

Reduction of Errors in Writing Assignments: A Comparison of the Impact of Peer, Teacher, and Mixed Feedback

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Research Paper

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Abstract

Feedback, one of the main components of learning-oriented assessment, has received special attention in recent decades. However, there are controversial remarks over the priority and importance of teacher and peer feedback. Therefore, accepting a pretest-posttest design, the current study investigated teacher feedback and peer feedback in comparison with mixed feedback in an EFL writing context as well as learners' attitudes towards providing feedback as a crucial strategy. The pretest was a 45-min diagnostic essay on health and longevity, and the posttest was a 45-min essay conducted after working on different types of feedback. Then, using the adopted writing scale, the researchers analyzed the obtained data. In addition, to understand the learners' attitudes towards peer and teacher feedback, the researchers conducted a focus groups interview with 15 learners randomly. Content analyses were employed to analyze the qualitative data. The results of ANCOVA analyses showed that there were no significant differences between the writing scores of teacher and peer feedback groups. However, the results revealed that the integration of teacher and peer feedback in a dialogic approach scaffolds the learners to outperform the other two. Moreover, the results of content analyses indicated that employing peer feedback might reduce anxiety and increase engagement and responsibility that lead to learners' autonomy. In practice, peer feedback and teacher feedback supported by feedback training encourages learning and supports learners to become independent.

Keywords: Teacher Feedback, Peer Feedback, Learning-Oriented Assessment, Assessment Training, Writing Ability

1. Introduction

Assessment is one of the main aspects of higher education that lies at the centre of any system; hence, the notion of assessment is a key factor for teachers, researchers, learners and all other stakeholders (Knoch & Chapelle, 2017). It is generally believed that learning is often hard to assess (Huang, 2016) and classroom writing assessment is fruitless and unsuccessful if it does not scaffold learners to become better learners or better writers (Kane, 2013). Therefore, assessment is widely considered the most challenging issue in educational research and it seems to be a common problem in many studies (Knoch & Chapelle, 2017).

For instance, research studies in English Language Teaching revealed that learning products are not usually adequate (Brown, 2004); some scholars claimed that numerous learning outcomes are not appropriate to put into practice or operationalize (Bailey, 2017; Carless, 2007; Huang, 2016). With the expansion of the globalization of education, it is evident that there is a kind of dissatisfaction with the assessment of learners' achievements in higher education across borders

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(Wang et al., 2013). Based on the results of the mentioned studies that highlighted the problem, it can be recognized that the assessment of learners' learning outcomes needs more attention or even further modifications.

Feedback as one of the main principles of Learning Oriented Assessment approach has received special attention in ELT field of study (Chen, 2008). Butler and Zeng (2014) stated that engaging students with feedback might help develop strategies that support interaction. Reviewing the literature reveals that many studies have focused on teacher feedback and peer feedback that has generated many debates in higher education (Butler & Zeng, 2014; Chen, 2008; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Zhang & Hyland, 2018). Many researchers put the reliability of both teacher feedback and peer feedback under question. For instance, Knoch and Chapelle (2017) and Butler and Zeng (2014) argued that teacher feedback fails to note the learning progress and Han (2016) asserted that peer feedback is in decline or as Hattie and Timperley (2007) stated, it fails to fulfil its potential. In a similar vein, Locke and Johnston (2016) concluded that teacher feedback usually do not encourage learning across a course and Zumbunn et al. (2016) observed that teacher feedback are regularly criticized for supporting memorization and rote learning. Butler and Zeng (2014) proved that teacher feedback might also pay little attention to encourage learners in producing lifetime learning inclinations, such as self-evaluation ability. In addition, it has been extensively disputed that feedback as a major component of LOA is usually ineffective, largely because it may be utilized too soon or too late in the instruction for learners to utilize it fruitfully (Carless, 2007). Regardless of the feedback form, Collie et al. (2016) stated that all kinds of feedback could lead to some kind of learning; however, the basic dispute is to choose the one that supports a rich type of learning. As a solution to this dispute, peer feedback has received a special attention in recent studies (Han & Xu, 2019); however, in Kane (2013) words, peer feedback is ineffective if it does not boost students' understanding and learning outcomes. The literature also shows that teachers and learners have different attitudes towards the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback in their learning contexts (Chapman & King, 2012; Tian & Li; Li, 2019; Wang, 2014).

The same critical dispute exists in the higher education in Iran in which teacher feedback is the most widely used form of feedback and according to Aryadoust (2015), this traditional assessment format fails to address the full description of learning outcomes (Black & William, 2018; Fatemipour & Jafari, 2015; Nazari, 2012; Tabatabaei & Bakhtiarvand, 2014). These studies put the validity of traditional assessment under question, but they did not offer alternatives to obviate the existed problem. While a few studies have been conducted in Iranian EFL context (Ahangari, 2014; Ganji, 2009), more studies are required to shed light on different and even hidden aspects of feedback in language teaching contexts as an efficient strategy to assess language ability. Considering the issue from a different perspective, this particular study investigated the impact of teacher and peer feedback in comparison with integration of these kinds of feedback called mixed feedback hereafter on Iranian EFL learners' writing achievements. In addition, it explored the learners' perception of teacher and peer feedback after participating in a learning-oriented assessment task design.

2. Review of Literature

The topic of feedback is widely discussed in second and foreign language writing studies (Bailey, 2017; Carless, 2007; Zhang & Hyland, 2018). In the past two decades, there has been some debate about the effectiveness of peer feedback, teacher feedback, and learners' engagement (Knoch & Chapelle, 2017). Hyland (2000) has devoted considerable attention to the importance of feedback in writing improvement and stated that explaining hidden layers of this complex issue, the total environment in which the feedback is provided should be considered. It can be postulated that providing feedback is an intricate issue in improving writing ability.

One important aspect to be applied to our understanding of feedback lies in the distinction between teacher and peer feedback. Numerous studies compared the effectiveness of peer feedback and teacher feedback as two writing strategies in writing curriculum. For instance, Miaoa et al.

(2006) compared teacher and peer feedback in an EFL writing class in China. They found that integration of teacher feedback and peer feedback leads to successful revisions in learners' writing practices. They also illustrated that more teacher feedback is used than peer feedback and teacher feedback leads to greater improvement in writing ability. The findings of the qualitative data also confirmed that learners value teacher feedback more highly than peer feedback. In a similar study, Ginkel et al. (2016) that compared peer feedback and teacher feedback found that teacher feedback is more powerful than peer feedback in encouraging effective learning. Similarly, Murillo-Zamorano and Montanero's (2017) argued that teacher feedback has a higher quality in comparison with peer feedback. They believed that teacher feedback leads into learning and is more profound than peer feedback.

In contrast, Gielenab et al. (2010) compared the effectiveness of peer feedback and teacher feedback in a secondary school writing curriculum. They found that peer feedback has a positive and a long lasting impact on writing ability. They stated that this impact is not significant in their revisions; however, they will learn to ask for feedback, and to reflect on it in their revisions. In other words, the learners learn feedback as a learning strategy that can be applied in future courses. Teacher support can be an effective feature in providing both teacher feedback and peer feedback in writing curriculum. Peterson and Portier (2012) investigated teachers' support for their students' writing development through formal peer and teacher feedback. They demonstrated that the feedback provided by teachers was not only directed towards developing students' understandings about writing ability, but it also addressed students' conceptual understandings and other aspects of the writing content. In another study, Diab (2016) compared the use of teacher feedback and peer feedback and in decreasing the language errors in students' writing assignments. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between teacher feedback and peer feedback in reducing language errors. However, the findings of the study revealed that other factors such as motivation, confidence, writing practice, and time might play a role in the effectiveness of feedback in language classrooms. The results of the mentioned study showed that there was controversial issue among language researchers about the effectiveness of different types of feedback.

These disputes existed in Iranian EFL contexts. While Birjandi and Hadidi Tamjid (2012) found that self-assessment together with peer assessment showed the maximum improvement in writing, Esfandiari and Myford (2013) argued that teacher assessment was the most significant type of assessment. In another study, Abolfazli Khonbi and Sadeghi (2012) examined the impact of self- and peer-assessment on Iranian EFL university learners' writing achievements and found that the peer-assessment group outperformed the self-assessment group significantly. The results of these three studies indicate that there is no consensus among Iranian EFL researchers regarding the effectiveness of self-, peer, and teacher feedback.

The next and arguably the most powerful dimension of feedback is teachers and learners' perception of this issue and its effect on learners' self-efficacy and attitudes. In a study conducted in a Chinese English writing classroom, Zhao (2011) investigated the learners' use and understanding of peer and teacher feedback on writing skill. To conduct the study, they adopted three research methods: (a) content analyses, (b) stimulated recall interviews, and (c) interviews. The study confirmed that the students used more teacher feedback than peer feedback in their revisions. The qualitative data of this study also demonstrated the acceptance of teacher feedback among the learners. To investigate its relationship with self-efficacy, Ruegg (2014) examined the impact of teacher feedback and peer feedback on writing self-efficacy changes in EFL learners. The findings of the study illustrated that teacher feedback can enhance learners' confidence more than peer feedback. However, it does not necessarily follow that increased teacher feedback will always increase learner confidence, as many other variables affect confidence. In 2019, Bader et al. explored learners' perspectives on peer feedback and teacher feedback. They claimed that learners will have little motivation to engage in providing feedback process if they have little hope of feedback as a successful classroom activity.

Nekuruh Motlagh (2015a,b) explored Iranian EFL teachers' and learners' preferences for feedback and found that many teachers used the same type of corrective feedback for all error types. Learners and teachers had different view over the usability of teacher feedback and peer feedback. While the teachers believed that peer and self-feedback are not beneficial, the learners preferred to use peer feedback in their revisions. Reviewing the literature, it was evident that there are controversial debates regarding the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback in language instruction and the idea is worth exploring in detail; therefore, the present study investigated the impact of teacher feedback and peer feedback in comparison with mixed feedback on learners' writing achievement in Iranian EFL context.

Research Question One: Do teacher, peer, and mixed feedback make any statistically significant effects on the writing achievements of Iranian EFL learners?

Research Question Two: Which type of written feedback do the learners use more frequently in their revisions, peer feedback or teacher feedback?

Research Question Three: What are Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards employing peer feedback, teacher feedback, and mixed feedback in their classrooms?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Since there are both qualitative and quantitative data in the current study, the specific design of this quasi-experimental study is mixed methods design. The qualitative data of the study were the results of focus group interviews, and the quantitative data were the writing scores of the participants in pre- and posttest. The researchers have two purposes for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The first one is triangulation of the data that reduces the possibility of bias in the study and collects in-depth information about the topic under question. The second purpose is to achieve complementary (Riazi & Candlin, 2014).

3.2. Participants

In order to adequately answer the research questions of the current study, three intact classes of learners who had already finished *Top Notch 1B* (Saslow & Ausher, 2011) in previous semesters in a private English language institute were taken as participants of the study. All these three intact classes were studying *Top Notch 2A* for the new semester (the summer 2019 academic year). All of the participants were first informed about the nature of the study, guaranteed that their identity would be held in strict confidence, and also were allowed to withdraw their contributions at any time without penalty. They were both male and female ($N = 37$; 21 males, 56.7 %; 16 females 43.2%) and Iranian with Farsi as their L1 and their mean age was 23. All of them had already studied English as a compulsory subject in their High School and they were studying different fields in university. The total number of learners participated in the main study was 37. The three classes were randomly assigned to experimental group 1 ($N = 12$; 50 % male; 50% female) as the Peer Feedback Group (PFG), experimental group 2 ($N = 12$; 8 males, 66.6 %; 4 females 33.3 %) as the Teacher Feedback Group (TFG), and experimental group 3 ($N = 13$; 7 males 53.8 %; 6 females 46.1 %) as Mixed Feedback Group (MFG) (both teacher and peer feedback). The participants required to pass the writing course taught by the same teacher. The teacher had previous experience of conducting writing course for EFL learners.

3.3. Writing Scale

In order to examine the impact of employing peer and teacher feedback, the researchers employed the following scale in the current study (see Table 1). The scale was developed by Beare (2019) to assess learners' writing competence. This scale addressed the organization and structure as well as spelling and grammar of learners' essays. Face and content validity of this scale were examined by three EFL experts in the field. Then, the teacher rated learners' essays according to this scale. The description of the writing scale is presented in the following table (see Table 1).

Table 1: Writing Rubrics

Category	4-Exceeds Expectations	3-Meets Expectations	2-Needs Improvement	1 - Inadequate	Score
Understanding of Audience	Demonstrates a keen understanding of the target audience, and uses appropriate vocabulary and language. Anticipates probable questions and addresses these concerns with evidence pertaining to probable potential readers.	Demonstrates a general understanding of audience and uses mostly appropriate vocabulary and language structures.	Demonstrates a limited understanding of audience, and generally uses appropriate, if simple, vocabulary and language.	Not clear which audience is intended for this writing.	
Hook / Introduction	Introductory paragraph begins with a statement that both grabs the attention of the reader and is appropriate to the audience.	Introductory paragraph begins with a statement that attempts to grab the attention of the reader, but is incomplete in some sense, or may not be appropriate to the audience.	Introductory paragraph begins with a statement that might be construed as an attention getter, but is not clear.	Introductory paragraph does not contain a hook or attention grabber.	
Theses / Main Idea Structuring	Introductory paragraph contains a clear thesis of main idea with clear suggestions as to how the body of the essay will support this thesis.	Introductory paragraph contains a clear thesis. However, the following support sentences are not necessarily or only vaguely connected to the body paragraphs.	Introductory paragraph contains a statement that may be construed as a thesis or main idea. However, there is little structural support in the following sentences.	Introductory paragraph contains no clear thesis statement or main idea.	
Body Evidence and Examples	Body paragraphs provide clear evidence and ample examples supporting thesis statement.	Body paragraphs provide clear connections to thesis statement, but may be need more examples or concrete evidence.	Body paragraphs are vaguely on topic, but lack clear connections, evidence and examples of thesis or main idea.	Body paragraphs are unrelated, or marginally connected to essay topic. Examples and evidence is weak or nonexistent.	
Closing Paragraph / Conclusion	Closing paragraph provides a clear conclusion successfully stating the author's position, as well as containing an effective restatement of the main idea or thesis of the essay.	Closing paragraph concludes essay in satisfactory manner. However, author's position and / or an effective restatement of main idea or thesis may be lacking.	Conclusion is weak and at times confusing in terms of author's position with little reference to main idea or thesis.	Conclusion is nonexistent with little or no reference to proceeding paragraphs or author's position.	

Sentence Structure	All sentences are well constructed with very few minor mistakes. Complex sentence structures are used effectively.	Most sentences are well constructed with a number of mistakes. Some attempts at complex sentence structure are successful.	Some sentences are well constructed, while others contain serious errors. Use of complex sentence structure is limited.	Very few sentences are well constructed, or sentence structures are all very simple.
Linking Language	Linking language is used correctly and often.	Linking language is used. However, mistakes in exact phrasing or usage of linking language are evident.	Linking language is seldom used.	Linking language is almost never or never used.
Grammar and Spelling	Writing includes no or only very few minor errors in grammar, spelling.	Writing includes a relatively small number of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation. However, reader's understanding is not impeded by these errors.	Writing includes a number of errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation which, at times, hinders reader's understanding.	Writing includes numerous errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation which make reader's understanding difficult.

Note: Reprinted from Thoughtco.com by Beare (2019), Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/esl-essay-writing-rubric-1212374>

All written assignments were scored according to the writing rubrics that are presented in Table 1. Since the scale has eight categories with four level of quality, written assignments of this study were rated on a 32-point scoring scale with “8” indicating the lowest score and “32” the highest score. Specific task descriptions in Table 1 illustrate the criteria that are found in written assignments at each of the score points.

3.4. Focus Groups Interview

To understand about the learners’ attitudes toward peer and teacher feedback, the researchers conducted a focus groups interview with the trainer and 15 participants. To conduct the interview, five learners from each experimental group were selected randomly. The major categories of interview questions focused on the participants’ experience, motivation, and attitudes towards teacher and peer feedback. In this 45-minute focus groups interview, the researchers tried to elicit the trainer and selected learners’ recognition and positive and negative attitudes over employing peer and teacher feedback in the course.

3.5. Procedure

The study lasted one and a half month, two 45-min sessions per week (12 sessions). After sample selection that was explained in the participants’ part, to check the learners’ writing knowledge at the first session of the study, all participants wrote a 45-min diagnostic essay on health and longevity as a pretest. The next phase was feedback training that was conducted in three sessions.

Feedback training phase was conducted to make the participants more confident and less anxious when they were giving feedback on their own. In addition, feedback literacy might play a significant role in the quality of feedback as well as its impact on writing ability. To control these crucial factors, all of the participants were trained by an expert trainer in three sessions. The learners were taught to analyze the writing essays based on the scale’s writing categories that were: understanding of audience, introduction, theses/main idea structuring, body/evidence and examples, closing paragraph / conclusion, sentence structure, linking language, grammar and spelling.

The teaching process was adopted from Hyland (2016) that were as follows: 1) Setting the context: The trainer explained the purpose and rationale of the course and writing activity. 2) Modelling: The trainer taught the writing process to reveal its stages and key features. Learners became familiar with basic information about how to write and how to deliver feedback on another writing assignment. They also had opportunities to study the process of providing feedback and to discuss and clarify the feedback criteria with the trainer before the real practice. 3) Joint construction: The trainer guided learners in delivering feedback and supported them when they needed. 4) Independent construction: After teacher-guided practice, learners were asked to deliver feedback independently while monitored by the trainer. 5) Comparing: Learners compared their provided feedback with their peers under the control of the trainer.

Practically, in training phase, both the teacher and learners provided feedback on an essay written by learners in the previous semester. During this phase, learners saw the teacher feedback on the essay, along with an explanation. If the learner and teacher feedback were similar, learners moved to the feedback phase. Otherwise, learners assessed another essay that the teacher has provided feedback. This process was repeated until the learners and teacher feedback matched closely, with up to five such training assignments. After five submissions, learners moved to the feedback phase regardless of how well they matched the teacher feedback.

In the feedback phase, the participants provided feedback on six writing assignments in six sessions. During these editing sessions, the learners in Teacher Feedback Group received only teacher feedback on their writing assignments. The learners in Peer Feedback Group received only peer feedback. However, the third group, Mixed Feedback Group, received peer feedback supported by teacher feedback. In Mixed Feedback Group, the learners provided feedback on their peers' writing assignments, then the teacher checked their feedback and correct if it was necessary. Later, the learners were able to read the detailed feedback given by the teacher and their classmate on their own writing assignments. At the end of the course, to check the effect of treatment, all groups wrote an essay in a 45-min session (11th session) as posttest.

In the twelfth session, the final session of the course, a focus groups interview was conducted with the teacher and 15 participants (five participants from each group) that were selected randomly by the researchers. This 45-min interview was started by a set of questions about implementing feedback in their classrooms. They were also open to talk about their own personal feelings and attitudes about feedback. To conduct content analyses, the interviewees' answers were transcribed.

The collected quantitative and qualitative data were considered for further analyses. To answer the first research question, the researchers used one-way ANOVA. To answer the second and third research questions, descriptive analysis and content analysis were employed. The qualitative data of the study were the results of the interview.

4. Results

4.1. Research Question 1 (Quantitative Data Analysis)

To check the learners' writing ability at the outset of the study, one-way ANOVA was conducted. Before conducting the analysis, normality of the data was assessed. A non-significant result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic indicates that the normality of the data was not violated. The results of this analysis are represented in the Table 2.

Table 2: The Results of One-way ANOVA of Pretest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.669	2	1.834	.364	.697
Within Groups	171.250	34	5.037		
Total	174.919	36			

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to investigate the writing ability of the participants, as measured by a writing pretest. Participants were divided into three groups based

on the kind of feedback they received (Group 1: TFG, Group 2: PFG, and Group 3: MFG). There were no statistically significant differences at the $p < .05$ level in pretest scores among three groups: $F(2, 34) = .36, p = .69$.

To determine the impact of peer, teacher, and mixed feedback on learners' writing achievement and answer the first research question of this quasi-experimental study, one way ANOVA was conducted. The results of this quantitative analysis are represented in the following tables.

Table 3: The Results of One Way ANOVA for Posttest

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	54.340	2	27.170	8.424	.001
Within Groups	109.660	34	3.225		
Total	164.000	36			

A one way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the effectiveness of three different interventions designed to investigate the impact of teacher and peer feedback in contrast to mixed feedback on learners' writing achievements. The independent variable was the type of intervention (peer feedback, teacher feedback, & mixed feedback), and the dependent variable consisted of scores on the writing test administered after the intervention was completed. Participants were divided into three groups based on the kind of feedback they received (Group 1: Teacher feedback; Group 2: Peer feedback; Group 3: Mixed feedback). Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions. There was a statistically significant difference among the three intervention groups on post-intervention scores on the writing posttest, $F(2, 37) = 8.42, P = .00$. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.3. To check the difference among each group Post-hoc comparison was conducted.

Table 4: The Results of Post hoc Comparison of Writing Posttest

	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scheffe	Mixed feedback	Teacher feedback	2.782*	.719	.002	.94	4.62
		Peer feedback	2.199*	.719	.016	.36	4.04

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Post-hoc comparison using Scheffe test indicates that the mean score for MFG ($M = 19.62, SD = 1.325$) is significantly different from PFG ($M = 17.42, SD = 1.782$) and TFG ($M = 16.83, SD = 2.209$). However, the results show that PFG and TFG do not differ significantly from each other.

4.2. Research Question 2

To answer the second research question, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The frequency of the peer feedback and teacher feedback in the writing assignments of the learners in MFG was counted as the quantitative data. The descriptive analysis of the data is presented in Table 5. In addition, one of the interview questions was about using of peer or teacher feedback in their revisions. The results of this analysis are presented in the qualitative analysis section.

Table5: Descriptive Statistics: The Frequency of feedback

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent of Feedback used in the revisions
Teacher Feedback	13	187	12.47	10.204	-
Peer Feedback	13	131	8.73	7.372	-
Used Teacher Feedback	13	120	8.00	7.000	64 %
Used Peer Feedback	13	72	4.80	3.986	54%

The results of Table 5 show that the learners of MFG used both teacher and peer feedback more than fifty percent. However, the results show that the participants used about 64 percent of the teacher's feedback in their revisions while used 54 percent of their peers' feedback.

4.3. Research Question 3 (Qualitative Data Analysis)

The qualitative data of the present study was gathered through a focus groups interview with 15 learners; five learners were selected randomly from each group. The procedure for analyzing the qualitative data was as follows: The collected data set was read a few times to find some sense of the main ideas. Then the researchers coded and analyzed the findings manually and subjectively. That is, the collected data in the interview were converted into transcripts or texts. Open coding was selected to code the transcribed texts which consisted of independent labeling of the texts. Here are presented some of the main beliefs about peer feedback and teacher feedback in the interview:

4.3.1. Encouraging Ideas about Using Peer Feedback in Writing Classrooms:

Reducing Anxiety

Most of the learners stated in the interview that they were less anxious when they assessed by their peers compared to their teacher (Student # 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, & the teacher mentioned the same concept but in different words). They believed that student peer feedback is a useful strategy to lower the anxiety in classroom assessment. For example a student stated that: *"I was so happy when I found that my teacher will not check my assignments"* (Student # 6).

Engagement

Since peer feedback creates a friendly atmosphere in the class, most students had a strong willing to participate in classroom activities (Student # 3, 6, 7, & 12 mentioned the same concept but in different words). *"I really like to check my friend's writing assignment; it is an interesting activity"* (Student # 3).

Responsibility

The implementation of peer feedback in the class enhances the sense of responsibility among the learners about their peers' assignments (Student # 2, 6, 8, 11, & 12 mentioned the same concept but in different words). *"I had a responsibility in the class and had to complete it. I would ignore it easily if it was about my own assignment"* (student # 7).

Improvement Power

Some learners stated that they were able to discover their weaknesses as well as their strength in their own writing practices when they delivered feedback to their peers (Student # 1, 2, 6, 12, & the teacher mentioned the same concept but in different words). *"This was the first time that I noticed my weaknesses in my own writing"* (Student # 12 stated in the interview). *"When I had a critical eye on my friend's writing assignment, I could find the same errors in my own writing"* (Student # 1 stated in her interview). Peer feedback has a great improvement power, as it is intended to stimulate learners to have a critical eye on peers and their own writing assignments.

Clear Rubric

Having clear and understandable writing rubrics help the learners to notice them more efficiently in the assignments (Student # 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, & 11 mentioned the same concept but in different words). *"I knew what I was looking for. The rubrics were very clear, and I understood them completely. I could recognize them in the writing assignments."* (Student # 1)

4.3.2. Challenging Ideas about Using Peer Feedback in Writing Classrooms:

Social Nature of the Activity

"While some students find it very useful, some of them find it very difficult to work on their peers' writing assignment. They thought they waste their time and preferred individually conducted

activities in the class” (The teacher stated in the interview). Individual differences and diversity among them in part of their learning styles can be a challenging issue in conducting peer feedback in language classrooms. Some learners do not accept peer feedback as an effective learning activity that might affect their performance in the class.

Time

Many learners as well as the teacher stated that peer feedback is a time-consuming activity (Student # 2, 5, 9, 13, 14, & 15 mentioned the same concept but in different words). *A large amount of time is required to conduct the peer feedback in the class and we can dedicate this time to our own learning* [while this is not the case] (Student# 13). The teacher also stated that I had to check the feedback again that needed a lot of time; therefore, time was a major challenge, especially for the teacher.

Understanding Rubrics

Some learners had difficulty to understand the writing rubrics that caused some challenges in conducting the peer feedback more effectively in class. The most important challenge was that learners need different amount of time to understand and to use the writing rubrics in providing their own peer feedback (Some of the students stated the same concept but in different words).

Authority of the Teacher

Some learners believed that teachers’ feedback are more reliable than peer feedback. They could trust comments that were delivered by teachers compared to their peers (Student # 2, 3, 5, 13, 14, & 15 mentioned the same concept but in different words). *“The teacher is more knowledgeable in the subject and is an expert in the subject; therefore, the teacher’s delivered feedback on our writing assignments is more reliable in comparison to peer delivered feedback”* (The sentences were translated from Persian to English by the researchers; Student # 13).

Quality of the Feedback

The main concern of the teacher was the quality of the feedback. She had to check the feedback to be sure about the quality and adequacy of the feedback that could be a bothering point for every teacher. In a same vein, the learners in the interview stated that the teacher provides more effective feedback. They claimed that the teacher’s follow-up inquiry and questions increase learners’ encouragement and even their understanding. *“The teacher asked me some questions that helped me to understand the comments and feedback. This is something that is absent in the peer feedback”* (Student # 8).

Lack of Confidence

Some learners did not believe that they are able to check their peers’ writing assignments and deliver feedback. *“I think this is a hard work for me to do. While I know the rubrics, I think I cannot determine them in the writings”* (Student # 9).

Classroom Management

Teachers should be able to handle the class in a way that provides adequate opportunity for the learners to work in a friendly atmosphere. *“Some learners did not participate in classroom activities that lead to some problems. A friend of mine lost his motivation due to the nagging learners and I think it would be better if the teacher manages them in an appropriate way”* (Student # 15).

4.4. Teacher or Peer Feedback?

The results of quantitative data showed that more than fifty percent of the learners used teacher feedback in their revisions. The results of interview also indicated that the learners preferred to use teacher feedback in the revisions or even in the writing posttest. While the participants of MFG used both peer and teacher feedback in their assignments, they accepted the teacher’s feedback more valid than peers’ ones and considered the teacher as a trusted source of knowledge.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrate that there is no priority over the impact of teacher feedback and peer feedback on learners' writing development. Although, the pre and posttest descriptive statistics showed an enhancement in writing scores of both TFG and PFG from pretest to posttest, the results of posttest show that there was no statistically significant difference between these two groups. The study demonstrated that a dialogic approach that starts from peer feedback and ends in teacher feedback would be very effective in language learning contexts.

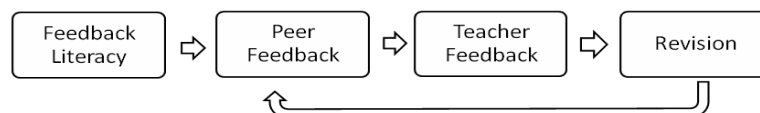


Figure 1. A dialogic approach to feedback in language learning context

It has been found that mixed feedback or integration of teacher feedback and peer feedback has a profound impact on writing enhancement of the learners. The enhanced exposure to feedback allowed learners to understand their strengths and weaknesses towards the feedback requirements and perform better in the next performance. The existence of feedback literacy and the process of delivering feedback in the approach presented in Figure 1 are different from previous studies. The results of quantitative data in the present study also suggest that peer feedback that followed by teacher feedback can significantly affect the writing ability of EFL learners. It can be used as a model to employ feedback in language classrooms to promote the quality of teaching and subsequently the quality of learning. Miao et al. (2006) had similar findings in that they stated that integration of teacher feedback and peer feedback leads to significant improvements in learners' writing practices. This finding is in contrast with Ginkel et al. (2016) and Murillo-Zamorano and Montanero's (2017) studies that found teacher feedback has a higher quality in comparison with peer feedback and believed that teacher feedback more likely results in deeper improvement in learners' writing ability than peer feedback.

The results also reveal that learners used about 64 percent of the teacher's feedback in their revisions while used 54 percent of their peers' feedback. Based on what learners expressed in the interview, they had various attitudes towards the effectiveness of teacher and peer feedback in writing instruction. In general, their comments in the interview indicated that they believed in the significant role in which teacher feedback plays in their writing improvement. It might be explained that some learners have problems in understanding the rubrics that may cause the subsequent challenges such as lack of confidence and delivering poor feedback. In other words, they need a skill or what Han and Xu (2019) called feedback literacy that plays a key role in understanding teacher feedback and providing peer feedback. One of the translations of feedback literacy can be a clear rubric that is understandable for both teachers and learners. The results of the experiment found clear support for the necessity of special training about how to provide feedback meaningfully and effectively. While Han and Xu (2019) focused on feedback literacy as a key factor in providing adequate feedback in the instruction, Murillo-Zamorano and Montanero (2017) claimed that only one session of the feedback or assessment training is inadequate in providing appropriate and effective peer feedback. This finding is consistent with what was found in the interview of the current study. Some learners stated that some rubrics are difficult and they need a lot of time to understand how to provide feedback.

One explanation for the improvement in writing scores in posttest could be teacher scaffolding. According to Ruegg (2014), teacher scaffolding facilitates the process of delivering feedback among learners. In addition, teachers' verification could also enhance the learners' confidence in both delivering peer feedback and their own writing ability. In confirmation, Bader et al. (2019) proved that learners will have little motivation to engage in providing feedback process if they have little hope of feedback as a successful classroom activity. It suggests that employing feedback in an instruction is a multidimensional phenomenon that should be considered from different perspectives such as learners' language ability, beliefs, and motivation.

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of feedback, the reflection notes in the interview revealed that the major advantages of conducting peer feedback in language classrooms deal with learners' anxiety, engagement, responsibility, and autonomy. It can reduce learners' anxiety level that might lead into more engagement on the part of learners in classroom activities. When they engage in an activity, they will be more interested in taking special responsibility in performing classrooms' tasks. Finally, these three processes might lead into learners' autonomy that is the final ambition of many teachers and curriculum designers. These findings corroborated with what Gielenab et al. (2010) found in their study. They found that effective and interactive peer feedback has a positive and a long lasting impact on writing ability.

In contrast, some of the learners had different and largely negative attitudes towards peer feedback. They believed that providing peer feedback need a high level of self-confidence that is absent in many language learners. In addition, it needs a great deal of time that in some cases wastes the time for effective learning. Most importantly, some learners were doubtful about the quality of peer feedback. These learners argued that teachers have an authority in class and they trust teacher feedback on their writing assignments. In a similar vein, the teacher stated that peer feedback is a time-consuming task as teachers have to check the peer feedback one more time to be sure about its quality.

6. Conclusion

The current quasi-experimental study investigated teacher feedback and peer feedback in comparison with mixed feedback and their impact on learners' writing achievements. The specific findings of the current study is that presenting a dialogic approach in feedback that starts from peer feedback and ends in teacher feedback would be very effective in language learning contexts. The most important points in the approach are the existence of feedback literacy and the process of delivering feedback in language classrooms. The present findings confirm that teacher and peer feedback have the same power in error reduction. More importantly, the results provide evidence for the significance of integration of teacher and peer feedback in classrooms. The results of interview also reveal that the main advantages of employing peer feedback are reducing anxiety, increasing engagement, and responsibility that lead into learners' autonomy. The learners also stated that the main challenges of using peer feedback in a language classrooms are lack of confidence, authority of the teacher, difficulty in understanding the rubrics, and a great deal of time that it requires. It might be explained that the large number of teacher feedback in revisions and writing posttest is due to the challenges concerning peer feedback.

This experiment on writing with peer, teacher, and mixed feedback adds to a growing corpus of research and extends the current knowledge of classroom feedback. It illustrates that the prerequisites for learners' feedback literacy are teacher scaffolding, understandable rubrics, and clear communication between teacher and learners. The study also explained that learners have different ability to understand the rubrics and teachers should consider individual difference, learners' background knowledge, and motivation in conducting any kind of feedback in language classrooms. It has several implications for educational researchers, teachers, and learners who are interested in conducting teacher and peer feedback in their classrooms. The main implications that emerge from this particular study are the necessity of providing clear rubrics for writing scale and teacher scaffolding to give peer feedback. To conduct an effective feedback strategy, the study suggests that

the best approach is integrating teacher and peer feedback. The findings also provide food for thought for educational researchers to think about an integrated teacher-peer feedback approach in language learning contexts. In addition, the findings of the study would be helpful for language learners who think of learning contexts as a stressful environment and recommend them some strategies to obviate their challenges in actual learning environments.

Although the findings of the current study cannot be generalized widely to other learning contexts, it offers encouraging information about teacher and peer feedback and their interaction to provide appropriate learning context to improve writing ability. More studies are required to confirm or even modify the findings of the present study. It is recommended that future studies can investigate the role of learners' feedback literacy on writing ability. In addition, learners' motivation and individual differences need to be addressed in the future studies on feedback. Finally, further inquiry can investigate mixed feedback in technology-enhanced learning environments and the role of teachers and learners in this newly developed mode of instruction.

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