

THE USE OF PEER FEEDBACK FORM (PFF) AMONG L2 LEARNERS IN PEER FEEDBACK ACTIVITY

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Abstract

Writing in L2 can create difficulties among students and teachers. Teachers sometimes use peer feedback activity in order for students to understand how essays are evaluated and to promote student-centered approach in classroom. However, numerous studies have suggested that peer feedback activity is unsuccessful because students were unable to provide effective feedback. Therefore, a material call Peer Feedback Form (PFF) was introduced in this study to help students to provide more and better feedback. In this study, students were asked to provide feedback for their friends' essays with and without the use of PFF. This study has found that students were able to provide more and different types of feedback after PFF was introduced in the activity. This study has shown that support during peer feedback activity is important to ensure success in this activity.

Keyword: *Peer Feedback, L2 writing*

PENGGUNAAN INSTRUMEN MAKLUMBALAS RAKAN SEBAYA DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR L2 DALAM AKTIVITI MAKLUMBALAS RAKAN SEBAYA

Abstrak

Menulis dalam bahasa kedua boleh menyebabkan kesukaran dikalangan para pelajar Dan para guru. Guru guru kadangkala menggunakan aktiviti ‘maklumbalas rakan sebaya’ supaya pelajar faham bagaimana penulisan karangan dinilai disamping menggalakkan kaedah berpusatkan pelajar dalam bilik darjah. Walau bagaimanapun, banyak kajian mendapati bahawa aktiviti maklum balas rakan sebaya sebagai tidak berjaya kerana pelajar tidak dapat memberi maklum balas yang efektif. Oleh itu, Borang Maklum balas Rakan Sebaya telah diperkenalkan dalam kajian ini dalam membantu pelajar memberikan maklumbalas yang lebih baik. Dalam kajian ini, pelajar diminta untuk memberikan maklumbalas karangan rakan mereka dengan dan tanpa penggunaan Borang Maklumbalas Rakan Sebaya. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa pelajar boleh memberikan maklumbalas yang lebih Dan berbeza selepas Borang Maklumbalas Rakan Sebaya diperkenalkan dalam aktiviti tersebut. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sokongan semasa aktiviti maklumbalas rakan sebaya adalah penting demi memastikan kejayaan aktiviti ini.

Kata kunci: maklumbalas rakan sebaya, penulisan bahasa kedua

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In L2 writing classroom, peer feedback is one of the activities used by teacher for several reasons, notably to encourage collaborative learning, to support student-centered learning and to expose students with different styles of writing and arguments (Hu ,2005 & Lin & Chien, 2009). Rollison (2005) has outlined five reasons to support peer feedback namely, 1) to enable students to learn how to provide feedback, 2) to educate student on audience awareness, 3) to encourage support and collaboration in classroom, 4) to lift teachers’ task and 5) to change students’ attitude towards writing. Wakabayashi (2008) has added that peer feedback helps students to read critically and simultaneously, students can be more aware in his or her own writing while Shulin (2013) notes that teachers employed peer feedback in helping students to be critical learners by reflecting at their own and peers’ mistake and to promote motivation and authority to control their L2 writing. This shows that peer feedback activity is considered as a useful activity that promotes self-learning and independent learning among students. Despite its favorable effects, it seems that peer feedback activity is not fully utilized by L2 teachers.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer feedback is an activity that involved students to work together in constructing knowledge through the process of critical evaluation and collaboration as it aims to help students to learn through looking at the peers' writing (Morra & Romano, 2008). Abdel Rahman (2013) adds that peer feedback is aimed to provide students the chance to bounce ideas back and forth, looking and giving feedback, discussing meaning and work together to create a good L2 writing. Faundez (2013) states the aim of peer feedback is to expose learner to pedagogical tasks that involve meaningful communication in L2 and to facilitate language acquisition by helping them to organize the input into sustainable knowledge. Through the literature, it can be seen that most researchers would agree that peer feedback is an activity that involves collaboration, meaningful discussion and it relies on the ability of students to work together to create and achieve meaning. This showed that peer feedback is a student-centered activity and the students are in the power to control their learning and knowledge. However, there are also studies that dispute the effectiveness of peer feedback activity in classroom.

Ineffective feedback is one of most cited reasons for failure in peer feedback activity. Taferner (2008) notes that students often make weak feedback due to language limitation and uncertainty while Parr and Timperly (2010) add that students often give unhelpful feedback that did not encourage discussion and negotiation in classroom. In a study conducted by Taferner (2008), students commented that vague feedback given by their peers were unhelpful and created tension in classroom because students felt frustrated by their lacking ability to give feedback and to respond to their peers' feedback. Another study by Min (2008) has shown that students felt their peers' comment were vague and did not provide direction for future improvement. These studies have showed that although peer feedback has a huge potential, its success is hindered due to students' inability to produce good feedback that can be utilized by their friends. Therefore, it is critical for students to receive adequate support during the activity. The use of support during peer feedback activity is beneficial to ensure success in L2 classroom.

A study by Morra & Romano (2009) has shown that when support is given during peer feedback activity, its result can be positive. In their study, the participants were engaged in two sessions of guided peer feedback activity. The participants noted that they enjoyed the activity and the support that was given during the activity has helped them to be more confident in producing better and more useful feedback. Therefore, by taking a note from Morra & Romano's study, this study has introduced an instrument called Peer Feedback Form (PFF) as a support to help students to provide feedback during peer feedback activity. In addition, the use of an instrument was also chosen based on studies by Liu & Hansen (2005) that suggest an instrument should be developed to help students to

see how a piece of writing is sectioned and evaluated and Wakabayashi (2010) that adds that an instrument should be able to help students during reviewing and responding to the feedback.

In this study, 50 students from a private college in Malaysia were asked to participate in two sessions of peer feedback activity, with and without the use of PFF. This study would observe whether the use of PFF has helped students in this activity by analyzing their number of feedback and types of feedback.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

50 students from a private college in Malaysia were chosen in this study. The students were divided into three groups which are beginner level (18 participants), intermediate level (20 participants) and advanced level (12 participants). Their level were determined based on their MUET scores and their performance one month prior the studies. All participants have noted that they have never involved in any peer feedback activity before this.

3.2 Instruments

This study used feedback analysis, where feedback were analyzed and grouped into their respective themes. The feedback theme was determined before the study was carried out. The feedback analysis was carried out in order to find any changes in reviewers' feedback behavior and to determine whether PFF has played a role among reviewers during peer feedback activity.

3.3 Procedure

In this study, the data collection is done in three stages. The first stage was students were asked to produce an essay and they were given an overnight to submit the essay. After the essay was submitted, the second stage was carried out as the essays were given back to the students and they were asked to switch the paper among themselves. The students were given 45 minutes to provide any feedback on their classmates' paper. The only instruction that was given during this session is to ask the students to mark the paper just like their teacher and no guidance was given during the session. After 10 minutes break, the third stage was carried out as the teacher introduced PFF and a quick explanation about PFF were given to students. The students then repeat the feedback session with the use of PFF. To avoid any misleading analysis, the teacher was prohibited from giving any aid during this session. This is to ensure that the students' feedback was entirely generated by them. To identify the feedback on the students' essay, the students were asked to use red pen during the second stage and purple pen during

the third stage. After the guided session was over, both the essays and the PFF were collected for data analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study, feedback analysis was used in the study in order to see how the feedback was generated in this study. The analysis was carried out in three steps. The first step was to determine the coding of the feedback. The coding of the feedback was divided into two types of coding which are coding for the classification of feedback group and coding for the classification of types of feedback. The code for feedback types were based from the feedback model by Nelson (2007). Adjustments were made on the feedback model to suit the purpose of this study. Each feedback was collected and coded into their respective coding. Table 1 and table 2 summarize the coding of feedback in this study.

Table 1: Coding for the feedback group

Feedback group	Description
F1	Feedback from the first essay without the use of PFF
F1F	Feedback from the first essay with the use of PFF

Table 2: Coding for types of feedback types

Coding	Description	Sample of feedback	Themes
FL (Location feedback)	Feedback that is used to pinpoint the basis or place of the problem and/or solution. The aim of this feedback was to navigate the writer to the source of error and make necessary correction.	Example: <i>Here!</i> <i>You missed the dot in this sentence!</i> <i>The teachers must <u>taking</u> care of students.</i>	Here! This is where you should put/ write... Markings: Underline (____) Circling Highlighting Arrows
FC (Correction feedback)	Feedback that corrects writers' errors in writing. This is done by reviewers in order to correct the errors directly and to be seen by the writer.	<i>The teachers must taking take care of students.</i>	Any corrections on grammar, sentence structure or organization of the essay

<p>Suggestion of ways to deal with the problem of writing. The aim of this feedback was to for the review to suggest solution and inspired the writer of other points or idea that can be put in the essay.</p>	<p><i>Maybe you can try better examples in this paragraph?</i></p> <p><i>Why don't you write this point first so that it is more organized?</i></p>	<p>Maybe you can try to write... You should... Why don't you write/do... I suggest... This should be... Provide more... Revise here...</p>
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Source : Feedback model by Nelson (2007)

After the coding for feedback group and the types of feedback was established, the second step was carried out by grouping the feedback according to their respective codes, first in the feedback group and then in the feedback types. The final step was to carry out the analysis to see whether there was a change in students' feedback before and after PFF was used.

3.5 Peer Feedback Form (PFF)

In this study, a material called the Peer Feedback Form (PFF) was introduced to assist the students during the assisted peer feedback session. The aim of the PFF was to allow the students to be able to provide feedback according to the feedback types. The PFF was put into three sections (Introduction, Body and Conclusion) to help students to navigate the PFF from start to finish. PFF was given to students during

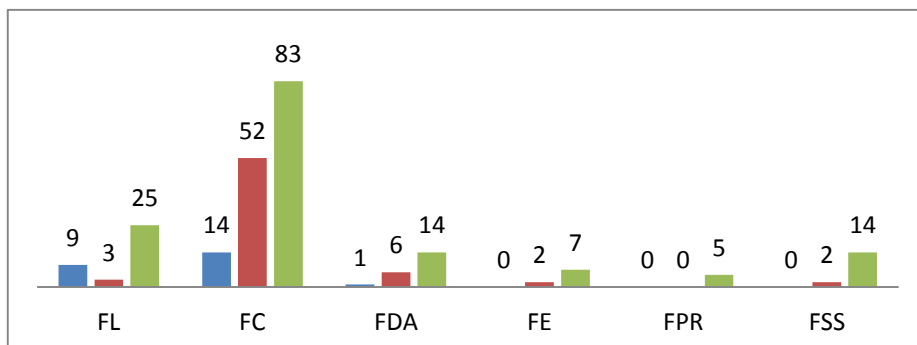
4.0 RESULT

4.1 Feedback analysis

After the study was carried out, the feedback analysis was run to see whether there is a difference in feedback with and without the use of PFF. The result of the feedback analysis is shown in Graph 1 and Graph 2. The result of the feedback analysis was categorized according to the feedback group to see the difference in feedback behavior between unassisted and assisted peer feedback session.

4.1.1 Feedback analysis for the F1 group

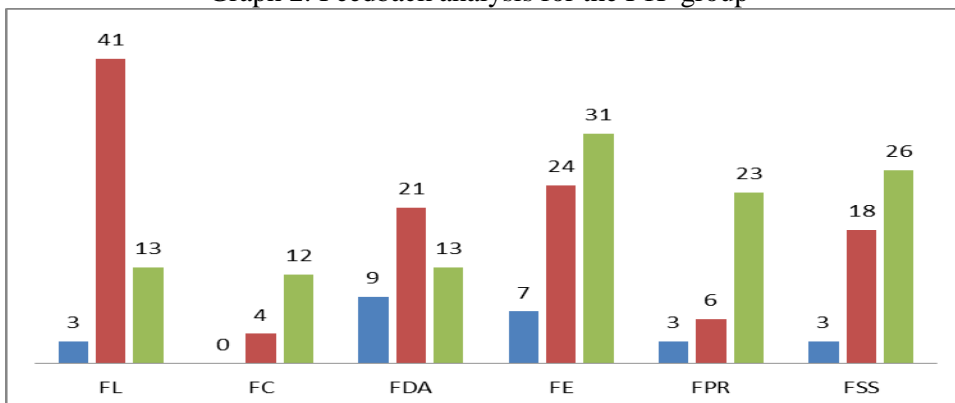
Graph 1: Feedback analysis for the F1 group



Graph 1 shows the feedback analysis for the F1 group or during the unassisted peer feedback session. During this session, it was seen that the most popular feedback is the correction feedback. This feedback is mostly seen as grammar correction. The number of correction feedback varies between students' level. The difference in the number of feedback is due to the students' language level. Advanced level students have higher language skills and as a result, were better at recognizing grammar errors. The other type of feedback that was observed to be provided by students is the location feedback. Students were seen to identify the elements of essays such the thesis statements and topic sentence. As for the other types of feedback, it was largely unnoticed by students. While there were efforts by the advanced students to provide all types of feedback, the intermediate and beginner students were not as enthusiastic. Beginners' students were seen to fail to provide any explanation feedback, problem feedback and suggestion feedback while the intermediate students have very small numbers of explanation feedback and suggestion feedback and no problem feedback was observed among them.

4.1.1 Feedback analysis for the F1F group

Graph 2: Feedback analysis for the F1F group



Graph 2 shows the feedback analysis for the F1 group or during assisted peer feedback session by using PFF. Based on the graph, it was seen that there are a difference in the students' behavior in providing feedback. Correction feedback, which is very popular during the unassisted session were now largely unnoticed by the students. The intermediate students were seen to put more efforts in recognizing the essay elements as shown by the high number of location feedback. As for the other types of feedback, the beginner students were seen to be able to produce some numbers of disagreement feedback, explanation feedback, problem feedback and suggestion feedback. As for the intermediate students, they were seen to be catching up with the advanced students based on their number of disagreement feedback, explanation feedback and suggestion feedback were on par with the advanced students. The advanced students were seen to be more active after there were given PFF and they were seen to provide higher number of the feedback except for correction and location feedback as compared during the unassisted peer feedback session.

5.0 DISCUSSION

This study investigates the use of PFF to assist students during peer feedback activity. Based on the feedback analysis, it was seen that PFF has been helpful to help students in providing more feedback during the activity. This can be seen through the result of the feedback analysis. During the unassisted peer feedback analysis session, all participants especially the beginner and intermediate level students were focusing solely on location feedback and correction feedback. This showed that during this session, students' actions were limited to locating essay elements (thesis statement, topic sentence) and correcting their friends' grammar. This showed that students' initial perception on peer feedback activity was

limited to some proof reading and grammar polishing. Even though the participants also provided other types of feedback during the unassisted session, this was seen more in the intermediate and advanced level students. This was due to their ability that enables them to put more attempts to aid their friends. In case of advanced students, although they provide many types of feedback during the unassisted peer feedback session, the number was small. The small number of other types of feedback showed that they were not quite confident to feedback that requires more analytical approach. After PFF was introduced to the students, it was seen that the students were able to provide different types of feedback. The increased number of feedback was seen significantly on the disagreement feedback, explanation feedback and suggestion feedback. The reason for the difference is students used PFF to provide explanation feedback to justify their disagreement feedback and suggestion feedback to supplement their problem feedback. This showed that PFF was able to help the participants during the peer feedback activity. Students were able to provide support for their feedback as they used the explanation feedback and suggestion feedback to explain their earlier feedback. PFF has helped the students to provide clearer and better feedback and this feedback is useful to help their friends in doing their correction later.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study has showed that with support, students can perform better during peer feedback activity. It is suggested in the future that teacher should plan the activity thoroughly and provide support for them during the activity. This is to ensure that students were guided during the process and they understand the aim of peer feedback activity. Although the study has shown that PFF has helped the students during peer feedback activity, the quality of the feedback was not studied in this paper. Therefore, it is suggested that future study should analyze the feedback provided by students in a deeper level to see whether the feedback was really helpful in improving essay among students.

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