

Learners' Roles in a Peer Feedback Task: Do They View Themselves as Writers or Reviewers?

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This study examines EFL learners' perceptions of peer feedback in writing instruction in the context of a Japanese university. Peer feedback is primarily a variety of input given from one learner to another. In a writing classroom, however, it refers to a dynamic process of reviewing peer texts and discussing one another's text. Peer feedback is defined here as a collaborative learning task in which learners learn to write through taking the role of both writer and reviewer. In a collaborative learning task, learners are expected to be aware of their roles for active and effective participation in the task. To investigate learners' perceptions of peer feedback in terms of their roles, a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews were conducted with a total of 51 students enrolled in two writing classes taught by the author. The results indicate that the students perceived peer feedback to be useful, and that they did so more from the writer's stance than the reviewer's. Pedagogical implications include: (1) the roles of reviewer and writer should be explicitly taught and guided; (2) peer feedback task instruction should focus on meaning-level revision; and (3) the functions of peer feedback and teacher feedback should be clearly distinguished.

Keywords: EFL writing, peer feedback, learner stance, learner perception

INTRODUCTION

Peer feedback is a complex activity that involves learners reading each other's texts, exchanging comments, and processing information that evolves from these acts to revise drafts. Given its complexity, peer feedback has received research attention from multiple perspectives: (a) the effects of peer feedback on writing quality (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Paulus, 1999); (b) learners' use of peer comments in revision (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Nelson & Murphy, 1993); (c) learners' perceptions of peer feedback (Arndt, 1993; Jacobs, Curtis, Braine, & Huang, 1998; Kamimura, 2006; Leki, 1990a; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998; Zhang, 1995); (d) the nature of interaction during peer feedback (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Nguyen, 2008a, 2008b); (e) learners' stances in peer feedback (Lockhart & Ng, 1995a, 1995b; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Min, 2008; Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996); and (f) effects of training on peer feedback (Berg, 1999; Miao, Badger, & Zhen, 2006; Min, 2005, 2006; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995).

Among the studies, those on learners' stances in peer feedback indicate that learners who took a collaborative stance showed a better understanding of the writing process than those who took an interpretive stance (Lockhart & Ng, 1995a, 1995b; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Min, 2008). A collaborative stance is characterized by a reviewer who tries to see a text through the writer's eyes, does not change the writer's focus or argument, points out possible problems to readers, and makes suggestions (Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992) through negotiating with the writer to help articulate new ideas (Lockhart & Ng, 1995a, 1995b). Moreover, the reported effectiveness of training for peer feedback (Min, 2005, 2006, 2008) suggests the significance of explicit instruction in learner roles. Reflecting its complexity, peer feedback has been defined in various ways. In their comprehensive book on peer feedback, Liu and Hansen (2005) define peer feedback as:

The use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing.(p. 1)

This definition is problematic, as it specifies learners' roles as those "normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor," which is not realistic, especially for learners with lower proficiency levels. In peer feedback, learners should not be expected to take over the roles of teachers or anyone in the position of teaching. Learners should be agents in peer feedback, which provides the ground where learners support each other to revise their drafts and better understand the writing process.

Peer feedback is given theoretical justification by several theoretical frameworks, including the process approach to writing (Mittan, 1989; Zamel, 1985), collaborative learning theory (Bruffee, 1984; Kohonen, 1992; McWham, Schnackenberg, Sclater, & Abrami, 2003), and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (de Guerrero & Villamil 1994; Donato, 1994; Villamil & De Guerro, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986, 1987). The process approach to writing emerged in the 1970s in reaction to an opposing view of a linear model of writing through the traditional product approach. In the process approach, learners write their writings through a series of drafts in a recursive cycle of writing. In the writing cycle, peer feedback is primarily the type of feedback that writers refer to in revising their drafts. Vygotsky's (1978, 1986, 1987) notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a theoretical concept based on sociocultural theory. The theory considers cognitive development to be a result of social interaction whereby an individual learns through the guidance of more experienced others, and the distance between one's actual developmental level and potential developmental level is referred to as the ZPD. Supportive interaction was also termed *scaffolding* (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), and it occurs between novice learners as *collective scaffolding* (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; DiCamilla & Anton, 1997; de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Donato, 1994).

In the present study, peer feedback is defined as a collaborative learning task by which learners acquire revision procedures while taking the dual role of writer and

reviewer. Collaborative learning is “a form of indirect teaching in which the teacher sets the problem and organizes students to work it out collaboratively” (Bruffee, 1984, p. 637). As the significance of collaborative learning is found in scaffolding taking place in an activity of helping each other (Bruffee, 1984), collaboration entails “responsibility for one another’s learning as well as their own” (Dooly, 2008, p. 21). Based on the constructivist view of learning, a learner’s role is modeled in a framework of collaborative learning as an agent who actively and cooperatively participates in small groups (Kohonen, 1992). By defining peer feedback as a collaborative learning task, treating peer feedback as an alternative format of teacher feedback can be avoided, and it can instead be conceptualized as a learning environment that learners build in collaboration. Moreover, specifying a learner’s role as writer and reviewer in the definition emphasizes the dual role that learners play in the task.

The majority of research to date has examined the advantages of peer feedback focusing on the role of writer (e.g., Mittan, 1989), while the significance of the role of reviewer has been claimed to be found in the development of self-revision skills (Leki, 1990b; Zamel, 1982). In recent studies, however, more focus is placed on the role of writer (Lundstorm & Baker, 2009; Zhu & Mitchell, 2012). As the nature of a stance or a role that learners recognize influences the effects of peer feedback, this study investigated roles that learners take in perceiving peer feedback. Specifically, the study addressed the following two research questions:

- (1) How do learners perceive the usefulness of peer feedback?
- (2) How do learners perceive their roles or stances in peer feedback?

METHOD

Participants

Fifty-one students at a Japanese university participated in the study. Eight of them also participated in the follow-up interview. They were all first-year law students enrolled in the author’s two writing classes in the spring semester of 2012. In the

program, course admittance is based on TOEIC IP® placement test scores, which places students in five levels: false beginner (below 300), upper-beginner (scores from 300 to 400), lower-intermediate (scores from 400 to 500), intermediate (scores from 500 to 600), and upper-intermediate (scores above 600). As a result of placement, 27 participants were designated in a lower-intermediate level writing class, and 24 students, as an integrated writing class of intermediate level and upper-intermediate level. Both classes were taught by the author using the same teaching materials following the same course plan.

With regard to the students' background, the students basically graduated from Japanese junior high school and high school where they learned English for 6 years, except for one Chinese student who came to Japan after graduating from high school in her home country. Six of them had experience of learning English abroad for 2 weeks to 10 months. A survey on English learning was conducted at the beginning of the year with 50 students who responded to the questionnaire. According to the multiple responses to the question that asked about their learning experience of English writing, 29 students, more than a half of the students, had no prior experience of learning writing in English. Among the remaining 21 students, paragraph writing was the most learned type of writing (19 responses), followed by essay writing (7 responses) and research papers (3 responses). About the experience of peer feedback, according to a separate investigation carried out with all the students who participated in the present study, 21 students (41.2%) had prior experience of peer feedback and 30 students (58.8%) had none. The details of peer feedback experienced are unknown, but among the 21 students who reported to have had prior experience, only 7 students reported to have learned paragraph writing, and 1 student reported to have learned essay writing. The remaining 13 students reported no experience of learning academic writing. The researcher also learned through personal communication with some of the students that they understood peer feedback in the survey to be a learning task by which students exchanged their notebooks or worksheets to correct each other's work in any English class. Therefore, the reported prior experience of peer feedback will not be taken into consideration in the data analysis. As for their attitudes towards learning

English, Table 1 below presents the students' responses to the question that asked whether they liked to learn English.

TABLE 1
Students' Responses to the Question "Do you like to learn English?" (N=50)

Not at all	Not very much	Neither like nor dislike	Pretty much	Very much
3 (6.0%)	2 (4.0%)	8 (16.0%)	23 (46.0%)	14 (28.0%)

The results show that the majority of the students have a positive attitude toward learning English. Moreover, according to the multiple responses to the question about their goal of learning English, "to study abroad" was the most popular goal (23 responses), followed by "to get a job that requires practical English skills" (19 responses), "to get a job that requires a high English certification test score" (14 responses), and "to get class units" (9 responses). There was no response that reported that there was no goal in learning English. The goal of learning writing in English was not specifically asked. These results indicate that the students basically had a positive attitude towards learning English. Finally, the responses to the questions about self-evaluation of English skills and self-evaluation of English writing skills are summarized in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2
Students' Self-Evaluation of English Skills and English Writing Skills (N=50)

	Very low	Quite low	Quite high	Very high
Self-evaluation of English skills	23 (46.0%)	21 (42.0%)	6 (12.0%)	0 (0%)
Self-evaluation of English writing skills	33 (66.0%)	15 (30.0%)	2 (4.0%)	0 (0%)

The results in Table 2 indicate that the students were mostly not confident about their English skills and English writing skills despite their positive attitude towards English learning.

Class Procedure

A 90-minute class met once a week for 14 weeks. The students wrote three sets of listing-order paragraph on three topics: occupation, place, and free topic. In each paragraph, the students explicated three characteristics of the topic (e.g. characteristics of flight attendants, or characteristics of Tokyo).

Figure 1 summarizes the process of writing a paragraph. In the first week, the students engaged in discussion in pairs or in groups of three as a brainstorming task. The students then started composing their outlines in class, finished them and the first drafts as a homework assignment, and submitted the files via a learning management system (LMS). The teacher made copies of the first drafts for use in peer feedback in the following week. In the second week, the students worked on peer feedback in pairs or in groups of three at least twice with different students. A peer response sheet (Appendix A) was prepared by the teacher for students to refer to the points to check and to write down peer comments. The students knew whose paragraphs they were reviewing as the writers' names were written on the drafts. The procedure of peer feedback was explained by the teacher, but there was no particular sample demonstration or training session. After working on peer feedback in class, the students revised the first drafts as a homework assignment and submitted the second drafts via the LMS. In the third week, the students received teacher feedback through a conference with the teacher. That is, each student met their teacher face to face either in the classroom or in the teacher's office for about 15 minutes. The form used for the teacher's comments followed the same format as the peer response sheet. For the third paragraph topic, a conference was conducted in groups of three or four. The second drafts were revised and submitted via the LMS as final drafts, except for those on the last topic, which were submitted in paper form.

Learners' Roles in a Peer Feedback Task: Do They View Themselves as Writers or Reviewers?

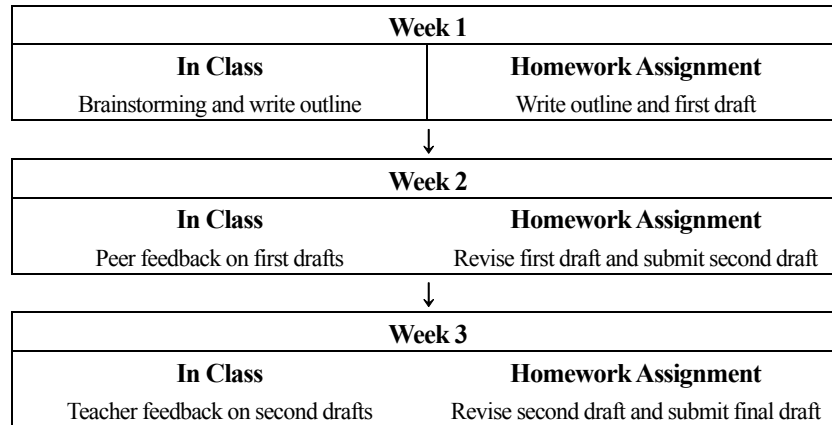


FIGURE 1
Process of Writing a Paragraph

Data Collection

A questionnaire survey was administered at the end of spring semester, and follow-up interviews were conducted at the beginning of the fall semester in 2012. Japanese was used in both the questionnaire survey and interviews. The students were told in advance that responses to the questionnaire or interviews would not affect their grades. Table 3 summarizes the questions asked in the questionnaire and follow-up interviews:

TABLE 3
Questions Asked in the Questionnaire and Follow-Up Interviews*

Question items	
Questionnaire	1. Was peer feedback useful in revising your drafts? 2. Was peer feedback useful for learning about writing? 3. What is your general opinion about peer feedback?
Follow-up interview	1. How exactly was peer feedback useful in revising your writing? 2. How exactly was peer feedback useful for learning about writing? 3. Is peer feedback advantageous for a writer or for a reviewer?

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4. Is peer negotiation necessary in peer feedback?
 5. Is the peer response sheet useful?
 6. What are the perceived differences between peer feedback and teacher feedback?
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*The original questions are translated into English.

In the questionnaire, terms that explicitly indicate roles such as “writer” or “reviewer” were avoided so as to understand on which standpoint the students stated their free opinions about peer feedback for Q3. Although “revising drafts” in Q1 and “learning about writing” in Q2 do not thoroughly explicate the role of writer or role of reviewer, these questions were asked in an attempt to suggest the task of each role. The perceived usefulness was evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much*). A Likert scale was used to investigate the students’ level of agreement instead of a dichotomy of yes or no. Moreover, a 4-point Likert scale was chosen instead of a 5-point or more scale to prevent students from choosing the central value of “either agree or disagree” in an attempt to choose “no answer.”

The follow-up interviews were conducted with voluntary students for more in-depth investigation into their responses to the questionnaire. The author asked for voluntary participation in the follow-up interviews during her office hours. All the students were informed that the interviews would take place one on one with the teacher for up to 20 minutes, and that it would not affect their grades. As a result, 8 students participated in the follow-up interviews. As the purpose of the follow-up interviews was to gain more insight into the responses they had given in the questionnaire, the participants could refer to what they responded in the questionnaire during the interview sessions. In the following section on data analysis, the responses for Q4 (on peer negotiation), Q5 (on peer response sheets), and Q6 (on the perceived differences between peer feedback and teacher feedback) will not be included as the present study focuses on which stance learners take, writer or reviewer, in perceiving peer feedback.

Data Analysis

The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The answers to the open-ended question were analyzed and categorized according to the students' stances towards peer feedback. The interview data were transcribed for a qualitative analysis.

RESULTS

Questionnaire

Responses to Q1 (*How exactly was peer feedback useful in revising your writing?*) are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Students' Perceived Usefulness of Peer Feedback in Revising Drafts (N=51)

Questionnaire item	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Was peer feedback useful in revising your drafts?	1 (2.0%)	2 (3.9%)	25 (49.0%)	23 (45.1%)

When combining the responses for “somewhat useful” and “very useful,” 94.1% of the students found peer feedback useful in revising their drafts. Responses to Q2 (*Was peer feedback useful for learning about writing?*) are summarized in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Students' Perceived Usefulness of Peer Feedback
for Learning about Writing (N=51)

Questionnaire item	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Was peer feedback useful for learning about writing?	1 (2.0%)	4 (7.8%)	26 (51.0%)	20 (39.2%)

When combining the responses for “somewhat useful” and “very useful,” 90.2% of the students found peer feedback useful for learning about writing. Responses to open-ended Q3 (*What is your general opinion about peer feedback?*) are categorized based on the stance towards peer feedback, as shown in Table 6 (see Appendix B for a full summary of translated responses).

TABLE 6
Students' General Opinions about Peer Feedback (N=51)

Questionnaire item	Useful as a writer	Useful as a reviewer	Lack of confidence	Other
What are your general opinions about peer feedback?	21 (41.2%)	6 (11.8%)	9 (17.6%)	15 (29.4%)

Twenty-seven students (53.0%) found peer feedback to be generally useful. Among them, 21 students reported peer feedback to be useful from the writer’s stance, and the remaining 6 students, from the reviewer’s stance.

The opinions on peer feedback from the writer’s stance included the following (translation is mine): “Peer comments were helpful because they pointed out errors that I could not notice by myself,” or “I appreciated that others pointed out problems that I could not notice by myself.” The phrase “errors/problems that I could not notice by myself” was found in most of the opinions on peer feedback from the writers’ point of view, and these opinions show that the students particularly appreciated peer comments that pointed out linguistic errors.

The following excerpts are some of the opinions on peer feedback from the reviewer's stance: "I could learn new English expressions and ways to organize supporting sentences in peer writings," "I could remind myself to take care of the problems detected in peer writings," or "I could understand the points of writing by reviewing peer writings and by comparing them with my own writings." These opinions mention three advantages of peer feedback from the reviewer's stance: (a) receiving input from peers' texts, (b) learning from problems in peers' texts, and (c) learning about writing through reviewing peers' texts.

Nine students expressed a lack of confidence in their own skills in peer feedback such as, "It was not easy to detect problems in peer writings with my poor English," "I was afraid about whether my comments were appropriate especially when I corrected what I thought as an error, because I was not sure about my own grammatical skills or vocabulary knowledge," or "I could not give critical comments on others' writings because I felt uncomfortable doing so." These opinions can be categorized into three difficulties: (a) difficulty in reviewing peers' texts and detecting problems due to one's own limited English proficiency, (b) difficulty in providing peers' texts with accurate comments due to one's own limited English proficiency, and (c) difficulty in giving critical comments on peers' texts due to interpersonal concern.

Other opinions included frustration towards peer feedback and general positive comments on peer feedback. The frustrations reflected their motivation towards peer feedback (e.g., "I wanted more practical suggestions on English expressions," or "People were just not involved enough.") suggesting the students' high expectations of peer feedback.

Follow-Up Interviews

The students who joined the interview sessions will be referred to by pseudonyms; Hiroki, Tomoya, Maiko, Mika, and Yukiko from the lower-intermediate class, and Masako, Yuri, and Maya from the integrated class of intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. The students' responses will be described and examined by category of responses (see Appendix C for a full

summary of response categories). Table 7 summarizes the excerpts of the students' responses to Q1.

TABLE 7
Interview Excerpts of Q1 “How Exactly Was Peer Feedback Useful in Revising Your Writing?”

Student	Interview excerpts
Masako	It was useful because classmates corrected my elementary mistakes such as misspellings, and what else? Well, the comments from the reader's point of view, such as to split a long sentence into two, or to add more information were helpful in making my subjective sentences more readable.
Hiroki	It was useful because I could come up with other expressions or ways to write what I wanted to say through talking with classmates, and they corrected my grammatical mistakes, which helped me check the grammatical points.
Tomoya	I appreciated when other students pointed out grammatical mistakes or some phrases I made up, but I didn't revise my writings based only on their comments. I looked up the correct use of grammar or expressions by myself as well.
Maya	Well, honestly speaking, peer comments are different from teacher comments. I mean, I basically didn't trust peer comments when they were pointing out problems, especially when they didn't understand what I meant. I thought it was their problem that they couldn't understand my English. But it was in fact useful when the problems they pointed out were obvious ones like mechanical mistakes.
Mika	The comments from the reader's point of view that suggested that I should explain my idea more clearly were helpful.
Yukiko	I'm basically not sure about my vocabulary skills, so I appreciated peer comments that suggested other vocabulary choices.

The responses to Q1 (*How exactly was peer feedback useful in revising your writing?*) can be summarized as follows: (a) peer comments provided grammatical and mechanical corrections (Masako, Hiroki, Tomoya, and Maya); (b) peer comments helped me revise my drafts for readability (Masako and Mika); and (c) vocabulary and expressions were shared with other students (Hiroki and Yukiko).

Table 8 summarizes the excerpts of the students' responses to Q2 (translation is mine).

TABLE 8
Interview Excerpts of Q2 "How Exactly Was Peer Feedback Useful for Learning about Writing?"

Student	Interview excerpts
Masako	I could refer to various organizational patterns by other students.
Hiroki	I was used to the type of learning where I answer questions and check for the correct answers, but through peer feedback, I have come to think about how I can write to get my meaning across to readers. Also, by focusing on writing readable sentences, I looked up and learned many words and expressions.
Maya	The peer response sheets were useful for understanding the points of revision, and the points of evaluation by the teacher.

Although half of the interviewees did not have relevant answers to the question, the responses to Q2 (*How exactly was peer feedback useful for learning about writing?*) can be summarized by the following points: (a) writing points were learned from other students' texts (Masako); (b) reader awareness was raised (Hiroki); and (c) use of peer response sheets helped learn about writing (Maya).

Table 9 summarizes the excerpts of the students' responses to Q3.

TABLE 9
Interview Excerpts of Q3 "Is Peer Feedback Advantageous for a Writer or for a Reviewer?"

Student	Interview excerpts
Masako	I think peer feedback is advantageous for a reviewer, but it really depends on which peer text you review. If the writing is bad, you can only correct mistakes for the writer, but if the text includes a lot of useful information, then the reviewer can learn from it.
Hiroki	For a writer, because I can know my mistakes by having other students point them out. I can learn new expressions and so on as a reviewer, but I still prefer when other students check my writing.

Tomoya	I feel there are advantages for both stances, but having other students correct my mistakes is the biggest advantage, so I think it's advantageous for a writer.
Mika	For a reviewer, because reviewing other students' texts was more helpful in discovering new expressions and text organization patterns. It was good that I read other students' texts after writing my own draft, because after reviewing others' texts, I realized that I could review my own text critically as well.
Maya	For a reviewer. It was interesting that I could learn and retain words or expressions that I read in other students' texts more than I do with those in model writings. I could also refer to how to use the words and phrases that I already knew in peer texts. I think peer feedback is a meaningful task for a reviewer, so when I have my texts reviewed by other students, it is basically not for me but for them as reviewers.
Maiko	For a reviewer, because for me, peer feedback was an opportunity to read English texts. I am aware that I don't usually read enough, so it was helpful.

The responses to Q3 (*Is peer feedback advantageous for a writer or for a reviewer?*) are summarized by the following three stances: (a) for a writer, by receiving corrections (Hiroki and Tomoya); (b) for a reviewer, by getting linguistic input of English (Masako, Maiko, and Maya); and (c) for a reviewer, by practicing reviewing one's own writing (Mika). As for Yukiko, she was not able to choose either stance because she sensed the advantages of peer feedback only vaguely from either stance. Yuri did not really have relevant answers to the questions asked in the interview. She expressed disappointment in the peer feedback tasks that took place in her class, saying that most other students were distracted during the tasks. For example, although she provided detailed comments on peers' texts, she only received rubber-stamp comments such as "good" or "great" in return. She was also discouraged by peers' reluctant attitude towards her comments. She assumed that her expectations of peer feedback and her proficiency level of English were higher than others'. She emphasized that a collaborative learning task such as peer feedback would be useful only if students commit to the task.

DISCUSSION

According to the questionnaire, the majority of students believed that peer feedback was useful in revising drafts and for learning about writing. The results of the follow-up interviews further suggested that the usefulness of peer feedback in revising drafts was found in peer comments from both linguistic (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, and expressions) and content (i.e., organization and idea development for text readability) perspectives. Moreover, the usefulness of peer feedback for learning about writing was found in peers' texts as a source of information and also in the act of reading peers' texts. Based on the premise that revising drafts and learning about writing each corresponds to the writer's stance and the reviewer's stance, these results might suggest that the students were aware of the benefits of peer feedback for both a writer and a reviewer. On the other hand, the students' general opinions about peer feedback asked in the questionnaire (Q3) revealed that they perceived peer feedback more from the writer's stance (N=21) than the reviewer's (N=6), and that the students did not include both stances in their general opinions. Their general opinions about peer feedback might indicate that the students were not fully aware of the dual role of writer and reviewer in the task, and that they tended to take a rather passive role.

From the interviews, three kinds of attitudes towards peer feedback were observed in Hiroki, Masako, and Maya. Hiroki represents a strong writer-oriented stance that passively appreciates all the peer comments on every aspect. Hiroki was used to the drilling type of learning and was a novice in collaborative learning. He expressed appreciation for peer comments that directly corrected his errors, suggesting relatively lower confidence in his writing skills. Choosing a passive role can be easier for students who are not quite confident about their writing skills. In the responses to the questionnaire, some students reported a lack of confidence in evaluating others' texts, finding errors in others' texts, and giving critical comments (see Appendix B). This lack of confidence also likely reflects a relatively low level of confidence in writing skills (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Storch, 2005). It is also arguable that some students were hesitant to give critical comments because they knew whose writings they were reviewing, as research shows that anonymous peer

feedback could help students feel freer to provide critical comments (Zhao, 1998). Since empowering learners as writers is one of the advantages asserted in peer feedback research, a passive stance is not ideal, and the task should be arranged and instructed in a way that learners find themselves equally significant in exchanging critiques and so that they can be selective with peer comments.

Mika represents a balanced stance that appreciates the dual role of writer and reviewer. Mika focused on the content aspects of writing that are related to meaning-level revisions both as writer and reviewer, whereas the majority of the students showed more interest in the linguistic or mechanical aspects of writing that are related to surface-level revisions. As research on skilled writers and unskilled writers (Raimes, 1985; Sasaki, 2002; Zamel, 1983) suggests, skilled writers focus more on meaning-level revisions, while unskilled writers focus more on surface-level revisions. To develop revision skills, it is important for learners to be able to shift their attention to the content aspects of writing for more meaning-level revisions (Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987). Too much focus on surface-level revision has been in fact pointed out as a drawback of peer feedback (Leki, 1990b). The connection between Mika's balanced stance of perceiving the dual role of writer and reviewer and her balanced focus on both meaning-level and surface-level revisions is unknown, but there is a hypothetical correlation. To become skilled writers, learners should be instructed to focus on meaning-level revisions from the early stages of writing instruction, because developing revision skills at the meaning level does not necessarily require higher linguistic skills (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2001). Mika also showed a balanced stance by the way she objectively perceived the act of reviewing peers' texts. That is, she was aware of the significance of engaging in peer feedback as an opportunity to review one's own text critically.

Maya represents a strong reviewer-oriented stance that shows doubts about peer comments and insists on one's own knowledge and decisions. She was critical and selective with peer comments because she was dubious about the credibility of peer comments. This kind of uncertainty concerning peer comments has been recognized as a constraint of peer feedback in research (Liu, 1998). Maya showed relatively higher confidence in her writing skills. If students who are relatively less

confident about their writing skills take a passive role in a task, it is assumed that students who are relatively more confident take an active role (Amores, 1997). However, Maya neither passively received nor actively provided peer comments. Neither was she very committed to the task because she was contrasting peer feedback with teacher feedback in a way that the former is an alternative to the latter. She showed absolute trust in teacher feedback, and regarded peer feedback as additional information, which is in line with research results that learners prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback (Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995). As a writer, Maya was looking for trustworthy comments, which in turn suggests that she considered the writer's role as one of receiving accurate corrections and guidance. As a reviewer, she acknowledged the significance of reviewing peers' texts as a source of input and perceived the advantage of peer feedback almost exclusively in the reviewer's role.

In comparing the three stances above, the pedagogical implications indicated are as follows: (1) the roles of reviewer and writer should be explicitly taught and guided; (2) in peer feedback, students should be instructed to focus on meaning-level revisions; and (3) the functions of peer feedback and teacher feedback should be clearly distinguished.

About the first point, in the present study, the students did not go through any training beforehand, even though it was likely to be their first encounter with peer feedback. The students' perceived difficulty or reluctance in giving peer comments has been explained in research as a lack of confidence in linguistic performance or as feelings of reservation (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Storch, 2005). However, the hesitation towards peer feedback observed in the present study could have been caused simply by a lack of experience.

As for the second point, the peer response sheets used in the study included grammatical and mechanical aspects as well as content aspects. Participants in the present study showed a general orientation towards surface-level revision, while a lack of confidence in peer feedback was expressed in relation to having to evaluate peers' writing or to correct errors. To avoid unnecessary pressure and promote better revision behavior, it is suggested that grammatical and mechanical aspects be excluded from peer response sheets. Peer response sheets are indeed crucial to

guiding learners towards focusing on the content aspects of writing, or meaning-level revisions (Wakabayashi, 2008).

Finally, with regard to the third point, teacher feedback was given in the conference after the peer feedback sessions. The two kinds of feedback, peer and teacher, were given on different drafts so that they would not be concurrent, following the method of Liu and Hansen (2005). However, some students ignored the peer comments by giving priority to the teacher comments on the same point on different drafts. One reason for this behavior could be that differences between the two kinds of feedback were not especially emphasized in the teaching. Moreover, the same format of peer response sheet was used for the teacher to go over the students' texts. When students compared teacher comments and peer comments given in the same format, it was often the case that they took only the former into consideration, regarding the latter as supplementary or incorrect. It is important then to make a clear conceptual distinction between the function of peer feedback and that of teacher feedback. For example, peer feedback can be set as a collaborative learning task in which learners play the dual role of writer and reviewer with equal responsibility and go over the content aspects of writing focusing on its readability, while teacher feedback provides comments and suggestions on the content aspects focusing on its organization pattern as well as corrections of linguistic or mechanical errors. One possible solution to avoid confusion is to refer to the two forms of "feedback" using different labels.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study investigated the stances or roles that EFL learners take in perceiving peer feedback, which was defined as a collaborative learning task by which learners acquire revision procedures while taking the dual role of writer and reviewer. The results indicated that learners generally answered positively about the usefulness of peer feedback in revising drafts and learning about writing. At first glance, this result could be interpreted to mean that learners perceived the usefulness of peer feedback as both a writer and a reviewer, but their general

opinions about peer feedback revealed that they perceived peer feedback more from the writer's stance than the reviewer's. The majority of those taking the reviewer's stance appreciated peer comments for pointing out errors in the texts, indicating that they were taking a rather passive role in the collaborative learning task. Although the results of the present study cannot be generalized to all EFL contexts, pedagogical implications include the following: (1) training is necessary to teach the dual role of reviewer and writer in a collaborative learning task; (2) peer feedback should be conducted to guide learners to focus on meaning-level revisions; and (3) the functions of peer feedback and teacher feedback should be clearly distinguished. Learners' understanding of their roles should encourage them to actively participate in the task and appreciate the benefits of peer feedback.

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APPENDIX A

Peer Response Sheet

1. Paragraph form		
■ The first sentence is indented (by ruler/tab key)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Sentences are connected (no use of enter key)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
2. Organization		
■ Topic sentence	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Concluding sentence	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
3. Sentence Structure		
■ Use of listing-order signals	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Use of conclusion signals	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
4. Punctuation and Grammar		
■ Period (a single space comes after)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement

■ Comma (a single space comes after)	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ No run-ons	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ No comma splices	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Word choice	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
5. Content: Check if the supporting points are stated clearly and logically.		
■ Unity	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ First point is well supported. Advice to the writer:	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Second point is well supported. Advice to the writer:	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement
■ Third point is well supported. Advice to the writer:	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Needs improvement

APPENDIX B

Students' Stances in Perceiving Peer Feedback (N=51)

Stances	Opinions
Useful as a writer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other students pointed out errors I was not aware of. (N=17) • I could revise my drafts to make them comprehensible for actual readers (N=2) • I became less hesitant in writing English sentences and show them to others (N=1)
Useful as a reviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I could learn words and expressions from others' texts (N=2) • I became more aware of certain points on writing and English composition through looking for problems in others' texts. (N=2) • I became more conscious about certain points about writing through finding errors and shortcomings in others' texts. (N=1) • I could learn quite a few things by reading others' texts. (N=1) • It was difficult to evaluate others' texts. (N=2)
Lack of confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was difficult due to my poor English, so I want to improve it. (N=2) • It was difficult to find errors in others' texts. (N=1)

Learners' Roles in a Peer Feedback Task: Do They View Themselves as Writers or Reviewers?

Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was difficult, but was a good opportunity to communicate with others. (N=1) • We were hesitant in giving critical comments to each other. (N=1) • It was difficult to write clearly for readers. (N=1) • It was difficult. (N=1) • It was useful. (N=2) • It was my first time, but it was a good way to learn. (N=2) • Writing itself was challenging. (N=1) • There were many rules that I had to consider. (N=1) • It made me think about the rules of writing and was therefore useful. (N=1) • I wanted more advice on English expressions. (N=1) • I could remember what I learned before. (N=1) • It was too bad that some comments were not clear. (N=1) • People were just not involved enough. (N=1)
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APPENDIX C

Summary of Interview Responses

	Question		
Student Name	1. How exactly was peer feedback useful in revising your writing?	2. How exactly was peer feedback useful for learning about writing?	3. Is peer feedback advantageous as a writer or as a reviewer?
Masako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer comments provided grammatical and mechanical corrections. • Peer comments helped revise drafts for the readability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing points were learned from other students' texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a reviewer, for getting linguistic input of English.
Hiroki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer comments provided grammatical and mechanical corrections. • Vocabulary and expressions were shared with peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader awareness was raised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a writer, for receiving corrections.
Mika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer comments helped revise drafts for the readability. 	N/A*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a reviewer, for practicing to review

			one's own writing.
Yukiko	• Vocabulary expressions were shared with other students.	and N/A	N/A
Tomoya	• Peer comments provided grammatical and mechanical corrections	N/A	• As a writer, for receiving corrections.
Yuri	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maiko	• Drafting itself was a useful activity.	N/A	• As a reviewer, for getting linguistic input of English
Maya	• Peers provided grammatical and mechanical corrections	• Use of the peer response sheets helped learn about writing.	• As a reviewer, for getting linguistic input of English.

Note. Responses are marked as N/A when no particular opinion was given about the question asked.