



## Effectiveness of Teacher and Peer Feedback: Through the Lens of Korean Tertiary Writing Classroom

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This classroom-based research attempted to explore whether teacher and peer feedback can be effectively implemented in an EFL writing classroom at the tertiary level. Characteristics of teacher and peer feedback, students' use of feedback along with perceived usefulness, and complementing effects of teacher and peer feedback were analyzed. Twenty students enrolled in an academic writing course participated in the study. Students engaged in drafting, revising, and editing stages of writing under the process approach. Data gathered were essay drafts, a survey on teacher and peer feedback, and interviews. The study found that teacher and peer feedback included various categories (e.g., identification, suggestion) and areas (e.g., thesis, organization) of feedback, yet teacher feedback was more balanced than peer feedback. Students found both teacher and peer reviews helpful and recognized the benefits of each, but they favored and incorporated more of the teacher feedback. The interviews, however, revealed that most students appreciated peer feedback because they could learn new perspectives and expressions. Students also felt less obliged to accept all of peers' comments, compared to teachers' feedback, leading them to critically evaluate their usefulness. Active verbal interactions and in-depth trainings were suggested to make both types of feedback more meaningful.

**Keywords:** L2 writing, EFL, process writing, teacher feedback, peer feedback

### Introduction

With the advent of the process approach in 1970, the way writing is taught in the classroom has shifted not only in first language (L1) but also in second language (L2). As opposed to the product approach, the process approach views writing as a sum of series of subprocesses, which involves gathering and organizing ideas as well as editing and submitting the text (Nation, 2009). Most researchers have agreed that these processes can help L2 learners improve their writing by engaging in self-editing, revising, and giving and receiving feedback tasks (Paulus, 1999). In addition, as a principal component of the revision process, the usefulness of teacher and peer feedback in L2 writing development has been researched a great deal. However, most writing research has been English as a second language (ESL) oriented, with little done in English as a foreign language (EFL) (Lee, 2008a; Lee & Schallert, 2008); thus, its effectiveness in EFL contexts seems inconclusive. Also, a skeptical stance about implementing teacher and peer feedback remains (Diab, 2010).

Indeed, it is not uncommon for peer feedback to end up becoming an unproductive class activity due to limited efficacy within the given time constraints, and this often discourages teachers from utilizing it further (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Paulus, 1999; Rollinson, 2005). In this respect, it seems reasonable for EFL writing teachers to debate whether they should put aside valuable class time for such feedback, considering its opportunity cost, when there are more pressing activities to carry out during class time.

Large class sizes in the EFL context also put a heavy burden on the writing teachers, inevitably affecting how they teach writing in the classroom. More specifically, not only students' writing ability (Zamel, 1982), but also cultural and institutional policies as well as teachers' beliefs and values toward writing (Lee, 2008a) can influence how their feedback is formed. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine whether teacher and peer feedback can be effectively conducted as a regular class routine, especially in an EFL tertiary level writing classroom which contains most of the constraints mentioned earlier. In order to shed some light on this matter, the study analyzes characteristics of teacher and peer feedback, students' actual use of feedback, and students' perceptions of the helpfulness of such feedback. The pedagogic implications of integrating teacher and peer feedback are discussed as well.

## Literature Review

### Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback is a crucial element in L2 writing (Paulus, 1999); accordingly, most early research on written feedback has focused on teacher review (Lee, 2008b). Studies have found that students generally appreciate teacher feedback (e.g., Ferris, 1995, 1997; Tsui & Ng, 2000), but students' preferences and perceived usefulness seemed varied in reference to areas of writing. More recent discussions have centered on types (e.g., direct or indirect) or areas (e.g., content, language, or organization) of teacher feedback and its impact on student writing (e.g., Choi, 2013; Ferris, 2006; Lee 2008a). For example, a series of studies conducted by Ferris (1997, 2006) showed the effectiveness of teacher feedback on language errors. In line with this, Lee (2008b) also reported that students particularly preferred teacher comments on language. Moreover, she found that high proficiency students wanted to receive error correction along with underlining/circling, categorizing, and corrections whereas low proficiency students wanted to receive all types of feedback except categorizations. Although both high and low proficiency students wanted to receive more teacher feedback on both language issues and content, not all low-level students appreciated error correction. It rather caused some resistance. This has implications for writing teachers that excessive error correction can overwhelm low proficiency students, inadvertently discouraging their motivation and interest in writing (Lee, 2008b). This finding also indicates that affective factors are crucial in students' engagement with feedback as well. Indeed, in Han and Hyland's (2015) study, students' emotional responses to teacher reviews played a positive role and led to enhanced motivation.

### Peer Feedback

An alternative to teacher feedback is peer feedback, which has drawn extensive attention from researchers who have highlighted its benefits in writing development (Hu, 2005; Min, 2006; Paulus, 1999; Rollinson, 2005; Wang, 2014; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006). Drawing on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, researchers have contended that peer review facilitates social interaction and further enhances students' competence by means of scaffolding (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). In support of this, Hu (2005) emphasized the "socially constructed process of invention (p. 322)" of writing in creating a collaborative learning environment as a key of peer review. Students can learn from each other based on their different areas of strengths and weaknesses while engaging in giving, receiving, and discussing feedback (Min, 2005). For example, peer feedback not only helps students notice linguistic errors through interaction and negotiation, but also leads to more revision in areas of ideas and organization (Diab, 2010). Moreover, as peer review is less authoritarian than feedback from the writing teacher, peer review can increase "self-reliance" (Harmer, 2004, p. 115) when editing. In other words, although students tend to feel obliged to address the teacher's comments, peer review gives them more opportunities to analyze and evaluate their own problems of writing by referring to the comments

received. Furthermore, on the reviewer's part, peer reviews have been found to be useful for improving their critical reading and analysis skills (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Rollinson, 2005). Lundstrom and Baker (2009, p. 31) concluded that analyzing peers' writing and providing global level feedback (e.g., logic, organization) help students become "better writers and self-reviewers," leading to academic success. Given that building autonomous L2 writers is one of the ultimate goals of writing classes (Hansen & Liu, 2005), contributing to learner autonomy seems to lend enough support to its implementation in the classroom. Furthermore, from the affective aspect, peer review was reported to help reduce writers' anxiety (e.g., Park, 2017; Stanley, 1992). In Choi (2013), the combination of teacher and peer feedback also positively influenced the decrease of students' writing anxiety.

Despite these benefits, some skepticism related to peer review has been reported. One major downside of peer review is that students do not trust their peers' comments as much as their teachers' feedback (e.g., Carson & Nelson, 1996; Harmer, 2004; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Park, 2017). Min (2005) found that the main reasons for unsuccessful peer review were misunderstanding the writer's intentions and receiving ambiguous feedback. Furthermore, students tend to show a lack of confidence when giving feedback. They do not consider themselves qualified to provide useful feedback, partly due to their lack of language ability (e.g., Choi, 2013). Given that the quality of peer review largely depends on the reviewer and the writer as well as the effectiveness of the communication between them (Tsui & Ng, 2000), cooperativeness and trustfulness among students are crucial. In this respect, teachers' guidance and intervention throughout the process seem mandatory (Paulus, 1999). Indeed, researchers have continuously argued the importance of providing training on being a good reviewer to raise the quality of peer reviews (e.g., Berg, 1999; Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lam, 2010; Min, 2006). In Min (2006), for example, peer review training not only increased comments incorporated in the subsequent draft, but also enhanced the quality of students' revisions.

Yet students' actual incorporation of feedback is still open to question. For example, Paulus (1999) analyzed 11 ESL students' essays and found that, among all revisions made by students, 34.3% were based on teacher influence but only 13.9% on peer influence. In addition, students used other sources (the self or others) for revision 51.8% of the time. Similarly, Tsui and Ng (2000) and Yang et al. (2006) found that students valued and incorporated teacher feedback more than peer feedback due to the greater level of trustworthiness in the former. Interestingly, however, peer feedback brought about more meaning-based changes whereas teacher feedback related to surface-level change. Likewise, Choi (2013) reported that students accepted most of teachers' feedback related to language issues (80%), but they only responded to 54% of content-related (more global level) feedback.

## Research Questions

Conflicting findings on teacher and peer reviews not only indicate that existing research on this area has been insufficient, but also implies the way such reviews were implemented varied according to the context. Some external factors such as institutional influence, students' levels, classroom settings and size, and internal factors like the quality of feedback can also be crucial factors affecting the successfulness of feedback. Therefore, this study attempted to explore whether teacher and peer reviews can be effectively carried out in the EFL writing classroom. In particular, this classroom-based practice was conducted at the tertiary level, which is generally vulnerable to those external and internal constraints. The study hoped to provide some insights on this matter by looking at the characteristics of teacher and peer feedback, students' perceived usefulness of the feedback, and their actual revision behavior. Practical concerns and suggestions were also discussed. With these goals in mind, the study sought to answer the following three questions:

RQ1. What are the characteristics of teacher and peer feedback?

RQ2. What do students' perceived helpfulness of feedback and their degree of revision tell us?

RQ3. What are the benefits of implementing teacher and peer feedback in the EFL writing classroom?

## Methods

### Participants

Twenty students majoring in English language and literature participated in the study; they were enrolled in an academic writing course in a large university in South Korea. Two were male students, and 18 were female students. Their average age was 23.6. Because all participants had completed formal English education in Korea, they had an average of 10 years of English learning experiences. However, students did not have as much experience in English writing compared to the other English skills. More than half of the participants (55%) responded that they felt least confident in writing in English. According to the diagnostic essay test administered on the first day of class, their average English writing ability fell between two and three on the TOEFL independent writing rubric (<http://www.ets.org/toefl/>). This indicates that their essays showed noticeable insufficiency in organization and supporting details along with language errors at both the sentence and word levels.

### Materials

Four materials were collected for data analysis: a background survey, a survey on teacher and peer reviews, student essays, and interviews. First, a background survey was administered to gather data on participants' major, age, English learning experience, and confidence in English (Appendix A). Second, a survey designed to measure students' perceived helpfulness toward both teacher and peer review was administered. Referring to Tsui and Ng (2000), the survey included 17 items based on a 5-point Likert scale; five items (1–5) asked about their attitude toward the process writing approach in general, and ten asked their perceived helpfulness toward teacher review (6–10) and peer review (11–15). The last two items (16 and 17) asked students how much they thought they incorporated teacher and peer comments into their revisions. Only items from 6 to 17 were used for analysis in the present study (see Park, 2017, for the entire survey analysis).

Third, essays—first and second drafts of an argumentative essay—were collected from the 20 participants. The purpose of using these two drafts was to (a) quantify teacher and peer feedback that each student received on their first draft, (b) then analyze the characteristics of that feedback, and (c) finally explore how much of that feedback was actually incorporated into their second drafts. Each teacher and peer comment was coded using the following categories: *Clarification* (clarifying the writer's intention), *Identification* (identifying the problems), *Explanation* (explaining the nature of the problem), *Suggestion* (making specific suggestions), and *Appreciation* (appreciating the writer's point). The first four categories were borrowed from Min (2005), and the last one was added based on the pilot data analysis of the present study.

In addition, teacher and peer comments were further classified depending on the aspects of the feedback given. Five aspects—thesis/topic, organization, supporting details, language use, and overall—generated from the pilot data analysis were used. Moreover, in order to see how much teacher and peer feedback was reflected in the second draft, five students' essays were further analyzed in detail. These five students also participated in the follow-up interviews and shared their thoughts and suggestions on teacher and peer feedback based on their experience. Interviews were conducted in Korean and translated into English for this report.

### Procedure

The goal of the writing course was to help students develop both general and academic writing ability. Students attended this course once a week for one semester, and each class lasted approximately 100 minutes. On the first day of class, the background survey was administered, and a diagnostic writing test was conducted to measure students' general writing ability. The instructor then gave an overview of the

course using the syllabus. As part of the course assignments, students were required to complete one argumentative essay on a topic of their choice and, following the process writing approach, students had to submit three drafts (i.e., first, second, and final). This writing sequence was adapted from Tsui and Ng (2000); the total number of drafts and teacher review sessions were modified to make the process more applicable to the curriculum for the present study (Figure 1).

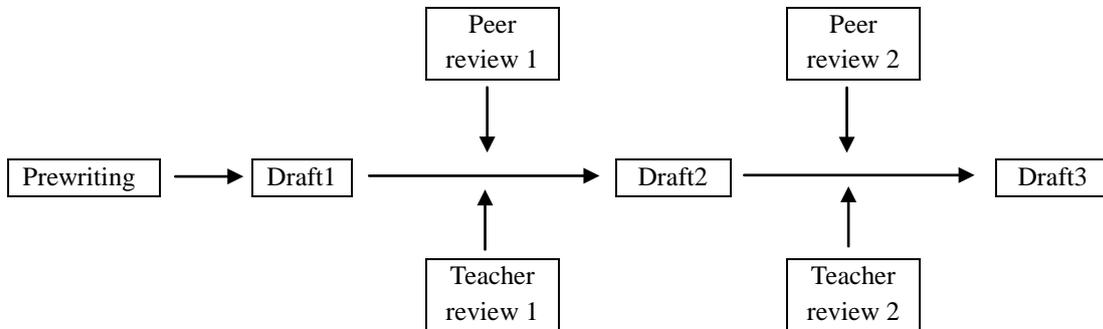


Figure 1. Sequence of writing process.

To complete each draft, students followed the four writing stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. As a central trait of process writing, this multi-draft approach helps students attend to teacher feedback more (Lee, 2008a), which was thought to apply to peer feedback as well. During the prewriting stage, students had the freedom to choose any techniques they felt useful for generating ideas (e.g., freewriting, listing, clustering). Using the ideas they produced, they made a brief outline and started composing their first draft (Draft 1). Students then received feedback from their teacher and peers and revised their first drafts (Draft 2); this was followed by another round of teacher and peer feedback for revision. Finally, students edited for minor errors at both the sentence and paragraph levels (e.g., grammar, spelling errors) and then submitted their final draft (Draft 3).

The peer review lasted for 40 minutes during the regular class period. First, students were paired, and each student verbally summarized his or her topic for five minutes. This seemed essential to help the reader better understand the writer's main argument. Then, students exchanged their drafts and started to read silently and individually for another five minutes. Next, students wrote their comments on a separate sheet for about 25 minutes, referring to the peer review guidance sheet (Appendix B). In support of Hansen and Liu (2005) and Wang (2014), the guidance sheet was designed to help students focus on various aspects of writing during peer review while preventing them from simply correcting errors. Students were also allowed to write simple comments (mostly language issues) directly on their peer's draft, using direct (e.g., provide correction) and indirect methods (e.g., indicate problems only with no correction). After returning their drafts, students read each other's comments and talked about them. Students clarified any ambiguous remarks during this discussion. In addition to the peer review, the course instructor collected all the drafts and took one week to give written comments to each student.

At the end of the semester, the survey was collected to examine students' perceptions regarding the helpfulness of teacher and peer reviews. Five students who indicated different degrees of helpfulness on the survey were selected for the follow-up interview. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes. The interview was conducted in Korean to enable students to share their opinions freely, with no pressure to speak in English. During the interview, students were asked to share their honest opinions on the following aspects: (a) likes or dislike about teacher and peer reviews, (b) difficulties they experienced giving and receiving feedback, and (c) suggestions based on their experiences.

## Results

### Characteristics of Teacher and Peer Feedback

The first research question investigated characteristics of teacher and peer feedback, analyzing types and areas of written comments. Based on its characteristics, each comment was classified, using the five categories identified (Table 1). Clarification included comments that confirmed the writer’s intended meaning for better understanding. Identification included comments that pointed out problems only, with no detailed reasons, whereas Explanation embraced feedback that clearly elucidated the source of the problem. If the teacher or students gave specific suggestions or offered direct alternatives, they were categorized as Suggestion. Complimentary comments were grouped under Appreciation.

TABLE 1  
Five Categories of Teacher and Peer Comments with Examples

	Teacher Comments	Peer Comments
Clarification	“What do you mean by ‘maximize’?”	“I don’t understand this. What do you mean?”
Identification	“Your stance, or argument, is not clearly expressed in your thesis statement.”	“Change problem to ‘problems’.”
Explanation	“Can you add a transitional word or phrase here to connect these two sentences logically?”	“The last sentence is ambiguous. In common sense, I think TV is generally a more interesting medium than a radio because of its visuals.”
Suggestion	“Your topic is not clearly expressed here. To make your assertion stronger, you should add some useful tips in this paragraph on how to use smartphones for the right purpose for the right amount.”	“If you talk about benefits of radio using some of the interesting radio stations you listen to, it would be helpful for readers to understand your argument.”
Appreciation	“Your topic is clear and your evidence supports your argument strongly.”	“Your topic is easy to understand and interesting.”

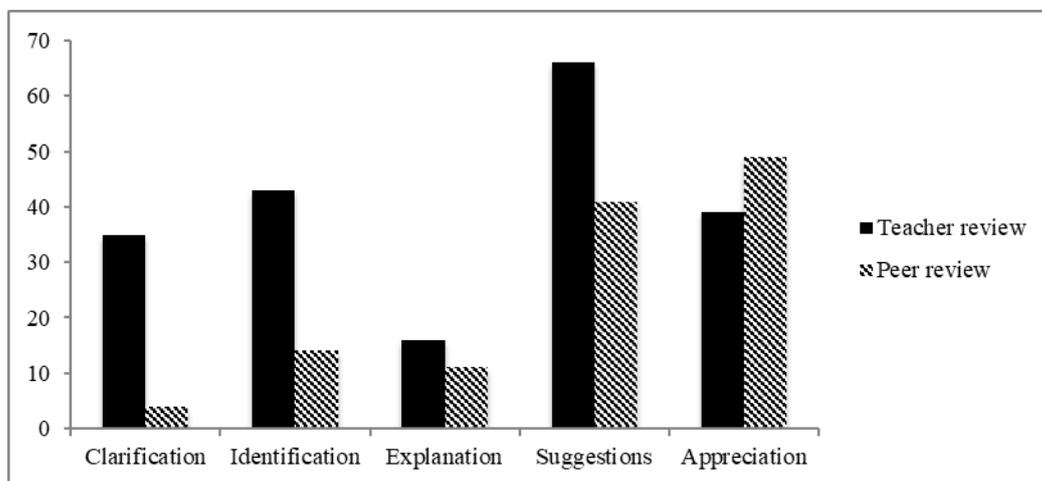


Figure 2. Frequencies of teacher and peer comments.

A total of 298 comments were made across the 20 essays. Of these, the teacher made 179 comments, and students made 119 comments, resulting in 8.95 teacher comments and 5.95 peer comments per essay. Looking at the frequencies of categories in Figure 2, the teacher used Suggestion (33.17%) most, followed by a similar amount of Identification (21.60%), Appreciation (19.60%), and Clarification (17.59%). Explanatory comments occurred most infrequently (8.04%); however, most of the teacher’s suggestive comments also included explanations. For example, as shown in the example in Table 1, the teacher tended to explain the problems first and then provide appropriate suggestions. Meanwhile,

students most often gave appreciative comments to their peers (41.18%), with suggestive comments occurring slightly less often (34.45%). The frequency of Clarification (4%) and Identification (11.76%) feedback was clearly lower compared to the teacher's feedback. Explanatory comments appeared 11 times (8.61%).

Teacher and peer comments were further categorized based on the five areas of writing: thesis/topic, organization, supporting details, language use, and overall (Figure 3). Except the last one, which briefly concludes one's holistic impression on the essay, teacher comments were fairly balanced across the four areas of writing. Peer comments most often included organizational comments, followed by a similar number of topic- and supporting details-related comments. Comments on language use were apparently insufficient when compared to the other areas and to the teacher's feedback.

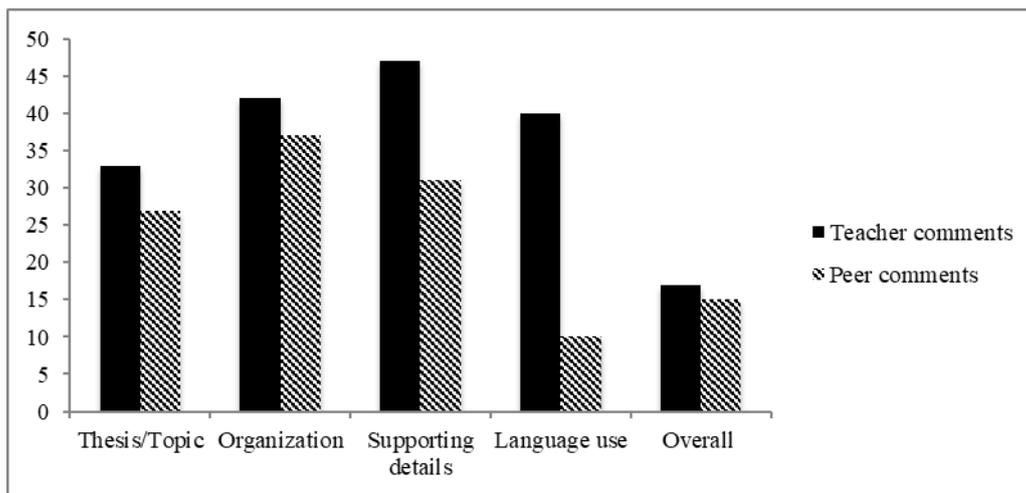


Figure 3. Areas of teacher and peer comments.

### Perceived Helpfulness and Degrees of Revision

The second research question examined to what extent students recognized teacher and peer reviews as helpful and how the feedback was reflected in the subsequent revision process. Ten survey items (from 6 to 17), asking about how helpful students perceived the teacher and peer reviews, were reported in the present study (Table 2).

TABLE 2  
*Students' Perceived Helpfulness of Teacher and Peer Feedback*

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6. I found my teacher's comments helpful.	4.80	0.51
7. I liked the way that my teacher gave me written comments on my essay.	4.70	0.64
8. My teacher's comments helped me improve the organization of my essay.	4.50	0.74
9. My teacher's comments helped me improve the content of my essay.	4.65	0.57
10. My teacher's comments helped me improve the language of my essay.	4.30	1.00
11. I found my classmates' comments helpful.	3.75	0.89
12. I liked the way that my classmates gave me written comments on my essay.	3.65	1.11
13. My classmates' comments helped me improve the organization of my essay.	3.30	1.00
14. My classmates' comments helped me improve the content of my essay.	3.45	1.07
15. My classmates' comments helped me improve the language.	3.30	1.27
16. How often did you take your teacher's comments into consideration when you revised your essay?	4.80	0.40
17. How often did you take your peers' comments into consideration when you revised your essay?	3.65	0.96

The reliability of the entire survey was .838, as determined by Cronbach's alpha. Students indicated that the teacher's reviews (item 1,  $M = 4.80$ , 96%) were generally more helpful than peers' reviews (item 11,  $M = 3.75$ , 75%). This finding is in line with students' perceptions on specific areas of writing; students perceived the teacher's reviews to be more helpful than peer reviews across all areas of writing, from content to language. In particular, the large standard deviations of peer reviews indicate that individual students' perceived helpfulness was less congruent. In addition, students responded that they took the teacher's comments into account most of the time (item 16,  $M = 4.80$ , 96%). In contrast, they considered their peers' comments less often in their subsequent revisions (item 17,  $M = 3.65$ , 73%).

Five students who indicated varying degrees of helpfulness on the survey were chosen for further essay analysis: Two found both teacher and peer reviews very helpful (A and B), one found both teacher and peer reviews relatively not helpful (C), and two found the teacher's reviews more helpful than the peer reviews (D and E). None of the students found peer reviews to be more helpful than the teacher's reviews, showing a noticeable difference (Table 3).

TABLE 3  
*Students' Uptake of Teacher and Peer Comments*

Students	Helpfulness of TC	Helpfulness of PC	# of TC received	# of TC taken (%)	# of PC received	# of PC taken (%)
Student A	High	High	10	8 (80%)	6	3(50%)
Student B	High	High	7	7 (100%)	3	3(100%)
Student C	Low	Low	7	6 (85.7%)	4	4(100%)
Student D	High	Low	6	3 (50%)	4	2(50%)
Student E	High	Low	5	5(100%)	5	2(40%)

*Note.* TC= teacher comments; PC=peer comments. Teacher and peer comments that require further action or revision were only counted for this comparison. Appreciative comments are excluded.

Teacher and peer comments on draft 1 essays were compared to draft 2 essays to track whether each comment was reflected in the revision. Corroborating the survey findings (items 16 and 17), students generally incorporated the teacher's comments more than their peers' comments. However, students varied in their use of feedback. For example, both Student A and Student B found teacher and peer reviews helpful, but they showed different degrees of incorporation. Whereas Student B incorporated all comments from both the teacher and peers into the revision, Student A was more selective. In addition, Student C found both teacher and peer reviews relatively less helpful, but she still ended up incorporating most of the comments received into her revisions. Student D and Student E both found the teacher's reviews more helpful than peer reviews, but Student D included them equally in the revised essay while Student E showed a strong reliance on the teacher's review.

### Challenges and Benefits of Teacher and Peer Feedback from Students' Perspectives

After the semester was over, the five students included in Table 3 participated in a 30-minute interview and shared their opinions about teacher and peer reviews based on their one semester of experience. Regarding the teacher's feedback, all five students mentioned that they were highly satisfied with the teacher's comments and found them helpful in revising their draft. In particular, students chose "systematic," "clear," and "trustworthy" as the key merits of the teacher's review. For example, Student A commented,

I liked the teacher's feedback because it was clear, and I liked the way the teacher explained what my problems were and how I could improve them. I think I used most of her comments for revision because she is an experienced teacher, so I could trust her comments.

Similarly, Student E mentioned, "I liked both, but for different reasons. I liked the teacher's comments because they were clear and detailed. They covered both overall and specific areas." Student C, who

indicated relatively low satisfaction with the teacher's review on the survey, also acknowledged its helpfulness. However, she said she sometimes could not clearly understand the teacher's comments and therefore was not sure how to revise her essay. In addition, reading the teacher's critique was initially somewhat hurtful and made her anxious about her writing. Interestingly, however, she wished to have more error correction from the teacher and have a chance to ask questions directly. It seemed her low satisfaction toward the teacher's review was not directly related to its quality per se, but to the student's anxiety stemming from a lack of confidence and clear written communication. Student D mentioned that she personally liked the teacher's encouraging comments:

The teacher not only gave me feedback on areas of problems, but also pointed out something I did well. It gave me confidence and made me want to make more effort in writing.... I could tell that the teacher actually spent time understanding what I wanted to say in my essay.

In terms of peer review, Student B mentioned that he liked to read his classmates' writing because it gave him a chance to approach his topic from different perspectives. This advantage was also mentioned by Students A and E. However, Student D expressed a negative attitude toward peer reviews, saying, "The peer review was helpful, but I felt uncomfortable about showing my incomplete draft to my peers." Given that students' first draft tends to be incomplete in many aspects, including organization, logic, and grammar, some students might have felt embarrassed showing their "unfinished" draft to their peers. Student D continued to say that her reviewer gave her various comments, but she only considered the language-related feedback because she did not clearly understand the points being made. Student A, on the other hand, indicated strong satisfaction with both types of feedback:

I think both teacher and peer reviews were helpful for improving my essay. I could feel that my essay came to have a better flow and logic. At first, I did not expect the peer review to be useful because I didn't think of myself as a good writer and my classmates would be the same. I could not correct any language errors on my peer's essay because I was not so sure.... But reading other people's essays gave me some confidence and an opportunity to reevaluate my own writing for contents and grammar. I also learned some expressions that I want to use in my writing later.

However, she was still in doubt as to the extent to which her classmates could help with the aspects of nuance and sophisticated language use, such as collocations and natural expressions. Thus, she had to turn to teacher feedback on this issue.

All the students recommended using both teacher and peer reviews for future students, as they saw benefits of both. However, they addressed some improvements to be made to ensure more useful teacher and peer feedback. For example, because they felt verbal interactions before and after the peer review session were useful for resolving some miscommunications, they wished to have a chance to discuss the teacher's comments directly and individually. In addition, two students mentioned that, depending on with whom they worked, the quality of feedback varied. Some peers gave constructive feedback; other only gave a few simple comments. They said that receiving complimentary comments was rewarding, but detailed feedback would have been more motivating, thus encouraging them to put more efforts into their revisions. Another point worth to note is that Student C expressed concerns about incorporating all the comments into the revision. She was afraid that her writing ended up being someone else's writing. She was confused about which comments to include and which ones to disregard. She, therefore, suggested providing students with more chances to practice how to evaluate each comment and use it effectively for revision.

## Discussion

Comparing the total number of comments, the teacher gave each essay more comments than students did, which was somewhat expected. It is more important to note that students were able to give a relatively good amount of feedback on their peers' essays. Although quantity does not guarantee quality, approximately six comments per essay seemed appropriate given the length of each essay (i.e., about one page) and the short time allowed. However, while teachers' comments were relatively evenly spread out across the five types, students' comments were less balanced. Suggestive and complimentary comments accounted for most of their comments, surpassing the other three categories. This may need cautious interpretation. Being able to offer suggestion indicates students' critical reading capabilities, on the one hand, but on the other hand, a high proportion of appreciative feedback may be students' trick to avoid going into a deep-level analysis. Of course, complimenting on what has done well can encourage the writer (Harmer, 2004), and the writer does appreciate praise (Ferris, 1995). Complimentary comments can further increase their positive attitude toward writing (Nation, 2009). This type of motivating feedback was also emphasized during the peer review training of the present study to prevent students from merely giving judgmental comments or correcting grammatical errors. Nevertheless, simple or broad complimentary comments, such as "you have a good point" or "this is a good example," as found in this study, do not require critical analysis and evaluation of the writer's point. Thus, giving more constructive feedback seems one area that EFL students need to work on.

Looking at the areas of comments in both teacher and peer feedback, much more feedback focused on macro issues, such as areas of content and organization, than on micro issues like grammar. This is different from what previous studies have found. For example, in Yang et al. (2006), teacher gave more surface-level-based comments while peers gave meaning-based comments. In Min (2005), students provided global (e.g., ideas and organization) and local (e.g., word usage, grammar) comments at a similar rate (57% and 43%, respectively). This difference may have partly stemmed from the goal of this writing course. As mentioned, students were encouraged to "respond to" their peer's draft, not to just "correct" grammatical mistakes. It is because responding is particularly more appropriate than correcting in the process-based writing classroom (Harmer, 2004). Harmer maintained that responding and suggesting, such as giving advice on contents, are more rewarding than correcting, which merely includes pointing out grammatical mistakes in syntax or words. Therefore, students in the present study were constantly reminded that their job was not to single out linguistic errors, but rather to share their thoughts and opinions, providing the writers with an opportunity to revise based on re-evaluation.

Given that one of teachers' concerns in implementing peer review in the classroom is students' inability to respond to their peers' essays effectively (Min, 2006; Tsui & Ng, 2000) or give feedback above the surface level (e.g., Eksi, 2012), students' capability of giving macro-level comments (i.e., topic, thesis, organization, supporting details) found in this study appears particularly noteworthy.

The second research question investigated the extent to which students found teacher and peer reviews helpful and whether the perceived helpfulness led to a high uptake of reviews. In line with previous studies (e.g., Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang et al., 2006), students generally valued the teacher's feedback more than their peers' feedback; accordingly, they incorporated more of the teacher's comments into their subsequent revisions. However, a high level of perceived helpfulness did not go hand in hand with a high percentage of uptake. This may indicate that perceived helpfulness did not necessarily result in a high level of acceptance or that students could actually evaluate each comment and take only those they felt necessary. Student D, for example, mentioned that he rejected some comments that he did not find useful or agreeable. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that students generally showed a high level of acceptance of feedback, and this incorporation led to an improved quality of the subsequent draft.

As revealed in the interview, the clear and systematic nature of the teacher's review was one of the key merits of the feedback, but perceiving the teacher as an expert was another underlying reason that students accepted this feedback. Previous studies (e.g., Hyland, 2000; Yang et al., 2006) have often reported that a teacher's authoritative figure makes students feel pressured to accept most suggestions.

Conversely, students felt less obligated to take all the comments offered by their peers (e.g., Paltridge et al., 2009). In addition, not having the attitude of evaluator was helpful for reducing students' writing anxiety stemming from the pressure to compose error-free essays, as was found in Park (2017) and Stanley (1992). Moreover, students found peer review helpful for their writing development, especially in broadening their views on the topic. Supporting the findings of previous studies (e.g., Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Min, 2005), peer reviews were found to be beneficial for the reviewers as well, who not only learned writing styles and expressions, but also developed a critical eye in evaluating their own writing. However, some students expressed dissatisfaction with peers' inability to give balanced feedback.

In this respect, as argued by many researchers (e.g., Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lam, 2010; Min, 2005; Rollinson, 2005; Zhu, 1995), offering in-depth quality trainings for student reviewers can be one possible solution. Although the present study included a workshop on how to give effective feedback, many students seemed still uncertain about being able to give useful feedback (e.g., Wang, 2014). Reviewer training can give students ample opportunity to become familiar with their peers' writing and aid them in seeing the actual benefits of participating in peer review, which may affect students' involvement in the review process. Although students' clear motives play a role in their participation (Yu & Lee, 2015), it is not uncommon for students to doubt or not fully understand the advantages of peer reviews in many cases (Rollinson, 2005). Teachers should let students know that even using friendly tones when giving reviews can positively influence the writers' attitude toward the peer review (Min, 2005). As previous researchers have asserted (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Min, 2005), teacher demonstration and modeling across a longer class period, along with teacher-student conferences, should improve the quality of peer feedback and the involvement of students.

One suggestion from students in the current study was to include more time for discussing their drafts with both their teacher and their peers. This was also reported in Wang (2014) that students liked being able to verbally clarify ambiguous parts before and after the peer review. This face-to-face interaction helped students resolve miscommunication; as a result, more fruitful interaction could take place. Considering that not understanding the writer's intention clearly can lead to unsuccessful peer feedback (Min, 2005) and that the majority of students appreciate opportunities to clarify comments (Lee, 2008b), providing opportunities for more verbal interaction could definitely be beneficial for students.

In line with Rollinson's (2005) concerns on student characteristics (e.g., students from certain cultures refrain from expressing negative comments), the interviews revealed that some students actually felt uncomfortable giving negative comments to their peers. Also, although students appreciated the fact that their teacher actually took time to read and try to understand their writing and give useful feedback, they initially felt that the negative comments they received were hurtful (e.g., Wang, 2014). This echoes what Lee and Schallert (2008) asserted in their study that the teacher-student relationship can determine how a teacher gives feedback to students and how students receive the feedback. They noted that such appreciation and acknowledgement led students to put more effort into their subsequent revisions. Moreover, given that EFL students generally show a lack of confidence in writing, building a trustworthy relationship between the teacher and students can positively influence reciprocity, resulting in a feeling of being rewarded on both sides. This can enhance learners' engagement when dealing with feedback, which can further bring about positive results in relation to students' outcomes (Han & Hyland, 2015).

Building this type of caring relationship among peers is also believed to positively influence how students give and receive negative comments. Moreover, given that the EFL classroom includes students with varying strengths and weaknesses, creating a supportive learning community is the key to leading to more successful peer review (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Paltridge et al., 2009). Helping students develop an attitude of embracing peers' mistakes and weaknesses may be one area to which writing teachers should pay further attention.

## Conclusion

The present study explored characteristics of teacher and peer reviews and the students' revision rate in relation to perceived helpfulness. The findings showed that both the teacher and students were able to give comments on various aspects of writing, from content to grammar. Nevertheless, peer feedback most often contained suggestive and complimentary comments, and feedback on language use was apparently limited, partly because of students' lack of language ability. The survey showed that individual students indicated varying degrees of perceived helpfulness toward teacher and peer reviews, and five student cases showed a relatively high degree of incorporation. The follow-up interview revealed that students wanted to have more verbal interactions with the teacher and their peers and have a more prolonged training to ensure a better quality of peer review.

Although the present study showed the possibility of effectively implementing peer and teacher reviews in the EFL setting, the following limitations should be noted. First, the study did not intend to generalize any findings because it was a classroom-based study implemented for one academic semester with a small number of participants. In particular, students had limited experience with teacher and peer reviews, meaning the quality and quantity of feedback they gave and received were hard to generalize. Second, the study only analyzed two essay drafts, so any developmental improvements were not intended to be measured. Examining the underlying reasons why students incorporated the teacher's and peers' comments was beyond the scope of this study, although this area should be further examined in future studies.

Despite these limitations, this study can offer insightful implications for writing teachers in similar contexts. Students' positive reactions to teacher and peer review suggest the possibility of implementing both in the EFL writing classroom as a useful pedagogic tool for writing improvement (Diab, 2010) while lowering anxiety and increasing motivation toward writing. Of course, careful training is necessary (Min, 2005; Paulus, 1999), because, in particular, peer review success is largely dependent on teacher planning and student training (Hansen & Liu, 2005).

The study also showed that the review process encourages students to engage in their writing process more actively. While responding to their teacher's and peers' comments, students can learn how to evaluate a piece of writing by analyzing problems, exploring logic, and suggesting solutions. In this way, students can not only develop critical thinking skills and problem solution skills (Wenting, Xuemei, & Min, 2016), but also learn to identify their own weaknesses and strengths as an L2 writer (Tsui & Ng, 2000). This would help decrease students' heavy reliance on the writing teacher while increasing their active role in the revision process, which will help them develop self-evaluation, or self-review, skills and ultimately alleviate the burden that EFL writing teachers have.

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## Appendix A

### Background Information Form

1. Gender: a. Male b. Female
2. Age:
3. Major:
4. Email (optional):
5. How long have you been learning English? About ( ) years.
6. In which language skills do you feel strongest? And why?  
a. Reading b. Writing c. Speaking d. Listening  
( )
7. In which language skills do you feel weakest? And why?  
a. Reading b. Writing c. Speaking d. Listening  
( )
8. How would you assess your overall writing ability in English?  
a. Very poor b. Poor c. Average d. Good e. Very good
9. What do you expect to learn in this class? What are your goals?

## Appendix B

### Peer Review Guidance Sheet

#### Topic and Thesis statement

- 1-1. What is the topic? Does the writer provide enough background information on the topic? If not, what additional information should the writer give?
- 1-2. After reading the topic sentence in each paragraph, what do you expect to read in the following sentences? Does the writer write according to your expectation(s)?
- 1-3. What is the writer's position or opinion on this issue? Does the thesis statement clearly give the writer's position/opinion?

#### Organization

- 2-1. Is the essay clearly structured, with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion?
- 2-2. Does the introduction paragraph interest you? How does the writer organize the introduction?
- 2-3. Does the concluding paragraph summarize the essay? How does the writer end the essay (e.g., predictions, suggestions, results, quotes)? How can the writer improve the conclusion?

#### Supporting details

- 3-1. How many examples are used to support the argument? Are they relevant to the topic? If not, explain why they are irrelevant.
- 3-2. Do you think that the writer's arguments are convincing? Why or why not? Which arguments work the best and are the most convincing? Which arguments need further development?
- 3-3. How does the writer support each position? Please recommend which evidence below would help the writer improve his/her argument further.
- 3-4. How did the writer support each position? Please recommend which evidence below would help the writer improve his/ her argument further.  
 Facts or statistics     Personal experiences     Representative cases  
 Observations     Examples     Anecdotes based on real incident  
 References from the authority or experts

**Language**

- 4-1. Are there any grammatical errors or inappropriate word usage?
- 4-2. Are there any spelling or punctuation errors?

**Overall**

- 5-1. What do you think the writer has done well?
- 5-2. What have you learned from reading this essay, either in language use or content?
- 5-3. Is there anything unclear to you? What questions do you have? If you were the writer, how would you revise this draft?