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**– THE EFFECT OF TRAINING STUDENTS IN GIVING AND
RECEIVING PEER FEEDBACK ON LEARNERS' REVISIONS
TYPES AND WRITING QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF
SECOND YEAR STUDENTS OF DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE**

BY

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Abstract

In the practice of peer feedback, it has been observed that writing teachers are not confident about the ability of their students in practising peer feedback on their peers' essays. It has also been complained that the peers themselves are reluctant to comment on each other's writing. Others, however, argue that students can successfully practice peer feedback if they get appropriate training and guidance in how to exercise peer feedback in writing classes. The objective of this study was therefore to investigate the effect of training students in giving and receiving peer feedback on the revision types and their writing quality.

The study focused on the case of ten second year students who were taking sophomore English language course. To gather information or data four essays of the students with two drafts each were mainly used. These were to evaluate the actual change in the revision types and writing quality. Questionnaires were also designed and administered to both the instructors and the students to identify the customs of feedback practice on the students' writing and to check the perception the students had before and after the training. The study took a month through the four essays together with two drafts each.

The result of the data presentation and analysis shows that sign of improvements were observed in the types of revision made on their classmate's essays and the qualities of these essays were also realised since the writers used most of the feedback given by their peers on the higher concerns of their writings. It can be concluded that this was the result of the training and the guidance given by the teacher.

So, if students get proper training and continuous guidance in the practice and use of peer feedback or revision, they may be reliable reviewers of each other's drafts of their essays. To avoid the wrong perception the students may have towards their classmates' comments on their writing they might be briefed of the benefits of peer feedback. The result of this study could also be more reliable if other related studies could be made. Therefore we could suggest further study which may substantiate the current finding.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Of the sources of feedback on students' drafts in second language writing, peer feedback or response has received less attention for different reasons. Writing teachers witness that though they try to make their students practice; they usually find them reluctant to give as well as to receive comments on their peer's draft. It has also been reported that writing teachers are usually sceptical about the practice of peer response. They do not seem to rely on the students' feedback. That is, they do not seem to recognise the benefit of peer feedback to the improvement of students' writing. It is sometimes heard that the teachers are not confident about their students' ability to comment on their peers' draft.

In our context, feedback on students' writing is dominantly provided by the writing teachers. The teacher seems to be the authority in writing classes. Teaching, editing, evaluating and marking of students writing are the routine activities of writing teachers in Ethiopian context, especially of higher teaching - learning. Little or no involvement of students in the feedback exchange activities has been experienced.

Together with this norm, problems are observed and complaints are heard from both teachers and students. It is usual to hear writing instructors complaining about the workload they experience. They usually have busy time throughout the semester correcting and grading their students writing assignments. This in fact happens when the instructors are serious about their teaching.

As a result, most language instructors tend to be reluctant when to be assigned to teach writing courses. If at all they find the assignment inevitable, they usually tend to reduce the load through different means.

Obviously the means affect the teaching - learning process of writing in one way or the other. The reason is that the teachers either minimise the writing assignments or avoid them totally. If they are to give writing activities and assignments and provide feedback, their comments either focus on the surface features of errors or they may be too general. These types of feedback do not have effect on improving the quality of writing of students.

Another problem is, since the comments are given together with the marks, they may help the writers much in improving particular writing and their writing skills in general. So, students may not consider the comments they receive important to improve the drafts for they are already graded.

A complaint is also heard from students' side that they get their writing assignments back after long delays, usually near the end of the semester. By then, the students may not have even the memory about what they wrote certain months ago. There are also times in which some of their papers may not be returned.

The contributing factors for these problems described so far seem to emanate from the total responsibilities left to the instructors to do with the teaching, especially of writing. In alleviating these problems, scholars and researchers suggest alternatives.

It has been argued that the students can be of great help to each other if they are given training as a guide and are provided with checklist by the writing teachers. By this it is presumed that students can better participate in exchanging feedback on each other's draft.

Therefore, the present study explored the value of peer response through training learners in how to exchange feedback on each other's draft. It evaluated whether training makes a difference on the types of revision the peers made on the drafts. It also checked out whether the perception of the students on peer response would be changed as a result of the training.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine whether training students brings significant changes on the practice of peer feedback. It was to examine the effect of training students in giving and receiving peer feedback on their revision types and writing quality. To this end, attempts were made to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current practices of feedback on students' writing drafts? Do students currently use peer feedback to improve their drafts?
2. What is students' present perception of their peers' feedback?
3. Does training students (in how to exchange feedback with peers) bring change on students revision and writing quality?

1.3. Importance of the Study

The study looked into what goes on in the teaching – learning of writing skill and process of writing in foreign language classrooms. So, it can be an input to those who are involved in this practice and those who have the interest to carry out related studies. To put it more specifically,

- a. as feedback is a classroom ~~level~~ practice, the beneficiaries could be teachers at large
- b. the finding may also help the language teachers and students to reconsider the old view that only teacher feedback is 'correct' and 'helpful', and entertain alternatives.
- c. by giving training to students in how to give feedback on their peers' draft, the burden on writing teachers could be reduced to some degree.

1.4. Scope of the study

The study focused on the analysis of sample essays of ten students. Since each student was made to write four essays, two essays before training and two after training with their own versions, there were eighty drafts for analysis.

1.5. Definition of Terms

Drafts- different versions of an essay which are made during the process of its writing.

Editing – the process of improving a writing with especial focus on grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

Feedback – comments or suggestions given on writing by a reader who is supposed to revise, a peer in the present situation.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

2.1. Approaches to Writing

Through out the history of language teaching different approaches to writing have been designed and used in teaching and learning writing. Of these approaches the product approach and process approach have been currently in use in different contexts though the latter seems to get wider attention now a days. As different approaches, both have different focuses.

2.1.1. Product Approach

This approach to writing focuses on the end result of composition writing as Nunan (1989) points out. From the teacher's point of view the main concern is to see that the end product is readable grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details etc not on how to make the writing piece have these qualities.

McDonough and Shaw (1993) write about the focus of the product approach. The emphasis on this approach is on accuracy and the focus of attention is on the finished product, not on the process. In other words, the process is not the concern of anyone except the writer; it is not given much explicit attention.

2.1.2. Process Approach

As a reaction to the product approach, a process approach came up with different experience. As Nunan (1989) explains, this recent approach to writing focuses as much on the means whereby the completed text was created as on the end product itself. According to Zamel (1982) as acknowledged by Nunan (1989), the act of composing in process approach to writing involves several stages as writers discover what it is that they are trying to say.

By emphasising the need for process writing scholars such as Blanchard and Root (1997) argue that it is difficult for most people to pick up a pen and produce a perfect piece of writing on the first try. So, they describe that the process to writing in the new approach involves the following steps: pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising and editing. It is through this process student writers can have well refined and organised writing piece at the end.

Charles (1990) on his part writes that current research on the process of writing emphasises its cyclical and recursive nature. There are steps or stages in which writers come up with polished draft as product. These stages are pre-writing, writing and rewriting. Of these stages the rewriting process is the result of revision. This is the process in



which learners receive feedback from different sources. As quoted by Charles (1990), Zamel (1982) describes that the emphasis on process to writing has influenced the teaching of writing in that revision has assumed a position of central importance.

2.2. Process writing and Revision

According to Charles (1990) revision is described as central to the process of writing. As to Blanchard and Root (1997), process writing includes different stages. Raimes and Norton (1998) also share this view that revision is essential part of the writing process for good finished written product. Student writers come up with refined and final version of their drafts through these stages.

Generally speaking, in the process approach to writing, the final product of writing is often the result of several careful revisions. Revision is, thus, part of the stages of process writing.

2.3. Feedback

Keh (1990:294) defines feedback as "... the comments, questions and suggestions a reader gives to a writer in order to produce reader-based prose." The feedback that is provided might take different forms. It can be written comment, oral or both written and oral

comments. Concerning the time in which feedback can be provided, it depends on its source and the awareness of both parties - the writer and the reviewer.

2.4. Sources of Feedback

All agree that the source of feedback is generally the reader. The readers can be the teachers, the writer himself, and group of classmates, peers or the whole class. Accordingly, Keh (1990) describes three main sources of feedback on students' drafts: peer feedback, conference as feedback and teachers' comments as feedback. Others add self-correction as feedback.

2.4.1. Peer Feedback

As it has been pointed out, the teacher is not and should not be the only source of feedback on students writing. As a result, of the methods of feedback giving practice on students writing, peer feedback or revision is getting attention these days as tool of learning in process approach to writing. This form of feedback is known with different names that entail a slight difference in intent: peer response, peer feedback, peer revision, peer editing, peer critiquing and peer evaluation.

According to Keh (1990:295) each naming implies a difference in the stage while feedback reaches the student writer in the process of his/her writing and aspect of students' writing the feedback addresses. For instance, peer response is supposed to come earlier on in the writing process i.e. after the first draft with comments on content. However, feedback in peer editing comes towards the final stage of writing aiming at grammar and mechanics (Keh 1990).

2.4.2. Benefits of Peer Feedback

Regarding the benefits of peer feedback to student writers, different scholars have similar sayings. Raimes (1983), Dheram (1995), Hermann (1989), Italo (1999) and Mangeldorf (1990) are some to mention. One advantage as Mittan (1989) explains as reviewed by Mangeldorf (1990) is that peer feedback can provide students with an automatic audience, increase students' motivation for writing, help students learn to read critically their own writing and enable them to receive different views on their writing.

Though it seems inappropriate to consider peer feedback as a substitution for teacher feedback, it is vitally important to introduce it in the writing process. Levereny (1994) strengthens this view that it is helpful because students share similar perspectives and problems.

They also certainly feel less threatened by feedback from peers. They may feel less obliged to accept comments from their peers. Thus, to encourage a more co-operative approach to writing, it is necessary to encourage peer correction as well as group and pair writing activities (Levereny, 1994).

From the teachers' point of view, peer feedback is said to ease the writing teachers' load. Trimber (1985) states as acclaimed by Dheram (1995:160) that peer feedback "... reduces the teachers paper load, the endless hours of grading students' essay."

As important remark on the benefit of peer feedback on students writing O'Muircheartaigh (2002) writes that it helps develop learner autonomy and it is possible that the teacher is not always the only audience for the written work. Peer reviewers can also be very effective source of feedback. Therefore, there need to be efforts which facilitate effective use of source of feedback on students draft for we cannot say peer feedback is without any flaw.

With all its benefits in developing writing skills, peer feedback has also been known with its own drawbacks. As Italo (1999) points out in his research, students in his study tended to be reluctant to respond to their peers paper thinking that the quality of their feedback would be

low, though attitudinal changes towards their peers comments were observed after time.

The present researcher believes that this might happen due to lack of awareness and practice of the method of feedback. Hermann (1989) indicates problems of peer feedback on its implementation that not all students learn to collaborate successfully. He reports that while some of the students in his study appeared to benefit from the comments of their peers, not all in classrooms did. Some students were unable, unwilling, or even ill advised to follow peer reactions in improving what they had written.

Another related problem reported by Mangelsdorf (1992) is that the peers are not willing to use their peers' feedback because the students did not think that they or their peers could be good critics. If it is believed that feedback in general and peer feedback in particular is central to process approach to writing, efforts have to be made on its effective and proper application in writing classrooms.

2.5. Types of Feedback

In the feedback practice process, the reviser or the reviewer mainly focuses on two major features which themselves have different effect on the quality of the draft. These features are classified as global

feature and surface feature. They have different effect on writing quality. Though the naming might be different all scholars describe two major levels of feedback or revision.

2.5.1. Global Feature

In the process approach to writing improving writing draft is not a one step process. As Charles (1990) writes, this process emphasises its cyclical and recursive nature. Thus, the improvement made on the writing takes two main stages. The focus of the first stage is on global revisions. These revisions address focus or unity, organization and content. They are the larger element of writing, (Hacker, 1992).

These features are again what Keh (1990) identifies as Higher Order Concerns (HOCs). The global revisions usually affect chunks of text longer than a sentence as Hacker (1992) further describes. Therefore, during peer feedback or response practice, students are advised first to focus on these types of revision.

2.5.2.Surface Feature

The surface feature of writing receives later attention as editing and proofreading process. The feature includes capitalisation, grammar usage, punctuation and spelling. These do not affect the overall meaning of the writing. They rather help to have grammatically polished final draft of the writing piece.

2.6. Training Students

Possible solutions have been suggested for the revealing problems with the implementation of peer feedback which have been pointed out so far. Training and guiding students in how to exchange feedback with their peers is said to be the remedy. Of the scholars who forwarded this suggestion, Murray (1989), recommends as quoted by Hermann (1989) that teachers should train their students to respond constructively to each other's writing in process. As possible way of facilitating peer response, Deheram (1995) suggests incorporating awareness raising activities into classroom pedagogy may be considered as a form of learner training.

Similarly, Raimes (1983) states that students should be alert about what to look for and how to look for it. With guidance, with clear, specific instructions on what to look for and what to do the students can be useful as readers of their peers' draft. Liu and Hansen (2002) argue that most unsuccessful attempts of peer feedback are due to lack of proper training of 'peers.' Therefore, they advocate for thoughtful, well-planned preparation of students for collaborative work.

Other scholars who share the above argument, Chaudron (1988), Ransdell (2001), Eades (2002) and Holmes (2001) are some. Ransdell

(2001:32), for example, writes that learning to critique drafts effectively requires training and reinforcement.

2.7. Revising Vs Editing and Proofreading

Blanchard and Root (1997) say that revising and editing are practised in the process of rewriting or reshaping drafts. According to Gebahardt and Rodrigues (1989), however, both are different in stages and intent. As to these scholars the focus on revising drafts is on adding new ideas, eliminating irrelevant sentences and rearranging ideas to improve the organisation. In short it looks on content and organisation of the draft.

Concerning the stage of practising revision, it is the prior focus on the rewriting process. That is since the purpose of revision is to improve the organization and content of the writing, reviewers are encouraged to focus on first these features of writing – which are said to be global features or Higher order Concerns.

In the revising process, the larger elements of writing should receive the attention of reviser first - the focus or relevance of the contents in the writing, organization, paragraphing, and overall writing piece. As it has been described, these types of revisions are known as global revisions or features, (Hacker 1992). In the peer feedback process the

peers are expected to exchange comments on the global issues of revision.

On the other hand, editing and proofreading come in the later and final stage of the writing process. The intent is different from that of revision. They occur after a writer is satisfied with the global features of writing - organization and overall content of a writing piece. During editing and proofreading the reviewer focuses on capitalization, grammar usage, punctuation and spelling. These features of writing do not usually affect the overall meaning of the writing. Keh (1990) describes them as lower order concerns (LOCs).

Murray (1989) also names these categories as internal revision and external revision. The former is the kind of changes that affect meaning whereas the latter affects the surface of the text - such as mechanical errors.

2.8. Revision Types and Writing Quality

In the feedback practice, the writing quality of students totally depends on the type of revision made on the drafts. As it has already been described above, the revisions made on the drafts are categorised into global feature and surface feature revisions. As it has been reiterated these two major features have different effect on the quality of writing drafts.



It has been explained that the global feature of revision focuses on content and organisation. Content revision checks all ideas described that focus on the subject of the writing.

Concerning the revision made on organization, reviewers check how well the different parts of the paper connect and flow together, the use and appropriateness of organizational signals in which readers follow the flow of ideas and the relationship among the sentences and paragraphs. The organisational signals in writing are that we call transitional devices. These devices differ based on the type of essays writing methods we use. For instance the transitional signals we use in writing cause - effect essay and contrasting and comparison are different.

Chapter Three: Research Design

3.1. Methods and procedures

In dealing with collecting and analysing data different methods and procedures were used and followed. As sources of information the randomly selected ten subjects of the case study and eight English language instructors were considered. However, the students' essays were the main source of the data used in the study. In addition, questionnaires were designed and administered to both the students and the instructors to substantiate the reliability of the study.

3.1.1. Sampling the Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study were second year degree students of Defence University College. The focus of the examination was on the case of ten second year students taking sophomore English writing course.

They were randomly selected from second year students of two faculties. The class size at second year level is usually ten to fifteen so that for convenience a class of ten students was formed for this study.

3.1.2. Essays Written by the subjects

During the study the subjects wrote four essays; the first two before and the other two after the training. They were made to write these four essays in class to avoid the doubt whether they write the essays by themselves or not. They were given two hours for each of the essays to write and to exchange feedback on each other's drafts of their essays, one hour for writing and the other hour for feedback practice.

3.1.2.1. Coding the papers

In writing their essays the students were provided with coded blank sheet of paper on which they could write their drafts. This was to minimise a bias the learners might have towards each others draft when they exchanged comments. When they exchanged feedback they anonymously reviewed each other's draft.

After the students finished writing their drafts on the coded paper, the teacher collected the drafts and distributed them to the students. One's paper was given to the other so as to exchange comments on.

3.1.2. 2. Topics of the essays

The topics on which the students wrote the essays were presumed to be the topics on which they had enough knowledge about because all the topics were in one way or the other related to their experiences.

They were given four topics, "The advantage and disadvantage of being taught by Indian instructors" and "Unforgettable event in my military training " Learning in Defence University College and other government universities and colleges", " Why I prefer to join Defence University College."

As sequenced above, the first two essays were written in the first two weeks of the training that might be considered as the first phase. That is the students wrote two essays on the first two topics; "The advantage and disadvantage of being taught by Indian instructors" and "Unforgettable event in my military training"

In the second phase, the subjects of the case study wrote two other essays on the latter topics; "Learning in Defence University College and other government universities and colleges," and " Why I prefer to join Defence University College." The topics were also related to the lessons they were taught in the one-month training.

3.1.2.3. Number of Drafts

Drafts are different versions of an essay which are produced in the process of its writing. It has already been noted that writing is a recursive process which passes through different stages. Accordingly, each of the four essays had two drafts; the preliminary draft and the final well polished draft. The students exchanged feedback on the first

drafts of the essays. So, eight drafts of each student's writing were collected and used for analysis.

3.1.3. Training Students

After the first two essays, the students were trained in how to participate in peer feedback practice. The training included introducing revision codes, different levels and types of feedback, and awareness raising on the advantages of peer feedback. For this purpose some selected essays from the first drafts were used as training instruments with the assumption that the students could easily learn from their errors.

3.1.3.1. Feedback checklist

In addition to the training, the students were provided with feedback checklist, which the peers should focus on while revising their partner's preliminary drafts. These checklists were also the evaluation grids by which the teacher grades the final drafts of students' essays. Since the checklists were topic specific the students were given different checklist for each essay.

Moreover, the students were introduced to correction codes with which they could comment on the middle order concern and lower order concerns of the writing. The students were made to comment on the mid order and lower order concerns after they had finished the revision

activities. This time the comments were written the drafts of the essays as marginal comments. It has been made clear that revision and editing have different purposes. These checklists and correction codes were projected to the students by using overhead projector so that they could evaluate their peers writing using the checklist as guide. See appendices – 2A and 2B for the checklists and correction codes

During the feedback sessions which were conducted after the training, the students were expected to apply what they were trained to revise and edit their peers' essay by using the checklist and correction codes. In all cases, the feedback activity was practised in class.

3.1.3.2. Feedback Sheet

In the second phase of feedback sessions in which they practised after the training, the students were provided with feedback sheet on which they can write comments on the global features of each other's draft. The feedback sheet had instructions on how they had to give and what they had to focus on when they gave comments on their peer's drafts.

3.1.3.3. Forms of Feedback

The peers' peer feedback had two forms; written and oral and providing extensive written commentary using a "feedback guide"

prepared by the instructor, commentary which was then discussed in a subsequent peer meeting. The oral discussion was to make the written comments clear to the writer of the essay. The reviewer could also ask the writer for ideas he could not understand.

3.1.4. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were designed and administered to the writing instructors and the students. These questionnaires were administered with different purposes.

3.1.4.1. A Questionnaire for Instructors

A questionnaire was administered to eight English language instructors who have been teaching writing courses at Defence University College. The purpose of this questionnaire was to find out the current practice of feedback on students writing. It mainly focused on whether peer feedback was used in the writing courses and lessons and whether students were trained and given guidelines on how to practice peer feedback if at all they used peer feedback. See the appendix - **1C** for the questionnaire for instructors.

3.1.4.2 Questionnaires for the Students

Two similar questionnaires were administered to the subjects of the study, one before the training and another after it. Both questionnaires were administered at the end of each phase of feedback sessions.

The purpose of these questionnaires was to discover students' perception towards peer feedback before and after training. That was to find out whether there would be change of views towards their peers' feedback as a result of the training. In other words, it was to check whether the training brought about change of attitude towards the feedback they received from their peers. See Appendices - 1A and 1B. It was also possible to learn the change of the students' perception from the revised essays which were before and after the training.

Chapter Four: Results and Analysis

The data which were collected from different sources through different instruments were analysed and described as indicated in the preceding discussions.

4.1. Current practice of feedback on students writing

A questionnaire was administered to identify the current practice of feedback given on the students writing. That was to find out the method of feedback that the writing teachers used to comment on the students writing drafts. It was also to check whether they trained their students and gave them guidelines, if at all they used peer feedback in the university where this case study was conducted. The questionnaire was administered to eight English instructors who have taught writing courses for a long time.

Accordingly, of the eight instructors six responded to item number 3 of the questionnaire (See Appendix 1C) that they never encouraged their students to exchange feedback with their peers on each other's writing drafts.

On the other hand two of the instructors said that they sometimes encouraged their students to exchange on each other's writings when it was simple classroom writing practice, which would not be graded. Similarly, the majority of the instructors witnessed that they always gave

comments on their students' writings. Of the eight instructors only two said that they sometimes used peer feedback in writing classes though they themselves often gave corrections on their students' writings. However, all reacted that they did not give any training and guideline.

4.2. Types of feedback students exchanged before and after the training

To investigate the differences in types and amount of feedback the subjects of the study exchanged before and after they were trained in the practice of feedback, the drafts of the four essays each student wrote were compared and contrasted. Before the students had received any training, each student wrote two essays on two different topics. As a second step, they exchanged comments on each other's drafts of the essays.

On the other hand, the students wrote the other two essays and they were made to exchange feedback on the drafts of these papers but under a different situation. At this time the students were made aware of the uses of getting feedback from their peers and they were trained in how and what they should respond to and on their peers' essays.

They were also introduced to the types of feedback and their degree of importance, in writing and the priority they had to give to the different types of feedback. Moreover, they were provided feedback checklists

which might have helped them to restrict their comments and give structured feedback by using these checklists.

4.2.1. Types of feedback the students exchanged before the training

It has been found out from the two essays of the students that the comments given on most of the papers focused on general comments which were given as end comment and mechanics. The general comments were short statements which were given as end comments which either were appreciation or criticism. Most of these comments stated that the essays were clear, very good, interesting etc. Some of these comments suggested that the handwriting was not clear and the idea of the whole essay was not clear.

The feedback given on mechanics was spelling errors and capitalisation. In giving the comments on these errors, they showed to their peers by underlining the misspelled words. In addition to the spelling errors and capitalisation, comments were given on language use – tense and reference words and vocabulary - word formation on some of the essays.

However, some comments were given on organisation and content of the essays especially, on two papers – on B_t E₁ P₇ and B_tE₁ P₈ of the first essay, and B_tE₂P₁ and B_tE₂ P₅ of the second essay. See Table 1 and Table 2 for detail.

Table 1 - Number and types of comments given on the first Essay written before the training

Types of comments							
Paper Number	<i>Essay code</i>	<i>Org.</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Vocab.</i>	<i>Other Mechanics</i>	<i>General end comments</i>
	B _t E ₁ P ₁	--	--	--	--	4	1
	B _t E ₁ P ₂	--	--	1			1
	B _t E ₁ P ₃	--	--	--	--	--	1
	B _t E ₁ P ₄	--	--	--	--	7	1
	B _t E ₁ P ₅	--	--	--	--	--	1
	B _t E ₁ P ₆	--	--	--	--	--	1
	B E ₁ P ₇	2		3	1	5	
	B _t E ₁ P ₈	--	1	3	--	3	--
	B _t E ₁ P ₉	--	--	--	--	--	1
	B _t E ₁ P ₁₀	--	--	--	--	1	1

N.B.

B_t = Before Training

E₁ = Essay 1

E₂ =Essay 2

P = Paper 1, 2, 3, ...

Similarly, the types and number of feedback given by the peers on second essay was found to be similar with the feedback given on the ten papers of the first essay. The comments on both essays focused on the surface feature of writing and general comments except on the two papers of the essays - B_tE₂P₁ and B_tE₂ P₅. See table 2 below.

Table –2 type and number of comments given on the second essay

Types of comments						
Essay Code	<i>Org.</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Vocab.</i>	<i>Other Mechanics</i>	<i>General end comments</i>
B _t E ₂ P ₁	3	2	5	--	3	--
B _t E ₂ P ₂	--	--	2	--	--	1
B _t E ₂ P ₃	--	--	--	--	4	1
B _t E ₁ P ₄	--	--	--	--	--	1
B _t E ₂ P ₅	1	--	4	2	6	--
B _t E ₂ P ₆	--	--	--	--	4	--
B _t E ₂ P ₇	--	--	--	--	--	1
B _t E ₂ P ₈	--	--	--	--	--	1
B _t E ₂ P ₉	--	--	--	--	--	1
B _t E ₂ P ₁₀	--	--	2	--	1	--

4.2.1.1. Types and number of feedback used by the writer

To evaluate how the feedback the students exchanged on each other's essays was important, the type and number of the comments that the students used to improve their drafts were examined from the second or final versions of the students' essays.

The following Table 3 describes the extent to which the student writers used the comments they received from their peers. These were the numbers and types of feedback they accepted as constructive comment and used to improve the quality of their drafts.

Table – 3 number and types of feedback given and use on the first two essays written before the training

Essay Code		Org	Content	Grammar	Vocab.	Other Mechanics	General end Comments
B _t E ₁ P ₁ / B _t E ₂ P ₁	Comments given	-/3	-/2	-/3	-/-	4/3	1/-
	Comments used	-/3	-/1	-/3	-/-	4/3	0/-
B _t E ₁ P ₂ / B _t E ₂ P ₂	Comments given	-/-	-/-	1/2	-/-	-/-	1/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	1/1	-/-	-/-	0/0
B _t E ₁ P ₃ / B _t E ₂ P ₃	Comments given	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/4	1/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/2	0/0
B _t E ₁ P ₄ / B _t E ₁ P ₄	Comments given	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	7/-	1/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	4/-	-/-
B _t E ₁ P ₅ / B _t E ₂ P ₅	Comments given	-/1	-/-	-/4	-/2	-/6	1/-
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/0	-/6	0/-
B _t E ₁ P ₆ / B _t E ₂ P ₆	Comments given	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/4	1/-
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/0	0 /-
B _t E ₁ P ₇ / B _t E ₂ P ₇	Comments given	2/-	-/-	3/-	1/-	5/-	-/1
	Comments used	2/-	-/-	3/-	1/-	4/-	-/ 0
B _t E ₁ P ₈ / B _t E ₂ P ₈	Comments given	-/-	1/-	3/-	-/-	3/-	-/1
	Comments used	-/-	1/-	3/-	-/-	3/-	-/0
B _t E ₁ P ₉ / B _t E ₂ P ₉	Comments given	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	1/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	0/ 0
B _t E ₁ P ₁₀ / B _t E ₂ P ₁₀	Comments given	-/-	-/-	-/2	-/-	1/1	-/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	-/ 0	-/-	1/1	-/ 0

N. B.

E1 -Essay One

E2 -Essay two

As it has already been pointed out and as can be learnt from the tables 1, 2 and 3, the types of comments given on most of the first two essays which were written before the training were on the Mid Order Concerns and Lower Order Concerns. In other words, the feedback was grammar usage, vocabulary and other mechanics. It was only on two essays from each writing activity on which Higher Order Concerns- organization and content, feedbacks were given.

Of course, most of the comments given by their peers were used to improve their drafts. These comments were on grammar usage, vocabulary and mechanics. The comments on language use included subject verb agreement, tense and references whereas the comments on vocabulary focused on word choice and word formation. The mechanics were mainly spelling error.

However, these types of feedback do not bring major change on the meaning and quality of writing unless prior focus is given to its organization and content. It has been discussed that the quality of a writing depends on the types of revision made by the reviewers and the improvements made by the writers using the comments they receive from their peers.

Though general comments were also given in almost on all the drafts, none of them were used in improving the drafts. The students in the question item number 6 and 7 of the first questionnaire that they used none of the general comments at the end of the essays for they were vague that they did not show specific problems of the writing.

However, since the majority of the comments were meaning preserving elements of the writings, there seemed not to bring about changes on the quality of essays. Generally speaking the feedback focused on the surface features of writing and general end comments. For detailed understanding see Table 3 above.

4.2.2. Types of feedback given by the peers on each others draft after they received the training

What makes this stage of essay writing and feedback practice different from the first stage as it has been described was that the students received training in peer feedback. In other words, the students were oriented about the benefits of peer feedback and they were trained how they should exchange feedback on each other's papers, and were provided with feedback checklist.

In the former stage or phase, the feedback that the students gave on the two essays of their peer's generally focused on general comments and

simple mechanics of the language such as subject verb agreement tense, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. In the latter stage, however, there seems to be differences in type and number of feedback that were given before and after the training was conducted.

At this stage it can be seen that the number of comments given included greatly the Higher Order Concerns - mainly organization and content, of the essays. The peers seemed to give greater to global features of the writing that had most profound effect on meaning. The comments provided on the first essays of the second stage or phase are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 - Number and types of comments given on the first Essay written after the training was conducted

Types of comments						
Essay code	Org	Content	Grammar	Vocab	Other mechanics	General end comments
A _t E ₁ P ₁	2	2	4	3	7	-
A _t E ₁ P ₂	1	1	1	2	3	-
A _t E ₁ P ₃	3	1	3	2	5	-
A _t E ₁ P ₄	1	-	2	1	3	-
A _t E ₁ P ₅	3	2	2	-	8	-
A _t E ₁ P ₆	-	-	1	1	2	1
A _t E ₁ P ₇	4	1	4	4	5	-
A _t E ₁ P ₈	5	2	5	3	7	-
A _t E ₁ P ₉	3	-	2	4	8	-
A _t E ₁ P ₁₀	-	-	1	1	3	1

N.B.

A_t = After training

E₁ = Essay 1

E₂ = Essay 2

P = paper 1, 2, 3, ...

Table 5 - Number and types of comments given on the second essay after the training was conducted

Types of comments						
Essay code	Org.	Content	Grammar	Vocab.	Other mechanics	General end comments
A _t E ₂ P ₁	1	-	1	1	3	-
A _t E ₂ P ₂	-	-	3	6	7	-
A _t E ₂ P ₃	1	1	2	2	3	
A _t E ₂ P ₄	-	-	1	-	2	1
A _t E ₂ P ₅	3	-	2	4	5	-
A _t E ₂ P ₆	-	-	-	1	3	1
A _t E ₂ P ₇	-	1	1	1	6	-
A _t E ₂ P ₈			-	1	2	-
A _t E ₂ P ₉		-	-	-	3	-
A _t E ₂ P ₁₀	1			1	6	

As can be seen from the above two tables - Table 4 and 5, the concerns of the feedback given on the drafts of the two essays has shown improvement. There seemed to be a shift of focus in giving comments on the drafts of the students' essays. Due attention seemed to be given to the organisation and content of the essays. This can be learnt from the increase in the number of comments given on these global features of

writing. It is also known that these features have major effect on the quality of writing. Their effect was observed in the students' improved version of their essays.

4.2.2.1. Types and number of feedback used by the writers

Concerning the comments given on the essays of the students as summarised in the above tables - 1,2,4 and 5, the peers seemed to appreciate most of these comments and used them to improve their drafts. The writers used the comments given on the use of transitional words, grammar usage, and contents of the essays to improve their drafts. These were reflected on the second and final drafts of each essay.

It was found that the writers used most of the comments they reviewed on the Higher Order Concerns and Mid Order Concerns of their essays. The number and types of comments given by the peers and the feedback used by the authors of the essays are computed in Table 6 below.

Table – 6 Number of Comments used by the writers to improve their draft

Essay Code		Org	Content	Grammar	Vocab.	Other Mechanics	General end Comments
A _t E ₁ P ₁ / A _t E ₂ P ₁	Comments given	2/1	2/-	4/1	3/1	7/3	-/-
	Comments used		2/-	4/1	3/1	7/3	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₂ / A _t E ₂ P ₂	Comments given	1/-	1/-	1/3	2/6	3/7	-/-
	Comments used	1/-	0/-	1/3	2/5	3/7	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₃ / A _t E ₂ P ₃	Comments given	3/1	1/1	3/2	2/2	5/3	-/-
	Comments used	3/1	1/1	3/2	2/2	5/3	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₄ / A _t E ₂ P ₄	Comments given	1/-	-/-	2/1	1/-	3/2	-/1
	Comments used	0/-	-/-	2/1	0/-	2/2	-/0
A _t E ₁ P ₅ / A _t E ₂ P ₅	Comments given	3/3	2/-	2/2	-/4	8/5	-/-
	Comments used	3/3	1/-	2/2	-/3	8/5	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₆ / A _t E ₂ P ₆	Comments given	-/-	-/-	1/-	1/1	2/3	1/1
	Comments used	-/-	-/-	1/-	1/1	1/3	
A _t E ₁ P ₇ / A _t E ₂ P ₇	Comments given	4/-	1/1	4/1	4/1	5/6	-/-
	Comments used	3/-	1/1	3/1	2/1	5/6	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₈ / A _t E ₂ P ₈	Comments given	5/-	2/-	5/-	3/1	7/2	-/-
	Comments used	3/-	1/-	4/-	1/1	6/2	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₉ / A _t E ₂ P ₉	Comments given	3/-	-/-	2/-	4/-	8/3	-/-
	Comments used	2/-	-/-	2/-	3/-	8/3	-/-
A _t E ₁ P ₁₀ / A _t E ₂ P ₁₀	Comments given	-/1	-/-	1/-	1/1	3/6	1/-
	Comments used	-/0	-/-	1/-	0/1	1/4	0/-

4.3. Change of quality in the students' writing

The quality of students' writing depends on the amount and types of feedback they receive from their peers and the types of improvement the writers make on their drafts using the comments. So, it's possible to evaluate the change of writing qualities of the students by examining the types of feedback the peers exchanged during the peer feedback practices on the four essays written before and after the training and the improvements made on the drafts of the essays by using the comments given by the peers.

Accordingly, it can be learnt from the above Tables (3 and 6) that the types of feedback given on the essays written before and after the training were found to be different in degree of importance in improving the quality of the writing.

For the comments given on the two second essays of the students were improved from Lower Order Concerns to Higher Order Concerns and the writers used most of these comments, and improvements were seen in the qualities of their final version of their essays.

It has been said that the quality of an essay in the process approach to writing can be measured by the number and types of revision made, and the improvements made on the last draft using the comments given by the peers. The examination of the types and number of comments

provided on the four essays were summarised in Table 3 and Table 6 above.

The responses of the students to item number 5 of the first questionnaire and item 6 of the second questionnaire show that they received valuable feedback on the second two essays. Of the ten respondents two said that they received comments on the organisation and content of their first two essays whereas eight responded that most of the comments they were provided on the second two essays were on organisation, content and grammar usage though there were also comments given on mechanics.

4.4. Change of perception towards peer feedback

It has been noted that two different questionnaires were administered to the students to find out the perception or position they had towards their peers' feedback before and after the training were conducted and feedback checklists were introduced.

Accordingly, in the third and fourth items of the first questionnaire, eight students responded that they were not interested in the comments they received from their peers. They reasoned out, some saying that the comments were not clear while others said that the comments were too general that they did not show particular problems which had to be improved.

On the other hand, the responses of the students on the second questionnaire were found to be the opposite. Nine of the ten respondents witnessed in item 1 that they liked very much the comments they received from their peers. They said that they were able to see the problems they overlooked when they wrote their essays.

Some other students even said that the training and the guidance they were provided helped them to see the benefits of peer feedback.

Therefore, there seemed to be change of the students' attitude towards the practice of peer feedback. This can also be realised in the performance of the students in the second two essays.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The main objective of the case study was to evaluate the effect of giving training to students in exchanging peer feedback on each other's essays. Specifically speaking it was to check whether there would be change of feedback type and writing quality as a result of the training. In doing so the subjects of the case study were taught a one-month essay writing lessons and they were made to give feedback on each other's writing drafts of the four essays they wrote at two different phases.

During the first phase the subjects were given topics and were made to write two essays in the two weeks time. After they had finished writing, they commented on each other's essays. This time they were not given any orientation and training. The result of the study shows that the feedback the peers gave on each other's essays did not help the writers to improve the quality of their essays. This was because the given comments were on the surface features of the writing and were general comments. See Table 1 and 2.

On the other hand, the types of the revisions made on the drafts written during the second phase were found to be improved both in number and type. It seems that due attention was given to the global features or Higher Order Concerns of the writings. These types of comments were not revealed in the essays written in the first phase except in some papers, one or two. Furthermore, the number of revisions made on the surface features was increased. These have been summarised in Table 4 and 5.

The improvement in the type of feedback or revision and the increase in the number of comments resulted in the improvement in the quality of the students writing for most of the comments given by the peers were used by the writers and improved their writing drafts. This can be learnt from Table 6.

This was also what was witnessed by the students on their response to items 4, 5 and 6 of the second questionnaire. Eight said that the types of feedback given on their drafts were improved as a result of the training and the guidelines of the instructor. These same subjects witnessed that the feedback they received included organization, content and grammar usage and they were able to improve their essays using the comments they received from their peers.

All in all improvements were realized in all aspects of peer feedback practice in the second phase compared to what happened in the first

phase. Therefore it can be concluded that the training given in the peer feedback practice the awareness raising made about the use of peer feedback and the checklist provided to the students played a great role in changing the types of revision made on the students' essays by changing the perception of the students they had towards peer feedback.

So, if students are given the authority to comment on their peers' writings, they should be guided in what they should focus on and how they should provide the different types of feedback or revision.

5.2. Recommendations

It can be learnt from the case of the ten second year students of Defence University College that college students can be a great help to each other in writing classes with providing constructive comments on each other's writings if they get appropriate guidance and are provided with a certain revision checklist. Therefore,

5.2.1. Peer feedback can be effectively used in the writing classes of our context if the instructors take the responsibility of training and giving guidance in how to use this method of feedback.

5.2.2. since the beneficiaries of practicing these methods of feedback are both the students and the teachers, the instructors need to reconsider the current practice of feedback on students writing. They should consider that writing is a recursive process in which it passes through different

stages. In this process the students can help each other if they are made alert about what to look for and how to look for.

5.2.3. Moreover, there the students need to be provided with revision checklist so as to help them exchange structured feedback on each other's writing drafts.

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Appendix 1- A
Questionnaire for Students
Number 1

Read the following questions carefully and give correct information accordingly. You don't need to write your name. Circle on the correct choices of the questions with multiple choices.

1. When you write have you ever produced first draft before you write the final draft?
a. Yes, always b. yes sometimes c. Never

2. Have you ever improved your first draft before you submit to your teacher?
a. Yes b. No

3. Now you have exchanged feedback on each other's draft, did you like it? a. yes, very much b. yes, some how c. not at all

4. If no, what do you think the reason?

5. What did the most of the feedback given by your peer focus on? a. organization b. content c. grammar
d. vocabulary e. mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization) f. general comment g. all

6. Did you improve your first draft after you received feedback from your partner? a. Yes b. no

7. If no what was the reason?

8. How did your peer's comment help you to improve your draft?

a. Very much b. very little c. not at all

9. So, do you believe that peer feedback should be encouraged and practiced in writing classes?

a. Yes, always b. yes, sometimes c. no, not at all

10. If yes, why is that?

- from your partner? a. yes b. no
8. Did you use the comments you received from your peer?
a. yes, all c. yes most of them b. yes, some c. no
9. How did your peer's comment help you to improve your draft?
a. very much b. very little c. it did not help
10. So, do you believe that peer feedback should be encouraged and practiced in writing classes?
a. yes, always b. yes, sometimes c. no, not at all

Appendix 1C

Questionnaire for Teachers

Read the following questions and respond to them. Your sincere responses are helpful to the person who is using the information you provide.

1. Have you ever taught writing course?
 - a. Yes
 - b. no
2. Do the students write first draft before they write the last draft which they should submit as final?
 - a. always
 - b. often
 - c. sometimes
 - d. never
3. Have you ever encouraged your students to exchange feedback on each other's drafts as peers?
 - a. always
 - b. often
 - c. sometimes
 - d. never
4. How often do your students use the following as sources of feedback to improve their drafts?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Teacher				
Peers				
Whole class (conferencing)				
Writers Themselves				

5. If your students ever use peer feedback, do you feel it has been helpful to improve the quality of their writing?

- a. yes b. no

6. What do the feedback the peers give focus on?

- a. organization b. content c. grammar

- d. vocabulary e. mechanics f. all

7. How often do you give guidelines to students on how to exchange feedback before they practice it?

- a. always b. often c. sometimes d. never

Appendix- 2A

Feedback and orientation Checklist

Essay 1

The goals of the peer review are a) to help improve your classmate's paper by pointing out strengths and weaknesses that may not be apparent to the writer or author, and b) to help improve revising and editing skills.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the paper assigned to you twice, once to get an overview of the paper, and a second time to provide constructive comments for the writer to use when revising his/her paper. When you read your peer's paper try to answer the questions below on the separate sheet of paper. Whenever you find any technical problems (spelling, punctuation, chopped sentences, word choice, usage; subject – verb agreement, tense, word order, pronouns etc) mark them directly on the essay using correction codes that you are provided.

General guideline for feedback

- Be specific both in your praise and your criticism.
- Be positive.
- Focus on how the student can change the paper to improve it.

(Beach, 1979)

Revision(what is revision?)

Organization

(Arrangement of ideas, coherence, inclusion of introduction and conclusion)

- What are the strengths of the essay?
- Does the paper have an introduction? Does the introduction state what the rest of the paper is about?
- Does each paragraph have topic sentences?
- Does each paragraph address one idea, and relate back to the major or main idea?
- Does each of the paragraphs follow clearly from one another (paragraph transition)? Is there logical sequencing of ideas? Is each paragraph appropriately placed?
- Does the writer include enough transitions to guide you from one idea to the next? (such as markers of comparison and contrast)
- Does each sentence fit within each paragraph (paragraph topics)?
- Is there an overall logical flow to the introduction?
- Is there effective conclusion?

How well is the writing organised?

How effective and specific is the language? How does the paper flow?

Content

What is the quality of the content of the writing?

- Do the ideas work together to make the message clear?
- Are all the ideas relevant to the topic?
- Are there adequate details which develop the topic?

❖ Editing and proofreading (what is revision?)

When edit and proofread your partner's use the following questions as guidelines and give feedback. Use also the correction codes to show the errors.

Grammar

- Do the subject and verb agree?
- Is there tense problem?
- Is there a problem of reference words?
- Are the words in the sentences ordered properly
- Are the forms of the verbs correct?

Vocabulary

- Are there any mistakes or inappropriate choices in words?
- Are the words used all appropriate?
- Are the forms of the verbs correct?

Other mechanics

- Is there spelling problem?
- Is there problem of punctuation?
- Is there appropriate capitalisation of words?

Blanchard and Root(1997)

Correction Codes

WF= Wrong Form	WW= Wrong Word	Sp = Spelling	T = Tense
WO = Word Order	^ = Word Missing	P= Punctuation	V = Wrong verb form
< > = Join words or ideas	?? = I'm not clear with what you want to say	[] = Delete	¶ = New paragraph needed

Appendix- 2B

Feedback and orientation Checklist

The goals of the peer review are a) to help improve your classmate's paper by pointing out strengths and weaknesses that may not be apparent to the writer or author, and b) to help improve revising and editing skills.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the paper assigned to you twice, once to get an overview of the paper, and a second time to provide constructive comments for the writer to use when revising his/her paper. When you read your peer's paper try to answer the questions below on the separate sheet of paper. Whenever you find any technical problems (spelling, punctuation, chopped sentences, word choice, usage; subject - verb agreement, tense, word order, pronouns etc) mark them directly on the essay using correction codes that you are provided.

General guideline for feedback

- Be specific both in your praise and your criticism.
- Be positive.
- Focus on how the student can change the paper to improve it.

(Beach, 1979)

Revision(what is revision?)

Organization

(Arrangement of ideas, coherence, inclusion of introduction and conclusion)

- What are the strengths of the essay?
- Does the paper have an introduction? Does the introduction state what the rest of the paper is about?
- Does each paragraph have topic sentences?

- Does each paragraph address one idea, and relate back to the major or main idea?
- Does each of the paragraphs follow clearly from one another (paragraph transition)? Is there logical sequencing of ideas? Is each paragraph appropriately placed?
- Does the writer include enough transitions to guide you from one idea to the next? (such as, markers of reason, cause and effect and sequencing)
- Does each sentence fit within each paragraph (paragraph topics)?
- Is there an overall logical flow to the introduction?
- Is there effective conclusion?

How well is the writing organised?

How effective and specific is the language? How does the paper flow?

Content

What is the quality of the content of the writing?

- Do the ideas work together to make the message clear?
- Are all the ideas relevant to the topic?
- Are there adequate details which develop the topic?

❖ Editing and proofreading (what is revision?)

When edit and proofread your partner's use the following questions as guidelines and give feedback. Use also the correction codes to show the errors.

Grammar

- Do the subject and verb agree?
- Is there tense problem?
- Is there a problem of reference words?
- Are the words in the sentences ordered properly
- Are the forms of the verbs correct?

Vocabulary

- Are there any mistakes or inappropriate choices in words?
- Are the words used all appropriate?
- Are the forms of the verbs correct?

Other mechanics

- Is there spelling problem?
- Is there problem of punctuation?
- Is there appropriate capitalisation of words?

Blanchard and Root(1997)

Correction Codes

WF= Wrong Form	WW= Wrong Word	Sp = Spelling	T = Tense
WO = Word Order	^ = Word Missing	P= Punctuation	V = Wrong verb form
< > = Join words or ideas	?? = I'm not clear with what you want to say	[] = Delete	¶ = New paragraph needed



Appendix –3A
Feedback sheet for Essay 1

Name of the Reviewer_____

Topic_____

Code Number of the Essay_____

Instructions: Read the paper assigned to you twice, once to get an overview of the paper, and a second time to provide constructive comments for the writer to use when revising his/her paper. Whenever you find any technical problems (spelling, punctuation, chopped sentences, word choice, usage; subject – verb agreement, tense, word order, pronouns etc) mark them directly on the essay using correction codes that you are provided.

Appendix – 3B

Feedback sheet for Essay 2

Name of the Reviewer _____

Topic _____

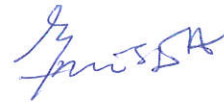
Code Number of the Essay _____

Instructions: Read the paper assigned to you twice, once to get an overview of the paper, and a second time to provide constructive comments for the writer to use when revising his/her paper. Whenever you find any technical problems (spelling, punctuation, chopped sentences, word choice, usage; subject – verb agreement, tense, word order, pronouns etc) mark them directly on the essay using correction codes that you are provided.

Declaration

The thesis my original work, has not been presented for a degree in other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Signature



Dawit Assefa