

Palestinian EFL Intermediate and Advanced Learners Perceptions about Peer Feedback in Writing Classes

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٢٠٠٨/٠٣/٠٤ تاريخ القبول ٢٠٠٨/٠٢/٠٧ تاريخ الاستلام

Abstract: *This study examined how Palestinian intermediate (Writing I) and advanced university level students (Writing II) felt about peer feedback in EFL writing classes. 25 EFL Writing I students and 22 EFL Writing II students from Al-Azhar University-Gaza students were selected to be the subjects of this study. All the participants responded to the questionnaires, and the results indicated that EFL students felt an improvement in their writing, especially in the mechanical aspects of writing. Additionally, EFL Writing II students felt more positively about peer feedback in the area of ideas and content, organization and narrowing down the topic than EFL Writing I students. Peer feedback expands in the form of a wave that starts small and widens as students move to higher levels.*

Introduction:

The present study was designed to investigate the role of peer feedback in the writing of Palestinian EFL learners following the track of other (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Caulk, 1994; Carson & Nelson, 1996; Jacobs et al, 1998; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Nelson & Murphey, 1993). Based on our own experiences as EFL teachers, we believe students usually welcome peer feedback as one type of feedback on their writing (Jacobs & Zhang, 1998). Before describing our study, we will review some of the literature relevant to the use of peer feedback in writing instruction.

Peer feedback can be defined as the activity through which students give and receive comments from each other on their language performance. This activity has been adopted in many foreign language writing classrooms in recent years; for it provides the students with a chance to be active and responsible learners. Moreover, peer feedback has shifted the traditional view of the teacher as the center of the teaching process, and converted the classroom from a teacher-centered

classroom to collaborative-class where the students have active roles to play in assisting one another.

However, some researchers raise a lot of questions regarding the use of peer feedback. One of the main reasons is that the teachers as well as the students may misunderstand the use and importance of this technique. The teacher by looking for an easy escape from responding to each student's writing assignment, and the student's by not trusting his peer's commentary since they have the same educational and probably the performance level. This problem also increases in EFL/ESL classrooms where the students are psychologically and linguistically unprepared to receive feedback from their peers who are non-native speakers of English (Tsui & Ng, 2000). Moreover, Ferris (2003) adds in this regard that "students, due to limitations as both developing writers and L2 learners, are simply not very good at giving one another helpful feedback, thus calling into question the time and effort needed to implement peer response" (p.103). EFL learners trust and appreciate the feedback from the teachers and the tutors who are native English speakers, but not from their classmates who have the same language abilities as them. In some cases the comments provided might be difficult to understand because of language barriers, thus confusing the student writers and discouraging them from revising their compositions or essays (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

Despite these drawbacks of peer feedback, many EFL/ESL researchers found that peer feedback has many advantages even in situations when the assessors are not native or native-like speakers of English. Since peer feedback is a form of effective communication among the students, such exchange of ideas should progress to include both reflection and critical thinking. When such content-specific exchange of opinions include these characteristics, it has the potential to motivate student inquiry and to create a learning context in which collaborative meaning-making occurs (Black, 2005). Another advantage of learners giving feedback to other learners is that they learn how to understand their own drafts by being critical readers of others' papers (Mory, 2004; Ferris 2003). Peer feedback has also been demonstrated to play an important role in instruction (Mory, 2004; Topping, 1998) with many learning theorists positing that it is essential to students' learning (Driscoll, 2000). In general,

instructional feedback provides students with information that either confirms what they already know or changes their existing knowledge and beliefs (Mory, 2004). Higgins, Hartley, and Skelton (2002) note that feedback that is meaningful, of high quality, and timely helps students become cognitively engaged in the content under study, as well as in the learning environment in which they are studying. Peer feedback, according to Paulus (1999), "encourages students to focus on their intended meaning by discussing alternative points of view that can lead to the development of those ideas" (p.267). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) suggest that feedback serves as a form of formative assessment, designed to improve and accelerate learning. Specifically, they describe feedback as "anything that might strengthen the students' capacity to self-regulate their own performances" (p. 206). Thus, peer feedback plays an important role in helping students improve writing. Many additional researchers believe that peer feedback is helpful in improving EFL/ESL writing. O'Brein (2004) supported findings by other researchers in that learners still felt value of peer comment even though they preferred to receive teachers comment rather than have peer comment. This evidence does not suggest that EFL/ESL learners have strong negative feelings, such as not trustful or useless, toward peer feedback. Moreover, many studies found that students have strongly positive perceptions about peer feedback. Ferris (2003) stated that "in general, researchers have found out that peer response is well received by student writers and that they enjoy the process" (p.133). In a research conducted by a group of researchers (Jacobs et al, 1998), a group of students – 121 EFL writers: 44 from the University of Hong Kong (upper intermediate and above) and 77 from Taiwan (lower-upper intermediate) were asked if they prefer to have feedback from other students on their writing or not. The result showed that 93% of the students preferred to have feedback from other students. One of the most important reasons for preferring feedback was that students were provided with more ideas about the contents and were helped to find the problems they missed. Since the students felt their writing improved when compared to the first draft by knowing how to develop their draft, they preferred to have peer feedback.

Thus, when EFL/ESL learners are asked to provide feedback to each other, instructors are inviting them to participate in each other's

learning to get good understanding and appreciation for their peers' experiences and perspectives. Moreover, by engaging learners in the feedback process, their satisfaction with the course will be promoted with the course work (Richardson & Swan, 2003), and with the teacher (Fulford & Zhang, 1998). In this respect Jacobs et al, (1998) cited many advantages which various educators (e.g., Chaudron, 1984; Clifford, 1981; Elbow, 1973; Moffett, 1968) have claimed for peer feedback, such as:

- Learners can receive social support from peers.
- Peer feedback can be more informative because peers are at the same level.
- Students can learn by providing each other with feedback.
- Learners may prioritize what peers say over teachers' feedback.
- Peers provide a broader audience for students' writing" (p. 3).

If used effectively, both teacher and peer feedback have the potential to increase the quality of writing, and thus the quality of learning English as a foreign language.

Purpose Of The Study

Since feedback has been established in literature to be an effective strategy in learning environments, limited research has been conducted that examines the role or impact of feedback in EFL writing classes in Palestinian universities. In fact, very few, if any, studies have examined the impact of using peer feedback to shape the quality of written performance of Palestinian university students. The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of the value of giving and receiving written peer feedback regarding the quality of their written performance in writing classes. The research questions included:

1. How much do intermediate (Writing I) and advanced EFL (Writing II) learners feel peer feedback is helping them improve their writing?
2. In what areas related to writing do intermediate and advanced EFL learners feel their writing assignments have improved through peer editing?
3. What kind of peer feedback do intermediate and advanced EFL learners feel is beneficial when they are revising?

4. Do advanced level learners feel more positively about peer editing than intermediate level learners?

Subjects Of The Study

The subjects of the study were 25 intermediate EFL learners enrolled in writing I class (ENGL1302), and 22 advanced EFL learners enrolled in Writing II class (ENGL1306), all of whom attended Al-Azhar University – Gaza. All of the students were Palestinian enrolled in the Department of English and were required to take these courses as part of their B.A. requirements. Students who enrolled in Writing II were required to have passed Writing I, whereas both levels should have taken English language Study Skills course (ENGL1201). All the subjects of the study were familiar with process approaches to writing via their university courses, although all had experienced more teacher-centered approaches at the secondary school level. All participants were native speakers of Arabic

Instrument And Data Collection Procedures

It should be clarified at this point that many peer editing studies used audio or video recoding method of students while they engage in peer editing. The studies that employed recoding methods focused on group interaction as it occurred naturally through a written peer editing activity (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998). However, since the researcher's goal of this study was not specific observation of students' interaction but rather how they think of peer editing, the researcher did not use this recording method. The questionnaire, a copy of which is shown in Appendix A, was distributed to the student participants in this study at the end of the second semester 2007. During that semester's writing courses, the participants wrote multiple drafts of compositions and received peer feedback while they were prewriting, revising for mechanical aspects and content, and editing. During the writing courses, the writing teachers provided feedback, both orally and in writing. Further, teachers made an effort to support students' peer feedback by training them and providing them with feedback guidelines and models of constructive feedback. Despite the fact that peer feedback was employed in the participants' writing courses, grading was based solely on teacher assessment. The questionnaire was administered by

the participants' teachers who assured them that it had no relation to their grade for the course. To reinforce this, students were asked not to write their names or other identifying information on the questionnaire.

The questionnaire comprised four sections with simple and straightforward questions addressed to elicit students' perceptions about peer editing and it was related to the answers of the research questions. In sections 1 and 2, students were asked to select a response within a range from 1 "No improvement" to 5 "Excellent improvement" in research question 3, students were asked to write their ideas freely. They were allowed to write more than two opinions in this section. In research question 4, students were asked to choose between two options.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires completed by 25 writing I and 22 writing II students were selected for data analysis. In question 1, the number of students who indicated that they had improved (3 or above) were counted together. In question 2, the following categories were included: 1) organization; 2) Ideas/content; 3) sentence clarity; 4) Narrowing down the topic; 5) Grammar; 6) Vocabulary; 7) Spelling; 8) MLA style sheet. The respondents in each category selecting (3 or above) were counted. In question 3, students' opinions about their preference of types of feedback were collected. As mentioned earlier, students were allowed to write more than two opinions in this section. In question 4, students' preferences of peer feedback were counted. In the analysis of RQ 4, which is to see the different perception according to students' levels, the results of questionnaire question 4 were compared with the results obtained in question 1. In addition, the percentage of students who felt improvement in each area related to composition writing in TABLE 2 and TABLE 3 from research question 2 was considered.

Results And Discussion

Research Question 1: How much do intermediate (Writing I) and advanced EFL (Writing II) learners feel peer feedback is helping them improve their writing?

Students' responses to the first question on the questionnaire "How much do you feel peer editing is helping you improve your writing tasks?" showed that they felt peer editing was helpful in improving their writing tasks (mainly composition writing). As shown in TABLE 1, 20 out of 25 (80%) Writing I students responded by selecting 3 or above, which meant that they felt improvement in composition writing through peer editing. For Writing II, 21 out of 22 (95.4.3%) felt that there was improvement in their composition writing. As a result more than half of the students in both courses felt peer editing was helpful in their writing tasks.

Table 1

The number of Students' response to the question "How much do you feel peer editing is helping you improve your writing tasks?"

Course	1	2	3	4	5
Writing I	0 (0%)	5 (20%)	6 (24%)	10 (40%)	4 (16%)
Writing II	0 (0%)	1 (4.6%)	4 (18.1%)	10 (45.4%)	7 (31.9%)

(1) No improvement (2) Less improvement (3) Improvement
(4) Better improvement (5) Excellent improvement

Research Question 2: In what areas related to writing do intermediate and advanced EFL learners feel their writing assignments have improved through peer editing?

Based on the students response to the second question in the questionnaire, "In what areas related to writing do you feel your writing task has improved through peer editing?", they felt that there was an improvement in their essay writing in the grammar and spelling areas the most by selecting 3 and above category. TABLE 2 showed the ranking of the writing areas in which EFL writing I students felt an improvement in peer feedback in areas like Grammar (88%), spelling (80%), vocabulary (76%), and sentence clarity (68%). Except for the MLA style (40%), the participants in this study showed positive perception of peer feedback that exceeded (50%) in most of the writing related issues. Also, TABLE 3 showed the result from Writing II students.

Table 2
Ranking of Writing Task Categories by Writing I Students

Course	1	2	3	4	5
1) Ideas Contents	7 (28.0%)	5 (20.0%)	3 (12.0%)	6 (24.0%)	4 (16.0%)
2) Sentence Clarity	2 (8.0%)	6 (24.0%)	4 (16.0%)	8 (32.0%)	5 (20.0%)
3) Narrowing down the topic	5 (20.0%)	6 (24.0%)	3 (12.0%)	7 (28.0%)	4 (16.0%)
4) Organization	6 (24.0%)	5 (20.0%)	6 (24.0%)	5 (20.0%)	3 (12.0%)
5) Vocabulary	2 (8.0%)	4 (16.0%)	4 (16.0%)	8 (32.0%)	7 (28.0%)
6) Grammar	1 (4.0%)	2 (8.0%)	2 (8.0%)	9 (36.0%)	11(44.0%)
7) Spelling	2 (8.0%)	3 (12.0%)	3 (12.0%)	9 (36.0%)	8 (32.0%)
8) MLA style	7 (28.0%)	8 (32.0%)	7 (28.0%)	3 (12.0%)	0 (0.0%)

(1) No improvement (2) Less improvement (3) Improvement
(4) Better improvement (5) Excellent improvement

As shown in TABLE 2, in Writing I class, 22 students (88%) felt improvement in grammar correction area, whereas in Writing II, as shown in TABLE 3, 20 students (90.9%) felt improvement in the same area. This result indicated that the majority of the EFL writing students favor peer feedback in grammar. The subsequent areas in which a greater frequency of EFL Writing I students felt an improvement were spelling, vocabulary, and sentence clarity. The subsequent areas to grammar correction that EFL Writing II students felt an improvement in were all writing areas except for the MLA style. The result indicated that both levels of students did not feel improvement in MLA style.

Table 3
Ranking of Writing Task Categories by Writing II Students

Course	1	2	3	4	5
1) Ideas Contents	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	3 (13.6%)	7 (31.9%)	5 (22.7%)
2) Sentence Clarity	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	9 (40.9%)	4 (18.2%)
3) Narrowing down the topic	3 (13.6%)	3 (13.6%)	4 (18.2%)	8 (36.4%)	4 (18.2%)
4) Organization	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	5 (22.7%)
5) Vocabulary	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	10 (45.4%)
6) Grammar	2 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (13.6%)	6 (27.3%)	11 (50.0%)
7) Spelling	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	9 (40.9%)	6 (27.3%)
8) MLA style	6 (27.3%)	7 (31.9%)	4 (18.2%)	3 (13.6%)	2 (9.1%)

(1) No improvement (2) Less improvement (3) Improvement
(4) Better improvement (5) Excellent improvement

Although the quality of students' feedback on ideas/content (77.3%), sentence clarity (72.7%) Narrowing down the topic (72.8%), Organization (77.3%), was moderately perceived by the students, it

did not indicate that peer editing is not well appreciated by the students, Many of them saw that peer editing was good in areas related to vocabulary (90.9%), grammar (90.9%), spelling (81.8%), and organization (77.3%) suggesting that peer feedback is effective in maintaining the quality of writing, specially when a quality level of peer editing has been reached.

The comparison between the perceptions of Writing I and Writing II students of the importance of feedback reveals the higher the level the stronger the perception; which meant that if the students continued practicing peer editing, their perceptions of the importance of feedback in writing courses would significantly increase. In both Writing I and Writing II students felt no improvement in MLA style. However, the result did not show a significant difference between the areas students felt the most improvement and the ones they felt better improvement; for all of the Writing II students ranked them (72%) and above. On the other hand, Writing I students felt less improvement in ideas and content, narrowing the topic and MLA style.

From these results, it is worth noting that the students in both courses felt an improvement in grammar, vocabulary, and spelling categories more than MLA style. The possible reason why students did not feel much improvement in MLA style is because they were not prepared to use it since the main focus in EFL writing classes is on the mechanical and idea/content areas. The other possible reason is that the students were told that following MLA style sheet was essential for publishable papers, thus persuading them to neglect this category while peer editing. According to the teachers of these classes, at the initial stage they asked the students to focus on the mechanical aspects of writing during peer editing. Thus, if time allowed, they would be expected to focus on content areas and MLA style during this peer editing activity.

Another possible reason is that peer editing mechanical aspects of writing tasks helps students use the language properly and without grammatical, spelling or vocabulary errors. This will increase their awareness of the rules that govern the use of the English language. The students were also encouraged to critically read the writing tasks of other students to help them become critical readers. Once they learn how to read critically through others' papers, they would adapt this reading strategy when they do their own writing tasks. They

could analyze their own writing tasks by themselves and would bring about a better draft. The result is that both TABLE 1 and TABLE 2 show that the participants of this study from the two writing courses showed low ranking of peer editing in ideas and content, which indicated that the teachers must focus on these issues from the very beginning of the writing classes.

To pursue this issue, it is essential to compare between what types of peer editing students are actually doing. If they focused on surface errors such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary, etc., they would be concerned more with mechanical issues, not with content and organization. Since this study did not analyze the student's actual performance, their actual peer editing, it would be difficult to make a statement that their focus of peer editing was based on surface errors rather than critical reading. This issue can be considered in further studies.

Research Question 2: What types of peer feedback do intermediate and advanced EFL learners feel is beneficial when they are revising?

TABLE 4 and TABLE 5 show that the students' response to the third question in the questionnaire "What kind of feedback do you feel is beneficial when you are revising?" indicated that they felt they highly benefited from feed editing in areas related to grammar correction, spelling correction, vocabulary selection, and punctuation. The comparison between the two groups of students shows that peer feedback develops like a wave which starts small at the center and gets large and large as it moves away from the center. The center here is the starting point where the students are introduced to peer editing, and as one moves from one course to another at a higher level, the students favor it more than before. It is clear from the TABLE 4 and TABLE 5 that Writing I students' appreciation and ranking of peer editing is lower than that of Writing II students. However, in both groups the ranking of the types of feedback is positive as represented in the number of students who ranked each type. For example 19 out of 25 Writing I students (76%) and 22 out of 22 of Writing II students (100%) favored the peer feedback related to grammar correction. The ranking of feedback types by Writing II students support the researcher's example of the wave theory; for the majority of them rank the peer editing types higher than the Writing I students, even in areas

that are low ranked by both groups "opinion and content" which showed that it was also given attention by advanced students; it developed from 24% in Writing I to 68% in Writing II. Both groups of students felt no improvement in MLA style; however, the result did not show a significant difference between the areas students felt the most improvement and the ones they felt better improvement; for all of Writing II students ranked the editing types (72%) and more. On the other hand, Writing I students felt less improvement in 'ideas and content, narrowing the topic, and MLA style'.

Another possible reason was that peer editing mechanical aspects of writing tasks helped students use the language properly and without grammatical, spelling, or vocabulary errors. The students were also encouraged to critically read the writing tasks of to help them become critical readers. Once they learned how to read critically through other's papers, they would adapt this reading strategy when they did their own papers. Then they could analyze their own papers by themselves, and would bring about a better draft. The result in both TABLE 2 and TABLE 3 showed that the participants of this study from the two writing courses showed low ranking of peer editing in ideas and contents area. This indicated that teachers must focus on these issues from the very beginning of the writing classes.

To pursue this issue, it was essential to compare what kind of peer editing students were actually doing. If they focused on surface errors such as grammar, spelling, vocabulary, etc, they would be concerned more with mechanical issues, not with content or organization. Since this study did not analyze the students' actual performance, or the actual peer editing, it was difficult to make a statement that the focus of peer editing was based on surface errors rather than critical reading. This issue needed to be considered in future studies.

Research Question 3: What kind of peer feedback do intermediate and advanced EFL learners feel is beneficial when they are revising?

Table 4

Ranking of Types of Feedback Writing I Students Felt Beneficial in Writing Tasks

No	Type of Feedback	No. responses	Percentage
1	Correcting grammar errors	19	76%
2	Suggesting vocabulary	16	64%
3	Correcting spelling errors	18	72%
4	Correcting punctuation	12	48%
5	Opinions about content	6	24%

Table 5

Ranking of Types of Feedback Writing II Students Felt Beneficial in Writing Tasks

No.	Type of Feedback	No. responses	Percentage
1	Correcting grammar errors	22	100%
2	Suggesting vocabulary	18	81.8%
3	Correcting spelling errors	19	86.3%
4	Correcting punctuations	16	72.7%
5	Positive feedback	19	86.3%
4	Opinions about content	15	68.1%
6	Pointing out the parts that were hard for readers to understand	12	54.5%

TABLE 4 and TABLE 5 show that the students' responses to the third question in the questionnaire indicated that the only type of peer editing was not highly ranked by both groups of students is 'opinions about content', (24%) by Writing I students, and (68%) by Writing II students. The ranking of this category by Writing II students was considered high when compared with the ranking of the same type of peer editing by Writing I students, but when compared with the ranking of other types by the same students (Writing II), it was considered relatively low. TABLE 5 shows that Writing II students added another type of peer editing 'pointing out points that were hard for the readers to understand' which regardless of its low ranking, was a new dimension added to their experience as student editors. This meant that as a students moved from one level to another higher level a new wave of peer editing (in our case 'type') was created and may develop and widen as students proceed with peer editing.

Thus, Writing I students wanted the readers to correct the grammar, spelling, and vocabulary when they edit their writing performance, meanwhile, they did not feel it was important to pay attention to areas such as 'correcting punctuation', and 'opinions about content', which to EFL students, based on personal experience, are not of high importance due to the attention paid by most EFL teachers to the mechanical aspects of the target language. However, when the students move to higher levels, such types of peer editing receive higher ranking which indicates a real development in their level of performance. In Writing II class such types were much more highly ranked than in Writing I class; for as the waves of 'opinions about content' and the 'pointing out points that were hard for the readers to understand' widen, the students become more dependent on the comments, such as what are the writers should write and explain to improve the writing tasks (essays, compositions, etc.).

Furthermore, if there are some parts that are difficult to understand for the readers, the student writers want them to point out these parts. Thus, student writers will know that their ways of explanation are not adequate for the readers to understand and will recognize the fact they should revise their writing outputs.

Research Question 4: Do advanced level learners feel more positively about peer editing than intermediate level learners?

In discussion of research question 1, it was found out that Writing II students felt peer editing was more helpful than Writing I students believed. As shown in FIGURE 1 and TABLE 5 and TABLE 6, (68%) of Writing I students and (90.09%) of Writing II students felt peer editing was helpful in revising their writing tasks. In addition, the examination of all the tables listed in this study show that Writing II students felt improvement in almost every aspect of writing more than Writing I students by showing higher percentages in each area related to writing classes despite slight differences. The investigation of Writing I and Writing II students' perceptions of peer feedback, as shown in Figure 1, reflected that the higher the students' level was, the more positive they felt about peer feedback in improving their writing activities. Therefore, EFL writing teachers should incorporate peer feedback in EFL writing classes. Thus, peer feedback should be introduced to students at the early stage of their writing classes; for the

current study showed that Writing I students felt less of an improvement as a result of peer editing, whereas in their writing tasks, Writing II students did. This could be due to their lack of knowledge and experience of how to give feedback to their peers, or it might be that they had some experience, but they did not know how to use it effectively.

Table 5

Writing I Students' Preference of Peer Feedback

Preference	No. of selections
a) I prefer to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on my writing.	17 (68%)
(b) I prefer not to have feedback from other students on my writing.	10 (32%)

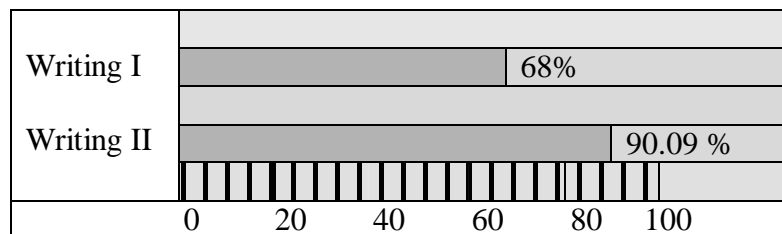
Table 6

Writing II Students' Preference of Peer Feedback

Preference	No. of selections
a) I prefer to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on my writing.	20 (90.09%)
(b) I prefer not to have feedback from other students on my writing.	2 (9.91%)

Figure 1

Writing I and Writing II Students' Perceptions of Peer Feedback



In this regard, Berg (1999) conducted a study to see how trained and untrained students' feedback responses affected the improvement of their essay revisions. The participants of this study represented two different levels of students. One was level 3, an intermediate level corresponding to the Test of English as a foreign Language (TOEFL) with scores around 375, and the other was level 4,

an intermediate high level corresponding to TOEFL with scores around 425. The participants were divided into two groups for empirical study. One group was trained to participate in peer feedback, and the other was trained in the ways of peer feedback. Each group consisted of level 3 and level 4 students. Both groups were taught about academic writing and received some instructions about their first writing assignment. The trained group received 11 steps, ranging between 5-45 minutes, of instruction in how to participate in peer response, such as learning appropriate vocabulary and expressions to peer's editing.

The result of Berg's study showed that the students who received training on peer response showed better quality essays. The result also reflected that the students who received the feedback might rely on feedback more and might show more improvement in their next draft. Thus, when students know how to give feedback, they will use that strategy in their own essays, for it will encourage them to become self-editors. Such students will give effective feedback on their own drafts and would revise the other students' drafts. This suggests that if all the students in the classroom know how to give feedback to their classmates, there can be more benefits. In this way EFL writing classes become good environments where the students can help each other by having good quality of feedback. Therefore, EFL writing teachers should train students on how to give feedback to help them improve their writing skills. The assumption is that the earlier they are trained in how to give feedback to their peers, the earlier and faster the written tasks will show improvement.

To evaluate the students' improvement as a result of in-class training, EFL teachers need to design their own questionnaires, such as the one used in this study. The result of such an evaluation will show the teacher where they stand as far as feedback is concerned, and/or adjust their instruction to help the students improve the areas in which they felt less improvement. As in the case of the present study, the students did not feel much improvement in the area of 'ideas and content', and 'pointing out the parts that were hard for the readers to understand', EFL teachers are required to consider what they should do to assist the students to improve their performance in these areas. Teachers may need to find out the reasons why the students did not feel any improvement, then they need to find the ways of helping their

students based on the result of such an inquiry. The reason could be that the students did not trust the judgment of their peers because they were not native speakers of the language as reported by Tsui & NG (2000); and Liu & Hansen (2002),

Conclusions:

The study investigated how EFL students perceive peer editing and revealed that the majority of them felt peer feedback was helpful throughout the process of their writing tasks. The result of this study indicated that many students described how they benefited from providing peer feedback in some very important areas related to their writing tasks. Most of the students felt that mechanical errors such as grammar, spelling, and vocabulary showed the most improvement. The data showed a trend of developing improvement represented in the high percentages that the Writing II students showed in comparison with the Writing I students' percentages. The majority of students did not feel there was much improvement for MLA style, ideas/contents content, and narrowing the topic. However, Writing II students showed little more benefit in these areas than Writing I students. The study also revealed that when the students moved to a higher level, they preferred to have peer feedback in almost every aspect of writing as in the case of Writing II students who, unlike Writing I students, preferred to have peer feedback which was focused on content. Thus, as they became more experienced with peer feedback, they preferred to have opinions about their written performance, such as what the reader thought about their writing and what was hard for them to understand. In this respect Dunlap and Grabinger (cited in Dunlap, 2005), stated that "the process of reviewing someone else's work can help learners reflect on and articulate their own views and ideas, ultimately improving their own work" (p. 20). Furthermore, the study showed that Writing II students felt more positively about peer feedback than Writing I students who were expected to be exposed to the expanding wave of peer feedback as they continued with their writing courses. Therefore, EFL writing teachers were recommended to continue using peer feedback in EFL writing classrooms. They were also recommended to train the students on how to give feedback to their peers and use a

questionnaire to assess the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of peer feedback.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire:

1. How much do you feel peer editing is helping you improve your writing tasks? (*Put the sign ✓ in the box you choose*)

Course	1	2	3	4	5
Writing I					
Writing II					

- (1) No improvement (2) Less improvement (3) Undecided
(4) Better improvement (5) Excellent improvement

2. In what areas related to writing do you feel your writing task has improved through peer editing? (*Put the sign ✓ in the box you choose*)

Course	1	2	3	4	5
1) Ideas Contents					
2) Sentence Clarity					
3) Narrowing down the topic					
4) Organization					
5) Vocabulary					
6) Grammar					
7) Spelling					
8) MLA style					

- (1) No improvement (2) Less improvement (3) Undecided
(4) Better improvement (5) Excellent improvement

3. What kind of feedback do you feel is beneficial when you are revising?

Please write more than two opinions if you want.

- (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

4. Select the most appropriate choice according to your preference:

(Put the sign ✓ in the box you choose)

Preference	✓
a) I prefer to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on my writing.	
(b) I prefer not to have feedback from other students on my writing.	