



EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF PEER FEEDBACK ON WRITING SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Fitri Wulandari¹, Amy Sabila², Rabiyyul Adawiyah³

^{1, 2, 3} Doctoral Program in Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lampung, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia

Email Correspondence: fitriwulandariyifa@gmail.com

Abstract

Writing is a challenging skill for EFL students, particularly in organizing ideas and applying appropriate language conventions. This study aimed to investigate the effect of peer feedback on students' writing skills. A pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was employed involving 30 high school students. Data were collected through writing tests and analyzed using a paired-sample t-test. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' writing performance after the peer feedback intervention ($t(29) = 19.88, p < .001$). The results indicate that peer feedback effectively enhances students' writing skills and supports collaborative learning in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, EFL Students, Peer Feedback, Pre-Experimental Study, Writing Skills

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most demanding language skills because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge, critical thinking, and communicative competence. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, higher education students are expected to produce well-organized academic texts, demonstrate grammatical accuracy, and communicate ideas effectively. However, many university students continue to experience difficulties in organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and applying appropriate language conventions, which often result in low-quality academic writing (Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2020).

In higher education, writing instruction commonly relies on teacher feedback to improve students' writing performance. Although teacher feedback plays a crucial role in developing writing competence, it is often constrained by limited instructional time, large class sizes, and delayed responses. Consequently, students receive limited opportunities to

OPEN  ACCESS



Creation is distributed under the Creative Commons License Attribution Share Alike 4.0 International Published in
<https://ejournal.umpri.ac.id/index.php/smart/index>
SMART Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics

revise their work through continuous interaction and reflection. Previous studies have reported that university students frequently struggle with idea development, academic organization, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary use in academic writing (Parmawati & Inayah, 2019; Safitri et al., 2022).

To address these challenges, collaborative learning approaches have gained increasing attention in writing pedagogy. One widely implemented strategy is peer feedback, in which students review and provide constructive comments on their peers' writing. This approach encourages learners to become active participants in the writing process by evaluating, revising, and reflecting on written texts. Peer feedback also promotes critical thinking, learner autonomy, and collaborative learning, which are fundamental principles of sociocultural learning theory (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

Previous empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving students' writing performance. Wu and Schunn (2020) reported that structured peer-review activities significantly enhanced students' writing quality compared with conventional teacher feedback. Similarly, Huisman et al. (2019) found that peer feedback improved revision quality by increasing students' awareness of audience expectations and writing conventions. More recently, Muhaimin and Widyaningsih (2024) revealed that peer feedback significantly improved EFL students' writing achievement, particularly in organization, grammar, and coherence.

Despite these positive findings, several limitations remain. Existing studies have largely focused on students' perceptions of peer feedback or have examined its implementation in specific learning contexts without measuring learning outcomes through structured pre-test and post-test assessments. Furthermore, relatively few studies have investigated the effectiveness of peer feedback among higher education students using an analytic writing rubric to evaluate multiple aspects of writing performance. This gap indicates the need for further empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving academic writing among university students.

Therefore, this study investigates the impact of peer feedback on the writing skills of higher education students using a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. Unlike previous studies that primarily explored students' perceptions or descriptive experiences, this research quantitatively evaluates changes in writing performance before and after the implementation of peer feedback. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing

body of knowledge on collaborative assessment in EFL writing and provide practical implications for lecturers in integrating peer feedback into university writing instruction.

Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate the impact of peer feedback on writing skills among higher education students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a pre-experimental research design using a one-group pretest-posttest approach to evaluate the impact of peer feedback on the writing skills of higher education students. This design was selected because it enables researchers to measure changes in participants' writing performance before and after an instructional intervention within the same group (Muhaimin & Widyaningsih, 2024). The study involved 30 undergraduate students enrolled in an English writing course at a private university in Indonesia. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because they shared similar academic backgrounds and had completed prerequisite English courses. Prior to data collection, all participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Data were collected using writing tests administered before and after the peer feedback intervention. In both the pre-test and post-test, students were required to write an expository essay on an academic topic appropriate to their level of study. Students' writing performance was assessed using an analytic writing rubric consisting of four components: organization, clarity of ideas, grammar, and vocabulary. During the intervention, participants exchanged their draft essays with peers and provided written feedback using a structured peer feedback rubric adapted from previous studies on EFL writing assessment (Putriani et al., 2023). Before conducting the peer-review activity, students received training on how to apply the rubric and provide constructive feedback to ensure consistency and improve the quality of comments (Cuocci et al., 2023).

The intervention was conducted over two weeks. During the first meeting, participants completed the pre-test to determine their initial writing proficiency. They then participated in peer-review sessions, during which each student evaluated a peer's writing and provided feedback based on the established rubric. After receiving feedback, participants revised their essays before completing the post-test at the end of the intervention period. To minimize scoring bias, all essays were anonymized prior to assessment and independently evaluated by two trained raters. Inter-rater reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum acceptable coefficient of .70, to ensure scoring consistency.

The quantitative data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed using a paired-sample t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' writing performance before and after the implementation of peer feedback. This statistical procedure is appropriate for comparing two related sets of scores obtained from the same participants following an educational intervention (Putriani et al., 2023). All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics, and the level of significance was set at $p < .05$.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of peer feedback on higher education students' writing skills. Students completed a writing test before (pre-test) and after (post-test) participating in a two-week peer feedback intervention. The essays were assessed using an analytic writing rubric covering clarity, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and development of ideas.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-test	30	56.73	9.41	40	74
Post-test	30	71.27	8.04	56	87

Table 1 shows that the mean writing score increased from 56.73 in the pre-test to 71.27 in the post-test, with an average gain of 14.54 points. In addition, the standard deviation decreased from 9.41 to 8.04, indicating that students' writing performance became more consistent after the implementation of peer feedback. To identify improvements in specific aspects of writing, each writing component was analyzed separately.

Table 2. *Improvement in Writing Components*

Writing Component	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain Score
Clarity	11.50	14.20	2.70
Organization	12.00	15.10	3.10
Grammar	10.80	13.50	2.70
Vocabulary	10.50	12.40	1.90
Development of Ideas	11.93	16.07	4.14
Total Score	56.73	71.27	14.54

As presented in Table 2, all writing components improved after the intervention. The greatest gain was found in Development of Ideas (4.14), followed by Organization (3.10), while Vocabulary (1.90) showed the smallest increase.

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test mean scores is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Writing Scores

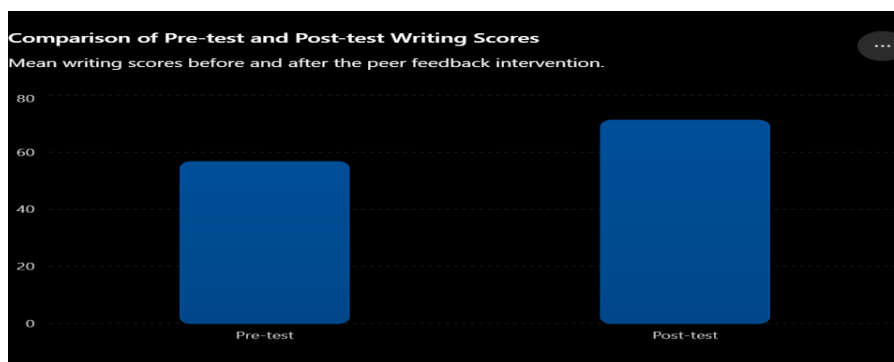


Figure 1 illustrates a clear increase in students' writing scores following the implementation of peer feedback.

To determine whether the observed improvement was statistically significant, a paired-sample t-test was conducted.

Table 3. Paired-Sample t-Test Results

Variable	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test – Pre-test	14.54	19.88	29	.000

The paired-sample t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, $t(29) = 19.88$, $p < .001$, indicating that students' writing performance significantly improved after participating in the peer feedback intervention.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that peer feedback positively influenced higher education students' writing skills. The significant increase in the overall writing score indicates that collaborative feedback provided students with opportunities to evaluate written texts, recognize weaknesses, and revise their work more effectively. The reduction in score variability also suggests that students achieved more consistent writing performance after the intervention.

Among the assessed writing components, the largest improvements occurred in development of ideas and organization. These findings suggest that peer feedback was particularly effective in helping students structure their arguments logically and develop ideas more comprehensively. By reviewing their peers' work and receiving constructive comments, students became more aware of text organization, coherence, and audience expectations. This finding supports the sociocultural perspective that learning is enhanced through interaction

and collaboration, where knowledge is constructed through dialogue and shared experiences (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

The present findings are consistent with previous studies. Wu and Schunn (2020) reported that students engaged in structured peer-review activities demonstrated greater improvements in writing quality than those receiving only teacher feedback. Likewise, Huisman et al. (2019) found that peer feedback enhanced students' revision practices by increasing their awareness of writing conventions and audience expectations. In the Indonesian EFL context, Muhaimin and Widyaningsih (2024) also reported significant improvements in students' writing performance, particularly in organization, grammar, and coherence. The consistency of these findings indicates that peer feedback is an effective instructional strategy across different educational contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, peer feedback offers an alternative assessment strategy that complements teacher feedback in higher education writing classrooms. Besides improving writing quality, the activity encourages students to develop critical thinking, reflective learning, communication, and self-assessment skills. These competencies are essential for fostering learner autonomy and collaborative learning in EFL instruction (Double et al., 2020).

Despite these positive findings, this study has several limitations. The use of a one-group pretest-posttest design without a control group limits the ability to attribute improvements solely to the intervention. In addition, the relatively small sample drawn from a single class reduces the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are therefore recommended to employ true or quasi-experimental designs involving larger and more diverse samples to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving writing achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that peer feedback has a significant positive impact on the writing skills of higher education students. The implementation of structured peer feedback improved students' writing performance across several aspects, including organization, clarity, grammar, vocabulary, and development of ideas, as evidenced by the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. These findings indicate that peer feedback is an effective collaborative learning strategy that promotes active participation, critical reflection,

and learner autonomy in EFL writing instruction. Therefore, peer feedback can be integrated into higher education writing courses as a complementary assessment strategy to support students' writing development. Future research is recommended to employ experimental or quasi-experimental designs with larger and more diverse samples to strengthen the generalizability of the findings and further examine the long-term effects of peer feedback on academic writing achievement.

REFERENCES

- Cuocci, S., Fattahi Marnani, P., Khan, I., & Roberts, S. (2023). A meta-synthesis of technology-supported peer feedback in ESL/EFL writing classes research. *Languages*, 8(2), Article 114. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages8020114>
- Double, K. S., McGrane, J. A., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2020). The impact of peer assessment on academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 481–509. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-020-09540-0>
- Huisman, B., Saab, N., van den Broek, P., & van Driel, J. H. (2019). The impact of formative peer feedback on higher education students' academic writing: A meta-analysis. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(6), 863–880. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1545896>
- Hyland, F., & Hyland, K. (2019). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2019). *Second language writing* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, I. (2020). *Classroom writing assessment and feedback in L2 school contexts*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-2722-1>
- Muhaimin, M. R., & Widyaningsih, T. L. (2024). Applying peer feedback to enhance high school EFL students' writing skills. *Morfologi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra dan Budaya*, 2(5), 209–219. <https://doi.org/10.61132/morfologi.v2i5.951>
- Parmawati, A., & Inayah, R. (2019). Improving students' writing skill through cooperative learning. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 2(6), 890–897. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v2i6.p890-897>
- Putriani, P., Nurhamidah, N., & Elfrida, E. (2023). The effect of peer feedback on EFL students' writing achievement. *ELTIN Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 11(1), 1–13. <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/ELTIN>

- Safitri, D., Fitriani, S. S., & Samad, I. A. (2022). Students' challenges in writing English texts: A case study at Indonesian secondary schools. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 6(2), 228–241. <https://ejournal.unib.ac.id/JEET>
- Wu, Y., & Schunn, C. D. (2021). The effects of providing and receiving peer feedback on writing performance and learning of secondary school students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(3), 492–526. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220945266>