



# A Study on Feedback Mechanism, Problems, and Countermeasures of Second Language Learners' Classroom Writing

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## Abstract

Peer feedback plays a significant role in enhancing students' writing skills in language classrooms, as it aligns with the "student-centered" policy orientation of second language teaching reforms and contributes to fostering students' critical thinking, communicative competence, and learning autonomy. However, its implementation in practice faces numerous challenges that hinder the full realization of its potential value. This paper mainly investigates the core issues, underlying causes, and solutions of peer feedback in foreign language writing classes through literature analysis and theoretical deduction. The core problems lie in the low quality of feedback—characterized by superficial, inaccurate, and unconstructive comments—and low student participation due to insufficient enthusiasm. These issues are attributed to the lack of systematic training and professional guidance for both teachers and students, and the influence of cultural psychological barriers such as collectivist norms that discourage direct criticism and social anxiety. Therefore, this study proposes specific measures such as conducting structured training programs and creating a supportive classroom environment. The research indicates that comprehensive intervention can improve the effectiveness of peer feedback, promote the development of collaborative learning models, and enhance students' writing abilities.

## Keywords

Peer feedback; Foreign language writing classroom; Feedback mechanism; Problem causes; Optimization strategies

## 1. Introduction

Peer assessment is a very essential element of training in the writing classroom of a language course. It also increases students' passion for taking part in teaching activities and can train students' capability to think critically and communicate with others, thereby improving the quality of writing (Carless, 2022). It is in line with the policy orientation and practical needs of "student-centered" in second language teaching reforms. But in genuine teaching situations, its practical worth has not truly come into play, and its usage is restricted. Teaching practice and existing studies find that in English writing classes in Saudi Arabia, the problems of superficial peer feedback and low student participation prevail, as there is a gap between theory and practice (Alsehibany, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore the core issues in the implementation of peer feedback, sort out the phenomena, analyze the reasons for the problems, and put forward corrective measures according to the analysis of relevant literature and evidence

collection. Thus, it can provide practical reference for the optimization of the peer evaluation mechanism in the second language writing classroom and enhance the teaching effect; it also verifies the practical significance of intervention measures to promote second language writing (Darvishi et al., 2024).

## **2. The Core Connotation and Practical Value of the Peer Feedback Mechanism**

### **2.1 Core Connotation of the Feedback Mechanism**

Peer feedback is when students work together to have each other's written tasks looked at by teachers, making suggestions for how it could be better in lots of different parts, like what it talks about, how it is set out, and what words it uses. Students become both givers and receivers of feedback. It breaks free from the old teacher-centered model and makes students the main actors in writing evaluation and optimization. The effective operation requires the participation of both teachers and students, the establishment of clear evaluation criteria, and the construction of a reasonable process to form a closed loop of evaluation, feedback, revision, and enhancement (Noroozi et al., 2023).

### **2.2 Practical Value of the Feedback Mechanism**

Empirical studies based on social constructivism have pointed out the rich studies on peer feedback have numerous benefits, such as deepens the idea of the writing techniques and logical structures and deepen students' thinking, enhance learning autonomy, and strengthen their participation (Zhang & Zou, 2023), transforming students' roles from passive knowledge acceptors to active constructors, broaden their writing views and styles, enrich the expression of language; make up for the shortcomings in teacher feedback caused by less time and energy, provide students with more practice and revisions. At the same time, promote evaluators to consolidate past knowledge and improve metacognition; also, allow receivers to see different points of view, recognize their own writing deficiencies, and form a good environment for joint learning in the classroom.

## **3. Problems in the Implementation of Peer Feedback**

### **3.1 Low Quality of Peer Feedback**

Low-quality feedback is a big problem that stops peer eval from working well—it just gives surface stuff, wrong stuff, and not helpful stuff. The main reason for this is a lack of language proficiency, evaluation ability, and cognitive bias. The theoretical basis of this is based on social cultural theory and formative evaluation theory. In a social and cultural context, bad feedback can't help with writing skills; it makes the wrong thing seem right. Due to the lack of language proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge, the lower grades are vague when giving feedback, focusing mainly on surface errors like spelling and grammar, which is the main source of frustration for both the person giving and receiving the feedback. Students without systematic training do not know what standard quality feedback has, so they either give vague or overly detailed feedback that does not get to the root of the problem. People who have cognitive biases won't understand the task. Their comment has no value. Low-quality feedback is always a problem between sender and recipient, the one who got can't get what the second language of academia to understand very well, and the other holder of the time that has no chance to learn. From a long-term perspective, it may damage the students' belief in the peer assessment mechanism and reduce its social cognitive value.

### **3.2 Insufficient Participation Enthusiasm**

Low student participation and lack of enthusiasm are the main obstacles to the implementation of the peer feedback mechanism. The underlying cause can be traced back to the core requirements of self-determination theory, that is, students will only truly engage if they feel a sense of belonging and value recognition.

Failure to abide by this is the issue. The primary cause of psychological discomfort is social anxiety when giving criticism, and suspicion towards the authority of peer feedback. Also, peer criticism causes defensiveness and suspicion regarding the professionalism of peers when receiving criticism, resulting in double anxiety (Shang, 2022). In a particular cultural or classroom environment, it could be magnified for some students' anxiety, making them avoid genuine criticism and take the feedback reflection as a matter of routine. Negative ideas about how good the

feedback hurts this. When feedback has no clear points, and it's of poor quality, students fall into a cognitive imbalance loop of "input - output". Both their participation and feedback quality decrease. In a performance oriented teaching environment, the lack of incentive mechanism turns peer feedback into an extra task, students tend to favor speed over quality and lack sufficient intrinsic motivation. Many empirical studies have found that anxiety, doubts about the effectiveness of feedback, and cultural discomfort are what cause students to resist.

## 4. Causes of Challenges in Peer Feedback

### 4.1 Insufficient Training and Guidance

The key issue in the poor effectiveness of peer assessment in language writing classes is the lack of systematic training and professional guidance for both teachers and students. Simply assigning peer assessment tasks without providing support structures results in the failure to fully leverage the potential value of peer feedback and leads to a vicious cycle of low-quality feedback, reduced participation enthusiasm, and ineffective teaching. This problem can be deeply analyzed through social-cultural theory and social learning principles: effective peer feedback is not an innate ability but a complex competence that requires deliberate cultivation. Learners need to internalize evaluation knowledge, master metacognitive strategies, and interaction norms. Constructivist theory holds that learning is a process of building understanding through guided interaction. Without targeted guidance, students' participation behaviors will lose direction, and the vagueness and inaccuracy of feedback quality, as well as students' resistance to the feedback process, are all inevitable results of "unguided participation".

Empirical research has also proven that it's because those students don't prepare well, and they're nervous, and teachers lack some professional training for their teaching methods, so there's a shortcoming with the tasks they make, how the process goes, and how to deal with disagreements (Noroozi et al., 2023). The combination of these two deficiencies makes things worse for teaching.

### 4.2 Cultural and Psychological Barriers

Cultural conventions, worry over psyche and peers all mix together to create a formidable obstacle for peer feedback. The core contradiction is that there is a conflict between "critical" and "classroom social relationships". Culturally speaking, because in collectivism the extreme desire for group harmony makes "avoiding direct criticism" a social norm, it directly conflicts with the frank criticism that is necessary for improving one's writing. In Saudi Arabian English teaching research, the phenomenon of "Being reluctant to point out peers' mistakes" is an embodiment of such cultural logic. Meanwhile, the direct feedback model of individualist culture can also result in misunderstanding caused by cultural cognitive differences, and the classroom is bound by implicit social rules, which "soften" and "dilute" the feedback content, lacking its essence (Mohamadi, 2022). At the psychological level, three types of anxiety interact with each other to put students in a vicious cycle of not wanting to evaluate, unwilling to hear others' opinions, and unable to give feedback. And besides, in the implicit hierarchy within peer groups formed by linguistic ability, academic performance, social status, and friendship, it results in such situation that the weak ones didn't dare make criticism while the strong ones could make harsh evaluation on the weak, turned peer feedback into formal social activity.

## 5. Solutions to Enhance Peer Feedback

### 5.1 Structured Training Program

To implement effective peer feedback in language writing courses, we need to build a training program and an environment together to address the issue of a lack of preparation, whether by teachers or by students, as well as the question. If we just assign peer feedback without any support, there's no point. The value is extremely low. Therefore, targeted and substantial teacher training and student training need to be in place before feedback quality and student participation can be raised, and social constructivist and Bandura's self-efficacy theory provide support. To teachers, training is mainly on task designing, creating good scaffolds and enhancing skills of managing dynamic classroom, through workshops, typical cases, so that teachers become facilitators in learning rather than evaluators. The students are slowly understanding the value of feedback, expressing feedback properly, knowing the evaluation criteria and prioritizing problems, as well as accepting and using feedback well. For the purpose of training concept

implementation, it's seen as crucial to conduct a pre-Feedback workshop using scoring rubrics, Model texts, guiding Exercise. Start from anonymous textual pieces or examples before moving towards the evaluation of actual Works. We use digital platforms for being more efficient and consistent. As for this structure training way, there are many research shows that it would greatly improve the proportion of "concrete and actionable" feedback. But most current study is about short time intervention, without long time effect trace. According to different training environments, the time and quantity of training should be arbitrarily set. Future research should do more efficient and scalable training model and the transfer and application of feedback skills. Creating a good feedback environment is also a guarantee of good peer feedback. Without having other students for security and friendship, their participation and feedback both drop. According to the zone of proximal development, supportive peer interaction is important for children's ability development. As for the Mindset Theory, it's a Growth Mindset that raises a learners receipt and delivering of feedback Specific strategies are to integrate mindset talks, transform classroom evaluation orientations into fostering a growth mindset to reduce students' psychological burdens during feedback; adopt a phased anonymous feedback model, start with just the text itself, gradually build trust, and maintain the objectivity of feedback; adopt digital platforms to provide feedback templates and asynchronous interaction functions to build feedback scaffolds, lighten interaction burden, and achieve feedback archiving and closed-loop management at the same time. Add continuous education and attention on feelings. Teachers should proactively observe among the students, stop unreasonable behavior in time, and provide feedback to teachers by actively seeking student opinions through anonymous channels, so as to continuously improve the system. The above strategies have to work together. Technological means achieve anonymity and give support. Growth mindset culture can help students take in feedback. Only when we integrate our own expectations, shows and reflections as a whole can we really experience this long-term value of peer feedback. Future practice should also do follow-up tracking to look at how it keeps affecting students' feelings and skills over time in different cultures and teaching style.

## 5.2 Establishing a Supportive Feedback Environment

Creating a solid feedback environment is the basic guarantee for the successful implementation of peer feedback. There is no psychological safety and peer trust, so it will result in lower participation and feedback quality. Its construction is firmly based on the theory of the zone of proximal development as well as the theory of thinking patterns. Core Strategies should create a multi-dimensional collaborative system: First, cultivate a growth mindset. In light of the classroom thinking patterns and adjusting the classroom evaluation direction as discussed, lead students to overcome the misconception that criticism equals negation, and regard feedback as a support for the improvement of ability to eliminate student's fear and defense of feedback from the source. Second, adopt a tiered anonymous strategy. At the start, pay attention to the text itself to avoid interpersonal disturbances. Once a peer trust bond is formed, switch to real-name interaction. Balance the feedback's objectivity with the cooperative atmosphere of the classroom. Third, use digital platforms to create feedback scaffolding. Use standardized feedback templates and asynchronous interaction functions to lessen the workload of teachers and students interacting, archive, track, and form a complete feedback management system with the feedback content. Make the feedback more pertinent.

To create a strong environment, we also have to improve support. Do targeted emotional training according to the teaching reality, be aware of students' emotions like anxiety and the reluctance in the feedback process, and give proper psychological care at once. Teachers should actively observe what's going on in the classroom, take immediate action against any inappropriate feedback behavior, gather feedback by asking teachers and students anonymous questions on surveys, and keep making improvements to the process. Each one should go as a pair. Technological tools can provide some support for anonymity and scaffolding construction. Growth-mindedness culture improves student feedback acceptance: Need to have an all-around design for teaching expectations, demonstration guidance, and reflection summaries. Future work could choose to use longitudinal tracking to verify whether this kind of environmental construction can produce long-term effective results, which could happen in different cultural backgrounds and teaching scenarios with different education level and also explore the deep influences on learners' psychological cognition and writing ability.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper is based on collaborative learning theory and a sociocultural perspective to analyze the practical problems

of the peer feedback mechanism in the foreign language writing classroom. The research findings suggest that peer feedback is helpful for students' writing improvement and autonomy improvement; however, there are two major problems: low feedback quality and low student participation. Teacher and student training problems as well as problems brought about by the training of culture and psychology. Thus, this paper puts forward two kinds of optimization plans—a perfect training system and an environment where people can give each other help. According to the empirical logic, it could be the way to promote the peer feedback from form to substance, and could be a practical reference to the foreign language writing teaching (Zou et al., 2023). A study limitation is that it didn't take into consideration that there might be some differences in the needs of learners with different levels of language abilities. Longitudinal research can be done to check if the strategies last over time and to see how to mix tech stuff and what other kids say.

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