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The Impact of Feedback Mechanisms on Writing Proficiency among Lower Proficiency EFL Learners

Mahdi R. Aben Ahmed

Jubail English Language and Preparatory Year Institute, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, Jubail 35718, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of peer feedback on the writing abilities of lower proficiency English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students and their perceptions of peer writing feedback. A quasi-experimental design was applied to 60 university students, divided into an experimental group that received peer feedback only and a control group that both provided and received peer feedback. Over a period of 8 weeks, both groups produced a series of argumentative writing essays. The experimental group, however, was trained to use a peer review rubric in providing constructive feedback. Pre- and post-tests in the form of timed essays were marked using an analytic guideline corresponding to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) writing band descriptors. Also, a questionnaire was used as a supplementary tool. The quantitative data were analyzed through paired and independent t-tests to ascertain statistical significance in writing development, and a questionnaire was used to gather data. The findings revealed that EFL learners with lower proficiency benefit from structured peer feedback but struggle with cognitive overload. To improve writing, students need scaffolding and specific, actionable feedback. Teacher guidance and structured feedback promote clarity, engagement, and collaboration, enhancing the educational impact of peer feedback activities.
Keywords: Writing Feedback; Peer; Writing Proficiency; Learners

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Mahdi R. Aben Ahmed, Jubail English Language and Preparatory Year Institute, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, Jubail 35718, Saudi Arabia; Email: Mha1121@hotmail.com

1. Introduction

Writing has long played a central yet challenging role in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In contrast to the receptive skills of listening and reading, writing requires the active combination of grammatical correctness, lexical information, coherence, and critical thinking. Among many pedagogies used to promote writing ability, teacher feedback has been considered the bedrock of practice for many years[1]. Nevertheless, the excessive use of teacher-led feedback has implications for sustainability, learner passivity, and its limited scope for learner autonomy. With increasing focus on collaborative learning and self-regulation in second language acquisition, peer feedback has been seen as a potentially revolutionary tool. Nevertheless, its use in EFL settings, especially among intermediate learners, is not well explored and utilized[2, 3].

Past research has already started to highlight the multidimensional effects of peer reviewing on writing education. Some would contend that requiring students to critique one another's writing improves their awareness of composition rules and extends their critical reading and revision capabilities[4]. Peer review can serve as a scaffold for metacognitive growth, enabling students to internalize assessment criteria and apply these skills to their own writing[5]. Additionally, the interactive quality of peer interactions can create a more authentic and reciprocal learning experience, thus lessening the cognitive load typically inherent in individual writing activities. While these positive implications are promising, there still exists a gap in empirical data regarding the effectiveness of peer feedback compared to traditional teacher feedback, particularly in EFL classrooms within non-Western educational contexts.

This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the effect of peer feedback on the writing proficiency of intermediate-level EFL students. Particularly, it explores whether guided and systematic peer review routines can have a quantifiable impact on students' argumentative writing competency, as measured by their performance on pre- and post-intervention essays. Taking a quasi-experimental approach, the study compares the development of an experimental group, which is instructed in using a peer review rubric, with that of a control group that receives only teacher feedback. Both cohorts will participate in a sequence of writing tasks over the course of eight weeks, enabling longitudinal analysis of writing development.

The reason for selecting argumentative writing is its complexity and cognitive load. In contrast to narrative or descriptive modes, argumentative essays necessitate students to organize sound reasoning, provide evidence, and refute opposing arguments—skills not only vital for academic achievement but also for critical reasoning in an increasingly globalized world[6].

Competence in revising such pieces based on useful feedback is thus the single most important measure of writing proficiency. In response, the research utilizes an analytic rubric in accordance with IELTS writing band descriptors to guarantee a standardized and thorough evaluation of the participants' written work.

Aside from quantitative data, the research uses qualitative data in the form of post-treatment focus group interviews. These interviews are designed to solicit learners' opinions regarding the peer feedback process, their agency in providing and receiving comments, and their general attitudes toward collaborative writing practices. Thematic analysis of these replies provided richer insights into the affective and cognitive aspects of peer review that cannot be measured by numerical scores. The mixed-methods approach reinforces the studys' commitment to capturing classroom realities in their complexity and providing evidence-based suggestions that are pedagogically sound.

2. Literature Review

Improving the writing abilities of EFL students should not be dependent only on one-time feedback from foreign language teachers but rather on a collaborative effort with reciprocal feedback to steadfastly support the continuous writing learning endeavors. The writing learning goal, in which EFL students cooperatively address a wide range of helpful recommendations, remarks, and advice meant to improve their writing performances, is perfectly suited to the continued use of peer feedback. Wijaya[7] culminated in an annotated bibliography review that thoroughly uncovered the unique effects of peer feedback on improving the writing abilities of EFL students. The researcher used a document analysis method to analyze the previously obtained research results in order to achieve the main study target and produce more believable and intelligible research outcomes.

The researcher also selected ten previous peer reviews

and writing studies to determine the applicability and relevance of the examined research findings. The study's findings showed that by consistently using peer feedback, EFL students worldwide have gradually transformed into more proactive, viable, and skilled writers, as they have made more effective writing edits in response to insightful criticism from their peers.

Bolourchi and Soleimani[8] sought to determine how peer feedback (PF) affected the writing performance and writing anxiety of EFL learners. To achieve this, 48 intermediate EFL students from two entire courses were chosen and divided into two groups: experimental and control (each consisting of 24 students). To evaluate the students' overall writing performance before and after the PF sessions, this study used a quasi-experimental approach that included a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The researchers collected data using Cheng's[9] Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI), seven writing subjects, a pre-test, and a post-test. The experimental group performed better than the control group due to the application of PF, as indicated by the results of the Mann-Whitney U Test and the paired sample t-test. At the conclusion of the trial, the researchers also administered Cheng's SLWAI questionnaire. The results showed that the experimental group receiving PF saw a considerable reduction in anxiety. The consequences are examined in relation to the use of PF by writing instructors in writing classes to create a more secure and comfortable environment in which language learners can express themselves.

To determine whether this manipulation had an impact on the writing performance of lower-proficiency EFL learners, Xiaomeng and Ravindran[10] raised the frequency of feedback provision and decreased the frequency of feedback receiving. This study was motivated by the increasing number of additional benefits from feedback provision. The experimental group (n = 79) performed the roles of feedback providers for two weeks and feedback recipients for eight weeks following the completion of the pre-test, whereas the control group (n = 60) did the same for ten weeks. After that, both groups completed the online survey and post-test writing. The outcome demonstrates that every participant's post-test writing improved noticeably over their pre-test writing. Interestingly, the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post-test by a large margin. According

to the survey, most respondents had positive opinions of peer review. The control group, however, was nervous about taking on two responsibilities in peer review. This suggests that lower-proficiency EFL learners may also benefit more from peer feedback giving.

Furthermore, Sotoudehnama and Pilehvari[11] examined two participant groups to ascertain whether providing or receiving feedback has the most positive effects on peer review in response to theoretical claims regarding the positive effects of peer review on the writing development of EFL learners. One hundred twenty-two female EFL learners in high-intermediate levels were split into two groups: givers (participants who exclusively provide feedback) and receivers (participants who receive feedback) at two proficiency levels (high vs. low). The findings of three training sessions revealed that irrespective of their level of proficiency. Givers improved more than receivers and nearly equally in both local and global aspects of writing.

Even while students' writing feedback literacy has received more scholarly attention recently, there are still few empirical studies on practical strategies for improving this ability. Few studies have examined the possible effects of peer feedback activities on students' overall writing feedback literacy, even though peer feedback frequently plays a significant part in the development of EFL writing. To close this gap, Weng et al.[12] examine how peer feedback activities affect students' writing feedback literacy development in areas like managing affect, recognizing various sources of feedback, appreciating feedback, making judgments, and acting on feedback. The study involved two intact classes, one serving as the experimental group and the other as the control group. Over the course of the semester (12 weeks), the experimental group participated in peer feedback activities, whereas the control group solely received traditional teacher evaluations. A writing feedback literacy scale was used to compare the two groups' pre- and post-intervention results.

Additionally, interviews with the experimental group's teacher and focal students were analyzed, as were the students' written assignments and revisions following peer review. The findings indicated that peer feedback exercises could greatly enhance students' capacity for judgment and their understanding of feedback. However, no discernible alterations in other dimensions were found. These findings

have important instructional implications and add to our current understanding of EFL students' writing feedback literacy.

Researchers have recently expressed concern about the low writing skills and high exam failure rates among EFL students. According to their findings, peer assessment (PA) can be effectively used to facilitate a more seamless integration of education and teaching, as well as the evaluation of students' learning progress. Meletiadou[13] used a pre-test, post-test, and quasi-experimental method to investigate how PA affected the writing abilities of 200 Greek Cypriot EFL students. Throughout the entire academic year, these teenage students attended two 90-minute writing classes each week. After completing PA skills training, teachers were required to instruct their pupils. During the training sessions, students and their professors worked on a PA rubric that was also created by the researcher and used by the students. To determine whether students in the experimental group (n=100 students and 10 teachers) and the control group (n=100 students and 10 teachers) improved their writing performance when comparing their pre- and post-test scores, paired T-tests were conducted. According to the study's findings, PA may improve pupils' writing abilities to a moderate degree. PA enhanced students' writing performance in five areas: vocabulary and language use, organization, topic, focus, and mechanics. This study offers suggestions for PA implementation in secondary school EFL writing classes, allowing teachers to enhance students' writing performance in response to the need for more experimentation.

Prior studies have highlighted the significance of peer feedback in general EFL contexts, but its ramifications in the Thai context have not received as much attention. The usefulness of peer feedback in improving Thai students' writing abilities and compositions was examined by Termjai[14]. This study aimed to find out how students felt about its effectiveness, pinpoint the precise writing components that both providers and recipients of feedback addressed and incorporated, and evaluate the precision of the comments and edits. Thirty-five English majors enrolled in the English Reading and Writing course at a Thai government institution. The research tools consisted of students' descriptive writings, interviews, and a questionnaire. Despite comparatively lower levels of perceived confidence in both giving and receiving peer feedback, the results showed that students unanimously agreed that peer feedback improves their writing abilities and quality. The feedback mainly focused on coherence, followed by other writing components, and together they achieved an impressive accuracy rate. Notably, students demonstrated greater levels of integration for grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary in their successive drafts than for coherence and unity, despite coherence being the primary goal. To improve students' writing skills and compositions, discussions were incorporated to offer insights into Thai students' perspectives, feedback provision and integration, and pedagogical implications for addressing peer feedback issues within the Thai EFL writing environment.

Kuyyogsuy[15] investigated how peer criticism affected students' English writing skills in second language (L2) writing classes. A mixed-methods study with an embedded experimental design was used, utilizing a self-written reflection as well as a writing pretest and posttest. A dependent sample t-test was used to assess the quantitative data, while a thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. Twenty-one English major undergraduate students from Thailand's three southernmost border regions participated. The results showed that the students' writing skills had significantly improved based on the mean scores of the pretest and post-test.

Furthermore, the effect size was determined to be 1.97, indicating a "large" magnitude. Additionally, students reflected that peer feedback was a valuable social interaction experience that helped them understand the writing process, develop effective strategies, support critical thinking abilities, and grow intellectually and socially through teamwork. They were also able to experience becoming more independent learners. Peer review should, therefore, be incorporated into L2 writing courses. Research on peer feedback in L2 writing published in the past decade (i.e., 2005–2014) is reviewed in Yu and Hu[16]. The theoretical foundations that have guided peer feedback research and the practical application of peer feedback in L2 writing teaching are examined first in this study. Additionally, they offer a critical analysis of the literature on peer feedback and address seven key themes that have emerged: (1) the effectiveness of peer feedback in comparison to teacher and self-feedback; (2) the advantages of peer feedback for those who provide it; (3) computer-mediated peer feedback; (4) peer feedback training; (5) student stances and motivations; (6) peer interaction and group dynamics;

and (7) cultural issues in peer feedback. After that, we look at methodological and contextual problems with peer feedback studies before offering some conclusions for further study.

3. Significance of the Study

The importance of this research goes beyond its immediate classroom application. It is at a time when educational policy more and more supports learner-centered methods that create productive models of feedback that allow for autonomy and interest to become the priority. Peer feedback, done with careful support and well-defined protocols, can democratize the writing classroom by decentralizing power and making students co-constructors of knowledge. For curriculum planners, the results of this study can provide useful guidance in incorporating PA models into EFL writing curricula. In addition, teacher education programs can learn from evidence that highlights the need to prepare teachers with the skills to promote meaningful peer engagement.

In summary, although teacher feedback will certainly remain an essential component of writing instruction, it is necessary to investigate additional approaches that tap the collective wisdom of students. It is argued here that peer feedback when organized and supported, can have a positive impact on writing performance and develop critical skills of self-regulation, critical thinking, and collaboration. By testing its effect in a controlled environment empirically, the study adds to a deeper understanding of how EFL students can be better writers, not just through correction, but through connection.

4. Research Questions

Peer feedback can have valuable implications for EFL writing instructors facilitating learner autonomy and enhancing revision processes through collaborative learning. In the long run, this can provide curriculum designers with insights into integrating peer feedback protocols into writing-intensive EFL courses. In this background, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of peer feedback provision on the argumentative essay writing ability of lower proficiency EFL learners?
2. What is the effect of peer feedback provision and re-

ception on the argumentative essay writing ability of lower proficiency EFL learners?
3. What is the perception of lower proficiency EFL learners about peer feedback provision and reception vis-à-vis argumentative essay writing abilities?

5. Method

Peer feedback is typically a reciprocal process in which learners both give and receive feedback within cohort groups (**Appendix A**). However, for lower proficiency learners, engaging in both roles can be particularly challenging, as it involves multiple cognitive stages, including problem detection, diagnosis, and the application of revision strategies[17]. Recent studies have found that writing development is only significantly enhanced when learners provide feedback to others, rather than simply receiving feedback[18]. In the context of the current study, the researcher assessed the effect of providing peer feedback specifically on the writing development of lower proficiency Saudi EFL learners. There appear to be no prior studies that have investigated this particular aspect with this population of learners. The researcher employed a mixed-methods design, using pre- and post-test writing scores and an online survey. When it comes to the peer feedback process, the researcher felt that it was practical also to use an online formatted peer feedback process, because post-pandemic education, this was considered a newly necessary tool in the learning tool-kit. This would facilitate a peer feedback process that would make peer feedback asynchronous and limit the anxiety that accompanies face-to-face peer feedback sessions. By using two sources of data, the researcher triangulated their findings to better understand how providing peer feedback may assist in improving writing proficiency, specifically for low-achieving learners, and to reflect on the affordances and challenges of using digital tools in EFL instruction. In sum, the rationale was that two types of data could be used to triangulate results and obtain a more accurate picture of how peer feedback reflected upon the writing proficiency of low achievers.

5.1. Participants

The current study had participants from an academic institution in the Eastern part of Saudi Arabia. Two sets of learners from the Department of English course were ran-

domly selected based on their University Placement Test, which identifies learners' proficiency in English, similar to the IELTS writing score band. As stated earlier, these participants were all lower proficiency learners with scores below band 4, indicating very basic understanding and limited ability to use complex language. It may be pointed out here that although English is taught as a foreign language from class 1 in Saudi public schools, most learners manage to reach the intermediate proficiency band in the university placement test, and very few score lower than that. The significance of this study is, therefore, even greater as it aims to be useful for the rather marginal learner of English. In all, 60 participants in the lower proficiency group were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group (30 each). No significant differences were found between the two groups in the University Placement Test, as they all came from the same pool of lower-proficiency learners.

Peer feedback is not new or unknown territory for the participants, as during and post-COVID-19, the revolution in education necessitated the introduction of new, participative, and collaborative learning environments, and given their efficacy, they have continued to be part of the education culture. This also applies to peer feedback, which nurtures a supportive learning environment where students can share both positive and negative feedback freely.

5.2. Instruments

The university uses a 12-point scale covering four dimensions of writing for teachers to evaluate EFL learners' essay writing. These four dimensions (total score is 20) are relevant to the topic, expression of content, coherence and cohesion, and grammar. One argumentative essay comprised the writing task for each week of the 8-week study. During this period, in the experimental group, participants volunteered (to a maximum of four) to upload their argumentative essays on the Google Drive link shared by the researcher. The field was then open to the group to offer constructive feedback to their peers on a Feedback Sheet, also uploaded on the drive. Thus, in a truly collaborative and democratic fashion, the participants could share their feedback. The same practice was followed in the control group, with the difference that participants had to refresh their writing based on peer feedback or maintain their original writing, but justify why they rejected the feedback. All essays uploaded by the two groups were rated by two experienced EFL writing teachers with IELTS trainer certification. They operated independently, and the final score for each participant was the average of the two raters' scores. Based on Gisev et al. [19], inter-rater reliability was computed and found to be high. Pre- and post-test scores were treated suitably (discussed later) to derive results. The six-step thematic analysis propounded by Braun and Clarke [20] was used to generate and identify leading themes.

Besides the test, a twenty-four-hour window was provided for participants to answer a closed-ended questionnaire to gather data on their perceptions, gains from peer feedback, and suggestions. Two professors validated the questionnaire items to ensure their content validity. They aimed to help derive conclusions about the efficacy of provision and/or provision and reception of peer feedback in writing essays. The survey questions were designed after careful analysis of earlier literature, the researcher's classroom experience, and vetting by a panel of ELT experts who also have experience in peer feedback practices. The questionnaire was piloted among 25 students to ensure its validity, and it was found valid, as shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Reliability statistics using Cronbach's Alpha.

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Perceptions of Writing Feedback	0.837	9
Gains from Peer Feedback	0.630	5
Suggestions for Feedback	0.873	4
Total	0.822	18

The table shows the internal consistency reliability of three constructs related to writing feedback, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The first construct, 'Perceptions of Writing Feedback,' scored 0.837 on Cronbach's Alpha scale, indicating good internal consistency. Also, the two other constructs, 'Suggestions for Feedback' and 'Gains from Peer Feedback' have good alpha scales of 0.873 and 0.630, respectively. Overall, the instrument has a reliability of 0.822,

which makes it reliable and valid to be used.

6. Data Analysis and Results

The first research question that the study set out to answer was:

What is the effect of peer feedback provision on the argumentative essay writing ability of low-proficiency EFL learners?

Table 2 summarizes the performance of the experimental group, which had engaged only in the provision (voluntary sharing) of feedback without any mandate for improving the writing in subsequent sessions.

Overall, the experimental group performed better in the post-test, with the difference in scores being statistically significant, thereby disproving the null hypothesis that a manipulated feedback mechanism, wherein participants only provided (and not received) feedback on peers' argumentative essays, is efficacious in improving their own writing. This finding can be interpreted to imply that evaluating others' writing helps lower proficiency learners identify the loopholes and shortcomings in their own output, thus creating opportunities for improving their writing. This conclu-

sion was also reached at by Khalil[21] as he investigated the impact of peer feedback on Turkish EFL learners at the pre-intermediate level. More precisely, by encouraging them to evaluate one another's writing and form their own opinions about the benefits of becoming more critical of their own writing, the researcher aimed to discover the approaches that would work best for these students. By addressing these goals, the researcher aimed to learn more about the benefits and impacts of peer evaluation on the students' writing abilities. To meet the study requirement, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was thought to be suitable. Primary data for the study was gathered using an attitude questionnaire and writing assessments to learn more about the needs of the students and the appropriate techniques needed for peer reading, analysis, and feedback. The students' opinions on peer criticism were also investigated through semi-structured interviews. The study's findings showed that students' writing performance improved because of the peer feedback process, and as a result, they developed a favorable attitude toward its use in EFL classes. Implications for foreign language writing classes and recommendations for additional research are provided, considering the findings.

Table 2. Experimental group performance in pre- and post-test.

Test	Group Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	P Value
Pre	3.4	1.54	5.619	0.000
Post	4.5	1.76		

The second question that the study set out to answer was:

What is the effect of peer feedback provision and reception on the argumentative essay writing ability of lower proficiency EFL learners?

The answer to this question was obtained from the performance of the Control Group in the pre- and post-tests. **Table 3** summarizes the findings.

Table 3. Control group performance in pre- and post-test.

Test	Group Mean	Standard Deviation	T Value	P Value
Pre	3.4	1.49	1.74	0.14
Post	3.1	1.81		

In the above data, although the t-value is moderate, the p-value below the threshold indicates that the difference in the group's performance is not due to chance. In other words, the practice of providing and receiving feedback affected the group's performance, in this case, negatively, as the group's

mean in the post-test was below that in the pre-test, although only marginally so. The Control and Experimental groups had one common element: the provision of feedback to peers' writing, but the former also received the feedback. Then, there must be some factor(s) responsible for their poorer per-

formance than the Experimental Group, since both groups had participants from the same pool of lower proficiency EFL learners.

The study will try to find the answer to this through survey responses, which will also answer the third research question: What is the perception of lower proficiency EFL learners about peer feedback?

As shown in **Table 4** and **Figure 1**, the three constructs were analyzed using percentages, standard deviations, and means

Table 4. Perceptions of writing feedback.

| No	Items	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Std. Deviation	Means	Rank
1	I believe receiving feedback on my English writing is important for my improvement.	00	43.3	56.7	0.50	4.57	3
2	I feel comfortable receiving feedback on my English writing from my teacher.	23.3	43.3	33.3	0.76	4.10	4
3	I feel comfortable receiving feedback on my English writing from my classmates.	00	43.3	56.7	0.50	4.57	3
4	I usually understand the feedback I receive on my English writing.	00	43.3	56.7	0.50	4.57	3
5	I find the feedback I receive on my English writing to be helpful.	13.3	63.3	23.3	0.61	4.10	4
6	I usually try to use the feedback I receive to improve my future writing.	10	23.3	66.7	0.68	4.57	3
7	I feel that receiving feedback makes me more aware of my writing mistakes.	00	43.3	56.7	0.50	4.57	3
8	I prefer receiving feedback on all aspects of my writing (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, organization, ideas).	00	36.7	63.3	0.49	4.63	2
9	I believe that feedback helps me become a better writer in English.	00	33.3	66.7	0.48	4.67	1
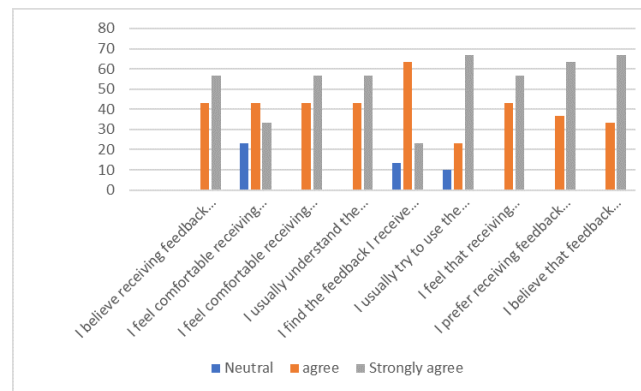
Figure 1. Perceptions of writing feedback.

The study reveals that students have a strong positive attitude towards receiving feedback on their English writing, reflecting both appreciation and recognition of its value in their learning process. The highest mean score was 4.67 for the statement, "I believe that feedback helps me become a better writer in English," indicating a strong conviction in the developmental impact of receiving constructive responses on their work. This suggests that students clearly associate feedback with tangible improvements in their writing skills and view it as an essential component of academic progress, rather than merely a form of correction.

The item "I prefer receiving feedback on all aspects of my writing (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, organization, and ideas)" scored a mean of 4.63, occurring at the second rank. This highlights that students value detailed and multifaceted feedback that addresses both linguistic accuracy and higher-

order concerns such as content and structure. Their preference for such comprehensive input demonstrates a mature understanding of the various elements that contribute to effective writing, suggesting that they are motivated to enhance their performance at multiple levels rather than fix surface errors.

The study reveals that students value feedback on their writing, particularly when it is clear, comprehensive, and relevant to their development. They are generally more at ease with peer feedback and have a strong conviction in the importance of feedback in developing their writing abilities. However, some students have reservations regarding the usefulness of teacher feedback, suggesting that additional assistance or clarification may be beneficial. The data also shows that students are not passive recipients but actively interpret, internalize, and implement the suggestions they receive, reflecting a feedback-literate mindset. Overall, students are highly engaged with the feedback process, viewing it as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism.

In summary, the data indicate that students place a high value on feedback, especially when it is clear, comprehensive, and directly connected to their development as writers. They appear generally more at ease with feedback from peers than from teachers, possibly due to the more collaborative and less evaluative nature of peer interactions, which can foster a safer and more supportive learning environment. Nonetheless, the consistently high ratings across all items suggest that students view feedback, whether from peers or instructors, as a critical tool in building their writing proficiency, fostering greater self-awareness, and increasing their confidence in using English effectively.

Table 5 and **Figure 2** revealed the participants' perceptions of the gains from peer feedback in their English writing development. The results showed that students believed peer feedback was beneficial overall, though the extent of perceived gains varies across different aspects of writing.

Table 5. Gains from peer feedback.

|	Items	Not at All	A Little	Moderately	A Lot	Great Deal	Std. Deviation	Means	Rank
1	Receiving feedback from your classmates helped me understand where I make mistakes in English writing.	00	00	10.0	46.7	43.3	0.90	4.23	2
2	As a result of peer feedback, my confidence in English writing ability has increased.	00	00	6.7	46.7	46.7	0.80	4.33	1
3	The peer feedback has improved the clarity of my ideas in English writing. (1)	3.3	10.0	53.3	26.7	6.7	0.86	3.23	5
4	I have learned new, different ways to express my ideas from reading my classmates' writing	3.3	3.3	20	23.3	50	1.07	4.13	3
5	The peer feedback was helpful in improving the organization of my paragraphs and essays in English.	13.3	23.3	13.3	50	13.3	1.25	3.63	4
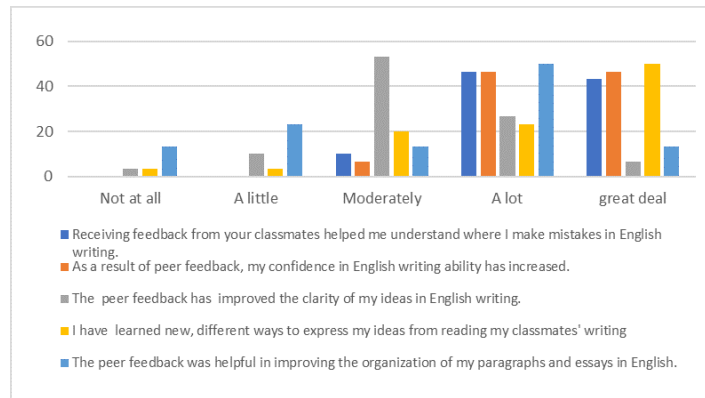
Figure 2. Gains from peer feedback.

The item 'As a result of peer feedback, my confidence in English writing ability has increased' scored the highest mean among the items in this construct, with a mean value of 4.33, which ranked first; this indicates that peer feedback not only contributes to skill development but also significantly improved students' confidence, which is essential for continued learning and engagement. Receiving feedback from classmates was perceived as an important aspect, with a mean of 4.23, showing that students find peer feedback useful for identifying areas that need improvement. Students reported learning new ways to express ideas from reading classmates' writing, indicating that exposure to peers' work offers valuable learning opportunities and expands their linguistic repertoire.

The study found that students generally perceive peer feedback as helpful in enhancing confidence, identifying mistakes, and learning new expressions. However, there is less consensus on its effectiveness in improving writing organization and clarity. The mean scores for the items 'Peer feedback was helpful in improving my paragraphs and essays in English' and 'Peer feedback has improved the clarity of my ideas in English writing' were 3.63 and 3.23, respectively, suggesting potential areas for instructional support to make peer feedback more targeted and effective.

Table 6 and **Figure 3** explain students' perspectives on enhancing the efficacy of peer feedback within English writing pedagogy. The data reveal a notable consensus among participants, evidenced by high mean scores across almost all items of this construct, indicating a clear student inclination towards more structured, lucid, and collaborative feedback mechanisms.

Table 6. Suggestions for feedback.

|	Items	Not at All	A Little	Moderately	A Lot	Great Deal	Std. Deviation	Means	Rank
1	It would be more helpful if peer feedback focused on only one or two specific aspects of writing (e.g., grammar or organization) at a time.	00	13.3	23.3	13.3	50.0	1.14	4.00	1
2	It would be beneficial if the teacher provided clear guidelines or a checklist for my classmates to use when giving feedback.	00	6.7	40.0	13.3	40.0	1.04	3.87	2
3	It would be useful if I had more time in class to discuss my classmates' feedback with them.	00	3.3	36.7	16.7	43.3	0.98	4.00	1
4	I prefer that peer feedback include more specific examples of what was done well and what needs improvement in your writing	3.3	16.7	13.3	26.7	40.0	1.23	3.83	3
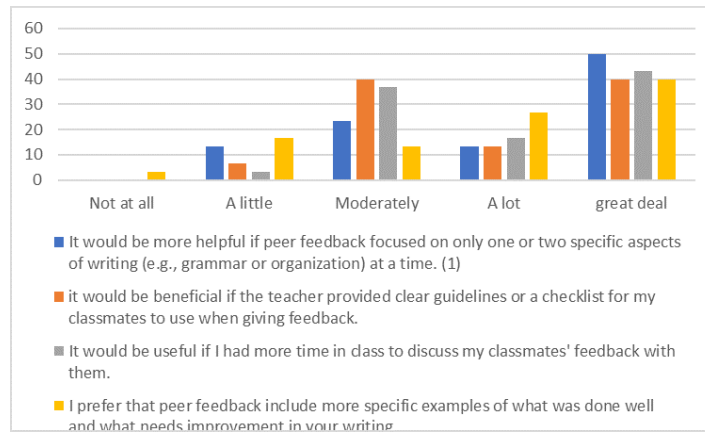
Figure 3. Suggestions for feedback.

The highest mean score was 4.00, which ranked first, and was shared by two items. Firstly, the suggestion that "peer feedback focused on only one or two specific aspects of writing (e.g., grammar or organization) at a time" was deemed most beneficial. This implies that students perceive narrowly scoped feedback as more advantageous than broad commentary. Such focused feedback enhanced precision, manageability, and the direct applicability of suggestions, thereby potentially increasing student engagement and the subsequent implementation of received feedback.

The study found that students value interactive discussions in class, as they facilitate clarification, deeper comprehension, and resolution of ambiguities. The low standard deviation (SD = 0.98) supports this, highlighting the importance of peer dialogue in fostering a reflective and collaborative learning environment. Students also prefer structured peer feedback, with a slightly lower mean score of 3.87; however, they still prefer teacher-provided frameworks to enhance consistency, relevance, and quality. The lowest mean score was for the suggestion to include more specific examples of writing strengths and areas for improvement. Overall, students believe teacher-provided frameworks can improve the quality of peer feedback and align it more effectively with instructional objectives.

All in all, the findings presented in **Table 6** underscore students' active engagement with and critical reflection on the peer feedback process. Their suggestions emphasize the pedagogical imperatives of targeted feedback, structured guidance, interactive dialogue, and specific, example-driven commentary. These insights highlight the necessity for instructors to strategically scaffold peer feedback activities by integrating pedagogical approaches that prioritize focus, clarity, and collaboration to optimize their educational impact on student writing development.

7. Discussion and Findings

Since EFL writers often find writing in English difficult, feedback is essential for helping them. Studies that demonstrate the variations in the effectiveness of teacher versus peer feedback and the responses of students to mixed input are generally uncommon, even though many research studies have been conducted on the value of peer and teacher feedback in EFL writing. Twenty students at an intermediate school in Buraydah, Saudi Arabia, where English is taught as a foreign language, participated in this study[3], which focused on peer and teacher feedback and both feedback models in three writing paragraphs. The study employed a semi-experimental approach to determine students' responses to the pre-post test design and the pre-post application of the questionnaire for a single set of students. At a statistically significant level of less than 0.05, the results showed no discernible differences between the mean scores of the instructor's feedback and those of the peers. Students' favorable opinions of combining feedback models, the value of peer comments, the high percentage of feedback incorporations, and their overall writing scores all demonstrated the experiment's success. Thus, the study affirms the value of mixed feedback based on the study's findings and suggests utilizing it to help students write better in English. This conclusion aligns with the current study's findings as well.

As stated earlier, different feedback mechanisms have

been the subject matter of research; however, what sets the current study apart are two unique features: manipulated feedback and lower proficiency learners. One of the study's findings suggests that peer feedback can improve motivation and facilitate the provision of feedback with an evaluation rubric. About the former, Cui et al. [22] examined the longer-term effects (i.e., into the next semester) of trained peer feedback on students' writing motivation and progress. During two semesters, sections of an EFL writing course were randomized to either trained peer feedback or instructor feedback conditions. During their writing lessons in the first semester, students either learned how to use peer feedback or only looked at writing models (which were also used in the training exercises). Students received peer or teacher evaluations on a variety of assignments during the second semester. At the start and finish of the second semester, tests of writing proficiency, writing self-efficacy, and writing self-regulated learning were conducted. Both the instructor and trained peer comments positively impacted the enhancement of writing skills and writing self-efficacy. In contrast to no such gain from teacher feedback, pupils' autonomous motivation was significantly increased by trained peer feedback.

The perception of students toward the feedback on their English writing was found to have a strong positive effect, reflecting both appreciation and recognition of its value in their learning process. The finding was confirmed by Al-Ahdal and Abduh [23] and Schillings et al. [24], who found that students perceived written feedback to be instructive. Students associate the feedback with a perceptible improvement in their writing skills and view it as an essential component of academic progress, rather than merely a form of correction. This finding aligns with that of Wondim et al. [25], who reported significant improvements in writing proficiency when peer feedback was used. They value detailed and multifaceted feedback that addresses both linguistic accuracy and higher-order concerns such as content and structure. Furthermore, students view feedback—whether from peers or instructors—as a critical tool in building their writing proficiency, fostering greater self-awareness, and increasing their confidence in using English effectively. Amazingly, students generally perceive peer feedback as beneficial overall, though the extent of perceived gains varies across different aspects of writing.

Regarding the suggestion, students revealed that peer feedback has to focus on only one or two specific aspects of writing (e.g., grammar or organization) at a time. This implies that students perceive narrowly scoped feedback as more advantageous than broad commentary; this notion goes in the same vein as Issa et al. [26] and Hopper and Bowen [27], who claimed that when it came to the ideal amount of writing feedback, preferred type to be grammatical errors, and the most useful writing feedback for specific error types. Such focused feedback likely enhances precision, manageability, and the direct applicability of suggestions, potentially increasing student engagement and the subsequent implementation of received feedback.

Discussing with classmates was perceived as having significance that makes students attribute to interactive dialogue. The provision of opportunities for real-time discussion facilitates clarification, promotes deeper comprehension, allows for the resolution of potential ambiguities, and promotes a collaborative learning environment. Students prefer structured peer feedback. However, they still prefer teacher-provided frameworks, which can enhance the consistency, relevance, and quality of feedback. The lowest mean score was for the suggestion to include more specific examples of what was done well and what needed improvement in writing. This suggests a preference for detailed and actionable feedback, as it helps students understand their strengths and areas for development. Overall, students believe teacher-provided frameworks can enhance the quality of peer feedback and align it more effectively with instructional objectives. Students' suggestions emphasize the pedagogical imperatives of targeted feedback, structured guidance, interactive dialogue, and specific, example-driven commentary. These insights highlight the necessity for instructors to strategically scaffold peer feedback activities by integrating pedagogical approaches that prioritize focus, clarity, and collaboration to optimize their educational impact on student writing development.

One important reflection was made by some students, who added that feedback protocols need to be made enjoyable, as connecting a stressful activity with positive emotions in the evaluation system makes it more effective for EFL students with lower language skills. This has been concluded earlier by Lo [28], who analyzed the effects of students' emotional state on academic performance. It may be added that students experience both social engagement

and reduced stress when participating in group commenting sessions and feedback circles for peer reviews. Further, learners develop increased engagement through the power of choice by deciding which specific parts of their work should receive evaluation. The use of points, badges, and peer feedback challenges through gamified feedback routines leads to increased satisfaction and motivation among participants. Positive emotional experiences during peer review can not only boost participation but also help mitigate the cognitive overload and anxiety often experienced by less proficient learners. When students feel safe, encouraged, and invested in the process, they are more likely to give and receive meaningful feedback, thus deepening both linguistic and metacognitive development.

8. Conclusion

The study findings indicate that lower proficiency Saudi EFL learners benefited from a manipulated feedback mechanism wherein feedback provision added value to their writing proficiency. Their perceptions of peer feedback are also positive, although they encountered obstacles when providing and receiving feedback during the task. This is a significant contribution to the available literature on peer feedback, as it dealt with lower proficiency learners and arrived at a unique result in the context of feedback provision.

Moreover, environments that promote feedback mechanisms on the premise that they are unquestionably beneficial come into question, as the current study found that motivation among lower proficiency learners was marred when they had to provide and receive feedback, as carrying out these two processes was too much of a cognitive load for them to deal with. This finding will certainly serve as a beacon for future research and policy development in EFL classrooms. Students perceive feedback on their English writing as a valuable tool for academic progress. They associate feedback with improvement in their writing skills and see it as a critical tool for building proficiency, self-awareness, and confidence. Peer feedback is generally perceived as beneficial. Students prefer narrowly scoped feedback, which enhances the precision, manageability, and direct applicability of suggestions. Interactive discussion are perceived as significant, promoting deeper comprehension and a collaborative learning environment. Structured peer feedback is preferred, but teacher-provided frameworks can enhance consistency, relevance,

and quality. Students prefer detailed and actionable feedback, which helps them understand their strengths and areas for development. Teachers should strategically support peer feedback activities by integrating pedagogical approaches that prioritize focus, clarity, and collaboration to optimize their educational impact on student writing development.

To enhance the generalizability of the findings from this study, it is important to include a more varied sample population that represents learners with different proficiency levels, educational and cultural backgrounds, and various writing genres. The shift to digital learning environments after the pandemic has really changed how technology plays a role in peer feedback, especially in EFL writing classrooms. Online platforms can be accessed by students to give feedback to each other at their own pace, easing the stress of face-to-face critiques and giving them more time to think things through. Tools like document-sharing sites, collaborative writing spaces, and feedback forms that include rubrics can make the peer review process more structured and help support students with lower proficiency levels.

These technologies offer benefits like instant access, easier tracking of revisions, and increased student engagement. However, the transition also presents challenges, including varying levels of digital skills, fewer opportunities for spontaneous questions, and a tendency for comments to be either too superficial or overly polite in asynchronous settings. Still, despite these hurdles, technology-driven peer feedback can be a key in keeping things moving, encouraging learner independence, and nurturing collaborative writing skills in a hybrid or fully online learning environment.

9. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, this study recommends the following:

1. Educational institutions should carefully assess their learners' needs and capabilities before implementing feedback mechanisms.
2. Notwithstanding the above, peer feedback should be encouraged as the first step in collaborative learning in EFL settings.
3. Different feedback mechanisms should be tested before any are adopted, as learners may react differently to them in their unique situation(s). Those that are

found enjoyable and positively impactful with the learner group may then be implemented.

4. Educators should structure peer feedback activities to encourage students to concentrate on one or two specific aspects of writing at a time,

5. Instructional design should incorporate dedicated in-class time for students to engage in meaningful discussions about the feedback they receive from their peers.

10. Limitations

Although this was certainly a unique study, a larger sample size and the inclusion of other factors, such as gender, language background, motivation, and engagement, should be considered in future replications.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The manuscript has been screened by the respective committee and everything is in place.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The necessary data were collected from the respondents following all professional norms.

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Confict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest whatsoever.

Appendix A

Peer Feedback Rubric

Criteria	✅ Yes, Well Done	🟡 Somewhat, Needs Work	❌ No, Needs a Lot of Work
1. The purpose of writing is clear	☐	☐	☐
2. There are appropriate examples to support the main idea in this piece	☐	☐	☐
3. The essay has a distinguishable Introduction, Body, and Conclusion	☐	☐	☐
4. Linking words in the essay connect one idea to another.	☐	☐	☐
5. The essay is written in formal language	☐	☐	☐
8. The title matches the content of the essay	☐	☐	☐
9. The conclusion summarizes the main points clearly	☐	☐	☐
10. Overall feedback: What is one thing your classmate did well? What is one thing they can improve?			

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