Research

Peer Feedback and Feedforward towards EFL Argumentative Writing

Rittu Gambhir

Language Institute Thammasat University, Thailand

rittugambhir@gmail.com

Supong Tangkiengsirisin

Language Institute Thammasat University, Thailand

supong_tu@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study aims to understand the main types of feedback peers use in an argumentative writing class at a private university in Thailand; and investigates the attitudes of the 30 EFL students towards peer feedback and feedforward. Peer feedback was provided on the draft and final versions of two argumentative essays assigned by the teacher. The types of comments provided by the peer on the peer feedback form, memo and essay were collected and analyzed quantitatively. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data investigating learner's attitude towards peer feedback and feedforward; and semi-structured interviews with learners was undertaken to triangulate the study. The results revealed that the type of instruments used for giving feedback had an impact on the peer feedback and type of comments. The maximum number of comments was found in the feedback form followed by memo and essay. Praise was the most common type of comment followed by advice and critique. Comments related to recognizing progress for improvement as well as advice towards future assignment, were prevalent in the final versions of both essays; such comments enabled learners take peer comments forward into the subsequent assignment. Feedforward did facilitate learners to set their goals; results of findings revealed improvement in the goals set by learners. Learners responded positively towards peer feedback and feedforward indicating that the act of receiving and giving peer

feedback and feedforward helped improve the argumentative essay.

Keywords: argumentative writing, feed forward, peer feedback,

1. Introduction

Feedforward is one of the most underdeveloped areas in assessment feedback based on a thematic analysis undertaken by Evans (2013). Research related to peer feedback mainly aims to answer questions such as what happens during peer feedback sessions, how peer feedback affects quality of writing, and/or what are the students' attitudes towards peer feedback (Ferris, 2003). Ferris (2003) suggests a serious need to undertake studies related to feedforward revealing the reasons and consequence of putting forward the comments of the peer into the next writing. Research is mainly focused on the current assignment and does not take into consideration the effect of the peer comment on the subsequent writing because the '*coding of student revisions are all extremely labor-intensive endeavors*' (Ferris, 2003).

The education reform in Thailand calls for the assessment to be clearly linked to student performance (Tangkitvanich & Sasiwuttiwat, 2012). Over the last 20 years, other countries such as UK and Australia have been aiming to provide such clarity and transparency through explicit assessments across the program but missed the chance to see how the feedback can be effective in the subsequent module as the feedback remained confined to a single feedback cycle in a program (Hughes, Smith, & Creese, 2015). Continuous, timely and subsequent feedback engages the learner in the feedforward loop to bridge the gap between current and expected performance (Hughes, 2011) which can be brought about by engaging peers in the feedforward cycle.

Having noted a minimal focus on research studies related to the effectiveness of feedforward in a peer feedback class in Thailand, there is limited work which foregrounds effective peer feedback and feedforward studies related to argumentative writing. A quantitative research study was carried out to determine the kind of feedback peers provide to learners in an argumentative writing class; and determine learners' attitude towards the feedforward cycle. To triangulate the study, in-depth interview with the students was undertaken to investigate as learners engage in a feedback and feedforward cycle.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Feedback and Feedforward

Feedback was dominant in the engineering world and entered the field of learning and education in the mid twentieth century. Transferring feedback as a "system-control function" by Ramaprasad (1983) into learning, feedback is defined as information with a

purpose to close the gap between the actual performance of a student and learning goals. Sadler (1989) suggested learners to engage in dealing with feedback through training, connect feedback to improve task, and take feedback forward to improve subsequent or future task.

Sadler (1989) traces the history of feedback from engineering where information provided was mechanical and external with no assurance that feedback has been acted upon, while feedback with information related to learner development (based on action taken) is *self monitoring*. A formative assessment requires transmission of information from feedback to self monitoring (Sadler, 1989) which can be controlled through a feedback loop to monitor the impact that feedback information has on student learning (Boud & Molloy, 2013). Based on the rationale that learning is characterized by feedback and self monitoring, a seven principle of good feedback practice is outlined by Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006. The principle is based on a self regulatory model derived from internal and external feedback. Internal feedback generated by cognition, motivation and behavior includes clarifying goals, self assessment, quality feedback, self esteem, bridging the gap, and pedagogical improvement. External feedback is generated by peers, teachers and other agencies.

Self-generated feedback influences cognition and motivation of a learner for any given (single stage) task, while feedback influences behavior when the task is undertaken in two (or more) stages to display revision and/or improvement in the subsequent task. In a typical situation, learners receive feedback in stage one and moves on to the next task without taking feedback to improve in stage two, thereby not being able to close the gap between learning goal and actual student performance. Attributed by feedforward, self regulated internal feedback influences learner behavior to bridge the gap by providing feedback for a task in stage one to help improve the second stage or the subsequent task (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). To observe effective feedback, learners engage in more than one task by acting upon the feedback in the subsequent task, thus completing the feedback cycle attributed by feedforward (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

Though behaviorist theorists believe that feedback can bring a change in learner behavior, Hattie and Timperley (2007) took into consideration Kulhavy (1977)'s argument that not feedback in itself, but the 'acceptance, modification, or rejection' of feedback affects performance depending on the students 'hunger for knowledge'. After conducting 500 meta-analyses from 180,000 studies with 450,000 effect sizes, The *Hattie and Timperley's Model* of effective feedback was proposed addressing three questions: *Where am I going* referring to the learner goals that need to be attained (feed up); *How am I going* refers to the current performance (feedback); and *Where to next* refers to learning that can be taken to subsequent assignment (feedforward).

2.3 Peer Feedback in Argumentative Writing Using Toulmin's Elements

Kaur (2015) mentioned argumentative writing to be the most difficult writing genre but an important and challenging skill for academic achievement especially at the university level. According to Kaur (2015), lack of practice is one of the factors that contribute to argumentative writing difficulty amongst Thai EFL learners. With an aim to teach argumentative writing effectively, Kaur (2015) suggests an effective teaching approach by developing strategies through uncovering students' weakness in argumentative writing. Amongst various strategies used, peer feedback was implemented when teaching argumentative writing and reported to be effective in developing writing skill.

In assigning skills to which feedforward can be implemented, Hughes et al. (2015) cited Lea and Street 1998's revelation of argumentative skill as a higher order skill for a specific discipline which needs to be explored further. Coffin (2004) refers to various studies including Toulmin's model for effective argument writing, especially during an IELTS test where two-sided arguments are required. Thus Toulmin's counter argument component is applicable. A Toulmin's elements of argument include ground, warrant backing, rebuttal and claim (Toulmin, 2003).

Though argumentative essay writing is one of the most difficult genre (Kaur, 2015), peer feedback can help students overcome the challenge and identify weakness through ongoing monitoring process (Wingate, 2012). Two sided argumentative practice can help improve argumentative writing (De Rycker & Ponnudurai, 2011) using argument schema to comprehend the text and identify key argument elements (Larson, Britt, and Larson, 2004). The Toulmin Model of argument that presents a two-sided argument (Coffin, 2004) can have a pedagogical impact to improve student's argumentative essay writing (De Rycker & Ponnudurai, 2011) through a feedforward class (Hughes et al., 2015).

2.4 Providing Peer Feedback and Feedforward

Teachers often found that providing feedback to students can be challenging and time consuming and have thus been encouraged to be trained to provide feedback (Ferris, 2007). If such professionals find feedback a challenge, peers undoubtedly would find providing feedback to friends challenging and may even wonder where and how to start providing feedback. Several studies confirmed peer training to be an effective strategy to be a good feedback practice.

In advocating the result of studies that peer response training can lead to good feedback, Liu & Hansen (2002) and Ferris (2003) put forward guidelines preparing students to provide peer response. Guidelines by Berg (1999) has been most influential in

fostering Liu & Hansen (2002) and Ferris (2003) to provide manuals for peer feedback. Both Liu & Hansen (2002) as well as Ferris (2003) were straightforward in providing the 11 guidelines by Berg (1999). However Liu & Hansen (2002) referred to Liu & Saddler (2003) and expanded into 16 points. The outline by Berg (1999) was classified by Liu & Hansen (2002) into affective, cognitive, sociocultural and linguistic categories.

Ferris (2007) suggests feedback training using a PPP (purpose, process and method) technique guided by the Approach-Response-Follow structure. Ferris suggests feedback provided should be a 'selective, prioritized approach' to include long term learning through assessment and evaluation, not just fixing errors for current assignment. Though the article mainly targeted teacher trainers, Ferris (2007) acknowledged feedback can be a 'judicious mix' sourced by teacher, peer and/or self.

An attempt is made to closely look at the guideline provided by Liu & Hansen (2002) as well as Ferris (2007), transferring the training to peers that Ferris (2007) suggested to teachers. It can be noted that 'Follow-up' is a useful approach allowing room for negotiation enabling learners to understand the comments provided by the peer, and to take the feedback forward into the next revision (or subsequent assignment).

2.6 Feedback/Feedforward Typology

Feedback comments can help learners improve writing and learners can take the feedback forward into the subsequent assignment to bridge the gap between learning goals and student performance (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). Hughes et al (2015) draws upon the feedback categorization from Orsmond & Merry (2011) to include praise, critique, advice, clarification request and unclarified request. Feedback remains a 'one-way message' until the comments are crucially related to the student task or assignment such that the feedback comments can be put as feedforward into the subsequent assignment. Hyland (2003) focuses on suggestions rather than praise to bring about change while criticism may or may not bring about the revision. Hughes et al. (2015) and Liu and Hansen (2002) are of the same camp that praise, suggestion and critique would be most effective when specific to a notion.

To overcome the challenge making praise effective, Hughes et al. (2015) added the ipsative 'performance goal' to the feedback categorization to clearly differentiate praise that may be subject to just current task; ipsative recognizes progress in comparison to the previous task. Critique was subdivided to discriminate global and local issues. To ensure advice is actionable as feedforward, a subdivision was clearly defined to include suggestions for future assignment.

Corrective feedback can be provided directly, indirectly and/or through metalinguistic comments (Ellis, 2009). Direct correction refers to instances where the peer identifies the error using cue (such as a strikethrough) and provides correction accordingly. Indirect correction refers to identifying the error without making any correction but using cues such as circles and/or underline to mark the error. Metalinguistic corrective feedback refers to clearly identifying the errors through explanations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Procedure & Data Collection

Peer feedback was provided on approximately 120 essays (2 essays with draft and final version for 30 students). Students used a combination of peer feedback forms including criteria checklist, response sheet and memo (Ferris, 2007). Based on Ferris (2007)'s 'selective, prioritized approach' to provide feedback, peers were encouraged to read the essay and provide feedback on the feedback form. Then peers would write a memo by selecting one feedback point to praise and two feedback points to suggest area(s) of improvement. At the end of every assignment, learners would fill the feedforward form to set goals prior to reading the peer feedback as well as after reading the peer feedback. The learner would take the goals forward for improvement in the subsequent assignment. At the end of the second essay, student were provided with a questionnaire to rate their attitude towards the peer feedback and feedforward activity.

3.2 Coding

Data collected from peer feedback form, memo and essay were categorized and coded for analysis. The types of feedback adapted from Hughes et al. (2015) and Hughes (2011) were categorized into praise (P1/P2), critique (C1/C2/C3), advice (A1/A3), clarification request (Q) and unclarified request (O).

In order to clearly distinguish feedback and feedforward, praise and advice were further sub-categorized to include subsequent assignments. While praise (P1) referred to praise towards current assignment, recognizing progress (P2) referred to improvement made when compared to the previous assignment.

Similarly, advice (A1) referred to suggestion towards current assignment while advice for future assignment (A3) referred to suggestions towards key areas of improvement that the peer provides to the writer to take into consideration for the next assignment.

Critique was further sub-categorized to clearly discriminate local and global issues.

Local issues referred to vocabulary, language & mechanics (C1). Coding for critique on global issues was further categorized into content (C2) as well as structure and argument (C3).

Questions asked by the peer for further clarification or request to respond to queries were coded as Q. Statements that provided no judgment or did not result in any action towards improvement of the essay (such as gratitude), or were of less relevance towards argumentative essay writing based on the criteria checklist (such as handwriting), were categorized as unclassified statement (O).

3.2.1 Coding of Peer Feedback Form

The feedback form was structured based on the criteria checklist adapted from Jacob (1981), Toulmin (2003) and Ferris (2007) to include response to prompt, use of reading, content, organization, as well as vocabulary, language and mechanics. Thus the comments on the peer feedback forms were coded into praise (P1/P2), critique (C1/C2/C3), advice (A1/A3), clarification request (Q) and unclarified request (O) adapted from Hughes et al 2015 and Hughes 2011; the peer feedback form require no coding in terms of criteria.

3.2.2 Coding of Memo

The memo allows the peer to provide praise towards one feedback point and suggest two feedback points for improvement. Two factors were coded in the memo, type of comment as well as criteria. Feedback comments in the memo are coded similar to the feedback form based on Hughes et al. (2015) and Hughes (2011), and categorized as praise, critique, advice, clarification request and unclarified request. While the criteria on the feedback form remained fixed and required no coding, any comments from memo were categorized based on criteria adapted from Jacob (1981), Toulmin (2003) and Ferris (2007) to include response to prompt, use of reading, content, organization, as well as vocabulary, language and mechanics.

3.2.3 Coding of Essay

Any feedback provided directly on the essay was categorized into corrective feedback or comments. Corrective feedback was sub categorized as direct or indirect feedback. Direct correction refers to identifying the error by making correction, for example by crossing incorrect occurrence and writing the correct answer. Indirect correction refers to identifying the error without making any correction but using cues such as circles and/or underline to mark the error. Comments on the essay followed the above mentioned categorization classification based on Hughes et al. (2015) and Hughes (2011) to include praise, critique, advice, clarification request and unclarified request.

3.3 Data Analysis

3.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

3.2.1.1 Data from Peer Feedback Form, Memo and Essay

Data from peer feedback form, memo and essay was coded and categorized into the type of comments and counted using statistical frequency for data analysis. Data from the first and second essay as well as the draft and final versions were compared across peer feedback form, memo and essay.

3.2.1.3 Data from Attitude Questionnaire

Data from the attitude questionnaire was calculated to investigate respondent's attitude towards peer feedback in general; attitude towards receiving and giving peer feedback; and attitude towards feedforward. Data was calculated based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 where 1 and 2 were negative attitudes (1=strongly disagree and 2= disagree); 3 and 4 were positive attitude (3= agree and 4=strongly agree).

3.2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data from in-depth interview with 5 students was analyzed from free coded transcripts with coding and findings reported to uncover information that was important and beneficial to the study.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 The Main Types of Feedback

As it turns out, praise (P1) is the most common type of comment found across all feedback instruments (including forms and essays) accounting for half of all comments, followed by advice and critique. Based on a similar study undertaken by Hughes et al. (2015) where praise, advice and critique also ranked amongst the top categories, however, results regarding subcategories differ. Comments related to future assignments from advice (A3) and praise (P2) were more prevalent in the current study compared to previous study where comments were provided related to current assignments for advice (A1).

Result from the study reveals that a feedback instrument (such as feedback form, memo and essay marginal comments) greatly affects the type of comments provided by peers. Praise, advice and critique dominate the kind of comments that peers provide to one another through a written feedback form, memo and essays; while questions and corrective errors were found in essays only, not in feedback forms or memos. A comparative analysis between the types of comments provides useful insights towards the development and purpose of the feedback on the draft and final versions (Hughes et al., 2015).

Praise

Praise remains the most common type of comment in this current study as well as a previous study undertaken by Hughes et al. (2015). While praise may be encouraging for EFL learners especially when undertaking challenging tasks such as argumentative writing, the effectiveness of praise towards improvement is in quest. In order to overcome the ineffectiveness of praise, which dominates all kinds of comments, praise is subcategorized based on 'ipsative' performance to acknowledge improvement made and enhance learner autonomy (Hughes, 2011; Hughes, Wood, & Kitagawa, 2014) thus recognizing progress (P2). The study undertaken by Hughes et al. (2015) saw 'ipsative' almost missing and ranking last amongst all comment categories. In contrast, results from this current study reveals that recognizing progress is predominantly prevalent in the final version of both the essays as well as the draft version of the first essay. Impressively, recognizing progress (P2) ranked third in the final version of the second essay, attempting to encourage writers to continue improve ongoing work into the subsequent assignment. The reason for the discrepancy between the previous study by Hughes et al. (2015) and the current study perhaps occurred as the draft and final versions of two essays were tabulated in this current essay rather than focusing on just one essay.

Advice

Following praise, advice ranks second mainly contributed by memo. Effective feedback results mainly from suggestions or advice that can result in constructive criticism resulting in revisions (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). However, advice is generally provided for the current assignment (A1) without taking into consideration the subsequent assignment; thus advice towards future assignment (A3) ranks low or almost goes missing (Hughes et al., 2015). This current study incorporated a structured memo adapted from Ferris (2007). The memo focused on a couple of feedback points selected from the feedback form, allowing peers to suggest writers the areas to improve for the future assignment (A3). Feedback provided by 'selective, prioritized approach' through textual commentary helps curb excessive comments; and contributes to learner's continuous growth enhancing learner autonomy, not just fixing errors for current assignment (Ferris, 2007).

Critique

Critique ranks third mainly contributed by comments in the feedback form. As Jones (2011) predicts, undoubtedly peer critique focuses on surface error (C1) more than rhetoric or global issues such as content (C2) and structure (C3) as evident in the first draft of the first essay. However, the shift from C1 (critique towards vocabulary, language and mechanics) in the first draft of the first essay to C2 (critique towards content) and C3 (critique towards structure) in the final version of the second essay depicts that the peer gradually views the work as a 'whole piece' (Hughes et al., 2015). Moreover, by the end of the second essay, vocabulary, language and mechanics may have been corrected so errors

on feedback are less prominent (Hughes et al., 2015).

Questions

Questions appear in the draft versions of both essays. The study remains at an advantage with minimal questions and maximum suggestions or advice as Ferris (2007) explains that L2 students sometimes find questions confusing by surpassing advice that may sometimes be embedded in the indirect speech act. An example provided by Ferris (2007) exemplifies the difference between suggestion and question where "Better give an example" is more likely to result in action compared to "Can you give an example here?". Thus, clear questions if well understood by the writer may help improve the work, else will jeopardize dialog or feedback distorting the communication (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

Corrective Errors

Corrective errors related to vocabulary, grammar and mechanics is evident in the essays only, obviously as the feedback form and memo does not accommodate such corrections. Results from the finding reveals that direct corrections far outnumbers indirect corrections; and the number of errors in the draft version far exceeds the final version. Errors gradually fade from the draft version in each essay as the mistakes decline towards the final versions (Hughes et al., 2015). Unsurprisingly, corrective error ranks last amongst all types of feedback as students were provided peer training based on the structured 'selective, prioritized approach' adapted by Ferris (2007) to primarily focus on global issues followed by local issues.

4.2 Attitude towards Peer Feedback and Feed Forward

Respondents have a positive attitude towards peer feedback and feedforward. While respondents are mainly inexperienced and relatively new to peer feedback, response towards the usefulness of peer training is positively viewed designating peer feedback to be effective (Berg, 1999).

The Act of Receiving

In general, more than 80% of the respondents are willing to have their essays previewed by peers, revise the essays according to the feedback comments, and find peer feedback helpful in improving their English writing ability (Liu & Chai, 2009). The result of the findings reveals that the respondents did improve their essays based on the comments received, providing highest mean score towards improvement in the recommendation paragraph (mean = 3.23). Receiving peer feedback also helped improve the overall organization of their essay as well as improve the conclusion paragraph (equal mean = 3.20 each).

The current study reported that 87% of respondents agree that classmates can evaluate their English essays appropriately, a slightly more satisfactory number of respondents compared to 70% reported by Liu and Chai (2009). In congruent with the study undertaken by Liu and Chai (2009), more than 70% of respondents agreed that peer feedback is as valuable as teacher feedback. Peer feedback cannot substitute teacher feedback but rather one complements the other (Qi, 2004).

The result of findings reveals that 80% of the respondents enjoy setting their own goals in the feedforward form, and found the form useful. One of the respondents claimed, "This is the best part. I enjoyed setting my own goals." After reviewing feedback, learners are allowed to engage in a dialogue with peers regarding appropriateness and clarity of comments, and can request peers for further support to improve the essay. In addition to the goals set prior to receiving peer feedback, earners would then set two goals to be achieved in the subsequent assignment after reading peer feedback and engaging in a dialog with peers. The act of allowing learners to interact with peers regarding feedback received facilitates goal setting for closing the gap between feedback received and goals students wish to achieve (Jones, 2011).

Respondents agreed that setting goals in the feedback form was helpful in writing both essays. Social interaction and mediators is the primary contributor to a learner's cognitive development (Moore, 2011). This leads to an understanding that development will take place "between" interactions of individuals (learner and interlocutor) as well as "within" the individual learner mediating the learner's thought through tools or agents. Based on goals set tabulated from the feedforward form, learners aimed to improve vocabulary, language and mechanics with a total of 129 goals, followed by content with 108 goals, organization (97 goals), use of reading (13 goals) and others (13 goals).

Respondents found it useful to ask questions and receive peer response on the form so they could improve their essay. Peers provide feedback such that the learners are able to interact and explore their skills and knowledge to reach the next level. While scaffolding is regarded as a collaborative process, zone of proximal development is the phenomenon, to take the learner beyond their area of present development to a higher level (Lantolf and Appel, 1994). Thus peer feedback is strongly supported by Vygotskian theories of scaffolding and zone of proximal development (Hyland, 2006).

The Act of Giving

While respondents believed receiving feedback from peers helped improved their essays, 77% of the respondents liked reviewing classmates' essays, a positive attitude as compared to a previous study by Liu and Chai (2009) where less than half enjoyed reviewing peer's work. In addition, results of current findings were congruent with the

same study where more than 90% of the respondents agreed to have carefully read the English essay of their peer; and more than 70% agreed that reviewing the peer's English essays helps inspire them to write in English.

A remarkable 97% of the respondents believe that peers carefully read their comments and revised based on feedback, as compared to a the 70% response rate by Liu and Chai (2009). More than 90% of the respondents reported that reviewing peer's English essays helps see areas of improvement by seeing a good modal and learning from friend's mistakes. The result of findings based on mean score towards each criteria revealed that reviewing peer's essays helped improve the overall organization of their essay (mean = 3.27), followed by improvement in the refutation as well as recommendation paragraphs (equal mean = 3.23 each).

Only about 73% of the respondents found it easy to respond to peer's improvement. Ferris (2003) refers to Mangelsdorf (1992) and Leki (1990b), suggesting that the act of giving feedback focuses on social skills, cognitive abilities, peer response techniques and requires patience. Considering the potpourri of quality an undergraduate is expected to meet for giving feedback towards a challenging genre such as argumentative writing, responding to peer's single assignment is commendable. Providing feedback and feedforward as an ongoing process requires tasks to be related, consistency (in terms of criteria or standards), and feedback given should be specific (Vardi, 2013). Selecting peers of the same discipline with common goals will help keep the reviewer motivated to give feedback, finding the process valuable and enjoyable (Ferris, 2003).

All the respondents reported improvement in essay when reviewing and responding to peer's work. Learners playing the role of a reviewer are exposed to construction of arguments such as confirmations and refutations, thus are able to revise their work accordingly (Tsai, Y. C., & Chuang, M. T. (2013). More than 90% of the respondents agreed that they did learn from the goals that friends set for themselves in the feedforward form. As Lightbrown and Spada (2013) quoted, "sociocultural theorists assume that the cognitive processes begin as an external socially mediated activity and eventually become internalized". Thus in order to revise one's own work, the learner may take into consideration peer feedback received as well as learner's own insights gained (from reviewing peer essay and goals) when taking the role of the reviewer (Yeh & Yang, 2011).

Dialog

Respondents agreed that the act or giving and receiving comments is indeed friendly. Both as a receiver and giver of feedback, peers and learners can engage in a dialog to express opinion, ask for clarification, or suggest if comments were appropriate and clear (or not). Interaction between peer and learners is effective based on the

implementation of Sadler (2010)'s concepts (task compliance, quality and criteria) mainly between teacher and learners. Nevertheless, the three important transmitters that enhance learner improvement is pedagogically proposed to take place through peer feedback. Sadler (2010)'s three concepts facilitating interaction included in the current study were the type of comment provided by the peer especially suggestions (task compliance), the criteria checklist that peers and learners can refer to for forming the paragraphs within the essay (quality); and sub categories evaluating each criteria, for example, Toulmin elements (criteria).

The results of findings reveal that most learners did not explicitly judge the appropriateness and clarity of the feedback; however, few learners were keener in gaining specific information to improve the essay. In addition to placing requests, learners did seek approval as many polar questions did not lead to actionable responses. External feedback (peer response) facilitated through dialog strategically paves way to self-regulated internal feedback; learner behavior is influenced by feedback provided for a task in stage one to help improve the second stage or the subsequent task (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

Progress Status

When learners were asked if they improved in the two points set before and after reading peer comments, 73% of the goals (262 goal) were marked as 'Yes I improved', while 'no improvement' and 'I'm unsure' accounted for an equal of 13% each, both with a total of 90 goals. The remaining 2% were goals voluntarily skipped by learners. Areas that respondents mentioned improvement did not take place included enrichment of vocabulary, organization particularly transition verb, and content mainly related to main idea. Paraphrasing remains an area of uncertainty as some respondents were not sure if they did improve or not.

Based on the above results of findings, majority of the respondents improved performance within an appropriate time between the first and second essays, supported by *feedup, feedback* and *feedforward* (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Feedup refers to knowing what goals learners need to attain; feedback refers to the current performance ensured through strategy to accomplish the task; and feedforward refers to regulating the feedback into subsequent assignment thereby bridging the gap between learner's existing and desired performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Implications of the Study

Peer training remains a critical process strongly influencing the pedagogical implication of peer feedback and feedforward in an EFL writing class. Thus peer training is recommended to be introduced to the learner prior to enrolling in the course; in fact an

ongoing drill through hands-on practice even as early as during freshman years will greatly benefit learners. Quality of feedback can be improved as the focus would be on the argumentative writing, rather than enhancing feedback and feedforward skills. Learners engaged in dealing with feedback through peer training, connected feedback to improve the task, and were able to take feedback forward to improve subsequent or future task (Sadler, 1989).

The type of comments illustrated through modeling technique facilitates improvement in effectiveness of peer feedback (Ferris, 2007). Training material should include examples to show the meaning and correction of each criterion. Peers should be able to explain to writers not just 'what' to improve but provide guideline as to 'how to improve'.

Specific details related to peer training such as formulating questions need to be addressed and practiced. Questions were specific when learners used 'how', implicitly and explicitly. Polar questions beginning with "Do I..." often led to yes/no answers and puts the learner's confidence in question, thus seeking approval rather than asking for suggestion. Though, questions requesting for clarification or elaboration yields results (Liu & Hansen, 2002), the question should be non-polar for effective answers.

As questions were geared towards seeking approval indicating lack of confidence, a genre- based activity can facilitate argumentative writing in a social context (Chala Bejarano & Chapetón, 2013). Modeling techniques act as a reference for students to shape essays through formulaic sequence. Joint construction facilitates dialogues, enabling learners to interact during the writing process. Thus peers and learners can discuss linguistic features, text structures as well as opposing viewpoints. Understanding the realities of the situation to respect one another's viewpoint while taking a stand for the argument can transform the writing process into a meaningful experience for a real life situation for the learner.

To support writers take their stand and improve the confirmation and refutation paragraphs, an essay framework forms the foundation to a good argumentative writing (Wingate, 2012). Peer feedback can begin as early as the development of the essay writing framework, focusing just on the argument even before developing structure, style or linguistic features. An illustration using text boxes can be used to establish the position of the writer to confirm or refute using Toulmin element. Once peers have understood learner's thoughts and agreed to the Toulmin elements, the learner can now start writing the paragraph. After providing feedback and feedforward to the structure related to the position, the writer can proceed to write the essay and send to the peer to review.

With an aim to implement the essay framework followed by confirmation and refutation paragraphs, based on the current study, Toulmin element is the most common area respondents aimed to improve. Usefulness of coherence devise ranked second amongst goals to improve organization of the essay, of which increase of transitions was most sought for improvement. The use of impersonal sentence structure with third-person pronouns can help make argumentative writings more objective; an enriching vocabulary and improved structure can help learners take a stronger position to argue more effectively (Hananta, 2015). The use of cohesion in second language writing can be responsive through feedback and effective for improving essay organization (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010).

Recommendations for Further Research

- Further research should be more focused on the paragraphs related to argumentation such as confirmation and refutation.

- Further research on peer collaboration and flexibility in group dynamics in subsequent assignment can be explored to bring together shared experiences and knowledge.

- Technology may be taken into consideration. The teacher can greatly benefit from timely analysis of the feedback comments and adjust lesson plans accordingly and be more proactive to guide students prior to the subsequent task.

- Further research related to satisfaction would be useful in bridging the gap between student needs and expectations.

- Investigating into the benefits of peer training as a part of the curriculum will enhance practice and acquaintance towards peer feedback and feedforward procedures, thus enabling students to focus more on the improving argumentative writing while using peer feedback and feedforward

5. Conclusion

Overall, praise remains the most common type of feedback followed by advice and critique. Result from the study reveals that feedback instrument such as feedback form, memo and essay has a strong impact on the type of comments provided by peers. While praise may be encouraging for EFL learners especially when undertaking challenging tasks such as argumentative writing, the effectiveness of praise towards improvement is in quest. Effective feedback results mainly from suggestions as well as questions that can lead to constructive criticism, thus facilitating revisions (Hyland and Hyland, 2001; Liu and Hansen 2002). In order to overcome the ineffectiveness of praise, which dominates all kinds of comments, 'Hughes et al. (2015) added the Ipsative 'performance goal' to the feedback categorization to clearly differentiate praise that may be subject to just current task, whereas ipsative recognizes progress in comparison to the previous task. Recognizing progress is predominantly prevalent in the final version of the essay, thus encouraging writers to continue improve ongoing work into the subsequent assignment.

Following praise, advice towards future assignment ranks second mainly contributed by memo. Feedback provided by 'selective, prioritized approach' through textual commentary contributes to long term growth, not just fixing errors for current assignment (Ferris 2007). A structured memo focusing on a couple of feedback points selected from the feedback form, suggests areas for writers to improve for the future assignment. Critique ranks third mainly contributed by comments in the feedback form. Undoubtedly peer critique focused on surface error more than rhetoric issues (Jones, 2011). However, in the final versions of both essays, peer critique shifted towards content of the essays.

The respondents had a positive attitude towards peer feedback and feedforward. The result of the findings revealed that the respondents did improve their essays based on the comments received as well as upon reviewing peer essay and giving comments. In addition to the area of improvement such as the overall organization of their essay as well as the recommendation paragraph, respondents agree that they improved based on the goals set for themselves.

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