

## STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON PEER CORRECTION IN ACADEMIC ENGLISH WRITING: A CASE STUDY IN A HIGHER EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

Peer correction has taken an important role in language teaching and learning as in contribution to motivate the performance of L2 learners in writing classroom. Peer correction encourages the development of autonomous learning due to teachers' review that took over-dependence thus lowered the students' initiative. However, the previous studies show that many teachers are still doubting the effectiveness of peer correction because of students' lack of knowledge and unable to assist other students. The current study investigated the writing performance of English L2 learners who either provided or received written peer correction in the context of academic writing tasks. Twenty participants enrolled and attended writing class in English Education Department in a state university in Surakarta. They were given a rubric to both reviews other students' writing tasks and receive peer feedback. In collecting data, questionnaires were collected after the writing projects. Results show the use of peer correction increased their writing motivation, self-regulated reflection, bidirectional communication, and deeper critical thinking. Thus, this study provide a clear finding of the efficiency of peer correction in improving students' academic writing and can be useful to be implemented in writing class for English learners.

**Keywords:** *academic writing, peer correction, peer feedback, writing performance*

### Sari

Penyuntingan rekan sejawat berperan penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris untuk memotivasi dalam proses penulisan. Namun, hasil penelitian sebelumnya menunjukkan adanya keraguan terhadap penggunaan strategi ini karena kurangnya pemahaman yang cukup oleh guru. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi calon guru dalam implementasi penyuntingan rekan sejawat dan penulisan teks bahasa Inggris. Dua puluh mahasiswa calon guru bahasa Inggris di sebuah perguruan tinggi negeri di Surakarta berpartisipasi dengan sukarela pada proyek ini. Data dikumpulkan dengan angket setelah kegiatan selesai. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penyuntingan rekan sejawat memotivasi mahasiswa untuk menulis. Selain meningkatkan

kemampuan menulis akademik, penyuntingan rekan sejawat juga mengembangkan prinsip refleksi.

**Kata kunci:** *kemampuan menulis, menulis akademis, penyuntingan rekan sejawat, umpan balik*

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## Introduction

Since the beginning of English's use as a first language, peer correction has been highly recommended as a valuable component in teaching to motivate the learning and keep standards so that the performance will be improved. (Anderson, 1982; Brophy, 1981; Kurihara, 2016; Naranjo, 2019; Vygotsky, 1978). Some studies show that text improvements in draft resulted from peer feedback with well-designed training. (Kamimura, 2006; Min, 2006). Peer correction expands the students learning by allowing students to correct their own mistakes and become self-regulated learners. (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p.1). However, many teachers are still doubting the effectiveness of peer correction due to students' lack of knowledge and unable to assist other students. (Braine, 2003; Dancer & Dancer, 1992).

Although peer correction is questionable, students are encouraged to take control in their writing performance by peer feedback that taking part in the development of autonomous learning (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006). Peer feedback plays an important role in instruction and provides learners with information that can change their existing knowledge (Mory, 2004). However, the existing literature overwhelmingly focuses on peer feedback without analyzing how authors assess and use the feedback (McEneaney & Zhang, 2019).

The present paper presents the efficacy of formative peer feedback compared to teachers' feedback and author responses to that feedback. This study investigated the extent to which college students in Sebelas Maret University could be observed to

provide relevant feedback on their partners' English writing and act on their peers' feedback during the revision process to improve their writing performance. The researcher believes that peer feedback supports more bidirectional communication, deeper critical thinking, and more informative as peers are at the same level.

### **Literature Review**

Peer correction has been studied and observed from a variety of points of view that it is a very critical issue in learning languages (Motlagh, 2015). In language learning, a correction not only comes from the teacher but also from peers. Caulk quoted Rollinson (2005) as saying that teachers review is broader than students' which is more peculiar. Peer correction or peer review defined by Liu and Hansen (2002) as "the learners' use of sources of information and interactions for each other in such a way that learners take on the responsibilities in commenting on each other's drafts in the process of writing."

In the 2000s, students' writing improved in many ways as the impact of peer correction in L2 writing classroom (Hirose, 2009; Jiao, 2007; Kamimura, 2006; Zeng, 2006). Suggestions, corrections, comments, and ideas' agreement can be accomplished by the students (Jiao, 2007; Kamimura, 2006; Zeng, 2006) since peer correction grants the learners to arrange agreement of their lack and potency (Williams, 1957).

Numerous studies have been conducted on peer and teacher review. It is found that L2 learners prefer teachers review to peer review. According to Zhang (1995), the majority of ESL students preferred teacher review to peer review or self-review due to lack of linguistic performance. Learners are confused and discouraged when the corrections come from their classmates who are non-English speakers so that they trust more on their teachers' reviews or coming from tutors who are native English speakers (Liu and Hansen, 2002). On the other hand, the benefits of peer correction have been found in other studies. For instance, Yang et. al (2006) stated that peer correction led to autonomy because of a greater number of self-corrections than teacher correction, while "overdependence on teacher review is likely to lower the students' initiative" (p.192). In college ESL classroom research, peer correction helped the students advance their social skills and provide meaningful assistance, a critical skill for writing improvement.

Therefore, although some studies conducted a greater impact on teacher correction than peer correction, it still has a significant benefit to learners, especially in an L2 writing classroom.

There are some research that studied peer review and its impact on the L2 students in writing class. For instance, a study conducted by Nelson & Murphy (1992) stated that the recognition of the advantages of the peer review was ineffective compared to the teachers' feedback. However, another research indicated that cooperating and acquiring each other improved students' self-esteem and their writing abilities as peer review was applied in writing class to reduce their writing anxiety (YastÕbaúa & YastÕbaúa, 2015). In addition, Google Docs has been positively influenced students' motivation to write and revise because Google Docs introduced the students to continue to work on their writing outside of class (Moore & Semeraro, 2016). In consequence, many researchers have studied peer correction from the conventional way until the current research that has improved peer correction into a new fresh idea by using Google Docs.

In summary, peer correction in L2 writing class has thrived over the past two decades. Regardless of the debate between peer correction and teacher correction, studies have shown that peer correction generates a positive impact in helping learners to improve their L2 writing.

### **Methods**

This is a descriptive research. Using a case study design, 20 students voluntarily participated in this study. Fourteen were female students and six of whom were male students. The participants were students in English Education Department semester 5, especially in writing class A1. Their level of English was intermediate determined by an exam organized by UPT2B of the university.

To collect data, the questionnaire was distributed to the students in writing class. The students had the role of either feedback provider or receiver. The online peer feedback was provided and the result of the students' writing improvement can be obtained from the rubric given by the teacher.

## **Results and Discussion**

This study investigated the extent to which there were differences in students' perception who received feedback from peers who were not experienced before in peer correction and receive feedback from their friends. The participants of this study were get used in using second language in writing as evidenced by their position as college student in English Education in semester 5. The author explained findings of this research by provide a brief result of students' perception in implementing peer correction in writing class. Their perception of peer correction included opinion, benefits, difficulties, suggestion, and real implementation.

L2 writing and the use of peer correction to develop L2 writing skills are being a doubtful connection. Yet, in this study, the researcher would like to support findings of the previous study. A research conducted by YastÖbaúa and YastÖbaúa (2015) found a positive result of peer feedback that helps the students to reduce their writing anxiety and motivate them to gain confidence in writing performance. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate more about students' perception of peer correction in correlation to improve writing performance.

### ***Student perceptions in relation to peer correction opinion***

Overall, students give neutral opinions related to the preceding of peer correction to be implemented in writing class. Chart 1 shows responses from 15 participants answering the question about their perception of using peer correction in writing class. From 15 participants, six participants have a neutral opinion and five participants agreed that they like using peer correction to be implemented in writing class. Although three students give negative opinions about peer correction, the six students give positive opinions about peer correction.

Result showed that student like to receive any feedback from my friends. From that feedback, students know something missing in their writing and received a helpful feedback from their friends. Naranjo (2019) investigated a study that resulting on peer feedback as a tool to improve the quality of the students' writing work by combining systematic writing instruction.

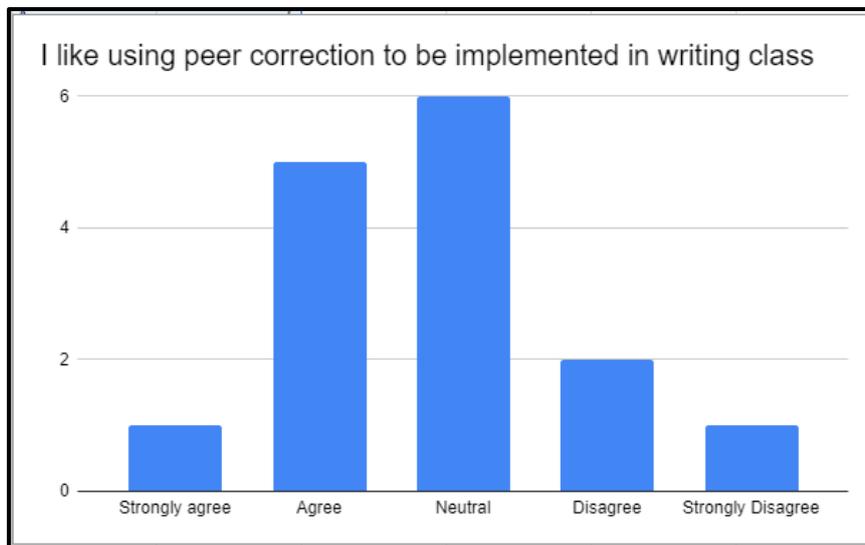


Chart 1. Students' opinions about peer correction using in writing class

### ***Student perception in relation to peer feedback benefit***

In general, students agreed to the benefit of peer correction that can grow self-reflection in writing class. Chart 2 shows responses from 15 participants answering the question about their perception of the benefit of peer correction in writing class. From 15 participants, eight participants agreed and four participants neutral that they realized their mistake in writing after implementing peer correction in writing class.

The students who agree with peer correction stated, “Peer correction motivate me when my friends' work are better than mine.” Previous study conducted by YastÕbaúa and YastÕbaúa (2015) found that peer feedback reduces the students’ writing anxiety levels, “the students’ physical and cognitive reactions to writing anxiety changed in a positive way by the end of the study, and it encouraged students to use English to write compositions. As indicated by Berg (1999), “in getting a response from a peer, the students will need to consider the advice from a peer, question its validity, weigh it against his or her own ability and ideas then make a decision” (p. 232).

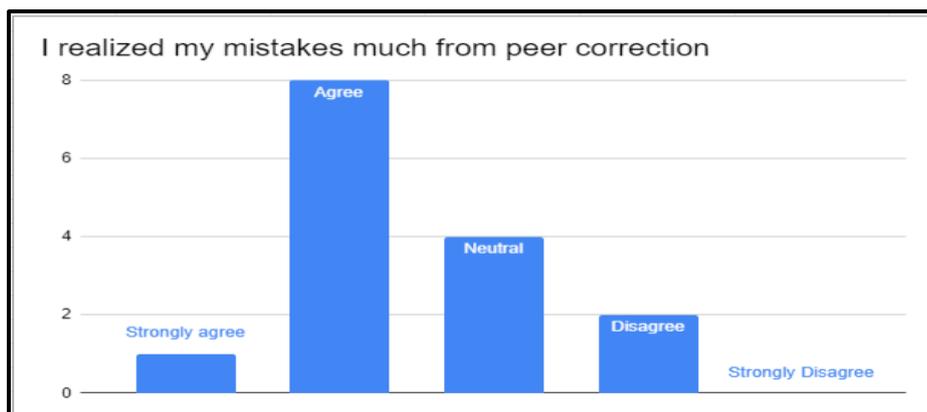


Chart 2 Students perception of the benefit of peer correction in realizing mistakes

***Student perception in relation to peer feedback difficulties***

Peer feedback was generally provided a balance response in the participants related to trust issues when using peer correction. From Chart 3, six students were neutral, five students agreed, and four students disagreed that they do not believe in their friends' correction. No participant strongly agree and strongly disagree with this perception.

One of the comment from the students is “I am still doubting the credibility of myself to check the others’ work. I don't know much actually, because i think teacher's correction give much more impact.” It relate to the finding from previous study that stated that most learners have shown tendency to be corrected by their teachers and none of the participants have chosen peer correction when not accompanied by their teacher. Zhang (1995) found that the majority of ESL students preferred to be corrected by teachers or themselves because of the L2 learners’ limited linguistic abilities.

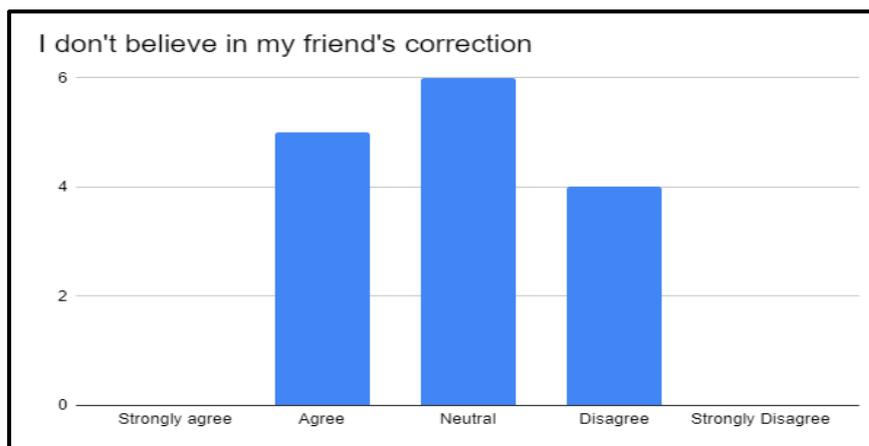


Chart 3 Students perception related to trust issue of peer correction in writing class

### ***Student perception in relation to peer feedback suggestion***

Results of the student perception related to peer feedback suggestion presented in Chart 4 focus on student suggestion to use checklist rubric to help in giving receiving correction. From 15 students, eleven students agreed with this statement. In summary, the majority of students agree to be facilitated with a checklist rubric to help them correct or review their friends' writing performance.

Most of the students need a rubric to help in giving or receiving correction. One of the students said, “That teacher should be there beside the students during peer correction to make sure that they do it correctly and help them on what should they to do next. And also we need a rubric as a guidance.” A previous study conducted by Motlagh (2015) found that students like their peers correction accompanied by the teacher feedback and suggest peer feedback to be accompanied with teacher explanation. The importance of teachers’ instruction has been cited from Berg (1999), “the teacher explained how to provide effective feedback on one essay, namely give critical but encouraging comments that might help clarify the ideas in writing.”

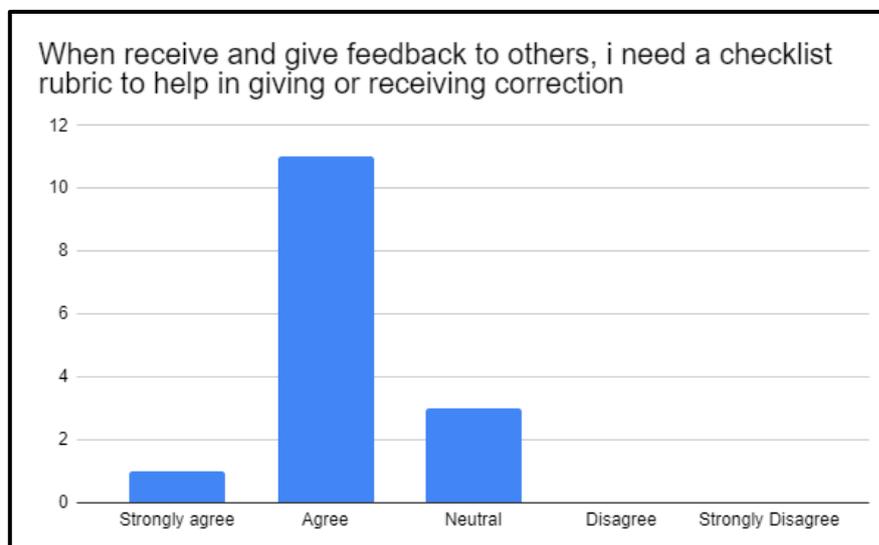


Chart 4 Students perception of the peer feedback suggestion to use checklist rubric

### ***Student perception in relation to peer feedback implementation***

Regarding the implementation of peer correction, Chart 5 presents student perception of the implementation of peer feedback in writing class. Of the fifteen responses that were answered by the students, six students were neutral, four students agree and disagree.

The perception is about peer feedback that being effective to be implemented in writing class. Thus, peer feedback may not fully effective as the students' responses were neutral but there is a chance to make peer feedback is effective to be implemented in writing class with some suggestions.

One of the students comment is “Peer corrections was effective improving my writing in this class.” Cho and MacArthur (2011), Greenberg (2015) stated “this findings corroborates those of prior studies reporting the positive effects providing peer feedback on students’ own writing performance.”

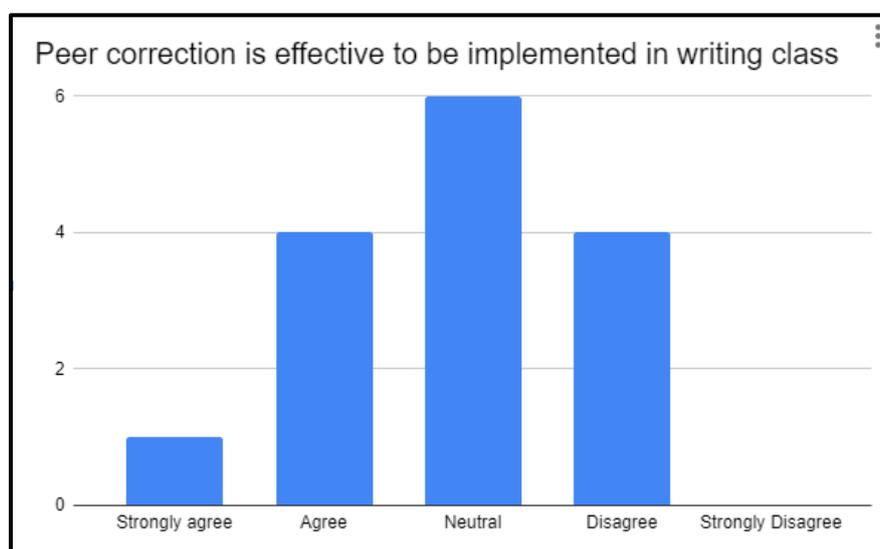


Chart 5 Student's perception of the effectiveness of peer feedback in writing class

In general the students showed a positive response to peer feedback to be implemented in the writing classroom. This findings is consistent with the results of different studies (Cho and MacArthur, 2011; Greenberg, 2015; Motlagh, 2015; Naranjo, 2019; Rachmania, 2018); YastÕbaúa and YastÕbaúa, 2015; Zhang, 1995) which indicated that peer feedback is effective to motivate the students to write, reduce anxiety in writing, and received a helpful suggestion from peers. In this context, lecturers’ role is also taken into account (Misdi, Kusriandi, & Tambunan (2020). Like the current study, theirs result have also indicated that peer correction is acceptable to learners when teachers accompanied students

during the peer correction process and give the explanation as their preference (Motlagh, 2015) in term of critical writing Misdi, Hartini, Farijanti (2018)

### **Conclusion & recommendation**

This study emphasizes the effectiveness of peer feedback and the results showed non-limited perceptions from the students. Some students weren't involved in peer feedback with the reason that peer ability and acknowledgment are not trusty enough. The validity of their peers' feedback is doubtful so the improvement of writing performance cannot be expected when students rely more on teachers' feedback that more credible and experienced. Thus, another finding presented a positive perception that the students can provide more comments to peers and they get self-reflection to pay more attention to detailed mistakes as being done by their friends. The considerations of students' suggestions using a checklist rubric can lead to better writing performance mostly in writing class.

Finally, some considerations must be regarded before this process can be categorized as an effective method. First, teachers must provide an example of a good feedback and a straight explanation before asking the students to do so. It helps students to understand how they should correct their peers. One of the ways is by using a checklist rubric contains several indicators and writing standard. Second, combining systematic writing instruction with the discussion about the purpose of peer feedback becomes meaningful interactions and grow self-reflection to become a good writer. Therefore, peer correction is not effective when being done alone. With those suggestions in mind, it is hoped that peer feedback will be a meaningful and effective activity to improve students' writing performance.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

No potential conflict of interest is reported.

### **Author Biography**

Chasna Tsuroyya is an undergraduate student in the English Education program at the Sebelas Maret University and will be graduating in 2021 with a bachelor degree in English Education. Tsuroyya has a strong interest in the field of second language education and English language teaching. Contact her at chasnatsuroyya@gmail.com.