


**Thracian Universities Association  
Postgraduate Student Congress  
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University  
29-30 April 2016**


**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF  
ANONYMOUS DIGITAL PEER FEEDBACK IN  
UNDERGRADUATE EFL WRITING**


Burçin BAYTUR  
 Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey  
 Assist. Prof. Salim RAZI  
 Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey

**OUTLINE**

- Writing as a skill
- The product-the process approach
- Feedback
- Teacher feedback vs student feedback
- Advantages of peer feedback
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- Problem statement
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**WRITING AS A SKILL**

- A long and challenging process
- Organizing ideas
- Requires good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary



**The Product Approach**

- ❖ Also called as *Traditional Approach*
  - ❖ Focus is on the final product
  - ❖ Well-organized and free of error

**The Process Approach**

- ◆ Producing and exchanging ideas

**Writing process (Keh, 1990):**

Pre- writing

Writing a first with a focus on content

Redrafting

Editing stages

**FEEDBACK**

- "Input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision" (Keh, 1990, p. 294).
- An important activity which facilitates the process of teaching and learning.
- Helps students gain the ability to write successfully.
- A crucial factor of motivation and encouragement in learning process (Çınar, 2014).
- May serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive class climate (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

### Three main sources of feedback

Feedback to learners derived from three main sources:

- teacher feedback,
- self feedback, and
- peer feedback (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Jordan, 1997).

### Teacher feedback vs. peer feedback

- ◆ Teacher: the only source of information.
- ◆ Students give feedback to each other.
- ◆ Also called:
  - peer response,
  - peer revision,
  - peer review.

### Advantages

- A positive impact on the writing performance of students.
- Feedback plays a central role in a students' educational development (Black & William, 1998).
- Provide learners to be more autonomous (Villamil & Guerrero, 1996).

### Digital environment

- Saves more time than traditional peer review.
- Not confined to physical and time constraints.
- Accelerates peer review process.
- Gives the possibility to seek teacher's advice and peer's guidance online simultaneously (DiGiovanni & Nagaswami, 2001).

### Anonymity in feedback

- Students can make comments more frankly.
- Is beneficial not only in terms of making easier for students to provide feedback,
  - but also generating comments that are more useful to the writer.



### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Are learners knowledgeable enough  
to help their peers  
detect linguistic problems and  
make suggestions to correct them?

## Main aim of the study



Investigating  
the impact of online peer review  
on the quality of students' revised texts.

## Research Questions

1. Can beginner level EFL learners provide effective peer feedback?
2. Does receiving anonymous digital feedback contribute to the development of better writing skills?
3. What are the perceptions of students towards the use of peer feedback in writing?

## Methodology Setting

- ✓ Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, a state university in Turkey
- ✓ School of Foreign Languages
- ✓ 2015-2016 academic year
- ✓ Fall term

Participants  
Biga Preparatory class students  
N = 13 (8 Female, 5 Male)

## Procedure

3 substages

First Stage: out of class activity-teacher asks each of the students to write a paper individually

Second stage: Peer feedback process in online and anonymous environment (out of class)

Third stage: students rewrite their own paragraph according to the feedback (out of class)

## Instruments

- Turnitin as a digital environment
- Assignment drafts
- E- feedback
- Interview sessions students
- Lecturer observation



## Results

**R1:** Can beginner level EFL learners provide effective peer feedback? (Teacher comments)

- ◆ Students who are not familiar with peer feedback have found the practice difficult and time consuming. They may feel frustrated as they are not sure what to give feedback on and the best way to give it. Training students in how to give feedback on their peers' papers may be beneficial of providing effective feedback.
- ◆ Using a detailed rubric or a checklist may be beneficial to inexperienced students, as it would focus their attention on the points that need more work in later drafts and therefore they may provide better feedback as the process goes on.

**R1-Teacher comments**

- For the students who think that feedback is a time consuming process, they can be asked to review only one essay or limiting the number of papers to be reviewed by each student can allow more careful reading and reflection which also may help them develop better critical reading and commenting skills.



**R2:** Does receiving anonymous digital feedback contribute to developing better writing skills in comparison to traditional feedback?

- Many L2 writers mentioned that e-feedback influenced their writing process.
- e-feedback from many people helped them to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their writings. One student mentioned that e-feedback encouraged him to write more revisions .

S8: " My friends gave me some comments that I didn't write on my essay. I read them and thought that they would help me. If we did not join this online feedback program, I would not revise my essay at all. It was an opportunity for me to see my mistakes."

- When it comes to concerns about offending the writer, the anonymous feedback does appear to have had a good impact on the willingness of students to provide feedback. The following answer confirm this assumption

S3: " when reading and giving feedback someone's paper whom I don't know, I don't have a worry about hurting or demotivating them. Likewise, they can tell me frankly because I don't know who is who".

**R2:** Does receiving anonymous digital feedback contribute to developing better writing skills in comparison to traditional feedback?

- A Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test indicated that post-test ranks were statistically significantly higher than pre-test ranks  $Z = 2.43, p = .015$ .

**R3:**What are the perceptions of students towards the use of peer feedback in writing?

- ✧ The students improved their self assessment and self-awareness skills . When they got feedback from their classmates, they checked their writings and corrected them accordingly.

S1: " I liked online peer feedback, I saw and learnt my mistakes ".

S9: "I like giving and receiving comments from my classmates. I know them, so, I felt more comfortable".

S4: " I think it was useful because the things we learn from each other are more permanent".

- ✧ As anonymous reviewers, participants felt that they could be honest with their comments and did not have to feel bad to criticize their friends.

S7: " I did not feel bad while commenting my friend paper. Because, I knew that he/she had no idea that it was me".

S13: " It is sometimes hard to make comments face-to-face. So, being anonymous reviewer was good".

## Discussion & Conclusion

Perceptions about peer feedback are positive because they believe it reduces their writing anxiety and makes them more confident in writing classes

According to them, making mistakes is a part of their learning and they can help each other in improving their writings on digital environment. The anonymity of reviewers made the learning environment less anxious and stressful. Therefore, they considered it as educational and supportive.

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## Implications

- ✓ students may lack the necessary confidence to provide a comment. Thus, pre-training may be necessary.
- ✓ Online peer feedback needs to be organized carefully to maximize its positive effect.
- ✓ Teachers should model and provide examples of effective peer feedback.
- ✓ Teachers should ensure that the process is easy for students to implement so as not to overwhelm them.

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Thank  
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