

Multi-Peer Feedback as a Means for Enhancing Students' Writing Skills

Osman Osmani*

Faculty of Foreign Languages, AAB College, Prishtina, Kosovo

Abstract—Teachers' role in helping students develop their writing is significant. However, as teachers regularly exercise too much control in the classroom in many schools and universities, there are frequently instances where teachers' instructions do not have a significant impact on each student, and, as a result, the desired results cannot be accomplished. The current study aims to find out whether peers can help each other develop this crucial skill through feedback, i.e., multi-peer feedback, in a more effective way. This empirical study was conducted with the second-year BA students of the English Department at AAB College in Kosovo. It lasted three months in 2022 and had 23 students. In addition, we aimed to find students' attitudes towards multi-peer feedback using a questionnaire. After collecting the data, it was found that multi-peer feedback contributed highly to the writing process, helped students produce better essays, and made them eager to discuss each other's essays once they got used to providing and getting feedback. Moreover, this very effective practice has been warmly embraced due to the following: first, it helped students get accustomed to receiving feedback from their peers by providing good examples in class; second, students learned how to be effective critical readers when reading and providing feedback on their peers' essays; and third, students realized how important it is to understand the structure of a well-written composition before trying to build one of their own.

Index Terms—multi-peer feedback, writing, essays, students

I. INTRODUCTION

The writing process is compared to a road map since it allows teachers to keep track of their students' thoughts and actions. If the writing process is a road map, the teachers are its co-drivers. When planning a road trip, drivers and navigators each have their own tasks. Since writing is a means of communicating with others and exchanging information, ideas, and experiences, mastering this skill is crucial (Cahyono, 2009). The improvement of students' writing performance is anticipated to be attained through the execution of this study approach. It is hoped that by creating an interaction between students to collaboratively create written discourse, students will be more involved in the learning process and consequently improve their writing skills. By using a creative approach, students' creativity will be developed too. We encounter changes every day, and they have historically produced better outcomes when put into practice. It is the author's contention that a change in the educational process, specifically in writing instruction and application, would greatly improve students' writing skills and raise their self-esteem. It is highly suggested that to create a better outcome, students should interact with each other, write collaboratively, and develop their creativity by having their own way of doing things.

A. Research Aims

We decided to conduct empirical research with AAB college students to determine whether multi-peer feedback plays any significant role in developing their writing skills because it has been observed that not always the instructions given by teachers are effectively accepted by each student separately. Thus, it is aimed at investigating the role of peer-feedback as an innovative tool to improve writing skills in particular. In addition to the challenges this approach might bring, we aimed at finding out how students perceive multi-peer feedback and providing the researcher's perspective from the observations he made with the students under the study. We intend to provide recommendations based on empirical findings for teachers of writing and those who intend to apply multi-peer feedback in their classroom.

B. Research Importance

Although many arguments are still running among researchers and linguists about the issue of peer feedback in improving students' writing skills, multi-peer feedback is relatively new among teachers of the English language in Kosovo in particular. Since multi-peer feedback is a tool that is utilized infrequently in many universities and schools, its advantages and disadvantages are not well known to a greater extent. This makes the research findings all the more significant. Thus, English course teachers in both higher education and pre-university settings will be provided with ground data and may act accordingly, allowing their time in the classroom to be used productively. These findings may be introduced as a planning tool in order to assist teachers in planning. Because our research findings related to multi-

* Email address: osman.osmani@universitetiaab.com

peer feedback will provide an in-depth investigation into various aspects of it, as well as a wealth of information that is not available in the literature and would be difficult to obtain by other means, English teachers will be able to plan and effectively utilize their time in a more effective manner when it comes to enhancing students' writing skills.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a common belief in many colleges and universities—possibly so today—that the teacher is the authoritative figure who should make decisions and provide feedback to students. It is he or she who views himself or herself as the ultimate authority and believes that his or her feedback is unparalleled in its efficacy. However, no longer is there a demand that teachers be the only subject-matter experts in the classroom (Sackstein, 2017). Nowadays, peer feedback is seen as a very productive practice that puts the student at the centre. It goes under different names. It is further known as peer review and peer assessment. It has typically been studied as a teaching and learning tool in a variety of settings and has generally received substantial study support (see Topping, 1998; Liu & Hansen, 2006; Liu & Carless, 2006; Lee, 2017, as cited in Schunn & Wu, 2019). Its positive impact has been shown in the opinion of Topping (2009) too, where according to him, it encourages students to share their knowledge with others and fosters teamwork, in addition to assisting them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Some use peer feedback as a less formal way of soliciting comments or advice, including how to edit a work, how the reader could improve it, and providing an assessment of the quality of the writing. For Hansen and Liu (2006), it is a fundamental and crucial component of writing instruction. They go on to say that this practice encourages students to assume the role of authors by asking them for feedback on the writing their colleagues have produced. Peer reviews provide the author with the opportunity to determine whether the message is clear or not, which helps build an audience (Rollinson, 2005). Typically, "peer feedback" means the process by which members of a particular field critically evaluate and help shape new works.

A. *Teaching Students to Give Peer Feedback*

It takes more than just telling your students, "Today, you are going to give each other feedback" to introduce peer feedback into your classroom. You must create a friendly and courteous setting that encourages taking risks and being open with others. As claimed by Sackstein (2017), students must first have the confidence to present their work to others before they may do so. It is the teacher who should try to build such confidence in his or her students. So, prior to undergoing the process of giving and receiving feedback, students should be comfortable telling their peers about themselves, presenting their work, and soliciting others' opinions. They should be instructed to be receptive to any questions and comments from their peers, and they should be open with their own ideas when asked for input. This, however, is not that easy, given that it is known that teachers have to deal with multi-level students from multicultural backgrounds. Often, in such settings, there might be a group of students who want to show off and establish superiority over the others (Sackstein, 2017). In this case, teachers need to safeguard student pride and ensure that the classroom is as free of negative judgment as possible. Unless this is achieved, progress cannot be guaranteed, for it is not acceptable for students to say nasty things to one another or make fun of something they don't understand. In order to enhance and promote feedback, the teacher should focus on providing a positive atmosphere, nurturing relationships, and assisting students in gaining meaningful insights from their peers.

B. *Pros and Cons of Peer Feedback*

In studies by Lee (1997), Mendonça and Karen (1994), Min (2006), and Wakabashi (2013), peer feedback has been shown to be very effective in fostering and improving students' writing. Because it serves so many purposes, it is extremely powerful. It: 1) assists in pointing out mistakes the student has overlooked; 2) calls attention to elements of the circumstance the learner had previously missed; 3) clarifies any misconceptions the learner may have and deepens their understanding of the subject; 4) offers fresh approaches or suggestions for enhanced performance; and 5) inspires the learner to get better (Hu, 2005; Liu & Carless, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Gao et al., 2018; Wu, 2019, as cited in Schunn & Wu, 2019.) The writers, once they receive peer feedback, produce better and more effective writing based on the comments and suggestions made by their peers. According to Min's research from 2005 (Min, 2006), students' abilities in general, including the structure and content, increased dramatically. As a result, it is a very successful, effective, and highly recommended research-based method of obtaining genuine, high-quality writing. Additionally, it was discovered in Wong's (1999) study, which examined the effectiveness of peer feedback, that this method reduced writing errors. However, peer feedback should be framed and follow some criteria in order to qualify as appropriate. Gibbs and Simpson (2004), as cited in Gielen et al. (2010), outline a number of circumstances in which feedback enhances learning. Feedback should be: (a) sufficient in frequency and detail; (b) focused on students' performance, learning, and actions under their control rather than on the students themselves and/or on personal characteristics; (c) timely in that it is received by students while it still matters and in time for application or for asking for more help; (d) appropriate to the goal of the assignment and its criteria; and (e) appropriate in relation to students' conceptions.

However, not everyone perceives peer feedback as advantageous. According to Yu and Lee (2016), teachers and lots of students have a lot of mistrust in the reliability of peer feedback. They argue that how can students who are developing their writing skills assist their classmates in improving theirs? Furthermore, students' lack of experience in this area is viewed as an impediment to the use of peer feedback. Yang et al. (2006) and Lee (2011), as cited in Shun

and Wu (2019), list, among other things, the limited prior experiences students had with peer feedback in instruction because of large class sizes, heavy teacher workloads, and tight teacher schedules. Rollinson (2005), who holds the same view, claims that peer feedback takes time, especially if students are unfamiliar with it. Based on this, a student who finds it difficult to learn from peers would face difficulties for sure. However, he or she is encouraged to engage with a certified tutor and gain practical experience in peer review. He asserts that reading a draft, providing feedback, and then making changes in response to the feedback all take a lot of time. Moreover, some teachers do not feel comfortable delegating their responsibilities to their students, and they may believe that if they do not intervene during the peer feedback session, the students will become less confident and disengaged from class activities (Rollinson, 2005). Not every student is able to accurately assess his or her classmates. According to Sackstein (2017), only a really self-aware student can accurately assess their classmates and comment on their work.

III. METHODOLOGY

We investigated multi-peer feedback's impact on improving students' writing skills. Students of AAB College who were attending their second year of study at the BA level in English were part of the study. They were of both sexes, 20 to 22 years old, with 22 of Kosovar nationality and one Bosnian. The whole class of 23 students was the sample. The research was carried out from March to May in the summer term of 2022. Of the students selected, 73.73 percent were female and 26.27 percent were male. Before conducting the empirical research, the students were taught how to write essays; they were instructed about the components of an essay and about the different types of essays. Lastly, they were made to read a number of essays by previous students and view the feedback the professors had provided them with. In order to have the students conduct peer reviews for one another, the researcher developed a peer review worksheet and shared it with them. Additionally, it gave them a simpler and better understanding of where to focus when providing feedback. The students were further encouraged to provide solutions and suggestions in addition to detecting the problems, because then their feedback could qualify as constructive. In an effort to reduce subjectivity and increase objectivity, the researcher divided students into groups of four students each (five groups) and one group composed of three students. He did this purposefully, given that students would prefer to join with their closest friends, thus leading to subjective results. Students had to write essays as homework assignments in four genres, namely narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive, and bring copies to class to distribute to their group members. Each student would then provide comments to three of his or her group members and receive feedback from the same peers. The same essays, but modified based on the comments received from two peers, were required to be submitted the other two days to the course instructor (in this case, the researcher). During peer review sessions, the researcher observed and provided feedback to students while they worked.

Mock peer review session

Though this practice is new to such students and may appear difficult to adapt to, students can become excellent peer strategists with minimal training and ongoing assistance (Sackstein, 2017). Therefore, two weeks prior to applying this approach, students were subjected to a mock peer review session. They were informed about the significance of multi-peer feedback in helping them develop professionally. In light of the above, practice activities and writing assignments related to the mock peer reviews at this stage should be seen as just preparatory stages for later use of the multi-peer practice. They were further instructed on how to provide effective peer feedback given that, at first, typically, students tend to be very brief in their comments due to their generality and trying not to sound like critics to their classmates. They were told that comments like "Well done!" and "Awesome!", and "Great improvement!", etc. are not really helpful and therefore not constructive. Therefore, they were encouraged to avoid them. In addition, they were encouraged to be as specific and detailed and as suggestive and constructive as possible so that their peers understood what they were doing well and what needed to be improved (*ibidem*). Besides, the researcher asked students to limit their feedback to the essay context only, though optionally they could provide feedback on grammatical, syntactical, vocabulary, and spelling mistakes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to measure students' progress, we chose four topics as their written assignments. The reason behind the decision to choose four different topics for students' written assignments lies in the number of English classes students have per week. Students attend two English classes once a week, and each class lasts 45 minutes.

The table below introduces the general progress achieved by the six groups, though it was not our aim to measure each group's percentage separately. Only for the first essay did we introduce the percentage for students' performance in the essay prior to receiving feedback and after receiving feedback. We did this on purpose because it was necessary for statistical recordings. For the other three essays, only the results achieved after multi-peer feedback are recorded.

TABLE 1
RESULTS ON FOUR ESSAYS

		Introduction		Body		Conclusion	
		Written Properly	Percentage	Written Properly	Percentage	Written Properly	Percentage
Essay 1 Narrative	Before multi-peer feedback	5	21.73%	9	28.12%	8	34.78%
	After multi-peer feedback	8	34.78%	11	47.82%	12	52.17%
Essay 2 Descriptive	After multi-peer feedback	13	56.52%	14	60.86%	12	52.17%
Essay 3 Expository	After multi-peer feedback	13	56.52%	16	69.56%	16	69.56%
Essay 4 Persuasive	After multi-peer feedback	19	82.60%	20	86.95%	20	86.95%

A. Essay 1 (Narrative Genre)

Basically, the most important goal for developing the introduction paragraph is to have a thesis statement and be sure it is supported by facts. Students seemed to have had significant difficulties framing the introduction paragraph correctly in the first essay once they were asked to complete it. Only five out of 23 participants were able to do so based on the required components. In the first peer feedback session, most students were very short and rather critical, albeit mildly, and few gave constructive suggestions. This prompted the researcher to once again organize an informative session for more constructive feedback. However, things have taken a turn for the better ever since.

The performance in the body paragraphs was slightly better (19.7%), however, the performance in the conclusion section was best (more than 50% of respondents were able to conform to the requirements necessary).

At first, the participants offered only general remarks and comments. Some made very brief comments like, "Yes, it is properly ordered," "It contains the conclusion," "It is not clear," and so on. Even though most of the students were unable to adhere to the standards, it is worth noting that almost all of them acknowledged this shortcoming and encouraged one another to pay close attention to the thesis statement, body, and conclusion section in upcoming essays. Some students focused more on the grammatical, syntactic, spelling, and vocabulary aspects of the text they were reviewing than on the components of the essay. These were, of course, taken seriously by the feedback recipient, and the fact that four students were checking the same essay and therefore offering suggestions only opened up new constructive and innovative ways for the student who had to reproduce the same essay once again.

B. Essay 2 (Descriptive Genre)

The students did not demonstrate equal proficiency in all genres. Because, in addition to the structure and skeleton of essays with their components, students must review the essay in terms of adhering to the genre for which it was written. The unique demands of the essay genre make each specific type of essay distinctive. The second essay belonged to the descriptive genre and had the title, "Describe an inspiring friend or family member." However, although the result was more satisfactory than in the first essay, our expectations were greater. Following the feedback, things began to improve. Even if the outcomes were still unsatisfactory, it was clear that their input was more detailed this time. Again, most of them started to focus on detecting deficiencies without offering problem-solving or alternative approaches. It would have been better if they had used more detailed feedback and provided some kind of structured problem-solving exercise. However, this approach undermined passivity and uncertainty, given that everyone was learning from each other's ideas. Nonetheless, the work on their analysis seemed to be helping them start to get a grasp of the situation. Even though their paragraphs were longer than the previous ones, 10 students, or 43.47% of them, once again were unable to produce a proper thesis statement. The students found it difficult to write a thesis statement. However, if comparing the body of the first essay with the second one, one notices that the effectiveness of the restructuring of the body has increased by 13.04%. Over 60% of the students under study were able to write one, two, or three paragraphs according to the standards, depending on the topic, with satisfactory language and structure. Students were expected to provide more precise, strong, useful, vivid, and logical feedback at this stage, given that they were better prepared than in the previous session. However, they did not perform so satisfactorily even in the conclusion part, where the conclusion remained where it was in the first essay, i.e., with 52.17%.

C. Essay 3 (Expository Genre)

This time, students were assigned to complete an expository essay as their homework assignment on the topic "Why do some parents seem to be strict with their children?" The students were considerably more prepared this time since they handled things really well. Their comments were rather suggestive, and their compositions were of a rather high standard. However, compared to the previous essay, no further progress was shown in the introduction section. As a result of their fast-paced and intense writing, 43.48 percent of the students omitted the thesis statement from their sentences. On the other hand, almost 70% of the students succeeded in summarizing and completing the conclusion. Not all groups performed as expected. Despite their best efforts, the second and fifth groups of students demonstrated significantly less improvement in their language skills than the other groups. That level of performance showed that

these two groups were not yet ready to write expository papers, so the teacher’s feedback was necessary. The same results were achieved in the body paragraphs. The final comprehensive statistics showed that out of the 23 students, the top 75% presented their arguments in a coherent and syntactically correct manner, while the other 25% needed to make further improvements and work harder than before.

D. Essay 4 (Persuasive Genre)

The students’ improvements are clear when it comes to their final assignment, which is to compose an essay in persuasive genre on the topic of "Pros and cons of social media." The average percentage for the three components is approximately 85%. In the last two sections of the essay, that is, the sections of the body and conclusion, each participant’s performance rose to 86%, which, if compared to the beginning of this study prior to providing peer feedback, in the body section has been improved by 58.83%, while in the conclusion section it is 52.17%. A satisfactory result was also achieved in the composition of the introduction, where the performance increased by 60.87%.

Given that this method has only been used for three months and that students attended English lessons once a week where they were also expected to learn other things, the outcome is pretty reasonable. Nevertheless, among the various benefits this approach provided, it was noted that students' active participation in peer feedback increased. The effectiveness of the feedback was also confirmed by the statistical analysis. Evidence shows that students are learning and growing with respect to their writing skills.

Peer feedback from students is regarded as an excellent tool for professional development. Students who meet peers face-to-face have a better chance of finding information or advice that they lack. However, with face-to-face feedback, teachers may use more informal modes of communication when explaining the ideas to students. No student wants to appear unprepared in front of a class, and no teacher wants to leave impressionable students with incorrect ideas about writing. Therefore, finding the most suitable approach towards improving this skill and then sticking to it is by no means a necessity. Another crucial benefit observed by the researcher was that students whom he knew were shy and introverted created a warming link with extrovert ones and did not have problems with communication and collaboration. Peer feedback usually depends on the mood, assumptions, and a student's intention to change. It was further found that better writers engage in deeper levels of reflection when writing a narrative essay, whereas less proficient writers rely more on retrieval strategies when they write a persuasive essay.

The phrases, "You've clearly understood the steps of how to properly write the thesis statement of the introductory paragraph of a narrative essay," "Though you have produced a good argument on..., I would have suggested you use a different structure when reproducing it," "I would kindly suggest you use active voice more than passive voice," etc. can now be found in peer review worksheets.

E. Students’ Views on Multi-Peer Feedback

A questionnaire was administered to the 23 students who were part of this study. It was composed of six statements only and was adapted from the questionnaire designed by Lin and Chien (2009, p. 8). It took students less than two minutes to complete it. We were interested in knowing students’ perceptions toward the application of multi-peer feedback. The results are then introduced in the column chart, and they are further analysed and discussed.

My teachers’ comments on my writing tend to have an emotional and, at the same time, motivational impact on me as I learn to write. After reading the unfavorable remarks made by my teachers, I feel apprehensive and lack confidence.

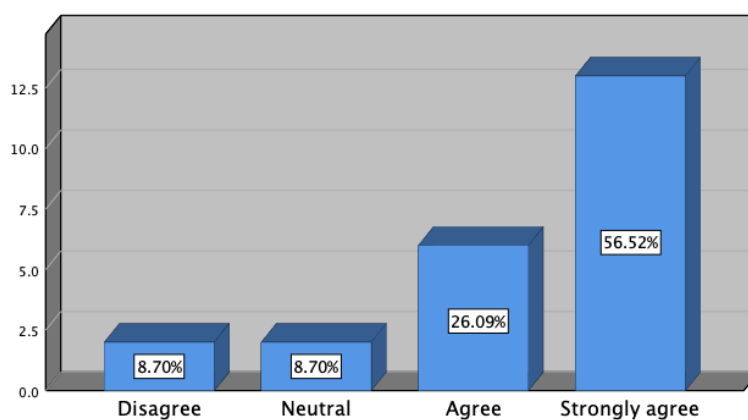


Figure 1. Teachers’ Unfavourable Remarks on Students’ Perception

The significance of teachers' feedback is not diminished. Moreover, teachers provide an invaluable source of ideas about language development, especially for writers. Since it is in human nature to seek praise, their suggestions and comments are actually very inspiring and enhance academic morale at the same time. But teachers' negative comments frequently cause anxiety and worry for certain students since they are afraid of criticism, which would only worsen their

lack of confidence and, as a result, their inefficient writing. Some students fear that teachers will mock their writing, criticize their performance in class, or say something they do not like. The vast majority (82.60%) of the students who participated in the survey claimed that they would not prefer teachers' feedback for the abovementioned reasons. Thus, the conclusion we draw from these findings is that, even if some teachers do not consider the peer-feedback approach, they are still urged to consider the feedback they give the students and come up with more effective ways to deal with critical remarks so that students do not lose confidence. Even if teachers are not actively and consciously teaching through their comments, the criticism is still critical enough to consider its long-term effects on the students' perception of their academic work and self-confidence.

When I read my classmates' comments on my writing, I feel more at ease.

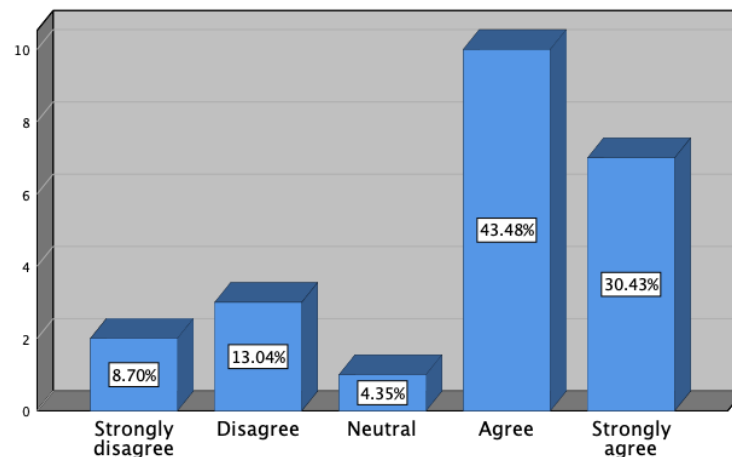


Figure 2. Students' Views on Their Classmates' Comments

Multi-peer feedback is viewed as having great value by 73.91% of the respondents. Despite the comments' framework, even if they are very negative, students' confidence is not undermined. Moreover, in such a setting, they feel relaxed, as opposed to when they receive negative comments from their teachers. Though they are in higher education, the majority of students do not complain of being insulted, humiliated, or bruised by peer comments. However, there is a contrasting viewpoint as well. Five out of 20 participants do not agree with their peers' remarks, positive or negative, possibly because they do not take their advice or criticism seriously. They consider that sometimes their peers are not experts, and sometimes they provide feedback just because they have to, though their feedback does not help at all since it contains nonsensical comments. That is why, according to some, teachers' feedback can never be replaced.

To comments from teachers, I much prefer multi-peer feedback.

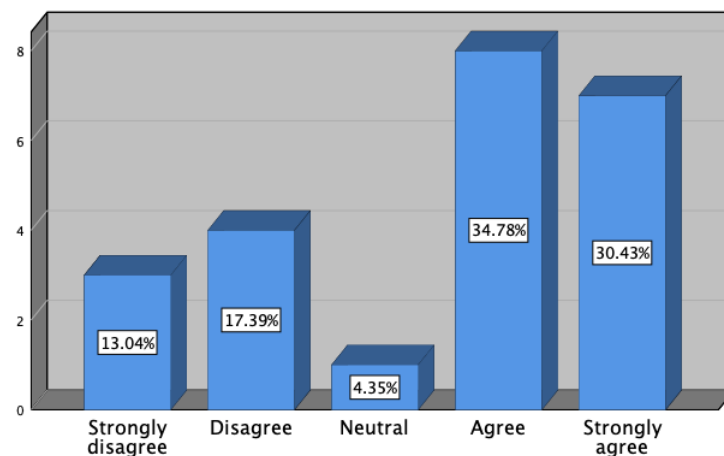


Figure 3. Students' Preference on Feedback

The figure of 65.21% is an indicator, and at the same time, it should encourage teachers, no matter the course they teach, to apply the multi-peer feedback approach. If feedback from peers helps most students develop their language skills more than feedback from teachers, then students should be provided with more competencies so that, as a result, their motivation for learning increases and, at the same time, they view themselves as contributors, particularly through

the assistance they provide to their peers. Feedback from peers not only stimulates students' development as learners but can motivate them to devote more attention to the task at hand. Given this information, the faculties and teachers should give students opportunities to demonstrate their skills and help them develop as learners. The best way to make teachers feel confident about peer feedback is to encourage students to describe the success of peer feedback by showing them practical results. However, 30.43% still give priority to teachers' feedback rather than peers' feedback, and this figure should not be overlooked at all. We must not simply measure time spent on a task but also measure whether it has contributed to the development of skills needed for future tasks. Therefore, a mixture of both is sometimes a good way towards students' enhancement. However, one thing is certain: peer feedback only works if students and teachers are convinced that students' language ability is a product of their own efforts and not a reflection of the speaker's native ability.

I believe that receiving feedback from peers helps me learn more in a fun way.

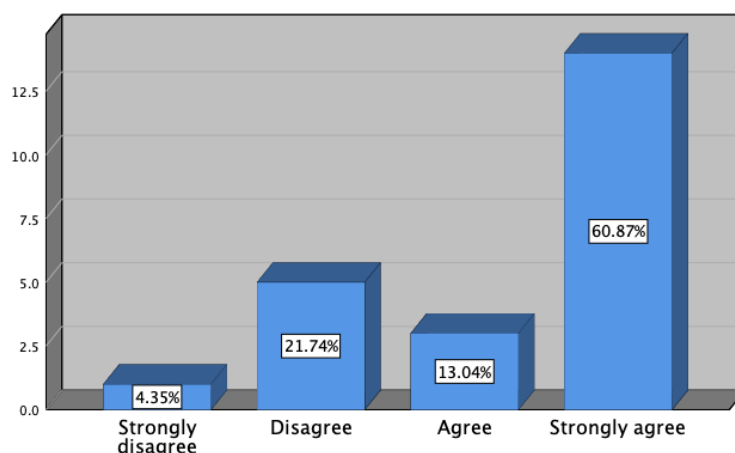


Figure 4. Students' Views on Peers' Feedback

Yet there were some students who did not positively perceive this type of feedback with regard to learning more in a fun way. For 26.08% of the students under study, this approach is not innovative and, consequently, not productive. Some students are apt to value traditional types of feedback over innovative forms because they perceive the former as supportive and not threatening to their learning. Some students simply do not enjoy feedback, but even if they do not find it "fun," teachers must be responsive and offer them alternatives to enhance their learning. Unlike for the majority of them, learning this way is fun, which makes things easier to grasp. In short, both the results from observation and the students' perceptions in the questionnaire speak much about the great benefits that multi-peer feedback has. To students, the benefits of multi-peer feedback seem to lie in the fact that it is inherently challenging, non-threatening, and enjoyable. Multi-peer feedback enables students to have their questions answered immediately, thus exposing them to knowledge more rapidly.

I can write more assuredly and encouragingly when I collaborate and connect cognitively with my peers.

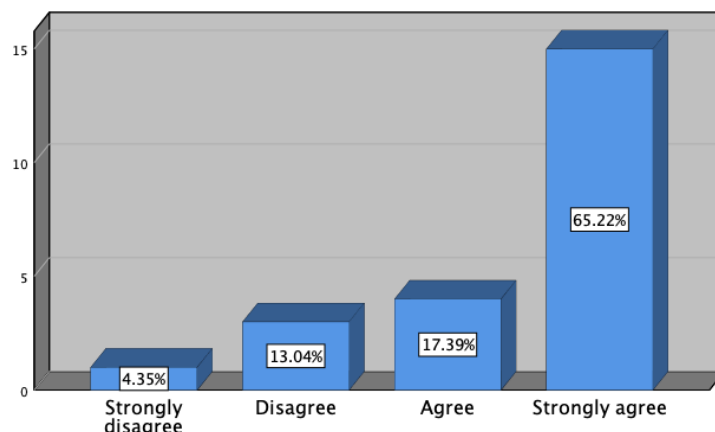


Figure 5. Students' Views on Their Performance After Collaborating With Their Peers

Perhaps the greatest advantage of peer feedback is the collaboration and interaction that occurs between students. Peer feedback encourages the development of self-concept and confidence in the abilities of students. Like other forms of formal assessment, peer feedback provides accurate and valid information about students' skills. Other forms of formal assessment do not stimulate as much conversation and collaboration, promote as much creative thinking, or promote peer learning and critical thinking as does this approach. Multi-peer feedback provided opportunities for peers to talk and work together towards meaningful goals, develop communication skills, and examine their thinking processes. Their collegial relationship had now moved to another level, which, in addition to producing healthy mutual collaboration in the context of their professional advancement, opened new windows of opinions, ideas, and discourse vocabulary for students. Thus, it is revealed that peer groups are a successful means of "self-concept enhancement." This helps students relate to classmates more effectively and enhances their social functioning, in addition to promoting students' self-esteem and sense of identity.

If I want to teach English in the future, I believe the multi-peer feedback pedagogy should be used in the classroom.

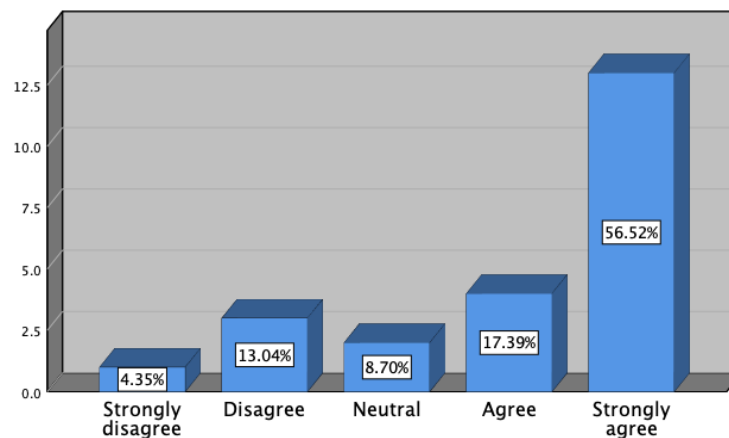


Figure 6. Students' Views on Feedback If They Teach

74% of students consider peer feedback a very helpful and attractive method of teaching and learning. They are in favour of using peer feedback if they pursue teaching as a career tomorrow. Most of them believe that given that multi-peer feedback is motivating and proven to be successful, they will apply it as a part of their classroom methods. Peer assessment is, in some sense, a more humane version of peer review, a more constructive version of instruction, and a more effective way to evaluate student learning than the traditional written form. In addition, peer feedback served these students as motivators and generators of new ideas. Here too, the opposite opinion on a percentage of 25 prevails.

The researcher's perspective on what he saw throughout these sessions is given in what follows:

F. Researcher's Views on Multi-Peer Feedback

Our research yielded several important results that illuminate the mechanisms that underlie peer feedback. Thanks to multi-peer feedback, students engaged in active learning and developed greater responsibility. Their roles and status were elevated, from being passive to active learners. It affected them in two ways. First, they tried to perform better because they felt some kind of pressure to meet their peers' high expectations since now they had access to a wider audience than just the teacher, giving them the ability to see how other students approached their work differently. Second, they started to become more critical of themselves and their own work. Though at first, fear of failing accompanied almost all the students, after the second session, things changed for the better and the students began to get accustomed to the new classroom situation, and the fear was significantly reduced. Basically, multi-peer feedback fosters a collaborative environment, which is actually one of the goals every teacher eventually aims to achieve. Students in such a classroom setting had the opportunity to collaborate and work as a team rather than independently. This, in fact, made writers think deeply about what was important for the essay topics and genres and work harder to ensure the quality of the writing. Working in groups means communicating with each other, which can sometimes be hard to achieve for some people. That is why some students initially shied away from engaging in multi-peer feedback because they believed that their language skills would never be good enough to get any kind of positive attention from others. In that case, it was the researcher, who was playing the role of an observer, who approached them and explained that suggestive comments should not be regarded as negative; because they might be constructive and consequently helpful.

Despite its great advantages, multi-peer feedback was observed to have some disadvantages too. It took students a lot of time to provide comments, since there were five groups with four members each and one group with three members. Each student had to give feedback on the same topic as the essays of the three other members of the group. Therefore, it is time-consuming if students are asked in such large groups to provide feedback in the classroom. Thus, the peer

feedback activities, time management, groupwork, and knowledge sharing required each student and each group to be active at the same time. Therefore, teachers who use this strategy—which they are highly encouraged to do—should recommend assigning students this task as homework.

Actually, though the class has great students, their levels obviously vary. What is worth mentioning is that the students who faced difficulties in writing and were underperforming started to improve to a great extent. So, in short, it influenced them because it served as a motivator and an encouraging tool that energized students, and somehow, they nurtured feelings that they were guiding others in the best possible way. In fact, the most interesting finding was that students' attitudes were not altered as a result of receiving peer feedback on their written assignments. To all this it should be noted that peer feedback is given by students who are on an equal footing with one another, and it can be seen as both a collaborative learning activity and a type of formative assessment (Topping, 2009; Webb, 1991; Van Gennip et al., 2010, as cited in Gielen et al., 2010).

If a student's work can be polished and finished with the help of his peer reviewers, the writing will soon become much more attractive.

V. CONCLUSION

This empirical research provides insights into a new teaching and learning practice, explaining why all students, despite their level of English abilities, may meaningfully participate in peer feedback, namely multi-peer feedback. Multi-peer feedback is a practice in which students in a class provide suggestions and comments to one another on the quality of their performance. Twenty-three students participated in the study over a period of ten weeks. They were assigned to write four essays in four different genres as homework assignments, and then they had to bring their copies to the classroom and switch with the other three members of their groups. At first, most students were rather frustrated, and it was observed that most of them had difficulties handling the assignment. The part where students mostly outperformed was the introduction, namely the thesis statement. In order to promote their own personal growth and insight, the students tried to discover ways in which they could all help each other maximize the impact of their essays. Their efforts were then realized because they were able to identify areas of weakness in their expertise and, as a result, became more cautious writers. When working together and helping each other, it turned out that both novice and expert writers were almost equally engaged in this process. The ones who were good at writing advanced at a satisfactory level, and those who were average moved to a greater level, though much is needed to further develop. This practice is better perceived compared to teachers' feedback. It rather motivated students to learn. Actually, it was observed to be a two-way process. In addition, the multi-peer feedback connection made them better able to assess their own learning because they grew when exchanging their knowledge and solving problems. Following peer comments, students were able to enhance their spelling and increase their vocabulary too. It engaged them actively in the learning process, aided in the growth of self-management and judgment, developed the ability to self-evaluate, helped in the development of topic knowledge, allowed them to obtain feedback more quickly, and encouraged social contact.

It was further revealed that it is time-consuming, particularly when applied to multi-peers, because each student had to provide feedback to three other students, and sometimes they provide similar comments, like they were influenced by their colleagues' comments. This, however, should not serve as an obstacle, because the advantages of this practice are so evident that it can change sceptics negative views and opinions regarding peer feedback applications. Therefore, English teachers are very much encouraged to apply this practice right away since they will be highly pleased by their students' growth in writing.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cahyono, B. Y. (2009). *Technique in Teaching EFL Writing*. Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- [2] Gielen, S. P. (2010). Improving the effectiveness of peer feedback for learning. *Learning and Instruction, Elsevier*, 20, 304-315.
- [3] Gielen, S. T. (2010). A comparative study of peer and teacher feedback and of various peer feedback forms in a secondary school writing curriculum. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36, 143-162.
- [4] Hansen, J.G. & Liu, J. (2006). Guiding Principles for Effective Peer Response. *ELT Journal*, 59(1), 31-38.
- [5] Hui Chin Lin, G. (2009). An Investigation into Effectiveness of Peer Feedback. *Journal of Applied Foreign Languages Fortune Institute of Technology*, 3, 79-87.
- [6] Lee, I. (1997). Peer reviews in a Hong Kong tertiary classroom. *TESL Canada Journal*, 15(1), 58-69.
- [7] Mendonça, C. O. (1994). Peer review negotiations: Revision activities in ESL writing instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(4), 745-769. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587558>
- [8] Min, H. T. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on ESL students' revision. Types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15, 118-141.
- [9] Rollinson, P. (2005). Using Peer Feedback in the ESL Writing Class. *ELT Journal*, 59(1), 23-30.
- [10] Sackstein, S. (2017). *Peer Feedback in the Classroom: Empowering Students to be the Experts*. Virginia, Alexandria, USA.
- [11] Schunn, C. D. (2019). The Learning Science of Multi-Peer Feedback for EFL Students. *TEFLE*, 5(10), 13-21.
- [12] Topping, K. J. (2009). Peer Assessment: Theory Into Practice. 48(1), 20-27. doi:10.1080/00405840802577569
- [13] Wakabashi, R. (2013). The effects of peer feedback process on reviewer's own writing. *English Language Teaching*, 6(9), 117-187.

- [14] Wong, K. R. (1999). *The effectiveness of peer correction in reducing mistakes in English compositions by S.5 students*. [Thesis]. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th_b3196118
- [15] Yu, S. &. (2016). Peer feedback in second language writing (2005–2014). *Language Teaching*, 49(4), 461-493. doi:10.1017/S0261444816000161



Osman Sabri Osmani was born in Gjilan, Kosova, on December 19, 1987. Osmani enrolled in BA studies in English Language and Literature at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina" in 2007/08 and completed them in 2010, thus gaining the title Bachelor of English Language and Literature. In the same year, he enrolled in MA studies at the same faculty and university, which he completed in 2014 with the title of Master of Philological Studies. In 2017, Osmani enrolled in Ph.D. studies in English language at the public university St. Cyril and Methodius in the Republic of North Macedonia and completed them in 2021, where he got the title Ph.D. in Humanities Linguistics—English Studies.

In the academic year 2016–17, he started his career at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina", as an English professor. Currently, he is a full-time professor at AAB Colleague in Prishtina, Kosova, at the faculty of foreign languages, English Department.

Dr. Osmani has published several papers and participated in many national and international conferences. Moreover, he is the author of a book with the title *Adjectives in English and Albanian: A Comparative Study*.