

A Review of Literature on the Potentials and Problems of Face-to-Face and Online Peer Feedback and the Patterns of Interaction among ESL/EFL Learners in a Peer Feedback Environment

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ABSTRACT

Peer feedback is one of the many elements that contribute to the mastery of the English language writing skills. However, ESL/EFL learners often faced difficulties in giving and receiving peer feedback as they often are not able to give or understand feedback from their peers. In uncovering the potentials and problems with peer feedback amongst ESL/EFL learners in developing their writing performance, this review provides a description on the nature and elements in face-to-face and online peer feedback, and report a review of literature on the patterns of interaction showcased by ESL/EFL students during the peer feedback sessions. Subsequently, the research gaps are identified and recommendations for future research are highlighted. The authors found that although some problems occurred when the peer feedback sessions are implemented, such as the preferences for teacher feedback and negative patterns of interaction, generally it is effective in improving ESL/EFL students' writing performance as both face-to-face and online peer feedback provides multiple benefits in their writing process (e.g., provides opportunities to discuss critical elements in writing, benefit from sense of anonymity in online platform and seize the opportunity for collaborative learning). However, the authors discovered that studies on the patterns of interaction are limited especially in an online peer feedback environment among ESL learners. Thus, this review recommends for future research to close this gap to uncover the potentials of the peer feedback (especially online peer feedback) in developing ESL learners' writing performance. As a whole, this review of literature brings great significance because it provides inputs to teachers on the strengths and weaknesses of the peer feedback approach (both face-to-face and online) and the best patterns of interaction developing the students' writing performance. These inputs can also benefit educational institutions and curriculum developers in introducing effective learning activities or tasks that involve the face-to-face and online peer feedback approach in the curriculum.

Keywords: ESL/EFL learners; Online peer feedback; Patterns of interaction; Writing performance; Writing skills

INTRODUCTION

There is no denying that the process of acquiring writing skills is considered to be very important, and yet it is also considered to be very difficult to master. This is especially true when the language that is being focused on is not the first language of the learners. According to Mukundan et al. (2013), English as Second Language (ESL) learners and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners always encounter problems and complications, especially in terms of writing. These ESL/EFL students face difficulties in their writing process as they often struggle with some of the important elements needed to produce excellent writing, such as vocabulary usage, syntactic knowledge, prior knowledge, and grammar (Shang, 2019). Ghabool et al. (2012) stated that poor language proficiency is one of the main reasons why ESL/EFL students find it difficult to grasp English writing skills. Meanwhile, Musa et al. (2012) argued that ESL/EFL students have difficulties in understanding or acquiring the said skills due to their lack of motivation in learning English. These studies showed that there are

various factors that have resulted in ESL/EFL students' weak performance in terms of the development of writing skills.

Since there are many elements that contribute to ESL/EFL students' problems in mastering English language writing skills, there is a need to have a better understanding on how to overcome such problems. The incorporation of the peer feedback approach in writing classrooms is becoming more prominent as it is proven to improve students' writing skills. Yu and Lee (2016) defined peer feedback as an activity where students either receive or give their own response to their peers' writing. In a traditional sense, the peer feedback activity is usually conducted in a face-to-face setting and as mentioned previously, it has shown to be beneficial in developing students' writing performance. Kusumaningrum (2019) found that both groups of EFL students who experienced random in-class peer feedback sessions and small group peer feedback sessions managed to improve their writing skills. Another study revealed that students' face-to-face peer discussion on their essay helped to develop their critical thinking skills in writing and also in understanding the appropriate writing process due to the session's collaborative nature (Kuyyogsuy, 2019). In addition, when students rely closely on writing rubric to mediate their peer feedback session, it significantly increased their understanding on how to use accurate and context-appropriate vocabulary, grammar and rhetorical devices (Yu & Lee, 2016).

The peer feedback approach has been known to have developed over time where different modes are incorporated. One of the modes is the usage of online peer feedback environment as a teaching approach in writing classrooms in which it has become more apparent especially in today's technological era. According to Xu and Yu (2018), they termed Online Peer Feedback as Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Peer Feedback, where students are able to offer and receive feedback synchronously or asynchronously through online educational technologies and platforms. It involves interaction between students in evaluating and commenting on each other's works in an online environment. The main strength of the online peer feedback is on its convenience where students are able to receive and provide feedback anytime and anywhere as long as they have the means to do so via mobile phones or computers (Lin et al., 2001, as cited in Cheng et al., 2015). Besides that, online peer feedback platforms are able to record students' discussions and feedbacks for reference and revision purposes (Yang, 2011, as cited in Cheng, et al., 2015). Bailey and Cassidy (2019) also discovered that when students experience online peer feedback sessions on their writing task, the interaction flow of the peer feedback process is clearer as it helps decrease students' writing anxiety. These features make the online peer feedback platform an effective alternative to be used among teachers in developing students' writing skills.

One of the most important aspects to be discussed in the use of both face-to-face and online peer feedback approach in writing classrooms is the patterns of interaction between students. Although this approach helps students to improve their writing performance, it might hinder its development. According to Zheng (2012), the three patterns of interaction that was found to have a negative effect on students' writing performance were the dominant-dominant, dominant-passive and the passive-passive pattern. The dominant-dominant pattern is evident when students contribute meaningful insights in their interaction but are unable to accept each other's feedback, while the dominant-passive pattern is seen when one of the students gives much feedback but do not give opportunities to other students (i.e., the passive partner) to contribute to the discussion. Passive-passive pattern, on the other hand, refers to students' lack of contribution in providing feedback in the peer feedback interaction. Other studies also shared similar findings on the dominant-dominant and dominant-passive patterns which were apparent among students and did not help in improving their writing performance (Storch, 2002; Kuyyogsuy, 2019).

Based on the above discussion, it is safe to say that there are mixed findings on the use of peer feedback, and therefore the understanding of interaction patterns in both face-to-face and online peer feedback environment is crucial to understand how the potentials of peer feedback can be capitalized and the problems minimized. Thus, the objective of this paper is to review past literature on the potentials and problems of face-to-face and online peer feedback and the patterns of interaction among ESL/EFL in a peer feedback environment. Subsequently, the research gaps are identified and recommendations for future research are highlighted.

A review of past studies on the topic will bring great significance to different stakeholders. For teachers, it will give them a better understanding of an alternative approach in teaching writing (i.e., the peer feedback approach). This review will provide them with more information on the best patterns of interaction in developing students' writing performance. Apart from that, it is hoped that the knowledge gained could empower their skills in using technology in classroom teaching (via the online peer feedback approach) as teachers and educators are expected to be well-versed with using online platforms as a means of teaching. This review will also greatly benefit educational institutions as well as curriculum developers. By knowing and understanding the nature of peer feedback sessions and the patterns of interaction in a peer feedback environment in developing students' writing skills, the methods in teaching and learning of writing skills can be improved by including a more student-centred approach. Educational institutions and curriculum developers can introduce learning activities or tasks that involve the face-to-face and online peer feedback approach in the curriculum. Lastly, researchers in the field of English language teaching and English language studies will be able to benefit from this review. The research hopes to explore and improve the understanding of the potentials and problems of face-to-face and online peer feedback, as well as the patterns of interaction among ESL/EFL learners in a peer feedback environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The systematic literature review utilized the matrix method in understanding the findings of past literature on the topics discussed and also identifying and analysing the gaps of the research. According to Klopper et al. (2007), the matrix method involves having an overview of the data from different studies in the form of a systematic table which enables the researcher to perform comparative analysis in order to identify connections between the studies. Goldman and Schmalz (2004) added that a review matrix includes columns and rows consisting of the details of the studies and the purpose of the documents. The purpose of the document is to allow the researcher to refer to the data that are to be extracted according to the purpose of the literature review. This method of reviewing literature promotes focused and systematic organization in extracting, analysing and synthesizing specific information needed to fulfil the objective of the review. This is due to the fact that the researcher is able to choose what aspects of the study that are needed for the review, and the table form of the matrix method makes it easier to identify any similarities, differences or gaps between two or more studies.

In conducting a systematic literature review using the matrix method, there are several processes that need to be followed in order to achieve an accurate and critical review. According to Goldman and Schmalz (2004), the first step is to plan the search of literature using specific key terms, followed by the selection of articles that are related to the review's objective through an analysis of its research objectives, methodology, findings and conclusion. Once the articles are selected, the researchers will create the review matrix by designing the rows and columns based on the objective of the review. Then, the articles will be read, re-read and analyzed to extract the information using the matrix table. Lastly, the information will be

transferred to the matrix table and later synthesized to fulfil the objective of the literature review.

This review closely followed the process suggested by Goldman and Schmalz (2004) where the first step consists of the search for previous studies using specific key words. Since the objective is to review past literature on the potentials and problems of face-to-face and online peer feedback, the patterns of interaction among ESL/EFL in a peer feedback environment, as well to identify the research gaps, key words such as ‘peer feedback’, ‘online peer feedback’, ‘writing performance’, ‘writing skills’, ‘patterns of interaction’, ‘ESL students’, ‘EFL students’ were used in the Google Scholar search engine. In order to ensure that the review is current, studies from 2011 to 2021 were selected, although a number of older articles were also chosen according to necessity. The selection of the articles was done based on the review’s objective. Thus, the abstract, research objectives, research methods, findings, discussion, research gaps and conclusion were analyzed. Once the articles were selected, the matrix table was designed where four columns were created (i.e., author and article details, methods and theoretical/conceptual framework, research findings, and gaps of the study). The information was subsequently extracted from the article and transferred to the matrix table for the synthesis process.

The synthesis process was conducted by categorizing the findings based on similar themes. The first theme is on peer feedback and ESL/EFL students’ writing performance where studies on the connection between face-to-face, online peer feedback and ESL/EFL students’ writing performance were explored. Next, studies on the elements of peer feedback which focus on the individual aspects (i.e., mental process and experience) of students’ experience in conducting a peer feedback session were discussed. Lastly, past literature on the patterns of interaction in a peer feedback session were analysed to identify how it relates to students’ writing performance.

FACE-TO-FACE PEER FEEDBACK AND ESL/EFL STUDENTS’ WRITING PERFORMANCE

There have been numerous studies conducted to study the practices and effects of implementing the face-to-face peer feedback approach in writing classrooms in relation to students’ writing performance. Birjandi and Hadidi Tamjid (2012) conducted a quasi-experimental study where they compared whether self-, peer or teacher assessment would be the most effective type of assessment and feedback in improving Iranian EFL students' writing performance. The result of the study shows that students from groups which receive self- and peer assessment treatment have the most significant improvement in terms of their post-test result. Diab (2011) also shared similar results in his study where he explored whether self or peer feedback would have minimal language error in their writing task. As predicted, students from the peer feedback group showed improvement in their writing. Huisman et al. (2018) also posited that the peer feedback approach gives a positive impact on Netherland university ESL/EFL students’ writing performance. They found out that both groups of students who either give or receive feedback yield similar improvements in their final essay, compared to their earlier drafts. These studies showed that the implementation of peer feedback is quite effective in helping students to increase their writing skills as reflected in their writing performance. In a more recent study, Kusumaningrum et al. (2019) discovered that when their participants consisting of EFL learners in Indonesia are put into two different peer feedback groups (i.e., in-class peer feedback provision or small group peer feedback provision), they showed significant improvements in the post-test scores of their essays, indicating an improvement of their writing skills. Apart from that, another study on Iranian EFL learners

revealed that significant improvement was observed in their writing performance due to the implementation of either self-assessment or peer assessment in their writing classroom (Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019).

From the studies above, it is apparent that in establishing the relationship between face-to-face peer feedback and ESL/EFL students' writing performances, the main research method chosen was the experimental research. This is where the studies incorporated the peer feedback approach on students and compared it with either traditional teaching method (i.e., teacher's feedback), other teaching of writing approaches (i.e., self-assessment) or different modes or focus on the peer feedback approach (i.e., receiving vs. providing peer feedback and small group vs individual session). Analysis of comparison in the implementation of different approaches are able to show improvements via the analysis of students' essay before and after the approaches are implemented. This quantitative data strengthens the effectiveness of face-to-face peer feedback approach in improving students' writing performance. However, the data did not explain how or why the face-to-face peer feedback approach contributed to such improvement in their writing skills. Past studies also include qualitative methods in exploring factors that lead to the improvement of students' writing skills.

One of the probable factors that contribute to students' improvement is the focus on writing components in discussions held during peer feedback activities. Berggren (2015) found in her study that the writing component that is revised the most after the ESL/EFL students have experienced the peer feedback session is their writing content. Suzuki (2008) supported the notion that peer feedback will give more chance for ESL/EFL students to discuss the topics, ideas, and contents of their essay. Since more focus is given on content rather than the language aspect of writing (i.e., grammar, spelling, and punctuation), students will become better writers as they understand what readers want to know in terms of the content of a particular essay. This is also reflected in another study, where it was found that EFL students in China rely closely on writing rubric or criteria for the content of essays to mediate the discussion during the peer feedback session (Yu & Lee, 2016). Similarly, Kuyyogsuy (2019) discovered that the focus on students' peer feedback interactions consists of feedback given to improve the content of essays (i.e., ideas and organization) rather than language issues. As it can be seen from past research, students are given more opportunity to provide and receive feedback on the important elements needed to improve their own writing (i.e., coherence and cohesiveness of ideas in essay writing). This would train them in the process of becoming good writers and thus, improve their writing skills.

Past literature on uncovering the potential of how face-to-face peer feedback improves ESL/EFL students' writing performance focused more on the content of their discussion through the analysis of the revision made in their essays or the analysis of their interviews. This seemed to be a limited approach as it does not explicitly highlight the content of the discussion and how the flow of interaction helps the students in their revision. There might be inconsistencies presented in their discussion and revisions that cannot be identified through an analysis of their revisions and perceptions alone. Thus, it is imperative to analyse their discourse or patterns of interaction to have a better understanding of this issue. Because of that, this article provides reviews of past literature on the patterns of interaction in a peer feedback session to overcome this limitation.

Apart from the focus on writing components, it is also very important to note that the positive perception of the peer feedback approach among students might affect the improvement in their writing performance. Zheng (2012) found out that EFL students have a positive perception on the use of peer feedback as it attracts their attention, and it is easier to comprehend from their teacher's feedback, increase their awareness as a writer, and inspire them to be better. Lian and Yang (2011) also discovered that EFL students have an easier time understanding their peers' comments on the grammatical mistakes that they committed in their

essay. They were also more aware of their progress in their learning process (Rotsaert et al., 2018). This is due to the fact that face-to-face peer feedback is able to offer a two-way interaction between peers in discussing and improving their essays. According to Schillings et al. (2020), students perceived that face-to-face dialogue (i.e., peer feedback) allowed them to seek clarification, ask questions and receive alternative suggestions on the issues and problems in their writing, thus helping them to revise their essay. Apart from that, students' positive perception on peer feedback also stemmed from the instructional nature of its interaction in which it increased their confidence in improving their writing skills (Huisman et al., 2019). These findings go to show that peer feedback does give a positive impression towards the EFL students' language learning process as it helps them to improve their writing performance.

The positive perceptions shown in past studies were due to the nature of the face-to-face peer feedback approach in which it enables students to discuss ways to improve each other's writing without feeling pressured by their status as peers. As a result, students are able to acquire new knowledge in a positive learning environment. This is in line with Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which posit that learning occurs due to the interaction between learners in the process of providing and seeking assistance (Vygotsky, 1978). Although this concept seems to strengthen the potentials of face-to-face peer feedback in improving students' writing performance, looking at it without considering learners' differences and the interactional dynamics can pose a problem in understanding the weaknesses of the approach. Thus, a review of past studies on factors that decrease the effectiveness of face-to-face peer feedback is needed so that scholars and educators are able to overcome them to achieve the full potentials of peer feedback in teaching writing.

One of the reasons why face-to-face peer feedback does not help in developing students' writing performance is due to their own personal preferences. Most learners in EFL contexts prefer teacher feedback compared to peer feedback. Ruegg (2018)'s study discovered that the writing self-efficacy of EFL Japanese students improve more in the teacher feedback group. Another study by Miao et al. (2006) concluded that Chinese EFL students incorporate more teacher feedback in their revision instead of peer feedback. This highlighted that in an EFL context, they appreciated teacher feedback more, and it could be due to the Asian culture in which the teacher is perceived to be a more superior figure in the writing class.

Besides the preference for teacher rather than peer feedback in developing their writing performance, there are also other factors that lead to how the peer feedback approach hinders the development of writing skills. Patchan and Schunn (2015) in their study revealed that reviewers' English language ability (or rather a lack thereof) might negatively affect students' learning process. Students' motives during the peer feedback session also tend to bring a negative impact on its effectiveness. For instance, Yu and Lee (2015) discovered that one of their respondents only participated in the peer feedback session because of the course's requirement. Another study by Yu et al. (2019) concluded that out of the three EFL master students in their study, one student did not appreciate the peer feedback session, especially the comments that she disagreed with, thus resulting in her revision rate to be quite minimal. This is due to the failure of the participant's peer in providing feedback with proper and strong justifications. This goes back to the issue of how language proficiency and writing skills of the students play a huge role in influencing students' perceptions on the peer feedback approach. These studies suggested that there are many complex factors, such as learners' personal preference on teacher feedback, peers' language proficiency, students' motives, and teacher's intervention that are involved in decreasing peer feedback effectiveness in developing ESL and EFL students' writing performance.

Another issue that is very prominent in terms of the link between peer feedback and writing performance is the issue of teachers' role in the peer feedback session. The intervention

from a teacher in a writing classroom is crucial when any approaches or methods are being implemented towards the students (Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012). In their study, one of the groups that receive both peer and self-assessment (without teacher's assessment) did not have a significant improvement in their writing performance. The main reason is because in the context of Iranian EFL students, they have the tendency to rely on the teacher's feedback more than their peers'. Because of that, the outcome of the peer and self-assessment in helping students to improve their writing skills were minimal. Vasu et al. (2016), on the other hand, found that a high percentage of ESL/EFL Malaysian students prefer to have peer feedback implemented alongside teacher feedback in improving their writing skills. This is due to the fact that although peer feedback is able to provide additional perspectives to their writing, students were still concerned about whether the peer feedback has high accuracy, or that a weakness can only be overcome by having the teacher's feedback. This proves that in order for the peer feedback approach to be effective, it cannot be implemented in isolation as different students have different preferences in terms of the feedback given; hence, this is to overcome the weaknesses of peer feedback (i.e., possibility of lack of accuracy).

On the whole, most of the past research support the notion that peer feedback approach in a writing classroom does give positive impact on students' writing performance within different educational settings. This is a result of students having the opportunity to discuss the important elements to improve their writing as well as their positive perception towards the approach. In another context, however, the use of the peer feedback approach was proven to have given little contribution to improve students' writings. This is due to students' preferences for receiving teachers' feedback, their important role in guiding the writing process as well as individual differences among students (i.e., proficiency, personality and experiences). It goes to show that the relationship between peer feedback and students' writing performance is not a very direct one as there are various complex factors that contribute to it, either positively or negatively.

ELEMENTS IN PEER FEEDBACK

Many studies have been conducted to study the elements that concern students which include the factors that affect peer feedback practices, strategies used, and personal preferences. Yu and Hu (2017) conducted a case study on two Chinese EFL students and discovered that they have different peer feedback practices where one of them focused more on grammatical errors and the other focused equally on content and grammar. This is due to some factors which included their beliefs on good writing, motives for writing, peer feedback training, examination culture and group dynamics (Yu & Hu, 2017).

Apart from these factors which affect students' practice of peer feedback, Yu and Lee (2016) also suggested that the effectiveness of peer feedback depends on the strategies used by students. The study on four EFL university students in mainland China indicated that they used five strategies to ease them in the peer feedback process; these include the use of their native language, the use of writing rubrics, their adherence to group activity norms, teacher reference and taking different peer feedback roles (Yu & Lee, 2016). Students' personal preference is another aspect that researchers seek to gain more understanding with regards to the process involved in a peer feedback session. For example, a study on three Master's students in China indicated that there are different preferences of students on the peer feedback approach which would affect their peer feedback practice and revisions. This includes preferences in receiving more content-based comments, difficulties in receiving comments as well as the inability to accept comments due to indifferences (Yu et al., 2019). Apart from past studies which specifically focused on the mental process of students, there are also research conducted on

teacher's intervention during the process of the peer feedback session. For instance, Latifi et al. (2019) found that when teachers apply different types of peer feedback (online unscripted, scripted and guided peer feedback) in the process among undergraduates in Iran, it significantly improved their revisions.

These research findings highlighted the fact that there are varieties of elements involved during a peer feedback session among the students. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers and educators to understand these elements as it will give a deeper explanation of the effectiveness of peer feedback session to develop students' writing performance.

ONLINE PEER FEEDBACK AND ESL/EFL STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

While previous studies mainly focus on the more traditional face-to-face peer feedback session, research on its online alternatives has become more prominent especially in today's technological era. Novakovich (2016) conducted a study on Canadian university students who were placed in either in blog-mediated peer workshop or paper workshop, and he found that students in the former group are seen to provide more critical comments and higher quality of writing, thus indicating a positive learning outcome. Ho (2015) discovered that both groups of EFL university students in Taiwan who were placed in face-to-face peer feedback (FFPR) and computer-mediated modes (CMPR) gave more revision-oriented comments. The study, however, suggested that although both types of feedback gave benefits to the students, CMPR has an added advantage as the participants preferred typed comments rather than handwritten ones, and it is more comfortable for introverted students. Similarly, a group of EFL Vietnamese students who experienced Facebook-based peer feedback session and another group who experienced a traditional peer feedback session showed improvement in their writing scores (Ho et al., 2020). As expected, the students in the Facebook-based peer feedback session had a better improvement compared to students in the traditional peer feedback group as the features in Facebook encourage collaborative learning between learners in an online setting. Lira-Gonzales and Nassaji (2019), on the other hand, found that ESL students in Quebec who were placed in paper-based peer feedback group and another in a blog peer feedback group displayed improvement in their writing although the focus of the revisions were different. In another research by Cheng et al. (2015), the type of peer feedback comments produced among Taiwan undergraduates are more affective (i.e., praises and comments involving negative feelings) and cognitive (i.e., comments that relate to the task given, including direct correction and guidance) rather than metacognitive (i.e., comments related to evaluation and reflection) in nature but there were still improvements shown in terms of their writing performance. These prove that an online environment for conducting peer feedback has a number of positive effects.

Past studies in establishing how online peer feedback are able to improve ESL/EFL students writing performance were more focused on comparing between online and conventional approaches (i.e., face-to-face) of peer feedback via experimental studies. The results were generally clear in highlighting the connection because of the presence of the pre- and post-test of the students' written essays that were conducted, as well as the analysis of the revisions made. In addition, past studies also included qualitative approach, such as interviews to understand the students experience and preferences between the two modes thus helping researchers to identify how it assist them in improving their writing skills. However, the sole focus on experimental studies in comparing between face-to-face and online peer feedback is not sufficient in uncovering the potentials of online peer feedback in developing ESL/EFL writing performance. Due to the fact that there are various types of online platforms, such as Google Doc, Blogs and Facebook that can be used as a medium of online peer feedback, a

review of past studies that deals with the analysis of different types or medium in conducting an online peer feedback is needed.

Since an online peer feedback session relies on specific applications or websites, researchers are interested in conducting studies on its features to identify whether it positively or negatively affect their learning process. Gao et al. (2016) explored mainland China undergraduates' perceptions on the strengths and weaknesses of the features of Qzone, an online peer feedback platform in China. They found that it promotes mobile learning, protects authors' privacy, has the capability to save essays and documents, and is very efficient for large classes; its weaknesses include the limit of 5,000 characters and the only available version is in Chinese (Gao et al., 2016). Demirbilek (2015), on the other hand, conducted a study in comparing Wiki and Facebook as an online platform for peer feedback session. The study showed that although both were beneficial in improving students' learning process, students were more comfortable using Facebook due to their familiarity with it but commented that Wiki's features are more suitable in providing written comments.

Al Abri et al. (2021) also investigated Wiki platform as an online peer feedback platform. Similar to the findings by Demirbilek (2015), students perceived that Wiki platform's functions to highlight, comment and correct specific parts of the essay via online written feedback are able to support them to improve their writing. Apart from that, Wiki platform also offered the students the option to be anonymous in their reviews, thus increasing their comfortability in giving feedback. This resulted in a higher quality of the students' feedback. Another research that analyzed Turnitin as an online peer feedback platform was carried out to understand the ways in which it assisted the students in developing their writing performance (Li & Li, 2018). The results showcased Turnitin's function of providing double-blind peer review that helped students to feel comfortable in giving honest reviews to their peers anonymously. In addition, the review workspace and the interface documenting peer review function in Turnitin were able to improve students' feedback by incorporating both local and global issues. This is because the functions compartmentalized their reviews on different levels. These studies show that the concept of anonymity has been emphasized significantly to highlight the effectiveness of these platform in conducting online peer feedback sessions. According to van den Bos and Tan (2019), the ESL Dutch students in their study who displayed improvement in their grades as they experienced being anonymous reviewers in their online peer feedback session and gave critical feedback (i.e., organization of ideas and development of arguments).

Apart from Turnitin, Google Doc is another platform that is usually used in facilitating students' online peer feedback session. According to Alharbi (2020), Google Docs allows students to interact freely among themselves in the comment section, thus promotes the culture of offering explanation, asking for clarification and confirmation as well as showing agreements and vice versa in an online environment. This is in line with Lumabi and Tabajen (2021)'s study in which the ESL students in their study felt that the settings of online asynchronous peer feedback encouraged collaboration of learning that are cost-effective. The platform also has a systematic storage of drafts and comments which helps students to retrieve them to ease the online peer feedback process.

As it can be seen from the reviews, there are significant research done on the analysis of different platforms that can be used in the online peer feedback session. This is because different platforms offer different functions that may influence the effectiveness of students' interaction, the process of giving and receiving feedback as well as the quality of feedback. Most of the approaches used in uncovering the effectiveness of the platform in the online peer feedback session are through an analysis of the students' perceptions via interviews as well their revisions. In conclusion, most research on online peer feedback gave emphasis on its effectiveness through comparisons with face-to-face peer feedback and the types of feedback

given, as well as an evaluation of the online platforms. This is very important especially for educators who intend to use online platforms as a means to conduct peer feedback, as understanding these issues would ease their teaching process as well as students' learning process.

PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN A PEER FEEDBACK SESSION

One of the most prominent processes in the peer feedback session is patterns of interaction between students. As discussed earlier, students often exchange ideas, share messages, and negotiate meanings in their interactions (Fahy et al., 2001; Storch, 2002). It is important to note, however, that the interaction they experience is very dynamic. In other words, different groups of students have different experiences in the process of interaction during the peer feedback session although they are doing the same activities (i.e., negotiation of meaning, share and exchanges of ideas). This is a result of the different patterns of interaction that emerged during their interaction. Past studies discovered that students do not only negotiate tasks but also their relationship (Banbrook, 1999; Clarke & Silberstein, 1988 as cited in Storch, 2002). When the negotiation of the relationship between the peers in a peer feedback session comes in, that is when different patterns of interaction emerge.

The ways in which researchers differentiate between the patterns of interaction are through the analysis of the language used by the students in their interaction. Since the differences of patterns stem heavily from learners' relationship with each other (Storch, 2002), one of the ways to distinguish the patterns is by looking at Storch's (2002) Index of Equality and Mutuality. Equality is defined as the degree of control or authority over the task. In the students' interaction, high equality is seen if both students take direction from each other. Mutuality is defined as the level of engagement with each other's contribution. It can be seen as high if students' interactions are rich in reciprocal feedback and a sharing of ideas.

From many research that were done, it is found that Patterns of Interaction also affect the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving students' writing performance. The effectiveness of peer feedback stems mostly from what students could gain from the interaction. Certain patterns can help to increase students' writing performance if the interaction shows plenty of mutual respect for each other's ideas and meaningful responses (i.e., seeking clarification, elaboration). In contrast, if the interaction has a lack of cooperation, as well as low mutual understanding and respect for each other's feedback, positive learning will not be achieved, thus decreasing the effectiveness of peer feedback. In her study, Storch (2002) found that her students showed four different patterns of interaction which include collaborative (domain 1), dominant-dominant (domain 2), dominant-passive (domain 3), and expert-novice (domain 4).

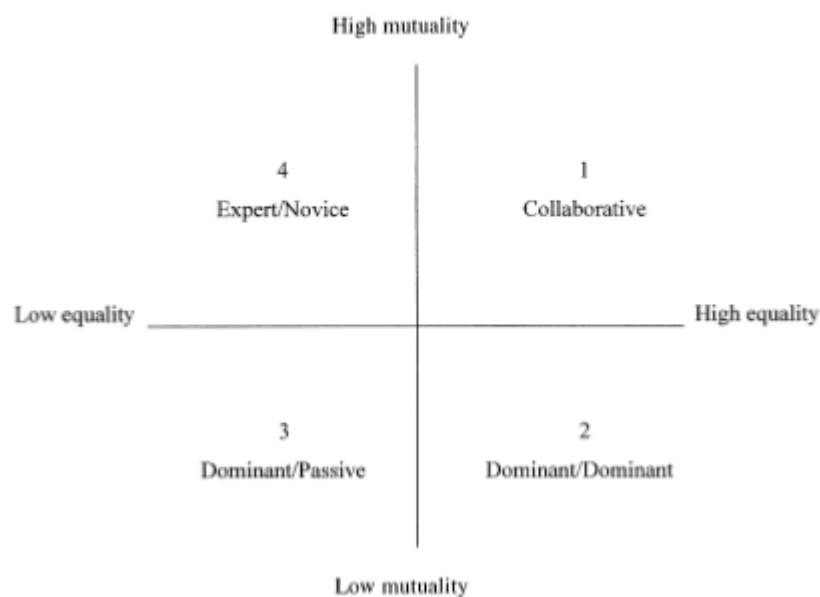


FIGURE 1. Storch (2002) model of dyadic interaction

Based on figure 1, the main indexes shown are the level of equality (x-axis) and the level of mutuality (y-axis). According to Storch (2002), the former refers to the amount of meaningful contributions given and the directions received while the latter refers to the amount of engagement with the peer's direction. Table 1 defines the four domains mentioned above.

TABLE 1. Definition of the Patterns of Interaction

Patterns of Interaction	Definition
1- Collaborative	Both participants contribute meaningful responses to each other (high equality) and accept as well as take note on other's feedbacks (high mutuality).
2- Dominant/Dominant	Both participants contribute meaningful responses to each other (high equality) but could not accept and ignore each other's feedbacks (low mutuality).
3- Dominant/Passive	Only the dominant participant contributes by mostly giving feedbacks (low equality) and do not give the chance to the passive participant to engage to the feedbacks given (low mutuality)
4- Expert/Novice	The expert participant contributes by mostly giving the feedbacks (low equality) but the novice participant is given chances to engage with the feedbacks given (high mutuality)

According to Storch (2002), the expert-novice and collaborative patterns that were showcased by some of the students had been proven to have helped them to develop their writing performance. This is because they have the chance to either learn from their peers who are more knowledgeable or are able to assist each other in making improvements in their essay. The dominant-dominant and dominant-passive patterns, on the contrary, hinder the development of students' writing performance as there are no learning opportunities occurring from the said patterns. This argument is supported by Chen (2018) whose study found that a more collaborative pattern (collaborative and Expert/Novice) among EFL Chinese undergraduates in China has more Language Related Episode (LRE) in the peer feedback session, thus indicating that learners discuss more language-related ideas rather than the non-collaborative pattern.

Similarly, Zheng's (2012) study also yielded the same results. The researcher analysed students' discussion in a peer feedback session and found that five patterns of discursive interaction were present in the process. These include the patterns which are similar to Storch's (2002) study, i.e., collaborative, expert-novice, dominant-dominant, and dominant-passive. He also found an additional pattern of interaction which is passive-passive where both participants do not contribute any meaningful response, thus unable to engage with the feedback-less session. Out of these five, the only patterns of discursive interaction proven to give a positive learning environment for the students are the collaborative and expert-novice learning pattern.

A recent study by Kuyyogsuy (2019) showcased the same outcome where the collaborative and expert/novice patterns among Thai undergraduates seemed to have improved their writing skills. This notion can be supported as another research on ESL students in New York concluded that the highest percentage of students making revisions in their writing comes from the collaborative and expert/novice pattern (Friginal et al., 2017). A similar result also showcased that having collaborative and expert/novice patterns significantly influence the pairs' EFL essay revision among Indonesian high school students (Mufiz et al., 2017).

There might be some reasons why these different patterns emerge. For one, Zheng (2012) believed that students usually lack the skills to give feedback to their peers, which results in the patterns that lead to the failure of developing students' writing performance. This means that peer feedback will not work in every context and its effectiveness will depend on students' personality, learning strategies, levels of proficiency as well as their skills in giving feedback. The research discussed above highlighted that the patterns of interaction among students in a peer feedback session will vary. The patterns that are shown can both help students to improve (collaborative and expert/novice patterns) or result in a plateau in their writing performance (dominant/dominant and dominant/passive patterns). This is why it is crucial for teachers to be aware of the types of interaction that emerge in a peer feedback session. This is because once teachers are able to identify these patterns of interaction, they would be able to monitor how to make it more effective so that students would benefit from the said approach.

DISCUSSION ON GAPS OF PAST STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

From the review of these literature, upon close inspection, most of the studies on the effects of peer feedback on students' writing performance were conducted in an EFL setting (see Birjandi & Hadidi Tamid, 2012; Suzuki, 2008; Yu & Lee, 2016; Zheng, 2012; Peng, 2010; Lian & Yang, 2011; Ruegg, 2014; Miao et al., 2006; Yu & Lee, 2015; Kusumaningrum et al., 2019; Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019; Yu et al., 2019; Yu & Hu, 2017; Lee, 2016; Ho, 2015; Cheng et al., 2015; Gao et al., 2016; Chen, 2018; Kuyyogsuy, 2019; Mufiz et al., 2017; Ho et al., 2020). As there were few studies that were conducted in an ESL classroom (see Storch, 2002; Friginal et al., 2017; Li & Li, 2018; Lira-Gonzales & Nassaji, 2019; van den Bos & Tan, 2019; Lumabi & Tabajen, 2021), it is not sufficient to uncover how ESL learners are generally influenced by peer feedback in developing their writing performance. Because of this, there is a need to conduct more studies among ESL learners studying in ESL countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, India and Sri Lanka. It might give different results and a wider understanding on the potentials and problems in the use of online peer feedback approach on ESL students' writing performance.

Second, most of past research focused on either the effectiveness of peer feedback in students' writing performance or the elements in peer feedback (see Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Diab, 2011; Huisman et al., 2018; Kusumaningrum et al., 2019; Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019; Berggren, 2015; Suzuki, 2008; Yu & Lee, 2016; Kuyyogsuy, 2019; Zheng, 2012; Lian

& Yang, 2011; Rotsaert et al., 2018; Schillings et al., 2020; Huisman et al., 2019; Ruegg, 2018; Miao et al., 2006; Patchan & Schunn, 2015; Yu & Lee, 2015; Zhang et al., 2019; Nimehchisalem, 2016), but there were only a few studies that were conducted to analyse the patterns of students' interaction in a peer feedback session (see Storch, 2002; Chen, 2018; Zheng, 2012; Kuyyogsuy, 2019; Friginal et al., 2017; Mufiz et al., 2017). The analysis of patterns of interaction is very crucial because interaction will be the major element in a peer feedback session. Students are expected to interact, discuss, provide and accept feedback most of the time in the peer feedback session. The patterns of interaction that they experience with their peers will give a huge impact on peer feedback's effectiveness in developing students' writing performance.

Third, to the authors' best knowledge, there are no studies conducted on the patterns of interaction in an online peer feedback session for ESL/EFL students. Past studies only focused more towards the general effectiveness of online peer feedback in developing students' writing performance (see Novakovich, 2016; Ho, 2015; Cheng et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2020; Lira-Gonzales & Nassaji, 2019) and also on the evaluation of online platform used during the session (see Gao et al., 2016; Demirbilek, 2016; Al Abri et al., 2021; Li & Li, 2018; van den Bos & Tan, 2019; Alharbi, 2020). The use of technology in teaching is becoming more apparent in today's era especially with the Covid-19 Pandemic currently happening throughout the world, where face-to-face classes are a limited option. Teachers and educators need to be more creative and open in using different technological approaches to improve the teaching and learning process. Thus, it is suggested that future research conduct studies on the patterns of interaction of peer feedback in an online environment as the discourse will be different from the face-to-face method.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, the review of past literature highlighted that the use of peer feedback and the online peer feedback approach in improving ESL/EFL students' writing performance is not an alien concept any more. There have been quite a number of studies conducted on the potentials or positive effects of peer feedback on ESL/EFL students' writing performance due to either the focus of discussion or students' positive perceptions of peer feedback. However, some studies argued that peer feedback might not be very effective in developing ESL/EFL students' writing performance either because of their preferences towards the teacher's feedback, role or individual differences. Past scholars were also very interested to study the elements that are present among ESL/EFL students in the peer feedback session which include factors that affect peer feedback practices, strategies used and personal preferences.

While other studies focused on face-to-face peer feedback, its other alternative, online peer feedback, is slowly but prominently studied by scholars, especially in today's technological era. Research on its effectiveness and the evaluation of online platform has been conducted to better understand the nature of online peer feedback. Apart from that, studies on the patterns of interactions in peer feedback have also been carried out to identify which patterns help to develop students' writing performance and which patterns do not.

Although there were numerous studies from the past in regards to this topic, there are several gaps that were identified. First, most of the studies were conducted in an EFL setting. In addition, there were only few researches conducted to analyse the patterns of interaction in a peer feedback session to improve students' writing performance as most focused on its effectiveness. Lastly, studies on the pattern of interaction, specifically in an online environment, are yet to be found. Most of the studies on the patterns of interaction were conducted in face-to-face peer feedback sessions. Because of this, future research can opt to

consider all of these gaps in order to have a better understanding of the pattern of interaction in an online environment in improving students' writing performance as the process and concept of the approach is very complex.

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