VIETNAMESE LEARNERS' ABILITY TO WRITE ENGLISH ARGUMENTATIVE PARAGRAPHS: THE ROLE OF PEER FEEDBACK GIVING

By

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ABSTRACT

The nature of peer feedback and its impacts on writing in English has attracted much attention of researchers and educators. Recent studies have indicated various types of peer feedback and its positive effects on writing development. This paper presents the results of an investigation into the nature of peer feedback and its effects on learners' writing argumentative essays in a Vietnamese context. The study aimed to explore the types of feedback which competent and less competent learners employed when they reviewed their peers' argumentative paragraphs. The study also aimed to measure the effects of one's giving feedback on their ability to write argumentative paragraphs. The study followed a two-group experimental research design with the participation of twenty-four English learners at pre-intermediate level of English. Four instruments were used in the study: the worksheet for peer feedback to elicit learners' comments to peers' argumentative paragraphs, the writing tests to examine learners' ability to write argumentative paragraphs before and after the treatment, the feedback coding scheme to code learners' comments and the assessment scale to evaluate learners' argumentative paragraphs. The results showed that both competent and less competent learners generated different types of peer feedback when commenting on their peers' argumentative paragraphs. In addition, the extent to which competent and less competent learners used the types of feedback was the same. Remarkably, giving feedback enhanced the mechanics component of learners' argumentative paragraphs.

Keywords: Peer feedback, Argumentative Paragraphs, Types of Feedback, Writing Improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Peer feedback is constructed when learner writers take part in peer review, a process in which learners play the role of readers to read and comment on their peers' writing (Lee, 1997). Peer feedback could be understood as input (e.g., commentaries, questions, requests or suggestions) which peer readers give the learner writers to help the latter revise their written work (Keh, 1990). Researchers have examined the nature of feedback from peer reviewers and the contributions of peer feedback to learners' writing performance. Previous research studies have indicated the diversity of feedback produced by peer reviewers. Lee (1997) reported that learner reviewers employed evaluating and suggesting more frequently than praising, explaining or requesting. Even they rarely restated their peer's ideas or made comprehension check. Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006) found that when writing comments on peers'

writing, learner reviewers gave evaluation more often than explanation, analysis or suggestion.

As regards the effects of peer feedback on the quality of learners' writing, most previous studies have indicated that peer feedback results in improvements in learners' writing (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz, 1992; Todd and Hudson, 2007; Tsui and Ng, 2000). Feedback receivers incorporated their peer feedback into revising their writing and accordingly the quality of their revised drafts was better than that of their first drafts (Lee, 1997; Kamimura, 2006; Ting and Qian, 2010; Hu and Lam, 2010; Cho and MacArthur, 2011). Nevertheless, few studies have reported that peer feedback has no effects on learners' writing. For instance, in Tang and Tithecott's study (1999), it was found that peer comments could not help the givers improve the quality of their own writing.

The literature that a controversy in the types of peer feedback

given has its effects on writing is existing. This controversy indicates a need for studying peer feedback in a different educational and cultural context by using different research design to check whether peer feedback could bring any benefits to the givers' writing performance.

Concerning the practice of English writing classrooms in the Vietnamese context, the implementation of peer feedback is still limited. This limited implementation of peer feedback results from teachers' belief that learner reviewers are not competent enough to generate helpful feedback to their peers' writing. Even learners are not confident about the quality of their own comments as well as their peers' comments. However, as reported by learners who participated in peer feedback activities, peer feedback could help learners improve their writing (Huynh, 2008). To encourage the use of peer feedback in English classrooms in the Vietnamese context, it is essential to conduct a study examining the types of learners' feedback to peers' writing and the effects of giving feedback on their own writing argumentative paragraphs. A study on peer feedback would offer more insights into the types of feedback produced by competent and less competent learner reviewers and the effects of giving feedback on learners' own writing, which could accordingly suggest pedagogical implications for implementing peer feedback in English writing classrooms in the context like Vietnam.

Research aims

The present study designed to reach two research aims. The first aim was to explore the types of feedback used by competent and less competent learners. The second aim was to measure the extent to which giving feedback affects learners' ability to write their own argumentative paragraphs. To achieve the research aims of the study, the study attempts to answer two research questions:

1. What types of peer feedback do competent and less competent learners give to their peers' argumentative paragraphs?

2. To what extent does giving feedback to their peers' writing help learners improve their own argumentative paragraphs?

Method

Design

In this study, a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approach was used to answer the two research questions. The qualitative approach was firstly applied in examining types of feedback given by both groups of learners, competent and less competent, in response to their peers' argumentative paragraphs. Then, the quantitative approach was used to compare the types of feedback were given by competent and less competent learners. The quantitative approach was also implemented in measuring the extent to which peer feedback affects learners' ability in writing argumentative paragraphs.

Designed as a two-group experimental study, the study randomly involved two groups of English learners, one as the control group and the other as the experimental one. Both groups received the same number of sessions on how to write argumentative paragraphs. Also participants were exposed to the same writing topics and the same writing tasks. However, after each writing assignment, participants in the experimental group are required to read their peers' writing and write comments to their peers while those in the control group read their own writing by themselves and did revisions.

Participants

Twenty-four English learners at a foreign language center in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam participated in this study. These participants were selected from the two classes which were fixedly arranged by the center. Participants were taking the English writing course at pre-intermediate level. The participants' ability in writing argumentative paragraphs of the two groups before attending the study was the same (t=.00, df=22, p=1.0), with the average writing score of M= 59.1 (SD= 12.0) for the control group and M= 59.1 (SD= 13.3) for the experimental group.

To investigate the types of feedback given by competent and less competent participants, the participants in the experimental group are divided into two sub-groups, based on the participants' writing scores in the pretest of writing. Six participants whose average mean score was 70.00 (SD = 6.3) formed the competent group. Other six participants whose average score was 48.17 (SD = 7.9) formed the less competent group. The writing score of the

competent group was significantly higher than that of the less competent one (t= -5.33, df =10, p= .00).

Instruments

The Worksheet for Peer Feedback

The worksheet for peer feedback was used to collect feedback given by competent and less competent participants in response to their peers' writings. This worksheet was adapted from the feedback sheet by Singto (2005). The worksheet used in the present study consists of ten questions which serves as a guideline for giving comments. Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 aimed to elicit reviewers' feedback on the content of the paragraph. Questions 2, 6, and 7 are designed to obtain participants' comments on the organization of the paragraph. Three questions 8, 9, and 10 stimulated reviewers' feedback on the writing style. Under the scope of question 8 while question 9 helped to elicit comments on grammar for the use of vocabulary are checked. Feedback givers could give their comments on spelling, punctuation, capitalization or any affective feedback in response to question 10.

The Writing Tests

Two writing tests, pretest and posttest, were designed to measure the quality of participants' argumentative paragraphs. The two tests shared two common characteristics. Both tests aimed to measure the participants' ability to write English argumentative paragraphs. Both took into consideration topics familiar to the participants as foreign language learning and the value of money. What obviously distinguishes the two tests is the time for administration. The results of the Scale tests indicated a high reliability of the two tests: α=.93 for the pretest and α=.86 for the posttest.

The Feedback Coding Scheme

The feedback-coding scheme was employed in coding participants' feedback to their peers' argumentative paragraphs. The coding scheme designed based on literature is relevant to the classification of feedback (Lee, 1997; Nelson and Schunn, 2009). In the coding scheme, feedback is examined from the perspective of feedback functions. Within this respect, feedback is sub-divided into seven types. By the term request, the researcher means

comments that aimed to get further explanation of an unclear word or idea in the paragraph. Feedback was coded restatement if feedback was paraphrases or summarization of what has been written. Restatement shows how a reviewer interprets information conveyed in peers' writing. Problem identification refers to all feedback, which helped the writers to realize any problematic aspects in their writing. Suggestion includes any statements aiming at bettering peers' paper. In terms of praise, any compliments given to the paragraph are considered as praise. By explanation, the researcher means feedback including the reasons why certain remarks are provided. If a comment did not relate to the writing, it was coded as off-task.

The Assessment Scale for Written Work

In order to evaluate the participants' writing performance, the assessment scale for written work proposed by Tribble (1996) was adapted. The assessment scale represents an analytic approach to scoring learners' written texts. Participants' written texts are examined from multiple dimensions as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In the assessment scale, detailed descriptions of criteria corresponding to different writing scores are offered. With this adapted writing assessment scale, content weighs 30 out of 100 points. Organization, grammar and vocabulary weigh the same, 20 out of 100. Mechanics receives 10 out of 100. The score for the whole paragraph is the sum of the scores of each aspect of the writing.

Procedures

The study was conducted within an eight-week writing course. In the first week, pretest on argumentative paragraph writing was administered in the control and experimental group to measure participants' ability to write argumentative paragraphs. In the following six weeks, participants in both groups received instructions on writing argumentative paragraphs. However, there was a difference regarding how feedback was given in the two groups. The experimental group received training on giving feedback, and participated in two peer review sessions, and in the control group participants did revisions by themselves. In the final week, the posttest on writing an argumentative paragraph was delivered to the two groups.

Participants' argumentative paragraphs composed in the

pretest and posttest was then graded separately by two English teachers to ensure the inter-rater reliability of the writing scores. Similarly, the feedback given by the participants were coded by these two teachers before quantitative analysis was conducted.

Findings

Types of feedback given by competent and less competent learners

To investigate the types of feedback given by the learners, a ten-question worksheet for peer feedback was used in the current study. The learners' comments on their peers' writing were collected and then coded into different peer feedback categories for data analysis. The Descriptive Statistic tests were run to measure the frequency of the types of feedback.

As shown in Table 1, praise was the most frequent feedback category (M= 10.08, SD=2.2). The learners made many complimentary comments to their peers to acknowledge the strengths of peers' writing. A common praise was that their peers were successful in introducing the main idea of the paragraph. Most of the learners wrote that the main idea of the paragraph was clearly stated in the topic sentence. Many learners commented that their peers supported their ideas very well. These learners acknowledged that their peers were successful in supporting their points of view thanks to giving a variety of supporting ideas. One learner commented,

I think peer's writing is quite successful. There are many supporting ideas. All ideas are relevant to the main idea. (Learner 2)

Another learner perceived,

The author is quite successful. The author points out three reasons to explain the main idea. (Learner 11)

Types of peer feedback	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Request	12	0	1	.17	.39
Restatement	12	2	9	4.92	1.8
Problem identification	12	1	10	5.92	2.6
Suggestion	12	1	6	3.25	2.0
Praise	12	6	13	10.08	2.2
Explanation	12	0	4	2.42	1.1
Off-task	12	0	5	2.83	1.3

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of types of peer feedback given

In relation to the organization of peers' writing, most of the learners stated that their peers' ideas were organized logically. Besides praises on the content and organization of peers' writing, the learners made some positive comments on vocabulary and mechanics aspects of peers' writing. Some learners commented,

Your vocabulary was rather specific, varied and correct. (Learners 1, 10)

Another learner evaluated,

Your vocabulary was varied and easy to understand. (Learner 2)

Other three learners stated,

Your handwriting was very clear and beautiful. (Learners 2, 3, 7)

Following praise, problem identification was the second most frequent feedback with the average mean score of M = 5.92 (SD=2.6). The learners identified peers' problems with different aspects of writing as content, grammar, and mechanics. Many learners shared that some of peers' ideas needed more supports to be clearer. A learner commented that peers' ideas were not persuasive enough by writing,

Some ideas were not explained successfully. (Learner 3)

Five learners pointed out peers' ideas which should be clarified by commenting,

Ideas […] need supporting details. (Learners 7, 8, 9, 10, 12)

The learners also pointed out that their peers had problems with grammar and mechanics. Six learners commented,

You made some grammatical mistakes as…. (Learners 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12)

Other two learners complained,

There were some spellings mistakes. (Learners 3, 5)

With the average mean score of M= 4.92 (SD= 1.8), restatement was sometimes produced by the learners. The learners often restated peers' main idea or convincing supporting ideas to illustrate that they could recognize their peers' ideas.

With the average mean score of M= 3.25 (SD= 2.6), suggestion was used less often than problem identification. The learners often gave solutions to peers' problems with

content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Typically, two learners suggested that their peers should provide more examples to support peers' ideas by writing,

…You should give more explanations and examples … (Learners 3, 9)

A learner asked their peers to explain the reasons for some arguments. This learner suggested,

You should explain why… (Learner 5)

Particularly, some learners suggested specific solutions to the problems found in peers' writing. A learner provided some suggested ideas for their peers by proposing,

About classroom, you should tell about its number, its size, its equipment. About education, you should tell about its quality… (Learner 11)

A learner recommended her peer writer to use conjunctions to connect relevant clauses,

You should use more conjunctions between two supporting details. (Learner 8)

In terms of explanation, this type of feedback was not frequently used by the learners (M= 2.42, SD=1.1). The learners tended to explain about their positive comments on the content of peers' writing. Some learners explained,

Ideas […] were well supported because there were many examples and details. (Learners 9, 11, 12)

The learners sometimes gave explanations about peers' problems and their suggested solutions. A learner commented,

Idea […] was not clear. You mentioned many classrooms, dormitory but then developed outdoor activities. (Learner 9)

Another learner explained,

You shouldn't write about disadvantages of city life because it made you paragraph unconvincing. (Learner 2)

With respects to off-task, the frequency of this feedback category was also rather low (M= 2.83, SD= 1.3). All of off-task comments are learners' invalid feedback on peers' writing. Some learners made a mistake in identifying peers' main idea and generated inappropriate praise on peers' writing.

The least type of feedback given was request (M= .17, SD= .39). Only two requests were given. These requests showed

the learners' need for peers' clarification of an idea. Two learners questioned as follows,

You said that in the city we could go and back easily. Why was it easy? By what way? (Learner 5)

You said that you like living in the countryside but explained advantages of city. What did you mean? (Learner 9)

To determine whether the difference in the mean scores of feedback categories is statistically significant, the Paired-Samples T-tests were conducted. Significant differences were evident in the mean scores of some feedback categories. The mean of praise (M=10.08) was significantly different from that of problem identification (M=5.92) (t=3.7, df =11, p=.004). The result supports the conclusion that the learners produced much more praise than problem identification. The significant difference in the mean of problem (M=5.92) and explanation (M=2.42) was also found (t=4.7, df =11, p=.00), indicating the number of feedback on problem identification exceeded that of explanation. The results of the Paired-Samples T test on problem identification (M=5.92) and suggestion (M=3.25) shows that there was a significant difference in the two mean scores (t=4.5, df =11, p=.00). It means that comments on peers' writing problems were generated more often than suggestions. The sample mean of request (M=.17) was significantly different from that of off-task (M=2.83) (t=5.7, df =11, p=.00), indicating that request was the least frequently used feedback.

The difference of feedback given by competent and less competent learners

To compare the frequency of feedback categories given by competent and less competent learners, The Independent-Samples T Tests were performed. Table 2 presents the results of the tests.

As seen in Table 2, the mean scores for seven types of feedback from competent and less competent learners are not the same except for request (M=.17). However, the results of the Independent-Samples T tests on the mean scores of feedback types given by competent and less competent learners show no significant differences (p>.05). In other words, the frequency of feedback types given by competent learners was the same as that of less competent learners.

Types of peer feedback given	Mean		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	Competent group	Less competent group			
Request	.17	.17	.00	10	1.0
Restatement	5.2	4.7	-.46	10	.659
Problem identification	6.7	5.2	-.98	10	.350
Suggestion	3.7	2.8	-.72	10	.488
Praise	10.2	10.0	-.12	10	.904
Explanation	3.0	1.8	-2.2	10	.057
Off -task	2.7	3.0	.42	10	.687
Total	31.3	27.5	-1.8	10	.103

Table 2. Feedback types given by competent and less competent learners

The effects of giving feedback on the learners' argumentative paragraphs

To measure the effects of giving feedback on learners' ability to write their own argumentative paragraphs, the quality of learners' argumentative paragraphs was measured two times: before and after the implementation of peer feedback. The results of the Scale test demonstrate the high reliability of the two tests (α=.93 for the pretest and α=.86 for the posttest). After each writing test, learners' paragraphs were collected for data analysis. Learners' papers were graded by two English teachers to ensure the inter-rater reliability.

To measure the effects of giving feedback on the overall quality of learners' own argumentative paragraphs, the Descriptive Statistic test was conducted on learners' writing scores in the pretest and the posttest. Table 3 illustrates the overall writing scores of the control group and the experimental group in the two writing tests.

In the pretest, the control group gained the same score as the experimental group: M=59.08 (SD=12.0) for the control group and M=59.08 (SD=13.3) for the experimental group. The results of the Independent-Samples T test on the sample mean of the two groups show that there was no significant difference in the mean scores

Writing tests	Conditions	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pretest	Control	12	42	77	59 .08	12 .0
	Experimental	12	38	79	59 .08	13 .3
Posttest	Control	12	44	77	63 .00	11 .4
	Experimental	12	51	84	70 .25	10 .6

Table 3. Writing scores of the control and experimental group in the pretest and the posttest

of the two groups (t=.00, df =22, p=1.0). It can be concluded that the ability to write argumentative paragraphs of the experimental group was equal to that of the control group before the intervention program.

In the posttest, the writing score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group: M=70.25 (SD=10.6) for the experimental group and M=63.00 (SD=11.4) for the control group. The Independent-Samples T test was performed to check whether the sample mean of the experimental group (M=70.25) was significantly higher than that of the control group (M=63.00). The result shows that the mean score of the experimental group was not significantly different from that of the control group (t=1.6, df= 22, p=.12). It means learners' ability to write argumentative paragraphs of the experimental group were the same as the control group after the study. In other words, the implementation of peer feedback had no effects on the overall quality of learners' argumentative paragraphs.

To measure the effects of giving feedback on different aspects of learners' argumentative paragraphs: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics; The Independent-Samples T test was used again to compare mean scores of the control and experimental group for each writing aspect. The results of the test are presented in Table 4.

From Table 4, it is obvious that there were no significant differences between the control group and experimental group in their mean scores for five aspects of writing in the pretest (p>.005). It is concluded that the control group and the experimental group were equal in all aspects of argumentative paragraph writing.

To explore the effects of the intervention program, the mean scores for the five writing aspects of the two groups in the posttest were considered. The Independent-Samples T tests were run to check the differences in the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group for every writing aspect. It can be seen that the experimental group's scores in content, organization, vocabulary, and grammar were not significantly different from those of the control group (p>.05). It can be concluded that giving peer feedback did not enhance the content, organization, vocabulary and grammar aspects of learners' argumentative paragraphs. In terms of the mechanics

Writing tests	Aspects of writing	Mean		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
		Control group	Experimental group			
Pretest	Content	18.50	18.25	.138	22	.89
	Organization	11.92	12.50	.494	22	.63
	Vocabulary	11.42	11.33	.083	22	.93
	Grammar	10.67	10.42	.256	22	.80
	Mechanics	6.58	6.58	.00	22	1.0
Posttest	Content	19.38	22.00	1.5	22	.13
	Organization	13.08	13.67	.54	22	.59
	Vocabulary	11.92	13.17	1.3	22	.22
	Grammar	11.50	13.58	2.0	22	.06
	Mechanics	6.67	7.83	3.3	22	.003

Table 4. Effects of peer feedback on aspects of writing

aspect, a significant difference was found (t=-3.3, df =22, p=.00), indicating that in the posttest, the experimental group was better than the control group at mechanics aspect. Accordingly, it can be inferred that giving feedback enhanced the mechanics aspect of learners' argumentative paragraphs.

Discussions of Findings

The results of the study indicate that the learners did not employ all types of feedback equally. They produced praise to respond to their peers' writing most frequently. The reason of this result could lie in the learners' great concern about the quality of peers' writing. The learners might try to show their peers which part of peers' composition met requirements of good writing. This finding corresponds to the findings of some previous research studies by Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006) and; Lu and Law (2012). The highest frequency of praise found in the current study opposes to the findings of Lee (1997) and; Cho and Cho (2011). To Lee (1997) as well as Cho and Cho (2011), peers' achievements in written texts were less concerned than the limitations of the papers; thus, feedback on peers' weaknesses or problem identification was produced more frequently. However, in this present study, the use of problem identification was lower than that of praise. It could be explained in terms of Vietnamese cultural characteristic: learners in the present study did not want to hurt their peers, so they avoided making many negative comments on peers' writing. Moreover, some learners were probably unsure whether a certain part of peers' writing was problematic or not, then they generated general praises instead of specific identification of weak points in peers'

writing accordingly.

The research results also illustrate that the learners did not frequently generate explanation and suggestion. The number of explanation and suggestion was significantly less than that of problem identification. This finding is similar to Lu and Law's result (2012) as well as Van den Berg et al.'s result (2006). The low frequency of suggestion could be due to learners' limitation of language proficiency. In some cases, the learners might identify the weaknesses in peers' writing, but they could not come up with the solutions for the problems; the learners did not give any suggestions to peers accordingly. In other cases, the learners might take for granted that their peers could find solutions to the problems by themselves; no suggestions were made. Similarly, to explanation, its low frequency possibly results from learners' belief that explanations were not necessary. When giving suggestions to problems with mechanics, grammar and word use, learners rarely explained their comments. Learners probably believed that it was easy for their peers to understand and to accept these suggestions, explanations were dispensable.

Request was reported to be very rarely used by all learners. It could be explained that when learners encountered problems with understanding their peers' writing, they tended to make complaints. They showed their peer writers that a specific part of the peer writers' paragraph was unclear and should be clarified. To mechanics mistakes, the learners could guess the words or ideas conveyed by their peers, so they did not make requests to their peers. This finding is different from Lee's findings (1997) which stated that learners sometimes used request to ask their peers for explanation and clarification of ideas. It is believed that this difference comes from the form of feedback activity employed in the two studies. In Lee's study, learners listened to peers' drafts for understanding and feedback. Learners needed to request clarification for an unclear point in peers' papers so that they could follow the flow of their peers' writing. In contrast, in the present study, learners read papers of anonymous peers. When the learners found it difficult to interpret a certain point in their peers' paper, reviewers could read peers' written texts several times until understanding was achieved. In addition, learners

probably guessed the ideas conveyed based on the context of writing.

The comparison of feedback types given by competent learners and less competent learners supports the conclusion that competent learners generated feedback types at the same extent as less competent learners. The similarity in the use of types of feedback of the two groups is firstly claimed to come from training on giving feedback (Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot, 2006). Participants were trained on giving peer feedback using the worksheet before writing comments to their peers, so both competent and less competent learners could make a number of feedback. Another factor which might account for the similarity in the feedback given by competent and less competent learners is the cultural factor. As indicated in previous studies (Lee, 1997; Lu and Law, 2012), learners in Asian countries traditionally appeared to be kind and modest to others, even in their evaluating their peers' writings. To be a kind reviewer, competent learners made less negative comments although they possibly recognized many problems with peers' writing. Being a modest reviewer, both competent and less competent learners tended to show their agreements when being asked whether peer writing met a criterion of good writing.

The comparison of writing performance of the control and experimental group indicates that giving peer feedback had no impact on learners' overall quality of their writings. The learners who commented on peers' writing did not outperform those who did not in the posttest. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of some previous studies (Cho and Cho, 2011; Hu and Lam, 2010). All these researchers found that learners improved their writing ability thanks to reviewing their peers' writing. By considering peers' ideas, identifying peers' problems and giving suggestions for peers' problems, peer reviewers could gain benefits. It is believed that the inconsistency of the current findings with previous findings results from the difference in research methodology. In previous research (Cho and Cho, 2011; Hu and Lam, 2010), the learners' first drafts were compared with their latter draft to determine learners' writing improvements after the treatment. Conventionally, the improvements were observed since it was common that

the revised draft was better than the first draft. Another reason which might account for the difference between the present findings and previous findings is the amount of feedback practice. In comparison with previous studies, the number of peer review sessions in the present study was rather limited. It can be argued that because the degree of feedback practice was low, the effects of giving feedback on the quality of learners' writing were not strong enough to be documented.

Giving feedback, in general, did not enhance the overall quality of learners' argumentative paragraphs. Yet, it could help improve mechanics component of learners' writing. The reason why peer feedback resulted in this improvement is that learners could make appropriate comments on peers' writing style if only they mastered the rules of mechanics. As a result, the learners reduced mistakes with mechanics in their own writing. This finding replicates Cho and MacArthur's findings (2011) as well as Lu and Law's findings (2012).

Pedagogical implications

Based on the research findings, several implications for writing classrooms can be drawn out. It has been found that peer feedback positively affected mechanics aspect of learners' argumentative paragraphs. This finding indicates that peer feedback is a useful activity in English writing classroom. Therefore, English teachers or instructors should create opportunities for learners to review and give feedback on peers' writing so that learners can improve the quality of their own writing. In addition, peer feedback should be conducted frequently to intensify its effects on the quality of learners' writings. From this study, we learned that after two 45-minute peer review sessions, the quality of mechanics was improved. It is expected that with more regular practice of peer feedback, other aspects of learners' writing as content, organization, grammar and vocabulary may also be improved as seen in other research studies.

As far as learners' feedback is concerned, it is clear that both competent and less competent learners were able to generate various types of feedback by answering questions in the worksheet for peer feedback. This finding suggests that teachers should train learners on giving

feedback to peers using a specific peer feedback sheet. Proper training on giving feedback with the employment of the specific review sheet makes giving feedback easier and more focused to both competent and less competent learners.

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