Students' Perceptions on Peer Feedback In Improving Group Performances In Efl Classroom Context

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki persepsi siswa tentang umpan balik teman sebaya dalam meningkatkan kinerja kelompok dalam konteks kelas EFL (Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing). Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode campuran, baik kuantitatif maupun kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester V kelas C1 Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara jurusan Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar (PGSD) semester gasal tahun ajaran 2022-2023 yang berjumlah 35 mahasiswa. Desain kuantitatif diterapkan untuk menghitung persepsi siswa melalui kuesioner yang terdiri dari tiga variabel yaitu, 1) persepsi umum persepsi umpan balik rekan, (2) efek positif dari umpan balik rekan (3) kemauan untuk meningkatkan. Sedangkan metode kualitatif dilakukan melalui observasi dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan; pertama, responden siswa bahwa peer feedback membantu mereka untuk belajar lebih baik dan mengembangkan kompetensinya, terutama dalam kelompok (100%). Kedua, umpan balik teman sebaya mendorong siswa untuk terlibat aktif dalam proses pembelajaran dan meningkatkan kemampuan pengaturan diri mereka (97,1%), dan untuk variabel ketiga, ada 35 siswa yang bersedia meningkatkan kinerjanya setelah menerima umpan balik dari teman sebayanya (100%). Kesimpulannya, ketika siswa diberi wewenang untuk mengevaluasi teman sebayanya melalui umpan balik teman sebaya, mereka cenderung lebih percaya diri, aktif dan bertanggung jawab atas penampilan kelompoknya. Temuan dari penelitian ini diharapkan dapat meningkatkan kualitas kegiatan belajar mengajar di Indonesia, khususnya dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: Umpan Balik Teman Sebaya, Kerja Kelompok, Persepsi Siswa

Abstract

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions on peer feedback in improving group performances in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom context. This research was conducted with mixed methods, both quantitative and qualitative. The subjects of this study were the fifth semester students of class C1 of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara majoring in Primary School Teacher Education (PGSD) in odd semester 2022-2023 academic year, they were totally 35 students. Quantitative design was applied to calculate the students' perceptions through questionnaires which consisted of three variables namely, 1) the general perception of perceiving peer feedback, (2) positive effect of peer feedback (3) willingness to improve. Meanwhile, the qualitative methods were carried out through observation and document analysis. The research findings indicated; firstly, students responded that peer feedback helped them to learn better and develop their competencies, especially in group (100%). Secondly, peer feedback encouraged students to be actively engaged with the learning process and increase their self-regulation abilities (97.1%), and regarding the third variable, there are 35 students who are willing to improve their performances after perceiving feedback from their peers (100%). In conclusion, when students are authorized to evaluate their peers through peer feedback, they tend to be more confident, active, and responsible for their group performances. The findings of this research are expected to improve the quality of

teaching and learning activities in Indonesia, particularly in English language teaching and learning.

Keywords: *Peer Feedback, Group Work, Students' Perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning practices in the 21st century have shifted from teacher-centered learning to student-centered learning. Therefore, teachers must facilitate more engaging student-student interactions. Teachers guide students how to become autonomous learners. Students believe that they can learn from peers and develop the skills needed for learning together. The vital role of peers and others including family members and teachers is also parallel with what scholars use the terms "social cognitivism" and "social constructionism" in what and how students learn (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, students construct their learning not alone but with others, namely with peers and the society in which they live.

To maximize student-student interaction, group works/group discussions are implemented. Each group member needs to share with the others what they can and cannot do, what they know and do not know. Everyone needs to contribute their fair share toward the group's goals. No one is excluded; no one dominates (Jacob & Kimura, 2013). In the group works, students need to not only use their learning to meet their own needs but also need to seek for an improvement towards their groups' performances. Listen to their teachers' and peers' feedback after achieving goal or performance in the learning process will give insight to students about their strengths and weaknesses. In writing, Hyland (2013) suggested that feedback has been identified as one of the most powerful influences on learning because it scaffolds students' cognitive development, highlights their weaknesses and strengths, assists them to develop writing conventions, and provides them with readers' judgment of a text. For that reason, constructive classroom feedbacks are required. Students are expected to learn from their peers and implement some actions to boost their work/performance. This study focuses on the following research problems:

1. Does the implementation of students' perceptions on peer feedback enhance group performances?
2. How effective students' perceptions on peer feedback to improve students' group performances?

Definitions and Functions of Peer Feedback

Karami & Rezaei (2015) pointed out that "Peer assessment is one of the main forms of alternative assessment. The importance of peer assessment is highlighted in different educational learning and educational research" (p. 94). Peer feedback enables students to take an active role in the management of their own learning. Peer feedback enhances student learning (Falchikov, 2001) as students are actively engaged in articulating evolving understandings of subject matter. At the same time, it develops learner participation in the assessment process. Puegphrom et al (2011) specify that peer assessment "is an alternative of assessment process that involves the learner's participation.

There are some benefits of peer feedback that students and teachers can consider. First, peer feedback is suggested as pedagogy of providing more self-control to language learners (Mendonça and Johnson, 1994). It means that students have their own flexibility and mindful consideration whether to take peers' suggestions or not. Teachers must promote a democratic classroom environment to encourage peer feedback. Second, replying to peer corrections and giving suggestions allow students to see similar problems and weaknesses in their own writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Through their peers' feedback, students will do self-evaluation, Then, they can elicit an idea of how much they should make progress in order to follow the whole class' learning pace.

There are another several feedback functions, such as identifying, verifying, or improving accurate answers or high-quality learning outcomes. Doing so can promote the acquisition of the knowledge and cognitive operations required to carry out learning tasks (Kaya & Yılmaz, 2019). Constructive comments identify where a learner needs improvement.

By providing constructive comments, students can practice specific revision skills, such as problem detection, problem diagnosis, and selecting the appropriate solution to solve the problem (Patchan & Schunn, 2015). Besides, peer feedback also benefits student's speaking skills as Barnes (1976) mentioned that increased opportunities for peer interaction because it allows students to engage in "exploratory talk." (p. 200)

In terms of psychological effect to students, peer feedback, with its potentially high level of replies and interactions among classmates, gives the sense of confidence through a collaborative and friendly dialogue in which two-way feedback is established and thinking is negotiated between two sides (Rollinson, 2005).

Group work's advantages in language learning

Interaction theories have indicated that L2 (second language) acquisition could be improved by giving learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning (Long, 1983; Richards, 2005). One of methods to promote classroom interactions is by initiating student-student interaction. Working in groups enables learners acquire the language naturally through negotiating meaning, sharing ideas, receiving input and those interactions can improve their speaking ability if they have a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input. Interaction is an important aspect of the language-learning process, as it gives learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning; this leads to positive developmental effects and an increase in a comprehensible input, pushed output (Richards, 2005; Swain, 1995; Ellis, 1994).

Ellis (1994) concluded from previous studies that learner-learner interaction is more effective than teacher-learner interaction in helping learners to acquire L2. Furthermore, Richards (2005) claimed that groups help learners to perform more negotiation, as the more relaxed environment helps them to negotiate with others without pressure. In EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, grouping method benefits students to practice English, it maximises the time that students can speak the target language. It can be used to improve oral activities for language learners, to complete tasks that need discussion among learners, to share reading and listening activities, and to write cooperatively with other learners. It also has the great advantage of allowing different groups of students to perform different tasks and activities according to their ability (Harmer, 1991). However, working in groups will stimulate student's creativity. As wise word saying, *two heads are better than one*, students are encouraged to process information together, discuss the problem and solve the problem on their own. The cooperative learning of group work can offer complementary and supplementary experiences, perspectives, opinions for the learners and can make the students motivated and to think harder and more creatively (Vidal, 2004).

Furthermore, from the psychological effect, working in groups affects to learner's emotions and attitude. Moskowitch (1978) viewed that group activities can reduce anxiety, increase confidence, give a positive attitude toward the second language and encourage students to take risks to learn a new language. Shor (1992) also added that group can reduce students' dependence toward their teachers through interaction and connection among the students and in this case, the students will also learn about team work. Moreover, Eggen and Kauchack (2012) proposed the ideas that group work can make student have full attention, learn about non-verbal instruction, understand different perceptions, be able to deal with disagreement (diplomatically), use their mind to create a word and make agreement statement and praises.

Challenges in implementing Peer Feedback

Despite the benefits of peer feedback, some challenges are also found. The process of giving and receiving peer feedback is associated with social factors in which positive pressure will be gained from their peers. The perceived and actual expertise of the student providing the feedback (reviewer) tends to provide the positive impact on the content (Govaerts et al. 2011). Furthermore, student who is aware of the academic level of the student providing the feedback, can infer the level of expertise from the feedback he received, either because this information is provided or because the feedback is received. Strijbos, Narciss, and Dünnebier (2010) stated that not only the actual, but also the perceived, academic level of both the reviewer and reviewee affect the acceptance and application of the peer feedback.

Another concern is that students may be biased, either consciously or unconsciously, because of their relationships with their peers, the characteristics of their peers, and personal preferences (Lu and Bol 2007; Vanderhoven, Schellens, and Raes, 2015). The feedback's usefulness and quality may suffer as a result. Even if the feedback is accurate, many students hesitate to use it and take it seriously because they are aware that the peer giving the feedback has less expertise than themselves.

There were some researchers have conducted studies about peer feedback or peer assessment, but mostly the studies discussed the correlation or the effect of peer feedback towards basic skils namely writing and speaking. As Coit (2004) mentioned using peer feedback for correcting articles through a student-centered environment is a beneficial pedagogy to extend learners' academic-style writing practice. "Based on theories in collaborative learning and social cognitive development, peer review has assumed an important role in both L1 and L2 writing classrooms (p. 902)." Grabe & Kaplan (1996) also stated that replying to peer corrections and giving suggestions allow students to see similar problems and weaknesses in their own writing. Lin and Paul (2009) also associated peer correction and writing competence. Their research was conducted and demonstrated at a required writing course assigned by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, a National University in Taiwan, Republic of China. The results of the study revealed that most participants believed that peer feedback positively assisted their learning in English writing.

Meanwhile, Chen, et al. (2018) investigated the effect of reciprocal peer feedback on EFL learners' communication strategy use and oral communication performance. Here, Chen, et al. (2018) focused on speaking skill. However, there is little research that examined peer feedback and group performance. Thus, in order to fill the gap in previous research, this research is aimed to examine students' perceptions on peer feedback in improving group performances in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom context.

METHOD

This study was conducted to find out students' perceptions on peer feedback in improving the group performances in EFL classroom context. Mixed-method design was conducted in this research. Creswell (2012) states that a mixed-method research design is a type of research design where the qualitative and quantitative designs are combined. The quantitative data were collected from a survey using questionnaires, the survey sheets of students' perceptions each consisting five questions. To calculate the degrees of response, and the intensity of response, a rating-scale was used. Students were requested to complete the questionnaire by placing a tick in one space only, for instance: 1= never, 2 = rarely, 3= sometimes and 4= always. The qualitative data were collected through observation and questionnaires.

The subjects of this study were the fifth semester of PGSD (Primary School Teacher Education) department students in odd semester 2022-2023 academic year consisting of 35 students. The total number of students in this class are 42 students, but 5 students were participating in *Kampus Merdeka* as one of programs of *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* initiated by Ministry of Education and Culture. Out of 35 students, there was the one and only male student in the classroom as the class monitor of the class. The students were dominated by girls. The researcher carried out this research in this class because she taught them a course namely "Pembelajaran Bilingual di Kelas Rendah." In this class, as the course used the word "Bilingual," so the researcher encouraged students to speak English as much as possible in classroom activities because some of them may be Bilingual teachers in the future. Moreover, the researcher considered the students have been in the fifth semester that means they have more experiences in learning and they must have been familiar with group works. Students were ordered to do group presentations every week (since the 4th meeting) with their assigned groups presenting various topics in "Pembelajaran Bilingual di Kelas Rendah" course.

The students' perceptions were collected from a student feedback survey using questionnaires as the instrument. The questionnaire consists of five questions, students were requested to tick the best answer based on their opinions. There are four column of responses

they can choose, namely; *never, rarely, sometimes, and always.* The students' feedback questionnaires were distributed to students. The students were instructed to respond the survey objectively, without any pressure. Most of questions discussed about their learning experiences and arguments about peer feedback. All instructions and questions of the survey were typed in English, if the students had any difficulties in answering or understanding the survey, the writer would help them out to explain the questions. After they had finished responding to the surveys, the students submitted the questionnaire papers to the researcher.

Furthermore, the data were submitted, calculated and converted into percentage. For qualitative study, the researcher observed every group performance every meeting and encourage the class to assess their peers by giving constructive comments and suggestions to the group that has just completed their oral presentation. The students were requested to give feedback regarding the presentation, the content, and the presenters as well. The rest of the students who have performed or who have not, were obliged to write their own feedback on a piece of paper to the group right after one group has presented in front of the class. Students elaborated their opinions and supported their comments with example or data. In this context, students learnt from their classmates (peer feedback). The researcher observed whether there was an improvement on the next group presentation after the students received feedback from their peers. To collect the data, document analysis was also applied in this study. The researcher used the groups' papers, the video of group presentations and some related journals to gather ideas and evidence to support her study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In calculating and classifying the data, three variables are used, namely, (1) the general perception of perceiving peer feedback, (2) positive effect of peer feedback (3) willingness to improve. The calculation of the students' perceptions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The General Perception of Perceiving Peer Feedback

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	34	97.1%
Negative	1	2.9%

Table 1 shows that there were 34 students who responded to question number 4 (Do you feel offended when your peers criticize you on group performance?). To this question, they answered that they never felt offended when their peers gave them feedback. This response is categorized as positive feedback in terms of the student's openness and humbleness in accepting feedback from peers. Most students argued that they did not have any problem with constructive comments from peers. Meanwhile, there was one student who responded that sometimes she felt offended when her peers criticized her group performance.

Table 2. Positive Effect of Feedback Received

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Helpful	35	100%
Unhelpful	-	-

From table 2, it can be concluded that all students considered that peer feedbacks have helped them improve their performances in group. It can be analyzed from their responses, particularly for no. 1 and no. 2 and no. 3. The statements respectively are; (1) the comments that I get on my work in this class from peers help me understand how to improve, (2) we get helpful comments to let us know what we did wrong on group performance and (3) peer feedback is important to improve group performance. To this variable, 35 students ticked *always* as the response, that means they found peer feedback was important and helpful.

Table 3. Willingness to improve

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Always	35	100%
Never	-	-

Table 3 highlights that all 35 students are willing to improve their performances after perceiving feedback from peers. They responded *always* to the 5th question from the questionnaire, namely "In the future, I will improve my group performance after knowing our shortcomings from peers' constructive comments." However, peer feedback benefit students how to evaluate and boost group performance if the feedback is relevant, objective, constructive and it is delivered in a polite way, not in an offensive one. Indeed, students realize that peer feedback really help them identify their weaknesses, it can be in terms of the relevancy of the material/ handout with the topic and standard competency are being discussed, the media used to explain the topic and most importantly, comments about body gesture during the presentation, it is also necessary. Since they will be future primary school teachers, pedagogic skills such as attitudes in public speaking (teaching) and classroom management are crucially needed.

CONCLUSIONS

The research results emphasize some points, to begin with, students agreed that peer feedback helps them to learn better and develop their competencies, especially in grouping. Furthermore, peer feedback helps students to get engaged with the learning process and to increase their self-regulation abilities. It is in line with Shute (2008) said that the horizontal learning, motivation, and implication make students more aware of their learning process represent their arguments supporting the strong points of peer-feedback in order to make it positive and constructive. In conclusion, the delivery of peer feedback must be taken into consideration as well. The comments or critics should be conveyed in a respectful, objective, and constructive manners.

There are suggestions are offered to implement this effective peer feedback; teachers have important roles to create a democratic classroom to enable this peer feedback or peer dialogue occurs more frequently in a group discussion or presentation. Teachers are expected to be able to motivate students to be brave and confident to express their opinions. More chances for the students to improve their communication and collaboration skills should be encouraged. Modelling appropriate peer feedback examples to the students also needs to be considered. The practices in conveying good feedback consisting of objective, relevant, constructive, and respectful peer feedback should be exposed intensively. Moreover, through this peer feedback, the students also can learn how to develop their skills in *communicating* and *collaborating* with their peers to achieve the learning goals. Those two skills (communicating and collaborating) also relate to the 4C elements of 21st-century skills side by side with *critical thinking* and *creativity* that help students respond to today's global challenges.

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