

Students' View on Peer Assessment in Academic Writing

Alkhorin Mawarda
Universitas Islam Kadiri, Indonesia
alkhorinmawarda718@gmail.com

Abstract

This study sought to explore students' view toward peer assessment within the context of writing activities, specifically focusing on their academic writing performance. Employing a qualitative approach, the research involved 9 second-semester students from UNISKA Kediri who followed Academic Writing class. Data collection comprised through survey by using open-ended questionnaire. The implementation of peer assessment in the academic writing class unfolded across four stages, encompassing various learning activities and tasks aimed at enhancing students' academic writing skills. The findings indicate a generally positive view among students towards peer assessment, as it contributed to improvements in their academic writing proficiency, facilitated understanding of peers' views, provided valuable feedback on their own performance, fostered motivation to engage with English language learning, cultivated a sense of active participation, enhanced teacher-student and peer interactions, and engaged students in the formulation of assessment criteria. Nonetheless, a minority of students expressed reservations about assessing their own work. In conclusion, the study advocates for the integration of peer assessment practices within academic writing classes.

Key words: academic writing, peer assessment, students' view, writing activity

Introduction

Peer assessment, a collaborative learning strategy, is gaining traction in educational settings for its potential to enhance learning outcomes and student engagement. Peer assessment involves students using designated criteria to evaluate and review their peers' written work, thereby enhancing their ability to provide constructive feedback (Chin, 2016). Both self-assessment and peer assessment have demonstrated their effectiveness as formative practices within the classroom setting (Double, McGrane, & Hopfenbeck, 2020). This journal delves into the perceptions and experiences of students with peer assessment, particularly in the context of improving writing skills. Based on survey responses collected from a cohort of students, this study aims to evaluate the comfort levels, perceived benefits, and challenges associated with peer assessment, as well as its potential impact on writing proficiency.

The survey data reveals a varied level of awareness and experience with peer assessment among students. While some students have participated in peer assessment activities in subjects like speaking and micro-teaching, others are new to the concept. In-class peer assessment sessions can be highly

beneficial because they offer students the chance to receive feedback from their peers that is tailored to their individual proficiency level. This type of feedback is comprehensible and accessible, allowing students to learn from one another and refine their skills in a collaborative and supportive environment (Krashen, 1993). They cited benefits such as gaining different perspectives, identifying unnoticed errors, and enhancing critical and analytical skills. However, challenges like discomfort in giving and receiving feedback, lack of trust in peers' abilities, and the fear of damaging friendships were also noted.

Guided peer review can assist ESL learners in enhancing their writing skills (Berg, 1999, as cited in Ho & Savignon, 2007). Peer assessment can be perceived as a threat to learners' sense of positive self-image or self-esteem (Ho and Savignon, 2007). Students' suggestions for improving the effectiveness of peer assessment highlight the importance of clear guidelines, involving students in developing assessment criteria, and fostering open discussions before the assessment process begins. Peer assessment aids students in critically evaluating their own writing and developing into effective self-editors (Min, 2005; Rollinson, 2005). These recommendations aim to create a more

supportive and productive environment for peer assessment.

This journal aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on peer assessment by presenting detailed insights from the survey and offering practical recommendations for educators to implement effective peer assessment practices in academic writing.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore students' views on peer assessment in academic writing. The qualitative approach allows for understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards peer assessment. There are 9 participants of this study were students from second semesters of an academic writing class. Data was collected using open-ended questionnaire that encouraged participants to elaborate on their responses. The survey was administered online over a period of two days, from June 18 to 20, 2024. Participants were invited via email to complete the survey at their convenience. After collecting the data, the analysis used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data.

Results and Discussion

Results

A. Familiarity with Peer Assessment

The survey results indicate a varied level of familiarity with peer assessment among students. Out of the 9 respondents, 4 students reported having heard about peer assessment before, while the other 5 were unfamiliar with the concept.

B. Comfort Levels with Peer Assessment

The majority of students expressed comfort in providing peer assessments, with 8 out of 10 students indicating they felt comfortable in this role. In contrast, only 6 students felt comfortable receiving peer assessments, while 3 students expressed discomfort. This suggests a slight apprehension among students about being evaluated by their peers.

C. Participation in Peer Assessment Activities

Among the participants, 4 students had previously participated in peer assessment activities. These activities were related to subjects such as speaking, and micro-teaching. This prior experience might contribute to their comfort levels and perceptions of peer assessment.

D. Perceived Benefits of Peer Assessment

The respondents identified several benefits of peer assessment for writing skills:

1. **Gaining Different Perspectives:** Highlighted by all 9 students, this benefit was the most commonly acknowledged, indicating that students value diverse viewpoints in improving their writing.
2. **Identifying Unnoticed Errors:** Mentioned by 6 students, this benefit underscores the role of peer assessment in enhancing the accuracy of written work.
3. **Increasing Learning Motivation:** 4 students felt that peer assessment could boost their motivation to learn, suggesting a positive impact on their engagement.
4. **Enhancing Critical and Analytical Skills:** 5 students noted this benefit, indicating that peer assessment encourages deeper thinking and analysis of written content.

E. Challenges of Peer Assessment

Several challenges associated with peer assessment were identified:

1. **Discomfort in Giving Assessments:** 5 students expressed discomfort in critiquing their peers' work, which could hinder the effectiveness of peer assessments.
2. **Discomfort in Receiving Assessments:** 4 students felt uneasy about receiving feedback from peers, reflecting concerns about potential negative impacts.
3. **Lack of Trust in Peers' Abilities:** 3 students mentioned this challenge, indicating skepticism about the reliability of peer feedback.
4. **Fear of Damaging Friendships:** 3 students were concerned that peer assessment could negatively affect their relationships with classmates.

F. Interest in Future Participation

Despite the challenges, all 9 students expressed interest in participating in peer assessment activities for writing skills in the future. This suggests a general willingness to engage in and potentially benefit from peer assessment processes.

G. Suggestions for Improving Peer Assessment

Students provided several suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of peer assessment:

1. Pre-assessment Discussions: Engaging students in discussions about feedback and criteria before the assessment process.
2. Guidance and Input: Providing clear guidance and input from instructors to help students understand how to assess effectively.
3. Development of a Scoring Rubric: Involving students in creating a scoring rubric to ensure clarity and fairness in the assessment process.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into students' views on peer assessment in academic writing. The equal split in familiarity with peer assessment highlights the need for educators to introduce and explain this concept to students to ensure everyone is on the same page.

The general comfort in providing peer assessments suggests that students are willing to engage in the process, but the discomfort in receiving feedback points to a need for strategies that can help students receive critiques constructively. This can be addressed through preparatory activities that build peer trust and openness.

The perceived benefits of gaining different perspectives, identifying unnoticed errors, and enhancing critical skills align with the literature on the advantages of peer assessment. These benefits underscore the potential of peer assessment to complement traditional instructional methods and foster a collaborative learning environment.

The challenges identified, such as discomfort in giving and receiving feedback, lack of trust, and fear of damaging friendships, highlight areas that need careful consideration. Educators can mitigate these challenges by establishing clear guidelines, fostering a supportive atmosphere, and ensuring that peer assessments are conducted respectfully and constructively. The unanimous interest in future participation indicates that students see the value in peer assessment, despite the challenges. This positive attitude can be leveraged to implement peer assessment more widely, with continuous improvements based on student feedback.

Overall, this study suggests that while there are challenges to overcome, peer assessment holds significant promise for enhancing students' writing skills and promoting a more interactive and reflective learning experience. By addressing the identified challenges and incorporating students' suggestions, educators

can create a more effective and supportive peer assessment process.

Conclusion

This study examines students' perspectives on peer assessment in academic writing, identifying both benefits and challenges. While students are equally split in their familiarity with peer assessment, many feel comfortable providing feedback, though some are uneasy about receiving it. Benefits include diverse perspectives, detection of unnoticed errors, increased motivation to learn, and improved critical and analytical skills. Challenges involve discomfort in giving and receiving assessments, distrust in peers' abilities, and fear of damaging friendships. Students suggested improvements like clear guidelines, pre-assessment discussions, and involvement in developing assessment criteria to create a more structured and supportive environment. Despite these challenges, students showed interest in future peer assessment activities, indicating a positive attitude towards the practice if well-facilitated. The study concludes that while peer assessment requires careful implementation to address its challenges, it offers significant benefits for improving writing skills and fostering collaborative learning. Future research should explore best practices and evaluate the long-term impact on student learning and development.

References

- Amalia, N. Z. (2021). The implementation of peer assessment in online writing class at senior high school in bawean. *Research on English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 09(01), 179–186.
- Chin, P. (2016). Peer Assessment. *New Directions in The Teaching of Physical Science*, Issue 3, No. 3, pp. 13-18. DOI:10.29311/ndtps.v0i3.410.
- Double, K. S., McGrane, J. A., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2020). The impact of peer assessment on academic performance: A meta-analysis of control group studies. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 481-509.
- Geithner, C. A., & Pollastro, A. N. (2016). Doing peer review and receiving feedback: Impact on scientific literacy and writing skills. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 40(1), 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00071.2015>
- Ho, M.-C., & Savignon, S. J. (2007). Face-to-face and computer-mediated peer review in EFL

writing. *CALICO Journal, 24*(2), 269-290.

Jung, M.-Y. (2016). Peer/Teacher-Assessment Using Criteria in the EFL Classroom for Developing Students' L2 Writing. *Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics(PAAL)*, 20(1), 1–20.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. Pergamon Press Inc.

Landry, A., Jacobs, S., & Newton, G. (2014). Effective Use of Peer Assessment in a Graduate Level Writing Assignment: A Case Study. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(1), 38–51. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v4n1p38>

Min, H. T. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on ESL students' revision, types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 15 (2006), 118-141, doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2006.01.003

Rauf, A., & Khan, W. A. (2021). Effect of Peer Assessment on English Writing Mechanics and Writing Apprehension of Undergraduate Students. *Pjere*, 9(2), 1–18.

Rollinson, P. (2005). Using Peer Feedback in the ESL Writing Class. *ELT Journal* 59 (1), 23-30. DOI: 10.1093/elt/cci003

Samouni, A. (2023). *Peer-Assessment of The Writing Skill in The Moroccan EFL Context : The Attitudes and Perceptions of Students and Teachers at Sultan Moulay Slimane University as a Case Study* . June, 0–90. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.27256.42242>

Sartika, Dewi & Arriyani, N. (2022). Enhancing Students Writing Skill To Write Descriptive Text Using Peer Review and Free Writing Techniques. *English Community Journal*, 9009, 90–97.

Sluijsmans, D., & Prins, F. (2006). A conceptual framework for integrating peer assessment in teacher education. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 32(1), 6–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2006.01.005>