

A Model of Critical Peer Feedback Using Patterns of Pair Interaction to Improve Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Skills

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Abstract

The current project was an attempt to explore processes of critical peer feedback using patterns of pair interaction in order to improve both the quality of peer feedback and the quality of English writing, and to summarize the model of critical peer feedback. A 16-week qualitative case study was conducted with a group of 12 Iranian EFL students for one semester at Poldokhtar University. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Model was introduced to the participants in the workshop. Collaborative learning through peer interaction was used in workshops to teach the model of critical thinking. Three kinds of data, including semi-structured interview transcripts, six writing assignments, and artifacts of critical peer feedback, were analyzed by QSR NVivo 8.0 with the thematic analyses. The codes were quoted in descriptions, and the nodes and models were illustrated with visualization in the findings. The findings revealed that critical peer feedback improves both the quality of peer feedback and the quality of English writing. This study may be significant for the knowledge of higher-order peer feedback to improve the quality of higher-level writing.

Keywords: critical thinking, English writing, patterns of interaction, peer feedback

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1. Introduction

In the realm of second/foreign language learning, the development of writing skills is widely accepted and uncontroversial among researchers (Merkel, 2018; Muller & Gregoric, 2017). Writing is globally considered a pivotal role in language acquisition and proficiency (Steinlen, 2018). English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) trainees consistently seek ways to enhance their writing abilities to meet language requirements (Sadiku, 2015). However, teaching methods often fall short in effectively improving the overall quality of students' writing. Consequently, concerted efforts are necessary to elevate the standard of writing and writing instruction through constructive feedback and guidance aimed at fostering the development of learners' writing competence. Notably, shifts in writing techniques have brought about revolutionized feedback routines, complementing trainer feedback with peer feedback. In consequence, peer feedback adoption is regarded as an essential element in the manifold-draft process-oriented approach to teaching writing skills (Khalil, 2018).

Farrah (2012) suggests that peer feedback dynamics, encompassing learners in distributing, furnishing, and picking up convenient feedback, can significantly enhance writing strategies. This pedagogically effective method has various benefits in second language (L2) writing. For instance, peer feedback can ameliorate learners' assurance and certainty and promote perceptive analysis skills as they read and respond to their peers' texts (Ferris, 1995). Furthermore, the use of peer feedback dynamics brings about learning encouragement and enhances interpersonal relation strategies, as it seems to be a social practice that influences students' behavior and engagement (Koka & Hein, 2006). The theoretical support for peer feedback in the education and training platform emphasizes shared and group learning, discoursed collective bonds, and L2 linguistic achievement (Kagan & Olsen, 1992; Oxford, 1997, as cited in Kunwongse, 2013). Consequently, peer feedback acts as a crucial factor in L2 writing and has numerous impacts on learners' writing improvement.

When it comes to peer feedback dynamics in educational settings, Luk and Lin (2007) emphasize the significance of exchanges in language contexts as crucial group communication endeavors for learners. These interactions play a pivotal role in the development of erudition,

character, and self-reliance as proficient language users. Utilizing pair interaction patterns, peer feedback dynamics primarily focus on enhancing writing skills through the provision of high-quality feedback.

The study aimed to delve into the dynamics of peer feedback in English writing and identify patterns of pair communication to enhance the nature of both peer feedback and writing ability. Furthermore, it sought to propose effective strategies to bolster students' critical thinking abilities. To accomplish these objectives, the researcher employed a constructivist grounded theory methodology and formulated a model of critical thinking based on learners' perceptions.

2. Literature Review

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), social constructivism, the sociocultural and interaction theories in second language acquisition (SLA) (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lai, 2016; Topping, 1998) are related to interaction. The mentioned theories shed light on the various roles peers play in the feedback process. In higher education, peer feedback is regarded as an underlying approach (Lai, 2016), with some investigators asserting that it fosters deep learning, professional development, and self-evaluation skills (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lai, 2016; Morris, 2001). Recent inquiries have also suggested that peer feedback can contribute to greater student autonomy (Yang et al., 2006). It is evident that students' self-efficacy and knowledge are fundamental to the success of peer feedback.

In the realm of learning, the acquisition of knowledge is heavily influenced by an individual's mental framework. Sociocultural theory in linguistics underscores the pivotal role of language communication and learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Vygotsky (1978), in his exploration of the development of cognitive processes related to writing, contends that interactions with knowledgeable individuals contribute to the advancement of higher-order thinking. He stresses the irreplaceable nature of active sociocultural communication and interaction in knowledge construction. Consequently, higher mental functions stem from both sociocultural exchanges and individual mental structures. Individuals demonstrate varying levels of mental functioning, with some exhibiting superior capabilities. Those with higher mental functions play a crucial role in facilitating the learning processes of individuals with

lower functions through effective sociocultural communication and interaction. It is widely recognized that individuals with advanced mental functions tend to be more skilled and intelligent learners (Wang, 2007). Sociocultural theory is recognized as a fundamental framework in the scholarly examination of peer feedback (Wang, 2012).

Peer feedback plays a crucial role in collaborative learning by providing scaffolding for peers to overcome challenges. It involves an active exchange of feedback between students, allowing them to construct knowledge from their learning experiences. This reciprocal process empowers students to both give and receive feedback, fostering a supportive learning environment (Breslin et al., 2014). In the context of writing, peer scaffolding encompasses error correction, asking questions, repetition, providing explanations and confirmation, and error identification (Lin & Samuel, 2013). In the realm of English language learning, learners possess varying reasoning abilities and language proficiency. Through peer feedback, students with advanced skills can support those with lower proficiency levels, particularly in process-oriented writing instruction. This collaborative approach enables students to enhance their writing skills and overall language proficiency (Breslin et al., 2014).

2.1. Writing Ability, Thinking Critically, and Feedback

Strategies of writing are closely tied to other language techniques such as common sense, word knowledge domain, spelling, and social awareness. Bayat (2014) identifies key components of writing as the ability to create texts, language perception, vocabulary knowledge, and critical thinking, which is crucial for supporting the writer's ideas effectively.

Critical thinking is a crucial practice that involves the evaluation of opposing settings or ideas, distinguishing it from other forms of cognitive activity. This process integrates an amalgamation of knowledge, strategies, and prospects. Critical thinking entails recognizing problems, gathering evidence to support arguments, assessing the accuracy of that evidence, and fostering an attitude conducive to this analytical process (Bayat, 2014). Watson and Glaser (1964) delineate five essential dimensions of critical thinking: inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction, analysis, and assessment of arguments. Furthermore, writing is an important manifestation of critical thinking and creativity. Empirical research has demonstrated that engaging in peer feedback cultivates students' critical thinking abilities,

allowing them to provide more constructive evaluations of their peers' writing and to make objective assessments of their own work (Breslin et al., 2014; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Jerry, 2012).

Feedback is a critical component in the post-response phase of analyzing and evaluating a writer's work. Numerous researchers have emphasized the strong correlation between feedback and critical thinking, contending that both processes involve similar analytical and evaluative mechanisms. In educational contexts, evidence suggests that feedback can significantly enhance individuals' critical thinking skills (Duron et al., 2006; Ertmer & Richardson, 2007). Nonetheless, there exists a gap in comprehensive research addressing the intersection of critical thinking and feedback within educational environments.

2.2. Critical Peer Feedback Dynamics and Writing

Pearlman (2007) investigated critical pedagogy to enhance peer feedback by means of critical collaborative evaluation, highlighting the importance of integrating critical thinking in collaborative learning. Li (2007) studied the influences of critical evaluation training on both the quality of peer feedback and the final projects of learners involved in peer assessment. Additionally, Cox et al. (2013) identified key characteristics of an effective preceptor in peer assessment, stressing the need to cultivate critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Research has indicated that the dynamics of peer feedback and the resulting interaction patterns significantly enhance students' writing skills in L2 contexts (Hu & Lam, 2010; Khalil, 2018; Min, 2016). Furthermore, peer feedback facilitates a deeper understanding of the role of technology in the educational process for both learners and instructors (Alharbi, 2019). Brusa and Harutyunyan (2019) assert that peer feedback operates as an effective learning tool, rooted in the sociocultural approach. This approach fosters increased levels of autonomy and critical thinking, drawing on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, thereby contributing to improved student learning outcomes.

Various researchers have emphasized the benefits of peer feedback for learners seeking to improve their writing skills. The timely and informative nature of peer feedback allows students to actively engage in offering constructive criticism, providing them with a voice in

shaping their writing abilities and expressing their ideas (Lu & Law, 2012; Reynolds, 2009). The dynamics of peer feedback offer learners various sources of feedback, leading to increased self-awareness, confidence, motivation, and critical thinking skills, while also nurturing social strategies (Farrah, 2012; Orsmond et al., 2013). Additionally, the process of peer feedback empowers learners to take charge of their learning journey and develop autonomy, ultimately leading to higher levels of critical thinking. Moreover, it helps students cultivate critical reflection skills, learn to listen, assess using obvious criteria, and provide high-quality feedback.

In the context of L2 writing, several studies have highlighted the significance of pair interactions in peer feedback, as they contribute to students' social interaction abilities and lead to improvements in their writing skills. Understanding and utilizing patterns of interaction can effectively describe the social peer feedback dynamics (Ferris, 2003).

2.3. The Current Study

Social Cognitive Theory posits that peer feedback facilitates open communication and fosters collaborative learning, which significantly enhances students' writing skills in English. Within the framework of the ZPD, students exhibiting advanced cognitive capabilities can provide constructive feedback to their peers with lower proficiency levels. This paper investigated the impact of critical thinking skills on the peer feedback process in English writing. Specifically, it sought to elucidate how individuals who possess strong writing abilities can effectively collaborate and communicate, thereby offering valuable support to their less proficient peers during feedback exchanges. Central to this investigation is the concept of critical thinking, as it aspires to elevate the overall quality of peer feedback. Ultimately, the study intended to analyze the interaction patterns within peer feedback sessions to enhance both feedback quality and the writing competencies of students in English. The research question posed was: What are the dynamics of peer feedback in the context of English writing among Iranian EFL learners, as manifested through patterns of pair interaction?

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

The initial phase of the study comprised two workshops, each spanning three hours, during which participants were introduced to the principles of critical peer feedback and its application in English writing. These workshops addressed the Paul-Elder Model (2012), Reichenbach's Six-Step Model (Reichenbach, 2001), and the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Critical Thinking (Forehand, 2005). These theoretical frameworks equipped participants with the essential knowledge and skills necessary for providing effective critical peer feedback. The second step of the research encompassed the collection and analysis of data over the course of one semester during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. The analyzed data included transcripts from semi-structured interviews, six writing assignments, and artifacts of critical peer feedback, all of which were assessed utilizing QSR NVivo 8.

This study examined the influences of peer feedback on learners' writing abilities through a qualitative methodology. Participants were introduced to principles of critical thinking, the process of critical peer feedback, a critical thinking framework, and assessment rubrics for English writing. The researcher facilitated training sessions, observed peer feedback interactions, and conducted interviews to obtain valuable insights. The training materials underscored the importance of utilizing critical peer feedback in order to enhance writing skills via written exchanges. The study encompassed various concepts, including peer feedback, critical thinking, interaction patterns, English writing, and the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of critical thinking (Forehand, 2005).

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted in the first semester of the 2023 academic year at Poldokhtar University in Iran, focusing on an English paragraph writing course. The primary instructional approach utilized peer feedback dynamics, incorporating methods of pair interaction and collaborative learning. The course convened once a week for a duration of 90 minutes, spanning a total of 16 weeks.

Three weeks before the commencement of the research, participants were provided with an introduction to critical thinking and the principles of critical peer feedback. This included a critical thinking model as well as rubrics specifically designed to facilitate peer feedback in

English writing. These introductory sessions were conducted separately from the main course lectures.

A total of 18 male students between the ages of 18 and 22 were enrolled in the course. All of them were majoring in English Language Teaching. From these participants, six pairs were selected based on their active participation in lessons and pair work, as well as their willingness to engage in the study, assertiveness, and the researcher's supervision over the three weeks preceding the collection of data.

The study subjects all shared Persian as their native language and were studying English Language Teaching. They were given permission to work in equal self-selected pairs throughout the semester. The researcher assured the students that all data collected from peer feedback processes, stimulated recalls, interviews, and classroom observations would be kept confidential. The students provided consent before the research began. All 12 case participants agreed to participate in the study and completed the necessary consent forms. Written consent was obtained from each participant, and they signed a form outlining all ethical considerations before the study commenced. This form provided detailed information to help participants make informed decisions about their involvement in the study. Key ethical procedures included informing participants about their roles in the study, using pseudonyms in all written and published data, and emphasizing that participation was voluntary.

3.3. Instruments

In this study, various instruments and materials were used for data collection and analysis:

In-depth Interviews. The interviews were spaced out to allow for reflection and in-depth responses. Each interview session lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and took place in a relaxed setting at the researcher's office in the School of Foreign Languages at Poldokhtar University. Conducting the interviews after work and class hours ensured that the participants were more comfortable and able to focus on sharing their thoughts and experiences regarding peer feedback dynamics.

QRS NVivo Software. The data collected from the interviews was analyzed using the QRS NVivo software version 8.0. This software is a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

Writing Assignment and Artifacts of Peer Feedback Dynamics. In addition to interviews, data collection methods included reviewing writing assignments based on the syllabus of English writing and gathering the re-writing submissions after participants received critical peer feedback. The interactions and conversations between participants were documented through written records and audio recordings, with careful consideration of ethical guidelines. Following the submission of their assignments, participants provided critical peer feedback to each other using patterns of pair interaction, which was then analyzed to assess its effectiveness in improving writing skills.

The collected data was analyzed using a qualitative method to identify patterns of interaction between peers during the peer feedback process. This analysis aimed to understand how the dynamics of peer feedback influenced the quality of the final English writing assignments. Additionally, the study aimed to determine whether certain pairs of peers were more effective in providing constructive feedback and how this impacted the overall improvement of English writing skills. Finally, recommendations were made for optimizing peer feedback dynamics to enhance the learning experience and improve writing proficiency among students.

Furthermore, the data collection process involved analyzing the process, language characteristics, quality, and development of peer feedback dynamics based on patterns of pair interaction in other peers' document files. This approach allowed for a comprehensive study of one peer's engagement in critical peer feedback dynamics.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The researcher conducted two workshops in the research setting, initially as a trainer and later as an observer and interviewer. The lecturer, who has eight years of experience, led the workshops.

After the preparation stage, participants engaged in peer feedback activities, giving and receiving feedback on each other's written work. The focus was on providing constructive criticism, highlighting strengths, and offering suggestions for improvement. Participants were encouraged to apply the techniques and concepts learned in the training workshop during these feedback sessions. The researcher observed and recorded the interactions to analyze the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving writing skills.

The analysis of peer feedback dynamics in teaching English paragraph writing involved observing pair interactions, collecting data, and conducting a detailed analysis. Participants were asked to keep their writing tasks in student portfolio folders and files and to provide feedback within a week. The writing assignments corresponded to the syllabus for English Paragraph Writing.

Throughout the semester, detailed records were kept of the feedback given by peers on each writing assignment. This information was stored in the students' portfolio folders and files, allowing for a comprehensive collection of feedback from week 4 to week 16. By preserving these documents, the progress of each participant and the development of their writing skills according to the English writing syllabus could be tracked. Efforts were also made to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the study participants.

The data collection process involved a combination of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Three in-depth interviews were carried out by the researcher at the School of English Languages between weeks 7 and 16. The interview questions were refined as the study progressed to align with the evolving research focus and new insights. Interviews were scheduled to accommodate participants' engagement with peer feedback dynamics in English writing, taking place after work or class hours. Each interview was conducted face-to-face, with audio recording using a record player and interview protocols provided in hard copy to enhance participants' comfort and understanding.

To investigate the dynamics of peer feedback, the researcher implemented a series of three in-depth one-on-one interviews with each participant. These interviews were transcribed prior to conducting data analysis. To facilitate comprehensive expressions of thoughts, participants were encouraged to articulate their perspectives thoroughly before each interview.

The questions were formulated in a semi-structured format, thereby creating an environment conducive to comfortable and relaxed face-to-face interaction. The objective of conducting three interviews was to obtain reliable and continuous data while also enabling a comparative analysis of peer feedback dynamics across various sections of the study, utilizing three distinct interview protocols.

Additionally, the document analysis involved a systematic examination of critical peer feedback dynamics as represented in written texts. Data collection comprised six English writing assignments for each participant, in accordance with the Academic English Writing Syllabus. The components of critical peer feedback dynamics extracted from each writing assignment were sorted out for subsequent analysis.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

Utilizing QRS NVivo 8, a software application designed for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis, the data sources were meticulously coded and categorized. This software facilitated the management of data and concepts, enabled data querying, and supported the modeling and reporting processes (Bazeley, 2007). Given that the research data comprised text-based materials, including interview transcripts, artifacts from English writing assignments, and peer feedback, QRS NVivo 8 demonstrated significant efficiency in organizing and analyzing the information. The selection of QRS NVivo 8 was based on its suitability for the analysis of textual data.

The 'EW Artifacts' folder contained samples of English writing by students, the 'PFD Artifacts' folder included feedback provided by peers, and the 'Interviews' folder stored audio recordings of interviews with participants. The data management feature in QRS NVivo 8 allowed for efficient organization and storage of these diverse data sources.

In the second round of coding, the 'Free Nodes' were refined and set into broader categories called 'Tree Nodes,' allowing for a more structured and systematic approach to data analysis. Finally, in the third round of coding, the 'Tree Nodes' were further refined and developed into key themes and sub-themes that captured the essence of the data and provided a comprehensive overview of the research findings (Saldaña, 2016). This meticulous coding

process enabled a deep understanding of the internal sources and facilitated the extraction of valuable insights and conclusions relevant to the research objectives.

During the second phase of coding, the 'Free Nodes' were restructured into 'Tree Nodes'. To enhance the analysis of the 'Tree Nodes', the source data underwent recoding to ensure consistency. In the final coding phase, integration of the 'Free Nodes' occurred within the 'Tree Nodes'. Following the categorization of the 'Tree Nodes' in QRS NVivo 8, these nodes were subjected to comprehensive validation and reliability assessments conducted by data examiners, including third-party experts, case participants, and the lecturer. Informed by their feedback, the 'Tree Nodes' were re-evaluated and revised as necessary. Subsequently, the 'Free Nodes' were reassessed by the data examiners. The finalization of the 'Tree Nodes' received endorsement from both the data examiners and the research conductor involved in this research.

4. Results

The study involved an extensive analysis of themes and codes from 116 Free Nodes and three Tree Nodes. It is worth mentioning that one of the three nodes specifically addressed the research question and main findings. Additionally, the study explored the dynamics of peer feedback, focusing on patterns of pair interaction in English writing.

Based on findings from analyses conducted using QSR NVivo 8, it was observed that the participants opted for the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to facilitate critical peer feedback dynamics. These dynamics encompassed three key elements: awareness, interaction, and cooperation. Preceding the critical peer feedback, the participants leveraged their existing knowledge of English writing for remembering, recognizing, and applying their peers' writing. Subsequently, they endeavored to provide critical peer feedback on their peers' writings.

The participants expressed that engaging in critical peer feedback equips them with a higher-order strategy for enhancing their English writing skills.

Example 1:

It seems that our feedback has evolved to become more critical peer feedback. While our comments may be more advanced, comprehensive, and logical, we still need to work on

eliminating grammar errors. I believe our capacity for critical peer feedback has improved, allowing us to identify the specific areas that need to be addressed in our feedback. As a result, our ability to provide peer feedback has become more impactful. (Interview Transcript)

Figure 1

Peer Feedback Dynamics in QRS NVivo 8

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
content	0	0	9/14/2020 12:32 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:32 AM	D.SH
awareness	7	10	9/14/2020 12:39 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
comfort	8	11	9/14/2020 12:41 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
competition	8	12	9/14/2020 12:40 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
confidence	8	12	9/14/2020 12:42 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
cooperation	8	14	9/14/2020 12:41 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
correction	7	10	9/14/2020 12:39 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
creativity	7	10	9/14/2020 12:38 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
interaction	9	14	9/14/2020 12:41 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
motivation	8	13	9/14/2020 12:40 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
nature	8	12	9/14/2020 12:40 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
opportunity	9	14	9/14/2020 12:42 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
role	8	11	9/14/2020 12:39 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
techniques	8	12	9/14/2020 12:39 AM	D.SH	9/14/2020 12:58 AM	D.SH
factors	0	0	6/16/2020 2:59 AM	D.SH	6/16/2020 2:59 AM	D.SH
achievements	9	12	6/16/2020 3:57 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:38 AM	D.SH
decision-making	2	4	6/16/2020 3:42 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:38 AM	D.SH
external	11	32	6/16/2020 4:06 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:42 AM	D.SH
Internal	8	15	6/16/2020 3:40 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:42 AM	D.SH
intervention	8	15	6/16/2020 3:43 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:40 AM	D.SH
practice	10	32	6/16/2020 3:39 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:37 AM	D.SH
role	10	26	6/16/2020 3:59 AM	D.SH	6/17/2020 1:38 AM	D.SH
setting	9	23	6/16/2020 4:02 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:39 AM	D.SH
process	0	0	6/16/2020 2:57 AM	D.SH	6/16/2020 2:57 AM	D.SH
cognition	11	40	6/16/2020 3:05 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:49 AM	D.SH
correction	6	8	6/16/2020 3:56 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:49 AM	D.SH
engagement	11	21	6/16/2020 3:41 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:49 AM	D.SH
identify mistakes	7	21	6/16/2020 11:17 PM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:49 AM	D.SH
informative	2	3	6/16/2020 3:07 AM	D.SH	8/30/2020 2:43 AM	D.SH

In Example 1, CP6 underscored the significance of critical peer feedback as a more sophisticated form of evaluation. Other participants also acknowledged its critical role in enhancing the hallmark of peer feedback within the context of English writing. The twelve case participants recognized that their prior feedback primarily concentrated on correcting grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. They admitted to lacking the requisite knowledge and skills to deliver higher-order feedback beyond mere error correction, regarding such corrections as a lower-order feedback approach.

Example 2:

It's evident that our peer feedback goes beyond mere error correction. Critical peer feedback allows us to identify numerous issues and then proceed to analyze, summarize,

evaluate, and rewrite the content. This approach greatly enhances the quality of feedback.
(Interview Transcript/CP1)

In the context of peer feedback, critical thinking represents a transition from lower-order thinking to higher-order thinking. Engaging in critical peer feedback involves higher-order critical thinking. It entails reading the title, comprehending it, and then delving into analysis, evaluation, and the generation of new ideas. It's a holistic process. (Interview Transcript/CP2)

I have come to realize that critical thinking emphasizes the creation of new ideas and logical reasoning. It's a systematic and comprehensive approach to addressing a problem. Only through this logical process can we gain a deeper understanding of the issue at hand and effectively tackle it. (Interview Transcript/CP3)

In the second example derived from the initial interviews, participants exhibited a fundamental understanding of critical thinking skills such as comprehension, application, awareness, interaction, and cooperation, which correspond with the principles of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The analysis of frequency conducted using QSR NVivo 8.0 indicated that the six keywords "remembering, understanding, applying, awareness, interaction, and cooperation" ranked among the top 100 words mentioned. This finding suggests that participants frequently referenced these terms associated with the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Moreover, all participants unanimously agreed that the critical thinking skills delineated in the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy are particularly effective for facilitating constructive peer feedback.

Example 3

I utilize the Revised Bloom's model in the peer feedback process, which follows a systematic methodology that emphasizes pair interaction. Currently, my capacity to deliver critical peer feedback remains limited in the areas of remembering, understanding, and applying concepts. As a result, I have not yet achieved a satisfactory level of self-awareness, engagement, and cognitive development. (Cited from Interview transcript/ CP5)

The dynamics of peer feedback utilizing patterns of pair interaction significantly enhance engagement, self-awareness, and self-confidence among learners. This strategy is instrumental in cultivating critical thinking skills and fostering learner autonomy and social interaction. Furthermore, it promotes collaboration and cooperative learning.

Peer interaction is a crucial element in enriching students' learning experiences, facilitating knowledge construction through social sharing and collaboration. This collaborative approach contributes to improvements in grammatical knowledge, oral engagement, and the complexity, accuracy, and fluency of writing skills. This notion is supported by Vygotsky's theory, which posits that learning unfolds in two stages: initially via interaction with others, followed by integration into a participant's cognitive framework.

Critical peer feedback operates upon two levels: interpersonal peer interaction and the cognitive processes associated with providing critical feedback. Without these interactions, the development and application of critical thinking skills, along with subsequent critical peer feedback, are rendered ineffective. The cognitive framework of critical thinking, enhanced through reading and writing, ultimately contributes to the effectiveness of critical peer feedback. It is essential to recognize that critical peer feedback encompasses both the resultant feedback and the ongoing process of critical thinking.

Participants in the study underscored the significance of awareness in delivering critical peer feedback in the context of English writing, emphasizing aspects such as wording, sentence structure, logic, cohesion, and overall communication strategies. Their exploration led to the identification of an innovative peer feedback strategy that integrates critical thinking skills, thus enabling the provision of higher-order peer feedback encompassing awareness, interaction, and cooperation. Furthermore, the participants strongly supported the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Model of critical thinking, acknowledging the pivotal role of critical thinking skills such as awareness, interaction, and cooperation in enhancing the quality of peer feedback.

Findings indicate that the twelve participants predominantly employed the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy to enhance the dynamics of peer feedback through structured pair interactions. The analysis of interview transcripts utilized free coding within the QRS NVivo

8.0 software, which led to the development of tree nodes that depict the 'Process of Peer Feedback Dynamics' (PFD). Figure 2 provides a visual representation of this process, illustrating its components effectively.

According to Figure 2, the process involved five key nodes: identifying mistakes, error correction, providing information, fostering engagement, and enhancing cognition. The study's 12 participants followed a five-step process for peer feedback dynamics, utilizing patterns of pair interaction specifically tailored for English writing: 1. identifying and assessing the errors of grammar and sentences; 2. correcting the errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation in text; 3. employing necessary strategies to solve problems more easily and using practical problem-solving skills to resolve learning difficulties; 4. the ability to comprehend, mental act, or process of knowing; and 5. offering suggestions on how to enhance writing to ensure successful communication. This can be achieved by using clear and engaging language, structuring the content effectively, and incorporating relevant examples to support key points. This five-step process is the concrete output of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction.

The cognitive processes associated with peer feedback dynamics in English writing, as analyzed in this study, can be delineated into three distinct steps based on the interaction patterns observed among pairs.

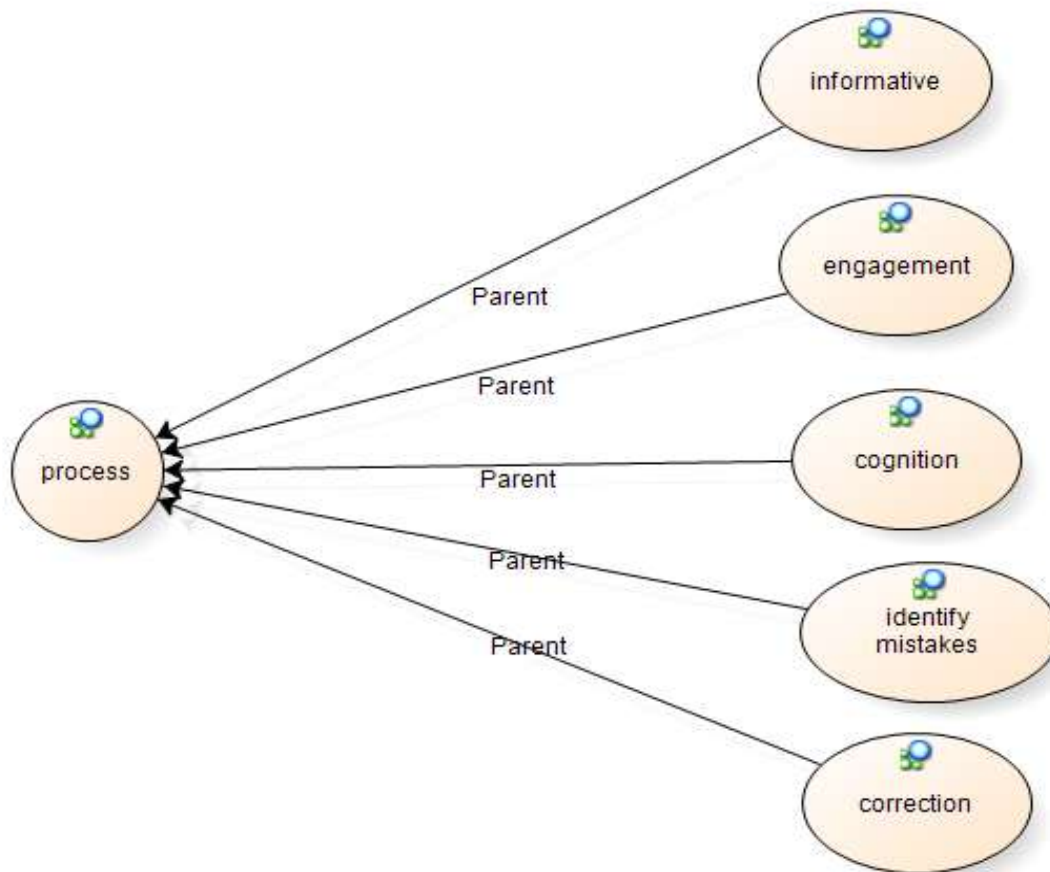
When assessing a peer's writing, it is imperative for the reviewer to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the writing tasks, language usage, and overall organization. This initial evaluation establishes a foundation for a thorough review process. Such assessment is aligned with the lower-order thinking stages (LOTs) of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, which encompass the processes of remembering, understanding, and applying.

The concept of "intake" refers to the internalization of input by an individual within the framework of SLA (Pawlak, 2011; Rast, 2008). In this context, a peer's intake during the peer feedback dynamics involves the active engagement in remembering, understanding, and applying English writing skills. Throughout the intake process, students may focus on one, two, or all three of these components simultaneously and may transition fluidly between them. It is important to note that at the intake stage, an essential phase within peer feedback dynamics,

these three activities of remembering, understanding, and applying English writing do not occur in a sequential or linear manner.

Figure 2

Nodes of Process in Peer Feedback Dynamics for English Writing



Second, after the initial intake stage, the focus shifted to critical thinking, involving activities centered on awareness, cooperation, and interaction. All the participants in the case study embraced a three-step model of critical thinking, emphasizing the importance of awareness, cooperation, and interaction. They found this model to be concrete, clear, and accessible for novice participants in peer feedback dynamics using pair interaction patterns, particularly underscoring the significance of interaction in the context of English writing. Engaging in peer activities allows students to assess their own work and that of their peers

using teacher-provided rubrics, thereby enhancing their critical thinking awareness, especially when employing interaction patterns. Through peer activities, students can evaluate their learning process and outcomes by appraising others' work and accepting their feedback, facilitating the identification of their learning blind spots and the restructuring of their learning objectives and plans. Additionally, various researchers have highlighted that utilizing peer feedback dynamics can foster students' critical thinking awareness (Wang et al., 2016).

In the final stage of peer feedback dynamics, utilizing patterns of pair interaction known as the output stage, individuals utilized their acquired knowledge to critically evaluate their peers' writing and then provided constructive feedback. In this context, "output" is related to the language generated by a language learner in the field of linguistics (Zhang, 2009). Specifically, in this study on peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction, "output" pertains to the written feedback language produced by a peer for their counterpart's writing. This concluding stage can be considered the culmination of the peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction for English writing in this particular research.

According to the tree nodes of peer feedback dynamics process using patterns of pair interaction in Figure 2, the output of peer feedback dynamics usually includes five parts: identify mistakes, error correcting, informative, engagement, and cognition. The detailed process can be shown in the figure below (see Figure 3).

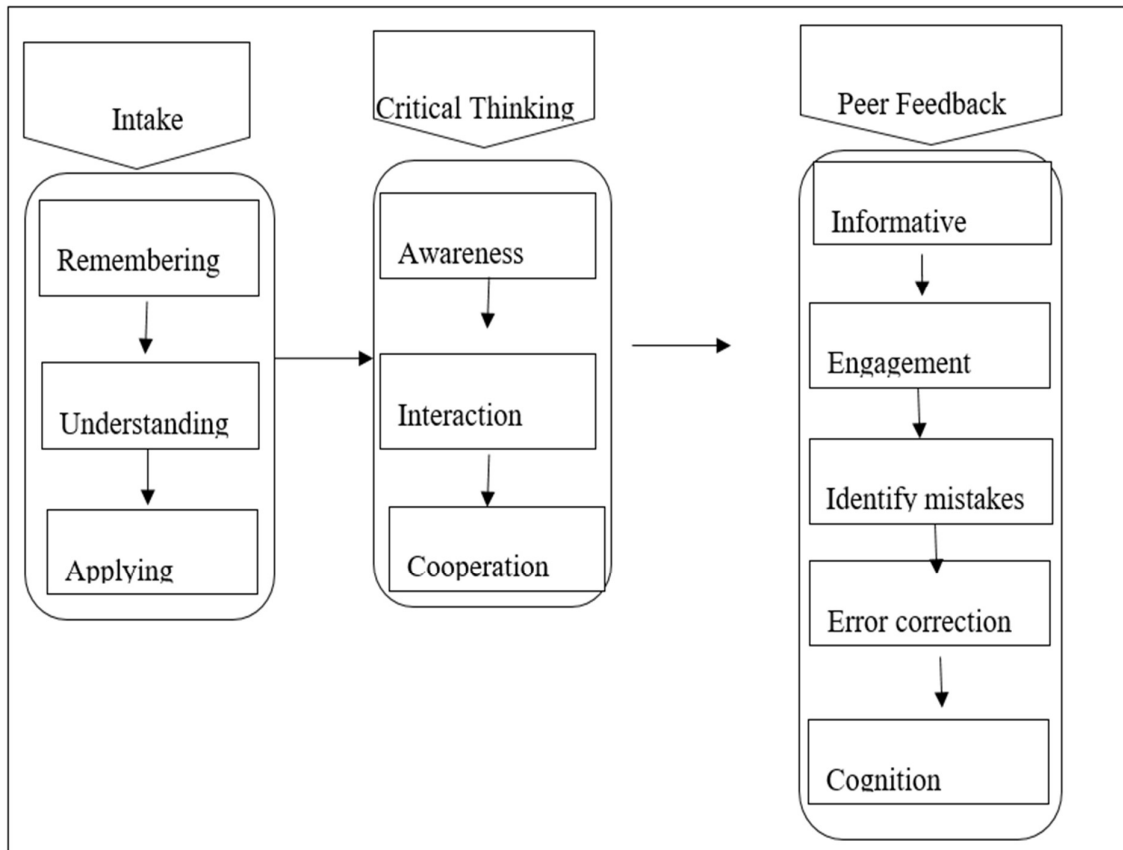
During the PFD output process, the first step involved a peer providing valuable strategic information to guide their counterpart toward successfully completing the task. This information focused on helping the peer detect errors, overcome obstacles, and apply more efficient strategies to solve the learning tasks. Informative feedback was used to inform learners why their responses were correct or incorrect, providing them with task-related information.

The next step focused on engagement, which is defined as a psychological process including the attention, interest, investment, and attempt that learners put into their learning. This definition implied both affective and behavioral participation in the learning experience. Creating a classroom environment that encouraged students to make meaningful connections by thinking critically and reflecting on their experiences helped to engage the participants in

classroom activities. The use of peer feedback dynamics increased engagement and enhanced critical thinking skills in the writing classroom.

Figure 3

Process of Peer Feedback Dynamics in English Writing



Higher-level cognitive processes in peer feedback dynamics have significantly contributed to the development of critical thinking skills, thereby enhancing students' interest and engagement in English lessons. This, in turn, has led to improvements in the quality of peer feedback and written assignments. The third step of the process involved a thorough analysis of the English writing tasks and their associated requirements, followed by a meticulous evaluation of each criterion. Subsequently, attention was directed toward error correction, an element often overlooked in higher-level peer feedback but recognized as a form of metacognition for Iranian students. This step encompassed the correction of grammatical,

spelling, and punctuation errors, as well as an assessment of task fulfillment, cohesion, coherence, and the overall logic pertaining to syntax, pragmatics, and discourse.

Finally, the last step involved studying cognition, which refers to the ability to comprehend mental acts or processes of knowing. This encompasses the brain's acquisition, processing, storage, and retrieval of information, as well as integrative neuropsychological processes such as mental imaging, problem solving, and perception, and is pertinent to emotion and affect. These five steps form the basic cognitive process of peer feedback dynamics.

Providing critical peer feedback is underpinned by the Model of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl et al., 2001), which serves as a foundational framework for critical thinking. This methodology is further reinforced by the "intake," "reaction," "input," and "output" hypotheses in the context of SLA (Pawlak, 2011; Rast, 2008; Zhang, 2009), underscoring its logical and rational basis. In contrast to previous research that primarily examined the physical activities involved in peer feedback—such as reading, commenting, discussing, and writing (Asikainen et al., 2014; Lai, 2016; Pol et al., 2008)—the current approach emphasizes the mental and psychological dimensions inherent in critical thinking during the peer feedback process.

5. Discussion

The research findings demonstrated that students can effectively understand critical thinking and the dynamics of peer feedback through structured workshops. The study employed the six-step model of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a valuable framework for novices in providing peer feedback. Participants engaged in analyzing peer writing by first utilizing the initial three steps of remembering, understanding, and applying concepts. Subsequently, they employed higher-order critical thinking skills, including interaction, cooperation, and awareness, to deliver constructive peer feedback. This approach is regarded as an effective strategy for refining higher-level writing, consistent with existing literature that underscores the significance of critical thinking in enhancing both peer feedback and writing quality (Bloom et al., 1956; Duron et al., 2006; Paul & Elder, 2002; Reichenbach, 2001). The study underscores the necessity of cultivating these skills within educational frameworks.

The outcomes of the report indicated that subjects possessed a limited understanding of peer feedback dynamics, primarily focusing on error correction prior to the investigation. This situation highlights the necessity for training in EFL writing skills (Lai, 2016). Although the participants considered themselves advanced writers, they acknowledged the imperative to develop sophisticated peer feedback abilities to promote effective communication and collaborative learning within the classroom setting. Furthermore, they asserted that the incorporation of critical feedback dynamics not only enhanced the quality of peer feedback but also contributed positively to their English writing proficiency. This perspective is supported by interview data and aligns with existing literature, which posits that critical feedback can significantly improve both peer interactions and writing outcomes (Cox et al., 2013; Forster, 2007; Li, 2007; Ruggiero, 2012; Zhao, 1996).

The dynamics of peer feedback, characterized by distinct interaction patterns, serve as a valuable model for understanding critical thinking processes. This framework is illustrated through the 'intake,' 'reaction,' 'input,' and 'output' hypotheses pertinent to SLA (Pawlak, 2011; Rast, 2008; Zhang, 2009). It can be inferred that effective peer feedback represents a higher-ranking assessment that integrates critical thinking skills, including awareness, cooperation, and interaction. These skills are built upon essential lower-order cognitive abilities such as remembering, understanding, and applying writing concepts. The Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of critical thinking is recognized as a suitable framework for analyzing these peer feedback dynamics.

Critical peer feedback serves as a valuable strategy for fostering higher-order thinking in formative assessments of advanced writing competencies. This skill set can be effectively developed through systematic instruction and practical exercises. The process encompasses three fundamental components such as intake that involves the initial engagement with the written work, emphasizing the cognitive processes of remembering, recognition, and using foundational thinking skills and critical thinking that participants are encouraged to cultivate awareness, engage in interaction, and foster cooperation with peers and output in which individuals articulate their analytical feedback in a written format. These components work together to enhance collaborative learning and improve writing proficiency.

Following the receipt of peer feedback, five activities are proposed to enhance writing quality and facilitate further critical evaluation. These activities include proofreading, re-editing, self-reflection, and rewriting. Although these processes may not be strictly cognitive tasks, they serve as important responses to the feedback received. After engaging in self-reflection, a subsequent cycle of critical peer feedback can be undertaken to assess the revisions, with this iterative process continuing until the writing is refined or accepted by peers.

The present paper indicates that individuals with higher-order thinking skills effectively support those with lower-order thinking abilities. Furthermore, individuals possessing higher-order thinking skills are able to provide feedback of a higher quality compared to their lower-order counterparts. Additionally, those with well-developed critical thinking skills demonstrate greater efficiency in delivering constructive peer feedback.

6. Conclusion

The ability to think critically is crucial for success in today's world. Both teachers and learners play essential roles in education and should be well-versed in the concept of critical thinking. This research aimed to investigate critical thinking skills in peer feedback dynamics for English writing, with the goal of enhancing the quality of peer feedback and English writing. Additionally, the study explored the process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction through written discourse and presents a model of critical peer feedback.

The implications of this research are significant for EFL teachers, learners, curriculum developers, and syllabus designers. Incorporating critical thinking skills into peer feedback through pair interaction patterns can help students identify key points, stay open-minded, evaluate peer work critically, reflect on their own thinking processes, and make logical deductions. These results emphasize the importance of integrating critical thinking into peer feedback dynamics using pair interaction patterns to enhance the nature of peer feedback and English writing. In today's world, the demand is increasing for individuals who can think critically, solve problems efficiently, and communicate and collaborate effectively in both personal and professional contexts.

In this way, teachers can establish a stimulating learning setting that encourages students to think independently, analyze information critically, and form their own opinions. By shifting the focus from memorization to understanding and application, individuals will be better equipped to navigate the complexities of the up-to-date world and contribute meaningfully to society.

Conflict of interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in the present research paper.

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Appendix

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE PARTICIPANTS (the original was in Persian)

1. Could you please provide your understanding of critical thinking?
2. How do you understand critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction?
3. How do you use critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in English Writing?
4. What difficulties do you have at your critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction?
5. How do critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction improve your quality of feedback in English Writing?
6. What is your process of critical thinking in English Writing?
7. What is your process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in English Writing?
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in English writing?
9. What are the contents of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in English writing?
10. How do peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction improve your English writing?