

# Pre-Service English Teachers' Experiences of Peer-Reviewing in L2 Writing

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## ABSTRAK

Studi kasus ini mengeksplorasi pengalaman pembelajar jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, yang merupakan calon guru, dalam melakukan penelaahan sejawat di kelas menulis dalam Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua. Studi ini menggunakan analisis data sekunder terhadap tulisan refleksi akhir dan hasil penelaahan sejawat. Studi ini menemukan bahwa para pembelajar masih kurang percaya diri dalam memberikan umpan balik tentang tata bahasa. Mereka juga menganggap cukup sulit untuk memberikan penilaian yang objektif terhadap tulisan teman. Akan tetapi, mereka mengakui bahwa aktivitas penilaian sejawat membuat mereka belajar secara mandiri dan memfasilitasi mereka untuk menyadari kesalahan yang tidak disadari sebelumnya. Mereka menyadari pentingnya memberikan umpan balik yang jelas dan akurat meskipun kadang mereka mengalami kesulitan melakukannya. Beberapa pembelajar menghargai usaha teman mereka dalam memberi umpan balik meskipun kurang baik secara kualitas karena itu merupakan bagian dari proses belajar. Berdasarkan hasil studi ini, disarankan penelaahan sejawat dilakukan secara rutin sehingga dapat memfasilitasi pembelajar untuk belajar dari satu sama lain. Selain itu, perlu juga dilakukan studi yang menginvestigasi sejauh mana umpan balik yang diberikan benar-benar digunakan untuk meningkatkan kualitas tulisan.

## ABSTRACT

This case study explored pre-service English teachers' experiences in peer review activities in second language (L2) writing class through secondary data analysis of the participants' final reflections and peer review documents. The present study used secondary qualitative document analysis as the method. It used two types of secondary data. The study found that learners were still unconfident in giving feedback on grammar and considered assessing peers' works objectively tricky. However, conducting peer review compelled them to study independently and facilitated them to realise their mistakes. Learners realised the importance of giving clear and accurate feedback but at times struggled to do so due to limited ability. The findings showing learners' repeated concerns on grammatical aspects in their reflections whilst the peer review activities also included organisation and coherence aspects may indicate that learners prioritised accuracy more than organisation of ideas. Furthermore, several learners appreciated their peers' feedback regardless of quality as a part of learning. It is suggested that peer reviewing is conducted regularly to facilitate learners to learn from each other and to conduct studies on the extent the peer reviewers' feedback is used to improve the reviewees' writing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is probably the central process of any effective instruction as only through assessment, the extent to which instructional activities result in intended learning can be measured. It can be summative, conducted at the end of a certain learning period to measure learners' achievement, and it can be formative, conducted continuously to improve learners' performance along the way (Danniels et al., 2020; García-Peñalvo et al., 2021; Topping, 2017). Specific in the field of English as Second Language (L2) writing instruction, peer review has been used in various learning contexts (Azarnoosh, 2013; Cahyono & Amrina, 2016; Kuyyogsuy, 2019; Lam, 2015). As writing entails a big portion of editing and drafting, peer review often becomes an important attribute in the editing stage in writing classes for its practicality from

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teachers' viewpoints and reported potentials it offers for learners (Tahir, 2012). Peer review as an established strategy to improve learners' writing quality both through being reviewers and reviewees (Baker, 2016; Loretto et al., 2016; Zhao, 2014; Zhu & Carless, 2018). In other words, learners develop metacognitive awareness and regulation of their learning process which in turn helps improve the reviewers' writing skills. Additionally, a recent experimental study in Iran also found that learners in the experimental group implementing peer feedback outperformed learners in the control group without peer feedback in writing (Bolourchi and Soleimani, 2021). In China, other research found that learners had a very positive attitude towards peer review conducted online, suggesting the use of technology positively affected peer review success (Lin, 2020).

Whilst identifying errors in their peers' works, learner reviewers practice evaluation and justifying their assessment and, in the process of providing feedback, they engage in more content, interpretations, and logic. This experience eventually promotes learning and critical thinking (Baker, 2016; Dewi et al., 2019). Learner reviewers who gave good feedback to their friends tended to score high in their writing assignments (Li et al., 2010). Additionally, other research also found that peer review was reported to help learners generate more ideas and improve their grammar (Moloudi, 2011). In a recent quantitative study, found that learners focused on grammar accuracy when peer-reviewing, thus improving grammatical aspect of writing (Ahmed, 2020).

As the reviewees, learners can receive more feedback on their works in addition to that from the teachers and, in so doing, they will obtain a reference to substantially revise their works before they submit them (Baker, 2016). It is acknowledged that at times feedback learner reviewees receive might not be so informative and meaningful due to learner reviewers' lack and it might not necessarily correct and precise either (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Farahani et al., 2019; Tahir, 2012). Even mentioned that in peer review activities, learner reviewers likely benefited more from *reviewing* their friends' works than from *receiving* feedback from their friends (Li et al., 2010). Even so, however, feedback from peers can still give learner reviewees more perspectives in which they obtain an authentic audience (Tahir, 2012). It is argued that writing process will be more meaningful if there is an audience reading their works and in turn, this could stimulate learners in improving their writing (Tahir, 2012).

Furthermore, peer review conducted in a learning context which often values teachers as the most, or even sole source of information, may potentially change learners' perspectives on assessment (Azarnoosh, 2013). Peer review invites learners to consider assessment a shared responsibility which might be beneficial to promote autonomy, learner-centred instruction, as well as cooperative learning (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Gupta et al., 2019; McLucas, 2021). However, several authors argued that these benefits may not be taken for granted as peer review may also pose several challenges (Azarnoosh, 2013; Esfandiari & Myford, 2013; Loretto et al., 2016).

A question commonly attributed to the drawback of peer feedback is whether learners are already capable of providing high-quality feedback (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Esfandiari & Myford, 2013). Learner reviewers, due to their limitations, might provide inaccurate, unclear, and too simple comments, which could potentially compromise the quality of peer review, like the 'blind leading the blind' (Farahani et al., 2019; Loretto et al., 2016; Tsai & Chuang, 2013). Learners' inability to provide useful feedback may be affected by several factors such as learners' limited language ability, attitudes and motivation, and familiarity with the peer review tasks. Another reported potential drawback of peer review is related to friendship bias, which could be culture-bound. Study in Iran found that there was no significant difference between the results of learners' peer review and that of the teacher, indicating no friendship bias was found in that study (Azarnoosh's, 2013). It was found that more valid peer review results were produced when the reviewers and the reviewees were just regular classmates than those when they were close friends (Izati, 2018). These differences may be attributed to the cultural beliefs of each specific research context. Though Asian culture generally considers social relationships among friends very important, leading to possible bias, learners' awareness in giving honest and objective feedback for their friends' sake as well as the general familiarity of all the students with one another in the class may come into play.

Despite the bulk of the literature investigating peer review, several points need to be further investigated. First, despite several reported potentials of peer review, they have been mentioned rather sporadically in the literature. Secondly, peer review seems to be seen to inherent several challenges in its implementations, worth further investigation. Furthermore, studies on peer review in the Indonesian context are still limited (Cahyono & Amrina, 2016; Dewi et al., 2019; Izati, 2018; Sudarmaji & Lifanie, 2020). Two studies were conducted using t-test in undergraduate university and High School contexts respectively (Izati, 2018; Sudarmaji & Lifanie, 2020). Despite these studies' possible contributions, a study investigating undergraduate learners' experiences in peer review in depth through qualitative approaches is needed; the more so, considering that learners' attitudes towards peer review can be highly culture-

bound and context-specific (Esfandiari & Myford, 2013; Meihami & Razmjoo, 2016). Furthermore, considering the seemingly endless criticism on the quality of peer review, investigating learners' views on the quality of feedback they receive is also worthwhile. Based on these rationales, the present study has three research objectives. These are: first, to investigate the extent to which learners face challenges, if any, during conducting peer reviews, second, to investigate learners' beliefs on what they obtain through conducting peer reviews, and third, to investigate how learners perceive the quality of feedback given by their peers.

## 2. METHOD

The present study used secondary qualitative document analysis as the method. It used two types of secondary data. The first data type, which was also the main one, was seventeen students' final reflection papers on peer-reviewing activities in Essay Writing class. Each reflection was around 700-1,000 words in length. Peer review documents of these students, in the forms of Microsoft Word documents, were also analysed to supplement the results of analysis on learners' reflections on the relevant research questions. A peer review document in this study typically consisted of suggested grades, followed with general comments on details of idea, organisation, and language use, in the form of a short paragraph containing feedback sandwich (encouragement – constructive criticism – encouragement) (see Figure 1), and a learner reviewee's work which was annotated for errors using comment feature in Microsoft Word.

In consideration that these reflections and peer review documents were learners' actual assignment in class and thus were not specifically aimed to answer this study's research questions, these secondary data were evaluated to make sure that they were adequate and valid to answer the research questions. The uses of learners' actual products in class could be seen as an advantage that they were more authentic in the way that any results were the participants' truthful accounts without any possible researcher's interference (Subekti, 2019). Furthermore, the uses of learners' reflections on peer review activities and learners' actual peer review products in the field of peer review studies could be considered rare as most studies in the field so far heavily rely on quantitative analysis (e.g.: Cahyono & Amrina, 2016; Izati, 2018; Kuyyogsuy, 2019) with fewer using interviews. This rarity, however, was expected to offer new perspectives in the literature in the field. In addition, the uses of two kinds of secondary data, learners' reflections, showing their perspectives, and their peer review products, showing what they actually did in class, also functioned as triangulation to improve the reliability of the data (Creswell, 2014).

The participants were seventeen third semester students, pre-service English teachers, taking Essay Writing class in the odd semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. Six were male and eleven were female. In total, these participants had conducted eight peer reviews, five on paragraphs, and three on essays, during the semester. These peer review results were graded, but the suggested grades learners gave to their peers were not included in formal class assessment. All seventeen participants voluntarily participated through giving written informed consent. Their confidentiality was protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Learners' reflections were analysed using Thematic Analysis in which results would be presented in the forms of themes following research questions. The results were presented in the forms of verbatim quotes to allow rich accounts showing particularity as well as uniqueness of each learner participants' experiences, which become the key and prominent characteristics of qualitative research, the more so as this study was exploratory in nature under a case study design intended to explore a specific setting and the participants in context (Creswell, 2014).

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The study found eight themes regarding the three research objectives (RO). These themes could be observed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Emerging Themes Based on Research Questions

RO 1
Theme 1. Learners felt unsure whether their feedback on grammar was accurate.
Theme 2. Learners considered objectively assessing friends' works tricky.
RO 2

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Theme 3. Learners studied independently to give accurate feedback.

Theme 4. Learners learned to be more aware of own mistakes as they conducted peer reviews.

Theme 5. Learners realised the importance of giving clear and accurate feedback for peers' improvements.

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### RO 3

Theme 6. Learners in general perceived very detailed feedback helpful.

Theme 7. Learners realised mistakes they previously overlooked after receiving feedback from peers.

Theme 8. Learners perceived some of their peers did not review their works optimally and gave unclear feedback.

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In the subsequent sections, each theme is elaborated. Participants' pseudonyms and gender were presented at the end of each excerpt. For examples, whilst "[Lala/F]" indicated the excerpts were from Lala, a female participant, "[Dodi/M]" from Dodi, a male one.

## RO 1. Learners' challenges during conducting peer reviews

### *Theme 1. Learners felt unsure whether their feedback on grammar was accurate.*

In general, this theme highlighted the learner participants' lack of confidence in their grammar knowledge and thus they were afraid of giving their peers inaccurate feedback on grammar. Twelve out of seventeen participants reported that they felt unconfident when they did peer review as they were uncertain whether their feedback was accurate. Interestingly all of these participants reported their uncertainty when having to give feedback on grammatical aspects. Lala and Yana perceived their knowledge in grammar was not very good and as such, they were afraid if their feedback in grammatical aspects was inaccurate. They reported:

I don't know and don't understand how to review it because my knowledge about grammar is not good. [Lala/F]

That is very challenging because I don't have much knowledge ... Grammar is very difficult to understand. Especially when I review recount text ... you must pay attention to the use of Verb 2. [Yana/F].

Rina, in a slightly different view, was more concerned that if she gave inaccurate explanations on grammar and her friends considered these explanations correct, she would feel guilty of misleading her friends. She stated:

I am afraid; if I give a wrong explanation and later my friends use my explanation as a reference in the next assignment it will be dangerous and I would feel very guilty because I give the wrong explanation. [Rina/F]

Despite the challenges learners faced when dealing with grammatical aspects of the works they reviewed, Winda reported that whilst she was still struggling, she got better as she conducted more peer reviews. She stated:

I still don't believe in my correction to my friend's works ... but as times go by, I can understand. [Winda/F]

### **Theme 2. Learners considered objectively assessing friends' works tricky.**

Generally, this theme highlighted the participants' struggle in giving their friends objective feedback in which whilst some believed giving objective and critical feedback helped their friends improve their essays, some other believed that doing so might not be so easy especially when they considered their social relationship with their friends. Eight participants expressed some kind of dilemma when they had to suggest grades to their friends' works and give them critical feedback for improvements. Yana was afraid of suggesting bad grades to her friends whilst Tania seemed to worry about different perceptions between her and the owner of the works she reviewed. They reported:

Sometimes I still feel unable to give a bad grade to my friends. [Yana/F]

Sometimes it makes me worried ... if I think my friend's paragraph/essay is not relevant but my friend thinks that it a relevant one. [Tania/F]

Slightly different from her friends, Nana stated that giving good grades to her friends might motivate them to improve their writing. She reported:

When I do peer review and give comments and grades to my friends ... it makes me confused because I should give them a good grade and make them more motivated to improve their essays. [Nana/F]

Despite still struggling in giving an objective review to her friends, somehow Jenny realised that giving subjective review would do no good for her writing improvement. She stated:

I still use my feeling because they are my friends. This is wrong, I realize if I am doing peer review with feeling, my scores will not be maximum, and my skill won't get improved. [Jenny/F]

Elsa and Cynthia also reported that despite the uneasy feeling, they believed she should give her friends' works an objective review for their own sake. They stated:

One of the most challenging things ... is to be frank with every essay we review. Sometimes, when we get our close friends' essays, we tend to give them a good score ... But we have to be honest in reviewing any essay so that our friends know their mistakes and they can fix the mistakes they have made. [Elsa/F]

The first thing is to be kind, honest, and fair ... if I review my close friends' works, I need to be fair to give them a bad score if their works have a lot of grammatical errors. [Cynthia/F]

## **RO 2. Learners' beliefs on what they obtained through conducting peer reviews**

### ***Theme 3. Learners studied independently to give accurate feedback.***

This theme generally highlighted the learner participants' efforts of learning independently outside class, including utilising online technology, in order to give accurate feedback. However, in the process, some participants became too reliant to it to the point that they did not feel confident enough to make judgment on their own whether something was correct without it.

Six participants reported that in their efforts to provide reliable feedback to their peers despite their possible limitations, they studied independently on the aspects to which they wished to give feedback. They mostly reported the use of *Grammarly*, online dictionaries, and *Google* search in their independent learning. Ello and Wahyu, for instances, reported their efforts in looking for references on the internet before giving feedback. They stated:

I [am] always looking for references on the internet, asking my friends to help me and understand the topic. I will give my best feedback to my friends, so they can improve their writing. I want them to be better at writing by receiving my feedback. [Ello/M]

I review the works and give the right corrections with reliable evidence ... when I have found their mistake ... I give some clear comments. I use some applications like *Grammarly* to find any mistake in grammar, *Google Translate* to find any typo letters, and *U-dictionary* to find the correct synonym in the contexts. [Wahyu/M]

Despite the seemingly good signs that learners were quite resourceful in finding various sources of learning in this digital era, several learners reported that at times they became too reliant on the technology to the point that it compromised their confidence and conviction. Jenny, for example, reported her over-dependence on *Grammarly*, stating:

I am not confident when I am doing peer review without *Grammarly*. I think if I don't use *Grammarly*, maybe I can't give a good correction to my friends. Sometimes I forget that computers ... can make a mistake. [Jenny/F]

Lala and Irma seemed to know that despite the ability of computers and Artificial Intelligence (AI), they should be the ones in charge of their learning. They stated:

*Grammarly* is not always correct, so I have [to be] careful when I use it. [Lala/F]

I used Thesaurus.com, *Grammarly* or *Google Translate*. I know that some of the translator machines on the internet aren't trustworthy. That's why I try to believe in and use knowledge in my mind. [Irma/F]

### **Theme 4. Learners learned to be more aware of own mistakes as they conducted peer reviews.**

This theme highlighted that through conducting peer reviews, the participants became more aware of the frequent mistakes they used to overlook in their works. By reviewing the works of others and noticing mistakes in those works, they realised that they also did the same mistakes and eventually learned from them through giving possible corrections.

Five participants expressed that as they conducted peer reviews, they began to realise their own frequent mistakes in writing. Rina, for example, commented that peer review activities created a chance for reviewers to learn. She reported:

I do not only do peer review, but I also learn from it. When I see there is a mistake, I will find the correct answer to fix it and give the comments clearly. While I am searching for the answer I can also learn. [Rina/F]

In a similar vein, Elsa also reported that through peer-reviewing, she became more aware of grammatical errors and obtained more ideas for writing. She stated:

I become more aware of grammatical errors ... more creative in making essays by reviewing my friend's essay ... [Elsa/F]

In more detailed, Tania reported that from peer-reviewing she learned several aspects of language use and recycled materials she had obtained in the previous semester. She stated:

I learn about many things ... how to use capitalization ... to apply the grammar structure that I got in the previous semester ... if I do not know the structure I will look for it on the internet ... ask my friend ... how to put punctuation... [Tania/F]

### **Theme 5. Learners realised the importance of giving clear and accurate feedback for peers' improvements.**

This theme generally reported the participants' realization that clear and accurate feedback could help their friends improve their essays. For this reason, they tried their best to maintain the quality of their feedback. Five participants understood that they needed to give clear and accurate feedback in peer reviews so that their feedback could be used by their friends to improve their writing. Ello and Irma believed that they should not give misleading feedback as it could affect their friends negatively. Ello, for example, reported:

I have been there where I think my friends' grammar is incorrect, but actually it is correct ... It feels like I made a big mistake. To make sure it will not happen again, I am trying to do my best; I should work harder. I don't want to give the wrong feedback to my friends. [Ello/M]

Furthermore, Rina seemed to understand that the more detailed the feedback she gave to her friends, the better. She stated:

I must understand first where the mistakes are and how to fix them and give the explanation clearly, so my friends can understand. [Rina/F]

Seen from their feedback in peer reviews, Ello and Rina seemed to do what they believed was useful for their friends, which was giving detailed feedback.

### **RO 3. How learners perceived the quality of feedback given by their peers**

#### ***Theme 6. Learners in general perceived very detailed feedback helpful.***

This theme corresponded with the fifth theme. In this theme, the participants who were also the receivers of feedback perceived that obtaining very detailed feedback helped them improve their essays. As several learners realised that as reviewers they should give very detailed feedback, as the receivers of feedback, five learner participants expressed their appreciation when receiving very detailed feedback on their works. Elsa, Wahyu, and Sapto were explicitly mentioned by their friends for their helpful detailed feedback.

Wahyu and Yana praised Elsa's feedback on their works. They reported:

I thank Elsa\* because she has helped me a lot in developing my essay. She gave me directions about the proper use of verbs. Because I use the first form of verbs a lot when working on recount text which should use the past tense form ... on the proper use of prepositions and articles and the correct placement of punctuation. [Wahyu/M]

They [reviewers] mention the details with [an] example so I can know what ... needs improvements ... when Elsa\* reviews my descriptive paragraph, she tells me ... I often forget about the plural object. I need to add "-s" in the end of the object when it's plural. [Yana/F]

As Wahyu appreciated Elsa's helpful feedback, he, too, seemed to have given helpful feedback to Cynthia. Regarding this, Cynthia reported:

Wahyu's\* feedback was very detailed. I know where my mistake is, why it is wrong, and he's also giving me the right word/article/preposition/punctuation if I'm wrong. I just trust Wahyu's feedback rather than the two [other] reviewers [reviewing the other two essays] ... [Wahyu] gives me a comment on how to use the right word. [Cynthia/F]

Interestingly, whilst it was reported that suggesting low grades to friends put learners in a dilemmatic position as seen in Theme 2, Yana seemed to be okay being given a low grade as long as she was given helpful feedback on how to improve her works. Praising Sapto's feedback, she stated:

When Sapto\* reviews my descriptive essay, he gives me 59 for my score and I think that is a bad score. But I don't feel disappointed ... he gives me many comments and suggestions to improve my essay ... that I have some grammatical errors and I use too many conjunctions in my paragraph. I really appreciate his opinions ... very helpful. [Yana/F]

*\*formerly identifying information changed into corresponding pseudonyms*

### **Theme 7. Learners realised mistakes they previously overlooked after receiving feedback from peers.**

This theme generally reported learners' realisation of mistakes they typically overlooked after they received feedback from their peers. These mistakes were mainly grammatical mistakes. Learners reported that as they received feedback on their works, they realised mistakes in their works they did not notice before. Nine participants out of seventeen reported this. Elsa, for example, admitted her friends' feedback helped improve her writing skills, saying:

Receiving a peer review of my essay from my friends improved my writing skills ... my friends could see mistakes or grammatical mistakes that I didn't realise ... I often forget to add punctuation ... miss-type some sentences or words. I often think that my essay is well written. But my friend's review reminds me of all the mistakes I've made. [Elsa/F]

Interestingly, other participants seemed to agree that grammatical aspects seemingly became aspects obtaining most feedback through which they learned. Wahyu and Sigit reported their grammar knowledge improved through learning from their friends' feedback. They stated:

I was always confused about present verb form and past verb form and after I see their revisions in my essay, I know why I was always wrong when doing the essay ... I can learn [from] my mistake ... Now, my essay has many improvements in grammar, the use of article and determiner ... correct punctuation. [Wahyu/M]

Some grammar mistakes are spot on by my friends and I correct them. I also use wrong tenses in my essay and my friends give feedback and corrections. [Sigit/M]

### **Theme 8. Learners perceived some of their peers did not review their works optimally and gave unclear feedback.**

This theme, in general, reported some of the participants' disappointment as they perceived some of their friends did minimal efforts in reviewing their works. These minimal efforts, they perceived, contributed to unclear feedback that was difficult to act on. Despite the previous report stating that learners acknowledged the benefits of giving feedback and receiving feedback for their learning, several participants believed that not all of their friends put optimal efforts in reviewing their works, resulting in low-quality reviews which might not be very helpful to improve their works upon returned. Eddy, for example, suspected that some of his friends might not put their best efforts reviewing his works. He stated:

...some of them [reviewers] are just like having no intention in reviewing my works ... she or he just gives a very minimum comment at my essay or paragraph and just speak a bit in the comment column. [Eddy/M]

Rina, in a similar tone, reported that some reviews she received were difficult to understand, suspecting that the reviewers might not give their best efforts in reviewing her works. She reported:

...some of them [reviewers] do not give the clear reasons ... comments in the structure they just write "the structure is confusing and not really clear" but they do not give more explanations about where the confusing structure is ... maybe they only read my tasks [works] once. [Rina/F]

In a stronger tone, Cynthia expressed her disappointment because two reviews she obtained were not useful for her to improve her works. She stated:



I feel so disappointed with some of my friends' feedback. From eight people giving me feedback, two of them aren't helping me to improve my writing. [Cynthia/F]

Interestingly, as though corresponding to several learners' disappointment on low-quality reviews, Sigit reported that at times he did not show his best efforts in reviewing his friends' works. Regarding this, he stated:

Sometimes I do not give my full performance ... I review my friends' works about two days before the deadlines. I do not review it with my full mind. Sometimes I just want to finish the review. [Sigit/M]

Even though several learners expressed some degree of disappointment towards low quality feedback, several others expressed more understanding stating that it might be due to their friends' limited ability and that they were all still in the process of learning. Jenny, for instance, despite the low-quality review she received, appreciated her friends' efforts in giving her encouraging comments. She reported:

Some of my friends do not give a detailed explanation about their correction, and that has confused me ... I like it when they are giving support ... it is very supportive and [it] motivates me. Overall, their correction is already good for me because we are still studying and need more practice. [Jenny/F]

From all the previously-mentioned themes, several highlights could be summarised. First, learners faced two challenges in conducting peer reviews. The first was related to their perceived lack of content knowledge causing them to doubt the quality of their. The second was attributed to learners' dilemma in objectively assessing their friends' works on worry it could affect their social relationship negatively. Despite the challenges, learners acknowledged that through doing peer reviews, they were compelled to study independently, were more aware of their mistakes and lacking, as well as realised the importance of giving good quality feedback for their peers' improvement. They also realised that at times the feedback they obtained as reviewees were not always accurate, but in general, they acknowledged obtaining feedback helped them realise mistakes they previously overlooked.

## Discussion

The first theme that learners felt unsure about the accuracy of their feedback on grammar resonated with several authors' concerns on learners' ability to provide high-quality feedback (Loretto et al., 2016; Tsai & Chuang, 2013). Though not specifically in peer review literature, several authors found that undergraduate students in EFL contexts were still struggling in learning grammar (Subekti, 2017, 2018a, 2018b; Zafar, 2016). Though indirectly, these studies may give some kind of explanation why the participants reported their lack of confidence in giving feedback on grammar. Interestingly, one participant, rather than mentioning lack of confidence, mentioned guilty feelings towards her friends if she provided inaccurate feedback, indicating her concern for her friends rather than for "saving her face". This could suggest that peer review had to some extent evoke learners' awareness that assessment was a shared responsibility and that learners should cooperate in learning process (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Gupta et al., 2019). Another thing was that a participant reported that despite struggling, she reported getting better in peer-reviewing as time went by, reiterating the role of familiarisation and training (Azarnoosh, 2013).

Regarding the second theme on learners feeling that objectively reviewing their friends' work was a delicate matter, some points should be highlighted. The present study's finding was also slightly in line with the finding of a study in China in which learner reviewers were considerate when giving feedback to avoid possible embarrassment (Yu and Hu, 2017). However, the present study's several other participants' reports yielded very interesting findings worth further commenting. Nana reported the needs to give good grades to keep her friends motivated rather than to look good and generous, suggesting an opposite result from several previous studies on learners' perceived needs to keep relationship by overrating (e.g.: Esfandiari & Myford, 2013; Izati, 2018). It may also indicate that these two participants had been aware of the importance of giving useful feedback for their friends' improvements, a good indication of cooperative learning (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Gupta et al., 2019; McLucas, 2021).

The third theme was on learners' reports that they independently studied and looked for references on the internet to give accurate feedback. It was in line with several authors' ideas positing that reviewing facilitates learners to be in the position to have to learn more content knowledge according to the works they are reviewing, and thus it promotes learning (Baker, 2016; Li et al., 2010; Zhu & Carless, 2018). Interestingly, learners seemed to agree that this independent learning mostly dealt with



grammatical aspects, which may suggest that learners, who were in their third semester, were still in the level of developing their grammar knowledge (Ahmed, 2020; Loan, 2017; Moloudi, 2011). However, learners also reported that at times during their independent study on grammar, they became too reliant on technology that could identify errors in grammar such as *Grammarly* to the point that they felt less confident without it. This finding should be treated as a soft reminder that whilst technology could assist learners in many ways, it should be used wisely and teachers may play a role in facilitating learners to realise that.

Furthermore, the fourth theme that learners began to realise their own mistakes whilst reviewing may not be a new finding as several previous studies in different learning contexts have found relatively the same results (Baker, 2016 in America; Zhao, 2014 in China). The present study's finding might further suggest that the advantage of peer review to develop metacognitive awareness and the ability to reflect on own mistakes for improvements has been fairly established.

The fifth theme was on learner reviewers' awareness of the necessity to give clear and accurate feedback. This particular finding was seemingly expected as literature had generally agreed on good feedback being clear and accurate (Loretto et al., 2016; Topping, 2017). However, under this theme, it was found that *due to* realising the importance of giving good feedback, some learners were afraid of giving misleading feedback mentioning their needs and will to study harder in order to be able to provide accurate feedback. It suggested that learners might have formed a sense of cooperation rather than competition as well as autonomy in learning (Bharuthram & van Heerden, 2020; Gupta et al., 2019; McLucas, 2021).

The sixth theme was on learner reviewees' views on the helpfulness of detailed feedback. Some learners even mentioned and appreciated several students for their feedback and it may suggest that learners did read the feedback they received and acted on the feedback to do revisions on their works, indicating the main purpose of peer review for learner reviewees had been achieved. Seen from some examples of learners' feedback considered useful by some participants, the feedback identified learner reviewees' errors, explained them, and suggested solutions. In High School contexts in which the participants generally reported difficulty in providing helpful feedback (Loretto et al., 2016; Mauliate et al., 2019; Schut et al., 2020). Yana even mentioned that she did not care even if given a bad score by her peers as far as she obtained useful feedback for her improvement, suggesting awareness of peer review as formative assessment intended to promote continuous learning process. Her studying in an English department may evoke her needs to improve her skills rather than to merely obtain good grades.

Lastly, the seventh and eight themes could be closely related. First, that learner reviewees realised peer feedback helped them see their previously overlooked mistakes was in line with idea that peer review provides learners with more perspectives and authentic audience helping them to realise aspects they previously overlook (Tahir, 2012). Literature had acknowledged that peer review might not always produce meaningful and helpful feedback and it seemed that it was what happened in the present study in which several learners complained about unclear feedback they received from their friends (Farahani et al., 2019; Tahir, 2012). One student explicitly reported his low motivation in reviewing and thus did not show his best efforts in providing feedback. This result suggested that learners' attitude on peer review, even in one class, could not be seen as uniform and teachers should find the possible cause of this low motivation and strategies to remedy the situation. In a more positive tone, that this study found several learners showing understanding on their peers' limited ability resulting in inaccurate and unclear feedback might further strengthen the recurring findings in the present study on learners' generally good attitude on peer review as a means to continuously learn in cooperation with others.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In relation with the reported benefits of peer review, the reported lack of confidence in providing good feedback, and the occasional dilemma when assessing friends' works, it is suggested to conduct peer review regularly in L2 writing classes as formative assessment accompanied with regular teachers' feedback on learners' peer review results. This regularity may serve as a way to familiarise learners with assessing their peers' works, providing meaningful and objective feedback, and to give them ample time to continuously improve their mastery of content knowledge required to provide good feedback.

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