

## Enhancing Students' Trust in Peer Feedback: The Critical Role of the Preparation Phase

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### Abstract

*Feedback plays a pivotal role in language acquisition and writing skill development. Despite its effectiveness in some contexts, traditional teacher-to-student assessment faces considerable limitations, particularly in large higher education classrooms where personalized feedback is scarce. In such settings, peer feedback has emerged as a viable and promising alternative. However, student scepticism towards its effectiveness presents a significant obstacle to its broader adoption. Negative attitudes, often rooted in doubts about peers' competence or the value of their comments, can undermine the potential benefits of peer review. This paper revisits the findings of a quasi-experimental study conducted among 60 first-year students at Ibn Zohr University in Agadir, Morocco, which examined the impact of peer reviewing on writing development. A follow-up survey was employed to assess participants' levels of trust in the feedback provided by peers. Based on the findings of this survey and their implications within the context of the study, this paper aims to offer pedagogical recommendations for improving the adoption and success of peer feedback through initial peer review training. Effective trust-building strategies are discussed, focusing on two fundamental types: communication trust and competence trust.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Peer feedback also referred to as peer review, represents an innovative learner-centred form of assessment for learning that seeks to empower learners by engaging them in active learning and helping them develop their skills in assessing their work and that of their peers. The merit of this form of feedback provision resides in its potential to cultivate cooperative and collaborative learning dynamics, thereby fostering the development of transferable lifelong learning skills (Nilson, 2003).

Nicol, Thomson, & Breslin (2014, p.102) define peer review as “a reciprocal process whereby students produce feedback reviews on the work of peers and receive feedback reviews from peers on their work”.

Topping (2017, p.20) defines peer assessment as “...an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of product or performance of other equal-status learners.”

Embedded within innovative, student-centered pedagogical paradigms, peer feedback challenges conventional, instructor-centered teaching methodologies. Despite its

documented efficacy in L1 and L2 contexts, the application of peer feedback in EFL contexts has raised issues of its effectiveness and appropriateness regarding pedagogical and cultural contexts. Over the last two decades, extensive attention within L2 writing has been devoted to investigating the effectiveness of peer feedback in L2/FL contexts (e.g., Mangelsdorf, 1992; Rollinson, 2005; Tsui & NG, 2000). However, studies conducted within SL/FL contexts have yielded conflicting and remain quantitatively insufficient to draw definitive conclusions. (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer feedback is increasingly utilized in higher education, especially in large online classes and writing courses, such as argumentative essay writing, where it fosters critical reading, reflection, and constructive knowledge creation, enhancing essay-writing competence (Noroozi, 2022; Tian & Zhou, 2020). Studies highlight its benefits, including improved writing quality (Ferris, 2003; Ghaicha & Ait Taleb, 2016; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Rollinson, 2005; Wakabayashi, 2008), improved evaluation and judgment (Liu & Carless, 2006), self-regulation (Lin, 2018a, 2018b), communication, collaboration, critical thinking (Novakovich, 2016), engagement, motivation (Hsia et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2014), and learning satisfaction (Donia et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of peer feedback depends on its quality. High-quality feedback, characterized by praise, problem identification, solutions, and actionable advice, is more likely to be implemented by students (Wu & Schunn, 2020, 2021; Banihashem et al., 2022). However, challenges include distrust in peers' competence to provide reliable feedback. While other factors may influence the implementation of peer feedback practices, the extent to which students value their peers' feedback remains the most crucial factor in the success of the peer review process. Skepticism arises when students doubt their peers' knowledge or commitment to the process, affecting motivation and the uptake of feedback (Kaufman & Schunn, 2011; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013). Variability in feedback proficiency can demotivate skilled students who perceive peers' feedback as inadequate (Jiang & Yu, 2014). Thus, students' attitudes significantly influence the success of peer feedback initiatives. This section reviews several studies that explored students' attitudes toward peer review, as well as research highlighting the significance of the training phase in fostering trust in the activity.

Alsehibany (2024) explored the integration of peer feedback with a checklist in Saudi EFL writing classes, focusing on the potential benefits and challenges. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers employed instruments such as essays, writing checklists, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a positive attitude among students toward peer feedback, as their writing improved in quality and accuracy in subsequent essays. Students reported enhanced awareness of their weaknesses and an ability to address mistakes, illustrating the method's effectiveness in improving writing skills and fostering independent learning. However, interviews highlighted challenges that might hinder the implementation of this approach in Saudi EFL contexts.

Maarof et al. (2011) have examined the ESL students' perceptions of the role of teacher's feedback, peer feedback, and combined teacher-peer feedback in ESL writing. The study revealed a general preference for teacher feedback among the participants. They believed that their teachers use more positive and facilitative feedback than peers. Additionally, they argued that the teacher's role is indispensable in giving feedback. They expected the teacher to provide both general and specific feedback that could address all their written errors. However, the

study showed that most participants (150 Malaysian secondary students from five schools) held positive attitudes toward the combined use of teacher and peer feedback.

Nelson and Careson (1998) conducted a micro ethnographic study to explore the Chinese and Spanish-speaking students' stances and assumptions of their interaction in peer response groups. The subjects of the study were three peer response groups in an advanced ESL class. The data analysis, which included videos of the activity and interviews with participants, showed that participants preferred negative comments that identified problems in their drafts. Additionally, participants expressed a preference for the teacher's comments as opposed to their peers' feedback. Although the participants from the two groups were convinced that the purpose of peer feedback was to help them improve their writing, they agreed that feedback was sometimes ineffective and that, at times, they felt that too much time was spent on useless issues.

On the other hand, Aoun (2008) has cited some studies that indicate students' favorable views toward peer feedback and assessment. For instance, a survey showed that 80% of respondents attributed the progress they made in their writing to the feedback they received from their peers. Further, students reported feeling more motivated thanks to their engagement in peer assessment, which they viewed as an incentive to perform well.

Mangelsdorf (1992) explored the views of a heterogeneous group of first-year students enrolled in a first-semester ESL composition course at the University of Arizona. The results of this study revealed that most students perceived peer feedback as a beneficial technique that helped them revise their writing, particularly the content and organization areas. Moreover, students have stressed that peer reviews helped them clarify and discover their ideas because their peers' comments and suggestions enabled them to be aware of the needs and expectations of the audience. However, many other participants in the study stated that peer feedback did not help them feel responsible for their improvement. They did not also feel confident about their ability to critique a text. Accordingly, the most significant negative views regarding peer review in this study concerned the students' lack of trust in their peers' responses to their texts and, generally, the limitations of students as critics. Students' complaints about their peers' feedback mentioned such problems as student ignorance, apathy, and vagueness. Another problem with peer reviewing that this study has revealed is that students from certain cultures (Asian cultures in this study) might resist such a student-centred activity because they were unfamiliar with a collaborative, student-centred environment.

Taghizadeh et al. (2022) investigated how undergraduate students' perceptions of the usefulness and trustworthiness of peer feedback affect their learning satisfaction in an online argumentative essay writing module at Wageningen University and Research. A pre-test and post-test design was employed with 135 participants who wrote essays, provided and received peer feedback, revised their essays, and completed surveys on learning satisfaction and attitudes toward peer feedback. Key findings reveal that the perceived usefulness and trustworthiness of peer feedback significantly influence learning satisfaction. Most students viewed peer feedback as a beneficial learning experience, provided it occurred in a competent, trustworthy, and safe environment. Students who trusted their peers' feedback were more likely to accept critiques, make revisions, and value the feedback process. Factors like self-confidence, prior training, interpersonal relationships, and the duration of group interactions were identified as crucial in fostering trust and enhancing peer feedback effectiveness.

As highlighted by the reviewed studies in this section, the challenges of incorporating peer feedback in writing class included skepticism about peer competency and a preference for expert feedback, highlighting the need for training in peer feedback techniques, critical thinking, and self-assessment. To address this issue, initial training on peer feedback is needed to familiarize students with the activity and equip them with the necessary skills to give and receive constructive feedback effectively. The usefulness of training has been supported by the results of some studies (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Min, 2005; Min, 2006), which have examined the effects of training on various aspects of peer feedback activity, including enhancing the level of interaction and the incorporation of peer suggestions in revisions. Equally, Mangelsdorf (1992) hypothesized that students' perceptions of the usefulness of peer feedback would change over time as students were made more familiar with the practice.

Min (2005), for instance, conducted a study that addressed the issues of vague feedback and misinterpretation of the writer's intentions as the significant problems that EFL students face. To tackle these problems, he implemented training to coach students to generate specific comments. The training focused on enabling students to provide specific feedback through a non-linear procedure that followed four steps: clarifying the writers' intentions, identifying problems, explaining the nature of the issues, and making specific suggestions.

The training consisted of two phases. In the first phase, the researcher demonstrated to the participants how to make specific comments by modelling the four-step procedure. The second phase of the training took the form of teacher-student conferences, during which the researcher provided more clarification of her instruction and feedback. Also, the researcher has helped students modify their comments and improve their feedback in a way that complies with the prescribed steps of the procedure. Consequently, students have learned how to become better peer reviewers thanks to the training sessions they have received. The number and the quality of comments have improved after the training. Also, the study has revealed that students have employed more steps in providing feedback without necessarily following a stable procedure. The researcher attributed this to the mutual understanding and intimacy developed among the participants throughout the training sessions.

In another study, Min (2006) investigated the effectiveness of training EFL peer reviewers on their revision types and writing quality. Similar to the previous study, the participants received two phases of training: in-class demonstration and after-class reviewer-teacher conference. The results showed that students incorporated more of their peers' comments. Also, the quality of the feedback provided significantly improved after the training.

The results from these studies demonstrate that peer reviewing can be an effective classroom activity in EFL contexts, provided that students receive proper and purposeful training from their instructors. In both studies, the researcher has targeted a specific area in peer reviewing (the clarity of feedback, its quality, the degree to which it is incorporated,...). The implication is that teachers should address specific skills in training their students to be good peer reviewers. The targeted skills in the training phase should address not only the pedagogical aspects of the activity but also the psychological factors involved.

Effective feedback engagement is principally determined by the trust that the feedback receiver places on the feedback provider. Carless (2013) identified two types of trust as being pertinent to feedback engagement: *communication trust and competence*

*trust*. The former type is defined as the belief that a particular person is willing to communicate sincerely, tell the truth, and provide constructive feedback rather than mere criticism. The feedback receiver is more likely to engage in a dialogue if he feels that he will be treated with respect and that their work will be fairly evaluated. The absence of this type of trust may cause students to misinterpret the received feedback as offensive personal remarks (Carless, 2006).

Competence trust refers to the belief in the ability of a person to provide quality and valuable feedback. This type of trust is indispensable for successful peer feedback exchanges because the lack of competence trust is the main reason that discourages several students from engaging in peer review activities. They believe their peers are less competent than their teachers to provide valid and valuable feedback. This brings to forth the importance of raising students' awareness of the nature and the importance of peer feedback as a process activity rather than a product one. The awareness-raising strategy is among the recommended trust-building strategies in this paper.

### **2.1.Purpose**

The present paper explores the role of peer reviewing preparation in promoting students' trust in their peers' feedback. It builds on the findings and pedagogical implications of a previous study (Ghaicha & Ait Taleb, 2016) conducted to assess the effectiveness of peer review in the Moroccan EFL university context. That study focused on three key dimensions: the impact of peer review on the writing quality of revised drafts, the validity of peer feedback, and students' trust in peer feedback. This paper narrows its focus to the third dimension—students' trust in peer feedback—by highlighting the pedagogical implications related to trust-building strategies implemented by the teacher-researcher during the training phase. These strategies effectively enhanced participants' trust in their peers' feedback. Detailed information is provided about the methodological procedures followed during the training phase, which took place before the peer review process, and the post-training phase, during which a questionnaire was administered to assess participants' attitudes and perceptions.

### **2.2.Procedures and materials**

The present paper is based on a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). The study involved 60 Moroccan first-year students enrolled in a spring semester composition course at Ibn Zohr University in Agadir. Over the course of twelve sessions, this group of students was taught essential writing skills, focusing on developing different types of paragraphs.

During the preparation phase of the study, participants received thorough and explicit instruction and training designed to build students' trust in the peer feedback process. First, to enhance students' communication trust, the teacher/researcher began by highlighting the advantages of peer feedback in improving writing skills. Engaging awareness-raising activities were utilized to illustrate how constructive criticism from peers can support students' growth as writers. Students learned that receiving feedback is not merely about correcting mistakes but involves engaging in a dialogue about their writing, which fosters more profound understanding and improvement. Importantly, participants were reassured that the actual value of this entire activity resides in the critical evaluation of their written work, which is sparked by the feedback provided by their peers. They were encouraged to view feedback not just as a reflection of accuracy but as an opportunity for growth and development in their writing journey. This understanding was intended to create a supportive learning environment where students could confidently share their work and benefit from the insights of their classmates.

Meanwhile, activities to enhance the competence trust of students were in progress. At this stage, participants become familiar with the meta-language required for writing analysis, including key terms related to paragraph structure and quality, such as unity,



coherence, cohesion, and organization. Additionally, a set of acronyms (e.g., P=Punctuation, S=Spelling, and WW=Wrong Word) was introduced to provide participants with a common language for identifying and addressing writing issues. This knowledge prepared students to engage in peer feedback, ensuring that they had the analytical tools necessary to evaluate both their work and their peers.

The emphasis on the student's competence in peer trust became more pronounced in the following sessions. In the fifth session, peer review training commenced, with the teacher/researcher introducing a structured checklist that would serve as the basis for peer feedback. In this session, the teacher started by explaining the items on the checklist before students worked in pairs to evaluate each other's paragraphs using this checklist. Later, students were encouraged to rewrite their paragraphs, taking into consideration their classmates' comments and suggestions. This training activity was repeated in the four subsequent sessions to peer-edit other home assignments. Meanwhile, the researcher invited students to express their opinions about the usefulness of the activity. This allowed for addressing some misconceptions that participants had about the activity. For instance, some participants used to believe that peer feedback sessions were a waste of time and that their peers were not qualified to provide effective feedback.

In the treatment phase, the participants engaged in a peer review session during which they used a structured checklist to offer feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticism of their peers' work. Afterward, the students revised their drafts, integrating the feedback provided by their peers.

Following the activity, participants completed a questionnaire designed to explore their attitudes and levels of trust in peer feedback (see Appendix). This questionnaire was adapted from a study that investigated Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward peer reviewing (Hashim, 2011). To align with the objectives of the current study, the original instrument was modified and further developed. A pilot survey was then conducted by administering the revised questionnaire to 20 prospective participants.

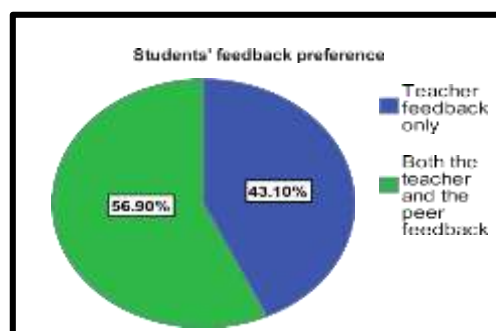
The questionnaire included both closed and open-ended questions to capture a comprehensive view of participants' attitudes. The closed-ended questions utilized a five-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Partly agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree) because they are more focused and quicker to code up and analyze. To address the limitations of closed questions, open-ended questions were also included, allowing participants to express more nuanced and detailed feedback.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Moroccan EFL university students' perceptions and attitudes on the usefulness of peer feedback

The participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the usefulness of peer reviewing activity were surveyed using various questionnaire items. The findings revealed that most participants held positive attitudes and perceptions regarding the impact of peer feedback on their writing performance.

#### Figure 1. Students' feedback preference



In Figure 1, statistics indicate that 57% of the study participants preferred receiving feedback from teachers and peers. This finding suggests that the participants were aware of the complementary roles of peer feedback and teacher feedback in enhancing students' writing skills. The most common argument provided by the respondents (40.8%) to justify their preference was their desire to benefit from diverse perspectives. This finding contradicts the results of earlier research, such as the one conducted by Nelson & Careson (2006), which found that 76% of L2 first-year college students preferred teacher feedback over peer and self-feedback. It seems that the respondents in that survey were directed to select exclusively one of the choices: teacher feedback, peer feedback, or self-feedback. By not presenting an option of a combined teacher-peer feedback model, the respondents were misguided, intentionally or unintentionally, to make exclusive choices.

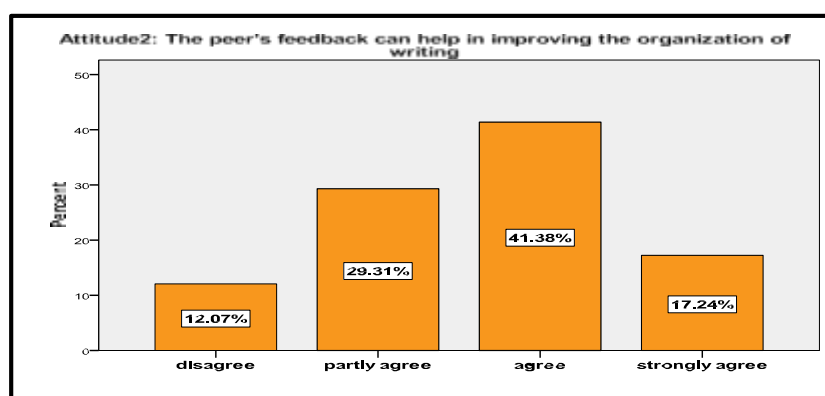
On the other hand, the arguments stated by the proponents of incorporating peer review in the writing class are supported by research. A comparative study by Miao, Badger, and Zhen (2006) examined the effects of peer and teacher feedback in a Chinese EFL writing class. This study found that the improvement in the participants' revised drafts was attributed to incorporating feedback from both their teachers and peers.

Additionally, a survey study conducted by Maarof et al. (2011) explored the preferences of 150 Malaysian secondary students. While students tended to favor teacher comments and suggestions, they also expressed strong appreciation for the benefits of receiving feedback from teachers and peers. This suggests that teacher feedback and peer feedback should be regarded as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

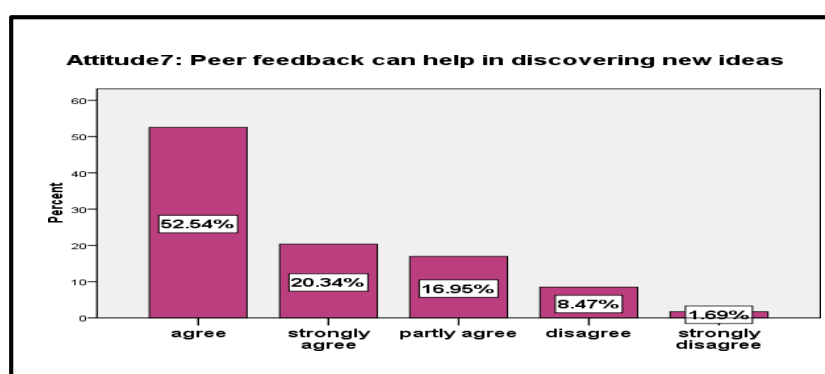
**Table 1. The participants' views on the value of peer feedback in enhancing their writing language and mechanics.**

Item	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Partly Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Mean	SD
1. Peer feedback helps me improve the grammar structure of my writing.	35 %	33.3 %	21.7%	6.7%	3.3%	2.10	1.069
2. Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation of my writing.	35%	41.7 %	18.3 %	5 %	00%	1.93	.861
3. My partner helps me choose appropriate vocabulary	8.6 %	31 %	39.7%	15.5%	5.2 %	2.78	.992

**Figure 2. Students' perceptions of the role of PF in improving paragraph organization.**

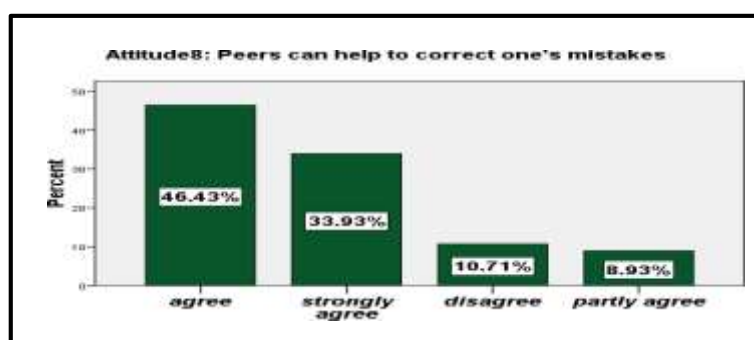


**Figure 3. Students' perspectives on the effectiveness of PF in generating new ideas**



The results displayed in Table 1 also indicate that a significant number of the participants held positive attitudes toward the usefulness of peer feedback in enhancing various aspects of their paragraphs. They seemed to be convinced that their peers' comments and suggestions had helped them improve the language (Table 1), content (Figure 3), and organization (Figure 2) of their first drafts. Notably, the participants' positive attitudes were consistent across the questionnaire items that assessed their views regarding the potential of peer feedback in improving these four primary areas of paragraph writing. This consistency implies a strong belief among the participants that PF positively affected the overall quality of their paragraphs.

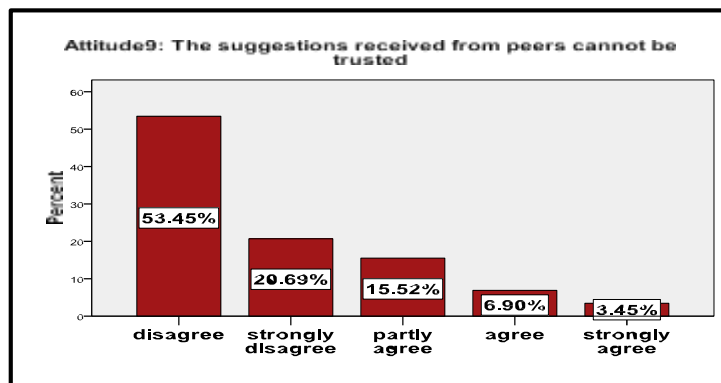
**Figure 4. Students' attitudes regarding the impact of PF on their writing accuracy**



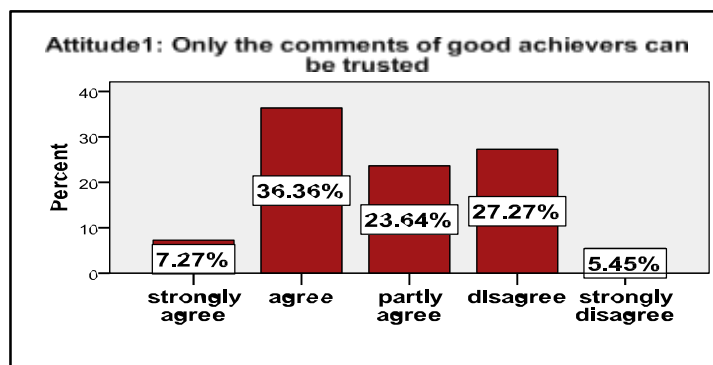


The significant results from the follow-up questionnaire strongly supported the trust that participants in this study placed in the feedback from their peers. The majority of respondents (as shown in Figure 4) believed that their peers could help them correct their mistakes, thereby improving the accuracy of their paragraphs.

**Figure 5. Students' perspectives on the trustworthiness of their peers' suggestions**



**Figure 6. Students' views towards the importance of their peers' proficiency level**



In addition, a significant number of participants expressed positive views about the linguistic qualifications of their peers and the reliability of their feedback. More importantly, the participants demonstrated positive attitudes toward how their peers' language proficiency affects the reliability of the feedback given. It was only 7.27% strongly agreed, and 36.36% agreed with the view that the reliability of the peer's feedback depends on his language proficiency.

In the same pattern, the participants' positive stances towards peer reviewing were reflected in their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the activity. The results revealed that the majority of the participants recognized the learning and psychological benefits of this activity. For instance, over half (55.6%) believed that peer reviewing could help improve their writing skills, 46% felt that exchanging feedback with peers is effective in helping identify and correct their mistakes, and 38.9% noted that their ideas about the writing topic improved as a result of their engagement in peer reviewing activity.

More importantly, the participants' responses highlighted other psychological benefits of the activity. They noted that it helped increase students' self-confidence and self-esteem. These perceived benefits align with findings from several studies, including those by Ferris (2003), Keh (1990), Rollinson (2005), and Wakabayashi (2008).

Likewise, the results regarding participants' perceptions of the potential disadvantages of PF activity were consistent with the previous findings. While most participants (83.05%) believed that peer feedback practice has no disadvantages, a smaller group (16.95%) had the opposite view. These informed ideas and perceptions expressed by the participants can be attributed to the aforementioned classroom instruction and training that students received and to the discussion that followed each peer reviewing session. This highlights the significance of metacognitive instruction and reflective learning in EFL writing classes.

In the present study, raising students' awareness of the importance of the writing process as a whole- particularly the benefits of peer review- along with encouraging them to reflect on the activity and assess its effectiveness, proved to be an effective teaching strategy as the majority of participants were able to identify the benefits of the activity. More details about the implications of this study are provided in the following section.

### 3.2.Implications of the study

The positive attitudes that participants hold toward peer reviewing reflect a high level of trust in their peers' language proficiency and ability to provide constructive feedback. This positive spirit among the participants can be attributed to several strategies employed by the teacher/researcher to boost participants' trust in peer feedback. These strategies can be categorized into two major types:

### 3.3.Strategies to develop communication trust

*Creating a psychologically safe environment for feedback.* The effectiveness of feedback practices, as well as other learning activities, depends basically on the learning environment where it takes place. This implies that teachers must prepare their students psychologically to engage in peer feedback exchanges. This can be attained through a number of strategies. For instance, teachers should start with awareness-raising activities that have the potential of setting a scene for candid feedback exchanges by explaining the nature of peer feedback as a process and the benefits of peer feedback exchanges for the two parties (feedback provider and receiver). At this initial stage, the teacher should also clarify his expectations. For example, students need to understand that the purpose of feedback practice is to assess and develop their learning and that while exchanging feedback, they need to highlight both the strengths and inadequacies of their peers' products.

*Awareness raising.* In our study, the informed ideas and perceptions expressed by the participants about the learning potentials of peer feedback are more likely attributed to the classroom instruction and peer reviewing training that participants had received and to the discussion that used to follow each peer reviewing session. This highlights the importance of meta-cognitive instruction and reflective learning in EFL writing classes. In the present study, raising students' awareness of the importance of the writing process in general and the usefulness of peer reviewing activity in particular and encouraging them to reflect on the activity and evaluate its effectiveness has proved to be an effective strategy through which the majority of the participants have identified the benefits of the activity.

### 3.4.Strategies to develop competence trust

As mentioned earlier, students' main concern about peer feedback is its quality compared to the teacher's feedback. Therefore, boosting students' competence trust is a prerequisite to successfully implementing the peer feedback practice. The strategies that were adopted by the teacher/researcher in this study include:

*Peer feedback training.* To increase students' capability to provide valid and valuable

feedback, it is necessary to incorporate feedback training into classroom activities prior to peer review activities. For instance, In our study, the researcher started by training students on using checklists to enable them to make academic judgments and purposeful feedback. Accordingly, the teacher/ researcher started by familiarizing students with the checklist in the fifth session of the course. In this session, the researcher started by explaining the items in the checklist before students worked in pairs to evaluate each other's home assignment using this checklist. Later, students were encouraged to rewrite their paragraphs, taking into consideration their classmates' comments and suggestions. This training activity was repeated in the four subsequent sessions to peer-edit other home assignments.

*Quality check on peer feedback.* Adopting peer feedback practice as another alternative form of assessment does not by any means exclude the teacher's presence in the scene. After the peer-review activity, teachers are recommended to monitor the quality of peer feedback in various ways (Han & Xu, 2020). For example, a sample of peer feedback forms can be randomly selected to provide feedback on and then shared with the whole class. The exploitation of the facilities that new technologies (online platforms, data show,...) offer can facilitate this process.

#### **4. LIMITATIONS**

The one-group quasi-experimental design adopted in this study presents some limitations. First, the absence of a control group restricts the ability to attribute changes in trust levels solely to the intervention, as other factors like natural maturation or external writing experiences may also have played a role. Additionally, the sample size of 60 participants from a single university, specifically Moroccan EFL students, raises concerns about the generalizability of the findings to other populations or educational contexts. Moreover, the study's reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires introduces potential biases, such as social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses they believe are more acceptable rather than their true feelings.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this paper has explored the role of the training phase in building students' trust in peer feedback. It presented the findings and pedagogical implications of a study that investigated the effectiveness of peer feedback in a Moroccan university writing class. The focus was on identifying effective strategies employed by the teacher/researcher to enhance students' trust in their peers' feedback. Two major types of strategies were discussed: strategies to foster communication trust and those aimed to enhance competence trust. Strategies that foster communication trust involve creating an open and safe environment for students to share their thoughts, thereby encouraging honest and constructive dialogue. These included setting clear expectations for feedback, modeling practical communication skills, and facilitating discussions that helped students articulate their critiques and suggestions. On the other hand, strategies aimed at enhancing competence trust focused on building students' perceptions of their peers' abilities to provide valuable and insightful feedback. This involved providing training on effective feedback techniques, incorporating rubrics that helped students evaluate their peers' work systematically, and encouraging students to reflect on the feedback received while reinforcing their critical thinking skills.

In summary, the research highlights that the trust students develop in the peer review process is fundamental in ensuring the successful implementation of peer feedback activities. When students trust their peers, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with the feedback process, leading to improved learning outcomes and richer educational experiences.

**Research Contribution:** Building on the pedagogical insights gained from a quasi-experimental study we previously conducted (Ghaicha & Ait Taleb, 2016), this paper highlights practical and effective trust-building strategies employed by the teacher/researcher during the preparation phase of the study. By integrating these trust-building techniques, educators can foster a more positive and receptive attitude toward peer feedback, encouraging students to engage in the process with greater confidence and openness

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## Appendix

### ***Questionnaire***

The following questionnaire is part of a study being conducted to investigate the effectiveness of peer reviewing in improving university students' writing quality. It aims at exploring the students' attitudes towards peer reviewing. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire to ensure the confidentiality of your responses. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

**1- General information:**

- Gender:        Male ☐                      Female ☐

- Age : .....

**2- Did you have experience with peer-reviewing before?**

Yes: ☐                      No: ☐

If yes, when and where?

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.....

**3- What type of feedback do you prefer to receive in writing?**

a- The teacher's feedback alone ☐                      b- Peer feedback alone ☐

c- Both ☐

Why?

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**4- Please check the box which best describes your attitude/ feeling.**

***N.B: There are no right or wrong answers***

Attitude towards peer feedback:	Strongl y agree	Agree	Partl y Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1- I trust only the comments of students who are good at English.					
2-My partner helps me improve the organization of my writing.					
3- My partner helps me improve the ideas of my writing.					
4. Peer feedback helps me improve the grammar structure of my writing.					

5. Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation of my writing.					
6. My partner helps me choose appropriate vocabulary					
7. Peer feedback helps me find ideas to write					
8- My classmate helps me find out some mistakes in my writing.					
9. I don't trust the suggestions my classmate gave me.					
10. I don't believe that my suggestions can be helpful to my friend					
11. I believe my classmate shouldn't correct my writing.					

**5- What are other advantages of peer-reviewing? Please list as many as you can.**

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**6. Do you think that peer reviewing has some disadvantages?**

Yes : ☐ ☐

If yes, what are they:

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**Thank you**

### About the Author

**AIT TALEB ABDELAZIZ** *is a Professor of English Language and Applied Linguistics, currently serving at Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco. He has contributed to the academic field through publications on EFL teaching methodologies and language contact issues. Professor AIT TALEB has extensive experience developing innovative syllabi and tailored course materials that cater to the diverse needs of higher education students across various disciplines, including Applied Linguistics, engineering and medicine.*