

**BRAC University**



**INFLUENCE OF PEERS' FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENTS OF  
TERTIARY LEVEL IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Mahmuda Akhter

ID – 06203004

**Department of English and Humanities**

December 17, 2009

**INFLUENCE OF PEERS' FEEDBACK ON THE STUDENTS OF  
TERTIARY LEVEL IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

**A thesis**

**Submitted to the Department of English and Humanities**

**Of**

**BRAC University**

**By**

**Mahmuda Akhter**

**ID 06203004**

**In partial fulfillment of the**

**Requirements for the degree**

**Of**

**Bachelor of Arts in English**

**December, 2009**

**This paper is dedicated to all my teachers for their valuable guidance throughout my academic career.**

## Table of content

<b>Acknowledgement .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1 – 2</b>
1.1 – Introduction .....	1
1.2 – Hypothesis .....	2
1.3 – Purpose of the study .....	2
1.4 – Limitations .....	2
<b>Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>3 – 16</b>
2.1 – Definition of feedback .....	3
2.2 – Why students make errors .....	4
2.3 – Factors influencing feedback .....	5
2.4 – Studies on the impact of feedback .....	5
2.5 – Conclusion .....	16
<b>Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>17 – 20</b>
3.1 – Research design .....	17
3.2 – Data collection procedure .....	17
3.3 – Principles for designing instrument .....	18
3.4 – Description of the questionnaire .....	19
3.5 – Participants .....	19
3.6 – Data analysis .....	20



<b>Chapter 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>21 – 28</b>
4.1 – Results found from students' survey .....	21
4.2 – Results found from teachers' survey .....	25
<b>Chapter 5: ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>29 – 34</b>
5.1 – Discussion of students' survey result .....	29
5.2 – Discussion of teachers' survey result .....	32
<b>Chapter 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>35 – 36</b>
6.1 – Conclusion .....	35
6.2 – Recommendations .....	35
<b>Work cited .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>39</b>

## Acknowledgement

My foremost thanks go to the Almighty for allowing me to complete this research. I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Md. Mahmudul Haque for his invaluable comments and guidance. Without his help, it would not have been possible for me to complete this research. I also want to thank all the teachers and students who participated in the survey and made the study possible.

Mahmuda Akhter

ID 06203004

December, 2009

## **Abstract**

This research attempts to find out which type of feedback is more influential on students at the tertiary level. Both teachers' and peers' feedback are important for second language learning but the influence of feedback vary among the students. The hypothesis of this paper is - Learners are more influenced by peers' feedback than their teachers' feedback in a second language classroom at the tertiary level. To test the hypothesis, a survey was conducted in four private universities. After analyzing the findings of the study, the hypothesis has been proven true. The paper concludes with some pedagogical suggestions on how to make feedbacks more effective.

## **Chapter: 1 – Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Feedback means to comment on someone's performance and mention the positive as well as the negative sides. It is a crucial element of teaching and learning (Gipps, 1995; cited in Askew, 2000). It is intended to provide information and develop better understanding. The aim of feedback is to bring improvement and raise self-awareness (Gower, et al, 1995:163). Giving feedback is one of the most important responsibilities of teachers. Traditionally it is expected that only teachers will provide feedback on students' performance. Nevertheless, for the last two decades, peers' feedback has come into play. ELT practitioners think that like teachers, students can also give feedback to each other. This study attempts to bring together some findings regarding the influence of teachers' feedback and peers' feedback at the tertiary level. It should be mentioned at the very outset, this study does not justify which feedback is better than the other. The researcher believes that both teachers' feedback and peers' feedback are effective and important in learning a second or foreign language but the influence of feedback may vary among the students of different level. The feedback that is accepted easily by young learners may not be received easily by adult learners. The type of feedback that introvert students prefer is different from that of extrovert students. Sometimes the efficacy of feedback also depends on learners' cultural background, educational background and many other variables. At the tertiary level, students get quite mature and their preferences for feedback also change. At this stage, a student may not like his teacher giving feedback in front of the whole class or students may not take the feedback seriously. The present study has attempted to find out which feedback is more influential or preferable at the tertiary level.



### **1.2 Research Hypothesis**

At the tertiary level, learners are more influenced by peers' feedback than their teachers' feedback in a second language classroom.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

Since this is a hypothesis testing research, its objective is to find out if the hypothesis is right or wrong. As it is mentioned earlier, at the tertiary level, all feedbacks may not be equally effective on the students. The present study attempts to find out which feedback has more impact on the students of tertiary level.

### **1.4 Limitations**

- a) Since it was not possible to match the researcher's time with that of the teachers, the teachers from all the participating universities could not participate in the survey.
- b) Due to time constraints, the survey is confined to four universities. The claim of this research could have been stronger and more representative provided that a few more universities have been covered.

## **Chapter: 2 – Literature review**

### **2.1 Definition of feedback**

In Askew's (2000: 6)) opinion, feedback is a judgment about the performance of another's. Feedback is given and received in the belief that the recipient will be able to adjust subsequent performances. It is assumed that the person giving the information knows more than the person receiving it or the receiver does not know it and this knowledge will lead to improvement. According to Black and William (1998: cited in Askew, 2000: p.8), feedback to any students should be about the particular qualities of his/her work, with advice on what he/she can do to improve and should avoid comparison with others. Askew (2000: p.7) says that feedback can be both positive and negative. Positive feedback refers to judgment implying satisfaction with the learners' performance. The impact of positive feedback may be increasing confidence, motivation and better understanding. On the other hand, negative feedback implies criticism and need for change. The recipient is assumed to welcome the former and fear the later one. Negative feedback often demotivates learners. However, it is the experience of the students that determines whether the feedback is positive or negative. According to Ur (1991: p.242), feedback, in the context of teaching, is information provided on students' performance of a particular task. Usually, the objective of providing feedback is to improve learners' performance. Feedback has two main different components such as – assessment and correction. In assessment students are only informed about how well or poorly they perform. For example, a percentage grade in examination, the response "Fair", on an answer etc. On the other hand, correction means some precise information

provided on learners' performance. It can be explanation, provision for better performance, eliciting the correct answer from the other students etc.

## **2.2 Why students make errors**

According to Harmer (2001: 99), there are two major causes for which the students make errors at various stages:

1. **L1 interference:** Students, learning English as a second language, already have knowledge about their first language i.e. L1. Since L1 is their mother tongue they can produce this language very efficiently even if they do not have the conscious knowledge of grammar. When their L1 and English come into contact with each other, there are often confusions, which provoke errors in learners' use of English. For example, Arabic does not have the /v/ sound in their language. Therefore, they may pronounce *ferry* instead of *very*. It also may happen in using grammar where students' L1 has a "subtly different system" from English. For instance, French students often face problem with the present perfect tense because this form is presented slightly differently in French. Japanese students face problems with article usage since they do not use the same system in their language. Finally, this type of confusion may happen where "similar sounding words have different meaning." For example, in Spanish *libreria* means "bookshop" not "library," *embarazada* means "pregnant" not "embarrassed."
2. **Developmental errors:** When children start speaking English, they often say "mom goed" or "daddy comed". What happens here is they "over-generalize" the rules of adding -ed to make past form. Same kind of "developmental errors" also occur when students start using a foreign language. For example, a student says,



“she is more nicer than him” where the student over-generalizes the rule of using “more” to compare between two things.

### **2.3 Factors influencing feedback**

Gower, et al. (1995: p.163) say, feedback can take a number of forms – giving praise and encouragement, correcting, having discussion with students etc. The type and extent of feedback depends on a variety of factors. The factors are –

- **Individual student:** Different student respond to different types of feedback. Unconfident students may need indirect feedback with more encouragement whereas students who are more self-confident appreciate more direct correction from the teacher.
- **Culture:** In a classroom all the students may not be from the same cultural background. The students from different culture appreciate different forms of feedback.
- **Type of lesson and activity:** Feedback also depends on the type of lesson and activity. Not all type of lesson and task require the same type of feedback. For example, structured and controlled activities require different type of feedback from open-ended activities. Written activities demand different type of feedback from oral activities.
- **Stage in the course:** The effectiveness of feedback also depends on which stage of the task it is provided.

### **2.4 Studies on the impact of feedback**

In case of providing feedback, a power hierarchy in the class room is “inevitable” where the teacher is in charge of providing feedback and the students have to accept that



(Ur, 1991: p.257). Traditionally it is expected of a teacher to feedback on her students' performance. However in recent years, the use of peers' feedback is emphasized in second language classrooms since it is considered "a potentially valuable aid for its social, cognitive, affective and methodological benefit" (Rollinson 2005: p.23). Rollinson (2005: p.26) also says that many teachers and students may not accept the idea that feedback received from a classmate can be beneficial since their level of proficiency is more or less the same. It is true that sometimes peers' interactions have been found less profitable because of the learners' lack of trust on their peers' ability (Zheng 1995; cited in Rollinson, 2005: p.24). For this reason, the affective advantages of peers' feedback (such as less threatening, less authoritarian, more supportive and so on) over teachers' feedback are not recognized by the students nor by the researchers (Leki, 1991: cited in Rollinson, 2005: p.24) . Since peers' feedback allows students to discuss their problems among themselves in a supportive way it helps improve their level of proficiency in the target language. Supporting this statement Vygotsky (1978) (cited in Lightbown and Spada 1999: 23) concluded that language develops entirely from social interaction. He also argued that in a supportive interactive environment, a learner is able to produce better language than in a controlled environment. Vygotsky refers to this level of production as Zone of Proximal Development.

In the last two decades the issue of teachers' feedback versus peers' feedback gained more attention. Rollinson (1998) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 24) found from his study that peers could provide very useful feedback. He conducted a research on his college students and observed that 80% of the feedbacks that came from the students were highly effective. Another researcher Caulk (1994) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 24) found similar results where 89% of his students gave useful feedback on their peers'

writing. 60% students provided the feedbacks that Caulk could not make after checking their writing.

Peer feedback is obviously different from that of teachers. Caulk (1994) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 24) found that students tend to give more specific feedbacks than their teachers. Teachers talk about the overall problems of a student while peers indicate where exactly a student needs correction. It helps students a lot to improve their learning as Fathman and Whalley (1990) (cited in Zheng 2007: 25) claim that students can “only” improve their grammatical competence when they receive specific feedback on grammar.

With the help of peer feedback, students improve their skills by correcting their errors. Mendonca and Johnson’s (1994) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 24) study revealed that 53% of the corrections that the students make on their paper are incorporated from their peers’ feedback. Rollinson’s (1998) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 24) study shows that 65% of the peer feedbacks are accepted completely or partially.

When teachers give feedback it creates a one-way interaction between the teacher and the student since the student usually does not say anything in response to the teacher’s feedback. But in case of peers’ feedback, there is a two-way interaction. Both the parties can argue, explain, clarify and justify their points that foster a “highly complex socio-cognitive interaction” between them (Rollinson, 2005: 25). Their interaction also “fosters a myriad of communicative behaviors” (Villamil and Guerrero 1996) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 25). Villamil and Guerrero (1996) found a “complex and productive scaffolded peer help process” from their study on some Spanish speaking EFL students. The authors argue that an important aspect of peer feedback is



“affectivity” that includes “camaraderie, empathy and concern for not hurting each other’s feeling” (cited in Hyland, 2006: p.7).

According to Zamel (1985) (cited in Rollinson 2005: 25), teachers’ feedbacks may not be as effective as we believe it to be. Surveys on students’ feedback preference indicate that ESL students greatly value teachers’ written and oral feedback (Leki, 1991; Saito, 1994; Zheng, 1995) but its contribution to students’ development is still ambiguous (Hyland, 2006; p.3). In many cases, teachers’ written comments are criticized for being general, ambiguous, and idiosyncratic. In this regard, Perpignan (2003) (cited in Zheng 2007: 25) has also concluded that teachers’ feedback has no positive impact on students’ improvement because of the distance between teacher-student relationships. Since a teacher has to deal with a large number of students she has to generalize her feedback. As a consequence, she cannot spend much time giving feedback to an individual student. But in a communicative classroom context, students can be easily encouraged to give feedback to their peers.

From Zheng’s (2007: 25) study, it has been concluded that teachers’ written feedbacks have negative impacts on their students. It is criticized for being “unspecific, incomprehensible, contradictory, inconsistent, inaccurate, meaningless, vague, over-general, abstract, formulaic and idiosyncratic (Zamel 1985: cited in Rollinson 2005: 25). Studies on L2 students show that learners remember and value encouraging remarks but expect to receive constructive criticism rather than simple platitudes (Ferris, 1995; Hyland, F, 1998: cited in Hyland, 2006: p.5).

The teachers generally use red pen to correct and give feedback that may cause students to “suffer death by the red pen” (Fureneaux 1999: cited in Zheng, 2007: p.26). When a student finds her paper full of red ink, she may feel frustrated and her interest in the subject may be destroyed. To solve this problem, peers’ feedback can be a good alternative to teachers’ feedback. Another important issue in peer feedback is that from a socio-cognitive perspective, it can be seen as a formative developmental process that gives learners the opportunities to discuss their texts with other and discover others’ interpretation of them (Hyland, 2006: p.6)

A question has been raised whether teachers’ spending hours correcting students’ errors make any difference or not. In 1977, Marzano and Arthur (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 57) found from their study that students did not read the teachers’ comments or even if they read, they did not make any attempt to learn the correction of the errors. In a follow-up study with 141 university students, Semke (1984) (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 57) found that correction did not increase students’ writing skill significantly. Rather the learners’ achievement was enhanced by their own practice. Besides, too many red marks may distract their focus excessively on the form of the sentence than the meaning. In this regard, Zamel (1985) (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 57) says that teachers’ feedback usually tend to focus more on accuracy of form. From her survey, conducted on 15 ESL teachers, she finds an emphasis on form rather than meaning. She also finds that the teachers both “misread” the text and consequently give “misguided” feedback or suggest recommendations and corrections that are ambiguous and not precise. She further claims that “learners would rarely read through the comments more than once” and they rarely attempt to implement the suggestions. Similarly, Kreizman (1984) (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 58) also found that the



students' primary interest is in grades. When they get their grades they hardly look at the comments made by their teachers.

Cumming (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 57) says that if the teachers do too much of correction, students may consider them as "arbitrator-reader". In such a case, the students may end up doing their tasks just to please the teacher and to get fewer red marks (Raimes 1983) (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 57).

However, students sometimes also misinterpret teachers' feedback. The research, conducted by Hayes and Daiker (1984) (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: 58), shows that the students may misinterpret the teachers' feedback though the teacher provides correct feedback. The following is a list of some findings:

1. The teacher asks students to analyze a given text but the students think they are supposed to write a summary.
2. If the teacher writes "check sentence fragment" the students think that "the sentence is out of place".
3. Short comments like "unclear", "explain", "be more specific" are generally found to be of little help to the students.

Similarly, Cohen (cited in Wenden and Rubin 1987: p.65) also explores from his study that 17% of the students indicate at least one teacher comment that is not clear to them, for example, "not clear", "confusing". The survey of the study also reveals the following findings:

1. The self-rated poor learners are less likely to read their teachers' comments and attend to the corrections.

2. When the students say that they do not understand teachers' comment these comments tend to be of single word or short phrases.
3. The teachers' usually provide feedback on grammar and mechanics but students expect feedback also on vocabulary, organization, and content – areas where teachers' comments are lacking. This finding is consistent with Zamel's (1985) finding that "teachers feedback tends to concern itself more with accuracy in form than with meaning." So there is some kind of mismatch between the type of feedback expected by students and provided by the teachers.
4. The most popular strategy used by students to process feedback is making mental note of the teachers' feedback. They hardly rewrite a paper or attempt to correct their mistakes except from some self-rated better learners.
5. Finally the results of this survey suggest that students have limited range of strategy to process teachers' feedback. The self-rated poor learners and poorer writers have even more limited strategy to process teachers' feedback.

Many language teachers believe that they should be directive and authoritarian in the classroom and they must correct every error of the students. However, this attitude can create a negative climate in the classroom and make students anxious about their learning (Young, 1991) (cited in Arnold 1999: 65). Many researchers (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986; Koch and Terrell 1991; Price 1991; Scarcella and Oxford 1992; Young 1990) (cited in Arnold 1999: 65) agree on the point that "harsh error correction...and uncomfortable handling of the mistakes in front of a class" may create negative relationship between the teacher and learners. So it is better if the teacher lets students provide feedback on each other's activities. When the students provide feedback on their



peers' work they usually work in a group or in a pair. As a consequence, it increases student-talk and fosters learners' responsibility (Ur 1991: p.232).

Since mid 80s, learner-centered classroom started to become very popular among the teachers and students. Cooperative learning is a consequence of learner-centered classroom where students are encouraged to help each other with a positive attitude. In a cooperative classroom, students have to work as a team that involves leadership, problem solving and decision-making task. These tasks are very effective for heterogeneous learners since they can provide feedback to assist each other (Crandall) (cited in Arnold 1999: p.226). In cooperative groups, learners ask for clarification, provide modified input, scaffold with vocabulary or structures, argue with each other and so on. In a word they assist each other like an experienced and knowledgeable teacher. So instead of one teacher teaching through the "zone of proximal development" there are several teachers who are helping each other. It increases self-determination and learner autonomy (Crandall: cited in Arnold 1999: p.239). As a result, learners become more responsible for their own learning that encourage them for better learning (Crandall; cited in Arnold 1999: p.239, 240). While forming groups, teachers intentionally form the groups combining strong and weak students so that the strong students can help and provide feedback to the weak students (Mckay and Tom, 1999: p.26).

Although peer feedback was introduced into L2 setting from L1 context on the assumption that what is good for one would be good for the other (Hyland, 2006: p.6), subsequent research has not confirmed this optimism. Different pieces of research, comparing peers feedback with teachers' feedback and self-feedback, show mixed results. In 1994, Connor and Asenavage (cited in Villamil and Guerrero 1998: 492)

explored from their study that only 5 percent correction were done based on peers feedback and most of the corrections were incorporated with teachers feedback. Cheong's study (1994) (cited in Villamil and Guerrero 1998: 492) shows that students use three kind of feedback – teachers' feedback, peers' feedback, self-feedback but most of the changes are adopted based on teachers' suggestion. On the other hand, Chaudron's (1984) (cited in Villamil and Guerrero 1998: 492) study presents the opposing result. Her study reveals that peers' feedback has as much impact as teachers' feedback on learners. Both types of feedback help students to improve their skill or task. Paulus (1999; cited in Hyland, 2006: p.6) establishes that peers' feedback influence students' revision significantly and lead to improved paper. Mendonca and Johnson (1994) find that students use their peers' feedback in more than half of their correction. Likewise, Caulk (1994) (cited in Villamil and Guerrero 1998: 492) explores that intermediate and advanced ESL learners provide as much feedback to each other as their instructor. Teachers' feedbacks are more general whereas peers' feedbacks are more specific and focus on a particular aspect. Similar result is found from Hedgcock and Lefkowitz's (1992) (cited in Villamil and Guerrero 1998: 492) comparative study between teachers' feedback and peer feedback. Their findings show that the experimental group, who gets peer feedback, performs on an equal level of the control group, who receive teachers' feedback. Likewise, from Berger's (1990) (cited in Villamil & Guerrero 1998: 492) study, it is found that peer feedback is more favorable to students than self-feedback. Zhang's study (1995) (cited in Villamil & Guerrero 1998: 492) also reveals the same result.

However there are many linguists and researchers who argue against the previous researches and studies. For example, Tarone and Yule (1989: 9) think that many



language learners are used to an educational settings in which teachers directly control the activities of the group in a formal manner. If students from such a background are thrust into much more informal setting where the teacher assumes less authoritarian role and the students are more active than the teacher then the students may feel uncomfortable. When the teacher encourages students to provide feedback on their peers' work students, who are from traditional settings, may think that the teacher does not know how to do her job properly. Such an interpretation may have a negative effect on students' ability to derive any benefit from classroom activities. Like Tarone and Yule, Sengupta (1998: 23) also finds that students always expect the teacher to tell them whether they are right or wrong. She conducts a study on Cantonese students who are asked to provide feedback on their peers' work. Later, in an interview session they admit that they can correct their peers' errors but still "the teacher must tell" them what to do.

In addition to traditional roles of teachers and learners, many ELT practitioners like Crandall (cited in Arnold 1999: 241) think that personality difference is also an important matter to think about in ESL classroom. There are many students who do not like to work in a group or accept feedback from their peers. They feel comfortable to work individually. For this type of learners, group work and peer feedback will not be very effective. Therefore, according to Crandall, individual learners' preferences should be honored while designing and controlling class activity.

Cultural difference also plays a pivotal role in accepting peers' feedback. All the students may not react to peers' feedback in the same way. According to Rollinson (2005: 26), students from certain culture many feel uncomfortable with certain aspects of social interaction demanded by peer review or feedback. For example, Mangelsdorf

(1992) (cited in Sengupta 1998: 19) reports that Asian students tend to rate peers' feedback negatively. Carson and Nelson (1996) (cited in Sengupta 1998: 19) believe that cultural factors such as "harmony-maintenance strategy" influence Chinese learners when they participate in peers' feedback. Freedman *et al.* (1986) (cited in Sengupta 1998: 19) finds that in western culture, teacher often controls peers feedbacks or evaluations. Besides, the social relationship that they maintain with their peers also determines their responses to some extent. In addition to that, if the learners come from such a culture where the teacher is considered as an "all-knowing" person then they may question the validity of a class where peers provide feedback instead of the teacher (Mckay and Tom, 1999: p.3). Hyland (2003) (cited in Hyland, F.: 2006, p.3-4) also found that ESL students, who come from a culture where teachers are highly directive, generally expect teachers to correct their errors. They may feel resentful if their teachers do not do so. It is particularly a pressing issue when students have to write for business or academic purpose where accuracy is important. Students may also feel uncomfortable with certain aspects of social interaction that are needed in peers' feedback. For example, the Chinese students in Carson and Nelson's (1996) (cited in Rollinson, 2005: 26) study were likely to "withhold critical comments, either to maintain group harmony or because they were reluctant to claim a degree of authority." According to Allaei and Connor (1990) (cited in Hyland, 2006: p.7), "conflict or at the very least high level of discomfort may occur in multi-cultural collaborative peer response groups." Students from different culture may have different expectations about the fundamental aspects of group situation such as roles of the group members, mechanics of the group and interpersonal interaction strategies (Carson and Nelson, 1994; Nelson and Carson, 1995; Nelson and Murphy, 1992).



Though peer feedback has become very popular in recent days, many linguists like Nelson and Murphy raise question about the efficacy of peer feedback. They think that students are not capable of detecting their peers' errors and providing effective feedback (Nelson and Murphy 1992, Leki 1990) (cited in Villamil & Guerrero 1998: 492). Many students may not accept the idea that their peers are qualified enough "to act as substitute for the teacher" (Rollinson, 2005: 26). It is suggested that students are more likely to address the "surface errors" than meaning (Keh, 1990) and inexperienced students may find it hard to judge the validity of their peers' feedback (Leki, 1990) (cited in Hyland, 2006: p.7). Peers may also have difficulties in finding the problem areas and as a consequence they may offer inaccurate or misleading feedback (Horwitz, 1986). Students may also react negatively and defensively to their peers' critical comments (Amores, 1997).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Eventually it can be concluded that both teachers' feedback and peers' feedback are important and beneficial for learners. But the efficacy of teachers' feedback and peers' feedback depends on some variables like age of students, personality, cultural background, educational setting, type of activity, lesson plan and so on. Whatever the type of feedback is, it has to be implemented according to these variables.



## Chapter: 3 – Research methodology

### **3.1 Research design**

This research is a small-scale, quantitative survey of the impact of peers' feedback and teachers' feedback on the ESL/EFL students of tertiary level.

### **3.2 Data collection procedure:**

The methodology used in this research includes –

1. Students survey
2. Teachers survey

Using questionnaire is one of the most useful methods of collecting data. Questionnaires have a number of advantages. Questionnaires are designed to make the result quantifiable and interpretable. It is also easy for the respondents to fill up a questionnaire properly within a short time. the answers are relatively objective and easy to analyze. Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 172) have stated a number of advantages of using a questionnaire for data collection –

- a) Questionnaires are self-administered and can be given to a large group of subjects at the same time. Therefore, they are less expensive to administer than other procedures such as interviews.
- b) When anonymity is assured, subjects tend to share information of a sensitive nature more easily.
- c) Since the same questionnaire is given to all subjects, the data are more uniform and standard.

- d) Since they can usually be given to all subjects at exactly the same time or within the short period of time, the data are more accurate.

### **3.3 Principles for designing instrument**

Questionnaires are printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subjects are expected to respond, often anonymously (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 173). A number of ways are there to design questionnaire. Using a rating scale is one of the common ways. The Likert Scale is one very widely used rating scale used in empirical study (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 173). It provides 5 different options for each item on the questionnaire and asks individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they “strongly agree” (SA), “agree” (A), “are undecided” (U), “disagree” (D), and “strongly disagree” (SD) with each statement. “Strongly disagree” may be assigned score 5 while “strongly agree” may be assigned score 1. But Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 173) suggest that in an attitude questionnaire the sequence of attitudes should be reflected in higher scores, which is reverse of the Likert scale. Therefore, in this research attitudes or responses have been assigned value in the following way:

Strongly agree = 5

Agree = 4

Neutral = 3

Disagree = 2

Strongly disagree = 1

### **3.4 Description of the questionnaire for students and teachers**

The following aspects are taken into consideration in designing the questionnaire to ensure validity and reliability of it –

- Literature review of this paper.
- Literature on research method.
- The pilot survey with the questionnaire.
- Consultation with the supervisor.

The questionnaire comprises 10 questions. For each item, there are 5 options, following the reverse of Likert scale. The respondents are required to tick one option which they think appropriate for each item. Each item deals with a single idea. They are worded as simple and as clear as possible.

### **3.5 Participants**

The surveys are conducted among the students and teachers of four renowned private universities of Dhaka. The universities are chosen very carefully to make the result more reliable and representative. The universities are –

- a) BRAC University
- b) North-South University
- c) United International University
- d) University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh

100 students and 10 teachers of these universities participate in the questionnaire survey of this research.



**3.6 Data analysis:**

To analyze the data, the researcher uses quantitative method since it is easier to interpret a result when it is expressed in mathematical figure. Mean score is calculated for each item and the mean scores are interpreted according the interpretation scale.

## Chapter: 4 – Research Findings

The data obtained from students' survey and teachers' survey are hand tabulated and analyzed in terms of frequency counts and means. In both the questionnaire, respondents have to tick an appropriate box from five options for each item. For analysis, the responses are converted into mathematical figure as follows –

Strongly agree = 5

Agree = 4

Neutral = 3

Disagree = 2

Strongly disagree = 1

### **4.1 Results found from students' survey**

The result found from students' survey is presented below. In each box the number on top indicates the number of scorers and the number at the bottom indicates the score after conversion into mathematical figures. The bottom ones are calculated to find out mean scores.

**Table: 1**

(For each item the number of total response is 100)

Number of item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
1	34	43	8	13	2	3.94
	170	172	24	26	2	
2	12	32	23	24	5	3.26
	60	144	69	48	5	
3	14	33	19	24	10	3.17
	70	132	57	48	10	
4	21	43	15	13	8	3.56
	105	172	45	26	8	
5	15	50	18	9	8	3.55
	75	200	54	18	8	
6	23	28	12	26	11	3.26
	115	112	36	52	11	
7	19	28	19	25	9	3.23
	95	112	57	50	9	
8	18	22	14	32	14	2.98
	90	88	42	64	14	
9	17	41	20	19	3	3.50
	85	164	60	38	3	
10	32	36	15	8	9	3.74
	160	144	45	16		



The details of the results of students' questionnaire survey are given below:

For the item number 1 (It is a good practice for the students to correct each others' mistake rather than always relying on the teacher), 34 students strongly agree with the statement and 43 students respond to the option "agree". 8 students remain neutral and 13 students disagree with the statement. 2 students choose "strongly disagree" in this item. The mean score is 3.94.

For the item number 2 (Students take their peers' comments very seriously and attempt to rewrite their paper), 12 students choose "strongly agree", 36 students choose "agree" and 23 students remain neutral. 24 students disagree and 5 students strongly disagree with this item. The mean score is 3.26.

For item number 3 (Students appreciate it when their peers provide feedback instead of their teachers), 14 students choose "strongly agree" and 33 students choose "agree." On the other hand, 10 respondents strongly disagree and 24 respondents disagree with this item. Other 19 students choose "neutral." The mean score is 3.17.

For item number 4 (Students hesitate to ask for further clarification of a correction to their teachers whereas they are more comfortable to do so to their peers), 21 students put tick mark on "strongly agree" and 43 students put tick mark on "agree." 13 students choose "disagree" and 8 students choose "strongly disagree". 15 students choose "neutral". The mean score is 3.56.

For item number 5 (When a student negotiates his peer's feedback with his peer, it helps him retain the feedback), 15 students choose "strongly agree" and 50 students choose "agree". 18 students are neutral and 9 students disagree with this statement. The rest 8 students choose "strongly disagree". The mean score is 3.55.

For item number 6 (Students accept both positive and negative feedback from their peers without any hesitation), 23 students choose "strongly agree" and 28 students go for "agree". 12 students choose "neutral," 26 students put tick mark on "disagree" and 11 students put tick mark on "strongly disagree". The mean score is 3.26.

For item number 7 (Students feel frustrated when teachers correct all the errors and return the copy with so many red marks), 19 students put tick mark on "strongly agree" and 28 students put tick mark on "agree". On the other hand, 9 respondents strongly disagree and 25 respondents disagree with this statement. Other 19 students are neutral. The mean score is 3.23.

For item number 8 (Peers give more detailed feedback than teachers), 18 students put tick mark on "strongly agree" and 22 students put tick mark on "agree." 32 students choose "disagree" and 14 students choose "strongly disagree". 14 students choose "neutral". The mean score is 2.98.

For item number 9 (Peers feedback reduces students' anxiety of being offended in front of the whole class when the teacher gives open feedback), 17 students put tick mark on "strongly agree" and 41 students put tick mark on "agree". On the other hand, 3

respondents choose “strongly disagree” and 19 respondents disagree with this statement. Other 17 students are neutral. The mean score is 3.50.

For item number 10 (Providing feedback to each other increases learners’ autonomy that enhances better learning), 32 students put tick mark on “strongly agree” and 36 students put tick mark on “agree.” 8 students choose “disagree” and 9 students choose “strongly disagree”. 15 students choose “neutral”. The mean score is 3.74.

#### **4.2 Results found teachers’ survey**

The result found from teachers’ survey is presented below. In each box the number on top indicates the number of scorers and the number at the bottom indicates the score after conversion into mathematical figures. The bottom ones are calculated to find out mean scores.

**Table: 2**

(For item the number of total respondents is 10)

No of items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
1	3	7	0	0	0	4.3
	15	28	0	0	0	
2	1	3	2	4	0	3.1
	5	12	6	8	0	



3	0	2	6	2	0	3.0
	0	8	18	4	0	
4	3	5	1	1	0	4.0
	15	20	3	2	0	
5	4	5	0	0	1	4.1
	20	20	0	0	1	
6	2	0	3	4	1	2.8
	10	0	9	8	1	
7	4	2	1	3	0	3.7
	20	8	3	6	0	
8	1	3	3	3	0	3.2
	5	12	9	6	0	
9	6	3	0	1	0	4.4
	30	12	0	2	0	
10	6	2	0	2	0	4.2
	30	8	0	4	0	

The details of the results are given below:

For item no. 1 (It is a good practice for the students to correct each other's mistake rather than always relying on the teacher), 3 teachers choose to "strongly agree" and 7 teachers choose "agree". no teacher chooses "neutral", "disagree" or "strongly disagree". The mean score is 4.3.

For item no. 2 (Students take their peers' comments very seriously and attempt to rewrite their paper), 1 teacher goes for "strongly agree", 3 teachers choose "agree", 2 teachers put tick mark on neutral and 4 teachers choose "disagree". No teacher chooses strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.1.

For item no. 3 (Students appreciate it when their peers provide feedback instead of their teachers), no teacher chooses strongly agree and strongly disagree. 2 teachers go for "agree" 6 teachers go for neutral and 2 teachers choose "disagree". The mean score is 3.0.

For item no. 4 (Students hesitate to ask for further clarification of a correction to their teachers whereas they are more comfortable to do so to their peers), 3 teachers go for "strongly agree", 5 teachers choose "agree", 1 teacher put tick mark on neutral and 1 teacher chooses "disagree". No teacher chooses strongly disagree. The mean score is 4.0.

For item no. 5 (When a student negotiates his peer's feedback with his peer, it helps him retain the feedback), 4 teachers choose to "strongly agree" and 5 teachers choose "agree". no teacher chooses "neutral", "disagree". Only 1 teacher chooses "strongly disagree". The mean score is 4.1.

For item no. 6 (Students accept both positive and negative feedback from their peers without any hesitation), 2 teachers choose to "strongly agree" and no teacher chooses "agree". 3 teachers go for "neutral", 4 teachers choose "disagree" and 1 teacher chooses "strongly disagree". The mean score is 2.8.

For item no. 7 (Students feel frustrated when teachers correct all the errors and return the copy with so many red marks), 4 teachers go for “strongly agree”, 2 teachers choose “agree”, 1 teacher put tick mark on neutral and 3 teachers choose “disagree”. No teacher chooses strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.7.

For item no. 8 (Peers give more detailed feedback than teachers), 1 teacher goes for “strongly agree”, 3 teachers choose “agree”, 3 teachers put tick mark on neutral and 3 teachers choose “disagree”. No teacher chooses strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.2.

For item no. 9 (Peers feedback reduces students’ anxiety of being offended in front of the whole class when the teacher gives open feedback), 6 teachers choose to “strongly agree” and 3 teachers choose “agree”. No teacher chooses “neutral” and “strongly disagree”. Only 1 teacher chooses “disagree”. The mean score is 4.4.

For item no. 10 (Providing feedback to each other increases learners’ autonomy that enhances better learning), 6 teachers choose to “strongly agree” and 2 teachers choose “agree”. No teacher chooses “neutral” and “strongly disagree”. 2 teachers choose “disagree”. The mean score is 4.2.



## Chapter: 5 – Analysis

An interpretation scale is used to interpret the result in mathematical figure and to identify the respondents' attitude towards any particular item. The interpretation scale is as follows –

- a) 1.00 – 2.25 : Strongly disagree
- b) 2.26 – 3.00 : Disagree
- c) 3.01 – 3.75 : Agree
- d) 3.76 – 5.00 : Strongly agree

### **5.1 Discussion of students' survey result**

In item number 1, the mean score is 3.94 that means the students strongly agree with this statement. It is to be noted that the range for “strongly agree” opinion is from 3.76 to 5.00. So 3.94 score is not a very high score. It is fairly close to the range of “Agree”.

In item number 2, students agree with the statement because their mean score is 3.26 that is in the middle of the range.

In item number 3, students agree with the statement and their mean score is 3.17. the score is not very high in the scale of “Agree.”

In item number 4, the mean score is 3.56, which means students agree also in this statement. The score is very high in the range of “Agree” that shows the strength of their opinion.

In item number 5, the mean score is 3.55 that shows that students agree with this statement. The mean score is quite close the highest score of the range.

In item number 6, students also agree with the statement as the mean score is 3.26. However the score is not very high or low in the range of “agree”.

In item number 7, the mean score is 3.23, which imply that the students agree with the statement. However, 3.23 is not a very high score in the scale of “Agree”.

In item number 8, students disagree with the statement since their mean score is 2.98. However it is quite close the highest of the range “disagree”.

In item number 9, the mean score is 3.50 that falls in the range of “Agree”. The score is quite high in the range.

In item number 10, the mean score is 3.74 that means students agree with the statement. The score is very close to the peak of the range.

The findings from analysis are shown in a chart in the next page –



Table: 1 (Students' response)

Number of item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score	Attitude
1	34	43	8	13	2	3.94	Strongly agree
	170	172	24	26	2		
2	12	32	23	24	5	3.26	Agree
	60	144	69	48	5		
3	14	33	19	24	10	3.17	Agree
	70	132	57	48	10		
4	21	43	15	13	8	3.56	Agree
	105	172	45	26	8		
5	15	50	18	9	8	3.55	Agree
	75	200	54	18	8		
6	23	28	12	26	11	3.26	Agree
	115	112	36	52	11		
7	19	28	19	25	9	3.23	Agree
	95	112	57	50	9		
8	18	22	14	32	14	2.98	Disagree
	90	88	42	64	14		
9	17	41	20	19	3	3.50	Agree
	85	164	60	38	3		
10	32	36	15	8	9	3.74	Agree
	160	144	45	16	9		



## **5.2 Discussion of teachers' survey result**

In item number 1, the mean score is 4.3 that means teachers strongly agree with the statement. However the score quite high in the range of “strongly agree.”

In item number 2, teachers disagree with the statement as their mean score is 3.1. The score is not very high or low in the range of “disagree”.

In item number 3, the mean score is 3.0 that refers to the disagreement of the teachers with the statement. The score is in mid level of the range.

In item number 4, teachers agree with the statement and the mean score is 4.0. The score is at the peak of the range.

In item number 5, the mean score is 4.1 that denotes teachers strongly agree with the statement. But the score is very low in the range of strongly agree.

In item number 6, teachers disagree with the statement and the mean score is 2.8. the score is also very low in the range of “disagree”.

In item number 7, the teachers agree with the statement as their mean score is 3.7, which is quite close to the peak of the range.

In the item number 8, the mean score is 3.2, which falls under the range of “disagree”. However it is very close to the range of “agree”.

In item number 9, teachers strongly agree with this statement as their mean score is 4.4.

But the score is not very high or low.

In item number 10, the mean score is 4.2, which also mean that the teachers strongly agree with the statement though the score is not very high within the range.

The findings from the analysis are shown in a chart in the next page—

**Table: 4 (Teachers' Response)**

No. of items	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score	Attitude
1	3	7	0	0	0	4.3	Strongly agree
	15	28	0	0	0		
2	1	3	2	4	0	3.1	Disagree
	5	12	6	8	0		
3	0	2	6	2	0	3.0	Disagree
	0	8	18	4	0		
4	3	5	1	1	0	4.0	Agree
	15	20	3	2	0		
5	4	5	0	0	1	4.1	Strongly agree
	20	20	0	0	1		
6	2	0	3	4	1	2.8	Disagree
	10	0	9	8	1		

7	4	2	1	3	0	3.7	Agree
	20	8	3	6	0		
8	1	3	3	3	0	3.2	Disagree
	5	12	9	6	0		
9	6	3	0	1	0	4.4	Strongly
	30	12	0	2	0		agree
10	6	2	0	2	0	4.2	Strongly
	30	8	0	4	0		agree



## **Chapter: 6 – Conclusion and recommendation**

### **6.1 Conclusion**

The objective of this research was to test the hypothesis – at the tertiary level, learners are more influenced by peers' feedback than their teachers' feedback in a second language classroom. After analyzing all the results found from the surveys, it can be claimed that the hypothesis has been proved right. The surveys were conducted among 100 students and 10 teachers. Based on their response the results are calculated and it shows that most of the teachers and students agree with the statements. So the hypothesis has been proved true.

### **6.2 Recommendation**

After conducting surveys and analyzing the results, the researcher has come up with the following recommendations –

1. The teachers should encourage students to provide feedback on each other's task.
2. Peer feedback has to be guided and controlled by the teachers.
3. The teachers should provide some guidelines of providing peer feedback before practicing it.
4. The teachers should not over correct students' scripts since it makes them frustrated.
5. It is better for the weak and unconfident learners if the teachers provide them feedback in private instead of providing it in front of the whole class.

6. The teachers should not be too much authoritative in the classroom. Instead, they should allow a level of freedom for the students so that they feel a responsibility for their own learning.
7. Students should be allowed to respond, argue and interact for any feedback.
8. Negative feedbacks should be provided supportively and warmly.

## Work cited

Arnold, Jane, ed. *Affect in Language Learning*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Askew, Susan, ed. *Feedback for learning*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2000.

Gower, Roger and Diane Phillips, Steve Walters. *Teaching Practice Handbook*. UK: Macmillan Heinemann English Language Teaching, 1995.

Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. England: Pearson Education Limited, 2001.

Hyland, Fiona, ed. *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Context and Issues*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Lightbown, Patsy M. and Nina Spada, *How Languages are Learned*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Mckay, Heather and Abigail Tom. *Teaching Adult Second Language Learners*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Rollinson, Paul. "Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class". ELT Journal. Volume 59.1 (2005). 20 July 2009 (<http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint.591/1/23>)



Seliger, Herbert W. and Elana Shohamy. *Second Language Research Method*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Sengupta, Sima. "Peer Evaluation: I am not the teacher". ELT Journal.

Vol. 52.1 (1998). 15 December 2009 ([www.eltj.oxfordjournal.org](http://www.eltj.oxfordjournal.org)).

Tarone, Elaine and George Yule. *Focus on the Language Learner*. New York:

Oxford University Press, 1989.

Ur, Penny. *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. UK: Cambridge

University Press, 1991.

Villamil, Olga S. and Maria C M De Guerrero. "Assessing the impact of peer revision

L2 writing". ELT Journal. Vol. 19.4 (1998): 491 – 514. 25

August 2009 ([www.eltj.oxfordjournal.org](http://www.eltj.oxfordjournal.org))

Wenden, Anita and Joan Rubin, ed. *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*.

New York: Prentice Hall, 1987.

Zheng, Chun-xian. "A study of peer feedback". ELT Journal. Vol. 5, No. 4,

Serial no. 43 (2007). 15 December 2009 ([www.paperpub.com](http://www.paperpub.com)).

## **Appendix**

**BRAC University**

**Department of English and Humanities**

**ENG 466: Dissertation**

- 1) It is a good practice for the students to correct each others' mistake rather than always relying on the teacher.**
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
  
- 2) Students take their peers' comments very seriously and attempt to rewrite their paper.**
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
  
- 3) Students appreciate it when their peers provide feedback instead of their teachers.**
  - a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree

- 4) **Students hesitate to ask for further clarification of a correction to their teachers whereas they are more comfortable to do so to their peers.**
- a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
- 5) **When a student negotiates his peer's feedback with his peer, it helps him retain the feedback.**
- a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
- 6) **Students accept both positive and negative feedback from their peers without any hesitation.**
- a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree
- 7) **Students feel frustrated when teachers correct all the errors and return the copy with so many red marks.**
- a) Strongly agree
  - b) Agree
  - c) Neutral
  - d) Disagree
  - e) Strongly disagree



**8) Peers give more detailed feedback than teachers.**

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

**9) Peers feedback reduces students' anxiety of being offended in front of the whole class when the teacher gives open feedback.**

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

**10) Providing feedback to each other increases learners' autonomy that enhances better learning.**

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Agree
- c) Neutral
- d) Disagree
- e) Strongly disagree

Thank you