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## Probing into the Patterns of Pair Interaction in EFL Learners' Peer Feedback Dynamics: Written Discourse in Focus

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### Abstract

The present study attempted to explore the patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics to facilitate the quality of peer feedback and the quality of English writing among EFL learners while communicating ideas through written discourse. This qualitative case study was conducted with 12 (six pairs) EFL learners. To this aim, 12 out of 18 EFL learners from a writing course over 16 weeks, a session per week, during the first semester of 2019-2020 at Poldokhtar University were selected. The revised Bloom's taxonomy model was transferred to the learners in the workshop. Three kinds of data, including semi-structured interview transcripts, 12 writing assignments, and artifacts of peer feedback dynamics, were analyzed by the QSR NVivo 8 software. The findings revealed that the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy Model is more acceptable for peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction which provides a six-step model of critical thinking. The process of peer feedback dynamics was summarized as three steps: *intake*, *critical thinking*, and *output*. Each of the three steps had several mental processes in peer feedback dynamics. Accordingly, the amount of learners' awareness resulted in their critical thinking. The more the learners were cognizant of their pair interaction and the feedback they received, the more they could criticize the tasks and class activities. Furthermore, the results showed that the pair interaction led to more motivation, cooperation, and confidence. When the learners were confident, they felt comfortable. In conclusion, during peer feedback dynamics, there was a cyclic

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relationship among the affective variables, including the learners' awareness, critical thinking, motivation, cooperation, and confidence.

**Keywords:** Patterns of Pair Interaction; Peer Feedback; Writing Skill

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## INTRODUCTION

The expansion of writing skills in second/foreign language learning settings does not raise challenges and debate among the researchers (Merkel, 2018; Muller & Gregoric, 2017). On the other hand, it is a widely agreed idea that writing skill plays a central part in language learning and performance (Steinlen, 2018). Indeed, EFL/ESL learners try to find ways to improve their writing skills in an attempt to meet their requirements (Sadiku, 2015). Based on Rubiyah, Maria Teodora Ping, and Syamdianita (2018), writing has been concerned as a complicated skill to teach and learn both for the instructors and learners in the EFL settings. Javadi-Safa, (2018) claims that writing is the essential skill in language learning. Writing is a necessary skill to able us to be successful in an academy and it is regarded as an operating, productive skill, learners learn to write in a foreign language when encountering various problematic issues. Melmann (2015) reported that written work is actually an intuitive procedure between the writer and the reader. Writing includes conceptualizing thoughts, mental extension of information and experience.

According to Farrah (2012), peer feedback has been considered the way of involving students in sharing ideas, providing and receiving constructive feedback to improve

their writing skills. Moreover, peer feedback is theoretically advocated by the teaching and learning framework in cooperative and collaborative learning, social interaction and L2 linguistic acquisition (Olsen & Kagan, 1992; Oxford, 1997, cited in Kunwongse, 2013). Vanden Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006) affirmed that peer feedback is a process in which "students assess the quality of their fellow students' work and provide one another with feedback" (p. 135).

According to Liu and Carless (2006), the main feature of peer assistance and collaborative learning is peer feedback, in which the approach to the writing process for draft revisions is always accepted at different levels of instruction and is seen as a mutual educating process that trainees can be engaged in conversations related to performance and standard. Also, one of the important features of peer feedback is that it emphasizes on providing fruitful answers without the assessment of written work (Chang, 2016). Therefore, peer feedback plays an essential role in L2 writing and has benefits and positive effects on improving students' writing skills.

In order to improve the quality of peer feedback, some researchers realized that the mindful process of feedback (Narciss, 2008; Poulos & Mahony, 2008). Roscoe and Chi (2008) found that students assessing their peers' works are engaging in a cognitively-

demanding activity that extend their understanding of subject matter and writing. The mental process of feedback on quality feedback is based on the theories of constructivism and psychological cognition (Narciss, 2008; Poulos & Mahony, 2008, Schraw & Robinson, 2012). These theories aim to study the thinking and reasoning process of feedback to improve the feedback quality in writing activities.

Patterns of interaction are ways to interact both trainers and trainees together in educational settings. Luk and Lin (2007) stated that interactions in language settings are critical social activities for learners to develop knowledge, identity and self-confidence as worthy language users. Based on sociocultural theories, in the language learning process as a social task, learners construct their knowledge through peers' and teachers' assistance (Vygotsky quoted in Hall & Walsh 2002). Many factors such as the classroom arrangement, facilities, atmosphere, learners' and teachers' attitudes and so on can influence patterns of interaction. The use of correct interaction patterns is essential to success in any classroom assignment or task, leading to better language acquisition. The main objective of this study was to improve students' proficiency in using English both for written and oral communication with pair interactions as the main model of learning. Students' achievement gained through this learning model when they use patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics. Therefore, this study aimed at

finding out teaching English writing strategies that can be used in actual communication for excellent proficiency.

The importance of peer feedback dynamics has been focused on L2 learning theories with changes in communicative language teaching approach and the process approach to writing with moving from a teacher-centred classroom into a student-centred classroom where the students confer and help each other. They read and comment on each other's work, thus increasing their opportunities for interaction and improving their social relations and increasing their self-confidence as well as writing quality. The researcher believes that peer feedback helps students to interact and increase their motivation. From the perspective of teaching objectives, the main problems are improving students' English writing ability and cultivating qualified EFL learners with good proficiency in English writing. From the perspective of teaching method, peer feedback has been used in teaching English writing, but the effectiveness of peer feedback is arguable and controversial. It is necessary to employ more valuable strategies to promote students' ability of peer feedback and their quality of peer feedback. Peer feedback is mainly aimed at improving writing with high-quality feedback. A fundamental research question is how to produce high quality peer feedback in writing and what is the strategy to produce higher-order peer feedback. There are few studies on how to improve the quality of peer feedback and improve the ability of writing. In this study,

patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics and critical thinking skills were conducted in peer feedback to produce higher-quality peer feedback. Through this study of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics, the researcher expects to learn what are Iranian EFL learners' processes and factors in patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics for English writing while communicating ideas through written discourse. In line with this purpose, the following research questions are proposed:

1. *What is the process of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics for English writing among Iranian EFL learners while communicating ideas through written discourse?*

2. *What factors affect peer feedback dynamics to facilitate English writing while communicating ideas through written discourse?*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The necessity of foreign language learning skills in showing the real need of future expert persons has been estimated comprehensively in various researches on teaching English as a Foreign Language (e.g. Steffensen, Fowler & Trousdale, 2017; Nazari & Warty, 2018; Zhang & Ardasheva, 2019).

The significance of feedback in language learning is ordinarily discovered with widespread agreement in English language teaching with an attempt to develop students'

written tasks. Written feedback is the crucial tasks for writing teachers to evaluate students' written performance to lead them to production quality improvement. Written feedback is considered as the input from a reader to a writer, which delivers information to the author for revision covering the comments, questions, and suggestions proposed by a reader, and the writer is able to revise the original in ways of adding more information, reinforcing logical organization, clarifying the development of ideas, or correcting word choice or tense (Keh, 1990, cited in Lei, 2017). With the writing process approach, peer feedback has become a more increasingly vital component in a writing class due to advocating student-centred learning (Lei, 2017). Peer feedback is classified under several names such as peer critique, peer review, peer revision, peer response, peer editing and peer evaluation, which is defined as a collaborative learning activity providing language learners to exchange their drafts and offer feedback to each other for the objective of revision (Mangelsdorf, 1992, cited in Lei, 2017).

Peer feedback holds the four theoretical frameworks including social constructivism, sociocultural theory, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and interaction in second language acquisition (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lai, 2016). These theories emphasize the role of "peer" in different perspectives. For the perception of peer feedback, peer feedback is identified as a valuable approach in higher education (Lai,

2016). Some researchers believed that peer feedback could promote in-depth learning, the development of professional practice and self-praise skills (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lai, 2016; Morris, 2001).

Many studies by various scholars have revealed that peer feedback has the positive effects of improving students' writing in the L2 context (Hu and Lam, 2010; Min, 2016; Khalil, 2018). For example, peer feedback offers students multiple sources of constructive feedback; the recursive process of peer feedback increases their awareness, builds their confidence, motivates them in active engagement, enhances their critical thinking ability, and supports the social dimension through working collaboratively (Hirose, 2008). In addition, peer feedback raises learners' awareness of the role of technological applications in the teaching and learning process through the roles of university students and teachers as Allharbi (2019) addressed. Brusa and Harutyunyan (2019) added that peer feedback, for its part, is a learning tool based on the sociocultural approach. It allows students to achieve higher autonomy and critical thinking levels based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory about increasing their communicative competence.

Many factors are affecting the effectiveness of peer feedback in second language writing. Ellis (2003) recognized four internal factors such as ability, propensities, learner cognitions, and learner actions. Bassham (2009) argued the factors of relevant knowledge information,

bias, prejudice, peer pressure, perception, and face-saving. Yu, Lee and Mak (2016) studied "collectivism and group harmony", "face-saving theory", and "power distance" factor among Chinese EFL learners and concluded that these are not effective in small group peer feedback. Moreover, in the same vein, Storch and Aldosari (2013) argued that peer interaction would encourage learners to focus on language use when the higher proficient and less proficient learners worked in pair. The higher proficiency learners can adopt the L1 to provide information in expressing the meanings of the words to the weaker students. Thus, they concluded that mixing proficiency differences may benefit lower proficiency learners when they perform in all patterns except for the dominant/passive stance.

Many researchers have reported that peer feedback is useful to learners in expanding their writing, for it is timely and more informative, which are fundamental components for their active engagement in offering feedback giving them a voice in scaffolding and constructing their ability and eventually sharing their ideas (Lu & Law, 2012; Reynolds, 2009). Peer feedback provides students with multiple sources of constructive feedback; the recursive process of peer feedback also raises self-awareness, builds confidence, increases motivation, boosts their critical thinking skills, and supports their social skills (Farrah, 2012; Hirose, 2008; Orsmond et al., 2013). In addition, the role of the peer feedback process allows students to be the main actor and

modeler for their learning process; this helps students develop learner autonomy more effectively and achieves higher levels of critical thinking. With regards to peer feedback use in L2 writing, several studies highlighted that pair interactions and language learning in ways which could be helpful for understanding and developing students' social interaction ability of conducting peer feedback led to their written improvement, so using patterns of interaction could be adopted to describe the social dynamics of peer feedback (Ferris, 2003).

## **METHODS**

### **Design of the Study**

This qualitative case study was conducted in this study. Qualitative research is one of the main research methods with the characteristic that focuses on words rather than numbers as data for analysis, especially in social science research. Qualitative research is fundamentally case-oriented (Bazeley, 2013). Data are contributed by cases rather than variables in the qualitative study. The study was conducted in Paragraph Development among EFL courses offered for applied linguistics at a Poldokhtar state-run university. The course was open to students in the Department of EFL, and the researcher was in charge of the class for the course. The course aimed to develop language skills in terms of paragraph writing within a curriculum under the department. Students took two hours per week for one academic year,

which consisted of two semesters, each semester consisting of 16 weeks including mid-term and final examination periods. For the purpose of the study, the qualitative research design was applied.

### **Participants**

Three weeks before the commencement of the research, details of the project and what was required of students were explained to the whole class. Then the participants' viewpoints were canvassed on the research prior to the study conduction and encouraged them to inform individually if they did not wish to participate. Of the 21 students in the Class, 18 agreed to participate in the study. It should be noted that it was possible that a power relationship between the students and the researchers might exist and that this could make them feel reluctant to reject the proposal of participating in the research, as he was both the lecturer and the researcher. In order to minimize the power relationship, it was repeatedly explained that there were not any disadvantages for students who rejected the participation. It was expected to gather fruitful data from the range of participants. As active learners, not silent ones, the participants were expected to provide as much input as possible to better understand patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics in lessons while communicating ideas through written discourse. Therefore, based on observation for three weeks before starting data collection, six

pairs were chosen who had actively participated in lessons and pair work, because as a lecturer he was uniquely positioned to judge students' learning attitudes in his lessons. In this conducted study, the twelve students had similar level of English proficiency and English study background. These twelve case participants agreed to attend this study and fulfill the requirements of consent form. Their ages ranged from 18 to 22 with male gender. The case participants were allowed to work in the same self-selected pairs throughout the whole semester. Although it was expected that such numbers would generate sufficient data to examine the issue at hand, it involved some decision-making. While it was known that selecting a large number of participants from several classes would generate extensive data, this would prevent him from carrying out detailed investigations into the individual processes involved in the pair interactions. Thus, six pairs could be selected in one class with the aim of more exact concentration in details. It is necessary to mention that these three sessions were apart from the main sessions of the course. The data were collected in advanced writing course over a sixteen-week period, a session per week, during the first semester of 2019-2020 at Poldokhtar University.

### **Research Data**

In this study, two data collection methods were involved including in-depth interview and document collection.

**In-depth Interview Data:** In this study, these in-depth interviews were conducted one-to-one with each of the case participants to process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. Before each of the interview, the case participants were informed to reflect their ideas in-depth.

This interview method followed Creswell (2007), who recommended six steps as guidelines for actual interview procedures: (a) identify interviewee based on purposeful sampling; (b) choose type of interview considered practical for the study; (c) use an interview protocol; (d) refine interview questions through pilot test; (e) identify conducive place for interview; (f) obtain consent for interview.

The interview protocol helps the researcher to run an interview without constraining them to a particular format or order. The interview protocol demonstrates the important notes for the interview which can remind interviewer well prepare for the interview and reduce invalidity of the data.

The topics that the interviewer wants to study during the interviews have been planned well in the interview protocols. The main questions were designed based on the research questions. The interview questions were all open-ended questions. They were helpful to explore the case participants' ideas of the study.

The three-time interviews were based on three interview protocols for each time and the interview questions were modified with the



development of this research and the further findings after the prior interview. However, the interview questions were modified and developed with the development of interview topics. The strategy of interview can lead the case participant probe into their deep understandings and perceptions of the study. Furthermore, the interview questions in interview protocols were confirmed by the third party and the lecture for reliability and validity.

**Document Data:** The outcomes of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction were collected based on each writing assignments while communicating ideas through written discourse, which were given by the case participants. There are two kinds of document data in this study: writing assignments and artifacts of peer feedback dynamic using patterns of pair interaction.

**Data of Writing Assignments:** There are six writing assignments for each case participant. The re-writing after reviewing peers' critical peer feedback dynamics were also collected to study effectiveness of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. The documents collection started based on the time span of this study from week 3 to week 16.

**Data of Peer Feedback Dynamics Using Patterns of Pair Interaction:** The data of artifacts of peer feedback dynamics refers to the outcomes of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in academic English

writing. After the submission of English writing assignments, the twelve case participants offered their critical peer feedback using patterns of pair interaction. The data were collected through two methods: (a) collecting data from each English writing assignment (b) collecting data from each case participant.

First, the data from each English writing assignments were collected in a document file. The data were used to compare the whole outcomes of critical peer feedback dynamics in a writing among peers and judge their quality of critical peer feedback dynamics, compare critical peer feedback dynamics in the same writing assignment among the twelve case participants, and study the effectiveness of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction to improve the quality of English writing.

Second, the data from each case participants were collected wholly on other peers' document files during this study. The data were used to study one peer's content of peer feedback dynamics and development of his critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data were collected over a period of sixteen weeks in the first semester after pre-observing for three weeks to select participants and running a pilot study for a week. The students were asked to complete each activity in pairs. They were told that if they felt that their L1



would be helpful to them in completing the activities, they should feel free to use it. The dialogue of the pairs was audio-recorded as they worked on the activities and the audio-recorded data were transcribed. In addition, observation notes were made while the students completed the assigned activities in pair work. The transcription of the pair talk attempted to reflect the nature of peer interaction and to represent the interaction as it occurred. The transcripts of the pair dialogues formed the primary source of data used to describe the pair interactions. Student interviews were another essential source of data in this study to understand pair interaction from learners' perspectives. During the study of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction, the data collection by interviews and document analysis were simultaneously conducted. In-depth interviews were conducted three times with each participant, which needed to be transcribed before the data analysis. The three-time interviews aimed for a reliable and continuous data, and a comparative data of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction in different sections of the study, which were conducted based on the three different interview protocols. The 12 participants were interviewed individually after each lesson. The thirty-six interviews were transcribed and the data examiners confirmed the completeness and accuracy of the transcripts. The quoted interview data for description in the findings were translated from Persian to English.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

In this study, the qualitative data analysis was based on the three kinds of data: in-depth interviews, English Writing assignment artifacts, and peer feedback dynamics artifacts using patterns of pair interaction. The data analysis was conducted with the interview transcribing and document collection. The computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software QSR NVivo 8.0 was used to code and categorize the data sources during the data analysis process. QSR NVivo has the five principal features for data analysis such as data management, ideas management, query data, and modeling from data and reporting from the data (Bazeley, 2007). By the use of QSR NVivo 8.0, a new project titled 'Peer Feedback Dynamics using Patterns of Pair Interaction to Improve English Writing', shortened as 'PFD' to improve 'EW' was set up. The sources are mainly internal sources including three folders such as 'EW Artifacts' 'PF' Artifacts' and 'Interviews'.

After importing the internal sources in each folder and document, the data was read through many times for certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, participants' way of thinking, and events that were repeated or enhanced (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the proceeding of free coding, the sources were reading detailed, slowly, reflectively by line-to-line coding to identify concepts and thinking about all of their possible meanings in both free codes and memos (Bazeley, 2007). Three turns of the data

sources coding were conducted. At the first turn, the raw data sources were coded as 'Free Nodes', which were widely coded based on the conceptual research framework and the new exploring findings during coding. At the second turn of coding, the 'Free Nodes' were organized as 'Tree Nodes'. During the 'Tree Node' analysis, the source data were re-coded to supplement the 'Tree Nodes'. At the last turn of coding, the 'Free Nodes' were connected into 'Tree Nodes'

In summary, by QSR NVivo 8.0 data analysis, the source data were clearly and definitely categorized. The findings emerged from the nodes. The last step was to conclude the findings. Data analysis is a crucial step for

the next step of findings and conclusion. The data analysis specifically follows the two research questions and the scientific process of QSR NVivo 8.0.

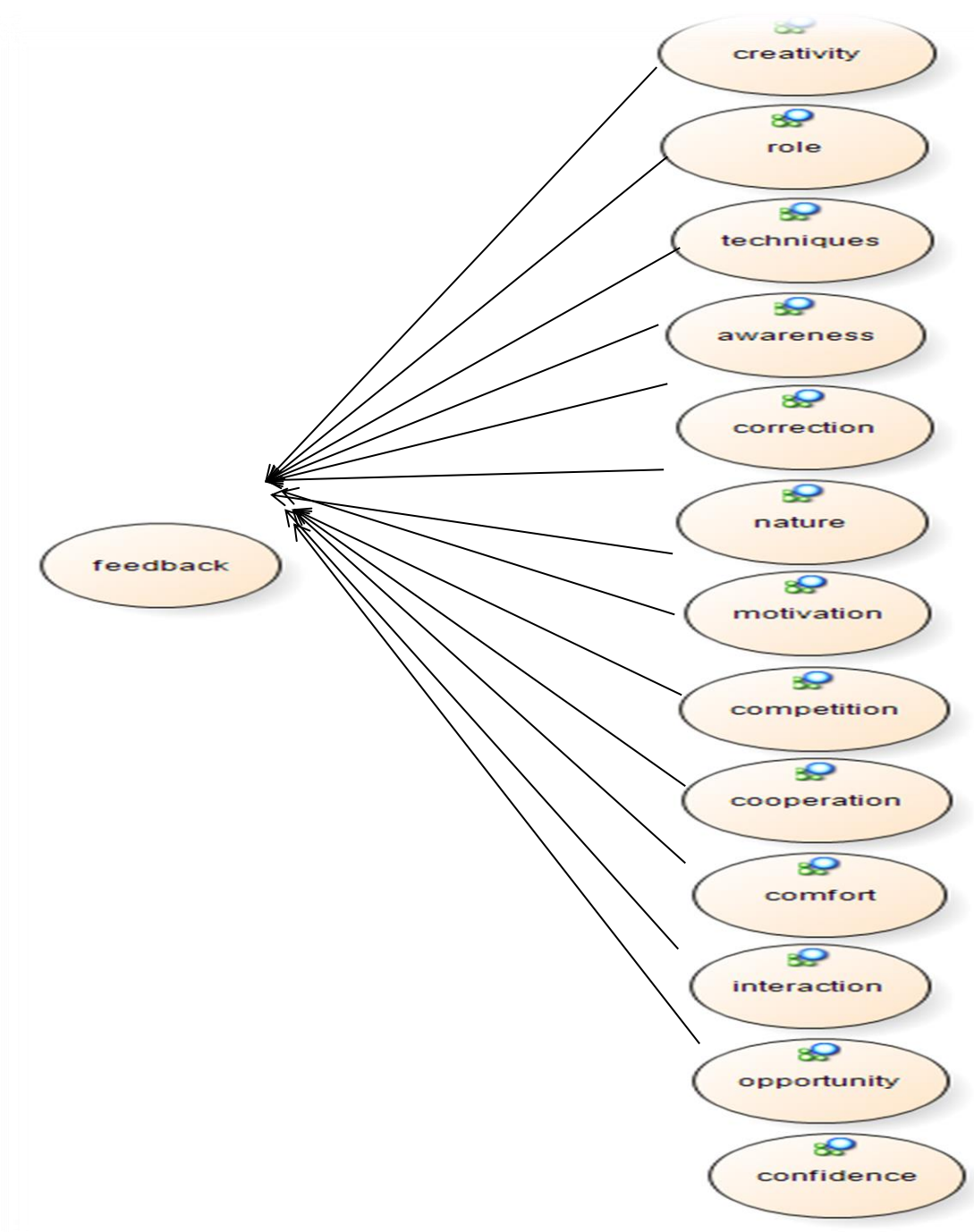
## RESULTS

In order to analyze the pair talk data, an inductive qualitative approach was utilized. Thus, three kinds of data, including semi-structured interview transcripts, classroom observation, and writing assignments of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics, were analyzed by QSR NVivo 8.0 with free nodes, tree nodes (see Figure 1), and the model (see Figure 2).

| Name        | Sources | References |
|-------------|---------|------------|
| factors     | 0       | 0          |
| competition | 2       | 4          |
| confidence  | 8       | 15         |
| cooperation | 9       | 23         |
| correction  | 9       | 12         |
| interaction | 10      | 32         |
| motivation  | 8       | 15         |
| role        | 10      | 26         |
| techniques  | 11      | 32         |
| process     | 0       | 0          |
| awareness   | 11      | 21         |
| comfort     | 6       | 8          |
| creativity  | 2       | 3          |
| nature      | 7       | 21         |
| opportunity | 11      | 40         |

*Figure 1. The Tree Nodes of Peer Feedback Dynamics in QSR NVivo 8*

In addition to the Three Nodes, the data obtained from the participants indicated that there can be a model assumed for the process of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics to facilitate English writing among Iranian EFL learners while communicating ideas through written discourse. Figure 2 presents the model.



**Figure 2. Model of Affective Factors of Peer Feedback Dynamics**

As shown in Figure 2, the nexuses among the factors related to the peer feedback dynamics are illustrated. The relationships among the factors are explained in detail along

with some sample excerpts from the interview. The data revealed that peer feedback was directly related to both *opportunity* and *interaction*. That is, the peer feedback may

provide more opportunity for practice. In fact, learners are motivated, their interest is gained, and their attention is focused on following. As one of the interviewees argues:

“Yes, pair work is great for practicing model dialogues, conducting vocabulary checks, and completing worksheets. It promotes collaboration and cooperative learning. In pairs, students can teach each other and utilize the synergy that comes from working together. Students who are working together can discuss and often figure out what to do without teacher intervention”.

Concerning the *interaction* factor of peer feedback dynamics, the results revealed that students usually work in pairs on tasks that entail interaction: conveying information, for example, or paired decision-making. Working in pairs gives students much speaking time. As far as the *awareness* factor is concerned, the results showed that the motivated learners' efforts and persistence to understand these language features may also help to achieve a higher level of awareness and lead to more achievements.

Concerning the *opportunity* factor, the results showed that pair interaction provides more opportunity for practice so that learners are motivated, their interest gained, and their attention focused on the activities to follow. It provides opportunities for students to work in pairs and small groups and use multiple modes of communication. Concerning the *comfort* factor, the findings indicated that the activities helped the EFL learners overcome

apprehension as they worked in a non-threatening atmosphere. Such a non-threatening and relaxed atmosphere helped them overcome their apprehension, develop self-confidence, and improve the quality of their papers. However, once students become comfortable with this aspect, there are ways to expand the strategy's reach. The think, pair, share strategy can help students learn about the writing process. It gives students a degree of privacy and allows them to try ideas in a less public forum.

As far as *competition* factor is considered, the results proved that when students are competing with their partners, they are more motivated. Pair work activities have several advantages for the language learner: many opportunities for language use, a chance for natural language practice, more student talk, a higher percentage of student talk in actual communicative activities, a safe environment for communication, more like a one-on-one conversation, and two-way communication - a chance both to ask and to answer questions. Some students consider it a challenge to articulate their thoughts to another person.

Regarding the *confidence* factor, the findings indicated that pair interaction reinforces the student's confidence in his thinking and provides modelling for saying the idea correctly in English. In paired work activities, students often have more confidence when completing exercises. One of the interviewees argues that:

“It helps shy and reserved students gain

confidence in their ability to take part in lessons and the opportunity to intervene and help students increase their knowledge and confidence as you interact with pairs discreetly. It made us feel content and increased our self-confidence.”

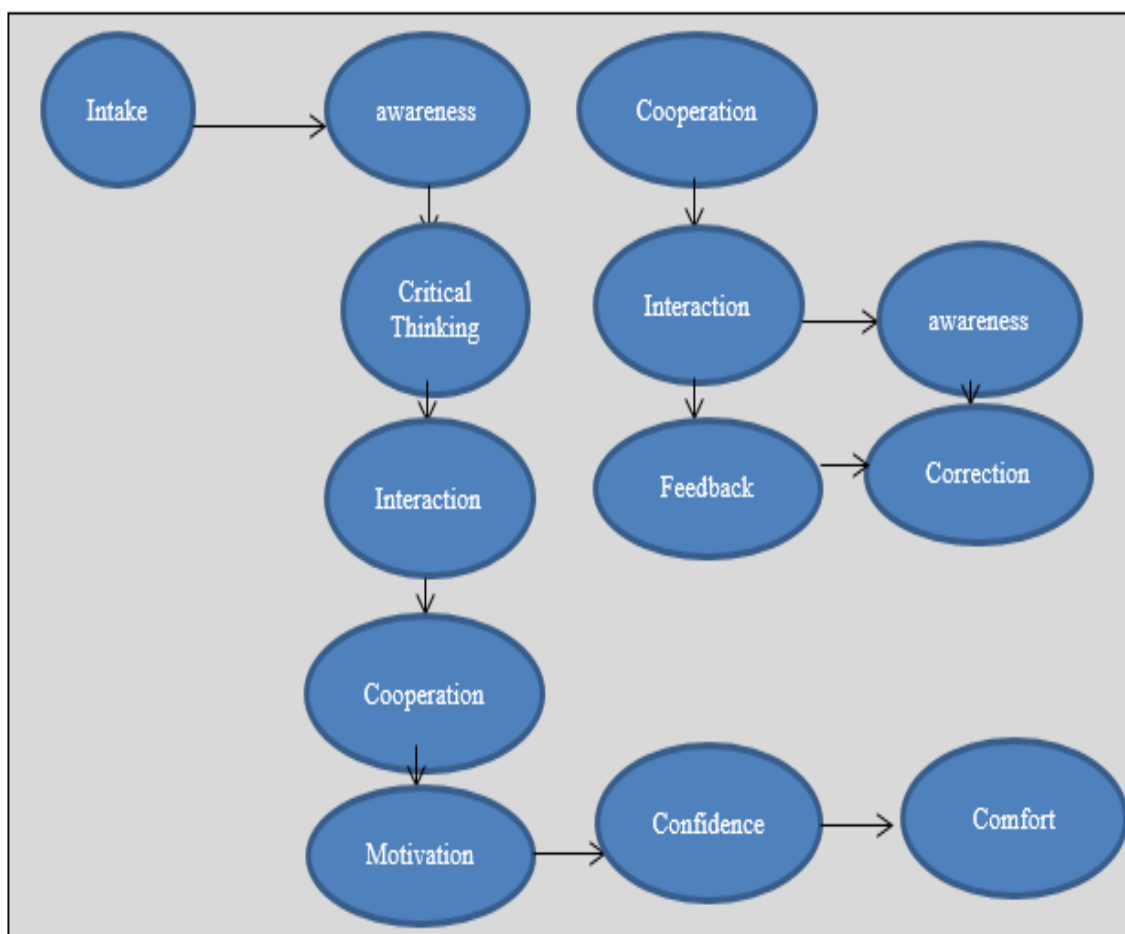
In terms of *cooperation* factor, the results obtained showed that pair interaction could reduce the number of student outbursts too. The students were encouraged to cooperate and support each other. Also, they could produce more accurate and richer texts. Peer scaffolding can boost student autonomy and improve learners’ writing skill. Concerning the *correction* factor, the findings showed that the activities of peer feedback dynamics include analyzing, evaluating and creating. The pair used their prior knowledge of English writing for remembering, understanding and applying their peers’ writing. Strategies and techniques such as editing and analyzing errors for taking responsibility of the quality of written work are emphasized.

Another factor of peer feedback dynamic is *creativity*. The results indicated that the creativity would increase the variety of activities. Importantly, discussing among the peers assisted learners to develop the ideas with creativity, and the roles of the students motivated them to the peer-engaged activity by taking great responsibilities as a feedback giver and a feedback receiver.

As far as the *nature* factor is concerned, the findings showed that the propensities of peer feedback dynamics included personality,

motivation, willingness, anxiety and inter-language in critical peer feedback. The participants had the personality of modesty, shyness, timidity and politeness. The results for the *role* factor showed that once pair interaction is concerned, the teacher lets students share for a couple of minutes and then brings their attention back. The think-pair-share strategy can help students learn about the writing process. Patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics can promote in-depth learning, the development of professional practice and self-praise skills.

Concerning the *technique* factor, the results indicated that as EFL learners think about the question and discuss their ideas with a partner, they usually come up with a long and valuable list of ideas that can take them through writing. It is the logical process of praising, error correcting, analyzing the academic English writing tasks, evaluating the writing and creating opinions. In terms of the *motivation* factor, the findings revealed that the pair interaction makes the course more attractive for learners. They attended the class with great interest. Adopting process writing pedagogy in composition classes as it perceives writing as a process encouraging learners to develop several drafts of their papers. Thus, based on the data, the process of peer feedback dynamics can be illustrated in the following Figure (Figure 3).



*Figure 3. The Process of Peer Feedback Dynamics*

As shown in Figure 3, the process of peer feedback dynamics begins with the intake, and leads to awareness. This results in the learners' critical thinking. The more the learners are aware of the pair interaction and feedback they receive, the more they are critical thinkers towards the intake. In addition, the interaction among the pairs makes the learners more motivated, cooperative, and confident. When the learners are confident, they will feel comfortable. Moreover, the more cooperative the EFL learners are, the more they can take

advantage of the feedback through pair interaction.

## DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data analysis and conclusion of findings, the research questions of this study were concluded and discussed in this section. In order to answer the research questions, the findings were categorized and the literatures were concluded comprehensively and completely.

As stated, the current research investigated Iranian EFL learners' process and affective factors in patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics for English writing while communicating ideas through written discourse.

The findings revealed that regarding the affective factors of peer feedback dynamics to facilitate English writing using patterns of pair interaction among Iranian EFL learners while communicating ideas through written discourse, the factors were motivation, interaction, awareness, comfort, competition, confidence, cooperation, correction, creativity, techniques, role, nature, and opportunity. It was shown that the higher and lower proficiency learners could be provided with more opportunities for learning together and working collaboratively. In addition, some learners preferred to cooperate with a partner who actively expressed their opinions, shared their ideas, and exchanged their experiences in the discussion. Additionally, the collaborative pattern of peer feedback and interaction was considered as the social dimension, which could develop students socially and intellectually. With regards to the learners' proficiency level, the proficiency differences of the learners were not a decisive factor affecting the nature of the peer feedback and interaction than co-constructed by the learners. This means that the relationships which learners established and the roles that they utilized were affective on the interaction among peers. The findings also indicated that the learners felt challenged in

improving their tasks with the peers, and significantly, they needed to develop their writing ability.

The roles of the learners created their responsibilities for doing peer feedback in the critique of the peers' tasks. In particular, peer feedback is a new writing activity, which motivates learners in learning. More importantly, peer feedback as cooperative and collaborative learning helped learners develop intrinsic motivation through sharing information and their attempts to achieve the tasks, develop trust with their peers, and be responsible for their duties in taking part in the peer-engaged activity. This coincided with Allharbi's (2019) study, which reported that patterns of interaction in peer feedback would help the learners to enhance their language learning including writing and grammar through the role of peers as both a feedback giver and receiver. This implied that they should shoulder much of their responsibilities in the peer feedback in providing constructive and supportive feedback.

The finding showed that patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics are used in critical peer feedback dynamics. The activities of peer feedback dynamics have three main parts including "awareness", "interaction", and "cooperation". However, before peer feedback dynamics, the activities of "remembering", "understanding", and "applying" were used to analyze the writing. Finally, peer feedback dynamics for English



writing was provided using patterns of pair interaction.

In summary, the findings showed that their mental process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction can be categorized into three steps. The first step was “intake” the writing according to actual performance of English writing. The actual ability of “intake” was different among peers. The second step was “critical thinking” in which peer use patterns of pair interaction of “awareness”, “cooperation”, and “interaction” to assess writing. The third step was to provide “critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. However, the third step was the output of critical peer feedback dynamics, which displayed peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. The output of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction was the process of assessment and creation which followed the logic process of “informative”, “engagements”, and “analyzing English writing tasks to identify mistakes, “error correcting”, and “making creating opinions or cognition”. In this three-step process, the second step belongs to critical peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction for English writing among Iranian EFL learners.

The findings revealed that peer feedback dynamics started with the intake, and proceeded to the learners’ awareness. Accordingly, the amount of learners’ awareness resulted in their critical thinking. The findings indicated that the more the learners were cognizant of their pair

interaction and feedback they received, the more they were able to criticize the tasks and class activities. Furthermore, the pair interaction led to more motivation, cooperation, and confidence. When the learners were confident, they felt comfortable. As a consequence, during the process of peer feedback dynamics, there was a cyclic relationship among the affective variables including the learners’ awareness, critical thinking, motivation, cooperation, as well as confidence. Besides, this also conformed to Lu, Law’s (2012), and Reynolds’s (2009) studies, which reported that peer feedback is useful to learners in expanding their writing, for it is timely and more informative, which are fundamental components for their active engagement in offering feedback giving them a voice in scaffolding and constructing their own ability and eventually sharing their ideas. This also coincided with Farrah’s (2012), Hirose’s (2008) and Orsmond’s et al. (2013) studies, which addressed that peer feedback provides students with multiple sources of constructive feedback; the recursive process of peer feedback also raises self-awareness, builds confidence, increases motivation, boosts their critical thinking skills, and supports their social skills. In addition, the role of the peer feedback process allows students to be the main actor and modeler for their learning process; this helps students develop learner autonomy more effectively and achieves higher levels of critical thinking.

After the process of peer feedback dynamics four further activities are discussed to react critical peer feedback dynamics. These post-activities of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction include “proofreading”, “re-editing”, “self-reflecting”, and “rewriting” for further critical peer feedback. The finding implies that post-activities are also actual practices in peer feedback dynamics. After the rewriting process, it is a new cycle of peer feedback dynamics which may make critical peer feedback reach a higher level. However, the finding implies that the activities of rewriting depend of the first writing quality and the writer’s opinion.

In conclusion the process of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics can be concluded with the mental process of the peer feedback dynamics and post-activities of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. This mental process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction is a representative model of the mental process of critical thinking. This mental process of peer feedback dynamics also proves its logic and reasonableness by “intake”, “reaction”, “input”, and “output” hypothesis in second language acquisition (Rast.2008; Pawlak, 2011; Zhang, 2009).

This process of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction emphasizes the mental and psychological “thinking” activities during peer feedback, while the previous studies focus on the activities of “doing something” in peer feedback such as

reading, commenting, discussing, and writing (Pol et al., 2008; Asikainen et al.,2014; Lee, 2015; Lai, 2016). However, different models of critical thinking may generate different processes of critical peer feedback.

Referring to the interviews' findings, there is much evidence that feedback, as expected, is highly valued by the EFL learners because they believed that using the peer feedback would improve their writing, mainly in grammar, vocabulary, and organization. The findings also showed that the EFL learners preferred their peers to correct their errors on the scripts instead of underlining them because they considered it easier for them to understand the errors corrected. The EFL learners argued that it is likely that they would not correct their errors if they did not understand the nature of the error corrected or underlined. Furthermore, the EFL learners’ answers amplify the interview results as they confirmed that their peers did not ask them to hand in a second draft and they rarely consult their peers for help or explanation.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is an increasing research that focusing on patterns, process, and affective factors of peer feedback as a key element of students’ writing development (e.g., Ferris, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction is a higher-order assessment by peer feedback with critical thinking skills of “awareness”, “cooperation”

and “cognition”, which is based on lower-order thinking skills of “remembering”, “understanding” and “applying” of the writing. The Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy of critical thinking is accepted as the skill for peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction. The students believed that their ability of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction could be cultivated by teaching and practicing. Peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction have been proved to be as an efficient way to improve English writing by collaborative learning in this study. Peer feedback dynamics using pair interaction patterns provide a higher-order mental activity strategy to assess higher-level writing.

On the study of the process of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics, the case participants experienced a serial mental activity to 1) “intake” the writing by remembering, understanding and applying with lower-order thinking, 2) use “critical thinking” for awareness, interaction and cognition of the writing, 3) and finally to “output” their “content” of peer feedback in written form. After the output of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction, there were some post-activities to improve their writing and further critical peer feedback. The post-activities of peer feedback dynamics using patterns of pair interaction have been categorized into four parts including proofreading, re-editing, self-reflecting, rewriting. Logically, this process can be

repeated until the satisfaction of the writing is achieved. However, the demonstration of post-activities depends on the condition of the writing quality and the writer’s preference.

It can be concluded that patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics show that the teachers do not always dominate the process of teaching and learning. It clearly shows that the students engaged in any classroom activity. The patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics enhance the students' talk and participation in the class. Additionally, peer interaction provides students with valuable experiences in the social dimension, and the writing process helps advocate students’ perception in producing their writing. It also develops their affective strategy, reinforces their critical thinking skills, and enhances their social interaction ability. Thus, peer feedback supports a student-centred method and learner autonomy for the students.

Regarding the implications, a crucial issue of this study is related to the EFL students with a common language and culture; therefore, the research emphasises intensive peer feedback dynamics training using patterns of pair interaction. However, although there was still some hardship in conducting the research, providing feedback by peers using patterns of pair interaction had fruitful benefits in both the pedagogic and theoretical results, which could be used in the relevant fields of language teaching such as writing and speaking skills. For instance, the process writing theory offers theoretical support for conducting patterns of

pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics whereas pedagogic implementations of using peer feedback in a writing classroom can be applied. Additionally, the collaborative learning theory could be incorporated into a framework to investigate peer feedback issues such as peer interaction, collaborative learning, student motives, and stances with clear pedagogy. Consequently, patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics should be implemented in L2 writing classroom.

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## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR THE PARTICIPANTS (Original was in Persian)

1. What do you think about participation in the activities?
2. Did pair work help your learning in terms of English writing by using patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics?
3. What strategies did you use in patterns of paired interaction in peer feedback dynamics?
4. What are your focuses (or preferences) in offering patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics in English Writing skill?
5. What functions did you use and how was your discourse affected?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback dynamics by using patterns of pair interaction?

7. How does peer feedback dynamics improve your quality of feedback in English Writing skill?

8. What is your process of patterns of interaction in peer feedback dynamics?

9. What kinds or types of patterns of interaction in peer feedback dynamics are more helpful to your English writing skill?

10. What are your contents of patterns of pair interaction in peer feedback dynamics in English writing skill?

11. What are the factors affecting peer feedback in English writing skill by using patterns of pair interaction?

12. Will you revise or rewrite your writing based on your peer's feedback by using patterns of pair interaction?

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