Using Learning-Oriented Assessment to Develop Student Feedback Literacy in Academic Writing: An Action Research Study

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Given the limited empirical research on utilizing different instructional approaches to foster student feedback literacy (Winstone & Carless, 2020), this action research study focused on the assessment approach of learning-oriented assessment and investigated its perceived influence on student feedback literacy in the context of academic writing. Data were mainly collected from student focus group interviews, supplemented by the reflective journal data of the teacher researcher. Student perceptions suggested the development of student feedback literacy in terms of appreciating feedback, developing judgements, managing affect, and taking actions. In particular, the participants gained confidence about using assessment criteria for writing evaluations, and this paper argues that confidence about writing evaluation should also be an important element of student feedback literacy within the dimension of managing affect. The study also identified unbalanced development across sub-components of a particular element of student feedback literacy. Pedagogical implications regarding the importance of teacher scaffolding and the synergy among various assessment activities within the learning-oriented assessment framework are discussed in relation to student writers' feedback literacy development.

Introduction

In recent years, student feedback literacy has attracted much attention from researchers (Carless & Boud, 2018; Yu & Liu, 2021). To reap the benefits of feedback, learners need to possess student feedback literacy, defined as "the understandings, capacities, and dispositions needed to make sense of information and use it to enhance work or learning strategies" (Carless & Boud, 2018, p. 1315). Although research on how to foster student feedback literacy is growing (e.g., Carless, 2020; de Kleijn, 2021), much empirical research on this topic is needed in education in general and in L2 writing in particular. As pointed out by Winstone and Carless (2020), there is limited empirical research on how to utilize different instructional approaches to cultivate student feedback literacy. To fill this gap, this action research study focused on one particular assessment approach, that is, learning-oriented assessment, and investigated its perceived influence on student feedback literacy in an academic English writing classroom in a university in Hong Kong. This paper focused on learning-oriented assessment, given its potential to foster student feedback literacy (Ma et al., 2021). Different from Ma et al.'s (2021) research that explored the impact of learning-oriented assessment on student writers' feedback literacy in an online environment, this action research study focused on the use of learning-oriented assessment in a face-to-face teaching environment.

Literature Review

This section first reviews the construct of student feedback literacy and its development in the context of tertiary education in general and L2 writing in particular. It then outlines the key elements of learning-oriented assessment and research on its use to foster student feedback literacy in L2 writing.

Student Feedback Literacy and its Development

Based on Sutton's (2012) initial conceptualization, Carless and Boud (2018) considered student feedback literacy to encompass four elements, including appreciating feedback processes, making judgments, managing affect, and taking actions. Appreciating feedback processes means that learners understand the formative role of feedback, appreciate their own

active role in the feedback process, and acknowledge that feedback information takes different forms and comes from different sources. Making judgements entails learners' capacities to make sound judgement of qualities of their own work and the work of others. To do this, students need to develop a good understanding of the features of quality work. Managing affect involves the management of emotional reactions in response to critical commentary and proactiveness in seeking feedback. Taking actions means that learners are aware of the importance of acting on feedback information and possess a repertoire of strategies for using feedback.

Student feedback literacy has also been conceptualized in the domain of academic writing. For example, Yu and Liu (2021) proposed an evidence-based framework for enhancing student writers' feedback literacy. They regarded student feedback literacy as consisting of three components, that is, understanding, regulation, and evaluation. Understanding means that student writers need to be able to not only acknowledge the learning opportunities embedded in feedback, but also to discern the qualities of good academic writing based on linguistic, genre and disciplinary knowledge. Concerning regulation, feedback literate student writers should be capable of regulating their emotions in response to feedback on academic writing. Regarding evaluation, writers need to be able to evaluate feedback and decide the extent to which feedback on writing should be incorporated into their revisions. In the context of L2 disciplinary writing, student feedback literacy has been operationalized as "cognitive readiness and socio-affective readiness that prepare students for engaging with teacher feedback in the discipline-specific L2 writing discourse" (Li & Han, 2021, p. 3). Student feedback literacy in L2 disciplinary writing has been found to be characterized by cognitive readiness, including subject/disciplinary knowledge and linguistic and pragmatic competence, as well as socio-affective readiness including proactivity and attitudes toward and appreciation of teacher feedback.

Despite the contributions made by the studies that situate student feedback literacy in the context of academic writing (Li & Han, 2021; Yu & Liu, 2021), studies have as yet not captured a comprehensive picture of student feedback literacy. For example, Yu and Liu (2021) included learner agency as one factor affecting student feedback literacy, but other researchers have regarded learner agency such as proactivity as part of the construct (Carless & Boud, 2018; Li & Han, 2021). Li and Han (2021)

focused on student feedback literacy only in the situation of responding to teacher feedback (i.e., cognitive readiness and socio-affective readiness that prepares students for engaging with teacher feedback). To capture its multi-faceted nature, this paper mainly adopted Carless and Boud's (2018) framework for the investigation of student feedback literacy. At the same time, the research acknowledges the importance of linguistic, genre and disciplinary knowledge for student writers to understand features of good academic writing (Yu & Liu, 2021) and the socio-affective readiness (Li & Han, 2021) that prepares student writers for a range of feedback-related activities.

Research on how to develop student feedback literacy is growing. Teachers shoulder the responsibility of designing suitable learning and assessment environments for learners to play an active student role in the feedback processes in order to develop student feedback literacy (Carless & Winstone, 2020). For example, Winstone et al. (2019) designed a holistic approach to fostering student feedback literacy, including the use of a feedback glossary, feedback guide, feedback workshop, and feedback portfolio. Notably, teacher scaffolding is particularly important to facilitate student feedback literacy (de Kleijn, 2021). For instance, the development of complex thinking skills such as evaluative skills requires consistent scaffolding through social interactions (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). In Deneen and Hoo's (2021) study, teacher feedback was provided for student reflections based on received peer comments and self-evaluation to facilitate the development of student feedback literacy.

In L2 writing, there is limited empirical research on the development of student feedback literacy. For example, Han and Xu (2019) investigated the strategy of teacher feedback on peer feedback, as a form of teacher scaffolding, in relation to student feedback literacy development in the situation of peer feedback. It remains to be known, however, how an assessment approach encompassing multiple learning-oriented assessment activities (e.g., learning-oriented assessment involving a combination of exemplar analysis, teacher feedback and peer feedback), with the potential of incorporating different forms of teacher support, may contribute to student feedback literacy development in the context of academic writing. Learning-oriented assessment represents such an assessment approach. The next section reviews the key components of learning-oriented assessment.

Learning-Oriented Assessment

Learning-oriented assessment highlights the learning aspects of assessment, no matter whether the major purpose of assessment is summative or formative (Carless, 2015). It contains three components, including learning-oriented assessment tasks, developing evaluative expertise, and student engagement with feedback both in the context of education in general (Carless, 2015) and that of language learning (Green & Hamp-Lyons, 2015). The first component emphasizes that assessment tasks should represent the desired learning outcomes. For example, assessment designs, such as pre-task guidance and draft-plus-rework, enable learners to be exposed to cycles of feedback and to uptake it (Winstone & Carless, 2020), thus making it more likely for students to fulfill the intended learning outcomes. The second component highlights the importance of enabling students to understand learning goals and assessment criteria through activities such as drafting criteria, engaging with quality exemplars, peer assessment and self-assessment. The third component stresses the need for students to receive feedback as "feedforward," which can be used for the current task or which can feed forward into future tasks. Therefore, feedback needs to be timely so students can engage with it, finally using feedback for the current task or seeing how it can be useful for future tasks. The above three components are not discrete elements, but are related. For instance, when students are aware of assessment criteria, teacher feedback is more likely to be useful to them to feed forward into current or future work.

Noticeably, two components of learning-oriented assessment (i.e., developing evaluative expertise and student engagement with feedback) correspond with the elements of student feedback literacy in Carless and Boud's (2018) framework (i.e., making judgements and taking actions). If students experience learning-oriented assessment in a positive way, it is also likely that they may develop appreciation for feedback as well as favorable responses to and positive dispositions for it. Although learning-oriented assessment has been explored in different contexts (Klenowski, 2006), including L2 writing contexts (Kim & Kim, 2017), there is limited research on its use with regard to student feedback literacy. While its influence on student writers' feedback literacy has been explored in an online context (Ma et al., 2021), with technology being perceived unfavorably by student writers in relation to feedback literacy development, how learning-oriented assessment contributes to student writers' feedback literacy in face-to-face teaching contexts

remains unclear. Given the potential of learning-oriented assessment to foster student feedback literacy, this paper focuses on this particular assessment approach in an academic English writing context.

In short, a review of the literature shows that there is a need to investigate how to develop student feedback literacy in the context of academic writing. To fill this void, the study aimed to explore learning-oriented assessment in relation to the development of student feedback literacy mainly based on student perception data.

The Study

This study was guided by the following research question:

> From the student participants' perspective, what was the influence of learning-oriented assessment on student feedback literacy?

Context

The study was conducted in a compulsory 14-week academic English writing course for first-year English major students in a private university in Hong Kong. The writing course mainly aimed to develop students' secondary and primary research skills and academic writing skills. I was the coordinator of the course at the time of the study, and it was the second time that I taught the course.

Table 1 shows the assessment framework for the course. The major assessment tasks were secondary and primary research papers with self-selected topics. Classroom instruction mainly focused on equipping students with skills needed to complete the two assignments (e.g. using library and internet-based resources in research, designing research instruments, collecting data, using APA citation style in writing).

Table 1. Assessment Tasks in the Academic Writing Course

Assessment Tasks	Weighting
Secondary research paper	30%
Presentation on secondary research	10%
Primary research paper	40%
Presentation on primary research	10%
Participation	10%

There were 15 students in the class and they were all native speakers of Cantonese aged from 18 to 19. In secondary schools, they were

seldom asked to write multiple drafts in English and were mainly exposed to a product approach to English writing. The students and I met twice each week. Conducted in English, each session lasted for about one and a half hours.

Methodology

Since action research is suitable for looking into the renewal of assessment practices in higher education (Torrance & Pryor, 2001), this methodology was adopted in the study. Action research typically involves four phases: observing, planning, acting, and reflecting (Norton, 2009). The first time I taught the academic English course, I observed the need for students to develop feedback literacy. First, given that teachers were only required by the then-course coordinator to provide written feedback on the final product of students' papers, the latter did not have a chance to act on feedback to improve their writing, thus lacking appreciation for the importance of feedback. Second, students still seemed to have a vague idea of the features of quality work even after teacher instruction and they did not know how to conduct self-evaluation based on assessment criteria.

A reading of the literature related to learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2015) stimulated me to consider the possibility of using it to address the above-mentioned problems in my writing classroom. While planning the same course to be taught to a new batch of students, I designed the writing assessment in such a way that it reflected all three components of learning-oriented assessment. Based on the design, the action research was then conducted the second time I taught the course.

During the action stage, I implemented the learning-oriented assessment. I used two design features, pre-task guidance and draft-plus-rework (Winstone & Carless, 2020), to help students develop evaluative judgement and generate and act on feedback. To familiarize the learners with features of good academic writing, I gave them opportunities to engage with one exemplar related to secondary and primary research papers respectively (see weeks 4 and 10 in Table 2). The students needed to construct criteria for good secondary and primary research papers based on group discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the exemplars. After peer discussion, I invited the students to share the constructed criteria based on exemplar analysis, gave comments on their analysis, and sought questions from them as a form of teacher support for their understanding of the qualities of good academic writing.

Draft-plus-rework design involved the provision of teacher and peer feedback on students' interim drafts. In particular, peer feedback activities were used for the first drafts of secondary and primary research papers (see weeks 6 and 13 in Table 2). For each type of paper, the learners were provided with a teacher-designed peer feedback form, which reflected the assessment criteria, to exercise and develop their evaluative capacities. To support the peer feedback activities, I provided two forms of scaffolding. First, due to limited time in the course, the exemplar analysis also served as peer feedback training. Second, the teacher-designed peer feedback form was intended as another form of support to guide the learners' peer feedback activities.

Draft-plus-rework design also allowed students to receive feedback from different sources to improve their work. For the secondary research paper, the students needed to act on teacher written feedback on their outlines (see week 4 in Table 2) as well as teacher and peer written feedback on their first drafts (see week 6). After the receipt of teacher written feedback on the first drafts, they also attended teacher-student conferences (weeks 6 and 7) to obtain additional support for the processing of teacher written feedback. For the primary research paper, the students were required to use teacher written feedback on the research proposals (see week 9) and peer feedback on their first drafts (see week 13) to improve their papers. The learners were also encouraged to self-evaluate their first drafts based on the assessment criteria and to discuss with the teacher the self-identified problems (see weeks 13 and 14). The students received teacher feedback on the final versions of their secondary and primary research papers in week 9 and 16 respectively.

Table 2. Learning-Oriented Assessment Activities in the Academic Writing Course

Week	Learning-Oriented Assessment Activities
	Secondary Research Paper
Week 4	• Teacher written feedback on outline
	• Exemplar analysis
Week 6	• Criterion-referenced peer feedback on first drafts
	• Teacher written feedback on first drafts
Weeks 6 & 7	• Teacher-student conferencing on first drafts (compulsory)
Week 9	• Teacher written feedback on final drafts
	Primary Research Paper
Week 9	• Teacher written feedback on research proposals
Week 10	• Exemplar analysis
Week 13	• Criterion-referenced peer feedback on first drafts
Weeks 13 & 14	• Teacher-student conferencing on first drafts (on a voluntary basis)
Week 16	• Teacher written feedback on final drafts

In the reflecting stage, I observed the implementation of learning-oriented assessment by keeping a reflective journal and collecting and analyzing student focus group interview data (see the next section). Although reflection is presented as the last stage in action research, reflections on the implementation of learning-oriented assessment and on the research process were performed throughout the study. Based on my reflections and student views, I made adjustments to the implementation of learning-oriented assessment as well (see the findings related to managing affect).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data of the study mainly came from student focus group interview data, with my notes in the reflective journal serving as supplementary data. Focus group interviews were conducted with the students, as the comparisons made concerning one another's experiences and opinions during group interactions may provide great insights into the research topic (Morgan, 1997). The participants (see Table 3) were selected according to the following criteria: (1) different levels of academic English writing proficiency as determined by their grades in the previous academic writing course, and (2) willingness to participate in the study. After the completion of the secondary research paper, two sessions of focus group interviews were conducted with 6 students in each group. Session 1 included M, H, Mel, W, S, and B. Session 2 included K, L, I, J, E and Ka. Each session of focus group interviews lasted for about 1.5 hours. After the completion of the primary research paper, one session of focus group interviews was conducted with 7 students (M, H, Mel, K, Ka, W and Ho). The interview lasted for about 1.5 hours. As English major students, the participants found no difficulty in expressing their thoughts in English. Table 3 shows the background information of the participants. As can be seen from the table, a total of 12 students participated in the focus group interviews for the secondary research paper while 7 students participated in the focus group interview for the primary research paper. The interviewees had different levels of academic English writing proficiency. As the focus group interview related to the primary research paper was conducted during the examination period, fewer students participated. For the primary research paper, all the other student participants except Ho had participated in the interview related to the secondary research paper.

Table 3. Background Information of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Academic English Writing Proficiency	Participated after the Completion of Secondary Research Paper	Participated after the Completion of Primary Research Paper
M	Male	High	✓	✓
H	Female	High	✓	✓
Mel	Female	High	✓	✓
K	Female	Average	✓	✓
L	Female	Average	✓	
I	Female	Average	✓	
J	Female	Average	✓	
E	Female	Average	✓	
Ka	Female	Low	✓	✓
W	Male	Low	✓	✓
S	Female	Low	✓	
B	Female	Low	✓	
Ho	Male	Low		✓

The focus group interview data were transcribed verbatim and checked for accuracy. The data were analyzed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006) based on Carless and Boud's (2018) framework of student feedback literacy, but at the same time, new categories were also created as new patterns emerged from the data. I read the transcripts repeatedly to identify data excerpts that shed light on the four components of student feedback literacy. Broad categories related to the perceived impact of learning-oriented assessment on appreciating feedback, making judgements, managing affect, and taking actions were constructed first. Within each category, subcategories, if any, were constructed. For example, under the category of developing judgements, two subcategories emerged: (1) exemplar analysis familiarized students with features of academic writing, and (2) reading and evaluating peers' writing enhanced capacities for self-reflection. For each category, the number of participants who shared similar views was recorded (see Table 4 in the Findings section). Emerging themes were developed based on the categories. My reflection notes were cross-referenced with interview data to validate the themes. I also conducted member checks both during and after data analysis to hear the student participants' opinions on my interpretation.

Findings

Before the presentation of findings, the key themes that emerged from the focus group interview data were presented in Table 4. The number of students sharing a particular response out of the total number of students interviewed was indicated for the secondary research paper and primary research paper respectively.

Table 4. A Summary of Key Themes of Student Perceptions

	Secondary Research Paper (A Total of 12 Interviewees)	Primary Research Paper (A Total of 7 Interviewees)
Appreciating Feedback		
• Formative nature of teacher feedback on interim drafts	10 out of 12 interviewees	4 out of 7 interviewees
• Formative nature of teacher written feedback on future assignments	6 out of 12 interviewees	4 out of 7 interviewees
• Usefulness of peer comments on interim drafts	5 out of 12 interviewees	6 out of 7 interviewees
• Dubious of the quality of peer comments	9 out of 12 interviewees	None
Developing Judgements		
• Exemplar analysis familiarized students with features of academic writing	9 out of 12 interviewees	5 out of 7 interviewees
• Reading and evaluating peers' writing enhanced capacities for self-reflection	3 out of 12 interviewees	1 out of 7 interviewees
Managing Affect		
• Not confident about applying criteria to peers' writing	10 out of 12 interviewees	
• More confident about applying criteria to peers' writing		4 out of 7 interviewees
• Proactive in seeking teacher feedback	N/A	3 out of all the students in class (i.e., 15)
Taking Actions		
• Acted on teacher and peer comments	12 out of 12 interviewees	7 out of 7 interviewees
• Highlighted the importance of teacher-student conference for the uptake of teacher feedback	7 out of 12 interviewees	N/A

Appreciating Feedback

In the study, the students were exposed to both teacher and peer feedback that was integrated into learning-oriented assessment. They appreciated the usefulness of the two sources of comments. For example, for the secondary research paper, 10 out of 12 student participants pointed out that the formative nature of teacher written feedback on outlines and first drafts could "pave a way to the project" (Mel), "gave a more clear direction" for writing (J), and "minimize the mistakes in the final draft" (L). For the primary research paper, 4 out of 7 student participants commented that teacher written feedback on research proposals and first drafts enabled them to "have a direction…to follow" (H) and to "do a better job in the final draft" (M). Just as H summarized when she commented on her experience of writing the secondary research paper: "I don't think we can produce the best final essay without having any feedback." The learners also found that teacher written feedback on final drafts was relevant for future tasks. For example, 6 out of 12 and 4 out of 7 student participants pointed out the relevance of teacher written feedback on secondary and primary research papers for future assignments, respectively. For instance, E stated: "the problems the teacher pointed out are basically similar or even the same in different essays."

The participants also demonstrated appreciation for peer comments. For the secondary research paper, 5 out of 12 student participants thought that peer comments were beneficial for improving their essays because peer feedback created "another opportunity for student writers to receive concrete suggestions" (W), made student writing "more reader friendly" (H), and "made it easier to accept errors pointed out by peers" (L). Concerning the primary research paper, 6 out of 7 student participants pointed out the usefulness of peer comments because they "can really improve writing" (Ho) based on peer comments.

Despite the perceived benefits, the students also had concerns about peer feedback, especially when the peer feedback activity was first implemented for the secondary research paper. 9 out of 12 student participants were dubious of the quality of the peer comments received. For example, L commented from the perspective of a student writer, "peer feedback may not be as professional as professor feedback." M explained: "The teacher possesses a good qualification. She is a doctor and we're only the bachelor degree student. She is more knowledgeable

...and more experienced like K mentioned. She can have different perspective to look on our essay and to help us improve." The students' concerns are consistent with research on student writers' mixed feelings of peer feedback (Ma, 2018). On the one hand, they realized that peer comments were beneficial to their writing. On the other hand, they were not confident about the quality of peer feedback. Notably, none of the 7 students expressed their concerns about peer comments on the primary research paper.

To summarize, after participating in learning-oriented assessment, the students demonstrated appreciation for both teacher and peer feedback. However, they also had mixed feelings about peer comments when they participated in peer feedback for the secondary research paper.

Making Judgements

The students mentioned the impact of exemplar analysis and evaluation of peers' texts on their enhanced knowledge of academic writing and increased ability to reflect on their own work.

Regarding exemplar analysis, a key point highlighted by students is that exemplar analysis gave them a concrete picture of characteristics of good academic writing. 9 out of 12 and 5 out of 7 student participants pointed out that such an analysis enabled them to see the key features of different aspects of secondary and primary research papers, respectively (e.g., illustration of main ideas, use of supporting evidence, citation, organization, use of impersonal language) and guided their writing in terms of the above-mentioned aspects. M explained the usefulness of exemplar analysis for the secondary research paper: "I think that one is quite useful because...I finally know how to give a very well-contented introduction and how to make my topic sentence clear and then how to illustrate the situation."

Among the 9 interviewees who pointed out the benefits of exemplar analysis for the secondary research paper (see Table 4), 5 students also mentioned the irreplaceable role of the student exemplars in comparison with the assessment criteria. For example, K stated: "I think that the criteria may not really guide us because we don't know what is...accurate [concrete] way to write an essay based on the criteria." Since exemplars convey a concrete message of what makes quality work (Price et al., 2012), the students preferred them to the use of assessment criteria when

it came to developing their knowledge of features of good academic writing—part of student feedback literacy related to making judgements.

In addition, the learners commented on how reading and evaluating peers' writing enhanced their capacities for self-reflection. For instance, for the secondary research paper, 3 out of 12 interviewees stated the benefits of reading and evaluating peers' writing. B explained: "Peer comments are beneficial to our essay, but we can also learn from our peers' essays. For example, we can read their points and then to compare with our own essay, maybe we can find some strengths from them." H stated: "My peer's writing reminds me of my own writing. Because the structure is more or less the same, so maybe her mistakes can remind me not to repeat." Regarding the primary research paper, 1 out of 7 interviewees (H) commented on the usefulness of the peer feedback form for self-evaluation: "[B]y looking at this form, I can have some direction knowing what I should do. So basically this form is good enough for student...to write."

In short, the students considered that exemplar analysis familiarized them with qualities of good academic writing in a concrete manner and a small number of students found that reading and evaluating peers' writing enabled them to be more reflective of their own writing.

Managing Affect

While the participants did not report the management of emotional responses to teacher or peer comments, they did mention an increased confidence about applying assessment criteria across the two peer feedback activities. For the criterion-referenced peer feedback for the secondary research paper, 9 out of 12 of the interviewees doubted their ability to apply criteria to peers' texts. For instance, the students mentioned that they were "not the same as the teacher" and their evaluation may not be "as accurate as the professional, the professors" (K).

Two reasons may account for the students' sense of inadequacy. First, the design of the peer feedback form for the secondary research paper resembled that of the teacher feedback form. The assessment criteria on the form contained many terms of academic writing and the form only allowed the students to put a check mark or cross for each criterion without leaving space for qualitative comments. This design probably reinforced the students' existing beliefs about the different roles of teacher and students in the assessment process and made them doubt

their ability (or even right) to use assessment criteria. For instance, S complained that the peer feedback form was too formal and that she wanted to play the role of a peer rather than a teacher in the peer feedback activity:

> Since this is the peer comment, so I think it should be more friendly, not to feel too serious like teacher and students, just peer. It shouldn't be evaluating. It should be discussing. Maybe I just read my peer essay and then I write something down on his essay or her essay. It would be helpful if we discuss with our peer but not judging it.

Mel talked about the peer feedback form for the secondary research paper in comparison with the revised form for the primary research paper: "[B]ecause the former one [the peer feedback form for the secondary research paper] like a teacher to mark the student essay is very serious and this one [the form for the primary research paper] can obtain an in-depth comments."

Second, the students complained about the "difficult wordings" in the assessment criteria on the peer feedback form for the secondary research paper. Although the terms pertaining to features of academic writing (e.g., thesis statement) were taught in the writing class, some students were still not familiar with some of them. For instance, Ka complained:

> And the criteria list...where is the thesis statement.... And then I'm looking for the thesis statement. I don't know what is thesis statement. And then I read so slow. I don't know what I'm doing, because I'm not able to correct other's work...so I feel a little bit frustrated because I can't finish the criteria form [peer feedback form].

As suggested by this quote, a lack of familiarity with the terms in the criteria might affect Ka's confidence about using the criteria. Due to this reason, students such as K expressed a dislike of criteria use in peer feedback.

To sum up, for the secondary research paper, the students were not confident about applying criteria to peers' writing because of the perceived inadequacy of adopting a teacher's role for writing evaluation, as prompted by the peer feedback form, and a lack of familiarity with certain terms in the criteria.

For the primary research paper, the students' perceptions of criteria use became more positive. 4 out of 7 interviewees mentioned that they were more confident about criteria use and that using criteria facilitated

their evaluation of different aspects of peers' texts. For instance, M stated: "[B]ecause in this form the teacher has divided it into four aspects like...organization, content, language and formatting, and I think it is very clear for me to give the comments to other students." Mel mentioned: "I can follow this form...I can rely on...each part and it will be very clear for me to analyze." Notably, when the students reported that they became more confident about writing evaluation of the primary research paper, they also showed less concern about the quality of peer feedback, as none of them expressed doubt about it in the interview related to the primary research paper (see Table 4).

The students' favorable opinions of criteria use were possibly related to the revised peer feedback form. Their lack of confidence about applying criteria to evaluating the secondary research paper prompted me to revise the peer feedback form for the primary research paper. After revision, it did not resemble the teacher evaluation form in that much space was provided for the students to write down comments as peers instead of as a teacher, and the criteria were also stated in a more understandable way without the use of many terms. Therefore, the students became more confident about applying criteria to evaluating peers' writing.

In contrast to an increased confidence about the use of assessment criteria, the students did not seem to be proactive in seeking feedback either from themselves or the teacher. When they were encouraged to self-evaluate the primary research paper and to discuss with me their self-identified problems, my reflection note showed that only 3 out of the whole class (i.e., 15 students) chose to do so (see Table 4). Another 6 students emailed me their writing without self-evaluation and relied on teacher written feedback instead. When asked why they did not initiate a feedback conversation with the teacher, the students mentioned that they did not have time to do so because they were busy with other assignments near the end of the semester and that they could just rely on teacher comments.

Taking Actions

In the course, the students received both teacher and peer comments on their interim drafts. All the student participants reported that they acted on both sources of feedback to improve various aspects of their writing

such as ideas, wordings, writing style and grammar. For instance, L mentioned her use of peer comments for the secondary research paper:

> I want to express the meaning of "appearance," but I wrote "outlook" ...but she [my peer] figured out that it should be "outfit." So I think sometimes those minor mistakes that are asked by my peers will be easier to be accepted than professor pointing out my mistake and asking why you can make such mistakes on the use of simple words.

M talked about how his use of teacher written feedback improved the primary research paper: "The teacher has given me some comments about my wordings and ideas, so I did a better job in my final draft." In short, student perceptions suggest that they acted on teacher and peer comments on interim drafts to improve writing quality.

Particularly regarding the secondary research paper, 7 out of 12 interviewees highlighted the importance of teacher-student conferences for interpreting teacher written feedback, stimulating reflection, and acting on teacher (or internal) feedback. For instance, H pointed out:

> I think it is good that after receiving the written comments then we can talk to the teacher. Because there may be some misunderstanding between us. But after meeting with the teacher, I think there is no problem.... Because during our meeting, we can ask many questions, and teacher can give instant response so I can have clear impression (as to how to revise).

M added:

> Because in the face-to-face communication the teacher kept asking about what is the main point in the essay. It makes me to think more, to think clearly about my topic sentences, about my research evidence, how to link up between the topic sentences and the evidence.

To sum up, student perception data indicated the development of all four components of student feedback literacy, albeit to different extents.

Discussion

This action research study has sought to investigate the perceived impact of learning-oriented assessment on student feedback literacy in academic writing. Based on students' perceptions, the multiple learning-oriented assessment activities embedded within learning-oriented assessment (e.g., exemplar analysis, teacher written feedback, teacher-student conferencing,

and peer feedback activities) developed their appreciation for teacher and peer feedback, facilitated their understanding of the qualities of good writing and evaluative expertise, enhanced their confidence about using criteria for the evaluation of writing, and enabled them to act on feedback from different sources.

The students' positive perceptions can be explained by the appropriate teacher support given to facilitate students' feedback literacy when they engaged in a variety of learning-oriented assessment activities. For instance, the students gained a concrete idea of the features of quality academic papers probably because of teacher feedback on student analysis of exemplars, in addition to peer discussion of them. According to To and Carless (2015), teacher guidance is necessary in addition to peer discussion of exemplars. The participants also reported on acting on teacher written feedback on their interim drafts and highlighted the usefulness of teacher-student conferencing for processing such feedback and acting on it. Teacher scaffolding in the form of interactive exchanges between teacher and students contributes greatly to the sense-making of teacher written feedback and its use for ongoing development (Winstone & Carless, 2020). It has to be pointed out that in the above two examples, teacher scaffolding did not diminish students' active role in the feedback processes—that is, the teacher scaffolding is learner-centered. For example, when I commented on student analysis and conducted teacher-student conferencing, I asked my students questions and invited questions from them. The learners were thus able to exercise their agency on participatory and inquisitive levels (van Lier, 2008).

Notably, the students enhanced their confidence about applying criteria to peers' writing. Although not highlighted in Carless and Boud's (2018) framework, confidence about using criteria for writing evaluation belongs to socio-affective readiness (Li & Han, 2021), which prepares students for the evaluation of not only their peers' writing but also their own writing. Arguably, the capacity to make sound judgements of one's own work are not sufficient for the generation of internal feedback that can benefit student writers, if this capacity is not complemented by confidence in using criteria to carry out evaluation.

In this study, the revision of the peer feedback form, representing teacher scaffolding that was adjusted based on students' concerns and difficulties, mainly contributed to the participants' increased confidence about performing criterion-referenced peer feedback. First, the revised form addressed the students' concerns by positioning their role as peers

who can provide concrete suggestions to student writers rather than as teachers who strictly judge their writing quality. This finding adds to previous research on the importance of a collaborative stance to the success of peer review (Lockhart & Ng, 1995) by showing that a collaborative (as opposed to a judgmental) stance facilitated the confidence about evaluation within the managing affect dimension of student feedback literacy. Second, the revised form addressed the students' difficulties by stating the assessment criteria in a more learner-friendly manner. Although the students preferred concrete exemplars to assessment criteria in terms of developing knowledge of good academic writing, it is still important for them to acquire terms related to academic writing (e.g., thesis statement, research question). This is because genre and disciplinary knowledge is an essential element of student writers' feedback literacy for them to gain acceptance into the academic discourse community and to understand teacher feedback provided within a specific academic community (Yu & Liu, 2021). However, this study showed that requiring first-year students, who were new to the academic discourse community, to use academic language to describe the strengths and weaknesses of peers' writing may make them less confident about writing evaluation. Although these terms had been taught in the class, some students were still not familiar or comfortable with using them for writing evaluation. In addition to stating the criteria in a more learner friendly way, more teacher scaffolding could have been given by providing the students with bilingual versions of the key terms to familiarize them with the terms pertaining to academic writing.

The increased confidence about writing evaluation may also help explain the shift in the students' unfavorable attitudes toward peer comments. While they were dubious of the quality of peer feedback on the secondary research paper, none of the participants expressed doubt after the peer feedback activity of the primary research paper. L2 writers tend to treat teachers as figures of authority and value teacher feedback more than peer feedback (Ma, 2018). However, this study shows that increased confidence about student writers' own evaluative skills may make it more likely for them to place more trust in their peers' feedback. This is probably because they transferred the confidence about their ability to conduct writing evaluation to that of their peers.

Despite the development in all four components of student feedback literacy, there was also unbalanced development within a particular component. Regarding developing judgements, a majority of the

participants reported that they were familiar with the features of good academic writing after the exemplar analysis activity. Comparatively speaking, only a small number of them mentioned that they reflected on their own writing in the peer feedback process. Concerning managing affect, while the participants developed confidence about applying criteria for writing evaluation, they did not seem to be proactive in eliciting self-directed and teacher feedback when they were not required to. The aforementioned findings add to research on postgraduate students' feedback literacy in L2 disciplinary writing (Li & Han, 2021) by showing uneven development across different sub-categories of a particular component of student feedback literacy for undergraduate academic writers.

Since the sub-components within each component of student feedback literacy may follow different developmental paths (Li & Han, 2021), teacher scaffolding should be fine-tuned to foster the development of a particular sub-component. For instance, sufficient teacher scaffolding should be given to help students generate internal feedback (Nicol, 2020) in the process of peer feedback activities, because only a small number of students reported that they became more self-reflective after reading or evaluating peers' writing. In the study, the teacher gave support to the peer feedback activities in two ways: teacher feedback on exemplar analysis, which served as peer feedback training, and adjustment of the peer feedback form for the primary research paper according to student responses. In addition to these two means of support, reflective questions requiring the students to compare their writing with peers' work (Nicol & McCallum, 2021) or the assessment criteria can be utilized to develop the students' ability to generate internal feedback.

For the primary research paper, a majority of the students demonstrated a low level of proactivity in that they refrained from performing self-evaluation (i.e., seeking feedback from self) first and then approached the teacher for feedback on such self-evaluation. The students attributed a lack of time for self-evaluation and reliance on the teacher as two main reasons. It is likely that an overexposure to teacher feedback (in comparison with peer or self-directed feedback) in the study may develop or reinforce the students' habit of being told what to do by a teacher, thus making them less proactive in seeking self-directed and teacher feedback on their self-evaluation. Seen in this light, it is crucial to build synergy among different assessment activities within the

learning-oriented framework in terms of promoting an active student role in feedback processes, in addition to teacher scaffolding for these activities.

In short, the findings suggest the following principles when learning-oriented assessment is implemented to develop student writers' feedback literacy: (1) Appropriate teacher scaffolding should be provided for different assessment activities within the learning-oriented assessment framework and such scaffolding should be learner-centered in that it should not diminish learners' active role in the feedback processes; (2) Teacher scaffolding should be adjusted to address student writers' concerns (e.g., concerns about adopting the role of a teacher marker) and difficulties (e.g., a lack of familiarity with terms related to academic writing and difficulties with using these terms for writing evaluation) based on teacher-student communication; (3) The uneven development of the sub-components of student feedback literacy calls for fine-tuned teacher scaffolding; and (4) Synergy should be created among the various assessment activities within the learning-oriented assessment framework in relation to promoting an active learner role in feedback processes.

Given the interplay between teacher and student feedback literacy (Carless & Winstone, 2020), it is also important for me to enhance my own feedback literacy. The research findings suggest the importance of creating a channel for teacher-student communication so that the teacher can reflect on his or her assessment and feedback practices and to generate knowledge of teacher scaffolding as part of assessment/ feedback design.

Conclusion

This action research explored the perceived influence of learning-oriented assessment on student feedback literacy in the context of academic writing. The learners' perceptions indicated the development of feedback literacy in terms of appreciating feedback, making judgements, managing affect, and taking actions. Such development was not only due to the implementation of the various assessment activities related to learning-oriented assessment, but also learner-centered teacher scaffolding for these activities. The study also found uneven development across different sub-components within a particular component of student

feedback literacy (e.g., the unbalanced development of confidence about applying criteria to peers' writing and proactivity to seek feedback within the dimension of managing affects). The uneven development suggested the importance of adjusting teaching scaffolding in response to learner concerns and difficulties and that of creating synergy among activities within learning-oriented assessment to promote an active learner role in the feedback processes. Based on the findings, principles guiding the implementation of learning-oriented assessment to foster student writers' feedback literacy have been provided.

The study has two major limitations. First, the double role of the teacher-researcher might have introduced a certain level of subjectivity into the study. Second, the research was conducted in only one classroom and its findings can by no means be generalized to other settings. Nevertheless, it is hoped that teachers and students in similar contexts will find the findings and implications relevant. Future studies may utilize different sources of data (e.g., textual data such as student writing, perception data such as teacher and student interviews, and observation data) to investigate how to create synergy among various assessment activities within the learning-oriented assessment framework and how to embed appropriate teacher scaffolding in these assessment activities to develop student writers' feedback literacy.

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