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Students' Response to Peer and Teacher Feedback in a First-Year Writing Course[1]

A B S T R A C T This article reports on the findings of a classroom-based study of the use in combination of peer feedback and teacher feedback in process writing by first-year university students at the revision stage. A peer-reviewing activity was carried out (following a survey of more than 250 students) in normal classroom writing activities with 52 first-year students from two tutorial groups taking an academic writing course. Two short (pre- and post-reviewing) questionnaires were administered to identify problems in and possibilities for using both peer and teacher feedback in student writing. The study confirmed the prediction of the preference of teacher feedback over peer feedback and, concomitantly, greater use of the former. It also resulted in the following findings: an unexpectedly high level of willingness to engage in peer reviewing by the majority of the students (more as reviewers than as recipients of the feedback); and, in some cases, correspondingly actual use of the feedback in revision; notable differences in the types of feedback from peers and from the tutor, a result suggesting the complementary roles played by the two main sources of feedback in revision; some explicit reasons for failure (decision not) to use peer feedback, much less explicit for not using teacher feedback in revision. In conclusion, there was evidence of greater feasibility than had been expected of the introduction of multiple-draft multiple-reader writing instruction at first-year. The study also showed how a "negotiated" classroom practice may become "accepted" practice, in spite of presumably unfavourable socio-cultural and educational traditions. The findings reported in this article have implications for writing pedagogy at tertiary level in South Africa (and may be useful elsewhere).

Key words: Process writing; English for academic purposes; Academic writing; Reader response; Peer and teacher feedback.

1. An earlier, shorter version of this article was read at the Annual Conference of the South African Association for Language Teaching (SAALT), Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 28-30 June 2000, under the title: "Teacher and peer response to student writing. Preliminary results". I am grateful to members of the audience for searching questions, insightful comments and advice, all of which were helpful in the writing of the article. Comments and suggestions from two anonymous reviewers are also acknowledged.

1. Introduction

1.1 Reader response in process writing

Reader response or feedback in revision is intended to achieve quality of the final text in process writing (e.g. Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver & Stratman, 1986; Zamel, 1983). Feedback raises the writer's awareness of the reader's expectations (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994) and, thus, informs the writing process (Arndt, 1993). Feedback in general has been said to be one of the distinguishing marks of learner-centred instruction, as opposed to the traditional "content-based" teaching. It has also been argued (e.g. Scarcella & Oxford, 1992) that the provision of multi-faceted feedback leads to higher achievements in language learning.

In South Africa, feedback to student writing today can be said to be still overwhelmingly in the form of teacher commentary, corrections, and red-pen marking as it was a decade ago (see Boughey, 1993). Many instructors, especially in subject areas, still assign written tasks for the sole purpose of awarding a grade, without requiring multiple drafts. The predominance of teacher feedback is a direct consequence of the predominance of the teacher-dominated instructional style and the examination-driven assessment system (Kasanga, 2001). Worse still, some students do little in the form of writing at secondary school (see Kasanga, forthcoming). These high school graduates bring to university their inexperience in essay writing that may develop in some sort of "writing anxiety". The latter accounts, at least partially, for the high failure and drop-out rates among university entrants, writing being the main form of assessment at university (Kasanga, 1999a; Paxton, 1995). On the other hand, schools where writing is taught seldom use a multiple-draft process writing approach. Teacher feedback at these schools is still, at best, the predominant, at worst, the sole, form of response to student writing. This tradition in which teacher feedback predominates (logically) continues at tertiary level.

However, Outcomes Based Education (OBE) advocates the use in combination of teacher's feedback and assessment mainly through the use of portfolios (see Dreyer & van der Walt, 1999; Tanner *et al*., 2000, for a description of this form of assessment) and self- and peer-feedback and assessment, because of their many formative benefits (van der Horst & McDonald, 1997). These forms of feedback and assessment are relevant to a learner-centred approach of teaching and learning (Tudor, 1993) that encourage learners' participation through debates, role plays, and oral presentations (see Coetzee-van Rooy, 1997, for a case study), group work (van der Horst & McDonald, 1997), and small research projects. In the typical South African writing classroom, the use of peer feedback and assessment is, thus, projected to become the norm. Its actual use is, however, far from being "a common activity in a process-oriented curriculum" (Mangelsdorf, 1992: 274) that it may be elsewhere.

The study reported in this article was prompted by the need for empirical evidence on the following: the students' reactions to the use in revision of a new type of feedback, in addition to the traditional teacher feedback; the usefulness of each of the types of feedback, as reflected in the actual use of the feedback by student-writers; and the best way to use any combination of sources of feedback. An outline of the aims and research questions underpinning the study is postponed until later in the article (3.3).

A review of the literature on reader response globally, brief and selective of necessity, with emphasis on peer feedback, will set the scene. Then a discussion of the theoretical foundation

of the use of peer feedback, with special reference to a mini-model inspired by the dependence-to-independence principle suggested by Nelson (1991), will be outlined. A brief description of the study (rationale, aims, research question, justification, and methodology) will lead to the presentation of the results and a discussion of the findings. It will be shown how a "negotiated" classroom practice may become "accepted" practice. Accordingly, suggestions for classroom practice on *how best* to make use of both peer and teacher feedback to increase the students' confidence and develop their abilities to take responsibility for their own learning will be offered.

1.2 Some key terms: response and assessment

Because response to student writing from peers takes various forms and occurs at different stages of the writing process, it goes under many names in the literature, such as: peer assessment, peer commentary, peer conference, peer correction, peer criticism, peer critiquing, peer editing, peer evaluation, peer marking, peer review, peer revision (the list is not exhaustive). Consequently, some authors (e.g. Sengupta, 1998; Zulu, 1995) use several of these terms interchangeably. However, terms that convey the purposes of "correcting", "assessing", "editing", or "marking" are avoided in this article because they do not suggest sole focus on the purpose of helping revision. Likewise, those that suggest the mode in which the response is given (for example, through conferencing) will not be used to avoid narrowing response to one single mode. Those with a focus on feedback for revision, irrespective of the mode, are preferred. Consequently, "peer feedback", "peer response", "peer commentary" and "peer reviewing", which are more neutral, are adopted in this article and will be used to refer to any type of response to writing by peers other than the attribution of a grade.

The use in the literature of the following terms related to assessment has been controversial: "assessment" vs. "evaluation"; and "alternative forms of assessment", "alternatives in assessment" on the one hand, and "alternative assessments" on the other hand. Firstly, in this article, "assessment" and "evaluation" will designate two distinct albeit closely related concepts: the former will refer to each of the single data-based measurements of knowledge (test, assignment, examination), while the latter will be understood as the overall judgement about the sum total of the learner's learning. In this sense, assessment is a means of achieving evaluation. Secondly, following Brown and Hudson (1998: 657), and Norris *et al*. (1998), the terms "alternative forms of assessment" and "alternatives in assessment" (also called "formative assessment") are preferred in this article to "alternative assessments" used elsewhere (e.g. Aschbacher, 1991; Huerta-Macías, 1995; van der Horst & McDonald, 1997; Winograd, 1995). My preferred use of the two labels serves to underline that these are not completely new ways of doing things nor exempt from the rigour of decision making. After this clarification of the terminology, I offer a brief survey of the literature on feedback, with an emphasis on peer feedback.

2. Literature review

Three main types of response, self-, peer-, and teacher-response, are generally used in process writing, but reader response may be of a mixed type, as is the case in "self-monitoring" (see Charles, 1990) in which both the student-writer and the teacher play an active role in revision, be it with different levels of involvement. Until recently, teacher feedback has had the lion's share of published research on response to student writing. In the traditional product-oriented writing class, the teacher had sole prerogative to evaluate student writing (Nelson & Carson,

1998) and provide feedback, often in the form of written commentary (Applebee, 1993). The preferred use of teacher commentary was justified by the long-held view that it has a beneficial impact on the revision of students' drafts, as has been demonstrated by empirical studies (e.g. Ferris 1995, 1997), is safer and of better quality.

In process-writing, feedback to students' drafts is now provided by, among others, peers. It is often at the re-writing stage that students are taught "to engage in self and peer assessment, to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, and to become aware of their personal as well as academic development ..." (Saunders, 1992: 211). Instruction thus also focuses on strategies and techniques which take the students through and familiarize them with routines appropriate to a recursive model (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This model generally follows a three-stage pattern of pre-writing, writing, and rewriting (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 1987), in a process that is often cyclical, rather than linear.

It must, nonetheless, be pointed out that some may profess to follow a cyclical approach, but do, in practice, deviate from it and follow a rather linear one. For example, although Angelil-Carter and Thesen (1990) claim their adaptation of the process-writing approach is in the form of a "cycle" which is "not fixed" (p. 589) but is "flexible and requires movement between the stages" (p. 590), they, however, later acknowledge: "Throughout the writing process cycle, we choose to de-emphasize language, with the focus being on more global features of writing, such as argument and coherence. There is some focus on language at the last stage of drafting, where the student is expected to self-edit for micro-linguistic errors (...)" (p. 592). In contrast, in the model proposed in this article, both revising and editing occur at all stages of the process.

The use of peer feedback has had its critics. Resistance to the use of peer feedback is often justified in the traditional writing classroom for the following reasons: (i) peer feedback is very difficult to implement, especially in a mixed-culture classroom (e.g. Allaei & Connor, 1990); (ii) its use is time-consuming and impractical (Keh, 1990); (iii) it is ineffective and may even be counter-productive, given peers' "inadequate linguistic and cognitive maturity to evaluate" (Sengupta, 1998: 25): their comments and corrections are likely to cause as many problems as they are expected to solve; (iv) some forms of peers' social behaviour may have a negative impact on the quality of the student-writer's revision (Nelson & Murphy, 1993); (v) peer feedback may be resented by student-writers who may fear ridicule from peers (see Linden-Martin, 1997, cited in Nelson and Carson, 1998). (The list of reasons for resisting using peer feedback is not exhaustive).

However, research which developed as a direct challenge by proponents of the writing-as-a-process approach to "the traditional practice of teaching writing according to reductionist and mechanistic models" (Lockhart & Ng, 1995: 606) has encouraged greater use of peer feedback in the writing class (e.g. Jacobs *et al*., 1998). Among reasons for greater use of peer feedback advocated recently (see, for example, Mittan, 1989, for these reasons) is the growing evidence of the beneficial effects of peer review in student-student writing conferences (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Kroll, 1991; Zamel, 1985).

Proponents of the use of peer feedback as facilitative of revision have, however, differed on whether to use it alone or in combination with other forms of reader response. Research on the use of review negotiations during peer review sessions and how these shape L2 students' revision activities (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger,

1992; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Mittan, 1989; Stanley, 1992) and factors facilitating the use by student-writers of peer feedback (Nelson & Murphy, 1993) tend to favour the use of feedback on its own. However, a middle-path approach, recently suggested (e.g. Caulk, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Jacobs *et al*., 1998) is one that fits in with my own tacit theory on the usefulness of peer and teacher feedback.

There has been very little documented research on the use of feedback (much less of peer feedback) to student writing in revision at tertiary level in South Africa. This lack of documented research on feedback to student writing was said to prevail globally in the late 1990s. Ferris (1997: 315), for example, bemoans the scarcity of research on teacher response to L2 student writing, despite the importance of this type of feedback in revision. Some of the published studies still lack in focus or depth. None of the few published studies on responses to student writing in recent years (Paxton, 1995; Spencer, 1998) comes close to a convincing analysis of peer response, because they generally lacked focus and precision in the reporting of findings, or systematic data collection. Paxton's analysis of the tutor's feedback to Social Anthropology students' essays and the impact of feedback on revision, for example, fails to discriminate (summative) assessment of student's writing in the form of a grade and teacher feedback in the form of commentary for revision. Besides, her analysis of the interviews with the students does not shed light on the possible benefit of the tutor's comments on revision but rather focusses on the students' willingness to read the comments. Likewise, in Angelil-Carter & Thesen's article on process writing, "peer feedback", "group work methodology" (...) [as] part of the process approach", and "evaluating (...) peer's writing" are the rare fleeting references to feedback in process writing.

To the best of my knowledge, the only recent attempt to include the analysis of peer response to student writing in research on writing instruction is Spencer's (1998) study of students' preferences of the types of teacher responses to their writing. Her study should, however, be read against the following five caveats. Firstly, the study, sadly, only touched upon, and thus side-stepped, important issues on the use of this form of reader response. Indeed, peer response was actually not the main focus of the research. Instead, it was included as one of several other variables in a broader framework of evaluation: only two items on "alternative means of response" (p. 31) were included in the questionnaire. One of these items elicited students' views on "peer-criticism", or to use the terms preferred in this article, "peer response". Secondly, the study's design was that of a survey, rather than an analysis of the process of writing, revising, and rewriting. Thirdly—a significant point of departure with the study reported in this article—the survey was conducted with distance-learning students of the University of South Africa. Unlike their contact-learning counterparts, distance-learning students might not mind receiving criticism from totally "faceless" peers. Besides, their age profile and career backgrounds may predispose them to greater tolerance than the typical full-time, younger contact-learning students in the study reported here. Fourthly, as the prefatory matter of the questionnaire indicates explicitly, her study was, in reality, heavily biased towards the awarding of grades, although, in the process, it investigated eclectic (at times interrelated) issues. Presumably, the respondents may, thus, have been referring to peer *marking* ("awarding of a grade"), rather than peer feedback or commentary. The respondents' apparent willingness to involve themselves in peer marking may not have necessarily been an expression of their willingness to give feedback to their peers for revision. Finally, the breadth of the investigation did not, unfortunately, do

justice to her study, nor did the analysis and presentation of the results, which were disappointingly superficial and, at times, perfunctory.

3. Theoretical framework, background, setting, and aims

3.1 A mini-model for building student-writers' autonomy

Central to the use of peer response is the student-writer's (in)disposition to work with peers. Greater involvement of student-writers, whether self-developed or induced, enables them to gradually move from dependence to independence, with interdependence playing a mediating role. Nelson (1991: 24) found in her extensive work with both native and nonnative writers that interdependence does "bridge the gap between dependence and independence". When the OBE system is firmly in place, the instructor will ultimately become a mere "facilitator" who will more often than not use pair and group work (including to provide feedback to student writing) and will require that learners take responsibility for their own learning. Schematically, following Nelson (1991: 53), a(n idealised) mini-model of process writing proposed in this article can been visualised as follows:

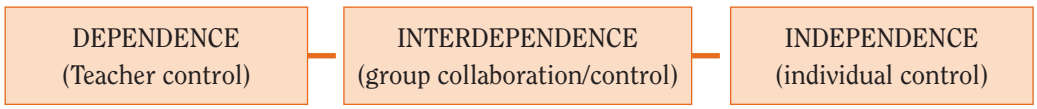

Figure 1: Mini-model of student's progress towards autonomy in writing

In the three-stage move, the stage of dependence emphasises the teacher's role (without excluding the peers' role). At the next stage of interdependence, the teacher's predominant role significantly gives way to "collaboration", in which peers contribute much more than in the previous stage. From this interdependence gradually grows independence (see Welsh, 1988, cited in Nelson,1991: 89), which builds up in the long run. Ultimately, by encouraging the dependent student-writer, used to working with the constant help of an authoritative figure, the teacher, to work with peers and, gradually, develop skills and ultimately work on his/her own, ensures his/her "autonomy", which is also the aim of communicative language teaching, graphically represented as follows (Miller & Aldred, 2000: 3):

Figure 2: Teacher-centred/driven to learner-centred/driven methodology cline

Consequently, the notion of "autonomy" works differently from what Angelil-Carter and Thesen (1990: 588) envisaged when they stated: "The student is aided in this decision-making by the process of evaluating her peer's writing, which gives her tools for assessing her own". The suggestion in this article is that, instead, the student is aided by his/her peers to assess his and others' writing and, thus, develop his/her critical skills for revising his own writing and evaluating others'. In this way, "autonomy" meshes with the assumption that "[O]nce students reach university, it is assumed that they have mastered the skills required to be responsible for their own learning" (Gaffield-Vile, 1995: 112). The aim of developing "autonomy" for the student writer is also endorsed by Davies and Omberg (1986).

3.2 Background and setting

The setting of the study reported here was the University of the North (hereinafter UNIN)[2], with a long tradition of catering to a sizeable number of educationally disadvantaged high school graduates. The roles of the instructor and of the students have been respectively to "bestow, transmit and command" and to "receive, accept and obey" (see Chandler, 1983; Holliday, 1994; Jones, 1995). The predominant use of the transmission mode almost ignores group work and peer interaction, presumably given the problem of overcrowding, but also as a result of an educational tradition shaped by socio-cultural factors as is widely recognised in the literature (e.g. Carson, 1992; Freeman & Richards, 1993; Hofstede, 1986; Jacobs & Ratmanida, 1996). The forms of summative assessment so far used encourage the widespread propensity to rely on rote learning (see Macdonald, 1991), which, unfortunately, continues into postgraduate studies (see Mitchell, 1999).

Two anecdotes will illustrate the "contagious" nature of this propensity to rely on rote learning. In his/her comments on a draft examination paper for a Master's course, an external examiner expressed concern on the open-book nature of the examination because as, s/he assumed, the students would merely copy from notes. Yet, all the questions on the paper required far more than copying: they, indeed, required the students to demonstrate both that they had read extensively and that they could apply their knowledge to the local educational and learning context. On the face of his/her comments, it appeared that the examiner could not envisage a situation in which a postgraduate examination could be different from an undergraduate one. (Compare the situation to that in some Master's courses in the UK where examination papers may be/are made available months in advance!). Ironically, in the same examination session, a Honours paper in which one of the questions required that the students evaluate a number of grammar books and textbooks was almost thwarted as a result of the reticence of colleagues manning the Examinations Section on the "legitimacy" of books being made available to students in an examination.

Although widely recognised, the over-emphasis on summative assessment that rewards the widespread propensity to rely on rote learning has continued unabated. There has not been much questioning in South Africa of the way response to student writing was provided. This lack of an adequate response to the problem of bookish parroting belies the essence of a university embodied in the oft-repeated statement that universities acknowledge that "there is no idea that is so sacred that it cannot be doubted and debated" (Moulder, 1995: 8) perhaps owing to the following factors: the constraints of the wider curriculum, the lack of resources, including the lack of a Writing Centre, which would provide one-to-one advice; logistical, administrative and time-table constraints; and class sizes. As a consequence, the traditional teacher-dominated style of instruction and an examination-driven[3] assessment system have continued largely

2. The disclosure of the name of the institution and of information about specific activities does not constitute a breach of confidentiality. Even if the institution was not mentioned by name, it might have been inferred from the author's affiliation. Besides, the identity of the participants having been withheld, the identification of the setting remains within the permitted ethical boundaries. It must also be stressed that the article is not a criticism of either the university concerned nor of individual faculty members who were involved in the programme from which the study evolved.

3. As observed elsewhere, indeed, the "pressure of examination exerts great influence in the style of teaching writing" (Lo, 1996: 10) and encourages the use of traditional classroom practices (Evans, 1996).

unchallenged because the isolated initiatives taken in the early 1990s to introduce process writing at school (e.g. Pratt, 1990) and university (e.g. Angelil-Carter & Thesen, 1990; Boughey, 1993), or the few documented attempts to use non-traditional assessment procedures at tertiary level (see, for example, Boughey, 1993; Jackson & Hart, 1995; Pratt, 1990; Sutherland, 1996) that predate the era of OBE, were few and far between. Both the teacher-dominated style of instruction and the examination-driven assessment system have heavily influenced writing instruction and the choice of forms of reader response. In most cases, given class size feedback on students' writing has predominantly been in the form of teacher commentary and follow-up has often been very superficial or inadequate as often proofreading and summative commentary are the main (sometimes the sole) types of feedback provided.

The study reported in this article evolved from teacher practice on an "Academic Writing" (henceforth AW) course at UNIN established to improve the teaching of writing at this tertiary institution. Although writing skills had always been of special concern at this particular university, academic writing instruction was formally introduced through the establishment of an English Language Unit in the existing Department of English Studies in the early 1990s and the subsequent introduction of the AW course as a degree requirement at undergraduate level (see Kasanga, 1998, for a detailed description of the course). The AW course was modelled on the process writing approach. Formerly "English 110" has now been split into two semester credit-bearing modules called respectively "English 131" and "English 132". Given the students' under- or un-preparedness for academic work, writing instruction builds from such basic writing skills as diary and letter writing, the writing of simple narratives in the form of free-flowing story-telling and personal histories, and gradually moves to basic paragraphing and essay writing skills in a variety of genres.

Writing instruction having long been heavily examination-oriented, the awarding of grades seems to be a top preoccupation for both the students and the instructor. There is an expectation that a grade should be awarded on every piece of writing, including the first draft. It was realised that to obtain the best out of the process-writing approach, writing activities had to strengthen the idea of developing students' basic writing skills into academic writing skills. Consequently, the awarding of a grade on assigned pieces of writing was kept to the minimum, usually after several drafts, to wean the students away from their obsession with grades and encourage them to re-write their assignments in the light of the feedback (then, solely from the instructor). However, the awarding of grades was not discarded, but was spaced out and postponed until the later stages of the process. It was assumed that the selection of only some assignments for summative evaluation and the use of others for "practice" were ample opportunities for the student-writers to learn to revise several drafts and, in the process, to gradually develop critical thinking and overall writing skills. In other words, this form of writing instruction was accompanied by "formative assessment" to promote learning and accountability.

In recent years, efforts have been made globally to introduce the use of peer feedback in revision, but fears of resistance to, hostility towards, or suspicion about, the use of peer feedback in the writing classroom may have deterred many from attempting to use this source of feedback. Indeed, like elsewhere (see, for example, Mangelsdorf, 1992), these fears were related to the students' "unfamiliarity with the new methods and to fear of failure with the new approach" (Nelson, 1991: 21) and the predominance of the teacher-centred tradition in language teaching

(see Carson & Nelson, 1996; Hofstede, 1986). To add to the students' unfamiliarity was the relative failure of previous attempts to introduce learner-centred teaching and learning (see Barkhuizen, 1998a; Chick, 1996), mainly because of the resistance by students and teachers.

3.3 Rationale, aims, research questions, and significance

At tertiary level especially, only occasionally and haphazardly have peer feedback (a rare example is Katz, 1995) or self-feedback (e.g. Boughey, 1993) been used as a source of response to writing. One of the reasons for this is the racial satellisation of education with syllabi from close to 20 different education authorities which could hardly allow a sense of direction and purpose. Given the demands of OBE, however, the question is no longer if peer feedback will or ought to be used at all, alongside teacher feedback; the issue is rather how best to use this combination. This also presupposes knowledge of how student-writers respond to different types of feedback.

All in all, there remain some disconcerting gaps in our knowledge of the possibilities, problems, and best procedures in the use of peer feedback in revision. Some badly needed empirical evidence must be built to guide the introduction of self- and peer-feedback in the writing classroom in South Africa. The study was concerned with that evidence. It was intended to contribute to facilitating classroom practice by gathering empirical evidence to answer the following questions: What problems (for example resistance or reluctance to use peer feedback, lacks of logistical support, classroom organisation) may arise in the use of peer response in writing instruction in combination with teacher feedback, given the established classroom practices? This question is important, given the long-established, teacher-dominated, examination-driven educational system, which is being replaced by OBE. How similar or different are the peers' and the teacher's feedback to student writing? How similar or different is the student-writers' response to their peers' and the teacher's feedback? Answers to this question may be useful in determining how much effort is needed to get the most out of each type of feedback; in other words, in finding an answer to another question: How best can the combination of peer and teacher feedback be introduced as a routine activity in the writing classroom at first-year university level? The answer to the latter question would be most welcome in view of writing instructors' uncertainty on the best way to provide feedback to their students, as Paulus (1999) observes.

The study's target contribution was to establish the efficacy of feedback through the examination of the responses to it. It thus formed part of an investigation (cf. 4.1) whose main aim was to establish the impact of many factors, such as multiple drafting, revision, and the role of teacher and peer feedback on the revisions and the quality of writing. Its significance cannot, therefore, be overstated. A description of the theoretical background, setting and participants of and procedure used in the study follows.

4. Methodology

4.1 Design

The study being described in this article followed two other studies that make up the bulk of the large investigation mentioned above. The first study was designed as an "an ethnography of writing" and was carried out in the form of a survey. It involved only students as respondents, after lecturers' perspectives on writing had been explored in greater detail in an ethnographic

study of essay prompts (Kasanga, 1999). The survey explored the students' beliefs on and perceptions of second language writing classroom practices, on what a successful classroom entailed, and on what the roles, responsibilities of both the tutor and the students in process writing, and the purpose(s) were of the activities which were taking place in the second language writing classroom. It was hoped that the findings would establish a pattern in the students' beliefs and perceptions of writing instructions to help in the formulation of strategies for the introduction of peer feedback in writing activities. Indeed, any gap between the students' and the teachers' practice (reflecting their beliefs which underlay the choice of materials and methodology) (Peacock, 1998) would inform on the potential problems in the use of peer feedback and the formulation of appropriate remedies. One expectation in undertaking the survey, following other studies (e.g. Shi & Cumming, 1995), was that it would lead to the feasibility of impending changes. It was also envisaged that it would serve as a basis for a classroom-based quasi-experimental investigation of peer response to student writing in the next phase of the research. Space limitation does not allow even a brief outline of the results of this phase which will be reported in a separate article (see Kasanga, forthcoming). However, reference will be made, in due course, to those results which have a direct bearing on this article.

The second study examined student-writers' response to teacher feedback, using a free-writing task in a normal writing class. Although the study has been reported elsewhere (see Kasanga, 2001) at some length, it is useful to summarise the main results. The following pattern of student-writers' response to teacher feedback emerged: (i) successful revision of the draft prompted or induced by overt or covert teacher feedback, illustrating the usefulness, at least in the short term, of teacher commentary; (ii) successful revision of the draft without explicit localised feedback, rare though these cases were; (iii) no revision made despite explicit teacher feedback, speculatively as a result of lack of understanding, misunderstanding, or deliberate rejection; (iv) unsuccessful attempt to revise the draft following teacher feedback, for want of the necessary skills and/or resulting from misunderstanding; (vi) mis-correction or mis-revision following explicit teacher feedback either a direct consequence of inadequate feedback or misunderstanding of feedback.

The study reported in this article was carried out to ascertain whether there was a gap in process writing between, on the one hand, what the students *might think about* (e.g. Mangelsdorf, 1992; Sengupta, 1998) or how they might perceive the use of peer feedback alongside teacher feedback, and, on the other hand, what they *might actually do with it*. Using a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) design format, with no pre-determined hypotheses, the study was carried out within the day-to-day, normal classroom activities, as unobtrusively as possible, and with minimal alteration to the common syllabus prescribed for the AW course.

4.2 Instruments, sampling, procedure, and data

Several sources and instruments were used to collect the data. The first instrument was a writing task in the form of a "free writing" (Raimes, 1983) task. The prompt was the topic, *My first experience as a writer was ...*, which had been assigned by the AW Course Coordinator for all students as part of the "personal writing" phase of the course. It involved two types of feedback provided respectively by peers and by the instructor on the same piece of writing, independently of each other. The decision to encourage student-writers to use peer feedback in addition to teacher commentary in revising their essays was inspired by Caulk's (1994) findings about the

usefulness of peer responses in combination with teacher commentary.

Two other instruments, used to measure the response to peer review activity and the response to teacher feedback, were two short post-revision questionnaires, referred to here respectively as "The English 110 Snap Questionnaire on teacher feedback" (SNQE110T) (see Appendix A) and "The English 110 Snap Questionnaire on Peer Reviewing" (SNQE110P) (see Appendix B). The questionnaires being very short, it was not deemed necessary to check their reliability statistically. The use of these snap questionnaires was, on the other hand, assumed to be a more cost-effective, time-saving and less face-threatening procedure than follow-up interviews with individual respondents—not used in this article but in a related study to be reported elsewhere (Kasanga, forthcoming)—to gain insights into why they made some choices. Besides, the narrow focus of the study allowed a detailed investigation, by means of a combination of the questionnaires and peer review activities, of specific issues such as different types of responses to student writing.

Given the difficulty of using a whole-population sample of over 250 students, which would have required more time and better logistics to collect the data, obtain the cooperation of other instructors, train and familiarise the inexperienced ones (especially student assistants) with all aspects of the research, and monitor carefully the data collection, a decision was made to use only two tutorial groups. This decision was also justified by the small-scale nature of the study. The study was conducted with 52 students from two ("The Research Group") of the fifteen tutorial groups (the "Survey Population" of over 250 AW students).

The questionnaires were administered in class, (i) to ensure a reasonably high response rate, given the high attrition rate observed previously in similar endeavours, (ii) to assist the respondents in completing the questionnaire, given their relatively low reading skills; and (iii) to allow for reliability. The SNQE110P questionnaire was administered one week after the peer review activity, after the student-writers had made revisions on their original drafts, while the SNQE110T was administered two weeks after the tutor commentary had been made on individual essays, because the teacher commentary was not disclosed to the student-writers until they had responded to their peers' feedback. To allow for both these types of feedback to be provided on the same draft, the students' writing used for peer feedback was anonymized by typing all the selected sample writings, while the teacher commentary was made on the original drafts.

The study constitutes an example of teacher research, initially conceived as an action research investigation, that is research which is "*pragmatic and action oriented*" (Baumann & Duffy-Hester, 2000: 77), also referred to as "self-reflective enquiry" (Kemmis & Taggart, 1982), given the combination of praxis and reflection. The proliferation of definitions, interpretations, and uses of "action research" highlighted in the literature (e.g. McNiff, 1992) requires that its operational use in this article be circumscribed. Action research aims to both understand (the research component) and change (the action component) one's own practice. Applied to teacher research, it "involves reflecting on one's teaching and practice, inquiring about it, exploring it, and then taking action to improve or alter it" (Baumann & Duffy-Hester, 2000: 77). Indeed, it is an activity undertaken by a critical observer-researcher which usually includes: abstract conceptualisation or planning, active experimentation or action, concrete experience, and reflective observation, in a cyclical (see Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993) rather than linear way, to inform the implementation and updating of the classroom dynamics. The source of

inspiration to the study reported here was Kemmis' (1982) model consisting of a self-reflective spiral of [reflecting,] (*my addition*) planning, acting, observing, reflecting, re-planning for action or change, for problem-solving. However, like in many other instances of teacher-research (cf. Baumann *et al*., 1997), I have adapted the procedures to suit the specific research needs by selecting some of these stages for much greater emphasis than others.

The action-research study comprised the following five steps, the first two representing the "research" aspect, the third, the "action" component: (i) asking the students to provide peer feedback to their classmates; (ii) gathering the student-writers' opinions on the effectiveness of both teacher and peer feedback to test the possibility of students' reluctance to rely on peers for feedback in re-writing, as suggested by similar resistance reported in previous research (Kasanga, 1996), (iii) verifying whether and to what extent both types of feedback would be incorporated in the re-writing stage; (iv) by means of brief face-to-face interviews, identifying the possible reasons for non-compliance with peer suggestions and corrections; and (v) implementing further action to improve on the previous one.

The peer review task was subdivided into different activities to maximise its effectiveness. First-year students might have been confused by a task that required too much of them within the space of one single tutorial. Firstly, in one tutorial session, students were asked to proofread a few writing samples of their peers with the aid of a marking key (see Murray & Johanson, 1990) for mechanics of writing (e.g. spelling, tense, misuse of vocabulary, punctuation), either individually or in pairs or small groups. In the second tutorial, students were asked to do more than proofread writing samples from peers. Most chose to work in pairs according to the seating arrangements, although some preferred to work in three- and foursomes. Nine writing samples by peers were selected from four categories of students' compositions ranked from very poor (very poor English, too many spelling and grammar mistakes, no logical organisation, lack of coherence, no relevance to the topic) to very good (impeccable English, very good spelling and almost no grammar mistakes, logical organisation, coherent, relevant to the topic). Anonymity was essential to encourage peers to comment candidly and without fear of ridicule and to maintain "face", an essential requirement in the local school culture. To ensure maximum anonymity and objectivity, all the writing samples were typed. As many copies as could be distributed were made available to allow for maximum response on each. All nine samples were distributed simultaneously and rotated in subsequent rounds. In this way, no two pairs sitting next to each other could have the same sample at the same time. This precaution was necessary to minimise the temptation among the students in different pairs, who were all novices in peer assessment, to resort to "copying" or "comparing notes" as often occurs in similar unfamiliar activities. After a slow start in the first activity, the exercise became more of a routine in subsequent rounds.

In previous studies, the provision of an evaluation sheet that students would use to respond to peer writing was found to have the effect of encouraging a "prescriptive stance" (see Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992: 248) rather than a collaborative one (see Sengupta, 1998), or might be used as an expedient rather than an aid for evaluating the writing (Mangelsdorf, 1992), thus forcing the reviewers to spend more time completing the sheets than interacting with their peers (Freedman, 1987). Furthermore, because the task was a free composition, which is usually assigned "without special preparation (...) for the particular topic" (Kühn & Meiring,

1984: 37), it was not necessary to set rigid criteria against which drafts would be judged. Consequently, students who participated in the study reported here were only briefed on items to look for, such as: (i) relevance of title (if any); (ii) clarity of introduction/purpose of the essay; (iii) logical sequence of ideas; (iv) intelligibility/clarity of language. They were, however, warned against producing point-form "lists". The use of broad categories to give student-reviewers guidance is endorsed by others (e.g. Tsui & Ng, 2000). Generally, students responded well and some showed uncharacteristic creativity by going beyond the points suggested. Constant monitoring of the activity by the teacher-researcher was assumed to be reassuring and useful in providing individualised assistance to dyads or small groups who might not have understood the instructions well.

It is useful to point out, at this stage, that the task used in the study was not a major writing assignment. Indeed, from the outset, a decision has been made to proceed from the basic writing activity and, thus, attempt to monitor any possible improvement in students' writing skills. Consequently, the choice of a major essay writing assignment was deferred until the next step in the large investigation. A major essay in the AW course generally involves verifying the students' mastery of the "process", that is the main steps recommended by the AW for "successful" essay writing, viz: (i) identification of task words and topic words in the prompt; (ii) gathering ideas through brainstorming, note-taking and note-making, and summarising; (iii) planning; (iv) drafting; (v) revising and editing; (vi) writing up in a recursive approach in which the writer constantly looks back at the previous stage(s) and makes the necessary adjustments.

The data include the following: the student-reviewers' commentaries (for which permission to use was sought and obtained); the instructor's commentaries; the student-writers' responses to both types of commentaries in the forms of corrections and revisions; and answers to both questionnaires. The focus of analysis is on the student-writers' response to their peers' feedback and to teacher commentary (the responses to teacher commentary were collected by means of the post-revision questionnaire).

5. Results and discussion

Because the study involved examining the nature of both peer feedback and teacher feedback, the differences between the two, and the impact of each on revision, it is logical to offer a separate analysis of each (5.1 and 5.2), followed by a discussion of the practical implications (5.3).

5.1 Peer feedback and student-writers' response

To explain the student-writers' responses to commentary by their peers, it is useful first to analyse the types of commentary provided to each of the nine pieces. The analysis is based on a thematic classification of peer corrections and commentaries made on a total of forty sheets representing the nine anonymised pieces of students' narrative essays selected from all 52 scripts available. In the analysis of peer commentary, the quantitative data across the nine narratives are described and explained in some detail.

Before discussing the student-writers' response to the use of peer feedback, it is perhaps useful to explain the nomenclature used in this article (see Table 1).

Table 1: Thematic distribution of peer feedback across drafts

Draft Theme	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7*	#8*	#9	Total
Error identification (without correction)	3				1	4			7	***15***
Error correction (preceded or not by identification)	9	3	3	1	5	14	26	14	2	***77***
Local commentary	8				5				1	***14***
Global commentary		7	7	8	9	2	4		10	***47***
Other commentary	1			1	3	1	1		3	***10***
Advice-commentary				1						***1***
Disagreement-commentary (moral lesson/opinion)	2			2						***4***
Request for clarification	2									***2***
Total	***25***	***10***	***10***	***13***	***23***	***21***	***31***	***14***	***23***	***170***

Note: (*) Seven of the nine drafts received each five student commentaries. For drafts #7 and #8, respectively four and one commentary sheets were collected. It is also useful to point out that, given the differences among pairs and small groups in terms of the pace at which they produced their commentary, the procedures followed (some had a "scribe" to take down their comments; others wrote comments in turns), and the length of the commentaries, the total of commentaries differed across the narratives: there were five commentaries each on seven drafts, and one each four and one commentary sheets respectively on the other two drafts.

A major distinction was made between "error correction", also called "error feedback" (Ferris, 1999; Ferris & Roberts, 2001), i.e. feedback on "surface errors" in the composition, and "commentaries", i.e. remarks, observations, and comments of some length (at least one sentence). Feedback on errors was subdivided into "error identification only" (that is without an explicit correction) and "error correction" (with or without prior identification). Commentaries, in turn, were subdivided into several categories: "local" vs. "global" commentaries; disagreement-commentaries; advice-commentaries; commentaries used to request clarification, and other commentaries (i.e. commentaries which could not be classified in any of the other types). Global commentaries are macro-level ("summative") comments made on (usually at the end of) the whole of a composition to praise, evaluate, criticise, warn, or even suggest improvements. Local commentaries, in contrast, are micro-level "in-text" (because found usually within the text) comments made on a word's, phrase's, sentence's, or even paragraph's, relevance, accuracy, or grammaticality, sometimes accompanied with the suggested alternative. Although disagreement-commentaries were made at a micro-level, they were grouped in their own category because of their purpose to give a moral lesson or opinion rather than to help revise or edit. Advice-commentaries were similar to local commentaries in the sense that they were made at a micro-level, but were different in their narrow purpose to give advice, rather than to help in the editing or revision (cf. "affective, positive comments" in Conrad & Goldstein, 1999). Commentaries in the forms of requests for clarification were also grouped separately from other types of commentaries. The nomenclature described above was preferred to existing ones because it reflects more accurately the pattern of student feedback. In contrast, Keh's (1990) nomenclature,

for example, based on the "lower order concerns" (LOCs) versus "higher order concerns" (HOCs) dichotomy misses important aspects of feedback strategies used by students. On the other hand, Ferris *et al*.'s (1997) nomenclature would rather be appropriate to teacher feedback.

I can now give a compressed account of the results starting with those related to peer feedback. Before all else, it is important to reflect on the students' preparedness or disposition to use peer feedback in revision. Any fear of resistance or reluctance to use peer feedback among students, for various reasons, such as: mistrust of peers' competence, dislike of some types of formulation of feedback (Ferris, 1995), its modality, style or tone (e.g. Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996), or other inhibiting factors, had been gauged in a survey, mentioned earlier (4.1), conducted with the same student population (see Kasanga, forthcoming). The survey found that a large majority of the students expressed their enthusiasm for peer reviewing (more so as reviewers of peer writing than as recipients of peer reviewing). The finding is in line with the emerging evidence from various parts of the world, such as the US, with learners from various countries (Leki & Carson, 1994; Mangelsdorf, 1992), in Hong Kong (Curtis, 1997; cited in Jacobs *et al*., 1998; Lockhart & Ng, 1994), that socio-cultural dispositions that may presumably be unfavourable to the use of peer feedback (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Hofstede, 1986) can be overcome. I further believe, as has been proved by Littlewood (2000) in his comparative study of European and Asian students' perceptions of the teachers' and students' roles, that any observed classroom passive attitude is "more likely to be a consequence of the educational contexts that have been or are now provided" for the learners "than of any inherent dispositions of the students themselves" (p. 33).

It must, however, be stressed that "enthusiasm", like sentiments such as satisfaction about, enjoyment, and value of an activity (see, for example, Barkhuizen, 1998b), is often merely an expression of the learners' positive perceptions and should not be necessarily be equated with (but, presumably, is a predictor of) success of the activity.

The examination of the student-reviewers' feedback revealed that, as expected, error identification and/or correction received most of the students' attention (see Table 1): more than half of the total amount of peer feedback was made up of either mere error identification or error correction (with or without prior identification); commentary of different types made up the remainder of the peer feedback. Caulk (1994), too, had earlier found that peer reviewers focused on surface mistakes and errors and seldom provided macro-level comments, because the latter are usually more demanding. This finding is in line with current practice by teachers who devote a great deal of their commentary to error correction. The finding also seems to be congruent with a global trend (e.g. Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Roen, 1989; Sengupta, 1996), which, as Lo (1996: 11) remarks, involves a "heavy emphasis [...] placed on accuracy" because, as she adds, "teachers are expected to highlight every grammatical error students make". The over-emphasis by the students on error correction to the detriment of communication of meaning and content underlines their own expectations, presumably influenced by current practice reported globally (e.g. Chandrasegaran, 1986; Keh, 1990; Leki, 1991; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992).

An unexpected result is the presence in peer feedback of a good number of commentaries. Global commentaries outnumbered local commentaries by 3 to 1 (see Table 1). Although these figures may not necessarily prove the level of usefulness of students' commentaries, they do point to

an encouraging trend, given the tradition reinforced by teachers' practice, to focus on surface errors. Students could not be expected to provide as useful and critical feedback as the tutor without prior practice or even "coaching". However, a combination of global commentaries, such as the following extracts representing some of comments on "poor language", "misuse of tenses", "over-repetition", "lack of links", and "overuse of long sentences", and the relevant local commentaries, may go a long way towards helping students to improve their writing (For a similar view, see Elbow, 1997). The following are a sampling of global commentaries by peer-reviewers:

> *I think that this essay is okay but the language is poor.*
>
> *All in all your tenses have been unproffessionally used.*
>
> *The writting is good. The only mistakes is that the writer use long sentences.*
>
> *Your English is good and interesting but make sure that you avoid repatition of words. Try to interelate your paragraphs so as to make sense.*[4]

Also important in the analysis of the data were results on the potential benefits (or drawbacks) of peer reviewing. These results were obtained by asking students to express their reactions either as reviewers of peers' writings or recipients of peer reviewing, after their involvement in peer review activities in the classroom. Only those who had expressed enthusiasm in peer feedback were selected and asked to say, as recipients of the reviewing, whether or not (i) they felt more/less confident after the reviewing; (ii) they believed they had learnt from it; (iii) it improved their skills; (iv) it increased their pride; (v) they had learned to work with others. Five corresponding statements were suggested (see Appendix B) and students were asked to rank them according to the importance they attached to the benefit accrued from peer reviewing. The results are shown graphically in Figure 3 below:

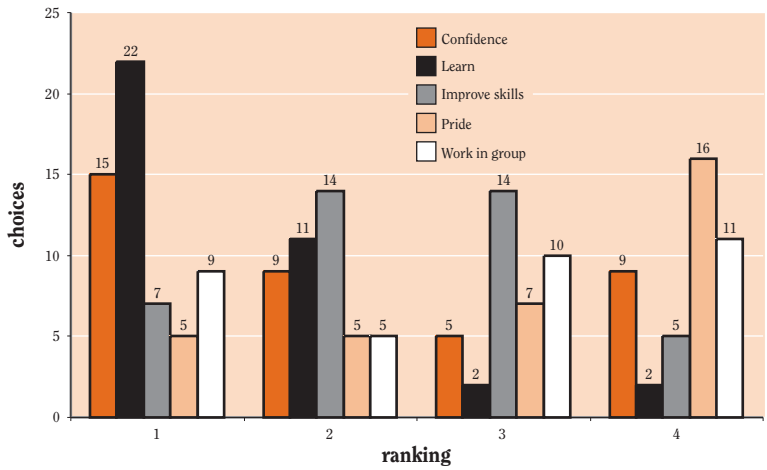

Figure 3: Reported benefits of peer reviewing

4. All the students' narratives (for which permission to quote was sought and granted) have been left unedited. For the sake of clarity, parenthetical additions are occasionally added.

The sum of the top two rankings for each benefit was considered in the interpretation of the results because they seem to reflect a fairly representative level of judgment of the respondents. It appears, therefore, that those who favour the use of peer reviewing as part of the writing process are those who actually benefit from it. They support the practice mainly for its *learning potential* and the *improvement of skills* that it brings about. These two benefits were ranked "top two" 54 times. The most important social benefit from peer reviewing was *confidence-building* which was ranked first and second most important benefit a total 24 times. Over all, the value of peer reviewing as a pro-social activity was not rated very highly: the benefits of *working in group* and *reinforcing one's pride* were ranked twice as low as some of the other benefits. The results of the post-writing survey clearly indicate that students' response to feedback from peers tallies with the reported enthusiasm of the majority of them. One implication of this finding is that the use of peer feedback in the writing classroom may not meet with as much resistance as may have been thought on the grounds of observed unfavourable attitudes toward student-led activities (see Kasanga, 1996) or failure of previous attempts to introduce learner-centred teaching and learning (see Barkhuizen, 1998a; Chick, 1996).

A qualification, however, is necessary here. The favourable attitude may be ascribed to the context of a study in which the anonymity of student-writers was strictly preserved and all comments, corrections, and suggestions were in writing. Given this anonymity, it is difficult to ascertain whether (and to what extent) the cultural values of the students which tend to favour the maintenance of harmony, cohesion, and face-saving and avoid open criticism and a confrontational style, might have been inhibited. It is, however, probable that the fear of confrontation remains real, as evidenced by the following students' narratives representative of comments by the respondents when asked if they would like to comment on their peers' draft essays:

> *Sometimes some student can become shy when they saw you because you have see their mistakes some can even come to an extend of running away from the class.*
>
> *It create problems to some students; because some are jealous. (...) I have to write it in such a way that the student would be satisfied. When he is not satisfy he will come to me and I will be responsible for that mark.*

The above comments echo findings from previous studies in which student-writers acknowledged the intimidating effect of peer comment, because of the fear of ridicule (see Linden-Martin, 1997, cited in Nelson & Carson, 1998); or the negative impact of some reviewers' attitude on revision (Nelson & Murphy, 1993): jealousy and hostility may arise from peer comments if it is felt that these comments may impact negatively on other students' academic standing should the comments be taken into account in the overall grade. The grade is often the main preoccupation of the student-writers because responses to their writing (usually by the lecturer) more often than not "come (...) as summative evaluations" (Newell, 1994: 311).

A related pitfall, highlighted in the literature (e.g. Sengupta, 1998) is the risk of receiving faulty and harmful input from peer-reviewers. Although it has been recognised that the fact that peers are at the same level may be beneficial to revision, findings from the pre- and post-revision surveys suggest that student-writers still regard peer comments with suspicion. It was surmised to have been a real reason for the resistance to the use of peer feedback expressed by 22% of

the respondents and a deterrent to using peers' feedback by some in the revision. This fear has also been expressed in the teaching and learning of other skills (e.g. Schweers, 1995).

More positive, however, is the wish and desire by some student-writers to receive more feedback from peers. These student-writers, indeed, believe that their peers whom, they consider to be at a higher level of language competence than themselves, can be of great use. Hence, a respondent wrote the following:

> *I am not good in writing and spelling words and my English is not good so if I know [knew] you I could come to you and ask some help from you. Keep on doing your good work.*

This feeling seems to explain the enthusiasm by the overwhelming majority (78% of the students polled) for peer review activities. It is possible, as was found in Tsui and Ng's (2000) study of secondary-school students in Hong Kong, that student-writers may have felt in this way to have gained a "sense of audience", "a sense of ownership", may have really "learned from each other", or the peers constitute several, more critical readers, whereas the teacher makes up one single reader (albeit more competent) who may use expedients to complete the marking "chore".

A word of caution is necessary at this stage. In spite of the high level of receptivity of the idea of using peer feedback in the revision process, students still use overwhelmingly teacher feedback. The finding echoes those of previous studies (although at different degrees of variance) that peer feedback was only in part the source of revision. In their studies of graduate student-writers, Mendonça and Johnson (1994) and Nelson and Murphy (1993) found that up to half the changes in revision made were influenced by peer comments, whereas others came from other sources. However, Connor and Asenavage (1994), in their study, found that only a minimal percentage (5%) of changes in revision were influenced by peer comments.

Although it appears that the presence of other sources of feedback may have influenced the student-writers' decision to consider peer feedback only in part, it seems fair to assume that the decision may have rested on the student-writers' ambivalent or negative attitude (respectively 30% and 15% of the respondents in Mangelsdorf's 1992 study) toward their peers' feedback. Also noteworthy is the possibility that too negative and harsh comments usually dished out by peers (see, for example, Sample 3, Appendix C) may have an inhibiting effect. Whereas some peers gave positive comments in the form of praise and encouragement, most tended to focus only on the negative points, as was found elsewhere (Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). It is not clear why peers in the study tended to provide negative feedback, but elsewhere it had been theorized that it was because "students do not need to change the good parts of their papers, there is no point in talking about them" (Nelson & Carson, 1998: 121). This belief notwithstanding, recipients of such negative feedback may often be alienated. Asked about her reaction, the author of the draft on which the harsh comment referred to above was made found the comment equally harsh. Besides, the comment was unhelpful because, as the author complained, it did not provide the kind of supportive corrective feedback which a weak draft would need. In the same way as research has shown how form, modality, and style or tone of teacher commentary affect the student-writers' receptivity to it (e.g. Chandrasegaran, 1986; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Reid, 1994), it may be speculated that negative peer feedback, especially of a face-threatening nature, will more often than not be utilised. Besides, mistrust of peers (e.g. Linden-Martin, 1997; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994), borne out of ill-feeling or anger may lead to a selective use

of their comments, as may skepticism about their abilities to give positive and useful input. Negative feedback may, thus, negate one of the presumed benefits of peer feedback reportedly (Zhang, 1995) claimed by educators, namely "social support from peers".

By way of a partial conclusion, the results of the study on peer reviewing, which seem to match my experience of the last few years, have proved more conclusive than Angelil-Carter & Thesen's (1990) who, working in a similar context, "found it difficult to get students to give useful, critical feedback" (p. 592). It may be speculated that we may be over-estimating first-year students' level of preparedness and language abilities. This said, I now turn to the students' views on and responses to teacher feedback.

5.2 Student-writers' views on and response to teacher commentary

It may be useful to recall the high level of enthusiasm (78%) for peer reviewing (more so as reviewers of peer writing than as recipients of peer reviewing) among the students in the survey, which belies their lack of enthusiasm for learner-centred (learner-directed) classroom language activities reported in a previous study (Kasanga, 1996). Despite this enthusiasm, teacher feedback is still highly valued. Once more, it is important not to over-estimate their enthusiasm towards peer reviewing activities. The item that elicited the reported high level of enthusiasm for peer reviewing did not compare peer and tutor feedback. Whenever a choice between peer and teacher feedback is given (e.g. Kasanga, 2001; Kasanga, forthcoming), learners tend to prefer tutor feedback by far. The great majority of those who were against the use of peers as reviewers overwhelmingly justified their decision by their belief that the teacher was the (most trustworthy) source of feedback (68.2%) or that their peers could not help (10.9%). The argument is more vividly illustrated by the following student comment:

> *Many student feel embarrass when their essays see by student than tutor*
>
> [Many students feel embarrassed when their essays are seen by students instead of the tutor]

One explanation is that if students will prefer drawing ideas and advice from the instructor, it is because they consider that s/he is "the only figure wielding authoritative power to impart knowledge to the students" (Kasanga, 1996: 243), the "source of knowledge" (Tudor, 1996: 273) who is more trustworthy than the uncertain advice of their peers whose correctness or accuracy remain doubtful. The students' doubt about and mistrust of their peers' feedback are illustrated in the following student comment:

> *I think because we as students we know each other very well, it will not be right to mark each others* **[other's]** *work because we do* **[commit]** *the same mistakes.*

Given her/his traditional position as "the role model, the source of knowledge, and the director of learning" (Johns, 1997: 4), the instructor remains the authority, the "expert reader", "sole audience", and "sole evaluator" or "consultant" (see Kasanga, 2001: 3) to correct, advise, and guide in the writing process.

To quantify the response to teacher commentary, Table 2 below indicates the student-writers' self-reported response to it, i.e. (i) whether or not and to what extent they understood the tutor's written comments, (ii) whether they agreed or disagreed with them, and to what extent, and (iii) whether or not and to what extent they found the comments useful.

Table 2: Student-writers' self-reported response to tutor's commentary

I understood the tutors' comments
ALL: 40%
MOST: 60% ONLY SOME: –
I agreed with the tutor's comments
ALL: 58%
MOST: 19%
ONLY SOME: 23%
I disagreed with tutor's comments*
ALL: –
MOST: 15%
ONLY SOME: 25%
Tutor's comments helped me (in re-writing the essay)
A LOT: 88.4%
A BIT: 7.8%
NOT AT ALL: 3.8%
To help me re-write my essay, the tutor should only indicate all my mistakes: – and write comments at the end of the essay: 23% indicate the mistakes and the correct words without comments at the end of the essay: 4% indicate the mistakes, the correct words, and give comments at the end of the essay: 73%

Note: (*) Six questionnaires were deemed "spoiled" for this item on account of incompatibility with response choices for the previous item. For example: "agree with all" is incompatible with "disagree with most" and/or "disagree with all".

In an earlier study, it was found that some student-writers failed to understand or, in some cases, misunderstood the comments by the tutor. Hence, for example, a student mistook a comment both locally and at the end of the essay for a suggested addition and incorrectly inserted it in her revised draft because s/he mistook it for a suggested addition (see Appendix E) (Kasanga, 2001). Because feedback is useful only if it is understood, the first concern in surveying the students on their response to teacher feedback was to ascertain the student-writers' level of understanding of the written comments before assessing their impact. Less than half the students (40%) declared to have understood all the comments by the tutor. However, none reported to have failed to understand most of them. Sixty percent declared that they understood most of the comments. If the comments are understood, student-writers can presumably effect the necessary revision. However, they may choose not to effect revisions or corrections as experience elsewhere has shown (e.g. Hounsell, 1987; Sommers, 1982). One of the reasons for declining to effect changes is presumably doubts about the relevance of the comments or the necessity of effecting changes if the student believes that both his/her formulation or idea and that suggested by the tutor are equally acceptable and that choosing either is only a matter of preference (see also Tsui & Ng, 2000).

Bearing in mind the above findings from previous studies, it was necessary to canvass the students on their level of agreement. Unexpectedly, six out of 26 students reportedly disagreed with the tutor's comments. However, only half this level of disagreement may be taken seriously because the other half failed the test of agree-disagree built into the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

Indeed, the respondents who reported to have *agreed with only some* of the tutor's comments also said that they *disagreed with all* (one respondent) or *with only some* (two respondents), although it had been pointed out to all the respondents that their choices (agree-disagree) had to follow some logic. This finding calls into question an earlier finding from a survey with similar students in which they reportedly, in their overwhelming majority, considered the tutor as "*the* authority to correct their mistakes" (Kasanga, 1996: 239) [italics in original text], which was equated with the respondents' dim view of the role of peers in providing new input.

In view of the high level of understanding of the tutor's comments, the next question was whether the comments were perceived to be useful. Table 2 above shows the student-writers' unsurprisingly high level of satisfaction about the tutor's comments (88.4%), although some found the tutor's comment only "a bit" helpful (7.8%) or even "not helpful at all" (3.8%). It could be speculated that those students who did not find the tutor's comments helpful may presumably have not understood them. However, given that none of the respondents declared not to have understood comments at all, the reason for not finding tutor's comments helpful at all must be found elsewhere than in the lack of understanding; for example, in their disinclination to accept criticism or negative feedback, or even their inability to effect the suggested improvements or corrections in the absence of explicit instructions.

Also important is how the students would prefer corrective feedback by the tutor to be provided to them. The respondents clearly preferred the provision by the tutor of corrective feedback that would be detailed and comprehensive, i.e. which would include marking ("indicate the mistakes"), correction ("give correct words or structures"), and commentary ("make comments at the end of the essay") (see Table 2 above). This result concurs with findings from previous research that indicate that language students, both students of English (e.g. Cathcart & Olsen, 1976; Chenoweth, Day, Chun & Luppescu, 1983) and of other languages, such as German for example (Wipf, 1993), do take error correction as a necessary support in language learning across skills. Teachers are well known for their traditional "red marking" and often use marking symbols to indicate different mistakes and errors and make comments of some sort at the end of the essay for various purposes (to praise, encourage, admonish, warn, or even explain the grade down or up). However, they sometimes fail to provide specific, detailed comments or suggestions by locating the trouble spot. Whether they should provide corrections and to what extent requires further empirical investigation. Implications of the findings discussed above are outlined in the next subsection.

5.3 Some implications for writing instruction

It is now time to outline some pedagogical implications of the findings discussed above in 5.1 and 5.2. One of the findings with some practical implications (the answer to Research Question 1) is the reported students' willingness (termed "enthusiasm") to engage in peer-reviewing activities and the fairly good level of "enjoyment", although not widespread, that seemed to match the students' actual involvement in peer reviewing. Although heavy emphasis seemed, understandably, to be on surface form-focused feedback, there was a fair amount of global content-focused feedback. Process writing involving the use of a combination of peer and teacher feedback in revision would benefit from this fairly high level of students' disposition to engage in peer reviewing, which is relatively a "new form" of feedback to writing.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that group evaluation yields better and more helpful comments than individual ones, whose "form, modality and style or tone" (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996) tend to adversely affect the student-writers' receptivity to feedback. However, peer feedback cannot (should not) be limited to group evaluation. A survey (Kasanga, forthcoming) showed that a sizeable number of student-writers would much prefer certain reviewers than others. Therefore, strategies to enhance the students' reviewing skills are more important than class or group organisation. In order to improve the quality of peer feedback and, thus, boost student-writers' confidence in the comments from their peers and increase the level of usefulness of these comments in revision to that observed elsewhere (see Belcher, 1989; Lam, 1991; Paulus, 1999), writing instructors may undertake the "coaching" (Leki, 1990) of students' in providing useful, constructively critical feedback in all aspects of reviewing. One of the ways would be to show them models of teacher feedback and the most important "moves" (see Mirador, 2000, for a move analysis of teacher written feedback[5]). The training of students in reader response, an idea also supported by researchers (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Jacobs *et al*., 1998; Stanley, 1992; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996) as a necessary means for improving the quality of peer feedback, is crucial because of the recognised complexity of the task: it is not only a question of *what*, but also of *how*, feedback should be given. Student coaching will also sharpen the students' critical reading and analysis skills (see Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990). Like Nelson (1991), I believe that the more experience the students acquire in using feedback from peers, in combination with that provided by the tutor, the less resistance they will feel and the easier time they will have engaging in peer reviewing and in revising. No universal prescription can be recommended, but individual instructors should devise flexible frameworks (rather than rigidly prescriptive evaluation sheets), for example in the form of a *checklist* of things to look for, which the student-reviewers could use in their peer-evaluation. Some basic guidelines used at first-year university level may well serve as a basis for peer feedback in the last years of secondary schooling.

Another important issue addressed in the analysis of data (Research Question 2) was the comparative nature of peer and teacher feedback. As expected, peers' and teacher's feedback to student writing was different, given the yawning gap between the students and the instructor in language expertise and in the experience in responding to the writing. Firstly, the majority of students could detect only those errors at their level of proficiency. Therefore, the teacher's error correction was far more thorough than the peers'. Secondly, although peers in general were representative of the wide gamut of feedback besides error correction, and included "affective, positive comments"(Conrad & Goldstein, 1999), they tended to concentrate on local commentaries. Besides, some of their global commentaries were too broad and vague to be of use to their peers. As had been found elsewhere (see Tsui & Ng, 2000), student-reviewers provided much less specific, localised comments than the teacher. Consequently, peer feedback cannot replace teacher feedback. These two types of feedback should, instead, be seen as complementary.

Correspondingly, the responses to peer and teacher feedback were, as expected, significantly different. This is the answer to the Research Question 3. The difference can first be ascribed to the quality of feedback: the teacher commentary was generally more explicit and accurate.

5. The following main moves in teacher written feedback are reported by Mirador (2000): General impression; Highlighting strength/s; Positivising; Calling attention to weakness/es; Suggesting improvement; Affective judgment; Probing; Overall judgement

Another obvious reason for the difference in the student-writers' response to peer and teacher feedback has to do with the issue of target audience. Indeed, student-writers presumably value the importance of incorporating feedback on the basis of the rewards which may accrue from the activity. The teacher's role as "evaluator" or "final arbiter" may still weigh heavily on the student-writers' decision to "conform" to the required norms. From a pedagogic point of view, the complementarity, rather than exclusion, of both types of feedback and the student-writers' response to each ought to be exploited. Some student-writers (especially if they begin to engage in some sort of exchange or conferencing) may, with time, benefit greatly from their peers' feedback because of a (perceived or real) climate of confidence or membership of the same social group. Others may still prefer teacher feedback and reject most or all of their peers' feedback. However, all will inevitably still revise mainly on the basis of the instructor's comments, given their "reassuring" effect. The use of peer feedback in combination with teacher feedback would be more beneficial than the use separately of peer and teacher feedback on different pieces of writing. The use of feedback as "an expedient" in large classes or a substitute for teacher feedback may be counterproductive.

Finally, the combined use of peer and teacher feedback being both an approach likely to improve the quality of revision and writing in general and an impending routine activity in the OBE writing classroom, there still remains the question of what would be *the best* or *ideal* combination (Research Question 4). At this stage, it is appropriate to refer back to the mini-model of development towards independence proposed earlier in the article (Section 3). The respondents rightly reportedly emphasised the teacher's role, and, unexpectedly welcomed peer feedback. It seems reasonable to assume that the next stage of interdependence involving collaboration with peers may not be as difficult as initially predicted. This interdependence would, hopefully, open the way to learner's autonomy, which may not necessarily be palpable immediately. As the tutor's involvement in directing and guiding gradually diminishes, the students move from being "reactive" (waiting passively without acting until prompted), to being "interactive" (being involved in peer contribution in the forms of hints, suggestions, advice, guidance, requests), and ultimately become "proactive" (asking for advice or information from peers and/or tutors, offering suggestions and/or criticism, doing self-initiated tasks, seeking information from other sources) (see also Nelson, 1991).

6. Closing remarks

By way of conclusion, I can now summarise the results, draw conclusions, and, in the process, offer pointers to and suggestions for further research. The assumptions that students would display hostility towards receiving feedback from peers, unwillingness to provide feedback to peers, or that they would lack the competence to engage in peer reviewing were not confirmed by the data. Nor was the fear of miscorrections, which would warrant cautioning against the use of peer feedback. However, as predicted, peer-reviewers focused more on surface errors and provided less content- or meaning-based feedback than the teacher.

Furthermore, there was evidence of the preference for teacher feedback, presumably as a result of the perception of his/her role as the final arbiter, especially in the awarding of grades. The teacher's role in providing feedback to the students is one "factor [which] has remained constant" (Ferris, 1995: 33), despite the many recent changes in process writing. Overwhelmingly, student-writers expressed their satisfaction about the tutor's comments which most found very helpful,

with the exception of a few who found the tutor's comments only "a bit" (7.8%) helpful or even "not helpful at all" (3.8%). This small number of "dissatisfied" students cannot be ignored. Clearly, there is a need to tease out, in future, by means of teacher-student conferences, or interviews, what specifically, in the tutor's comments, they found unhelpful. Findings from an investigation of this kind would advance our knowledge of how the students would prefer feedback by the tutor to be provided to them (See Hyland & Hyland, 2001, for some suggestions of the forms of teacher feedback in New Zealand). They might confirm or disconfirm what emerged from the analysis of the data, namely: the preference for detailed and comprehensive "corrective" feedback (especially on surface errors) which includes the following: an indication of errors or weaknesses and suggestions of how to correct words or structures. This aspect opens another avenue for research. Although there is evidence from one study (Ferris & Roberts, 2001) of no significant difference in the usefulness of coded and uncoded error feedback to second-language writers by the teacher in the US, in a different context, using slightly different materials, evidence has been adduced of differential effect between coded and uncoded error feedback on student-writers' ability to revise (Lee, 1997). Further research is, thus, needed in the South African context.

While it is common sense to acknowledge as valid the criticism about cases of teachers' misreading of student texts, their inconsistency in reacting to students' writing, arbitrary corrections and contradictory comments, vague prescriptions, and the suggestion (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999) that both the nature of the comments and the types of problems students are being asked to revise must be taken into account, an interesting research question would be: What would be the effect of offering (Is it good pedagogical advice to offer) "specific strategies for revising text", as Zamel (1985: 86) would suggest, besides offering content-specific comments?

I conclude that the findings on the effect of feedback on revision are not mere anecdotal evidence but firm evidence to challenge the doubts casts by some (e.g. Frankenberg-Garcia, 1999) on the effectiveness of feedback on revision, although they do not constitute an irrefutable counterargument to the charge of "short-term" effect (e.g. Muncie, 2000) of feedback on revision or the quality of writing. Furthermore, the results of the student-writers' response to peer and teacher feedback suggest that it is not so much a case of choosing between these two main sources of feedback in multiple-draft writing; but it is perhaps useful to consider both sources of reader response and make timely use of them. Indeed, teacher and student responses to students' writing being significantly different, they are complementary, rather than mutually exclusive (see also Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996). It would, therefore, be both naive and counterproductive to turn the use of peer feedback into an expedient, "one of the solutions to the problem of dealing with large classes" (Mooko, 2001: 168). Indeed, of the different teacher's traditional roles in writing, "coach, judge, facilitator, evaluator, interested reader, and copy editor" (Reid, 1993: 217), peer-reviewers may only fulfil with confidence the roles of "evaluator" and "interested reader", while the writing instructor's assessment will remain *the* authoritative voice, arbiter, and final evaluator, regardless of the changes in the education system. To accomplish even these few roles, students (especially at first-year level) will need to be coached in strategies and techniques to take them through and familiarise them with routines appropriate to a recursive model of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

I suggest that process writing has the potential to change teachers' and students' examination-oriented views and attitudes when the use of a combination of peer feedback and teacher feedback becomes a routine practice emphasising revision and if the preoccupation of testing and examinations is de-emphasised. Evans (1996), for example, found that the introduction of communicative language teaching (CLT) in English classrooms in Hong Kong in the late 1980s had little impact on classroom teaching practice partly because of the requirements of the examination syllabus. Referring to teacher education, Miller and Aldred (2000: 17), following others (Ellis, 1996; Holliday, 1994; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996), stress "the need to tailor [the teaching of] pedagogy to the local contexts". Likewise, if the recommendation by Henning, van Rensburg, van Loggerenberg and Naidoo (2001) to introduce writing instruction in teacher education is heeded, it is necessary to consider to what extent examination requirements might be an obstacle to the implementation of process writing.

Teachers may consider the following as features of students' independence which they can incorporate in their assessment practices or activities: (i) the students' ability to produce several drafts; (ii) the students' awareness of more than one revising strategy; (iii) the students' ability to identify their peers' weaknesses and strengths (for feedback and assessment); (iv) the students' ability to identify their own weaknesses and to correct them or seek advice; (v) the students' ability to understand feedback; (vi) the students' readiness or willingness to apply advice from several sources; (vii) the students' ability to work independently with the help of references.

Unlike in other studies (e.g. Tsui & Ng, 2000), both types of feedback were used at the re-writing stage in the study described here. The inconclusive result on when in the writing process peer feedback would be more useful because is a gap that needs to be filled. In addition, we ought to identify teacher and peer (written and oral) feedback that works and that which does not, and to establish the reasons for success and failure. For example, it has been suggested (Straub, 1996) that teacher feedback is more effective if it is "facilitative" (i.e. "providing feedback and support", p. 223) than if it is "directive", i.e. dictating the path of revision. Further studies might want to take account of and address some of the limitations of the study reported here, inherent to any classroom research undertaken in the normal activities with a minimum of disruption. These limitations are mainly of the sample size (only two tutorial groups) owing to logistical constraints; and time or duration (over a semester) of the study, given time-table and syllabus requirements; and of design (which could be expanded). Further research through action research utilising reflective inquiry (see Keating, Robinson & Clemson, 1996) must take account of the following factors: the use of larger samples, possibly several at various levels of writing ability; research over a longer period of time (a full academic year; or possibly, over two years where writing instruction extends over such a length of time) because, being cyclical, action research may involve different components of the "cycle" being completed by different researchers, if there is a match of setting, population, aims and needs; the need to test the effectiveness of feedback at all the three main stages of the writing process (pre-writing, writing, re-writing); the need to employ different writing genres beyond narratives, because others may require analytical and argumentative skills[6] where revision has proved largely unsuccessful (e.g. Conrad

6. Hart, in an ethnographic study of student writing in which he compared the literate life history and experiences of one student-writer to prevailing theories on writing instruction found that his students had seldom encountered genres other than the narrative genre in their school years (1990).

& Goldstein 1999); the use of a combination of data, including data which go beyond written comments and include face-to-face peer response session and teacher-student writing conferences where this is feasible.

Another task for the teacher-researcher, prepared to engage in reflective teaching or practice (Killen, 1996; Pennington, 1995; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) is to find ways of overcoming student resistance to peer feedback, where it happens. In other words, it is worth exploring whether a gradual introduction of peer feedback, taking inspiration from examples of adaptation of classroom practices to students' cognitive styles and other study habits turned to good use (Jones, 1995; Sherman, 1992) or what Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) call the "reformulation of the authentic pedagogy into an appropriate pedagogy", might be a cure to students' resistance. There is preliminary evidence from attempts at UNIN in the past few years to introduce peer feedback as a routine activity in the writing classroom that suggests that a carefully managed introduction of peer feedback may produce good results. This managed introduction should be through gradual sets of student-centred classroom practices together with, rather than a wholesale substitution for, the traditional methods of assessment.

The limitations of the study notwithstanding, its contribution cannot be overemphasized. It contributes to filling the gap illustrated by the paucity of studies of peer feedback at the revision stage in South Africa. It also offers a basic framework for use (or adaptation) in process-writing at first-year university level. Besides being a contribution to the implementation of OBE at tertiary level, the study is a contribution to the response to Herndl's (1993) call for a more critical approach to the largely "descriptive and explanatory" research on professional and non-academic writing. Indeed, such research reportedly "reproduces the dominant discourse of its research site and spends relatively little energy analysing the modes and possibilities for dissent, resistance, and revision" (p. 349).

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Appendix A: SNQE110T – Writing my essay

I understood	all ☐	most of ☐	only some of ☐	the lecturer's comments
I agreed with	all ☐	most of ☐	only some of ☐	the lecturer's comments
I disagreed with	all ☐	most of ☐	only some of ☐	the lecturer's comments

In re-writing my essay, the lecturer's comments helped me

a lot ☐ a bit ☐ not at all ☐

Next time, if I have to re-write an essay, I would like the lecturer to

only indicate all my mistakes ☐

indicate all my mistakes *and* write comments at the end of the essay ☐

indicate the mistakes *and* the correct words *without* comments at the end of the essay ☐

indicate the mistakes, the *correct* words, and give *comments* at the end of the essay ☐

Appendix B: SNQE110P – Reflecting on the peer-reviewing activity

Reflect on the peer-reviewing activity in which you took part. Give your opinion about the following possible advantages of peer-reviewing by **ranking** them by order of importance from: **1**, the most important, to **5**, the least important.

I will agree in the future to have my essay seen and checked for mistakes by another student (other students), because I expect that the peer comments will

give me a lot of confidence	☐
help me learn from my mistake	☐
help me improve my mark	☐
make me feel proud	☐
help me learn to work with others	☐

If you have other comments to make about having your essay seen/checked for mistakes by another student please write them here:

Appendix C: Sample students' evaluations*

SAMPLE 1

My best experience as a writer was when I was still at secondary level. I wrote the most wonderful novel, which was didicated to my freind. This novel it[1] was talking about people who live their freinds' lives[2]. The good thing about the novel[3] is that, our or my principal saw that novel and he liked it. Then he rewarded me for that particular novels with the money of R300,00. That it[4] gave me courage to write not only novels, but different[5]. And being liking to write, it helped a lot because whenever I write anything, it is written completely. Some pupils used to come to me and help them[6].

In-text comments:

[1] *Should be removed. If "it" is used, then "this novel" should be removed;*
[2] *I think the writer wanted to mension the influence of peer group;*
[3] *The writer should explain what he/she liked about his/her novel;* [4] *Should be removed;*
[5] *Give other types of writing;* [6] *The writer used to help pupils who seek help from him/her*

End-of-draft comment:

The writer should improve his/her sentense constructions.

***Note on Appendix A.**– Double underlining here represents single underlining in the students' scripts. Strikeout mirrors peer reviewers' suggested removal of portions of text. The circled numbers (e.g. [1]) represent different comments inserted by peer reviewers between text lines, but which are shown here as "in-text comments" immediately after the composition. Suggested replacements and insertions are *italicised*; the ∧ symbol indicates the place where an insertion was suggested.

SAMPLE 2

My best experience as a writer was when I was still at secondary level. I wrote the most wonderful novel, which was didicated to my freind. This novel it was talking about people who live their freinds' lives.

The good thing about the novel is that, our or my principal saw that novel and he liked it. Then he rewarded me for that particular novels with the money of R300,00. That it gave me courage to write not only novels, but different.

And being liking to write, it helped a lot because whenever I write anything, it is written completely. Some pupils used to come to me and help them.

End-of-draft comments:

Your story seems to be relevant to the title. I think the best thing you experienced here is that you are a good writer, because a principal liked your novel, and because of his profession we should trust his judgement.

Mistakes

1st paragraph

2nd sentence: didicated (sp) = dedicated
3rd sentence: You should eliminate either "This novel" or "it" ("It" stands for the novel, so you cannot mention "this novel" and "it" at the same time). The sentence itself is not understandable. I don't think one can live another's life.

2nd paragraph

2nd sentence: ...that particular novel eliminate (s) (You are talking about one novel, not two or more)

..."the money of". Replace with "an amount of"

3rd sentence: Eliminate either "that" or "it". You should say: "that gave me..." or "It gave me..."

"...not only novels, but different..." What? Finish your sentence.

3rd paragraph

A paragraph should not start with "And."

"...It is written completely..." I do not understand what you actually mean.

2nd sentence: "...and help them". You should have said "... and I helped them."

SAMPLE 3

My best experience as a writer was when i wrote the poem about the drunked man. I wrote about the man who were drunked and take his clothis all off. A drunked man doesn't mind. But a normal person can't do such[1]. The following day he didn't know what he has done the past day.[2] Alchohol is stupiditying people. Can I do the same if i'm drunked? Who know but I don't think so[3]. Who were[4] wrong between the man and the alchohol? No answer.[5] It can be a man or the Alchohol. Tell me people ∧[6] we have to stop drinking or to limit drinking,? drinking is not good. But stoping! There is a thirsty how to avoid that. I dont think wecan ddo. Drunked person doesn't know himself and the following day he is Amised about what happened the past day.

In-text comments:

[1]*Not relevant;* [2]*He could not remember what has sais yesterday;* [3]*Not necessary;* [4]*was;* [5]*Unnecessary;* [6]*do*

End-of-draft comment

The writer is irrelevant. He could have told the contents of the poem not try to quote the poem. He cannot even use punctuation marks. His tenses are poor, long sentenses, and repetition of sentenses or ideas.

Appendix D: Thematic classification of peer comments*

Theme	Example
Error identification (without correction)	(...) my younger brothers and sisters had to go to school and my parent didn't have enough money to take them to school. [9] *sp* (...)drunked and take his clothis.(...) Alchohol is stupiditying people.[5]
Error correction (preceded or not by identification)	Eliminate either "that" or "it".(...) "That gave me..." or "it gave me..."[1] The second sentence does not make sense.– You should have use learned instead of experienced.[2]
Advice-commentary	Please learn to write reasons when you write a Memorandum otherwise your complaints would regarded as a hatred towards something may be you don't like.[4]

Disagreement-commentary (Moral lesson/opinion)	The money it would never give you an experience or courage to write the novels or (...)[1].– (...)We don't encourage the reward of money at school, he should have rewarded you with a certificate.[1]
Local commentary	(i) Your story seems to be relevant to the title.[1]; (ii) The sentence itself is not understandable. I don't think one can live another life.[1] The writer should improve his/her sentense constructions.[1]; (iii) The writer should specify what he/she liked about the novel.[1]
Global commentary	I think that this essay is okay but the language is poor.[2].– All in all your tenses have been unproffessionally used.[2].– The writting is good.– The only mistakes is that the writer use long sentences.[3].– Your English is good and interesting but make sure that you avoid repatition of words.– Try to interelate your paragraphs so as to make sense.[3].
Other commentary	This is a very good reason; I mean (...).– Actually he/she did a very good job by writing all hose enquiries.– Thanks for his/her experience, it really helped.[4]
Request for clarification	"And being liking to write". We don't understand what actually want to say? Can you specify.[1].– "...it is written completely..." I do not understand what you actually mean.[1]

***Note on Apendix D**.– Figures against examples of peer commentary refer to the drafts in which they were made.

Appendix E: Example of misunderstanding of teacher commentary*

FIRST DRAFT

Who is he in the story?

Maru is quite a young man, he is the paramount chief elect, for his father the chief has died and he is expected to take over leadership of the village

End-of-draft comment:
This is good, but please, in your first sentence, say who Maru is in the story.

REVISED DRAFT

Maru ***who is in the story***, he is the paramount chief-elect, for his father the chief has died and he is expected to take over leadership of the village.

***Note on Appendix E.**– This example was drawn from a different dataset merely to illustrate the case of misunderstanding of feedback leading to miscorrection (see Kasanga, 2001).

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