

First-year Students' Perceptions about Feedback Provision and their Performances of Writing: A Study on Ethiopian Defense University

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate first-year students' perceptions about feedback provision and their performances of writing at Ethiopian Defense University. For the study, the researcher used an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The data were collected from first-year students and English language instructors. The responders were selected from the university's Engineering and Resource Management colleges. As a consequence, 108 students completed a questionnaire to find out their perceptions about feedback provisions in writing, and the same number of students took a paragraph writing test to identify the level of their writing performances. Eight students and six English language instructors participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrated that although the students had positive perception on feedback provision, their writing performance was below average. Furthermore, the correlation analysis's findings demonstrated a negative relationship between the students' perceptions about feedback provision and their writing performances, however, this relationship was not statistically significant. Finally, bridging English language trainings should be given, English courses and modules should be updated, raising awareness of the detrimental effects of traumatic experiences on writing, offering additional writing resources that consider the requirements of military students particularly were suggested.

Key words: *Teachers' Feedback; Peers Feedback; Self-feedback; Positive Perception; Negative Perception; Writing Performance.*

1. Introduction

Writing performance is the skill and efficiency of written language to communicate their ideas and facts. Having a good writing performance is an ability which is necessary for outstanding

academic achievement. It is important for more than just an individual; it affects businesses, educational institutions, and society at large. It is a crucial indicator of students' accomplishment in educational contexts. Students' writing performance may be greatly impacted by educational experiences such as receiving feedback.

Writing, as a domineering language skill, remains confusing for first-year students in particular. These students face problems at the commencement of their studies to acquire new sets of learning practices (Al Murshidi, 2014). In this regard, Maguire (2002) as cited in Manedante (2011:3) confirms, "no matter how good and effective a written communication may be, yet the fact is that it does face certain challenges which need to be paid more attention."

English language instructors have a major role in providing their students with effective feedback and guidance that can help them figure out their strengths and weakness in writing. Feedback is very essential to improve the writing performance of students. Learners are able to assess their level of accomplishment and identify their areas for growth by means of feedback. Giving constructive criticism is crucial when students do not realize they have made a mistake since it enables classroom communities to lower the likelihood that mistakes will be made again (Halfom, 2011).

1.1 Feedback

1.1.1. Importance of Feedback in Writing

Giving feedback is a crucial and anticipated part of any performance. It is especially utilized to speed up the process of teaching and learning languages (Hyland 1990; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Ur 1996). In the context of education in general, feedback is defined by Ur (1996) as information provided to the student regarding how well they performed on a learning assignment, generally with the intention of improving this performance. Keh (1990) further states that a process approach to writing must include feedback as a basic component. When it comes to writing, she describes feedback as reader input that has the purpose of giving the writer information for re-writing.

Giving students' feedback on their performance is a crucial part of teaching (Richards and Lockhart, 1994), who explain the function of feedback in language instruction. In addition to

letting students know how well they did; feedback may boost motivation and create a positive learning environment in the classroom.

In a similar vein, Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006) discuss the function of writing feedback in connection to the process method. According to their writing, feedback has long been recognized as crucial for the growth of writing abilities in second languages, both in terms of learning potential and student motivation. Feedback changes as a writer progresses with their work. To explain this, Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006) explain that during the past 20 years, advancements in writing pedagogy and knowledge gleaned from research studies have changed the way feedback is given. Currently, teacher comments are frequently combined with feedback from peers, writing workshops, oral conferences, or computers. These academics point out that as a result, formative feedback, which looks ahead to a student's future writing and the growth of his or her writing process, has replaced summative feedback, which is product-focused.

1.1.2 Sources of Feedback on ELT

In students' written works, most people agree that receiving feedback is essential for promoting and solidifying learning. Writing experts agree that peer, instructor, and self-feedback are the three primary sources of information about students' writing (Harmer 1991; Celce-Murcia 1991; McDonough and Shaw 1993; Jordan 1997). On the other hand, according to Keh (1990), there are three types of feedback: comments made by teachers, peer feedback, and conference feedback. Self-correction is just going over one's writing again and making any necessary corrections; it is not the same as imparting knowledge to others. Let's now look at the three most popular categories of feedback that students receive on their writing: instructor/ teacher, peer and self.

1.1.2.1 Instructor' Feedback

The most prevalent and extensive type of feedback on students' written work seems to come from their teachers. Research indicates that students tend to view instructor comments as a trustworthy source of information on their writing. According to Zhang's (1995) research, students value instructor feedback over peer evaluation. Despite this, teacher feedback is frequently viewed as having a more conventional overall format (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). They go on to argue that, prior to the process movement in writing instruction taking hold, a lot of feedback given to students on their work took the form of a final paper grade, which was frequently marked heavily in red ink

throughout the essay (Grabe and Kaplan 1996). Berkow (2002) offers a more forceful critique of the conventional method of teacher feedback. He contends that in a typical teaching style, students turn in an essay for evaluation, the teacher marks it with red pen, hands the document back, and no one ever looks at it again. The students' awareness of the audience is not developed at all.

As Keh (1990) also states that the majority of writing instructors concur that providing feedback on students' papers is the most time-consuming and frustrating task. She goes on to say that educators are concerned about whether their remarks will be read, comprehended, or even result in the desired outcome. Keh advises responding to a writer as a concerned reader and not as a grammar checker or grader in order to counter the teacher's unproductive and inefficient remarks. She also says that rather than addressing every aspect of the students' work, it is much more beneficial to restrict comments to the core issues. A similar issue about the appropriate use of teacher feedback is also reflected in Dheram (1995). He says that instead of seeing the student's initial draft as the finished work, the instructor should take on the role of a consultant, helping the student create a text step-by-step.

The perception of teacher feedback has changed from its previous state due to these disadvantages. According to Hedge (2000), a lot of educators today believe that there are significant drawbacks to the custom of receiving student work, marking it, and giving it back to them after it has faded from their memory. She offers substitute techniques like reformulating comments and holding conferences. This demonstrates how much it is appreciated when students participate more directly and actively in the revision process.

Teachers should be concerned about how many revisions their students write for any given text, according to Celce-Murcia (1991). This claim is supported by Ur (1996), who states that teachers who use a process approach to teaching writing should assist students in composing and revising their drafts utilizing input from various sources rather than focusing on fixing their mistakes. As Leki (1994) points out, this may be accomplished by having other students comment on the teacher's evaluation. She notes that students are increasingly participating in reacting to writing, so the instructor is not the only one who responds to or assesses students' texts.

Generally speaking, teachers should create or implement response strategies that can help students' writing, as suggested by Ur (1996). This can solve the typical, time-consuming, surface-level oriented, and untimely technique of responding to students' work, as argued by Zamel (1985).

1.1.2.2 Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is crucial to the process of drafting and revising before producing the final result in the current trend of writing towards the process approach. In reference to this, Mangelsdorf (1992) points out that a peer review session, in which students read each other's drafts and offer revision suggestions, is a typical activity in a process-oriented curriculum. Citing Elbow (1973) and Emig (1971), Hansen and Liu (2005) further affirm that peer reaction is seen as an essential element of the process writing technique that first appeared in the 1970s. Thus, one could contend that a component of the process approach to writing is peer feedback.

Mendonca and Johnson (1994) discuss the social benefits of peer feedback by stating that students' communication ability may be increased by encouraging them to speak and negotiate their views. By enabling students to examine their peers' writing talents and shortcomings, peer evaluation also helps students become more confident and less anxious (Leki 1990). Peer feedback is therefore a crucial tool for fostering student communication and boosting their self-assurance in the learning process. Other students' input is another source of what is now thought to be the state of the art when it comes to students' writing. Peer feedback is defined by Hansen and Liu (2002) as the utilization of students as information sources and interactants for one another in a way that students take on roles and duties in remarking and critiquing one another's drafts in both written and spoken formats during the writing process.

Peer input is something that many writing scholars (Keh 1990; Celce- Murcia 1991; Richards and Lockhart 1994; Tudor 1996; Ur 1996; Berkow 2002; Rollinson 2005) support for students' work. For example, Richards and Lockhart (1994) propose that following the completion of a first draft, students might collaborate in pairs to review each other's work and offer recommendations for enhancement. They contend that the student may find this input helpful in rewriting the piece of writing since it addresses issues of substance, organization, or clarity of communication. Tudor (1996: 182) provides the following justification for the use of peer evaluation as, "Peer evaluation is justified by the idea that learners are involved in the assessment of those linguistic or communication criteria that are pertinent to their own performance by critically analyzing the skills of other learners in relation to a common objective. Hence, peer evaluation is a useful type of learner training that helps students understand how language is used and the kinds of problems they could run into when producing their own language."

This tells us that peer feedback serves two purposes. The feedback that one's peers provide to oneself is beneficial to the writer, and it also reduces the gap between the writer and the assessor. The writer also presumes that there will be a wider readership for their work. The benefit of reading other people's writing is that the reader may assess their own writing in comparison to that of their peers.

1.1.2.3 Self-feedback

There is a claim that the writers themselves may supply details to enhance their work. Hyland and Hyland (2006) reflect on the importance of self-evaluation and how students may use it to make their own edits and greatly enhance their writing. They argue that it is inappropriate to ignore writers as critical readers and reviewers of their own works. They also assert citing Brinko (1993) that feedback functions better when data is obtained from both the participants and other sources. However, other academics argue that receiving feedback from external sources is necessary and do not rely on self-evaluation. Either way, criticism should be given in a way that helps students get to a more autonomous position where they are able to assess and edit their own work critically.

Edge (1989), who emphasizes the need of giving students the opportunity to self-correct, notes that in order for self-correction to be effective, we must provide students some time at the start of a class to review their marked work and attempt to make any necessary corrections. Here, she emphasizes the need of encouraging self-correction through input from various sources. In addition, Makino (1993: 338) makes the following argument: "During the language-learning process, learners can correct some of their errors when other people, like teachers or peers, give cues or hints about them. They can also notice some of their errors by themselves, through the strategy of monitoring." The idea being emphasized is that the student writer should get additional forms of criticism in a manner that encourages self-correction. The writer, the teacher, or other students may provide this critique.

1.2 Perception

1.2.1 Aspects of Perception

Allport (1942) as referenced by Varadhilla (2016), there are three components to perception: the cognitive, emotional, and conative components. The elements that make up a cognitive component are ordered according to the knowledge or information a person possesses on the subject of his attitude. A particular belief on the subject of that attitude will be developed based on this understanding. Pleasure and displeasure are tied to the affective component. As a result, it is excited in character and strongly tied to its value system or cultural ideals. The Conative Component refers to an individual's behavior preparedness in relation to the subject of their attitude. Thus, the way a person feels, thinks, and acts toward an object attitude is an expression of how the three mutually exclusive components combine to form their attitude. There is internal linkage among the three components since they are consistent and connected to one another.

1.2.2 Forms of Perception

According to Eka et al. (2021), perceptions are grouped into two: positive and negative perceptions. When someone has a positive perception, she/he has a strong probability of winning a specific case. Positive perception is a person's positive understanding, interpretation, or evaluation of a situation, or concept. It encompasses the positive, helpful, and appreciative lens through which individuals see and evaluate their circumstances and surroundings. People who have a positive viewpoint may be able to cultivate a positive and appreciative outlook that enhances their social connections, overall wellbeing, and flexible coping strategies. This may lead to a happier and more positive reaction to life's circumstances.

Conversely, negative perception refers to circumstances that the persons disapprove of because they conflict with their own values. Negative perception is the term used to describe a person's unfavorable understanding, evaluation, or interpretation of a person, object, situation, or concept. It encompasses a gloomy, negative, or critical lens through which individuals see and evaluate their circumstances and surroundings. By addressing and managing negative perception in a number of ways, people may work toward creating a more balanced and positive perspective, enhancing their social relationships, mental health, and adaptive coping strategies (Eka et al. 2021).

Among all the studies conducted, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no any research conducted on students' perceptions about feedback provision and their performances of

writing particularly in a military university setting. Consequently, this research addresses the following questions:

1. What are students' perceptions about feedback provision in writing?
2. How proficient students are in writing?
3. How do students' perceptions about feedback provision and performances of writing relate?

2. Method

2.1 Research Paradigm

Defining a research paradigm would help a researcher to determine the direction of an inquiry. It is the paradigm that directs the type of instruments the research uses, and the ways the collected data are interpreted. In line with this, Rahi (2017:1) describes the term paradigm as, essential collection of beliefs shared by scientists, a set of agreements about how problems are to be understood, how we view the world and go about conducting research. Thus, these paradigms contain a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide inquiries for particular research.

Though different scholars have classified the types of paradigms in different ways, some of them categorize it into two major groups: positivism and anti-positivism. The positivists believe that observation and experiment is the source of knowledge; reality remains unchanging and can be described objectively (Rahi, 2017). Against this, the anti-positivists or interpretivists advocate the method of social sciences is basically different from that of natural sciences. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) as cited in Mesfin (2013), further explain that anti-positivists believe that reality is multilayered and complex. That means, an existing phenomenon may have various interpretations as the knowledge and experience of individuals differ.

Pragmatic paradigm, which is the third paradigm, tries to legitimate the use of multiple approaches to answer research inquiries. It recognizes the complementary nature of figures and phrases in the day-to-day human practices. According to Creswell, J.W., & Creswell, J.D. (2018), the pragmatic paradigm in research, often associated with pragmatism as a philosophical orientation, focuses on the practical application of research findings and the importance of addressing real-world problems. This paradigm emphasizes the need to balance theoretical insights with practical utility,

aiming to generate knowledge that can be effectively applied to enhance understanding, inform decision-making, and solve practical problems in various fields.

2.2 Research Design

As mentioned repeatedly in the above sections, the main objective of this study is to investigate students' perceptions about feedback provision and performances of writing at EDU. The explanatory sequential mixed method design, a two-phase design in which both quantitative and qualitative data are mixed, examined, and then sequentially interpreted, was therefore used in the current investigation. Since the main objective of this design is to use the qualitative data to support and provide a more thorough explanation of the quantitative results, it is essential to relate the quantitative results to the qualitative data outcomes, as explained by Creswell & Creswell (2018). The key idea is that the qualitative data collecting and analysis immediately builds upon the quantitative findings. The idea of offering a more thorough explanation of the process by which the variables interact through the qualitative support is one of the design's primary benefits.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) proposed that adult education research can utilize both quantitative and qualitative research approaches at different phases of a project, with one approach taking precedence over the other, is known as dominant sequential mixed methods design /QUAN-qual/ can be used to represent the research design of this study. This design, therefore, directs the results of quantitative data analysis to be supported by the qualitative data analysis. Using a method that connects the quantitative results to the qualitative data collection, then the researcher integrates the two datasets. This is where an explanatory sequential design integrates. This design is helpful for a researcher since each phase moves forward. It may also be modest to implement it because data gathering is spread out over time to explain the other.

2.3 Setting

The research participants were selected from two colleges that the EDU oversees. These colleges are: Engineering College and Resource Management College, which are located at Bishoftu / Debre Ziet – about 47 kms away from the capital, Addis Ababa. This university is the university that the researcher serves as an English instructor, so he used the opportunities to access the necessary information from the research participants, and to associate his experiences with the research works.

2.4 Research Participants

First-year students and English language instructors of EDU were the research participants of the study. The students were the main subject of the study because freshman students are facing new learning environment to be familiar with. In addition to the students, the English course instructors were the other participants. It is almost impossible to think of any successful inquiry without teachers' involvement. Regarding their educational background, all English language instructors had Masters of Art /MA/ in Teaching English as a Foreign Language /TEFL/ with 15 years and plus teaching experience, so the researcher believed that they could provide the necessary information based on their teaching experiences in the military setting.

2.5 Instruments

Three instruments were employed to gather data in order to meet the established study objectives. Instruments included a questionnaire, a paragraph writing test and interviews. It was believed that using many instruments would help produce more reliable data than using only one. A questionnaire is one kind of research instrument, which is a series of questions designed to get information from participants. According to Gay et al. (2012), a questionnaire frequently helps the researcher in collecting large amounts of data in a comparatively short period of time. The main study issue that the questionnaire was designed to look into was "What are students' perceptions about feedback provision in writing?" In order to determine the range of alternatives related to the students' writing viewpoints, Likert-scale questionnaire was utilized. (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) uncertain, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree were the response possibilities on the five-point Likert scale.

The second instrument was the paragraph writing test. The second research topic that the paragraph writing exam was primarily intended to address was "How proficient students are in writing?" which demonstrated the students' writing levels. The primary focus of the writing test evaluation was the students' ability to structure their ideas, content, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. It was believed that the categories would show how well the students could write. As a result, the students were given an hour to write a paragraph about "The Benefits of Learning English Language" using the previously specified categories. The topic was deliberately chosen so that students would be familiar with it in order to motivate them to work harder on their writing and successfully communicate their ideas and opinions to the reader (Raimes, 1983). An analytical

rubric technique was used to evaluate each exam paper related to paragraph writing, and it was taken from (Agan & Deniz, 2019).

The third instrument was interviews. Interviews with first-year students and English language teachers were conducted for the study. To do this, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews combine elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. The data gathered from different instruments was contrasted and compared. To reduce communication barrier, the interview was done in the students' native Amharic language with their consent. The interview was transcribed and then translated into English. The English language was used for the interviews with the English teachers. Every participant gave their permission for all the interviews to be audio recorded as well.

2.6 Data Collecting Procedure

As it is referred earlier, explanatory sequential mixed method design contained two phases. The first phase had involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data. Student participants were initially given instructions on how to fill out the questionnaire before the interviews began. A questionnaire was then distributed to the students in order to determine their perceptions on feedback provision in writing. The students' writing skills were then evaluated by the administration of a paragraph writing test. Using SPSS version 26 software, the researcher analyzed the quantitative data from the questionnaire and paragraph writing test. To ascertain the relationship between the two variables, the students' perceptions about feedback provision and their writing performances, where the former is the independent variable and the latter is the dependent variable. Therefore, descriptive statistics, correlational analysis were employed.

The second phase involved collecting and analyzing qualitative data. The researcher created interview guiding questions for use with students after collecting and analyzing quantitative data. The interview guide for English language teachers was then created after the student interviews. In order to respond to the third research question, "How do students' perceptions about feedback provision and performances of writing relate?" the researcher then went on to explain the association between the students' perception about feedback provision and their writing performances.

3. Data Analysis

In the first phase, the quantitative data obtained from questionnaire and paragraph writing test were unanalyzed. To do so, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 26) was used to analyze the descriptive and correlation of the two variables: the students' perception about feedback provision and their writing performances. In the second phase, the qualitative data obtained from interviews with the students and English language instructors were analyzed. In this case, the NVivo version 10, (computer program for qualitative data analysis), was used to sort the qualitative data into major and sub-themes.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results of Students' Perceptions about Feedback Provision

In the table below, Table 01, the items were designed to know about students' perceptions about feedback provision. Among the question items, the first item was mainly designed if receiving comments from peers supported the students to write better.

Table 01: Students' Perceptions about Feedback Provision

Items		SDA		DA		UD		A		SA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1-Getting comments and corrections from peers helps me write better.	108	2	1.9	3	2.8	13	12	57	52.8	33	30.6
2-Getting comments and corrections from teachers helps me write better.	108	-	-	2	1.9	9	8.3	57	52.8	40	37
3-Making self-evaluation helps me improve my writing so I correct writing errors myself.	108	3	2.8	8	7.4	5	4.6	50	46.3	42	38.9

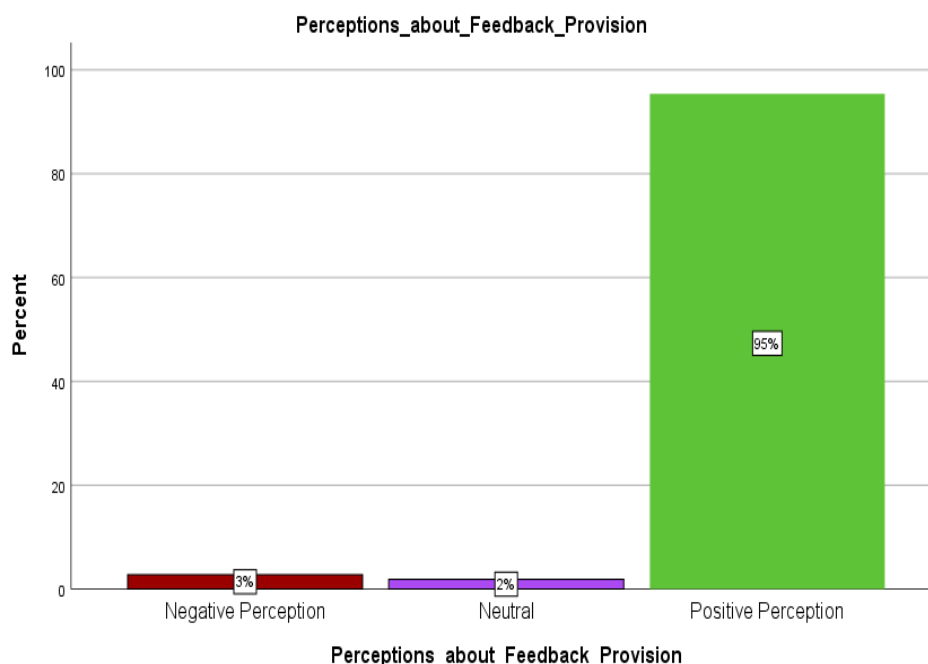
In this regard, the majority of the respondents, (83.4%=52.8 agree and 30.6% strongly agree), reported that peers feedback could help them improve their writing. A very small number of the

students, (4.7%=2.8% disagree and 1.9% strongly disagree), disagreed when the rest of the students, (12%), preferred the undecided alternative. Similarly, for the second item, the majority of the students, (89.8%=52.8 agree and 37% strongly agree), reported that English instructors' comments and corrections could help them develop to write well. A very small number of the students, (1.9%= disagree), disagreed when the rest of the students, (8.3%), preferred the undecided alternative. Thus, it is possible to infer that the students have positive views on peers and instructors feedbacks that are essential for a good writing. As students gain the ability to accept constructive criticism, it promotes critical thinking and collaborative learning to improve their writing abilities.

The third item, which asked if making self-evaluation helped students improve their writing and then made corrections of writing errors by themselves. For this item, majority of the respondents, (85.2%=46.3 agree and 38.9% strongly agree), stated that self-evaluation helped them improve their writing. Contrarily, few of the respondents, (10.2%=7.4% disagree and 2.8% strongly disagree), disagreed when a few of the participants, (4.6%), remained neutral. The results indicate that the students might have been aware that self-evaluation enabled them to assess their own works critically, highlighting both their strengths and opportunities for successful writing abilities.

To conclude, the findings indicate that students see peers and English instructors' feedback favorably believe that it is crucial to improve their writing. They also understand that they would become better writers as a result of accepting constructive criticism, which encourages critical thinking and collaborative learning. The findings also imply that students understand the importance of evaluating themselves while evaluating their own work may pinpoint their areas of strength and progress in doing writing exercises, which can help them become more proficient writers. The following bar chart shows the students' general perceptions about feedback provision as positive and negative including those who remained neutral.

Figure 01: Students' Perception about Feedback Provision



As it is shown in the above bar chart, the result indicates that overwhelming majority of the respondents, 95%, have positive perception about feedback provision in learning writing. Only few of the respondents, 3%, have negative perception and the rest, 2%, of them chosen the neutral alternative. These may indicate that the students have a positive perception about peer, instructors' and self-feedback.

The students who receive instructors' and peer feedback on writing reveals several benefits to improve their writing skills. Some of the interviewees replied that English instructors' and peer comments would contribute for their writing improvement and as they often receive comments from their instructors. On the benefits of accepting English language instructors' feedback, S05 and S08 said that teachers' comment could improve their writing. For example, S08 said, "I really appreciate the teachers' feedback during written practice. Because the teacher has more courses and more practice than me, he has learned, and I follow what the teacher gives me properly. I will implement that as well." Similarly, S05 stated that receiving feedback could support to improve

one's knowledge and skill and to learn more. Generally, students who accept teachers' feedback believe to make improvements in writing. In this discussion, S01 means Student 01 and all interviewed students are labeled from S01 - S08.

To the contrary, some of the interviewees responded though they recognized that feedback could help them write better, they couldn't receive any from their English instructors. For this confirmation, S01 responded, "There is no teacher here to pay attention. They gave us before. Now, as you know, because technology is increasing, you go at that speed, and no one checks your writing, and so on." In a similar way, S02 has never seen it as a focus in her writing practices. The responses may highlight the importance of constructive feedback in writing; however, it also suggests that instructors need to be aware of the way feedback is delivered to ensure encouraging and not discouraging.

In relation to peers' feedback, the majority of the students answered positively that peer feedback could help them improve their writing skill. Peers' feedback as a useful resource for professional development, students can improve their performance by cooperating and accepting helpful criticism. In this vein, S05, S07 and S08 responded that peer feedback could improve their writing. For example, S08 said,

We often discuss this English together with my peers. And we exchange ideas. Because the opinion of many people says something better, we say it. And if their idea is right, I will accept it. This is the kind of thing we follow. Because I often accept it when you find someone else is a better reader than me.

Additionally, S05 described his friends as his mirrors. He said, "I have to accept the comments of my peers. Problems that I don't see, problems that are invisible to me, stand out to my friends. So, my friends are my mirrors to me. Therefore, I consider it as a big advantage for me to accept their comments." Metaphorically, here mirror is used to look at the positive and negative side of a student's writing through peer criticism in which one can clearly see all sides.

On the other hand, S01, S03 and S06 said that however they knew the usefulness of peer feedback, they have never practiced it. For instance, S03 replied that he had never done writing exercises like that with his peers. If he did, he would accept it, but he had never commented. The other interviewee, S01 also replied that he had never given much attention to it. He said it as,

In our writings, we can criticize each other. What we often do is because we don't pay that much attention to knowledge and not that much attention to writing, that we don't get that much acceptance. We all accept that.

In this part of the interview, the researcher also asked students if their English instructors helped them in commenting during writing practices. In this regard most of the students responded that their English instructors helped them in commenting on their writing practices. In relation to this, for example, S07 said, “Yes, the teacher helps me. It means correcting the mistakes that I encounter while writing. The teachers support me in that way.” These points are necessity for ongoing support and perhaps a more personalized approach to address individual writing weaknesses. Encouraging students can help them positively understanding in writing, and feedback as a pathway to improvement rather than criticism.

Feedback allows students to learn from their mistakes. In a process of writing, receiving feedback, helps deepen their understanding of effective writing. Teachers' comments can also introduce new perspectives and ideas that students may not have considered. This can expand their thinking and improve the depth of their writing. Accepting peers and teachers' comments on writing is a crucial part of the learning process. It is not only helping students improve their writing skills, but also contributes to their overall academic success, professional preparedness, and personal growth. By embracing feedback, students can develop a more positive attitude towards writing and continuous improvement. In relation to this, Byrne (1988) supports that instructors must also provide students with positive feedback indicating not only their mistakes but their good points as well. In this approach, the learners will identify that they make improvement, on the one hand, and the other hand, their interest in writing will be reinforced.

On the other hand, English instructors were interviewed. One of the purposes of the English instructors' interviews was to find out students' views towards handling of instructors' and peers' feedback. In this discussion, EI01 means English instructor 01 and all interviewed instructors are labeled from EI01 - EI06. The English instructors were asked if their students positively received comments given by their English instructors and their friends. In this regard, EI01 and EI02 said that peer's feedback was better than instructors.

However, peer feedback helps students stay engaged, but English instructors don't always use it. In this case, EI02 said that peer feedback was not a preferred mechanism in English language

teaching. He added, though teachers' feedback was widely used, the students gave it less attention to it. He literally stated,

The problem is, I think, the problem is they always relate teachers' corrections with grade, not actually with improving themselves. When it comes to peer corrections, we don't even allow that because students get frustrated very easily especially, our students are adult students. If they are corrected by their peers, they may be frustrated so we don't allow that. We don't usually use that mechanism even though the mechanism is appropriate, but teachers' corrections are very much used, but students believe the corrections given by their teachers undermine it. That is their problem.

Differently, the other interviewees, EI03 and EI06, believed peer feedback was better than instructors' feedback. They argued that students were more comfortable in receiving comments of their peers than instructors. For example, EI06 said,

Yeah, for most students, they may think the instructors' feedback is good to improve their writing skill, but they are not certain about their peers' correction. Therefore, in most cases, they may not consider their peer correction as correct feedback for them. Therefore, they neglect that.

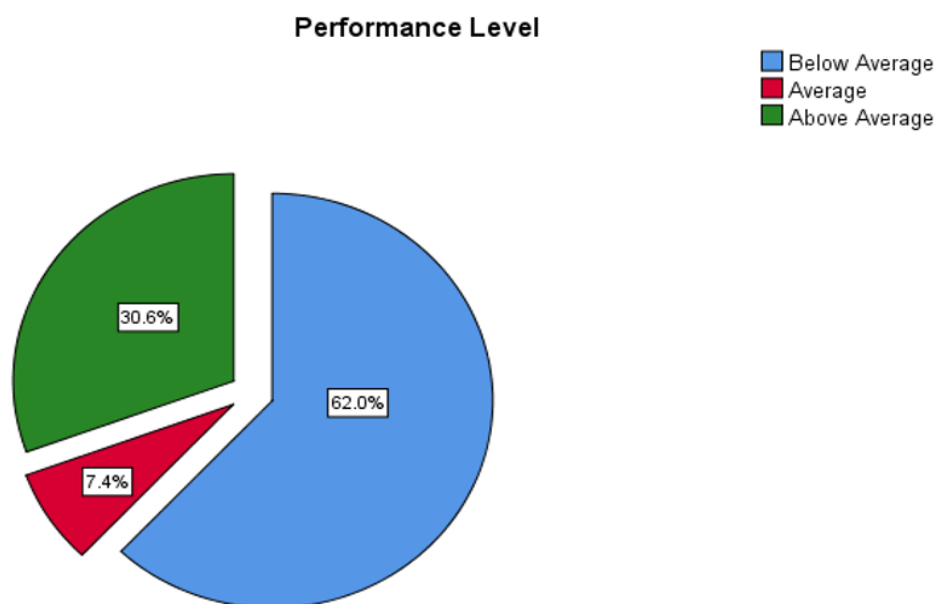
The results show that students' perceptions in getting feedback and putting it into practice were dissimilar. Therefore, from the instructors' responses we understand that the students' perceptions about criticism or comments reflected in different ways; some take it to heart, while others ignore it. Although feedback is appreciated, there is still little use of it in practice. Only some of the students perceive feedback seriously, and others do not use it for progress. However, peers and teachers' feedback have value in writing development, students do not frequently apply it to their writing improvement.

4.2 Results of Students' Writing Performances

The main objective of this section is to assess the students' writing abilities. This was made possible by giving the students a paragraph-writing test. It is believed that the students' writing performances were analyzed using the evaluation rubric tool. To categorize the students' writing

performances as below average, average, or above average, each paragraph was analyzed. The following pie-chart shows the students' writing performance level.

Figure 02: Students' Writing Performance Level



With a sizable majority (62%) performing below average, the distribution of student writing performance appears to be notably out of balance. The fact that 30.6% of students receive higher-than-average scores, however, suggests that some students were doing really well. This might be due to a mix of personal qualities, successful teaching methods, or the availability of extra support networks. The rest, 7.4% of students had average results, which might indicate that they were struggling to reach average scores or that they were doing regularly in the middle range. The distribution emphasized the necessity of focused interventions to help students who were performing below average while also recognizing and enhancing the writing abilities of those who were performing above average.

To check the correctness of the findings and evaluate the level of agreement between the two raters' evaluations, the Cohen's Kappa coefficient was employed. The calculated Cohen's Kappa result ($k=0.621$), which lies between 0.61 and 0.80, showed that the two raters had a high degree of agreement. This suggests that despite the subjective nature of the paragraph writing test, there was not much of a score discrepancy between the two raters. Because of the great level of agreement, the paragraph writing test rating is therefore more reliable.

In relation to students' writing performance, the students were interviewed as well. The first question that the students were asked was about how they rate their writing performance. The guiding question was mainly designed to know what the students perceive about their level of writing performance with their actual writing performance. In this regard, except one student who rated herself as below average, the rest rated their level of performances as average and above average.

One of the students, S06, said, "I consider my own writing level to be about average. The reason I said this is not because I was tested or said that I am average, but based on the results I get from random assignments or some classwork, I think it is average." The other student, S05, who rated his writing level as above average said that even if he didn't fully convey the idea he wanted, he thought he could present and write a text as he wanted to convey it.

In the same manner, the English instructors were asked how they would rate their students' writing level. Except EI04, all instructors, EI01, EI02, EI03, EI05 and EI06, said that the level of their students' writing was below average. Unlike other instructors who rated most of the students as below average, EI04 rated them average. The finding showed that the majority of the instructors leveled their students' writing performance as below average.

In order to comprehend the reasons of students' poor writing performance, the instructors were determined that this problem was caused by many factors. For example, EI05 leveled students' writing performance below average and reflected some of the factors that influenced them. He said,

The majority of the students are below average due to their academic background, lack of motivating environment, class size matters, the process they came to during their high school learning. I guess, most of the teachers concentrate on grammar and vocabulary teaching. No room is given for writing skills, and with other factors.

From the given responses, it can be understood that English language instructors leveled their students' writing performance below average.

4.3. Correlation Analysis between Students' Perceptions about Feedback Provision and Performances of writing

The association between two or more quantitative variables is referred to as "correlation" in correlation analysis (Gogtay & Thatte, 2017). Correlation analysis is a statistical method for figuring out the degree and direction of a relationship between two variables. It aids in determining if and how strongly two variables are related. In order to show the association between students' perceptions about feedback provision and their writing performances, this study used correlation analysis. The following table shows the relationship between students' perceptions about feedback provision and their writing performances

Table 04: The Spearman's rho Correlation between Students' Perceptions about Feedback Provision and their Performances of Writing

			Perception of Writing	Performance of Writing
Spearman's rho	Perceptions about Feedback Provision	Correlation	1	-0.073
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.451
	Performance of Writing	N		108
		Correlation	-0.073	1
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.451	-
		N	108	108

The Spearman's rho results of -0.073 indicates a moderately negative correlation between students' perceptions about feedback provision and their actual writing performance. This demonstrates that, although the relationship is weak, writing performance somewhat decreases as their perception about feedback provision increases (or vice versa). The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.451 is more than the usual cutoff limit of 0.05. Since the link is not statistically significant, this suggests that there is no convincing evidence.

The weak and non-significant correlation suggests that students' perceptions about feedback provision in writing may not align with their actual performance. Priority should be given to strategies that align students' self-assessments with their performance. Activities such as guided self-assessments, peer evaluations, and formative feedback might be used to close this gap. The absence of significance necessitates looking into additional factors that could affect the relationship between the students' perceptions about feedback provision and performances of writing.

5. Conclusion

The findings showed that students' perceptions on receiving and using criticism differed. We may thus infer from the teachers' interviews that students' views of criticism or comments varied; some take it personally, while others choose to disregard it. Feedback is valued, but its practical use is still limited. Some students do not use feedback to advance, and only a small percentage take it seriously. Students seldom use the feedback from instructors and peers to enhance their writing, despite the fact that it is valuable for writing development.

Based on the assessed writing test, which focused on the content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics, the findings revealed that most of the students' writing performance fell into below average, however, the students believe their writing performance was average and above average. The students' actual writing performance and English instructors labeling were coinciding. Many attributed their poor performance to a lack of preparation, inadequate writing exercise in high school, and a limited English-language education. These issues highlight the need for targeted support to improve students' foundational writing performance.

Statistical testing revealed that there was no meaningful correlation between students' perceptions about feedback provision and their writing performance. The result points to further study in the area. Poor writing outcomes can be caused by a lack of linguistic knowledge, inconsistent practice, and low confidence. Therefore, it is recommended that offering bridging English language trainings to help first-year university students build stronger writing foundations. The current English courses, Communicative English Language Skills I&II, should be revised to take into account the most recent findings and standards in education. English instructors should provide professional assistance and be aware of the particular challenges that first-year military

students confront, particularly the impact of trauma in writing. To continuously practice and improve their writing, students themselves must overcome obstacles of any kind.

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