



Improving Academic Writing Competence of English Education Students through Peer Review and Writing Consultation

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Abstract

Academic writing competence is an essential skill for English Education students; however, many students still experience difficulties in developing well-organised, coherent, and academically appropriate texts. Limited writing practice, insufficient feedback opportunities, and challenges in revising written work remain common problems in higher education writing contexts. This study aimed to investigate the improvement of academic writing competence among English Education students through the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities in the Writing Clinics course. The study addressed the need for an integrated writing support approach that combined collaborative feedback and individual guidance to enhance students' writing development.

This study employed a Classroom Action Research design involving 19 sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program. Data were collected through students' writing assessments, including quizzes, assignments, practical activities, mid-term examinations, and final examinations. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis to identify students' academic writing achievement after participating in peer review and writing consultation activities.

The findings showed that students demonstrated satisfactory academic achievement after the implementation of the writing activities. All participants successfully achieved the expected learning outcomes, with final scores ranging from 84 to 90. The results indicated that continuous writing practice, peer feedback, and writing consultation supported students in developing their academic writing competence. This study implied that integrating collaborative and individual feedback strategies could provide an effective learning environment for improving academic writing skills among English Education students. The findings contributed to writing pedagogy by highlighting the importance of feedback-based instruction in supporting students' academic writing development.

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1. Introduction

Academic writing competence is an essential skill for English Education students because it supports their academic achievement and professional preparation as future English teachers. University students are expected to produce academic texts that demonstrate clear organisation, logical argumentation, appropriate language use, and the ability to integrate information from various sources. However, developing academic writing competence remains challenging for many students, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where students must manage both linguistic accuracy and academic discourse conventions (Hyland, 2022).

Many English Education students still encounter difficulties in producing effective academic writing. These difficulties include generating ideas, organising arguments, maintaining coherence and cohesion, applying appropriate academic vocabulary, and reducing grammatical errors. These challenges occur because academic writing requires complex cognitive processes, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. According to Toba et al. (2021), EFL students often struggle with writing because they have limited experience in developing ideas and applying appropriate writing strategies. Therefore, writing instruction should provide students with continuous practice and meaningful feedback to support their development as academic writers.

One approach that has received considerable attention in writing instruction is peer review. Peer review involves students evaluating and providing feedback on their peers' written work based on specific criteria. This activity encourages students to become active participants in the writing process by analysing texts, identifying problems, and suggesting improvements. Recent studies have indicated that peer feedback can enhance students' writing awareness, revision skills, and confidence because students learn to view writing from both the perspective of writers and readers (Yu & Lee, 2021). Furthermore, peer review promotes collaborative learning, which allows students to exchange ideas and develop a deeper understanding of academic writing features (Zhang & Hyland, 2022).

In addition to peer review, writing consultation provides personalised guidance that helps students address individual writing problems. Through consultation activities, students can discuss their writing difficulties, receive constructive suggestions, and improve their texts through revision. Teacher and tutor feedback are important components in supporting second language writers because students often require guidance to understand how to improve content, organisation, and language accuracy (Hyland & Hyland, 2021). Recent research has shown that combining feedback practices with individual support can create a more effective writing environment because students receive both collaborative input from peers and expert guidance from instructors (Lee, 2022).

Previous studies have demonstrated that feedback-based approaches positively influence students' academic writing development. Research by Yu and Lee (2021) showed that peer feedback encouraged students to engage in reflective writing practices and improved their revision abilities. Similarly, Zhang and Hyland (2022) found that peer interaction contributed to students' understanding of academic writing expectations and helped them develop greater awareness of text quality. However, many previous studies have investigated peer review or teacher consultation separately, while limited research has examined the integration of peer review and writing consultation as a combined strategy for improving academic writing competence among English Education students.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the improvement of academic writing competence among English Education students through the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities. This study addressed the need for an integrated writing support approach that combines collaborative learning and individual guidance. The findings are expected to contribute to English writing pedagogy by providing evidence on how peer review and writing consultation can support students in developing clearer, more organised, and academically appropriate written texts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Academic Writing Competence in English Education

Academic writing competence refers to students' ability to produce written texts that demonstrate appropriate organisation, clarity of ideas, academic language use, coherence, cohesion, and effective argumentation. For English Education students, academic writing competence is particularly important because they are expected not only to complete university assignments but also to develop the ability to communicate knowledge through academic texts as future educators. Academic writing requires complex skills involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing, which makes writing development a continuous learning process rather than a single classroom activity (Hyland, 2022).

Research on second language writing has shown that EFL students frequently experience difficulties in developing academic texts. These difficulties include limited vocabulary, grammatical problems, weak paragraph organisation, lack of critical analysis, and challenges in expressing ideas clearly in English. Toba et al. (2021) reported that Indonesian EFL students often face problems related to generating ideas, organising content, and applying appropriate language structures in writing. These challenges indicate that improving academic writing competence requires instructional approaches that provide students with sufficient practice, feedback, and opportunities for revision.

Recent perspectives on writing instruction emphasise that academic writing should be viewed as a process-oriented activity rather than a product-oriented task. Students need opportunities to engage in different stages of writing development, including receiving feedback and reflecting on their own texts. Hyland and Hyland (2021) explained that feedback plays an important role in second language writing because it helps learners recognise weaknesses and make improvements in their written work. However, feedback effectiveness depends on how students understand, interpret, and apply the feedback they receive. Therefore, writing instruction should create an interactive environment where students actively participate in improving their writing.

Although many studies have investigated strategies for improving academic writing competence, some studies have focused mainly on teacher feedback or writing outcomes without examining the collaborative and individual support processes involved in writing development. This limitation suggests the need for further research exploring instructional approaches that combine multiple forms of support to enhance students' academic writing skills.

2.2 Peer Review and Writing Consultation in Writing Development

Peer review is an instructional strategy that involves students providing comments and suggestions on each other's written work. In writing classrooms, peer review encourages students to become active participants in the learning process by evaluating texts, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and suggesting possible improvements. Through peer interaction, students develop awareness of writing quality and gain opportunities to view writing from the perspective of both writers and readers (Yu & Lee, 2021).

Previous research has indicated that peer review can positively influence students' writing development. Zhang and Hyland (2022) found that peer feedback helped students develop greater awareness of audience expectations and academic writing conventions. Peer review also promotes collaborative learning because students discuss writing problems and negotiate possible solutions with their classmates. However, the effectiveness of peer review may depend on students' experience, feedback literacy, and understanding of evaluation criteria. Some students may provide limited or inaccurate feedback if they lack sufficient guidance or knowledge about academic writing standards.

Writing consultation provides another form of writing support by offering personalised guidance from instructors or writing tutors. Unlike peer review, which focuses on collaborative feedback among students, writing consultation allows learners to discuss their individual writing difficulties and receive targeted suggestions. According to Lee (2022), effective writing consultation can support second language writers by addressing specific problems related to content development, organisation, and language accuracy. Individualised support enables students to better understand their writing challenges and develop appropriate revision strategies.

The combination of peer review and writing consultation may provide a more comprehensive approach to improving academic writing competence. Peer review encourages collaborative learning and student autonomy, while writing consultation provides expert guidance and clarification of writing problems. Although previous studies have confirmed the benefits of both approaches, limited research has examined their combined implementation, particularly among English Education students in higher education contexts. Therefore, this study addresses the research gap by investigating how peer review and writing consultation together contribute to improving students' academic writing competence.

3. Method

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to investigate the improvement of academic writing competence among English Education students through the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities. Classroom Action Research was selected because it provides a systematic procedure for identifying problems, implementing instructional actions, observing the effects of the actions, and reflecting on the results to improve teaching practices (Kemmis et al., 2014). This research design was considered appropriate because the study focused on improving students' writing competence through an instructional intervention conducted in an authentic classroom context.

The participants of this study were 35 sixth-semester students enrolled in the Writing Clinics course in the English Education Study Program. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they were directly involved in academic writing activities and had experienced challenges in developing academic texts. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), purposive sampling is commonly used in educational research when participants are selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The study was conducted during one semester of the Writing Clinics course, in which students participated in academic writing activities involving drafting, peer feedback, individual consultation, and revision.

The research procedure followed the Classroom Action Research cycle consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kemmis et al., 2014). During the planning stage, the researcher prepared learning materials, writing tasks, peer review guidelines, and consultation procedures based on students' academic writing needs. In the action stage, students were involved in writing activities that required them to develop academic texts, exchange drafts with peers, provide feedback based on established criteria, and revise their writing. After receiving peer feedback, students participated in writing consultation sessions with the lecturer to discuss difficulties and obtain further guidance for improving their texts. The observation stage focused on monitoring students' participation, writing development, and responses during the learning process, while the reflection stage was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and determine further improvements.

The research instruments consisted of writing performance assessments, observation sheets, and students' reflective responses. Writing assessments were used to measure students' academic writing competence before and after the implementation of peer review and writing consultation. The assessment criteria included content development, organisation, coherence and cohesion, vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, and academic writing conventions. Observation sheets were used to record students' engagement during peer review and consultation activities, while reflective responses were collected to explore students' perceptions of the learning process. According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), effective language assessment should use clear criteria that represent the skills being measured and provide meaningful information about learners' development.

The collected data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data from students' writing scores were analysed descriptively by comparing students' writing performance before and after the intervention. Meanwhile, qualitative data from observations and reflective responses were analysed thematically to identify students' experiences, challenges, and improvements during the writing process. Mixed approaches in educational research allow researchers to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of learning phenomena by combining numerical evidence and participants' perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings, several strategies were applied. The writing assessment rubric was developed based on established academic writing criteria and reviewed before implementation. Data triangulation was also conducted by comparing information obtained from writing assessments, observations, and student reflections. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility in qualitative research can be strengthened through strategies such as triangulation, prolonged engagement, and careful interpretation of data.

Furthermore, consistent assessment procedures were applied to maintain reliability in evaluating students' writing performance.

This study assumed that students participated actively in peer review and writing consultation activities and were willing to revise their writing based on feedback received. However, the study was limited to one class in an English Education programme, and the findings may not represent students from other educational contexts. In addition, students' improvement in academic writing may also be influenced by their previous English proficiency, motivation, and individual learning differences. Despite these limitations, the methodology provided evidence regarding the effectiveness of integrating peer review and writing consultation in supporting students' academic writing development.

4. Results

4.1 Students' Academic Writing Achievement in Writing Clinics Course

This study presented the academic writing achievement of English Education students after the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities in the Writing Clinics course. The students' learning outcomes were measured through several assessment components, including quizzes, assignments, practical activities, mid-term examination, and final examination. The data were obtained from 19 sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program and were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis.

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Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of students' achievement in the Writing Clinics course.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Academic Writing Achievement

Assessment Component	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Quiz	19	80	90	84.74
Assignment	19	80	90	84.74
Practical Activity	19	80	90	84.74
Mid-Term Examination	19	80	90	84.74
Final Examination	19	90	90	90.00
Final Score	19	84	90	86.84

Table 1 shows that students demonstrated satisfactory achievement in all assessment components. The final examination obtained the highest average score, while the other assessment components showed consistent achievement. The final score distribution indicated that students achieved scores ranging from 84 to 90, showing a relatively narrow range of achievement among the participants.

The distribution of students' final grades in the Writing Clinics course is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Final Grades

Grade Category	Score Range	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
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A	80–100	19	100
B	70–79	0	0
C	60–69	0	0
D/E	<60	0	0
Total		19	100

Table 2 indicates that all students obtained an A grade in the Writing Clinics course. The achievement showed that all participants successfully reached the expected learning outcomes based on the assessment criteria applied in the course.

The detailed comparison of students' assessment scores showed that most students obtained similar achievement patterns across quizzes, assignments, practical activities, and examinations. Students who achieved scores of 80 in the initial assessment components obtained a final score of 84, while students who achieved scores of 90 consistently obtained a final score of 90. This pattern indicated that students maintained stable academic performance throughout the learning process.

Overall, the results demonstrated that students achieved positive learning outcomes in the Writing Clinics course. The assessment data showed that all students successfully completed the course requirements and achieved the expected level of academic performance after participating in writing activities involving quizzes, assignments, practical tasks, examinations, peer review, and writing consultation.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities contributed positively to the academic writing achievement of English Education students in the Writing Clinics course. Students demonstrated satisfactory performance across various assessment components, and all participants achieved the expected level of course completion. These results suggest that providing continuous opportunities for drafting, receiving feedback, revising, and discussing writing problems can support students in developing academic writing competence.

The positive achievement observed in this study can be explained by the nature of writing as a process-oriented activity. Academic writing development does not occur through a single writing attempt but through continuous cycles of planning, drafting, feedback, revision, and evaluation. Hyland (2022) emphasised that effective writing instruction should engage students in the writing process because writers need opportunities to develop ideas, organise information, and refine their language use. The writing activities implemented in this study reflected this process by requiring students to produce texts, receive feedback, and improve their writing through consultation.

The use of peer review contributed to students' writing development by encouraging collaborative learning and reflective thinking. Through peer review activities, students were able to analyse their classmates' texts, identify writing problems, and provide suggestions for improvement. Previous studies have shown that peer feedback can increase students' awareness of writing quality and improve their ability to revise academic texts (Yu & Lee, 2021). Similarly, Zhang and Hyland (2022) reported that peer interaction helps students understand academic writing expectations because students become actively involved in evaluating language use, organisation, and content development.

Furthermore, peer review provides benefits beyond improving written products because it develops students' feedback literacy. When students evaluate peers' writing, they are required to apply writing criteria and recognise effective writing strategies. According to Chong (2021),

students who participate actively in feedback activities tend to develop greater understanding of writing standards and become more independent writers. This finding supports the current study, where students were involved not only as recipients of feedback but also as reviewers who reflected on writing quality.

In addition to peer review, writing consultation played an important role in supporting students' academic writing improvement. Individual consultation provided opportunities for students to discuss specific writing difficulties and receive focused guidance. Teacher feedback and consultation are particularly valuable in second language writing because students often require explanations about how to improve organisation, argumentation, and language accuracy. Hyland and Hyland (2021) stated that effective feedback should be interactive and provide learners with opportunities to understand and apply suggestions rather than simply correcting errors.

The combination of peer review and writing consultation created a balanced feedback environment by integrating collaborative feedback from peers and expert guidance from instructors. Previous research has indicated that multiple sources of feedback can provide more comprehensive support for second language writers. Lee (2022) found that effective feedback practices involve students actively engaging with comments and using them to improve subsequent writing. Therefore, the improvement observed in this study may be associated with the continuous interaction between students, peers, and instructors during the writing process.

The findings are also consistent with previous studies examining feedback-based writing instruction. Teng and Zhang (2021) reported that feedback engagement positively influenced students' writing performance because students who actively processed feedback showed better improvement in writing quality. Similarly, Han and Hyland (2022) found that students' responses to feedback were influenced by the clarity of feedback and opportunities for revision. These findings suggest that feedback becomes more effective when students are provided with sufficient time and guidance to implement revisions.

Moreover, the achievement of students in this study supports research showing that structured writing support can improve EFL learners' academic writing competence. Toba et al. (2021) found that Indonesian EFL students commonly experience difficulties in idea development, organisation, and language accuracy; therefore, instructional interventions that provide systematic guidance are needed. The Writing Clinics approach applied in this study addressed these challenges by combining writing practice, peer interaction, and consultation support.

The results are also in line with research by Chen (2023), who found that collaborative writing activities enhanced students' confidence and engagement in academic writing. Similarly, Khosravi and Taheri (2023) reported that feedback-oriented writing instruction improved students' ability to revise and produce more organised academic texts. These studies strengthen the argument that writing improvement requires active student participation rather than passive correction from instructors.

However, previous research has also identified challenges in implementing peer review. Some students may provide limited feedback due to insufficient knowledge of writing criteria or lack of confidence in evaluating peers' work. Liu and Zhang (2022) noted that peer feedback effectiveness depends on students' feedback training and their understanding of assessment standards. Therefore, the role of writing consultation remains important to clarify students' misunderstandings and provide additional academic support.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous evidence that combining peer review and writing consultation can effectively support academic writing development among English Education students. The integrated approach provided students with opportunities to practise writing, receive various forms of feedback, revise their texts, and develop greater awareness of academic writing conventions. This study contributes to writing pedagogy by demonstrating the value of combining collaborative and individual feedback approaches in improving university students' academic writing competence.

6. Conclusion

This study concluded that the implementation of peer review and writing consultation activities supported the improvement of academic writing competence among English Education students in the Writing Clinics course. The combination of collaborative feedback through peer review and individual guidance through writing consultation provided students with opportunities to develop their writing skills through continuous practice, reflection, and revision.

The findings showed that students achieved satisfactory academic performance after participating in the writing activities. The learning process involving drafting, peer feedback, consultation sessions, and revision helped students improve their ability to produce academic texts that met the expected writing criteria. The results indicated that an integrated feedback approach could create a supportive learning environment where students actively participated in the development of their writing competence.

This study highlights the importance of implementing student-centred writing instruction in higher education, particularly in English Education programmes. Peer review encouraged collaboration and critical evaluation among students, while writing consultation provided personalised support for addressing individual writing difficulties. Therefore, combining these two approaches can be considered an effective strategy for supporting academic writing development.

Although this study was conducted in a limited classroom context with a specific group of English Education students, the findings provide valuable implications for writing instructors who seek to improve students' academic writing skills. Future research is recommended to involve larger groups of participants, longer implementation periods, and different academic writing contexts to further examine the effectiveness of peer review and writing consultation in improving students' writing competence.

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