

*Original Research*

## Exploring Challenges of Peer Feedback in an EFL Micro Teaching Class

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### Abstract

For EFL learners, peer feedback is a useful tool that fosters autonomous learning. Allowing students to give and receive feedback from their peers during Micro Teaching sessions offers an alternative in addition to the input from teachers. It also helps in developing students' evaluating skill which is a prerequisite of being future teachers. However, if students are still facing difficulties in giving and receiving feedback, the quality of the peer feedback activity cannot be guaranteed. The objective of this study was to investigate the challenges and their underlying factors associated with peer feedback which revealed potential for improvements in the quality of the feedback and the students' evaluating skills. Data collection was conducted using a case study approach and involved the use of a questionnaire and interviews. A total of eighteen participants partook in the study, with six of them also engaging in interviews. Hesitation in giving comments, changes in power relations, lack of time, and quality differences of the feedback were shown to be the four main challenges in peer feedback. Three primary aspects, which are lack of confidence, ambiguous feedback, and differences in proficiency levels, had an impact on these difficulties. The study's findings indicate that peer feedback should take place within a supportive environment, highlighting the importance of academics providing clear instructions to enhance the effectiveness of the peer feedback process.

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## 1. Introduction

Assessment is one of the crucial steps in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) where teachers are seen to be the ones in charge of its process. Their prominent role is to correct students' errors during a performance (Chekol, 2020). Peer feedback can serve as a substitute for students to enhance their evaluating skills. In addition, their autonomy can also be increased (Faridah et al., 2020). Among the different methods for implementing peer feedback, pair work stands out, where students give oral feedback to each other regarding their language performance. This approach allows students to evaluate feedback from multiple viewpoints. Liu and Carless (2006) define peer feedback as a communication process among EFL learners related to performance and standards. Sackstein (2017) proposes another definition of peer feedback, stating that it involves giving learners the responsibility of sharing their expertise, allowing them to learn how to teach. This approach not only provides learners with new knowledge and perspectives but also enables them to adapt to new learning methods. While the terms "peer feedback" and "peer assessment" are often used interchangeably, they have distinct differences. Peer assessment focuses on students' grades and scores, while peer feedback is solely based on peer interaction in providing and receiving comprehensive comments and suggestions, removing the aspect of grading (Liu & Carless, 2006).

In relation to Micro Teaching classes, peer feedback facilitates pre-service teachers with proper guidelines to improve their teaching skills and ability in teaching the target language (White, 2007). In Micro Teaching, peer feedback can be conducted in both oral and written forms (Hansen, 2005). Written feedback requires the assistance of the lecturer and the use of a tool such as a sheet of paper or online platforms. Meanwhile, oral feedback is given by observing learners to the performing learners at the end of the teaching practicum, which allows for deeper interaction between the two parties. In addition, learners must rely on their production skills such as writing and speaking. Since gaining oral evaluation skills might be difficult for EFL learners (Seraj & Habil, 2021), the quality of the feedback given cannot be guaranteed. As a result, when implementing peer feedback in in-class activities, learners may encounter challenges, which can be caused by internal and external factors. These factors are the triggers that come from the feedback givers themselves, which are the learners. The challenges can be categorized into four aspects, namely reliability, power relations, time allocation, and perceived expertise (Liu & Carless, 2006).

Several studies have attempted to study peer feedback in the context of EFL classes. However, most research were conducted in the context of EFL writing class (Kusumaningrum et al., 2019; Ma, 2020; Wang, 2015; Wu et al., 2022; Xu & Yu, 2018). Meanwhile, studies on peer feedback within the context of micro teaching class have been conducted to investigate the effects of peer feedback (Dayal & Alpana, 2020; Kamimura et al., 2014), students' perspectives and attitudes towards peer feedback (Erdemir & Yeşilçınar, 2021; Larasaty & Reza, 2022; Srichanyachon, 2012), and characteristics of students' peer feedback (Nam, 2020). To date, challenges of peer feedback implementation within the context of EFL micro teaching class have not been much researched. Therefore, this research tries to fill the gap in literature through facilitating the exploration for devising varied problem-solving methodologies guided by two research questions:

- a. What are the challenges faced by EFL learners during the implementation of peer feedback in the Micro Teaching class?
- b. What factors cause the challenges to appear?

Investigating the challenges and their underlying factors is essential so that teachers can devise more suitable approaches to execute peer feedback activities. This will lead to more effective peer feedback sessions during Micro Teaching classes. For the students, the recognized difficulties will provide recommendations on how to handle such obstacles and enhance their skills in giving constructive feedback. As a result, the collected data can serve as a valuable reference for future research related to the challenges encountered by students in peer feedback implementations.

## 2. Literature Review

When implementing peer feedback in in-class activities, learners may encounter challenges, which are mainly caused by internal factors. These factors are the triggers that come from the feedback givers themselves, which are the learners. According to Liu and Carless (2006), the challenges can be categorized into four aspects, namely reliability, power relations, time allocation, and perceived expertise. Regarding the issues on reliability, the primary challenge is that learners may have different levels of English proficiency. According to Kurniawati's research (2021) on students' views and obstacles in EFL writing peer feedback, students frequently feel uncertain about their peers' suggestions because they believe that their peers have varying levels of comprehension and knowledge of the material that requires feedback. Other factors may contribute to this problem. In Liu and Carless' study (2006), students felt hesitant when grading or commenting on their peers' work as well as when receiving feedback from them. The same study also suggested another reason for this issue: when students are given the responsibility of providing feedback, they feel compelled to demonstrate that they are as trustworthy as instructors or scholars. Other research also found that peer feedback is not as meaningful as teacher feedback since it lacks depth and explanation which requires training to create a more efficient peer feedback activity (Iswandari & Jiang, 2020; Kusumaningrum et al., 2019b; Tian & Zhou, 2020).

In their study conducted in 2013, McGarr and Clifford observed that when students are assigned to grade their peers, it can lead to a change in the power relations among them. This means that students may not provide unbiased feedback about their friends' work, which renders suggestions aimed at improving their skills irrelevant. The power dynamic may arise because students may feel uncomfortable having control over their peers' work or vice versa, leading to a tendency to provide only positive comments. According to Liu and Carless (2006), this may be due to the reluctance to give harsh feedback, while Kurniawati (2021) suggests that maintaining friendships might also be a contributing factor.

From a teacher's perspective, using peer feedback appears to be a practical and efficient method as it requires only providing instructions on how to conduct the activity. However, this approach can also be time-consuming. According to [Nortcliffe's research in 2012](#), one participant mentioned that some peer comments contained insufficient feedback, resulting in a waste of time. Additionally, time management can be a significant obstacle as some students may require additional guidance in completing the peer feedback task, which would require teachers or lecturers to invest extra time in providing support ([Liu & Carless, 2006](#)).

In various types of classrooms, including English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom, students are often considered beginners and are not expected to provide feedback or corrections on their peers' work that might come from the perceived expertise of students. Students typically view the role of assessing and giving feedback as the responsibility of experts such as teachers and lecturers. Consequently, they may not take their peers' suggestions seriously ([Liu & Carless, 2006](#); [Tai et al., 2014](#)). This challenge arises because learners are perceived to have less experience and knowledge about the subject matter, making them feel inadequate in giving valuable feedback in comparison to educators ([Liu & Carless, 2006](#); [Zhu & Carless, 2018](#)).

The English Language Education Study Program at Sanata Dharma University provides a specific instance of the implementation of peer feedback. The syllabus for the Micro Teaching class in this program emphasizes the importance of peer evaluation to assist learners in enhancing their abilities and proficiency in teaching English to Indonesian EFL students. To ensure the quality of the feedback, the lecturer should provide learners with a procedure or steps on how to provide proper comments and suggestions related to the performing learner's teaching practicum. The feedback should cover several aspects related to foreign language teaching such as language proficiency, gestures, test items, student engagement, and additional comments about what needs improvement. These aspects should be integrated into the procedure to help learners achieve the learning objectives by the end of the session.

### 3. Method

To gather data, the researcher opted for a qualitative methodology. The qualitative approach is appropriate to be used by researchers when the problems, or the variables of the research, need to be explored. Such exploration must be conducted since the variables are immeasurable by a certain unit ([Creswell, 2013](#)). Moreover, the researcher applied a case study method to acquire in-depth data. There were two main reasons why a case study was chosen. [McKay \(2006\)](#) stated that one of the purposes of a case study is to elaborate the causal links in real-world cases. Therefore, a case study was applied to comply with the variables of the study (the challenges and the causes) which serve as one of the motives of a case study. Second, the problem or issue of this research was a bonded case. This means that the case happens within a certain time frame and a specific place ([Creswell, 2012](#)).

The setting of this research was a Micro Teaching class in the English Language Study Program of Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta. A Micro Teaching class is aimed to help students develop and improve their knowledge and skills in teaching English in the Indonesian EFL context. In addition, at the end of the lesson, the students are expected to be able to evaluate their peer's teaching. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Micro Teaching class uses peer feedback actively during the teaching and learning process. The EFL learners do the peer feedback activities after their peer finish presenting the teaching simulation. Later, the feedback will be used by the presenting students to improve their teaching skills in further practice.

The population of this research was the students enrolled in Micro Teaching Class B at the English Language Study Program of Sanata Dharma University in the academic year 2021/2022 which consisted of 23 students who had just finished their final teaching practicum in the Micro Teaching class. The research was conducted from 20 December 2022 until 31 December 2022. Furthermore, the researcher chose the research subjects based on the non-probability (purposive) sampling strategy. This was done to select participants who fitted the research variables ([Cohen et al., 2018](#)). Other than that, purposive sampling was chosen because it allowed the researcher to dig more into a particular problem ([Ishak & Bakar, 2014](#)).

As a result of the nature of the case study, the researcher used more than one data-gathering technique. The first technique was distributing questionnaires. The questionnaires were used since they are economical, reliable, rapid, and user-friendly ([Cohen et al., 2018](#)). The questions in the questionnaires gathered the frequency of the students who experienced the four kinds of challenges related to reliability, power relation,

time limit, and perceived expertise. In addition to exploring the challenges, the researcher added an open-ended question regarding other challenges that the respondents might have encountered during the implementation of peer feedback.

The second technique was by doing interviews with the EFL learners enrolled in the Micro Teaching class in the year 2021/2022. The kind of interview was a semi-structured interview. This type of interview was chosen since it allowed the researcher to dig more into the participants' responses and it opened doors to open-ended questions.

Two kinds of data were collected by the researcher, namely questionnaire responses and transcription from the interviews. The questionnaire responses showed the number of students with a degree of agreement with each of the questions. The points for 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree', and 'strongly agree' are respectively 1, 2, 3, and 4. Later, the researcher calculated the percentage of each statement and compared the results with the theoretical answers. To explore the challenges faced by the learners, the researcher provided additional space in the questionnaire for open-ended questions and interviews. The results of the open-ended questions from both the questionnaires and transcribed interviews were analysed using the stages of analysing qualitative data proposed by [Ary et al. \(2014\)](#) which include familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, as well as interpreting and representing.

After all data were analysed, the researcher employed data triangulation as a tool to establish the credibility of the research results. The data triangulation procedure involved the use of multiple data sources to validate the researcher's interpretation of the data. [Ary et al. \(2014\)](#) suggested that in this type of triangulation, the goal of the researcher is to obtain validation for their observations and conclusions from multiple sources of data. When a dominant theme or pattern emerges in the data collected from multiple sources, it enhances the credibility of the findings.

#### 4. Results

The first research question explored challenges in peer feedback for EFL Micro Teaching students. Data were gathered through a Likert-scale questionnaire where the respondents choose the response category that most accurately reflects their response to each statement: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), and semi-structured interviews from 18 students, 6 of whom also participated in the interview. From the data collection activities, the researcher has found four types of challenges of peer feedback in EFL Micro Teaching class, namely: (1) hesitation in giving comments, (2) changes in power relations, (3) lack of time, and (4) quality differences of the feedback.

Table 1. Students' Challenges Related to Reliability in EFL Micro Teaching Class

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1	I doubt my friends' feedback	4 (22%)	7 (39%)	6 (33%)	1 (6%)
2	I don't think I should take advice from friends who I consider having lower grades than me.	7 (39%)	8 (44%)	2 (11%)	1 (6%)
7	I don't know whether the suggestions that I give to my friends are theoretically correct.	0 (0%)	5 (28%)	11 (61%)	2 (11%)
8	I should only give good comments and praises to my friends, especially to those who I consider having higher grades than me.	8 (44%)	7 (39%)	2 (11%)	1 (6%)
12	I need guidance in giving meaningful feedback	0 (0%)	5 (28%)	6 (33%)	7 (39%)

Data from [Table 1](#) showed that from the point of view of the receiver of the feedback, the students tend to have little problems with having their friends as the ones who give feedback. This could be seen from the responses in both statements number 1 and number 2. There was a total of 61% of the students answered the statements with "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" for statement number 1, whereas for statement number 2, there was a total of 83% of the students answered "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". The responses from the questionnaire resulted that only 7 (39%) out of 18 students had experienced hesitation in trusting the quality of their friends' comments, meaning that they rarely had this as a challenge.

As seen in Table 1, from the point of view of the feedback providers, students experienced doubt about the feedback that they delivered to their peers. This was proven by the responses of statement number 7 related to students' capabilities in giving feedback where 11 (61%) students answered that they experienced doubt about whether their knowledge was sufficient to give proper feedback to their friends. Meanwhile, in the responses to statement number 12, students also admitted having the necessity of receiving guidance from trusted sources to give proper feedback. This was derived from the questionnaire data with 72% of the respondents answering with "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". These findings supported the fact that students positioned themselves below lecturers, hence making them feel as if they require guidance from experts which also indicated the interview.

"I got confused, I was also hesitant in giving the scores, so I often asked the other observers." — S2

"I need guidance, especially from the lecturer because there are things that need to be paid attention to and I am still palpating the materials." — S3

Data derived from the interview transcript showed that having the responsibility to give comments and assessments to peers was challenging for students. Furthermore, it could be seen that students hesitated when giving feedback because they lack self-confidence in their evaluating skills. Guidance was urgently needed since students were not confident enough with their understanding of the materials that need to be given feedback. This resulted in the hesitation the students experienced when they were in the position of observers, making the feedback less reliable from the point of view of the receiver of the feedback.

Table 2. Students' Challenges Related to Power Relation in EFL Micro Teaching Class

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
3	I do not like the fact that my friends have control over my grades	7 (39%)	4 (22%)	5 (28%)	2 (11%)
4	I feel uneasy when receiving bad comments about my teaching	5 (28%)	10 (56%)	3 (17%)	0 (0%)
9	I feel uncomfortable in having control over my friends' score	2 (11%)	4 (22%)	11 (61%)	1 (6%)
10	I do not want to hurt my friends' feelings by giving bad comments	0 (0%)	8 (44%)	8 (44%)	2 (11%)

Table 2 showed students' responses from both points of view of the provider and the receiver of the feedback related to control over the grades. Statements number 3 and 4 reflected on how students, as the receivers, rarely experienced uneasiness when their friends have control over their grades with 39% answering "Strongly Disagree" as well as when receiving bad comments with 56% answering "Disagree". They felt that their scores would be safe under their friends' control.

While the data showed that students had no problems in handing over the power of their grades to their friends, it was confirmed that students had difficulties when having power over their peers' work. This was shown from data answering statements number 9 and 10. From questionnaire number 9, there were 11 (61%) students answered "Agree", with 6% answering "Strongly Agree" and the rest with "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". Whereas from statement number 10, most students (55%) admitted that they did not want to hurt their friends' feelings by giving bad comments about their teaching performance. This resulted in how uneasy the students felt when students were given the responsibility of their peers' grades. This uneasiness came from the disruption of the roles of the lecturer and students. Students were not accustomed to having to grade their friends since it naturally became the lecturer's task. Results supporting the statement can also be found in the interview.

"When I must fill out the Google Form is when I sometimes get, hmmm, uncomfortable. Because of that, I said that I am still biased. So, sometimes I must think for a moment." — S2

"I am afraid of making mistakes like when I have already given low scores and it turns out that it was supposed to be correct." — S5

From the insights gained during the interviews, it became evident that students experienced discomfort when tasked with providing feedback to their peers as part of the assessment process. They expressed the belief that this responsibility should lie solely with the lecturer or instructor. Additionally, some students acknowledged that they refrained from giving critical comments to their friends to prevent potentially hurting their feelings and jeopardizing their friendships. Furthermore, the interviews highlighted certain students lacked the necessary skills and confidence to deliver constructive feedback effectively. As a result, they tended to offer vague or superficial comments rather than engaging in meaningful and constructive critiques. Interestingly, a pattern emerged where some students hesitated to offer feedback to their close friends due to the fear of damaging their relationships.

Table 3. Students' Challenges Related to Time Allocation in EFL Micro Teaching Class

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
5	I need extra time to understand my friends' comments	4 (22%)	4 (22%)	7 (39%)	3 (17%)
11	I need extra time to understand what I have to do when giving feedback	0 (0%)	3 (17%)	8 (44%)	7 (39%)

As the receiver of the feedback, there were more than half of the respondents (56%) admitted to experiencing difficulties in understanding peers' comments. This could be seen from the table representing statement number 5 with 39% answering "Agree" and 17% answering, "Strongly Agree". The struggle that the students had was closely related to the time allocated for conducting the peer feedback activities. During one meeting of the Micro Teaching class, up to four students would have to present their teaching practice, so the peer feedback activity which naturally happened in discussions must be conducted in a short time. Within only five to ten minutes, the observers must provide comments related to the predetermined aspects and there were often when the practicing teacher had to clarify the feedback that the observers conveyed. Due to lack of time, the observers must perform under pressure making the comments become convoluted. This result was also supported by the data obtained from the interview.

"There was a time when I could not understand my friend's comments. At that point, I was a little confused "What is this person trying to say?" — **S4**

The feedback receivers expressed the need for additional time to decipher their peers' comments, as some points were often presented in an unclear or ambiguous manner. They found themselves having to guess the intended meaning behind certain remarks, which hindered their ability to fully understand and act upon the feedback provided. Moreover, the recipients of feedback acknowledged that their peers faced constraints when offering detailed comments. Due to the limited time allocated for constructing feedback, some students could only provide brief or generalized remarks, leaving out crucial specifics that would have been valuable for the feedback receivers.

Statement number 11 also yielded equivalent results. It can be seen from the table that a total of 15 (83%) out of eighteen respondents required extra time to get a better understanding of what they should do when becoming feedback providers. Having little to no understanding of what to do during peer feedback activities could hinder the peer feedback activities because students must set aside some time for them to find out what they had to do. This result was also supported by data obtained from the interview.

"Yes, I need some more time when providing feedback because there were no, like, certain rules or guidelines in giving the feedback." — **S2**

Another challenge related to time was also found in the interview result:

"Because the time given is only 20-30 minutes, I am afraid of making false judgments and we are not allowed to ask the lecturer or the guest teacher, so I must grade based on what I saw and my knowledge." — **S5**

The time constraints emerged as a significant challenge during the interview, with students expressing their frustration over the overwhelming workload when giving feedback. They felt that the limited time allocated for providing feedback made it difficult for them to carefully consider and articulate their thoughts, leading to rushed or incomplete comments. In addition to time-related struggles, some students also

mentioned feeling anxious about the pressure to deliver valuable feedback within a short timeframe. This pressure often resulted in them hesitating to voice their opinions or second-guessing the relevance of their comments.

Table 4. Students' Challenges Related to Perceived Expertise in EFL Micro Teaching Class

No	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
5	I value my lecturer's comments greater than my friends' comments	0 (0%)	3 (17%)	10 (56%)	5 (28%)
11	I think that giving feedback should only be done by the experts (lecturers, academics), not peers	2 (11%)	8 (44%)	6 (33%)	2 (11%)

Statement number 6 showed the result of how students acted differently toward lecturers' comments and peers' comments. The data showed that more than half of the respondents (84%) answered "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" on the statement that indicated how they perceived their peers as being the ones who have control over their grades. The data from the interview also showed comparable results.

"If there is any feedback, I will take it, but if they are on the lower grades, I mean, like, not paying enough attention, I think they might lack knowledge on that aspect, so it needs to be doubted. They are not professionals, and their knowledge is still limited so sometimes they give comments on matters they do not understand." — S2

The data showed that there was a difference in how they responded to the lecturer's comments compared to their peers. This challenge was closely related to the perceived expertise that the students had toward their peers. Compared to the lecturer, students are in the position of beginners. Despite the differences, most of the students still thought that feedback from their peers needs to be heard and appreciated. This was shown by the data from Table 4 related to statement number 13 where more than half of the respondents (55%) answered "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" to the statement which said that giving feedback should only be done by experts. The data from the interview also yielded similar results.

"I feel that peer feedback is still relevant because the point of view is easier to understand during the peer feedback activity and because they are our students, so the feedback is, of course, meaningful." — S4

In an academic setting, the influence of a lecturer's remarks is perceived to be more significant than comments made by fellow students. This difference in impact could be attributed to the lecturer's position of authority, expertise in the subject matter, and their role as the primary source of knowledge and guidance in the classroom. When a lecturer speaks, students often pay closer attention, as they assume that the lecturer's comments carry more weight and validity. Despite the elevated status of the lecturer's comments, students don't completely disregard their peers' opinions about the teaching performance. They recognize that their classmates' perspectives can provide valuable insights and offer a different lens through which to assess their learning experiences. As a result, students view their peers' comments as a supplementary tool for self-improvement and future growth.

The second research question focused on the factors that cause the challenges. The data used to answer the research question was taken from the coded interview transcripts. Previously, it had been found that students experienced doubt about their abilities. The following excerpts depict the reasons why this occurred:

"I don't know if this is correct or not, because, going back to teaching, there was Classroom Management and there were things that need to be paid attention to and I am still palpating because it turns out that the materials are new, yet we only have limited time and our insight is still so little." — S3

"When I am performing, sometimes there are still many comments, so I feel like I am not good enough to give appropriate feedback." — S4

S3 admitted that she did not feel confident when having to provide feedback on her friends' teaching due to a lack of understanding of the materials. It was said that the materials were new to her, and the time given was too short for her to master the topics for preparing herself to be the provider of the feedback. Meanwhile, S4 stated that the number of comments related to the need for future improvements during her teaching practice was still large. Therefore, she thought that her mastery level of the material was still too

little for her to provide feedback. The same factor caused a challenge regarding power relations. This was proven from the interview excerpt.

“I feel like I don’t have the bravery to give honest scores or feedback because I still don’t have enough knowledge to give scores.” — **S2**

“I felt unsure because maybe this is biased and it is not good, but I cannot give comments that are too low because they are my close friends.” — **S4**

The situation described suggests that students were given some level of control or input in determining their peers' grades, which led to a phenomenon known as "peer grading" or "peer assessment." Peer grading involves students evaluating the work or performance of their fellow classmates and assigning scores or grades based on predetermined criteria. When students are entrusted with the responsibility of grading their peers, they may encounter various challenges and experience resistance in the process.

The peer feedback activity is an essential component of the learning process, particularly for pre-service teachers who are still developing their skills and competencies in the field of education. This activity involves pre-service teachers providing feedback on each other's teaching practices, classroom management, and instructional techniques. The purpose of such an exercise is to promote self-reflection, foster a collaborative learning environment, and help pre-service teachers improve their evaluation and teaching skills. However, when receiving feedback from peers, there were difficulties in understanding what the comments meant.

“In the first teaching practice, there was a time when the sentences are, like, entangled. They wanted to convey a point, for example about student engagement, but they said unnecessary things and were not direct about the things that they wanted to say.” — **S3**

The process of peer feedback during a lesson can be beneficial but also presents challenges, particularly when peers struggle to effectively convey their feedback. One major consequence of this difficulty is the need for extra time during the feedback activity. When peers have trouble articulating their observations or suggestions in a clear and concise manner, the process of giving and receiving feedback can become more time-consuming. When feedback is conveyed with convoluted sentences or unclear statements, the practicing teacher might need to seek clarification from the feedback provider to ensure a full understanding of the points given.

As students progress through their academic journey and gain more experience, they can gradually develop their expertise in assessment and judgment, ultimately becoming more proficient in evaluating their own performance. However, compared to the lecturers, students were seen to have less expertise in dealing with assessment and judgment of one’s performance. Data from the interview showed the reason why this could come as a challenge when conducting peer feedback.

“Yes, because when we hold on to those who are not competent enough – it is as if the blind leading the blind. We cannot get anything from that person. If the person understands the material, we will have more belief in that person.” — **S3**

“I think that my friends’ feedback is not so different from my lecturer’s feedback. The only difference is the depth of the feedback.” — **S6**

Based on the interview transcript, students admitted that there were differences, especially in the quality of the feedback given by peers and lecturers. The main observable differences were related to the discussed aspects and detailed feedback. Students saw that their peers’ comments have less value compared to their lecturer’s comments because the aspects being discussed lacked depth.

## **5. Discussion**

Based on the data obtained, there were four challenges that the students faced during the implementation of peer feedback in the EFL Micro Teaching class. The first challenge was hesitation in giving scores. It was found that students, when being the observers, doubted their abilities to give appropriate scores and judgments to the practicing teachers. If students experienced hesitation in giving comments, they may be unsure of the worth and validity of their thoughts (Tai et al., 2014). As a result, they might not have confidence in their feedback and make less meaningful comments that do not provide their peers with useful information. Additionally, if students are not confident in their own input, they could not value or trust the



evaluation provided by their peers, which might reduce the overall efficacy of the peer feedback process (Sackstein, 2017). According to Min (2005), one of the students' main concerns about the challenge of implementing peer feedback in an EFL environment was how the feedback providers cannot often give detailed feedback. This was in line with the research results where most students agreed that they had experienced doubt as the feedback providers (Zhu & Carless, 2018, p.4). Furthermore, students admitted having needs of guidance in giving meaningful feedback. This was related to how students saw themselves as equals, so they were still not adjusted to comment on their friends' works as this was naturally the lecturer's task. Zhu and Carless (2018) noted that most students suggested in-task help from the teacher to reduce students' confusion and hesitation when giving feedback. Another research yielded comparative results with students recommending written instructions before class using online platforms which were seen as being more accessible and effective (Latifi et al., 2021).

The second challenge was the changes in power relations. With the implementation of peer feedback, the lecturer, automatically, shares part of his/her role in giving grades and judgment to the students. With this role-shifting, students admitted feeling uneasy to bear the responsibility. In addition, being part of the peer feedback activities required students to give objective feedback as well as criticism to their friends, no matter how close they are. This was found to be complicated for students since they did not have the intention of hurting their friends' feelings. These results yielded similar findings in the previous research. During the implementation of peer feedback, there was a major change related to the roles of the assessor that moved from the lecturer or academics to the students. Along with this change, students might experience reluctance which resulted in behaviors such as giving biased judgment and avoiding giving grades that were too harsh to maintain the friendship (Iswandari & Jiang, 2020; Kurniawati, 2021; Liu & Carless, 2006; McGarr & Clifford, 2013).

The third challenge was the lack of time. As discussed previously, peer feedback involves discourses where students give comments and confirm the comments received. Still, students admitted needing extra time in understanding their friends' comments. Other than that, they also confirmed needing more time in understanding what they must do when becoming observers. The previous research regarding this challenge supported the results of the data obtained. In an EFL environment, for example a writing class, students experienced difficulties in understanding the writer's intention which led to convoluted comments (Min, 2005). In addition, research done by Nortcliffe (2012) resented a respondent's opinion on how the feedback from the audience was contradictive. If seen from the Micro Teaching class activities, these issues raised uncertainty and doubt among the practicing teachers making them have further discussions with the observers hence it would require more time to execute meaningful peer feedback.

The fourth challenge was the difference in the quality of feedback. Besides peer feedback, Micro Teaching B Class also had lecturer feedback after all observers finished giving comments, thus students could observe the quality differences of the given feedback between the lecturer and their friends. More than half of the respondents admitted that they value the lecturer's comments greater than their friends' comments because the difference in the depth and weight of the feedback could be vividly observed. A previous research yielded slightly different results on how students perceived their peers as beginners, they tend to believe that the feedback should only be given from lecturers and experts instead of peers (Liu & Carless, 2006).

The coded interview transcripts were used to answer the second research question related to the factors of the challenges. It was found that there were three main factors contributing to the occurrence of the challenges. The first factor was a lack of confidence. Derived from the interview excerpts, students confirmed receiving many comments about their teaching practice. These results were also evident in research done by Zhu and Carless (2018). In the research, it was found that there was resistance regarding the observers' abilities to provide proper judgment. It was stated that this occurred because their understanding of the materials was seen to be below average. From the point of view of the receivers of the feedback, McGarr and Clifford (2013) found that students often lack objectivity when grading. This became a concern for them because the feedback was perceived to be less meaningful. As a result, they still thought that they were not in a position of giving comments. Another result showed that students admitted having struggles in understanding the materials, making them doubt their knowledge. In other words, students still had thoughts that giving scores and feedback were the lecturer's tasks, and being given that responsibility made students compare themselves to experts hence they lack confidence. This result was also found in other related research which noted that peer feedback in an EFL environment was challenging to be conducted since the students were not accustomed to being assessors, resulting in the uncertainty of their evaluating abilities (Kangni, 2015; McGarr & Clifford, 2013; Tianotak, 2021; Tosuncuoglu, 2018).

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The second factor that caused the challenges in peer feedback was convoluted statements. The interviewees admitted having experiences of receiving comments that were too long, entangled, and indirect, making it hard for them to make sense of the feedback. In addition, the points given by the observing students were not always meaningful, meaning that there would be chances for the feedback to have few points and hard to be understood so the activity would be a waste of time (Nortcliffe, 2012). Another research also noted that during peer feedback, some students required more time to understand their peers' comments and they sometimes disagreed with the reviews, especially in written form (Zhu & Carless, 2018).

The third factor was proficiency level differences. Compared to the lecturers, students were seen to have less expertise in dealing with assessment and judgment of one's performance. This occurred because of the existence of proficiency level differences. In the Micro Teaching class, students learned and practiced proper teaching techniques. Since the students had less experience in teaching compared to the lecturer, students tend to consider the lecturer's comments compared to friends' comments. Zhu and Carless (2018) noted that when students receive comments on how their performance was thought improper by peers while they thought it was plausible, they usually waited for their teacher's comments on the issue. Taken from a comparison to a writing class, Choi's research in 2013 found that reviews from peers mostly discussed only the outer part of the problems such as mistakes in spelling or rules in writing, whereas teachers tend to give more complex comments related to the whole writing (Meletiadou, 2021, p.87).

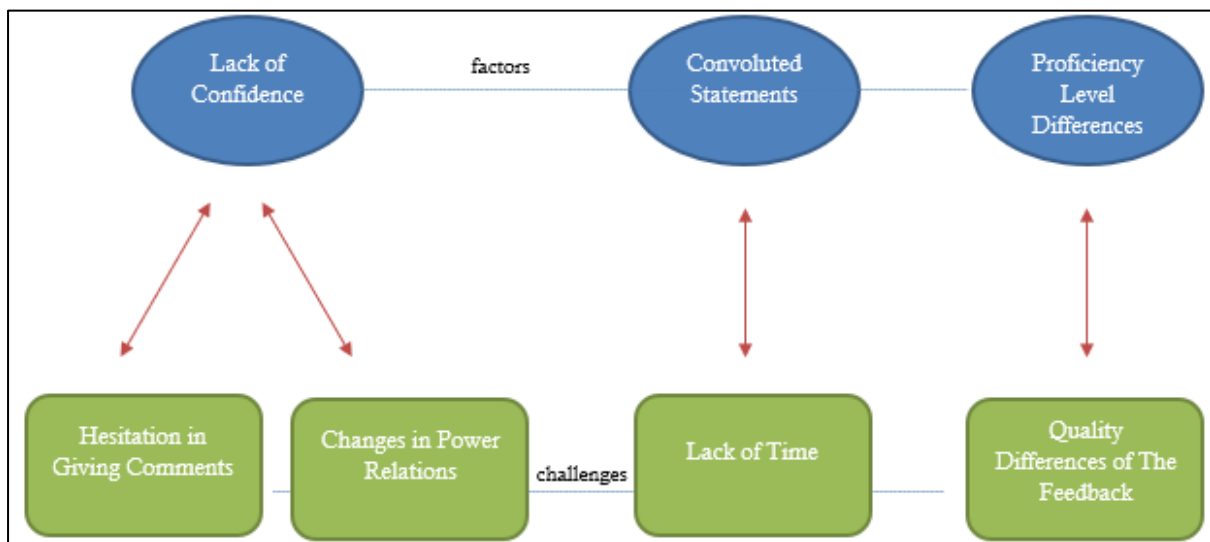


Figure 1. Flowchart of The Research Results

The flowchart shown in Figure 1 shows how each of the challenges are interrelated to the found contributing factors. Previously, it had been found that students experienced hesitation in giving comments to their peers and changes in power relations. The main reason why this could happen was because they lacked confidence in having sufficient insight related to the materials. Students admitted that the materials kept changing depending on the new curriculum and the time given was too short to master the topics for preparing themselves to be the feedback providers. In addition, they do not see themselves as equals to their lecturers. As a result, they tend to avoid giving scores that were too low or too high. Regarding the challenges related to time, the main contributing factor was the convoluted statements from the observers which made the peer feedback activity requiring more time than the allocated time. Whereas the factor of why students observed significant differences between the quality of the feedback given by the lecturer and peers was because of the differences in the proficiency level. The lecturer's comments were seen to be having more in-depth aspects compared to the peers' comments.

Furthermore, this study proposes that the challenges and their contributing factors found during the implementation of peer feedback in an EFL Micro Teaching class are similar to those found in EFL writing classes. However, the key difference of the findings is how these challenges, if not being explored, can cause disruption in students' evaluating skills development process which seems to be the prominent skill to have for teachers. Looking at these challenges from the perspective of an EFL Micro Teaching class opens new ways of how to come up with different approaches to the problems.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the implementation of peer feedback, the evaluating skill – one of the most prominent skills for a teacher to have, is developed. In the process of the development, there are challenges that are commonly found and seen to have a certain pattern in most EFL classes which have not been discussed and can be neglected since most research only focuses on the context of EFL writing classes. The research findings proved that the implementation of peer feedback in EFL Micro Teaching Class is still challenging for students and the challenges come from internal and external factors. Regarding the findings, there are suggestions and recommendations for the future implementation of peer feedback in the Micro Teaching class. When being the observers, it would be better for students to have the principle of viewing themselves as the students that the practicing teacher teaches instead of positioning themselves as experts or lecturers. The lecturer should also take part in making sure that this principle is understood well. For instance, micro teaching lecturers can provide trainings and guidance to students prior to giving the peer feedback task. Other than that, it will be better if the peer assessment activities are guided with more detailed scoring rubrics to help the observers finish their tasks.

Finally, this research can still be developed more in the future. Since peer feedback is actively used in the learning and teaching process, especially in EFL classes, future research can involve bigger populations to obtain more dispersed data. In addition, exploring peer feedback would reveal discoveries with different methods and approaches. For example, future research can analyze the effectiveness of peer feedback in all Micro Teaching classes or the impact of peer feedback in relation to pre-service teachers' evaluating skills. Therefore, the utilization of other research designs will add more depth to research findings related to the challenges of peer feedback in EFL Micro Teaching classes.

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