Effects of Indicating Reviewers' Confidence Levels in Providing Feedback

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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of indicating reviewers' confidence levels when they provide feedback during peer editing activities. Two classes of Japanese university students were compared. One class indicated their confidence levels in a peer feedback sheet while the other class did not. The analysis of the data showed that indicating confidence levels in providing feedback was beneficial because it generated more feedback which encouraged students to have interactions and negotiations during peer editing activities. Those interactions and negotiations could contribute to language learning and development. In addition, it was found that indicating confidence levels might lower the risk of reviewers' embarrassment in providing feedback. This might be an important factor for reviewers' providing more feedback.

Peer review has been commonly used as one possible alternative or supplemental teaching approach in both ESL and EFL classrooms and many empirical studies have lent support to its effectiveness for various pedagogical reasons. Peer review has been found to help students to review their peers' writing and revise their own writing critically (Leki, 1990; Nystrand & Brandt, 1989; Zamel, 1982), reinforce students' metalinguistic knowledge (Gere, 1987; Hirvela, 1999), help students build friendship with classmates with the same learning concerns (Hirvela, 1999), provide opportunities to express their opinions and negotiate their ideas (Gere, 1987; Mendonca and Johnson, 1994), and inform students of what parts are written well and what parts need to be made clearer (Liu and Hansen, 2002). Despite all these benefits, peer review has been subject to criticism. One area which criticism has been directed at is students' vague and unhelpful feedback (Chou, 1998; Lockhart and Ng, 1993; Tsui and Ng, 2000). This inability to provide concrete and helpful feedback is attributed to students' lack of knowledge and skills to provide such feedback and is considered to result in low incorporation rates of peer feedback in revisions (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Min, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000). Previous studies on rates of peer feedback in revisions have shown low peer feedback incorporation rates ranging from 5% to a little more than 50% (e.g., Conner and Asenavage, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Tang & Tithecott, 1999). In reference to

students' inability to provide concrete and helpful feedback, Liu and Hansen (2002) point out that students as writers who receive feedback are often uncertain about whether or not their peer feedback is useful. This uncertainty about the usefulness of peer feedback might be caused by their lack of knowledge and skills to discern the usefulness of peer feedback as writers who decide whether to use peer feedback in revisions. This uncertainty might negatively affect their perceptions of and attitudes towards peer editing activities, as Liu (1998) states that this uncertainty might result in a lack of enthusiasm toward this kind of activity. Like writers who suffer from this uncertainty problem, reviewers might also feel uncertain about whether or not their feedback is useful when they provide feedback. The reviewers' uncertainty about the usefulness of their feedback could affect the amount and types of feedback he or she provides. That is, some reviewers might provide feedback even if they are not sure of the usefulness of their feedback while others might refrain from providing feedback. To date, little is known about the impact of reviewers' confidence levels on the amount and types of feedback they provide and incorporation rates in revisions. Taking this issue into account, this study aims to examine the effects of indicating confidence levels in providing feedback when students are not familiar with peer editing activities. Thus, the following three research questions are posed:

1. Is there a difference in the amount of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?
2. Is there a difference in types of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?
3. Is there a difference in peer feedback incorporation rates when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?

Method

Participants and situation

There were two English classes at a Japanese university involved in this study: one class with 31 students (age 18-19, 28 males and 3 females) and the other with 28 students (age 18-19, 26 males and 2 females). These two classes were taught by the researcher of this study. Each class used the same syllabus. All the students were first-year engineering students. Each student was assigned a presentation about their childhood memories. Before the presentation, they wrote an approximately 200-word presentation draft, engaged in peer editing activities in pairs, and revised their original drafts based on the feedback they received. No students were familiar with these peer editing activities because none of them had written a presentation draft nor engaged in peer editing activities until they entered the college. At junior high school and high school, they learned English through the Grammar Translation Methods and

grammar focused instruction for paper and pencil university entrance examinations that tested mainly their listening and reading comprehension and grammar knowledge. The students in the two classes can be considered to be in the same range of English proficiency because those classes were at the same level set by a proficiency-dependent English program of the university. Students were assigned to each class based on their English scores on an English test they received entering college. The students' original drafts were analyzed by the researcher before the peer editing activities and the following overall characteristics of their writing were evident: 1) Sentences were mostly made up of simple structures, but attempts to use complicated structures were evident, disrupting the meanings of some sentences; 2) Ideas were mostly coherent but with limited patterns of transitions and referential ties; 3) Meanings were occasionally disrupted by unidiomatic expressions and/or inappropriate lexical choices; and 4) Random errors were occasionally present in morpheme usage.

Procedures

Both classes followed the schedule shown in Table 1 to prepare and make their presentations.

In session 1, the students were told that they were going to make a presentation and assigned a topic, their childhood memories. In sessions 2 and 3, the students learned targeted grammar and vocabulary necessary for the presentation topic by using a required textbook and through communicative activities. The students learned a paragraph structure including a topic sentence and supporting details. Also, they reviewed the past tense and the expression "used to ~". In session 4 and the first half of session 5, they wrote a 200-word presentation draft. In the latter half of session 5, they had an orientation for peer editing activities (see Note 1 for the explanation of the use of the word "orientation"). The orientation was designed to introduce the students to the minimal knowledge and skills necessary for peer editing activities by showing a

Table 1 Timetable of lessons and activities for presentations

Session	Lessons and activities
1	Introduction and assignment of topic
2 & 3	Learning targeted grammar and vocabulary for the presentation topic
4 & 5	Writing a draft & orientation for peer editing activities
6	Peer editing & revising drafts based on feedback from the peer editing activities
7	Rehearsal for the presentation
8	First presentation day

20-minute video clip and using a sample essay. First, the students watched the video clip in which two university students exchanged their feedback on their partners' draft. Next, they practiced reviewing a sample essay by filling out a peer feedback sheet. This sheet would be used in the actual peer editing activities in the next session. The sample essay included problematic parts that needed to be corrected concerning six writing aspects: organization, development, cohesion, structure, vocabulary, and mechanics. These aspects are from a writing grading rubric used by Paulus (1999). The students' drafts were to be evaluated by the researcher using the same rubric at the end of semester. When the students individually read and analyzed a sample essay, they were told to check those six aspects as well as points listed in the peer feedback sheet. After this, the instructor, the researcher of this study, went over all the problematic parts in the sample essay with the whole class and showed how feedback should be provided in the peer feedback sheet.

In session 6, the students engaged in peer editing activities in pairs in their first language, Japanese. The students got in pairs, exchanged their drafts, read and reviewed their partners' drafts individually filling in sections for reviewers on the peer feedback sheet, and exchanged feedback orally. When exchanging feedback, the students as writers who received peer feedback were encouraged to ask for clarification if they did not understand the peer feedback. Also, students as reviewers who provided feedback were encouraged to explain their feedback in detail if they were asked to. After they exchanged their feedback, they independently completed a section for writers. In the section, the writers noted whether or not they would use the feedback in revisions and provided detailed reasons for the decisions about their use of the feedback. Based on the decisions, they revised their drafts. After the peer editing activities, the students were allowed to ask the instructor questions on issues that they and their partners could not resolve during the peer editing activities (see Note 2). In the peer editing activities, the students used a peer feedback sheet. There were two different versions of the peer feedback sheets. In one version, students were asked to indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and In the other version, students were not (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the English translation of the different versions). Both of the versions consisted of two areas: one for reviewers and the other for writers. For reviewers, there were two sections. One section common for both classes was designed so that the instructional objectives in the lessons were reflected, because Liu and Hansen (2005) claim that peer feedback sheets could be useful if they are based on instructional objectives and proficiency levels. In this section, reviewers were asked to 1) check whether each paragraph included a topic sentence and supporting details, 2) check whether there were any errors in the use of the past tense and the expression "used to ~" and count the number of the uses of them, and 3) write comments about the content of the draft and how well the draft was written. The other

section was different for the two classes. In filling in this section, the students were asked to underline and number problematic parts in their partners' drafts and provide feedback on the problematic parts in the section. In this way, the numbers of feedback in the drafts and the peer feedback sheets ware matched. The difference for both classes was whether or not they were asked to indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback using the following rubric:

(A) I am sure that the draft will be better if it is revised based on my feedback;

(B) I know this part needs to be changed, but I have difficulty understanding what you are trying to convey. So, I provide possible alternatives. But I would like to find a solution with you; and

(C) I am not sure whether my feedback is correct, but this part might need to be changed. I would like to discuss it with you.

For writers, there was a section in which they were asked to state their decisions about whether or not they would use their partners' feedback in revisions and write their reasons for their decisions in detail. They were to fill in this section independently away from their partners after they and their partners finished exchanging feedback. In this way, writers' honest opinions on their partners' feedback could be more likely elicited without a fear that their partners might see their decisions.

In session 7, the students rehearsed their presentations in pairs and in small groups. In session 8, they made their presentations.

Data collection methods and methods of analysis

The data collected were 1) students' original drafts, 2) students' revised drafts, 3) students' peer feedback sheets, 4) observations by the researcher during the peer editing activities, and 5) interviews with five selected students from each class. All of the data were used for cross-reference to answer the three research questions. For research question 1 (Is there a difference in the amount of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?), the amounts of peer feedback for each class were measured and compared. For research question 2 (Is there a difference in types of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?), feedback provided in the peer feedback sheets from each class was analyzed and certain types of peer feedback were identified. Then, those types of peer feedback for both classes were compared. For research question 3 (Is there a difference in peer feedback incorporation rates when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?), overall peer feedback incorporation rates and peer feedback incorporation rates by type were calculated for both classes and the rates were compared.

Results and discussion

Data from the two classes were collected and carefully examined. The data used to obtain basic numeral results were primarily from the second section for reviewers on the peer feedback sheets because the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of indicating confidence levels in providing feedback. There were two sections in the peer feedback sheets for reviewers. In the first section, which was common to both classes, they were asked to check a paragraph structure and the accuracy of the targeted grammar, and write comments about the content of the draft and how well it was written. This section was designed to be linked to the instructional objectives so that the students' mastery and understanding of what was learned in the lessons were to be reflected in this section. In the second section, which was different to both classes, the students were asked to provide feedback to any problematic parts in a draft. The difference was whether or not they were asked to indicate confidence levels in providing feedback.

The numeral results from the second section for reviewers were closely analyzed and cross-referenced with the other data for confirming the interpretations of them. Hereinafter, the class in which the students were asked to indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback is referred to as the class with confidence levels ("A" in the tables below) and the class in which the students were not asked to indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback is referred to as the class without confidence levels ("B" in the tables below).

1. **Is there a difference in the amount of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?**

The total instances of feedback provided were 183 in the class with confidence levels and 98 in the class without confidence levels as shown in Table 2. Because the numbers of the students for both classes were different, 31 in the class with confidence levels and 28 in the class without confidence levels, these numbers were proportionally adjusted. Then, it was found that the total feedback in the class without confidence levels accounted for only about 60% of the total feedback in the class with confidence levels. Also, as shown in Table 2, the average numbers of feedback provided by a reviewer were 5.9 in the class with confidence levels and 3.5 in the class without confidence levels. The numbers of instances of feedback provided by a reviewer ranged from 4 instances to 9 instances in the class with confidence levels and from 2 instances to 5 instances in the class without confidence levels, as shown in Table 3. As it is easily predicted from the total feedback and the average numbers of feedback by a reviewer, the number of feedback by a reviewer is generally larger in the class with confidence

Table 2 Total feedback and average feedback

	A (n=31)	B (n=28)
Total feedback	183	98
Average feedback provided	5.9	3.5

Note. A refers to the class which indicated their confidence levels in providing feedback. B refers to the class that did not indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback.

Table 3 The number of feedback by a reviewer

	A (n=31)	B (n=28)
1 instance	0	0
2 instances	0	5
3 instances	0	11
4 instances	3	10
5 instances	12	3
6 instances	10	0
7 instances	0	0
8 instances	3	0
9 instances	3	0

Note. A refers to the class which indicated their confidence levels in providing feedback. B refers to the class that did not indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback.

levels than in the class without confidence levels.

The students engaged in the peer editing activities in pairs at their own pace. The time spent for the whole course of the peer editing activities included time for reading a partner's draft individually, filling in the reviewers' sections on the peer feedback sheet, exchanging their feedback orally, filling in the writers' sections on the peer feedback sheet, and revising their own drafts based on the peer feedback. Table 4 shows how much time was spent in the peer editing activities. In both classes, some students did not finish revising their drafts within the class time of session 6. In this case, they were asked to finish revising the drafts until the day of the rehearsal in session 7. As can be seen, the time spent for the peer editing activities in the class with confidence levels were generally longer than that in the class without confidence levels.

Table 4 Time spent for the peer editing activities

	A (n=31)	B (n=28)
Reading a partner's draft and filling in the reviewers' sections on the peer feedback sheet	15 - 27 min	13 - 29 min
Exchanging feedback	28 - 43 min	15 - 32 min
Filling in the writers' sections on the peer feedback sheet	10 - 18 min	7 - 16 min
Revising their own drafts based on peer feedback	22 min -	20 min -

Note. A refers to the class which indicated their confidence levels in providing feedback. B refers to the class that did not indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback.

2. Is there a difference in types of feedback when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?

The examination of the data from both classes shows that there is not a difference in types of feedback provided in both classes. There are three common types of feedback identified: suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, grammar, and mechanics. Suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions can be divided into two sub-types: 1) Reviewers provide alternative vocabulary and/or expressions which could replace the originals based on writers' preferences. These alternatives are not made because the originals are considered to be incorrect or inappropriate; and 2) Reviewers request clarification of vocabulary and/or expressions and suggest possible alternatives that might be better in a given context. These clarification requests along with possible alternatives are made because reviewers are uncertain about their understanding of certain vocabulary and/or expressions. As Table 5 shows, in the class with confidence levels, out of 183 total instances of feedback, 63 were made for suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, 111 were made for grammar, and 9 were made for mechanics. Of the 63 instances of feedback for suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, 54 were suggestions for alternative vocabulary and/or expressions which writers could decide whether or not to use based on their preferences and 9 were clarification requests for vocabulary and/or expressions along with possible alternatives due to reviewers' uncertainty of their understanding of them. The 9 instances of feedback for mechanics consisted of 6 for spelling and 3 for capitalization. In the class without confidence levels, out of 98 total instances of feedback, 32 were made for suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, 60 were made for grammar, and 6 were made for mechanics. Of the 32 instances of feedback for suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, 25 were suggestions for alternative vocabulary and/or expressions which writers could decide whether or not to use based on their preferences and 7 were clarification requests for vocabulary and/or

Table 5 Feedback by type

	A (183 feedback in total)			B (98 feedback in total)		
	Vocabulary/ expressions	Grammar	Mechanics	Vocabulary/ expressions	Grammar	Mechanics
Total feedback (% of total feedback)	63 (34.4%)	111 (60.7%)	9 (4.9%)	32 (32.7%)	60 (61.2%)	6 (6.1%)

Note. A refers to the class which indicated their confidence levels in providing feedback. B refers to the class that did not indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback.

expressions along with possible alternatives due to reviewers' uncertainty of their understanding of them. The 6 instnaces of feedback for mechanics included 4 for spelling and 2 for capitalization.

All the feedback was analyzed according to the taxonomy of revisions by Faigley and Witte (1981) which distinguished between surface changes and meaning changes in revisions. In revisions, surface changes are minor changes and do not affect the overall meaning of the original text; however, meaning changes affect the meaning of the original text at a sentence, paragraph, or summary level. It was found that all of the feedback in both classes consisted of surface changes. This might appear to support the conclusion that inexperienced reviewers tend to provide surface changes rather than meaning changes (Beason, 1993; Berger, 1990; Yagelski, 1995). However, the data discussed here did not include the feedback provided in the first section for reviewers on the peer feedback sheets. In that section, reviewers were asked to check a paragraph structure and the accuracy of the targeted grammar, and write comments about the content of the draft and how well it was written. The examination of the first section for reviewers reveals that in both classes reviewers provided feedback on not only surface errors but also meaning errors concerning organization, development, and cohesion, however, in varying degrees. This indicates that the students used their knowledge and skills that were taught purposefully in the lessons when they reviewed their partners' drafts and provided feedback. In addition, it could be assumed that the students referred to the six writing aspects that included both surface and global issues even though they had an orientation including the six writing aspects only once. If focused instruction directs students' attention to certain targeted areas in providing feedback as seen in the first section for reviewers which was designed based on the instructional objectives, peer training has a great potential to train students to be successful reviewers in intended ways (Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995; Min, 2005).

When the feedback by type is analyzed from percentages of the total feedback, it is noticeable that ratios of vocabulary/expressions and grammar for both classes are similar, that is, the ratio for the class with confidence levels is 34.4% : 60.7% and the ratio for the class without confidence levels is 32.7% : 61.2% as shown in Table 5. Even

though the amounts of feedback provided are different for both classes, the ratios of vocabulary/expression and grammar are similar. This seems to show that indicating confidence levels has little to do with the ratios of vocabulary/expressions and grammar. When the feedback only from the class with confidence levels is categorized by type and confidence level, it is found that ratios of vocabulary/expressions and grammar for "confident" and "less confident" are similar. The ratio for "confident" is 32.0% : 60.0% and the ratio for "less confident" is 34.5% and 65.5% as shown in Table 6. These ratios are also similar to the ratios for both classes. Taken together, it could be assumed that feedback for vocabulary/expressions and grammar is provided in similar ratios regardless of the use of indicating confidence levels and the different confidence levels: "confident" and "less confident". These higher percentages of grammar feedback might result from the students' previous learning background. The excessive emphasis on grammar for university entrance examinations in their English learning probably increased the students' awareness for grammar. Also, the L1 use in the peer editing activities might also be a cause as Huang (1996) claims that L1 use leads to more focus on grammar and usage while L2 use leads to more focus on content and rhetoric.

Table 6 Feedback by confidence level and type in the class with confidence levels

Confident			
	Vocabulary/ expressions	Grammar	Mechanics
Total feedback (out of 75 in total) (% of total feedback by type and confidence level)	24 (32.0%)	45 (60.0%)	6 (8.0%)
Difficult to provide feedback			
	Vocabulary/ expressions	Grammar	Mechanics
Total feedback (out of 21 in total) (% of total feedback by type and confidence level)	9 (42.9%)	9 (42.9%)	3 (14.2%)
Less confident			
	Vocabulary/ expressions	Grammar	Mechanics
Total feedback (out of 87 in total) (% of total feedback by type and confidence level)	30 (34.5%)	57 (65.5%)	0 (0%)

Note. "Confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are sure that the draft will be better if it is revised based on their feedback. "Difficult to provide feedback" refers to a confidence level when reviewers know a part needs to be changed, but they have difficulty understanding what the writers are trying to convey. So, they provide possible alternatives. But they would like to find a solution with the writers. "Less confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are not sure whether their feedback is correct, but a part might need to be changed. They would like to discuss it with the writers.

3. Is there a difference in peer feedback incorporation rates when inexperienced reviewers indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback and when they do not?

Feedback incorporation rates for both classes are 74.3% for the class with confidence levels and 85.7% for the class without confidence levels as shown in Table 7. These feedback incorporation rates are much higher than previous studies whose rates ranging from 5% to a little more than 50% (e.g., Conner and Asenavage, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Tang & Tithecott, 1999). The low peer feedback incorporation rates could be considered to result from vague and unhelpful feedback by students who do not have sufficient knowledge and skills for peer review (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Min, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000). However, although the students in this study did not receive special training for peer review and were not necessarily equipped with knowledge and skills for peer review from the beginning, the peer feedback incorporation rates were higher than the previous studies and their feedback were not necessarily vague or unhelpful. Almost all of them provided their feedback in detail on the peer feedback sheet, explained their feedback at length when exchanging feedback with their partners, and discussed parts well when they were asked questions.

When the peer feedback rates for both classes are compared, the rate for the class without confidence levels, 85.7%, is higher than that for the class with confidence levels, 74.3%. The data only from the class with confidence levels were categorized by confidence level and peer feedback incorporation rates by confidence level were calculated as shown in Table 8.

Table 7 Overall feedback incorporation rates and feedback incorporation rates by type

	A (183 feedback in total/ 136 feedback incorporated)			B (98 feedback in total/ 84 feedback incorporated)		
Feedback incorporation rate	74.3%			85.7%		
	Vocabulary/ expressions (63 total/ 45 used)	Grammar (111 total/ 82 used)	Mechanics (9 total/ 9 used)	Vocabulary/ expressions (32 total/ 17 used)	Grammar (60 total/ 57 used)	Mechanics (6 total/ 6 used)
Feedback incorporation by type	71.4%	73.9%	100%	53.1%	95.0%	100%

Note. A refers to the class which indicated their confidence levels in providing feedback. B refers to the class which did not indicate their confidence levels in providing feedback.

Table 8 Feedback incorporation by confidence level in the class with confidence levels

	Confident	Difficult to provide feedback	Less confident
Total feedback (out of 183 in total) (% of total feedback)	75 (41.0%)	21 (11.5%)	87 (47.5%)
Total feedback incorporation in revisions (out of 136 in total)	60	21	55
Feedback incorporation rate in revisions	80.0%	100%	63.2%

Note. "Confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are sure that the draft will be better if it is revised based on their feedback. "Difficult to provide feedback" refers to a confidence level when reviewers know a part needs to be changed, but they have difficulty understanding what the writers are trying to convey. So, they provide possible alternatives. But they would like to find a solution with the writers. "Less confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are not sure whether their feedback is correct, but a part might need to be changed. They would like to discuss it with the writers.

Table 9 Feedback incorporation by confidence level and type

Confident (75 in total/ 60 incorporated)			
	Vocabulary/ expressions (24 total/ 12 used)	Grammar (45 total/ 42 used)	Mechanics (6 total/ 6 used)
Feedback incorporation rate in revisions	50.0%	93.3%	100%
Difficult to provide feedback (21 in total/ 21 incorporated)			
	Vocabulary/ expressions (9 total/ 9 used)	Grammar (9 total/ 9 used)	Mechanics (3 total/ 3 used)
Feedback incorporation rate in revisions	100%	100%	100%
Less confident (87 total/ 55 incorporated)			
	Vocabulary/ expressions (30 total/ 24 used)	Grammar (57 total/ 31 used)	Mechanics (0 total/ 0 used)
Feedback incorporation rate in revisions	80.0%	54.4%	0%

Note. "Confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are sure that the draft will be better if it is revised based on their feedback. "Difficult to provide feedback" refers to a confidence level when reviewers know a part needs to be changed, but they have difficulty understanding what the writers are trying to convey. So, they provide possible alternatives. But they would like to find a solution with the writers. "Less confident" refers to a confidence level when reviewers are not sure whether their feedback is correct, but a part might need to be changed. They would like to discuss it with the writers.

It is noticeable that the peer feedback incorporation rate for "confidence" is 80.0% (Table 8) which is similar the peer feedback rate for the class without confidence

levels, 85.7% (Table 7). From these similar peer feedback incorporation rates, it could be assumed that the students in the class without confidence levels provided feedback when they were confident in their feedback. This assumption is supported by the similar ratios of vocabulary/expressions and grammar for the class without confidence levels (Table 7) and for "confidence" in the class with confidence levels (Table 9). The data only from the class with confidence levels were categorized by type and confidence level as shown in Table 9. The ratios of vocabulary/expressions and grammar were 53.1% : 95.0% for the class without confidence levels (Table 7) and 50.0% : 93.3% for "confidence" in the class with confidence levels (Table 9).

Five students from the class without confidence levels were later asked to describe their confidence levels in providing feedback. Four of them mentioned that they provided feedback only when they felt confident in the usefulness of their feedback. The remaining student stated that he basically provided feedback when he was confident in it, but he had to provide feedback for the improvement of the partner's draft even when he was not sure of the usefulness of his feedback. He mentioned that he was reluctant to provide feedback when he was not confident in it due to his partner's possible negative reactions to the feedback. The other four students were asked about whether they had problematic parts in their partners' drafts which they were not sure about how to deal with. All of them admitted that they had some, but they did not provide feedback on them because they didn't know what feedback should be given and two of them were afraid of showing their inability to handle the problems. The interview with the five students in the class without confidence levels also confirmed the assumption that the students in the class without confidence levels would provide feedback exclusively when they were confident in it.

Five selected students from the class with confidence levels were asked about their perceptions of indicating confidence levels in their feedback. All of them mentioned that by indicating confidence levels they did not have to worry about how their partners would react. When they provided feedback that they were not confident in, they expected that they and their partners would discuss the problematic parts to which the feedback was given. Also, they mentioned that they enjoyed interactions with their partners. One of them mentioned that at first he did not feel comfortable when his partner provided feedback on a part which he was confident in. However, his partner showed his uncertainty about the usefulness of his feedback and was willing to find a solution together. He stated that this helped them to discuss the part in a friendly atmosphere until they found a solution. As shown in Table 8, feedback for "difficult to provide feedback" and "less confident" accounts for 59.0% of the total feedback provided in the class with confidence levels although feedback for "confident" itself makes up only 41.0%. Indicating confidence levels appears to lead to more feedback. This is confirmed by the result that the total amount of feedback provided in

the class without confidence levels was only 60.0% of that in the class with confidence levels (Table 5).

It seems apparent that one of the benefits of indicating confidence levels is a chance to provide more feedback, including feedback with different confidence levels. In particular, the feedback which reviewers are not confident in would require interactions and negotiations between reviewers and writers. Those interactions and negotiations might bring about benefits discussed in the past literature, such as developing critical skills (Leki, 1990; Nystrand & Brandt, 1989; Zamel, 1982), enhancing metalinguistic knowledge (Gere, 1987; Hirvela, 1999), and establishing friendship as language learners (Hiervela, 1999). Another possible benefit would lower the risk of reviewers' embarrassment. When reviewers are not sure of the usefulness of their feedback, indicating confidence levels might ease their uncomfortableness about the uncertainty by explicitly showing their uncertainty to their partners because they can expect their partners to react to the feedback as such. At the same time, feedback which reviewers are not confident in might be appreciated because it might represent the reviewers' devotion to the quality improvement in their partners' drafts. Maintaining students' psychological security is a very important factor which needs to be seriously taken into account, especially for classroom interactions. Foster and Ohta (2005) claim that students don't engage in negotiation of meaning as frequently as it is believed to contribute to L2 acquisition because they are afraid of being embarrassed and/or embarrassing their partners. By indicating confidence levels, negotiation of meaning could be more easily initiated and negotiation of meaning leads to meaningful interactions during peer editing activities.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of indicating reviewers' confidence levels when they provided their feedback during peer editing activities. Two classes of Japanese university students were compared. One class indicated their confidence levels in a peer feedback sheet and the other class did not. The data were examined to see if there was a difference between the two classes in the amount of feedback, types of feedback, and incorporation rates in revisions. The results showed that the total feedback in the class without confidence levels accounted for only 60% of the total feedback in the class with confidence levels. Moreover, three common types of feedback were identified in both classes: suggestions for vocabulary and/or expressions, grammar, and mechanics.

It was also found that feedback for vocabulary and/or expressions and grammar was provided in similar ratios regardless of the use of indicating confidence levels and the different confidence levels: "confident" and "less confident". The data were further examined in terms of feedback incorporation rates. The results showed 74.3% of

feedback incorporation rate for the class with confidence levels and 85.7% of feedback incorporation rate for the class without confidence levels. These peer feedback incorporation rates are much higher than those from previous studies ranging from 5% to a little more than 50% (e.g., Conner and Asenavage, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Tang & Tithecott, 1999). Those low peer feedback incorporation rates could be attributed to students' lack of knowledge and skills necessary for peer review which result in vague and unhelpful feedback (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Min, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000). However, the students' feedback was not necessarily vague or unhelpful in this study, even though they did not receive a special training nor have sufficient knowledge and skills necessary for peer review. The analysis of the data also revealed that the students in the class without confidence levels provided feedback exclusively when they were confident in their feedback.

When all the results are taken together, it could be concluded that indicating confidence levels in providing feedback benefits students in that it generates more feedback than when confidence levels are not indicated. Lowering the risk of reviewers' embarrassment by indicating confidence levels might be an important factor. The feedback provided with different confidence levels would lead to interactions and negotiations, which contribute to students' language learning and development.

However, the results of this study need to be further examined, especially for the following two reasons. First, the data used to obtain the numeral results came from the second section for reviewers in which the students indicated their confidence levels in one class and the students did not in the other class. The reason is that the focus of this study lies in whether or not indicating confidence levels causes a difference. However, the feedback provided in this section consisted solely of surface changes for vocabulary/expressions, grammar, and mechanics. On the other hand, the feedback provided in the first section for reviewers, which was excluded from the main data, included global issues such as development and organization. The inclusion of this section may lead to different results. Second, peer feedback which was checked by the instructor after the peer editing activities was excluded from the data because the teacher feedback is beyond the scope of this study. However, the feedback checked by the instructor was given by peers. The students asked the instructor about it because they and their partners could not resolve problematic parts to which the feedback was given. If it had been included in some way, it might have yielded different results. Further examination of the two issues would lead to a better understanding of the results of this study.

Despite the above two issues, the study found that indicating confidence levels benefits students engaging in peer editing activities. This is an important pedagogical implication for teachers who employ these activities in their classrooms.

Notes

1. This session was called an orientation rather than training because the purpose of this session was not to train the students to be successful reviewers but to learn about what peer editing activities were like because they were all unfamiliar with these kinds of activities. This naming might be controversial; however, the methods used in this study were insufficient to be considered as training when compared with other studies employing methods especially designed to train learners to be successful reviewers (Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995; Min, 2005).

2. Instances of feedback about which the students asked the instructor after the peer editing activities were excluded from the total feedback provided because only the peer feedback was the focus of this study. However, in the class with confidence levels, 12 students out of 31 asked the instructor about 18 instances of feedback in total. If these instances had been included in the total feedback, they would have accounted for 9.0 %. In addition, in the class without confidence levels, seven students out of 28 asked the instructor about 12 instances of peer feedback in total. If these had been included in the total feedback, they would have accounted for 10.9%. A further study including the feedback excluded in this study might be needed because these percentages of the total feedback for both classes might lead to different results and interpretations of the data.

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Abstract

　本研究では，ピア・エディティング活動において，フィードバック提供者がフィードバックを原稿作成者に与える際に，フィードバックに対する彼らの自信度を示すことにより生じる影響について検証した。調査対象は，英語学習においてピア・エディティング活動の経験がない日本人大学生である。フィードバック提供者のフィードバックに対する自信度を示すクラスと示さないクラスが比較され，フィードバックの量，フィードバックの種類，フィードバックの改訂版における使用率が調査された。データ分析の結果，フィードバックの自信度を示さないクラスのフィードバックの量は，示すクラスの約60％だということが判明した。また，フィードバックの種類は，語彙や表現に関するもの，文法に関するもの，単語の綴りや大文字などの英語ルールに関するものの3種類に大別されることが分かり，どちらのクラスでも文法に関するフィードバックの量が語彙や表現に関するフィードバックの量の約2倍であることが分かった。フィードバックの改訂版における使用率は，フィードバックの自信度を示すクラスが74.3％，示さないクラスが85.7％であった。更に，フィードバックに対する自信度を示すことにより，フィードバック提供者の精神的負担が軽減され自信がないフィードバックも提供されるため，より多くのフィードバックが原稿作成者に提供されることが分かった。そして，そのようなフィードバックはフィードバック提供者と原稿作成者に話し合う機会を与え，それが彼らの言語学習や言語発達につながることが示唆された。

Appendix 1: English translation of peer feedback sheet for the class with confidence levels   Student No. _____   Name _____

⟨For reviewer's use only⟩

Reviewer's name : _____	Reviewer's answers: If the answer is "No", indicate the reason.
Are there a topic sentence and supporting details in each paragraph?	Yes / No ( )
Are there any errors in the use of the past tense and/or the expression "used to ~"?	Yes / No ( ) The number of the uses of ( ) The number of the uses of ( ) the past tense the expression "used to ~"
Comments about the content of the draft and how well the draft is written. (more than 3 lines in Japanese)	

\<Degrees of confidence in feedback\>

A: I am sure that the draft will be better if it is revised based on my feedback.

B: I know this part needs to be changed, but I have difficulty understanding what you are trying to convey. So, I provide possible alternatives.

   But I would like to find a solution with you.

C: I am not sure whether my feedback is correct, but this part might need to be changed. I would like to discuss it with you.

	⟨For reviewer's use only⟩		⟨For writer's use only⟩
Feedback number	Confidence A/B/C	Feedback	Revision incorporation Yes / No	Detailed reasons why I use feedback or why I don't use feedback
①				
②			Yes / No	
③			Yes / No	
			Yes / No	

Note. In the real peer editing sheet given to the students, 16 feedback columns were provided although only 3 columns are shown on this appendix 1.

Appendix 2: English translation of peer feedback sheet for the class without confidence levels   Student No. _____   Name _____

⟨For reviewer's use only⟩

Reviewer's name : _____	Reviewer's answers: If the answer is "No", indicate the reason.
Are there a topic sentence and supporting details in each paragraph?	Yes / No ( )
Are there any errors in the use of the past tense and/or the expression "used to ~"?	Yes / No (The number of the uses of ( ) the past tense) Yes / No (The number of the uses of ( ) the expression "used to ~")
Comments about the content of the draft and how well the draft is written. (more than 3 lines in Japanese)	_____ _____ _____

	⟨For reviewer's use only⟩	⟨For writer's use only⟩	
Feedback number	Feedback	Revision incorporation	Detailed reasons why I use feedback or why I don't use feedback
①		Yes / No	
②		Yes / No	
③		Yes / No	

Note. In the real peer editing sheet given to the students, 16 feedback columns were provided although only 3 columns are shown on this appendix 2.