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# Cultural Influences on Students' Perceptions of Written Feedback in L2 Writing

**Abstract** One of significant topics to discuss in studies about feedback in L2 writing is the influence of students' culturally constructed view of the feedback process. Research has shown that the cultures of hierarchical relationship and face-saving strategy have significant influence on students' perceptions of feedback process in L2 writing, particularly in Asian societies. Aiming to investigate whether these findings resonate in Indonesian EFL context, this study collected data through writing drafts, reflective journals, questionnaires and interviews with seven students who took an after-class writing course. Findings suggested that students valued teacher feedback more than peer feedback, however they were not concerned about practicing face-saving strategies to maintain group harmony and cohesion.

**Keywords:** Perception, cultural influence, teacher feedback, peer feedback, L2 writing.

## Introduction

Writing is one of the skills that is considered to have an essential significance in second language (L2) learning because it serves as both a tool for communication and a means of learning, thinking, and organizing knowledge or ideas. Unfortunately, writing has also been considered one of the most difficult skills for L2 learners to master because it encompasses problem solving and deploying strategies to achieve communicative goals (Graham, 2010; Kurt & Atay, 2007). For L2 learners, the difficulty in L2 writing is doubled because they need to transfer ideas from their first language into the target language and organize those ideas into new and different patterns than

those in their first language (L1). These challenges that learners encounter in L2 writing call for teachers and researchers to find better ways for instructing writing. Providing feedback is one of the most appropriate ways of instruction to help L2 learners successfully learn a writing skill (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

A large body of research has been conducted to investigate different aspects of feedback in L2 writing classrooms. One among the focuses of investigation is how feedback is perceived by students. Students' perceptions are the beliefs or opinions that they have as a result of realizing or noticing something, especially something that is perhaps not obvious to other people such as teachers or other students. These beliefs and opinions are the result of direct experiences during the feedback process and also very personal and individual, which result in different perceptions from one student to another. Thus, students' perceptions regarding feedback play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of feedback implementation in L2 writing instruction. Furthermore, students' perception is shaped and sometimes distorted by various factors residing in the students themselves, in the object or target being perceived, or in the context of the situation in which the perception is made. Specifically, Lewis (2001) stated that aspects such as the cultural context have a profound influence on that which is being perceived. Based on this information, it can be assumed that culture can also play an important role in shaping students' perception of the effectiveness of feedback implementation in L2 writing instruction.

## Literature Review

The influence of culture in L2 writing has been highlighted in many studies (e.g., Lee, 2008; Scollon, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000) showing how cultures influence the pedagogical practices in EFL classrooms, particularly in most Asian societies. These studies also emphasize the

differentiating characteristics of L2 writing instruction in ESL and EFL contexts. However, some other researchers (e.g., Holliday, 1999; Kubota, 1999, 2001, 2004) have criticized the attempts to essentialize and polarize the cultural differences of ESL/EFL students. In her critics, Kubota (2004) stated that although cultural difference is an important topic of discussion in second language education, it should not be conceptualized as fixed, objective, and apolitical based on an essentialist and normative understanding of culture (p. 21). This is especially true when imaging the ESL learners in English-speaking countries such as the United States where classrooms are usually demographically heterogeneous. ESL learners in those classrooms tend to have the urge to assimilate with the general norms and practices that are functional in class. As explained by Bhowmik (2009), when ESL learners from different socio-cultural backgrounds work together in feedback activities, the issues of culture could be minimized because each student is likely to come out of her comfort zones and participate in class activities more actively.

  This current study would refer to the research investigating how cultures influence the pedagogical practices in EFL classrooms. It was not aiming to emphasis the cultural differences between students in ESL and EFL contexts, particularly those from Southeast Asian countries with the perceived culture of students in English-speaking countries such as the United States. The reason is because this study was conducted in a demographically homogenous classroom, similar to those referred studies.

  **Research on cultural influences in feedback process.** Some research investigating feedback in L2 writing has reported different findings on whether cultural traits had a significant bearing on students' perceptions of feedback process in L2 writing. Miao, Badger, and Zhen (2006) and Tsui and Ng (2000) investigated how students from hierarchical cultures perceived and incorporated the feedback they received from teachers and peers differently. Carson and Nelson

(1996; 1998) investigating cultural influence in feedback activities in two different studies reported that students' view of cultural values affected the effectiveness of feedback in collaborative L2 writing.

Tsui and Ng (2000) conducted a study to investigate peer and teacher feedback in revision in L2 writing in a secondary school in Hong Kong in which English was used as the medium of instruction. Twenty-seven students participated in this study. The findings showed that students perceived teacher comments significantly more effective and useful than peer comment because they believed that the teacher was more experienced and a figure of authority. These findings show how cultural values shape students' perceptions of the feedback they receive from teacher versus a peer. This is in accordance with the cultural value of traditional Chinese education stating that 'students are expected to receive and retain, with an open mind and without preconceptions, the knowledge imparted by their teachers and textbooks." (Hu, 2002, p. 100).

The influence of hierarchical culture was also highlighted by Miao, Badger, and Zhen (2006) in their study. They argued that the power distance between teachers and students from hierarchical culture is "problematic" in the feedback process since students are always expected to abide by what the teachers say, and they are not supposed to challenge the teachers and their opinions (p. 180). They also explained that in Chinese society the Confucian cultures ascribe a lot of respect to teachers which students at all levels usually follow.

Another cultural value which has been found to have an impact on feedback activities in L2 writing is face-saving which is much practiced in collectivist society. Carson and Nelson (1996; 1998) conducted two studies investigating Chinese ESL students' interaction styles and reactions to peer response groups in ESL composition classes. In these studies, they examined three Chinese speaking students in an advanced ESL composition class in a US university. Arguing that writing

groups, as used in composition classes in the United States, function differently than groups in collectivist cultures like China and Taiwan, they hypothesized that writing groups might be problematic for Chinese students studying in the US because of the cultural differences. Furthermore, they stated that the primary goal of the group in collectivist cultures is to maintain the relationships that constitute the group, to maintain cohesion and group harmony among the group members. Thus, students of collectivist culture tend to practice face-saving strategy in peer feedback group by not saying negative comments when responding other students' works.

The findings of both studies affirmed their hypothesis. The analysis in the first study (Carson & Nelson, 1996) indicated that the Chinese students' primary goal for the groups was social-to maintain group harmony-and that this goal affected the nature and types of interaction they allowed themselves in group discussions. The Chinese students were reluctant to initiate comments and, when they did, monitored themselves carefully so as not to precipitate conflict within the group. This self-monitoring led them to avoid criticism of peers' work and to avoid disagreeing with comments about peers' or their own writing.  In the second study (Nelson & Carson, 1998), the researchers compared Chinese students' perceptions of peer feedback group with those of Spanish students. Although the analysis indicated that both the Chinese and Spanish-speaking students preferred negative comments that identified problems in their drafts, they had different views about the amount and kind of talk that was needed to identify problems. The Chinese students perceived the goal of peer feedback as problem-identification; they were reluctant to identify problems, recognizing, it seemed that making negative comments on a peer's draft leads to division, not cohesion, in a group. In conclusion, peer feedback is less successful for students of collectivist cultures because of unwillingness to criticize others.

In conclusion, since research investigating how cultural traits have significant bearing on students' perceptions of feedback process in L2 writing has reported different findings, it is necessary to conduct this study to further explore students' perceptions of written feedback in L2 writing classrooms, particularly in Indonesian EFL context. Furthermore, most of the studies in the existing literature were conducted in L2 writing in ESL context, thus it is necessary to conduct this study to find out whether the results as reported in this literature review will also resonate those in this context. This study may contribute to the growing body of literature and provide more information for ESL writing teachers who want to implement written feedback in their classrooms.

**Some general features of Indonesian culture.** Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) stated that culture is a collective phenomenon because it is at least partially shared with people who live within the same social environment. It includes language, art and sciences, thought, spirituality, social activity, and interaction (Tabalujan, 2008). Since classroom context reflects a social unit within the larger unit of a society (Maulana et al, 2016), culture, thus plays an important role in pedagogical practices, including in L2 writing classrooms.

The influence of culture in L2 writing is also highlighted by Tickoo (1995) who argued that one of the differentiating characteristics of L2 writing instruction in ESL and EFL contexts is how cultures influence the pedagogical practices in classrooms. This is particularly significant in most Asian societies which are heirs to rich and established cultures and traditions. In addition, research also shows that L2 writing pedagogy in EFL context especially that in Asia, is confronted by the issue of culture, which plays a critical role in effective L2 writing instruction (Bhowmik, 2009). Among the issues of culture that influence the effectiveness of L2 writing instruction as reported in some research findings are the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students

(e.g., Miao, Badger, & Zhen, 2006; Scollon, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000) and collectivist society that practices face-saving strategy to maintain group harmony (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Lee, 2008, Nelson & Carson, 1998).

The two cultural values of hierarchical relationship and collectivist society are also found in Indonesian cultures. Hierarchy is very important in Indonesian society and people's status should be respected at all times. This hierarchical structure suggesting obedience to higher authority figures is also reflected in teacher–student relationships in Indonesian classrooms (Maulana et al, 2016). Teachers are the ones who are responsible for managing order and neatness in classrooms and students are expected to follow their rules. Lewis (as cited in Novera, 2004) described the relationship between Indonesian teachers and students which is circumscribed by their respective social positions and traditional beliefs about learning.

> The teacher is seen to be a moral authority and students are expected to defer to all their superiors, including teachers. Teachers are also viewed as the fountain of knowledge – while knowledge is viewed as a more or less fixed set of facts to be transmitted and digested by thirsty learners, later to be regurgitated in test (a deficit model of learning). (p. 478)

One related aspect of hierarchical culture is the concept of power distance. Hofstede (1980) defined power distance as a measure of interpersonal power or influence between two persons. In educational settings, power distance includes the distance between a teacher and a student. In a country with a large power distance like Indonesia, teachers are viewed as the holders of truth, wisdom, and knowledge, and they pass this knowledge on to their students. Thus, EFL/ESL students from countries with a large power distance are perhaps less likely to value their peers' views than are students from countries with a lower power distance (Nelson & Carson, 1998).

Indonesia is also known as a collectivist society that places higher importance on the group than the individual (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The collective nature of Indonesian society resembles a 'high contact' feature in which people express a substantial amount of interpersonal closeness (Hall, 1966) and place a strong emphasis on social harmony, conformity, and family interdependence (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). For this reason, saving face strategy is a very important practice. Indonesian students are not encouraged to ask questions to their teacher and are reluctant to ask questions even when they are invited to do so. Questioning is seen "to challenge teacher's authority, and to demonstrate one's arrogance or ignorance – to risk the possibility of punishment or personal humiliation (loss of social face)" (Lewis as cited in Novera, 2004, p. 478). When interacting with other class members, Indonesian students tend to avoid debates and confrontation in class and will generally work toward maintaining class harmony and mutual face-saving to maintain a state of cohesion. It may be difficult for an Indonesian student to respond to other students' writing in any manner other than being positive. She may say what the writer wants to hear rather than what might be helpful. Thus, it is interesting to find out whether the cultures of hierarchical relationship and face-saving strategy in Indonesian society also influence the L2 writing pedagogical practices in Indonesia EFL context, as reported in other EFL contexts in Asian society.

## Methods

This study applied a qualitative case study approach. Using purposive sampling technique, the researcher recruited seven 6th sixth semester students majoring in English Education at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra in Medan, Indonesia. Data for this study were collected through a variety of instruments including writing drafts, reflective journals, questionnaires, and

interview, to ensure that nuances of students' perceptions in every stage of written feedback process were captured.

Thematic content analysis with three coding stages was used as the main data analysis. In the first stage of coding, significant quotes and passages on the copies of all reflective journals and written feedback surveys were manually coded using color pencils. The initial findings were then recorded in researcher's note as guidance in preparing the interview questions. In the initial coding stage, the findings from pre-coding stage were transferred to a table sheet in a Microsoft Word file. All significant quotes and passages were labeled as 'data extract,' which was further analyzed at the sentence level for coding and temporary categorizing. The findings from this stage of coding were later analyzed again in the final coding stage. This process was iterative before reasonable saturation for categories and sub categories could be reached.

**The writing course.** This study was conducted in an after-class writing course consisting of seven meeting in total. Each meeting was divided into two sessions, with one session lasting for one hour (see Table 1). During the course, students completed two writing tasks of argumentative essay; *agree &disagree* and *comparison & contrast*. Furthermore, as part of the writing tasks, students completed a sequential series of tasks including writing the first draft of an essay, providing written feedback on peers' essays, revising the draft after written feedback sessions, and producing the final draft of the essay. In an effort to get the maximum benefits of peer feedback in this study, the first meeting of the writing course was used to introduce peer feedback through the ALA (Academic Literacy for All) Protocol (Mahn & Bruce, 2010) and train the students how to give feedback on an essay.

| Meeting | Session I | Session II |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Introduction | Peer feedback training |

| 2 | Teacher's presentation (*Agree & disagree* essay) | Peer feedback 1 |
|---|---|---|
|   | Writing 1 (first draft) | Revision 1 (second draft) |
|   |   | Reflective journal 1 |
| 3 | Peer feedback 2 | Teacher feedback |
|   | Revision 2 (third draft) |   |
|   | Reflective journal 2 |   |
| 4 | Revision 3 (final draft) | Written feedback survey 1 |
|   | Reflective journal 3 |   |
| 5 | Teacher's presentation (*Comp. & contrast* essay) | Peer feedback 1 (global issues) |
|   | Writing 2 (first draft) | Revision 1 (second draft) |
|   |   | Reflective journal 4 |
| 6 | Peer feedback 2 | Reflective journal 5 |
|   | Revision 2 (third draft) | Teacher feedback |
| 7 | Revision 3 (final draft) | Written feedback survey 2 |
|   | Reflective journal 6 |   |

Table 1. Writing Course Schedule

## Findings

**Theme one: Valuing more teacher feedback than peer feedback.** Hierarchy plays a very important role in Indonesian society. One principle of hierarchical culture is obedience to higher authority figures. As a result, students from hierarchical cultures where teachers are ascribed the highest power and ultimate source of knowledge in classroom interactions may perceive different values of written feedback provided by teachers and peers (Miao, Badger, & Zhen, 2006, Scollon, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000). The analysis of the data in this study also showed that students valued teacher feedback more than peer feedback, which was reflected from the amount of written

feedback incorporated in their writings. As shown in the Figure 1, although the total number of teacher's suggestions/corrections was smaller than that of peers', students yet incorporated more teacher than peer feedback in revisions. A closer look at the data revealed that these different values resulted from three reasons: different levels of confidence in teacher and peers as feedback providers, different levels of confirmation of written feedback usefulness, and discrepancy of teacher and peer feedback incorporation.
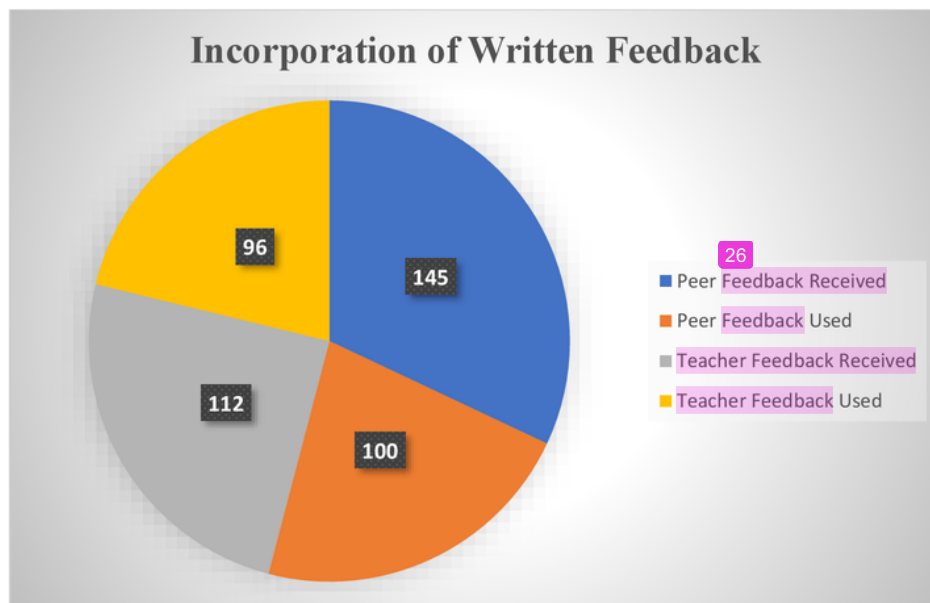
**Incorporation of Written Feedback**



Figure 1: Distribution of Written Feedback Received and Used

Students showed different levels of confidence to written feedback they received from teacher and peers. When referring to teacher feedback, they used words like "trust," "believe," and "sure" of teacher's competence. In addition, they also showed high confidence in the quality of teacher's comments by stating that they were "more trustworthy," "more accurate," and "more qualified." In the following excerpt, the student explained why he trusted teacher feedback more than peer feedback.

I think teacher feedback is more qualified. I personally trust teacher feedback more than all my peers' feedback. Because I can also see the result from teacher feedback looks better and fits better in my essay, compared to feedback from my peers. (Excerpt 1, Interview)

On the contrary, when talking about peer feedback, students tended to use words showing low confidence like "distrust," "doubt," and "uncertain." Furthermore, they also claimed that peers have lower competence as feedback provider by stating that they "have equal knowledge," or "have no or little experience."

I think that my word is correct, it doesn't need revising. But she thinks that my word is wrong. Well, it was happened because we have a different understanding about it. I don't know which the correct one is. Therefore, it is one of the lack of getting feedback from the peer because we have the same level in knowledge. That is why I cannot believe 100% the feedback from peer. (Excerpt 2, Reflective Essay)

In the reflective essay, the student expressed her disagreement with her peer's correction. She also stated that one of the drawbacks of peer feedback was because the feedback provider and the feedback receiver were at the same level in knowledge thus peer feedback cannot be totally trusted.

Different values of teacher and peer feedback were also indicated by how students perceived the usefulness of written feedback in their revisions. When talking about the usefulness of written in the revision, all the students gave positive responses. However, the usefulness of teacher feedback was confirmed absolutely while the usefulness of peer feedback was expressed with reservations. In the students' words, teacher feedback was 'very," "definitely," or "totally" useful while peer feedback was ''basically,'' ''sometimes'' or "less" useful. This different acceptance of written feedback can be seen in the excerpt below:

I think teacher feedback is worthier than peer feedback. It was really helpful and very detailed in all aspects from grammar, idea, to the conclusion were commented by the instructor. (Excerpt 3, Interview)

The student quoted in excerpt 3 explained the usefulness of teacher feedback by using the word "very" to intensify the degree of how helpful and detailed the teacher's comments she received. Furthermore, she praised teacher feedback on all aspects of writing which shows her trust in teacher's knowledge and competence. Meanwhile another student (quoted in excerpt 4) used the word "enough' which is a lower degree of intensifier when talking about the quality of peer feedback that she received. She also only praised one particular aspect of writing, in this case grammar where she thought her peer was competent to comment about.

About 50% [of peer feedback was used in revisions], because I think my friend's suggestions are good enough, especially about grammar. (Excerpt 4, Written Feedback Survey)

The last indication that students valued teacher feedback more than peer feedback is the different amount of teacher and peer feedback incorporation. As seen in table 1, students incorporated higher percentage of teacher feedback (86%) in their revisions, meanwhile for peer feedback, only 69% was used in revisions. This discrepancy of feedback incorporation was also admitted by students as highlighted in the following excerpts:

I took 50% of comments from my peer because I think [only] 50% of the comments are right and useful for my essay… Most of the comment I have from teacher feedback, 90% of comments I took because I think the comments from teacher's feedback is really helpful. (Excerpt 5, Written Feedback Survey)

I used 40% of my peer feedback in my revision. I do that because I think the correction is wrong... I used 80% (of teacher feedback) in my essay because I think my teacher has more knowledge than me. (Excerpt 6, Written Feedback Survey)

Both students quoted in excerpts 5 and 6 admitted of using much higher teacher feedback than peer feedback in their revisions. Despite their different reasons for doing so, the fact that they incorporated more teacher than peer feedback also indicated that they value teacher feedback more.

In summary, students gave more credits to teacher comments more than peer comments. In this case, students have higher confidence in teacher feedback which resulted in higher percentage of teacher feedback incorporation in revisions. However, it should be noted that student valued both teacher and peer feedback although with different levels of confirmation.

**Theme two: Claiming authority as feedback providers and receivers**. Another principle in hierarchical culture is the high-power distance between teachers and students. Thus, educational practice in cultures of hierarchical relationships places a great emphasis on 'maintaining a hierarchical but harmonious relation between teacher and student. Students are expected to respect and not to challenge their teachers' (Hu, 2002, p. 98). In addition, Indonesians as collectivist society also practice face-saving strategy to maintain cohesion and group harmony among the group members.

However, the data analysis demonstrated that despite the high-power distance between teachers and students and the practice of face-saving strategy in Indonesian society, the students in this study were not hesitant to claim their authority as feedback receivers and feedback providers. When receiving feedback from teacher and peers, students were not reluctant to voice their disagreement and reject the feedback for personal reasons such as "I don't think the comments

are correct," I dissatisfied with the feedback provided,". In addition, as the writers, they were also aware that they were the decision makers in deciding what comments to incorporate or ignore in their revisions. They rejected the feedback using some reasons such as "the original draft is better," "suggestions/revisions changed the intended meaning," and "feedback interfered with writer's voice and style. In the interaction below (Excerpt 7), the student showed how he claimed his authority as the writer of the essay. Although he confirmed the quality of the feedback, he rejected to use it in his revision because he saw this contribution as intrusive. It can be said that students valued teacher feedback and confirmed its quality, but it was not necessarily for them to agree with and incorporate it in their writings.

> Interviewer: In your reflective journal, you wrote that you took only 50% of teacher feedback. Why?
>
> Mr. Potter: The teacher gave me only two suggestions. I took one but ignored the other because I think the suggestion [which was ignored] was not applicable in my writing. The other I think was acceptable although a little bit difficult to make it flow with my sentences, with my idea. I admitted the first comment was good, but if I kept using it in my revision…what can I say…the idea didn't flow so I had to rewrite everything. (Excerpt 7, Interview)

When serving as feedback provider, students did also not hesitate to give comments on her peers' drafts which was shown in their statements like, "I provided as much feedback as necessary, "I gave feedback based on one's understanding," "I gave feedback to help improve peer's essay," "I did not hold back when giving criticism," and "I believe that the writers will not be offended with my feedback." Those statements indicate that students realized that being a feedback provider allowed them to speak as a teacher might. They also knew that the purpose of their giving

comments on peers' drafts was to state their opinions on what peers needed to do to improve their writings. When providing criticism, they also did not hold back just because of not wanting to hurt anyone's feelings. As a result, students in this study were not concerned with maintaining group harmony and practicing face-saving strategies.

> As long as I think it is necessary, I will give feedback on my peers' drafts. Because I believe that my friends know that I had no intention to insult or offend them. I personally also expected that my friends be honest to me when giving feedback. When they think it's good, they can praise it. When they think it's not good, they can criticize it. Even when they think my essay was good, I still expected them to provide me much feedback. (Excerpt 8, Interview)

The interview excerpt above clearly illustrates that the student's only intention was to help her peers improve their writing by not holding anything back when providing feedback. She furthermore explained that she expected the same treatment from her peers. This indicated that she was not concerned about practicing face-saving strategies to maintain harmony with her peers by subordinating honesty to politeness.

## Discussion

The finding showing that the students valued teacher feedback more than peer feedback is in line with those of Miao, Badger, and Zhen's (2006) and Tsui and Ng's (2000). Miao, Badger, and Zhen (2006) reported that the students in their study "value teacher feedback more highly than peer feedback but recognize the importance of peer feedback" (p. 193). Similar to this, Tsui and Ng (2000) found out that their students favored teacher comments. They furthermore explained

that the reasons were because the students thought that "the teacher was more experienced and a figure of authority and that teacher's comments guaranteed quality" (p. 160).

Two among the reasons, namely: "the teacher was more experienced" and" the teacher's comments guaranteed quality" were also mentioned by the students in this study to explain why they valued more teacher feedback. Interestingly, the other reason saying that the teacher was a figure of authority whose words should be followed did not seem to be a reason. Although hierarchical societies tend to accept more power distance, including the distance between a teacher and a student, the students did not hesitate to disregard teacher's suggestions and to voice their disagreement with them. This indicates that power distance did not have any significant influence in students' perceptions of written feedback.

The second finding showing students' willingness to criticize peers' writings and to voice their disagreement with peers' comments is quite the contrary of Carson and Nelson's (1996). The results of their study showed that that "the Chinese students' primary goal for the groups was social-to maintain group harmony-and that this goal affected the nature and types of interaction they allowed themselves in group discussions" (p. 1). They furthermore described some characteristics of the Chinese students' interactions: (1) reluctance to criticize drafts because they thought might be hurtful to other group members; (2) reluctance to disagree with peers because it would create conflicts within the group.

It can be assumed that such different findings between this study and that of Carson and Nelson (1996) may lie in two reasons; (1) students' understanding of the written feedback purpose and (2) the nature of feedback interactions. In the beginning of this study, the students were introduced to the concept of written feedback through the ALA protocol. Through this activity, students got a very good understanding of the purpose of peer feedback throughout the composing

process that is to help improve the quality of the writing and develop writing skills of both feedback receivers and providers. They characterized their interactions in the peer feedback activities as task oriented. They focused on providing comments that helped improve their peers' essays and viewed the social dimension of maintaining the state of cohesion as subordinate to the task dimension. Thus, although Indonesians belong to a collectivist society which practices face-saving strategies to maintain cohesion and group harmony among the group members, the students' mutual understanding of the written feedback purpose in this study seemed successful to prevent them practicing those strategies which may not work toward the fulfillment of the purpose.

Another speculation to explain the contrast findings is that the nature of interactions between students in Carson and Nelson's (1996) study was different from that in this study. In the former, students provided feedback through discussions in groups of three or four consisting of speakers of different mother tongues. In the latter, students worked in pairs or groups to provide written feedback on drafts. This means that students in this study did not involve in face-to-face interactions where the feedback provider would look at the face of the writer when giving suggestions or criticism. Furthermore, face-to-face interactions would also allow the feedback provider to read the feedback receiver's emotions through verbal and nonverbal cues, such as facial expression, which perhaps could be a factor that made students of collectivist society practice face-saving strategies in peer feedback to maintain group harmony. Thus, the nature of interactions in this study might make it easier for students to be as honest as possible when providing feedback.

**Conclusion & Suggestion**

The findings of this study have contributed to the existing literature showing how cultures influence the pedagogical practices in EFL classrooms, particularly in most Asian societies. Some

cultural influences, particularly hierarchical culture still plays a role in shaping students' perceptions of the different values of written feedback they received from teacher and peers. However, providing students with a fundamental understanding of the purpose of feedback activities through the ALA protocol seemed successful in minimizing those influences. With some adjustment to accommodate the different contexts of where it is implemented, teachers who would like to incorporate peer feedback in their teaching practice could also make use the ALA protocol to introduce the students with the concept of peer feedback.

This study might lead to similar research studies that may collectively provide a more extensive framework for understanding cultural influences on Indonesian EFL students' perceptions of written feedback in L2 writing. The replication of this study in a formal classroom setting with a larger size of participants could be conducted to increase the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, since this study involved written feedback only, it might be interesting to investigate whether there are similarities or differences in terms of cultural influences in the combination of written and oral feedback in L2 writing.

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