

Undergraduate students' voices on the role of tutorial-based dialogic feedback in developing academic writing skills

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Abstract

This study explores undergraduate students' perspectives of experiencing tutorial-based dialogic feedback (DF) aimed at enhancing their academic writing skills required for successful completion of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing courses. To achieve this aim, an interview-based qualitative study was conducted in a renowned institution of higher education in Bangladesh. The generated data were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis approach, which yielded the findings of this study. The key findings suggest that DF has possible significant prospects to be employed in EAP writing courses working alongside written corrective feedback (WCF). DF helps students better comprehend and effectively apply WCF in both the revised and final drafts of their assignments, potentially resulting in enhanced academic writing. The successful implementation of the DF framework, as proposed by Yang and Carless (2013), may ultimately lead to improvements in academic writing skills. Consequently, this study contributes South Asian evidence-based research to the existing body of knowledge on the pedagogical use of DF.

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Introduction

This study aims to explore how undergraduate students perceive dialogic feedback (DF) initiated through one-to-one interactions between teachers and students during tutorials. It also examines how DF, in conjunction with written corrective feedback, contributes to the enhancement of students' academic writing in a second language (L2). To gain insights into students' experiences with DF during tutorials, it is

important to provide an overview of the tutorial process facilitated by EAP tutors. These tutorials were specifically designed to discuss and explain the teacher generated written corrective feedback (WCF) on students' first drafts of written assignments. Following the tutorials, students were expected to revise their drafts and submit them for final assessment. In addition to the standard four hours of teaching in the EAP writing class, course tutors typically allocated approximately 5-10 minutes long one-to-one tutorial sessions with each of the 20 students in the class. These tutorial sessions were exclusively offered as part of the EAP writing module.

Rationale of the Study

WCF on students' writing is a matter of concern for the L2 practitioners, particularly in university settings where students tend to struggle to produce high-quality academic texts. Feedback has many potentials in fostering effective student learning such as identifying issues with academic writing strategies, clarifying misunderstandings about these strategies, and promoting autonomous learning (Yang & Carless, 2013; Carless & Boud, 2018). Unfortunately, such benefits of feedback do not seem to be fully consumed by students due to difficulties in understanding it adequately (Carless, 2006; Ferris & Kurzer, 2019).

It is worth noting that the concept of dialogic feedback (DF) has gained attention from some L2 researchers, including Beaumont et al. (2011) and Carless et al. (2011). Carless (2013, p. 90) defines DF as "interactive exchanges" between teachers and students aimed at clarifying any misunderstandings arising from the provided WCF on written drafts. This process also involves "shared and negotiated" interpretations of the WCF, fostered by "trust and quality" in the teacher-student relationship. DF serves as an effective tool to address the one-way nature of WCF given by tutors at the end of a course, which often leads to misunderstandings (Carless, 2016).

Dialogic feedback promotes students' empowerment by facilitating their active engagement in the meaning making process of the feedback- making argument, seeking clarification, and discussing the feedback for enhancing understanding (Nicol, 2010). This active interaction between teacher and student is likely to be maximised in case of both formative and iterative assessments. Such interactive opportunities assist both teachers and students to eliminate any misunderstandings regarding the intended feedback (Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017).

Ensuring and addressing students' perspectives on feedback is crucial to make the purpose of feedback fruitful (Winstone et al., 2016). Unfortunately, very little research has been done to explore students' perspectives on the use of DF (Carless et al., 2011; Smith, 2021; Tam, 2021; Gan & Wan, 2024) compared to teachers' perspectives (Ewert, 2009; Hyland, 2000; Merkel, 2018). Therefore, this study intends to fulfill the very gap by addressing undergraduate students' viewpoints of the importance of dialogic feedback in improving their academic writing skills, and to contribute new

experiential insights in the field of feedback assessment within the South Asian context.

Dialogic Feedback Framework

This study is grounded on the theoretical framework proposed by Yang and Carless (2013), which outlines the dialogic feedback framework which is consisted of three components. The first one is the cognitive dimension containing the content of DF, the second one is the social-affective dimension concerning interpersonal interaction of DF, and the final one is the structural dimension covering organisation of DF. These interrelated components of DF serve as the foundation framework for the DF model, which holds potential to facilitate effective DF sessions aimed at developing L2 academic writing in the classroom (Yang & Carless, 2013).

Additionally, DF accelerates students' metacognitive abilities in L2 writing as it initiates self-regulation in their own learning practices. This self-regulation enables them to effectively apply the knowledge gained from received WCF to complete revised academic writing tasks (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017; Gan & Wan, 2024). Building on Bakhtin's dialogism (1981), Linell (2009) defines DF as a social activity characterised by verbal interaction that involves coordination, reciprocity, and mutuality. It opens scope to ensure comprehension and facilitate interpretation through verbal discourse (Moradian et al., 2021). This discursive exposure helps both the teachers and students to process the knowledge of academic writing skills required to respectively teach and learn in an EAP course (Goldstein, 2004). Especially, in case of students, the interactive exposure of DF turns as a mediation of developing their academic writing practices actively where they get the scope to probe, argue, and check their understanding of the WCF (Wittek, 2018; Roy & Vetter, 2023). This agentic experience of learning process aids them to grow their cognition as proficient individual student-writers (Wittek & Habib, 2014).

Furthermore, DF assists to foster self-reflection in students as an additional personal growth with cognitive development (Yang & Carless, 2013). This occurs through a scaffolding process that transforms the dialogic interaction into a means of individual development for the targeted students (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) framework, the teacher as an expert, offers cognitive support in the form of scaffolding. This scaffolding is essential for students to realise and identify their merits and difficulties in academic writings (Linell, 2009). Moreover, to ensure this individual growth, it is crucial to establish trust between the teacher and student during their engagement in DF (Carless, 2013). This trust is important because, a student's vulnerability in responding to dialogues involved in DF might potentially hinder the purpose of DF that was meant to improve students' academic writing (Wegerif, 2011; Hill et al., 2023).

Empirical Evidence on Dialogic Feedback

Research concerning DF shows that EAP practitioners around the world tend to adopt DF usually in formative assessments in L2 writing classrooms to evaluate its effectiveness in the learning process (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Some of those evidence-based research have been discussed below to provide a rationale for its focus.

Merkel's case study (2018) emphasises the significant role of DF in creating consolidated understanding of the linguistic errors identified by teachers in students' written drafts. This is achieved through the promotion of teacher-student negotiation of meaning during the learning process. Ewert (2009) also highlights the importance of intervention and scaffolding in assisting low-proficiency learners in decoding WCF which maximises their learning capacities. Hyland (2000) adds that through DF teachers can help students further by getting the opportunity to clarify their WCF and ensure that the students' difficulties in understanding the WCF are duly addressed.

Research conducted by Weissberg (2006), and Zhang (2023) indicates that on a macro level, DF scaffolds students in developing their overall academic writing structure such as planning, formatting, and revising. Additionally, on a micro level, DF also aids in enhancing students' linguistic and content related features in academic writing (Moradian et al., 2021). This is accomplished through the utilization of scaffolding techniques initiated through dialogic exchanges between teachers and students as stressed by Tam (2021).

In applying the DF model proposed by Yang and Carless (2013) to enhance students' academic writing skills, Ajjawi and Boud (2018) observe that the cognitive, socio-affective, and structural aspects inherent in DF significantly influence students' learning process. The model offers a collaboration between teachers and students in developing the students' learning process. Studies by Esterhazy and Damşa (2019) and Ogiermann and Wingate (2024) argue that DF promotes student-centredness in classrooms as they act as the co-constructor of meaning of WCF, not a passive receiver. Their empowered role in the learning process and gained awareness of the rhetorical aspects of writings, lead them to refine their academic writings through informed revisions (Perpignan, 2003; Moradian et al., 2021; Roy & Vetter, 2024).

Similarly, Macklin (2016) and Gan and Wan (2024) suggest that students' active participation in the construction of meaning in DF sessions support them to develop their authorial voice and critical thinking, which in turn promotes a student-centred pedagogy. Rodway (2017) and Wood (2023) add that the interactive DF sessions which intrigue students to be equally active in making the WCF meaningful, enhance their confidence, and their reflective and evaluating capacities that positively affect their future learning outcomes.

The effectiveness of DF in EAP courses is evidential in many studies that report teachers' perspectives of using DF as a tool for the formative assessment. Studies by

Wingate (2019), Beck et al. (2020), Vattøy (2020) and Hill et al. (2023) show that integration of DF in the forms of conferences and tutorials turn on students' autonomous self that drives them to solve their problems in academic writings effectively. Furthermore, the research by Merkel (2020) and Mochizuki and Starfield (2021) emphasises the potential of DF to serve as a tool for EAP practitioners to engage in verbal discussions during informal tutorials, facilitating the negotiation and clarification of meaning with students. Consequently, this process may empower students to apply their understanding of WCF to their own writing (Tam, 2021).

Existing Feedback Practices in Bangladeshi L2 Writing Classrooms

The pedagogy of higher education in Bangladesh primarily follows a teacher-centred approach, where L2 teachers commonly provide feedback on students' writing as WCF, with only a few exceptions (Hamid & Honan, 2012; Shamsuzzaman & Everatt, 2013).

The University of Dhaka (DU), the oldest higher education institution in Bangladesh, offers numerous EAP writing courses to its students from different disciplines (Chowdhury & Kamal, 2014). In the EAP courses, WCF is summative feedback giving practice, primarily focusing on correcting students' writing mistakes in the revised drafts, which are considered the final product (Khan, 2003). This feedback usually takes the form of immediate error correction. Due to overcrowded classrooms at DU, there are instances when WCF is administered through additional tutorial sessions to accommodate all students (Khan, 2003). Specifically, the Institute of Modern Languages (IML) within DU (the target context of the study), practices various kinds of feedback aiming to enhance students' academic writing skills such as conference, written comments, grading, and error-correction (Rahman, 2017). Though there is a variety in the forms of feedback, usually, only one type of feedback is practiced by a tutor at a time.

However, in private universities, teachers can usually employ a combination of two or more forms of feedback due to having a limited number of students in a writing course compared to public universities. Feedback practices in private universities include both oral feedback and written feedback along with several rounds of feedback on a draft (Begum, 2019). Despite that, it is observed that even both types of feedback (oral and written) seem inadequate for students realise their pros and cons in academic writing. Thus, the lack of understanding of the received feedback result into receiving lower grades. So, it could be argued that one-to-one tutorial sessions between teachers and students to discuss and clarify the WCF provided by the teacher might be effective for students to incorporate the received feedback into their revised work.

Additionally, Shamsuzzaman and Everatt (2013) advocate for the implementation of a process approach to writing in L2 writing classroom in Bangladesh, which could potentially create opportunities for the use of DF. The process approach may foster more scope for educators to increase interactions with students with their writings and

go beyond just providing one-sided error correction. Thus, DF and process writing together might align for effective EAP classrooms which demands reconsidering traditional feedback assessment system in L2 pedagogic contexts (Beaumont et al., 2011).

Based on the insights from the previous research, it seems that tutorial-based DF can be considered as a complementary feedback practice of WCF in academic writing classrooms. However, there is a lack of sufficient research addressing students' perspectives on the effectiveness of DF, particularly when tutorials are incorporated as a form of feedback to enhance their academic writing skill in L2 EAP classes. Therefore, this study seeks to address the very gap by focusing on the collection of opinions from Bangladeshi ESOL undergraduate students through interviews. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of both the current role and future potential in fostering the academic writing skills of L2 students. Hence, to guide this study, the following research question has been postulated:

RQ: What are the perceptions of Bangladeshi ESOL undergraduate students regarding the impact of tutorial-based dialogic feedback practices on developing their academic writing skills?

Methodology

This study employs an exploratory qualitative research approach (Dörnyei, 2007) to investigate undergraduate students' perspective on the importance of tutorial-based dialogic feedback in developing their academic writing skills.

Sampling and Participants

Since the study required subjects who had previously completed EAP writing courses during their undergraduate studies, the purposive sampling method (Dörnyei, 2007) was most suitable to recruit participants for the study. Therefore, following purposive sampling method, six fourth year ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages, BA honours) undergraduate students were selected from the Institute of Modern Languages (IML), University of Dhaka (DU), Bangladesh. These students had the EAP writing course in their second year, so they could reflect their experience of studying the EAP writing course in the interviews accurately. Furthermore, it was expected that this chosen sample would enable us to generate comprehensive and insightful data about the phenomenon under investigation. We contacted the participants via email to inform them about the research and formally obtain their consent of participation in the study.

Data Generation

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants in six face-to-face interview sessions. To ensure the validity and reliability of the interview structure and its content, following the guidance of Creswell (2008), we initially conducted a pilot interview with one participant. This allowed us to assess the appropriateness of the

interview structure and gain practical experience in conducting the interviews. Each session continued between 40 and 50 minutes, and were conducted in English, as the interviewees had a good command of the language at an intermediate level, which is equivalent to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B1 level (Council of Europe, 2001).

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed in this study. Initially, the recorded interviews were transcribed manually and then, analysed using the inductive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To conduct thematic analysis, we started by closely examining the entire data set to identify potential patterns within the data. We proceeded to code the transcribed data, using colour coded highlights (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Next, separate tables of each data set were created which contain the emerging codes on one side and the corresponding extracts from the interview transcripts on the other side of the tables.

All the primary codes were synthesized later into a single document which enabled us to identify potential emerging themes derived from the patterns in the codes. To ensure the validity and reliability (Dörnyei, 2007) of the themes obtained from the data coding and their names, a senior colleague was invited who possessed knowledge and skills in inductive thematic data analysis. This colleague carefully reviewed our data coding and agreed with most of the coding. We then incorporated their feedback into our discovered themes which led us to add some more sub-themes under some main themes and supporting them with relevant extracts from the transcripts.

Findings and Discussion

This section illustrates the key findings of this study as presented in the forms of following themes to address the postulated research question.

Structure and Nature of the Received (Dialogic) Feedback

To address the research question, firstly, it is important to highlight the current feedback practices experienced by the target students in their EAP writing course. One prominent theme derived from the data analysis pertains to the participants' awareness of the types, methods, and structure of feedback they typically receive on their academic writing. Almost all participants noted that they got WCF along with a tutorial-based DF on their academic writing. As an example, Participant E reports the following

“... many a times I've got written feedback to correct my mistakes and the teacher tries to incorporate different feedback in class, either in written or conversation form... um, in some cases it happened when he offered me and my classmates the tutorial session, where he discussed some topics and showed us some writing materials and advised us to follow... um he actually showed the lacks um the gaps in my writing. It really helped me a lot...”.

In contrast, ESOL students in Bangladesh, typically received only WCF with very limited opportunities to discuss the WCF in interactive sessions with teachers (Hyland, 2003; Gan & Wan, 2024). Hence, they believed that these interactive informal tutorial sessions tend to enable them to seek further guidance from the tutors on how to effectively incorporate WCF into their final assignments to improve their academic writing skills (Wingate, 2019), as supported by the following quotation from Participant C:

“The tutor usually takes formal tutorial sessions, to provide the feedback on the drafts and points out various areas specifically for improvement in my writing and he used to give me one to one session outside the class, and most importantly, in those dialogic sessions, tutor used to ask me some academic questions. He also used to take informal tutorial classes like whenever I needed further discussion on the written feedback, I used to ask him about a time, and he used to provide some slots, and I choose one and he confirmed me one to one private session in his office as well”.

The excerpt above illustrates that ESOL undergraduate students, likewise students in other ESL contexts, experienced both WCF and DF through tutorials as feedback practices on their draft writings in EAP courses (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). It also demonstrates the structural aspect of the DF framework (Yang & Carless, 2013) explaining the organisation of the DF through informal tutorials along with the received formal WCF.

Impact of Dialogic Feedback on Developing Students' Cognition in Academic Writing Practices

All participants shared their experiences regarding how they modified their writing style in response to receiving dialogic feedback on their written work. They highlighted specific areas, including use of grammatical rules, diction, style of writing, content, writing organisation, task execution techniques, and importance of feedback. They believed that they were able to make substantial improvements in these areas, which had a substantial impact on their perception and use of the feedback to enhance their academic writing skills.

Participant C pointed out that the EAP tutor follows a rigorous approach to grammar and its appropriateness in the writing process. Students typically received feedback on grammatical errors through WCF. If a student encountered difficulties in understanding the complex explanations of the grammatical errors, they had the opportunity to discuss these issues with their tutor during the DF session. This interactive exposure assisted the students to gain appropriate application of grammar in their academic writing (Weissberg, 2006). Participant A highlighted the significance of grammar in the following excerpt:

“Teachers tell me that you should not uh use run-ons or fragments, you should be careful while writing. Uh, and you should correct your subject verb agreement, tenses etc... actually correct grammar makes the writing clear, and if I make grammatical mistakes in my writing ah, my writing becomes very ambiguous...”.

Subsequently, the participants also talked about the issue of using appropriate vocabulary in academic texts. Participant E pointed out that he typically employed numerous “metaphorical, uncommon and flowery words in academic essay writing”, aiming for a more sophisticated style. However, during a tutorial session, the tutor advised him to avoid such language and instead use more academic and collocated words to facilitate a more straightforward expression of meaning (Goldstein, 2004).

Another area of discussion involved writing style, content, and organisation, all of which received ample feedback from the tutor. In the following excerpt, Participant B illustrated his tutor’s assistance through tutorials to improve his writing style:

“Uh, I have received lots of dialogic feedback from my course instructor in tutorial classes to improve my academic writing skills and uh, most of the cases, my tutor gave feedback on writing style such as how to generate and organize idea, how to design an essay or which part comes first, which part comes later...”.

Furthermore, the response of Participant D, as illustrated below, shows that DF refined their academic writing style, aligning with the findings of Beck et al. (2020) and Zhang (2023):

“I usually wrote my assignments abruptly mentioned by my tutor in WCF, which I think I need to change immediately. So, I asked him about this in tutorial and he replied that first you must write a topic sentence for each paragraph separately, and then you must use linking words to connect each body paragraph. And by this way, he clarified me about how to write the body paragraphs logically in an essay”.

It can thus be argued that the DF sessions conducted via tutorials have helped ESOL students to bring noticeable changes in their academic writing as they were able to write with improved style, produce higher-quality content, and adhere to the expected structure of the assigned writing tasks (Nicol, 2010; Zhang, 2023). Furthermore, participants asserted that the tutorials in DF also helped them to improve their overall strategies involved in completing a writing task (Perpignan, 2003; Roy & Vetter, 2023). They also talked about how they were able to successfully complete their assigned writing tasks by following specific task completion strategies. The following excerpt from Participant B exemplifies this matter:

“The received dialogic feedback provided in tutorial classes was very effective in preparing myself for the final task submission as uh I got a lot of guidance from him about how to write, what to write, how to improve my weaknesses in academic writing, and he gives a lot of tips and tricks about how to improve them. And when I was submitting the revised task, I always followed the dialogic feedback that I received from my tutor on task completing tips... uh, that this is how I was able to submit the revised task and perform well in the exam”.

Additionally, the participants mentioned that DF sessions (and their content) conducted via tutorials considerably changed their approach to feedback and made them more open to receiving constructive feedback on their writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This transformation can be attributed to the fact that these sessions inherently facilitated their self-regulation in terms of understanding the dos and don'ts of academic writings (Wood, 2023). Participant E's comment below provide a clear illustration of this effect:

“Uh, I think the WCF was very concise, and I couldn't understand them from the instructor's point of view. May be, he cannot elaborately describe them in written form, but in dialogic form happened in the tutorial classes he could sufficiently describe what he meant to say, and he could give examples and he could point out what other students had written properly and what I had not written in the draft, thus this one-on-one conversation was really necessary to guide me how to bring improvement in my writing, and I want it more and more”.

The explored themes play a substantial role in addressing the research question, which focuses on understanding how Bangladeshi ESOL undergraduate students perceive the notable improvements in their revised written drafts after receiving DF within tutorial sessions. By reflecting on the DF framework (Yang & Carless, 2013), we have identified and analysed potential changes in the current academic writing practices of ESOL students, focusing on the cognitive aspects of the framework. This data analysis also offers insights into the feasibility of incorporating tutorial-based DF as a complementary feedback approach alongside WCF in locally and internationally offered EAP writing courses.

Social-affective Benefits of Tutorial-based Dialogic Feedback

During the data analysis, we identified additional themes, namely, the benefits of DF and participants' expectations. These themes assisted us in addressing our research question. Students in Bangladeshi L2 writing classrooms tend to exhibit a preference for the product approach to writing over the process approach, which is typically implemented through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Hamid & Honan, 2012; Shamsuzzaman & Everatt, 2013). The product approach allowed students to submit only their final version of writing for grading, without soliciting any feedback on it. As a result, it made the students prone to produce memorised contents in their

writings to be able to receive a good grade regardless of their learning of the writing process. In contrast, the process approach discarded the scope of memorisation and made the students consciously experience the various stages of writing (pre, during, and post) and reshape and improve their writing continuously based on the feedback received upon each stage of their writings. The emphasis on providing repetitive feedback by teachers and the ongoing proceduralisation of academic writing styles by students are precisely what the tutorial-based DF accomplishes in EAP writing courses, leading to the effective development of students' academic writing (Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017). The excerpt from the interview with Participant D conveys the very point below:

“In my college days, I usually write an essay by memorizing, not by understanding about it.... after doing the EAP writing course and after getting dialogic feedback at the university, now I can write it in a proper way following the academic writing style, not memorising it”.

In contrast to WCF, DF encouraged students to comprehend and clarify their understanding of the feedback they received on their draft versions of writings. DF is dialogic in nature, as opposed to monologic feedback, which promotes Bakhtin's concept of dialogism (1981) that facilitates interaction between students and tutors (Linell, 2009). The engaged and repeated interaction between the feedback giver and receiver helps students to internalise the rules of academic writing by facilitating cognitive development in them (Hyland, 2000). The active involvement of learners in the process of constructing meaning empowers them to become autonomous in their learning process and fosters their reasoning, and critical argumentation skills, along with learning the academic writing conventions (Wittek & Habib, 2014). The ensuing response from Participant C is an instance to support this issue:

“After getting the written feedback on drafts, sometimes I feel that I need more explanation on the written feedback that he just provided me, so I often requested my tutor to provide me some time. And uh he gave me some tutorial sessions for like 10-215 minutes in his office and used to guide me specifically in my weak areas by exemplifying like in real life terms for each and every phase of the essay in detail.... So yeah, for which I learn a lot and become confident in my writing slowly but steadily”.

This sense of self-autonomy achieved through the dialogic exchanges provided sustainable assistance to students in refining their academic writing abilities (Wittek, 2018), as exemplified in Participant's B response:

“Oh, when I received the dialogic feedback through tutorials ah, it increased my self-awareness and enthusiasm for learning the techniques of writing easily. And now I can successfully apply them to produce a positive output in my writing and to organize my writing in a proper manner. Um, I must say, dialogic

feedback is one of the most effective and most timely tools for every learner in the EAP course....”

Furthermore, tutorial-based DF ultimately contributes to achieving higher scores in writing, instilling in students the confidence to master the skills of academic writing (Beaumont et al., 2011; Wood, 2023). The following response from Participant C reflects this idea:

“So, in my writing, I have applied those techniques, the methods, and the strategies that I learn from those dialogic sessions, and the suggestions from my tutor help me a lot to structure my writing, and so there was a massive difference in my marks after getting the dialogic feedback, it was very satisfactory for me.”

The improved academic performance undoubtedly contributes to students' development of confidence (Yang & Carless, 2013). Hence, they become able to independently produce assigned academic written work in various social settings beyond the classroom being independent of their tutor's assistance. This practice gives them the sense of being an independent writer (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Tutors continuous scaffolding supports them to reach their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) where they become able to take charge of their own learning process (Ewert, 2009). The comment of Participant A describes the point very well:

“Sometimes I need to write an academic article to be published in the student newsletter run by the current ESOL students, or I might want to write a short story to get published in the IML magazine, in these cases, uh, I incorporate the learning from dialogic feedback which I have gotten from my teachers in tutorials, and you will be glad to hear that seniors often praise my writing sometimes, which I believe is a great thing happened to me”.

Therefore, DF sessions implemented through tutorials facilitate students' active involvement in their learning process (Ogiermann & Wingate, 2024) and enhance their meta-cognitive abilities, enabling them to independently generate high-quality academic writing (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017). This interpreted analysis of the discussed data likely suggests the potential application of the DF framework (Yang & Carless, 2013) in terms of developing students' interpersonal negotiation skills in understanding the received feedback and producing a quality writing in the learning process.

Students' Societal Expectations to Engage in Dialogic Feedback

Participants in this study opined that the implementation of tutorial-based DF in EAP classrooms could be successful if it ensures student-centred classroom and autonomous learning. Participant D added that the tutor should pay extra attention in creating a learner and learning friendly classroom (Yang & Carless, 2013; Tam, 2021)

where students “can get their feedback orally from tutor in an engaging and positive way, which will make the students feel free to share their thoughts”.

Participant B elaborated that DF should be “easy in nature, not very difficult to understand”, otherwise the entire effort invested in the DF session would be in vain. This suggests that discussions involved in DF should be comprehensible and conducive to students allowing them to establish rapport with tutors thus making the learning process enjoyable (Carless, 2013; Hill et al., 2023).

Moreover, the implementation of DF should be done in a way that students themselves can feel the urge of discussing the feedback for their self-correction and can realise the importance of feedback in developing their academic writing (Barnett, 2007). It should be conducted aiming to lead them to become an autonomous learner who would feel eagerness to identify and correct their mistakes for the betterment of their own academic writing skills (Macklin, 2016). This idea is echoed in Participant E’s response:

“An instantaneous dialogue in the form of dialogic feedback has enabled me to rectify my mistakes, it's not only about learning from my own mistakes, but also, as an individual I need to decide what to do and what not to do after receiving the DF in tutorial classes, but it is sure that I need to brush up my writing skills”.

Therefore, the illustrated themes help to address the research question by conveying that undergraduate students perceive tutorial-based DF as a valuable tool for enhancing their academic writing skills required to be successful in EAP writing courses. The discussion of the findings also highlights the potential future use of tutorial-based DF in EAP writing courses, specially stressing the organisational, cognitive, and social-affective factors of the DF model (Yang & Carless, 2013). It can be argued that the interplay among the three elements of the DF framework (organisational, cognitive, and social-affective) tend to actively work in background to ensure the potential implementation of dialogic feedback in the classroom to enhance undergraduate students’ academic writing skills establishing flexibility and trust between tutors and students (Carless, 2013; Hill et al., 2023).


Conclusion and Implications


This study elicits undergraduate students’ viewpoints on the usage of DF and its role in enhancing their academic writing skills. Our findings might add new insights to the experiential research paradigm concerning the potential of tutorial-based DF in teaching academic writing in a South Asian context, such as Bangladesh, and other similar contexts worldwide. The findings also suggests that students consider DF sessions as beneficial to elicit, process, and utilise the information received through WCF on their written assignments. Such insight may guide EAP tutors in reviewing and refining their feedback practices in academic writing courses, by aligning them with the DF framework (Yang & Carless, 2013).


However, the findings cannot be generalised to all higher education contexts given the limited sample size used for data collection. Moreover, application of mixed-method research approach could be more helpful to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings of the study (Dörnyei, 2007). Finally, to gain a complete comprehension of the usefulness of tutorial-based DF in developing L2 students' academic writing, teachers' perspectives could also be incorporated beside students' perspectives.

Despite these limitations, the findings of the study advocate that the combination of WCF with DF can strengthen the feedback practices in EAP courses. Most importantly, the findings highlight that DF sessions promote students' autonomous learning, confidence and, active participation in the meaning making process of the given WCF that in turn enhance their critical thinking and meta cognitive ability, and cooperative learning strategies essentials for developing academic writing skills (Ajjawi & Boud, 2017; Tam, 2021; Hill et al., 2023; Wood, 2023; Ogiermann & Wingate, 2024). Finally, this study attempted to convey the potential use of Yang and Carless's (2013) model of DF in ESL contexts (i.e., Bangladesh) in developing L2 students' academic writing skills.

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