
The present research investigates effects of peer review feedback on beginner-level learners. It focuses on two questions: (1) whether the metalinguistic peer feedback practice is viable among the beginner-level students and (2) whether the practice helps promote the students’ metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness is defined here as conscious knowledge of the formal aspects of the target language (e.g., grammar). Two groups (experimental and control) of participants at a beginner-level are examined by using two instruments: Error correction and justification test and sentence translation test. In order to examine any difference in metalinguistic awareness over fourteen weeks, the scores of pre- and post-tests are analyzed using paired samples t-test. For the purpose of investigating the treatment effect, comparisons are made between experimental and control groups through independent samples t-test. The results indicate that experimental group outperforms control group, suggesting that peer review feedback helps promote the students’ metalinguistic awareness. It is suggested that through the process of providing feedback substantial learning may happen to the reviewer students themselves by enhancing metacognition on their own learning. Concerning viability of the activity, an affirmative answer is suggested; the beginner-level students as a whole give valid feedback.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the distinction between meaning-focused and form-focused instruction was drawn (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998; Harmer, 1982), there has been the observation that meaning-focused communicative language teaching alone does not lead to the desired level of language proficiency (Harley & Swain, 1984; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; L. White, 1991). Although the emphasis on expressing and exchanging message content in communicative classes promotes the development of fluency, it has been claimed that such instruction is not
successful in enabling learners to achieve high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic accuracy (Swain, 1985). To compensate for this, researchers suggested that some attention paid to forms through grammar instruction is necessary and that grammar instruction should be integrated in communicative teaching by presenting grammatical features in context to learners (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Long, 1988, 1991). Other researchers also pointed out that some amount of attention to forms is necessary for acquisition to occur (Ellis & Laporte, 1997; Gass, 1997; Schmidt, 1990, 2001; VanPatten, 1990, 1994, 1996).

VanPatten (1990) claimed that learners, especially those with a low level of proficiency in the L2, have limited processing capacities and thus cannot easily attend to both meaning and form at the same time. Hence, focus on form may not be as effective in a beginners’ class as in a high-intermediate or advanced class given that the instructor and students both primarily focus on using language communicatively in focus on form; beginner level students opt for whichever pays them greater attention, which is obviously meaning in case of the instruction with a focus on form approach. It is expected in focus on form that occasions arise when students choose to focus on form despite the focus on meaning, but this may not work for the learners with a low level of proficiency according to VanPatten (1990). In an attempt to help learners take in linguistic information, researchers developed and examined various teaching techniques (Lightbown, 1998; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Sheen, 1996; Simard, 2001; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; J. White, 1998; Wong, 2000). Leow (2001), based on a meta-analysis of the techniques (Norris & Ortega, 2001), claimed that only studies examining more explicit techniques revealed an overall positive effect on L2 acquisition, while others examining more implicit techniques provided conflicting results. One of the more explicit techniques to draw learners’ attention to form is involving metalanguage, which has been neglected in language classrooms (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2002). To help raise learners’ metalinguistic awareness, metalanguage is often integrated in teaching techniques and classroom activities. For example, teachers give metalinguistic feedback in responding to student errors; students engage in metalinguistic reflection through the use of diary.

It is assumed that beginner students will find a rather explicit technique helpful for them to pay attention to forms. In this regard, the present study is intended to examine the effect of the metalinguistic peer feedback activity on the beginner EFL learners’ language awareness. The use of peer feedback in ESL writing classrooms has been generally supported in the literature as a potentially valuable aid for its social, cognitive, affective, and methodological benefits (see, for example, Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996), and yet little has been known about the effect of peer feedback using

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1 According to Long (1991), focus on form “overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (pp. 45-46).
metalanguage although there have been a few studies investigating the effect of corrective teacher feedback (Brumfit, Mitchell, & Hooper, 1996; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In this context, the present study will serve its purpose by examining the viability of the metalinguistic peer feedback practice among beginner students and its effect on raising their awareness in grammar in particular.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Peer Review Feedback

Although peer review has now become commonplace as one part of the feedback and revision process of ESL writing classes, doubts on the part of many ESL students are not uncommon. They feel their peers whose proficiency level is more or less the same as theirs are not qualified to judge or comment on their written work (Allei & Connor, 1990; George, 1984; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Nelson & Murphy, 1993). It is not surprising that the students, especially when they are in a lower level writing class, prefer to receive feedback from a native speaker or a teacher. Such negative attitudes seem to hinder the students from having productive experience from the peer feedback practice. Zhang (1995) reports that less than profitable interactions have been found within peer groups because of the students’ lack of trust in the accuracy, sincerity, and specificity of the comments by their peers. The peer feedback practice appears extremely complex to implement requiring careful training and structuring in order for it to be successful in L2 contexts (Kim, 2001; Stanley, 1992; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996). Failure to establish proper procedures or to engage in pre-training is quite likely to result in less than profitable peer review activities.

Against these negative findings, however, there is more positive evidence from studies of the effect of peer feedback and student attitudes toward the activity suggesting that peer review feedback advantages in ESL classes. For example, Rollinson (1998) found that over 80% of his college-level students’ comments were highly valid. Caulk’s (1994) study showed similar results: 89% of the intermediate and advanced level EFL students provided useful feedback. The study by Kim (2001) also provides positive findings concerning corrective feedback by peers. Five first-grade high school students in Korea participated in the case study. Kim claims that peer feedback has much stronger effect on the revision process than the teacher’s. Besides, corrective feedback on grammatical errors by the teacher had little effect; the students repeated the same grammatical errors even after having corrected them following the teacher’s feedback. Han (2002) and Park (2007) parallel Kim (2001) in suggesting that peer corrective feedback has more impact on students than teacher feedback.
The ‘genuine sense of audience’ in the writing classroom will encourage student writers to formulate their writing in line with the demands of their readers (Keh, 1990; Mittan, 1989); in that way the students are expected to become more serious about what they are doing and thus feel more responsible for both the process and product of their writing. Concerning students as reviewers, peer review helps develop their critical reading and analysis skills so that they will be able to become more critical readers and revisers of their own writing (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990).

2. Metalinguistic Awareness

1) Relationship Between Metalinguistic Awareness and L2 Proficiency

Considerable interest in metalinguistic awareness was raised by an increasing consensus among educators and researchers that a number of L2 learners lack linguistic accuracy in performance (Alderson & Steel, 1994; Germain & Seguin, 1995; Hammerly, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1995). Not a few studies have investigated the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and L2 proficiency and provided conflicting results.

According to van Lier (1998), metalinguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency are relatively unrelated under the assumption that they are two different constructs. Some studies provide support for the view that metalinguistic awareness has little to do with L2 proficiency. In research at Lancaster University, Alderson, Clapham, and Steel (1998) found little relationship between metalinguistic knowledge (as measured by identifying and correcting ungrammatical sentences and various other tests) and proficiency in French. Similarly, studies carried out by Liceras (1983) and Ellis and Rathbone (1987) revealed inconsistencies in the relationship between grammaticality judgment tasks and learners’ production.

There is, however, evidence indicating that metalinguistic awareness is a reflection of developing second language competence (Arthur, 1980; Bialystok & Fröhlich, 1978; Bialystok, 1982; Gass, 1983, 1994; Masny, 1987, 1991; Thomas, 1988). Metalinguistic awareness is often measured through learners’ grammaticality judgments and particularly those which require error correction and justification. Sorace’s (1985) study showed that development of learner judgment ability was proportional to improvement in L2 proficiency. Leow (1996), in a similar vein, concluded that learners’ ability to judge grammaticality reflected their L2 development based on the quantitative data. The study by Renou (2001) draws our attention in that not only a written judgment test but an oral judgment test was used to measure metalinguistic awareness of sixty-four university advanced learners of French. The results corroborated findings from the previous studies; the higher a learner’s metalinguistic awareness, as defined by the score on the two
judgment tests, the higher the score is likely to be on the French proficiency test. Bialystok (1982) maintains that even future studies will continue to provide conflicting results as far as descriptions of metalinguistic awareness and L2 proficiency are made in the light of underlying task demands; that is, what learners are being asked to do.

2) Pedagogical Activities to Promote Metalinguistic Awareness

The focus of the present study is on developing an activity to promote learners’ metalinguistic awareness and examining its effectiveness rather than investigating the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and L2 proficiency. In this regard, two noticeable classroom activities to raise metalinguistic awareness in the literature are discussed here: Metalinguistic teacher feedback and learner metalinguistic reflection.

Basturkmen, Loewen, and Ellis (2002) conducted the study to describe the use of metalanguage by teachers in responding to student errors in the communicative class and to identify the relationship between the use of metalinguistic feedback and the occurrence of student uptake moves—that is, the student correctly reformulates the error and produces the targeted linguistic item. The data were the collection of twelve hours of audio-recorded teaching involving whole-class interaction as well as interaction between the teacher and the students, either individually or in small groups. However, interaction between learners without the teacher was not included in data analyses. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between metalinguistic feedback by the teacher and the subsequent use of the target form in student production. Before simply accepting the results, one may raise a question as to the amount of teacher feedback given to each student. Given that the single teacher had to deal with more than one student’s errors in the communicative classroom, the teacher’s metalinguistic feedback may have not been sufficient to take effect on the students. Such an activity appears very demanding to teachers and not very efficient to students who need to benefit from the teacher’s ample feedback.

The other way to draw learners’ attention to form and promote their metalinguistic awareness is to have learners verbalize their reflection about language use. In order to elicit metalinguistic reflection some researchers used the kind of activities that probe learners’ intuition with questions about a specific grammatical point and have them verbalize the strategies they use to arrive at their understanding of the target grammar point (e.g., Bourguignon & Candelier, 1984; Bourguignon & Poucho, 1979). Swain (1995, 1998) supports such pedagogical activities claiming that students in L2 classrooms may make use of SLA processes by using meta-talk, which refers to the use of language to reflect on language.

Diaries are also used to promote metalinguistic reflection through written communication. Some researchers studied the use of a diary as a way of reporting on language itself (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Warden, Lapkin, Swain, & Hart, 1995) even though most learner diary studies
in SLA research have been employed to gather information on affective factors and learner perception of language learning and learning strategies (Bailey, 1991; Bailey & Ochsner, 1983). For instance, Allison (1998) explored the possibility of enhancing language awareness of university-level ESL students using the diary. The students enrolled in the course, Meaning System of English were asked to report their ideas about the meaning and use of English in their diary entries. The diaries were collected twice by tutors for feedback during the term. Allison (1998) presented multiple examples of students’ reflections about language and concluded that more research was needed to investigate the diary as a tool for promoting metalinguistic reflection among L2 learners.

Compared with the use of a diary, the peer feedback practice has one thing in common with it in that both activities encourage students to use meta-talk themselves rather than to depend on teachers’ corrective feedback only. However, the peer review feedback practice seems more likely to have students engaged in the activity asking for more responsibility, assuming that interaction between a writer and a reviewer will encourage a collaborative dialogue in which two-way feedback is established. The present study aims to examine the viability of metalinguisitc peer feedback in the beginner-level EFL class and its effect on the students’ metalinguisitc awareness. The subsequent research questions of the study are as follows:

1. Is the metalinguisitc peer feedback practice viable among the beginner-level EFL students?
2. Does peer corrective feedback help promote the students’ metalinguisitc awareness?

III. METHOD

1. Participants

Fifty-three freshmen at a university in Korea participated in the study. They were enrolled in a required course entitled, Freshman English II, which has three classified levels (advanced, intermediate and beginner). Freshman English II is designed to develop both spoken and written communication skills in English. It deals with various aspects of language such as conversation strategies, structural knowledge and grammar, vocabulary, and knowledge of different cultures and customs. The students were placed into two beginner-level classes based on their TOEIC scores, which ranged from 35 to 350. Each beginner-level class was assigned a different purpose, that is either experimental or control.
2. Experimental Conditions

The two beginner-level classes were taught by the same instructor. For both experimental \((n = 26)\) and control \((n = 27)\) groups, a sentence building assignment was given every week. The students were asked to compose five sentences about the topic of the week, which was drawn from the textbook unit covered during the week—the directions for each assignment were uploaded onto the online forum of the class (see Figure 1)—and upload their work onto the class web-board. In case of experimental group, the students were to give their classmates feedback about the use of vocabulary, expressions, and grammar after reviewing the sentences. They were required to give corrective feedback to more than one peer every week. The instructor reviewed the students’ sentences in the following week and presented suggested sentences in both classes. Therefore, the difference between experimental and control groups consists in the peer review feedback practice.

![FIGURE 1](Example of Sentence Building Assignment)
3. Materials and Procedures

In order to measure the participants’ metalinguistic awareness, two tests—an error correction and justification (ECJ) test and a sentence translation (ST) test—were used. The ECJ test purports to measure knowledge of grammar and structure, whereas the ST test intends to examine if the participants incorporate their metalinguistic knowledge into production.

Two equivalent sets of the ECJ test (for pre- and post-test) contained 20 items each, selected from *Barron’s 600 TOEIC* by Lin Lougheed (2003) (see Appendix A). In the test, the participants were to identify an error of each sentence, provide grammatical explanation about the error, and rewrite it. Two sets of the ST test consisted of 10 items each. The items were developed based on the vocabulary, expressions, and grammar points from the class materials. The participants were asked to translate each Korean sentence into English using appropriate vocabulary, expressions, and structure.

Both tests were administered by the instructor in the second class session of the first week as a pre-test. It was made sure that the participants read the instructions, written in Korean, about how to respond to each test. They were given maximum of thirty minutes to finish the ECJ test and 20 minutes to complete the ST test. Two kinds of post-tests were also administered in the 15th week.

In case of experimental group, they participated in two peer review sessions in class during the second week as pre-training for giving corrective feedback. Appropriate language and techniques for providing feedback on peers’ work were modeled and discussed during the pre-training sessions. The importance of providing useful feedback was also discussed in order to make the students fulfill their responsibility. The first sentence building assignment was given from the second week, and they started giving feedback from the third week.

4. Analyses

Data from two different types of tests were separately analyzed due to their distinctiveness in test method facets. For the ECJ test, two sets of 20 items were all included in data analysis. In case right answer choice is marked and correctly rewritten, the item is scored 2 as in (1a). When right answer choice is marked but not correctly rewritten, the item is scored 1 as in (1b). Incorrect answers are scored zero. The maximum score of ERC test is forty.

(1) The restaurant used an age-old marketing strategy of continually attractive new

(A)                          (B)

customers and satisfying current customers with good food at good prices.

(C)     (D)
a. (B) attractive $\rightarrow$ attracting (2 points)
b. (B) attractive $\rightarrow$ attracted (1 point)

Each 10 items from the two sets of the ST test were also included in data analysis. As for scoring, when the Korean version of a sentence is properly translated into English, it is scored 2 as shown in (2a). In case there is a single grammatical mistake in number, agreement, or tense while sentence structure of the translated sentence is correct, it is given 1 point as in (2b) and (2c). Otherwise the item is scored zero. The maximum score of ST test is twenty.

(2) Na-neun ujae TV-rul bomyu maneun sigan-ul bonae-utta.
  I-SUBJ yesterday TV-OBJ watching much time-OBJ spend-PAST

  a. I spent a lot of / much time watching TV yesterday. (2 points)
  b. I spent many time watching TV yesterday. (1 point)
  c. I spend a lot of time watching TV yesterday. (1 point)

In order to see whether there is any difference in metalinguistic awareness among within-group subjects over fourteen weeks, the scores of two different types of pre- and post-tests were analyzed using paired (samples) t-test, which is used when you have two related observations (i.e., two observations per subject) and you want to see if the means on these two normally distributed interval variables differ from one another.

For the purpose of examining the treatment effect (i.e., effect of metalinguistic peer feedback practice), comparisons were made between the data from experimental and control groups. The data were analyzed using independent samples t-test, which compares the mean scores of two groups on a given variable. To examine the assumption of the test that the two groups have approximately equal variance on the dependent variable, Levene’s test for equality of variances was taken. The significance level was set at $\alpha < .05$ for statistical decisions.

IV. RESULTS

1. Error Correction and Justification Test

It was assumed that initial compositions of the two groups, control and experimental, were equivalent since they were all placed into a beginner-level class based on their TOEIC scores. Yet it is necessary to check whether metalinguistic knowledge (knowledge
of grammar) of the groups matches each other at the outset, so pre-test scores of the groups were compared. The result of independent samples t-test on the ECJ pre-test scores is shown in Table 1. As assumed, it was shown that there was no statistical difference in the performance of the groups on the ECJ pre-test although there is .10 difference in mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>50.86</td>
<td>.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p < .05 \)

In order to see if there is any change in metalinguistic awareness of each group over fourteen weeks, mean comparisons between pre- and post-test were made within each group. According to descriptive statistics (see Table 2), control group did better on post-test. Paired samples t-test was calculated to examine whether the apparent gain in post-test scores is statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SD Error</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result (see Table 3) indicates that mean score on post-test significantly differs from that on pre-test. It appears that metalinguistic knowledge of the students in control group improved due to the class materials covered in the course; for example, they received mini-lesson type of grammar instruction and completed sentence-building assignment using the structure and expressions of the given unit every week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SD EM</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1: Pre–Post</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-1.52 - .36</td>
<td>-3.22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( p < .05 \)

As for experimental group, the result of paired t-test suggests there is noticeable gain in post-test. The significance level is less than .05 as reported in Table 4. In addition to being significant, the difference (5.31) is meaningful because it is relatively large.
Given that both the groups improved in post-test, it is necessary to check if the increase in the mean for experimental group is due to the treatment (i.e., peer review feedback) or other possible variables. Therefore, independent samples t-test was conducted. The result is reported in Table 5. Even though both the groups did better on post-test, the mean score of experimental group is found to be significantly higher than that of control group. It seems actual gain of the group can be accounted for by the treatment since the only difference between experimental and control group lay in the peer review feedback practice. The students were to recognize errors when reviewing their peer sentences and then give metalinguistic (grammar) feedback to help their peers improve the sentences. Such a procedure seems to have promoted their metalinguistic awareness.

### TABLE 4
Paired T-test within Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 Pre–Post</td>
<td>-5.31</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>-7.72</td>
<td>-2.89</td>
<td>-4.52</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ p < .05 \]

2. Sentence Translation Test

The participants were given ten sentences in their native language and were asked to translate each into English. According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), such a procedure requires both the decoding of the stimulus sentence and the encoding of the translation, so that the participants’ performance approximates natural speech production. In this sense, this instrument was used to estimate their capability to bring metalinguistic knowledge into production under the assumption that metalinguistic awareness did help produce desired output.

Independent samples t-test was calculated with the groups in order to assure equivalence of the groups in terms of their ability to make use of metalinguistic knowledge for production. It is revealed in Table 6 that their mean scores on pre-test were not significantly different, which suggests both experimental and control group matched in their ability to make use of metalinguistic knowledge at the beginning.
In order to see if there is any gain over fourteen weeks in their ability to incorporate metalinguistic awareness into production, mean comparisons between pre- and post-test were made within each group.

### TABLE 6
**Independent T-test on ST Pre-test Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>.785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$

In case of control group, the students scored 7.52 points higher on post-test on the average. The result of paired t-test indicates the gain is statistically significant (see Table 7). Considering the .93 mean difference observed in the ECJ post-test, the mean increase in the ST post-test appears quite large. A possible conjecture is that the students are supposed to be more familiar with decoding of stimulus sentences and encoding of translation by the time they take post-test (in the 15th week) because the stimulus sentences were developed based on the grammar and structure, vocabulary and expressions covered in the course.

### TABLE 7
**Paired T-test within Control Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre–Post</td>
<td>-7.52</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>-8.86 - 6.18</td>
<td>-11.53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$

### TABLE 8
**Paired T-test within Experimental Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre–Post</td>
<td>-10.0</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-11.15 - 8.85</td>
<td>-17.85</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$

Concerning experimental group, the students scored 10 points higher in the post-test on the average, and this was found to be significantly higher than the mean of pre-test scores (see Table 8). Compared with control group, experimental group surpassed them in
Building Metalinguistic Awareness Through Peer Feedback in the Beginner EFL Class

post-test; there is a mean difference of 2.26 between the groups. In order to check whether superiority of the performance of experimental group to that of control can be accounted for by the treatment, mean comparison between the groups is required.

**TABLE 9**

**Independent T-test on ST Post-test Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15.04</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>45.88</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$

It is shown that the difference is significant at below the .05 probability level set for this study (see Table 9). It seems actual gain of experimental group, surpassing control group can be interpreted due to the treatment since the only difference between experimental and control group consisted in the peer corrective feedback practice. The findings suggest the peer feedback activity helped promote the students’ metalinguistic awareness thus being reflected in their capability to produce desired output.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1. Viability of Peer Corrective Feedback among Beginner-Level Learners

The first research question addressed the issue of viability of the metalinguistic peer feedback practice in the EFL beginner class. Considering the results of the study, the answer is positive. It is no surprise that there is more doubt about feasibility of the practice since beginner-level learners are supposed to lack in knowledge of grammar and thus cannot succeed in giving passable metalinguistic feedback. However, the beginner-level students in the study as a whole tended to give meaningful feedback. They did not depend only on their own interlanguage grammar. They knew where to refer to for information which they lack in. Actually, Figure 2 presents how they managed to give metalinguistic feedback in order to help their peers improve the sentences. The following data is drawn from an informal survey of the students in experimental group. Only 10% of the students tried to give metalinguistic feedback without any reference. The rest turned to other sources and received assistance to give their peers better feedback comments than they themselves can provide.
FIGURE 2
Ways to Deal with Giving Metalinguistic Feedback

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>asked someone whose English is better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>referred to the textbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>referred to grammar books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>searched on the Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>referred to a dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>did on my own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3
Samples of Student Sentences and Related Peer Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>제목</th>
<th>[가리] 2006.10.9 이유지</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>번호</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>작성자</td>
<td>이유지 (hiocc77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I like a boyfriend who is good-looking and smart.

I want a boyfriend that has short dark hair.

My boyfriend who is tall and slim.

I don’t like boyfriend who is smoker.

The last, must have individuality!!
Figure 3 presents samples of grammar feedback given by the students. Even though the feedback comments do not appear perfect, they are thought of relatively substantial and detailed considering the fact that those are given by beginner-level students. The beginner students pointed out mistakes of the sentences exactly explaining the problems with grammar terms and suggested a remedy. Even though where to present feedback, online or offline (on paper), was not considered as a variable in the present study, presenting their feedback on the web board appears to have played a certain role to stimulate more serious participation of the students. The students may have been more engaged in the activity and provided responsible comments since presenting their feedback online brings more responsibility accompanied by an enhanced “sense of audience” than giving paper-based feedback (Tsui & Ng, 2000, p. 147). Some researchers suggest that online communication promotes better participation from students and stimulate interest among them (Chun, 1994; Kern, 1995; Salaberry, 1996). More specifically, it is expected that online peer feedback will encourage students more to negotiate each other and enhance more practice of language skills among them thanks to two aspects of online communication. First, such environment provides chances of immediate interaction through instant feedback (Kern, 1995; Liu & Sadler, 2003). Second, it creates similar learning environment to that of giving
face-to-face feedback, while it reduces students’ anxiety better than face-to-face interaction (Reid, 1994). These aspects were observed among the participant students.

**FIGURE 4**

Samples of Interaction Between Reviewer and Writer

In case of the first example presented in Figure 4, when the writer, Eun-young finds her
peer Sang-mee’s feedback inappropriate due to her misinterpreting Eun-young’s sentence, Eun-young clarifies and justifies the meaning and expression she tried to deliver. In the second example, the writer, Ji-Hye also tries to clarify intended meaning of her sentences by explaining her use of ‘the most’ and ‘but’ for instance. Besides, when she considers Eun-young’s metalinguistic feedback about present perfect tense incorrect, Ji-Hye justifies her use of present perfect tense by arguing. Here we see two-way feedback is established and that meaning is negotiated, whereas students are likely to end up making revisions without necessarily agreeing with or even understanding the comments when receiving feedback on paper.

Taking what is discussed above into account along with the results of experimental study, such a conclusion can be drawn that peer feedback involving metalanguage is a viable activity even among beginner-level learners. The students were aware of how to give metalinguistic feedback and where to get assistance in order to provide useful feedback. Through the process of managing to give feedback, they seem to have become more responsible and autonomous learners, which is an unlikely aspect to be observed among beginners. It appears the use of online community board gave an impetus to the implementation of peer feedback. The sense of real audience laid more responsibility on the students, and interactions between the student writer and the student reviewer led them to take what they are doing more seriously.

2. Effect of Peer Feedback on Metalinguistic Awareness

Results from both tests (error correction and justification test and sentence translation test) indicate that experimental group outperformed control group, suggesting that peer review feedback helped promote the students’ metalinguistic awareness. With regard to the findings from ST test, they should be interpreted with caution. The test was developed to measure how much metalinguistic knowledge the students incorporate into production for the purpose of examining whether their metalinguistic knowledge is activated when they produce translated sentences rather than investigating any relationship between metalinguistic awareness and general proficiency. Therefore, the findings do not suggest that growth in the ST post-test is associated with any growth in proficiency. They simply reveal the students’ metalinguistic awareness was operative in production.

Both experimental and control groups carried out sentence-building assignments and uploaded their sentences onto class web-board every week, but only experimental group had to review their peer sentences and upload their feedback comments onto the web-board as well. They detected errors in peer sentences, explained the problems they found often using grammar terms, and provided improved version of each sentence. Such a procedure seems to have fostered the students’ grammatical analysis and the strategy of monitoring. It
seems through the process of providing feedback substantial learning happened to the reviewer students themselves, which resulted in increased metalinguistic awareness.

Implications of the study are twofold considering the findings. First, apparently demanding and complicated activities may work for even beginner-level students as viability of metalinguistic peer feedback among beginners has been proved in the study. As far as the beginner group consists of adults, they can manage such activities with proper pre-training. Their proficiency in English is beginner-level, not their intelligence or cognition. It is not rare to observe university students complaining about demotivating in-class activities. They feel frustrated because they think they are treated like children with having to waste their time with too plain and dull activities. More research is needed in this area to develop pedagogical activities having beginner-level students engage in and leading them become autonomous. Second, the findings suggest that conscious knowledge is required for accurate production since it helps learners notice the gap between their own output and the target form. Emphasizing metalinguistic knowledge only is dangerous, but certain degree of metalinguistic awareness is necessary in order to advance toward a higher level of proficiency as suggested in the literature.

REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX A**

Error Correction and Justification Test

Choose the underlined word or phrase that should be corrected and rewrite it providing appropriate grammatical explanation.

1. George found it was more productive and less expensive to inspiration loyalty in his current customers compared to the cost of advertising to attract new customers.
   - A
   - B
   - C
   - D

2. Joelle cannot compete with the prices of jewelry found in stores, but she is able to persuasion consumers that her handmade products are unique works of art.
   - A
   - B
   - C
   - D

3. Adil’s plan to market his soccer lessons meant persuading boys and girls that soccer was not a short-lived fad and convincing parents that he offered a better service comparison to local soccer camps.
   - A
   - B
   - C
   - D

4. The restaurant used an age-old marketing strategy of continually attractive new customers and satisfying current customers with good food at good prices.
   - A
   - B
   - C
   - D
5. Claude read the **required** warranty only to find that, while the manufacturer promised to repair or replace the CD player, the **coverage** had **expiration**.

6. Before buying a new appliance, compare the **characteristics** of similar products and their warranties, which **protect** your purchase and **frequently vary** from product to product.

7. Bassem discovered the **consequent** of not following instructions: Because he had not had the **required** service performed on his car, his warranty **coverage** no longer **protected** him from mechanical failure.

8. It is especially important to **consideration** the **reputation** of a manufacturer when buying a product **protected** by an **implied** warranty.

9. The board **warned** us that they planned to **shut our department down**, but we **figured in** a way to **convince** them that we were vital to the organization.

10. If the software is not **compatible** with the operating system, the computer may **fail to function** and **shut down without warn**.

11. The new account manager took the **initiative** of promising to **stay on top of orders** by **physical inspecting** the warehouse stock.

12. Ordering **as need** was discouraged by the **provider** who was **in charge of maintaining** a high **capacity turnover**.

13. A plan to **reduce the physical space allotted to each employee** is a recursive idea that is **usually initiated** by a new manager.

14. The company **initiating an affordable new program for the division** that **reduced wastes and increased capacity**.

15. The **popular new software**, which **facilitated the process of learning new functions on an as-needed basis**, had been **sharp reduced in price**.

16. Having computer **networks has revolutionary** not only how information is **stored**, but also how it can be **processed**.

17. The manager sent the letter by **express mail**, but he neglected to have it **proof beforehand**.

18. The letter was **revision, then folded with the petition**, and sent by **express mail**.

19. You **mentioned** that the word processing program was **revised**, but it is still
extremely complicated and I couldn’t run the program without reading the manual beforehand.

20. The layout of the petition must be revised, because it may need to be folded many times if we get a lot of signatures.

Applicable levels: secondary, college education
Key words: metalinguistic awareness, peer feedback, beginner-level students

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