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Author(s)	Qiyun Zhu and Jessica To

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**Proactive receiver roles in peer feedback dialogue: Facilitating receivers' self-regulation and co-regulating providers' learning**

Qiyun Zhu (zhuqiyun@gdufs.edu.cn)

Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6489-9364>

Jessica To

National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0264-3160>

## **Proactive receiver roles in peer feedback dialogue: Facilitating receivers' self-regulation and co-regulating providers' learning**

### **Abstract**

Understanding the proactive roles of receivers in peer feedback processes is crucial because proactive recipience carries great potential in enhancing the effectiveness of feedback and supporting self-regulated (SRL) and co-regulated learning (CoRL). However, receiver's proactivity has been insufficiently explored and the field lacks a clear understanding of how peer feedback receivers could aid academic self-regulation and co-regulation. This study unpacks the black box through examining different receiver roles in peer feedback dialogue and receiver-triggered SRL and CoRL behaviours in an undergraduate writing course for first-year English majors in China. Data were collected through audio-taped peer feedback dialogue, stimulated recall interviews and journals. Findings revealed a variety of increasingly active receiver roles: respondent, verifier, explicator, negotiator, seeker and generator. Assuming these roles, receivers not only regulated their own learning by self-monitoring works, evaluating the quality of received comments and co-producing feedback but also improved feedback providers' writing and evaluative skills. The study challenges the stereotypical image of passive receivers and argues that receiver proactivity could turn peer feedback into a mutually beneficial learning activity for receivers and providers. Implications for developing receiver proactivity are discussed.

**Keywords:** dialogic peer feedback; receiver role; self-regulated learning; co-regulated learning

## **Introduction**

Understanding receiver roles in peer feedback processes is important to productive learning since the proactive roles of receivers are central to the effectiveness of feedback (Winstone et al. 2017) and the development of self-regulated learning (SRL) (Clark 2012). Parallel to the conceptualisation of feedback as a dialogic process (Nicol 2010; Carless 2020), peer feedback is reframed as a collaborative dialogue between feedback providers and receivers, in which the latter are expected to participate actively to evoke different levels of regulation, for example planning and coordinating feedback activities, discussing feedback to support its uptake, and applying it for performance improvement (Er, Dimitriadis, and Gašević 2021). In the light of reciprocity in peer interaction (Hadwin, Järvelä, and Miller 2017), co-regulated learning (CoRL) could also occur as a result of effective feedback exchanges between providers and receivers.

Nevertheless, specific proactive receiver roles in peer feedback are only hinted in some studies (e.g. Lockhart and Ng 1995; Guerrero and Villamil 2000; Zhu and Carless 2018; Wood 2021) but not systematically articulated. To help students make the most of peer feedback exchanges, we need to clarify the roles of proactive feedback receivers and how they promote academic self-regulation and co-regulation. This paper probes into different receiver roles and how SRL and CoRL are unfolded in peer feedback dialogue. The contributions of this study lie in exhibiting the range of receiver proactivity, identifying self-regulation and co-regulation mechanisms in peer feedback processes and making suggestions for fostering receiver proactivity.

## **Receiver roles in dialogic peer feedback**

Given the limitations of one-way information transmission in written feedback, Nicol (2010) stresses the need to embed written feedback in a dialogical context to promote successful learning. This dialogic approach emphasises students' active engagement (Price, Handley, and Millar 2011; Carless 2020). Winstone et al. (2017) further propose the concept of “proactive recipience” or “agentic engagement” that accentuates the fundamental role of receivers in making feedback effective. In their understanding, receivers take responsibility to construct meaning of feedback, use the feedback to evaluate work progress and enact it for performance improvement.

Notwithstanding the significance of proactive recipience, only a few studies (Guerrero and Villamil 2000; Kim 2009; Harland, Wald, and Randhawa 2017; Wood 2021) discussed receiver proactivity in peer feedback. Wood (2021), for example, discovered that through technological mediation feedback receivers could seek clarification, challenge feedback or raise additional questions to support their uptake of peer feedback. The feedback receivers in the studies of Kim (2009) and Harland, Wald, and Randhawa (2017) were required to produce a written response to every peer comment and explain whether and why they agreed or disagreed with the comments. Both studies found participants' improvement in works after articulating judgements. Kim (2009) further revealed that the participants developed higher metacognitive awareness of their learning process and were more motivated in peer feedback interaction. Guerrero and Villamil (2000) discovered that receivers gradually assumed more responsibility to revise works-in-progress when continuously interacting with

their feedback providers over time. Although these studies shed light on the benefits of receiver proactivity, they failed to document how feedback receivers communicated response to providers or to analyse the receiver role in depth. If receivers' response could determine feedback effectiveness (Winstone et al. 2017), it is crucial to understand how receivers maintain interaction, clarify ambiguity, negotiate meaning, seek help and so forth in discussion. More empirical studies are needed to advance the knowledge about the extent and mechanism of receiver proactivity.

In fact, some receiver roles could be inferred from the description of receivers' behaviours in feedback literature. For instance, receivers may act as a respondent by giving minimal responses such as "mm" to show that they are listening to the dialogue (Steen-Utheim and Wittek 2017). They could also function as an explicator to explain their writing intention (Zheng 2012; Zhu and Carless 2018) or a seeker to elicit guidance and assistance from teachers, peers or other sources (Molloy, Boud, and Henderson 2020; Joughin et al. 2021). The mere description of receivers' behaviours, however, is inadequate for a comprehensive understanding of proactive receiver roles because it is unclear how their behaviours aid learning. In the absence of systematic elaboration of receiver proactivity, receivers tend to be portrayed passively and disempowered in peer feedback processes. It is high time that the field needed more empirical evidence to enrich our understanding of receiver roles.

### **Developing self-regulation and co-regulation in dialogic peer feedback**

Peer interaction supports SRL and CoRL (Panadero, Jonsson, and Strijbos 2016). SRL

refers to the process of becoming a strategic learner by actively monitoring and regulating metacognitive, motivational and behavioral aspects of one's own learning (Hadwin and Oshige 2011). CoRL means "the affordances and constraints stimulating appropriation of strategic planning, enactment, reflection, and adaptation" through interactional exchanges (Hadwin, Järvelä, and Miller 2017, 87). Self-regulation emerges when feedback receivers set goals for improvement and monitor their task engagement process and actions. Co-regulation is initiated when they request clarification from their feedback providers, and their clarification request could prompt the providers to revisit initial understanding of knowledge. In this paper, we are particularly interested in how peer feedback receivers regulate their own learning and co-regulate the learning of their feedback providers.

Two studies provide pertinent insights in this regard. Guerrero and Villamil (2000) ascertain that receivers' self-regulation gradually emerges when they and their providers discuss how to revise a draft. This study argues that scaffolding in peer feedback is mutual rather than uni-dimensional. This is consistent with the SRL model in collective settings that regulatory expertise or scaffolding is distributed across individuals rather than from a more capable person to the less capable one (Hadwin, Järvelä, and Miller 2017). However, this study details how feedback providers co-regulate receivers' learning rather than elucidates how receivers co-regulate providers' learning.

Er, Dimitriadis, and Gašević (2021) discuss CoRL and SRL in peer feedback processes. They theorise that CoRL is emanated when feedback providers assist

receivers in negotiating meanings of feedback, setting goals and planning actions. SRL is triggered when receivers monitor and evaluate their own performance and make changes to improve work. As with Guerrero and Villamil (2000), Er, Dimitriadis and Gašević (2021) do not cast light on the CoRL of feedback providers as a result of receivers' participation. Additionally, their study discusses the emanation of SRL only in the revision phase but not in the phase of peer discussion. To fully understand receivers' active engagement in the process, it is necessary to pinpoint how receivers regulate their own learning and co-regulate their providers' learning during peer interaction. A probe into CoRL enacted by receivers is needed to understand peer feedback as a mutually beneficial learning activity long recognised in the literature (Topping 1998).

To this end, we examine the proactive roles of feedback receivers in dialogic peer feedback processes and how SRL and CoRL on the part of receivers could be manifested during the processes. This study throws light on the growing interest in students' agentic engagement and theorisation of peer feedback grounded on self- and co-regulation. Two research questions are addressed:

RQ1: What active roles do receivers play in peer feedback dialogue?

RQ2: How do receivers regulate their own learning or the learning of their peer feedback providers?

## **Method**

This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm because unpacking receiver roles



required an understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives of peer dialogue and their interaction during feedback exchanges. For this purpose, we collected data through three qualitative methods (audio-taped peer discussion, stimulated recall interviews and journals).

### ***Context and participants***

The research was conducted in a writing module for first-year undergraduates majoring in English at a university in southern China. This research site was chosen because peer feedback practice was encouraged in the module and teachers were given the autonomy to design and implement peer feedback. The participants were 21 students taking the module, out of the intake of 76. 14 students were taught by Teacher A and 7 by Teacher B. They were invited to participate in the research as they were enthusiastic about peer feedback and willing to share their feedback experiences. Their English proficiency roughly fell between B1 and B2 levels in Common European Framework (CEF) of Reference for Language. Informal consent was obtained from the university and the students to use the data for research. Each student was assigned an identification code (S1- S21) to preserve anonymity.

The students received some feedback training prior to peer feedback exchanges. Teacher A explained to students how to construct peer comments in relation to the assessment criteria of their writing task. Teacher B provided a completed peer feedback form and an annotated draft with teacher comments to model the process of feedback provision. To complement the training and develop students' feedback literacy, Teacher B asked her students to comment on two essay exemplars, explained their evaluative

decisions in a whole-class discussion and refined their academic judgements necessarily. She also reminded them to take an open attitude towards received comments and encouraged them to generate insights from the feedback exchanges to improve their subsequent draft.

Both teachers embedded the peer feedback activity into the draft-plus-rework task design (Winstone and Carless 2019). That is, the students produced their first draft of writing prior to the feedback discussion and applied the comments received and insights derived from the activity to improve their subsequent draft. For peer feedback arrangements, they were often allowed to pair up with their friends or occasionally randomly assigned to a group of four. They first wrote comments on each other's draft and then completed a peer feedback form with specific statements of task criteria. Afterwards, they discussed each other's draft for around 10 minutes based on the written feedback and revised their own draft after the peer feedback dialogue. The major difference between both teachers was that Teacher B encouraged students to self-assess their works with the peer feedback form and jot down three questions that they would like to ask their feedback providers. By doing so, they could reflect on their writing while familiarising themselves with the criteria for subsequent peer discussion.

### ***Data collection***

There were three data collection methods. The first one involved audio-taped peer feedback dialogue to identify receiver roles. To minimise disturbance to students' learning, we invited them to record their in-class discussion with their mobile phones. After the first feedback activity, the semester was cut short because of an unexpected

change in the university calendar. In the end, only eight groups of peer feedback dialogue were recorded. Six dialogue recordings were transcribed verbatim, while the other two were discarded because of poor recording quality. The length of the recordings was between 4 and 10 minutes. Their drafts and completed peer feedback forms were also gathered to provide a glimpse into the use of peer feedback.

The second one included stimulated recall interviews to explore the students' experiences and perspectives of feedback dialogue and their SRL or CoRL behaviours. When conducting the recalls based on their first and final drafts, they recounted how they had given or responded to oral comments and why they had responded in a particular way (see Table 1 for the interview questions at the end of manuscript). Twenty-one interviews were carried out. All were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Each lasted for approximately 30 minutes.

The third one encompassed journals. The students kept a journal entry right after the peer feedback activity to document their thoughts and emotions during the discussion and reflect on their feedback experiences. To prepare them for journal writing, the first author briefed them the process of reflection and gave them a short list of prompts centring on how they acted and thought during the discussion. Only 12 students wrote their journal entries. They were generally reflective, detailing their major writing problems, their ways of giving and handling peer comments and the insights derived from evaluating peer works.

To encourage students to freely express their views, they were allowed to use Chinese (their mother tongue) in the interview and journal. The first author translated

the data into English and the second author verified the accuracy of translation. The translated excerpts were passed to the student participants for member checks. They reported no misinterpretation of meaning.

### ***Data analysis***

We employed interactional analysis method to examine the feedback discussion because this method captured the communicative nature of dialogic feedback and enabled researchers to look into the interactional features of interlocutors (Ajjawi and Boud 2018). The first author began with the identification of initiation-response patterns between feedback providers and receivers from the dialogue transcripts. Informed by the literature, she looked for dialogue excerpts to illustrate the “respondent”, “explicator” and “seeker” roles. The recursive analysis of the entire dialogue allowed her to identify other roles according to their main function playing in the interaction. Following this logic, she inductively identified the roles of “verifier”, “negotiator” and “generator”.

Upon the identification of receiver roles, she re-scrutinised the dialogue excerpts to examine moment-to-moment behavioural changes which might signal SRL or CoRL development. For example, a student’s initiative to verify received comments implies taking responsibility in regulating one’s learning. The identified behaviours were validated by the students’ delineation of SRL or CoRL in the interviews and journal entries and their performances in first and final drafts. This part of analysis was mainly inductive, focusing on how receiver proactivity facilitated the SRL of receivers and CoRL of providers. The preliminary analysis was reviewed by the second author to

see if there were differing interpretations of evidence. When such cases happened, both authors exchanged their views, reexamined the data and reached consensus after discussion.

## **Findings**

Six receiver roles were identified from the data. They are presented in the sequence of increasing proactivity. Generally, an excerpt from audio recordings is used to illustrate each role. The excerpts are selected because of their salience in demonstrating the characteristics of the roles. Since the recordings for the roles of negotiator and generator are unavailable due to unclear recordings, stimulated recall interview data are provided instead to exemplify the roles. The interview and journal data are used to elucidate the SRL or CoRL behaviours.

### ***Receiver as respondent***

A commonly found receiver role is respondent. Feedback receivers respond to their providers' comments, usually through facial expression, tone of voice, gesture and other paralinguistic elements. Excerpt 1 showcases a typical feedback interaction between a provider (S3) and a receiver (S4).

Excerpt 1 Receiver as respondent in feedback interaction

Turn	Student	Utterance
1	S3	Would it be better if you change the positions [of these two phrases]? Because when you say 'something is gone far away from me', it implies something good is gone.
2	S4	Right.
3	S3	Yes?

4	S4	Hmm! (affirmative)
5	S3	[The other phrase] indicates experiencing something [bad].
6	S4	What [do you mean]? (S4 didn't hear clearly.)
7	S3	Experience [something bad]. I feel it would be better if you change the positions.
8	S4	Hmm! (affirmative)

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In this excerpt, S4 constantly responded to S3 by giving confirmation (Turns 2, 4 and 8). The minimal responses “right” and “hmm” were essential in dialogue since they signaled the attentiveness of the receiver. Regulating one’s attention was part of the receiver’s deliberate efforts to engage with feedback because she was considering how to apply the feedback to her own writing. The receiver explained how the interaction led to SRL in the interview and journal.

When my partner was commenting on the phrases, I realised I wrote in a haste and didn’t polish my writing at all. This helped me rethink my attitude to my work. (S4, Interview)

I was a bit uneasy about the feedback as it meant I wasn’t careful enough when checking my work. But it’s the uneasiness that made me pay attention to what I used to ignore. (S4, Journal)

The above quotes seem to suggest that S4 experienced some emotional upset after interacting with the provider as the comments indicated her inadequacy. However, such distress prompted her to reflect on time management and focus on language editing. This instance shows that the respondent role could trigger the feedback receiver’s self-regulatory behaviour.

The receiver’s responses also created an impact on the provider, as shown in S3’s journal “My partner gave positive responses to my comments. She nodded and marked down the problem. That really motivated me to talk.”. Inferring from this quote,

we believed that the receiver could co-regulate the motivational aspect of the provider's learning.

### ***Receiver as verifier***

Another receiver role is verifier. Receivers either ask their providers to clarify points or confirm their understanding of comments through further inquiry. Excerpt 2 exemplifies this role.

Excerpt 2 Receiver as verifier in feedback interaction

Turn	Student	Utterance
1	S18	I think you need to add a bit more description about what they think.
2	S19	Does that mean I need to delete some conversations? Are the conversations too long?
3	S18	Yes, too many conversations. The focal point should be the description about their thinking behind the conversations.

In this excerpt, S19 (receiver) followed up the feedback by raising a query concerning revision strategy in Turn 2. This led to the related explanation from S18 (provider) in Turn 3. Thus far, S19 fully understood the *how* and *why* about the revision and was ready to take the feedback. The need to verify the provider's comments was sometimes related to the vagueness of written comments. This point was illustrated by S19.

Peer feedback without discussion is meaningless. The comment 'the flow is too compact' is unclear. I need to ask what she (provider) meant and whether she wanted me to revise in a particular way. If her reason wasn't convincing, why should I consider it? Asking her to explain could help me judge if it's good to take the suggestion. (S19, interview)

The perceived vagueness of the written comment prompted S19 to request further explanation in the dialogue. A comparison of her first and subsequent drafts

showed that she enacted the feedback by adding some description about the protagonist's thoughts and deleting some conversations. In this sense, the receiver regulated her own learning by verifying the given comments and working out the revision strategies through follow-up of the provider's suggestions. This indicated that she was taking personal responsibility to deliberately regulate the cognitive aspect of learning.

### ***Receiver as explicator***

During feedback discussion, receivers could play the role of explicator to explain their intended meaning or writing process, either as a kind of self-reflection or in response to the provider's request. Excerpt 3 serves as an illustration.

#### Excerpt 3 Receiver as explicator in feedback interaction

Turn	Student	Utterance
1	S3	How come you wrote it this way?
2	S4	You mean this part? Well, I remembered there was a scene in <i>Forrest Gump</i> . His wife left. I just adopted the sentences from the movie.

This excerpt occurred during the middle of peer feedback dialogue wherein S3 (provider) read through the writing of S4 (receiver) and offered comments one by one. S3 raised a query about the way S4 framed her writing. In response, S4 explained why she wrote in a certain way. As indicated in the following quotes from S3, the receiver as an explicator could co-regulate the learning of feedback provider.

Why did I ask the question? Her writing was very good. I just wondered how she could write so well. Kind of learning from her about different ways of writing. It helps open my mind. (S3, Interview)



I didn't understand her metaphor, so I asked her to explain the meaning to me. I needed to know why she wrote in this way. Without this information, I might have given inappropriate comments. (S3, Journal)

The above quotes implied that the receiver's response was useful in co-regulating the provider's writing knowledge and evaluative skills. It helped to increase S3's writing repertoires by demonstrating a different way of writing and offered her additional information to re-evaluate her initial judgement of the peer's draft and adjusted her feedback accordingly.

### ***Receiver as negotiator***

Receiver's proactivity is also evident in feedback negotiation. The negotiation often involves disagreement between receivers and providers. Because of the unavailability of related recordings, we extract pertinent interview quotes of a receiver (S5) and her provider (S6) to illustrate the negotiator role. They had divergent approaches to continuing a half-finished story but reached consensus after discussion. The following quotes capture their differing views and perceived effectiveness of the negotiation.

My partner suggested changing my writing style. I disagreed at first as our teacher told us to show how desperate and hopeless the protagonist was. It's necessary to present this kind of information directly, not to cover it up. But different opinions ignite unusual sparks. This kind of discussion made me think deeper. Different writing styles might produce different effects. Maybe next time I could write in an implicit way and see how it goes. (S5, interview)

My partner's writing highlighted the emotion of the protagonist. Discussing her writing actually helped me realise my neglect of the emotion. ... I didn't put myself into the protagonist's shoes. Once I realised the reason for the problem, it's easier for me to improve. I could add description about his emotion. (S6, interview)

Both receiver and provider benefited from the negotiation. From the receiver's perspective, S5 first judged the appropriateness of the given feedback and expressed disagreement. The negotiation allowed her to appreciate the merits of different writing styles. In the end, she was considering a different writing style for the subsequent draft. We hence infer that the receiver regulated her own learning through evaluating received comments, verbalising judgements and rethinking her writing plan. From the provider's perspective, S6 was co-regulated by S5 when the reciprocal exchanges enabled the former to understand her writing problem for the sake of draft improvement. This instance showed that receiver as a negotiator could be useful in resolving disagreement and promoting academic self-regulation and co-regulation.

However, not all students were able to reconcile differences, and teacher scaffolding became necessary in this circumstance. We cite the quotes of two other feedback receivers (S8 and S21) to cast light on the importance of teacher scaffolding.

I doubted if his (provider's) view was right. We couldn't convince each other ... so we asked our teacher when she was patrolling the class. She listened and explained to us ... (S8, interview)

We didn't agree on how the protagonist's wife would react. So we turned to our teacher. She asked us to refer to the original text about any hints on the wife's reaction. She also told us to be critical about the received comments and jot down reasons for dismissing any comment. (S21, journal)

The quotes imply that teacher scaffolding could aid students in clarifying their points of contention, fostering skills to evaluate peer comments and developing a rational approach to coping with divergent views. The development of these skills would be useful in establishing a climate for collaboration among peers.

### *Receiver as seeker*

Seeker is a more proactive role compared with the foregoing roles as receivers take the initiative to solicit specific feedback from their providers. This role was apparent when students conducted self-assessment prior to peer feedback. Excerpt 4 below illustrates how S14 (receiver) sought comments from two feedback providers (S11 and S12) in a discussion.

Excerpt 4 Receiver as seeker in feedback interaction

Turn	Student	Utterance
1	S11	Well-written. Able to describe from two different perspectives. Also included many dialogues.
2	S12	A profound topic too.
3	S11	Right, very profound. A touch on a big issue in the city.
4	S14	I feel like having two skills for our article. (All laughed) ... (S11 and S12 continued to give compliments.)
5	S14	Got one question. Do you think the foreshadowing is too much, too long?
6	S11	Yes, I feel it's a bit long. Need to cut back. Put the focus on the urban management officer instead.

In this excerpt, when S11 and S12 gave only compliments from Turns 1 to 3, S14 took the initiative to seek critical comments in Turn 5. Apparently, providing only positive feedback did not satisfy her. Critically examining one's own work and seeking help accordingly were her SRL strategies. In her journal and interview, she explained why she actively sought critical comments. Her response hinted at the self-assessment prior to the peer feedback process.

After self-assessment, I believe my writing needs lots of improvement,

especially the use of foreshadowing. I hope my partner will address these questions and gave me advice in discussion. (S14, Journal)

At first my peers just said I did well, no need to revise. They just praised me and nothing else ... Then I took the initiative to ask questions and elicit comments from them ... As they go along, they may have something to offer. I began with what I felt to be problematic during self-assessment. (S14, Interview)

Clearly, the self-assessment prepared S14 for seeking specific feedback. When self-appraising writing, she discerned her weaknesses but lacked ways to tackle the problems. By noting down her questions on the draft, she was cognitively ready to raise questions during the feedback dialogue.

The receiver as seeker also exerted a positive effect on feedback providers, as explained by S11 in the following.

We all know she (S14) is a good writer. When first reading the article, there was nothing to complain ... but when she asked if the foreshadowing should be trimmed, it made me think twice. Yes, she's right. Previously, we weren't reading carefully enough. (S11, interview)

The above quote seems to suggest that the feedback receiver co-regulated the learning of the provider by drawing the latter's attention to a potential problem. Without the prompt from S14, related comments might not be available. It could be understood that the receiver's query made the provider rethink academic judgements.

### ***Receiver as generator***

A less common but important proactive receiver role is generator of feedback, usually demonstrated through a receiver producing revision strategies in collaboration with a provider. Due to the unsatisfactory recording quality, an interview excerpt from S9 (receiver) is presented to explain the generator role.

My peer underlined a word on my draft ... When I asked how I should revise, she had no idea. Then I continued to ask what the problem was. She said the word was not enough to describe the protagonist's feeling. Then I came up with some alternative words. At last we reached an agreement. Neither she nor I knew how to revise at the beginning. But we complemented each other through discussion... it's quite beneficial [grinned satisfactorily]. (S9, Interview)

The above quote shows that rather than passively receiving feedback, S9 co-constructed revision strategies with her feedback provider. When comparing her first and subsequent drafts, we noticed that she made use of the alternative words to develop a paragraph to fully reveal the protagonist's feeling. This suggests that the receiver cognitively regulated her own learning during peer dialogue and the co-generation of feedback led to its uptake in later revision and further improvement.

S9's quote also indicates the incapability of some feedback providers in offering specific revision strategies. S1 (the provider of S9) echoed this view in the interview and explicated the importance of collaborative discussion.

She (receiver) suggested some words to replace her original one. I didn't think they were good enough, but they reminded me of something I learned before and told her ... I can discuss with her how to revise, but not give her a ready-made answer because it may be beyond my ability. The revised product shouldn't be spoon-fed by me, but something she comes up with after integrating both her own and my ideas. (S1, Interview)

When the receiver took the generator role, the provider could be stimulated to co-produce appropriate feedback. In this sense, the receiver co-regulated the provider's learning as the collaborative dialogue helped sharpen the provider's evaluative skills.

In summary, peer feedback dialogue enabled the full play of receiver proactivity when peer feedback receivers took the roles of respondent, verifier, explicator,

negotiator, seeker and generator. Assuming these roles not only regulated the learning of receivers themselves but also in some occasions co-regulated the learning of their peer feedback providers.

## **Discussion**

This study explored how peer feedback receivers developed proactivity in dialogic feedback and how different receiver roles facilitated the SRL of receivers and CoRL of providers. Our identification of various agentic receiver roles (respondent, verifier, explicator, negotiator, seeker and generator) not only echoes the call for activating students' active role in feedback processes (Carless 2020) but also provides empirical evidence to the conceptualisation of proactive recipience (Winstone et al. 2017). Specifically, we focus on receivers' behaviours in moment-to-moment peer dialogue during recipience processes, an under-researched aspect in peer feedback literature (Winstone et al. 2017).

Among the different roles, negotiator, seeker and generator are of particular interest because they manifest receivers' greater contribution in shaping feedback effectiveness and hence truly embody the essence of receiver proactivity. Our data indicate that the negotiator role allows feedback receivers and providers to be exposed to different perspectives and inspires both parties to develop ideas for writing. This corroborates the views of Zhu and Carless (2018) about the benefits of negotiation to both receivers and providers. The seeker role is highly self-motivated. Taking the initiative to elicit critical feedback, the receivers display their proactive engagement

with feedback and set the direction for peer discussion. Aligning with Wood (2021), our data substantiate how feedback can be sought among peers, an aspect scarcely addressed by major feedback research (e.g. Molloy, Boud, and Henderson 2020; Joughin et al. 2021). The generator role is in contrast to previous studies which accentuate the importance of peer feedback providers in constructing feedback (Guerrero and Villamil 2000). Confirming those of Wood (2021), our findings reveal that proactive receivers are able to generate revision strategies in collaboration with their providers. This is significant for receivers since this signifies their transformation from a passive recipient of feedback to a proactive user.

Our study also unfolds how receivers self-regulate their learning through agentic engagement with peer feedback. Differing from receivers' SRL in the revision stage (Er, Dimitriadis, and Gašević 2021), our delineation of their SRL behaviours in the discussion stage is particularly important because the reciprocal interaction between receivers and providers enables the former to clarify ambiguity and gain deeper insights into peer feedback for task revision. Since SRL is a good predictor of better learning outcomes and motivation (Clark 2012), we infer that the more SRL behaviours receivers exhibit during peer dialogue, the more likely they claim ownership in the feedback processes and take up the feedback for performance improvement. Together with earlier literature on SRL in the revision stage, we contribute to a fuller understanding of receivers' learning mechanism in peer feedback processes.

We further capture specifically how peer feedback receivers co-regulate providers' learning, a point often overlooked in the literature. The dominance of

provider-initiated CoRL in extant studies, for example co-regulating receivers' learning (Er, Dimitriadis, and Gašević 2021), reinforces the stereotype that receivers are in need of help. Consistent with Hadwin, Järvelä, and Miller's (2017) argument about distributed CoRL, we ascertain that when feedback receivers play multiple proactive roles, they could enhance their providers' motivation in feedback dialogue, writing knowledge and evaluative skills. Our discovery could empower peer feedback receivers and fully establish peer feedback as a mutually beneficial learning activity for receivers and providers.

### **Pedagogical implications**

A pedagogical implication arising from the present study is the design of peer feedback processes to develop receiver proactivity. Prefacing peer feedback dialogue with student self-assessment would be effective in preparing feedback receivers to assume the role of seeker because self-assessment could sensitise them to the weaknesses in works-in-progress, a viewpoint shared by Zheng, Wang and Chai (2021). In the feedback dialogue, they could seek help and critical comments from their providers for improvement. This pedagogical arrangement would be useful to first-year undergraduates as they are new to academic practices in higher education and not fully equipped for related assessment participation (Zhou, Zhao, and Dawson 2020).

Another implication involves emphasising the importance of receiver proactivity in peer feedback training. Some students may not be aware of the variety of proactive receiver roles and the positive impacts on SRL and CoRL. So, it is essential



to share with students the various proactive roles in peer discussion and the mutual benefits to feedback providers and receivers. In addition to providing examples of effective peer feedback (Topping 1998), academics could explicitly explain different receiver roles to raise students' awareness of receiver proactivity during peer feedback training. This can be followed by showing a video of peer feedback dialogue to model the behaviour of receiver proactivity so that students could be better prepared for strategic participation.

More importantly, the nurturing of receiver proactivity needs to be considered in wider assessment and curriculum designs for a greater impact. Nested assessment tasks or tasks designed in multiple and related stages could encourage students to seek and utilise feedback from multiple sources for academic regulation (Winstone and Carless 2019). Regular learning activities such as exemplar analysis, peer reviews and self-assessment need to permeate the higher education curriculum so as to develop students' understanding of assessment standards, evaluative and self-monitoring capabilities (Boud and Molloy 2013). In tandem with teacher scaffolding to clarify students' ambiguities and foster the skills of peer collaboration, the seed of receiver proactivity is likely to take root among students and gradually promote learner independence for lifelong learning.

### **Limitations and avenues for future research**

The study has two limitations. First, only a small number of oral discussion was available for analysis because of poor-quality audios and fewer rounds of peer feedback

in a curtailed university schedule. We addressed this limitation by extracting pertinent stimulated recall interview data to cast light on some receiver roles and the accompanied SRL and CoRL behaviours. Future research could garner a larger size of oral feedback recordings so that more proactive receiver roles could be identified.

Second, the stimulated recall interviews based on written drafts may not fully activate students' recall of all SRL and CoRL behaviours because the drafts did not capture paralinguistic elements such as posture, body language or tone. It would be illuminating if participants could conduct the recalls based on video-taped peer feedback dialogues so that future researchers could elicit more SRL and CoRL evidence and invite the participants to elaborate on their SRL and CoRL experiences.

## **Conclusion**

Through identifying a range of proactive receiver roles, our study contributes to a nuanced understanding of receiver proactivity in peer feedback processes. Particularly, the roles of negotiator, seeker and generator fully represent the agentic involvement of peer feedback receivers. Another significance lies in delineating receivers' self-regulated learning in recipience processes and uncovering the distributed nature of co-regulation between receivers and providers.

As a final note, although we have presented six distinctive receiver roles for illustrative purpose, in practice there could be overlaps between some roles and receivers could assume two or more roles during peer interaction. For example, the negotiator role may involve some explication when receivers persuade their providers

to change viewpoints in feedback exchanges. Rather than seeing these as problems, we believe it is promising for students to assume multiple active roles because they could maximise the learning impacts of dialogic peer feedback. With a richer understanding of receiver proactivity, the effectiveness of peer feedback could be further increased.

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**Table 1. Interview Questions**

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1. Could you go through each received comment and share with me how your partner gave comments during the in-class discussion?
  2. How did you feel when hearing the comments? What did you do and say in response to the comments?
  3. Do you think it is necessary to discuss with your partner? Why or why not?
  4. Did you conduct self-assessment before peer feedback? If yes, how did you do it? To what extent did the self-assessment influence your interaction with partner?
  5. What did you think after receiving peer feedback? Did you use the received feedback in writing your next draft? If yes, how? If no, why not?
  6. What comments did you give during the discussion?
  7. How did your partner respond to your given feedback? Did the response change your thoughts?
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