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K–12 Vietnamese learners' oral peer feedback in classroom L2 task-based interaction in English as a Foreign Language: frequency, characteristics and influencing factors

Phung Dao and Mai Xuan Nhat Chi Nguyen

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Abstract

The facilitative role of oral corrective feedback in second language (L2) learning has often been evidenced in interaction research. However, this body of research has been largely lab-based and focused on adult learners. Some studies have explored feedback in classroom settings but have been primarily concerned with teachers' and/or adults' feedback. Research on feedback provided by young learners in an intact English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom setting, where groups of learners are already formed, is scarce. To fill this gap, this study investigated K12 Vietnamese EFL learners' provision and characteristics of oral peer feedback in two intact L2 classrooms, and explored factors affecting feedback frequency. Data were audio-recorded interactions of 68 K12 Vietnamese EFL learners, aged 11 to 15, collected from two English classes over a period of a 12–week course. The participants performed varied communicative tasks during their regularly scheduled classroom activities. Their interactions were coded for feedback frequency and characteristics. An open-ended questionnaire and focus group interviews were administered to examine learners' perceptions of factors affecting their feedback provision. Results revealed that young learners noticed and provided feedback on each other's errors; however, the feedback frequency was relatively low. Regarding its quality, peer feedback was mostly accurate, and targeted morphosyntactic errors, which are grammatical errors in word formation and sentence formation. Notably, although the learners largely provided their partners with opportunities for modifying output, only one-third of correct modified output occurred following the feedback, with more than half of the feedback followed by incorrect or no modified output. Learners also reported multiple factors affecting their feedback provision. The results evidenced the occurrence of peer feedback by young learners and thus suggest pedagogical implications for harnessing the benefits of peer feedback and for taking into consideration a multitude of factors influencing feedback occurrence.

Key words: oral peer feedback, young L2 learners, classroom task-based interaction, L2 learning

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1 Introduction

Feedback given in oral second language (L2) interaction is often referred to as corrective feedback, whether or not it contains explicitly or implicitly corrective elements. Typically, corrective feedback involves a learner receiving either formal or informal feedback by a teacher or a peer on his/her speaking. Like teacher or native-speaker feedback, peer feedback refers to "all response information which informs the learner about their actual stage of language use and/or communication issues" (Iwashita & Dao, 2021, p.10). The uniqueness of peer feedback is that it is given by peers who hold an equal-learner status and learners are both active feedback providers and receivers (van Popta et al., 2017). This unique characteristic of peer feedback might have an impact on its frequency and quality in learner-learner (peer) interaction and thus on the L2 learning process.

Historically, L2 interaction research on corrective feedback has spanned over three decades, and started to gain momentum with the publication of Lyster & Ranta's (1997) seminal article on oral corrective feedback. Thus far it has largely focused on teachers' feedback and its facilitative role in promoting L2 development (Li, 2010; Li & Vuono, 2019; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007). Recently, peer feedback has gained more attention, with the results of a limited body of research showing that feedback provided by learners promotes L2 production accuracy (Adams, 2007; Sato & Lyster, 2012; also see Philp, Adams & Iwashita, 2014; Sato & Ballinger, 2016 for reviews). However, there are also issues associated with peer feedback in L2 interaction. For example, the occurrence of peer feedback in L2 task-based interaction appears to be rare (Fujii & Mackey, 2009; Philp, Walter & Basturkmen, 2010). In addition, its frequency has been shown to be vulnerable to different social and contextual factors such as task type and language features (Adams, 2007; Dao, 2019; McDonough, 2004), actual or perceived proficiency level (Dao & McDonough, 2018; Sato & Viveros, 2016; Watanabe & Swain, 2007, 2008; Williams, 2001), and learners' perceptions of peers and learners' approach to tasks (Philp & Mackey, 2010). Notably, both teachers and learners seem to share a concern that learners might provide non-target-like input in feedback and/or are unable to correct each other's errors (see Mackey et al., 2007; Pica et al. 1996).

It should be noted that these results were largely observed from interactions among adult learners (e.g., university students) and mainly in lab-based settings. Thus, little is known about peer feedback provided by young learners (e.g., adolescents or teenagers) in intact EFL classes, the extent to which it occurs, and whether its frequency and characteristics are influenced by contextual, social, affective, and individual factors. To fill these gaps, the current study investigated (1) whether younger EFL learners (adolescent learners) provide each other with peer feedback in intact EFL classrooms, (2) the characteristics of this feedback, and (3) learners' perceptions of factors influencing its frequency. The study aims to contribute to the general understanding of the quality and quantity of peer feedback given by adolescent EFL learners and provide language teachers with pedagogical suggestions to maximize the facilitative role of peer feedback among adolescent language learners in L2 learning.

Theoretical accounts of peer feedback

In L2 interaction research, three main theoretical accounts have been used to explain the benefits of peer feedback to L2 learning: the cognitive-interactionist perspective, skill acquisition theory, and sociocultural theory. According to the cognitive-interactionist perspective, which mainly draws on Long's Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996, 2007, 2015) and Swain's Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 2005), oral peer feedback provided in interaction facilitates L2 development through triggering learners' attention to forms, which is likely to increase language modifications, possibly resulting in L2 learning. Meanwhile, skill acquisition theory postulates that oral peer feedback provided in contextual interaction in combination with multiple opportunities for meaningful practice transforms learners' L2 knowledge from declarative knowledge (i.e., the mental representation of language meanings and rules) to procedural knowledge (i.e., the ability to carry out cognitive operations such as language modifications and production) (Anderson, 2005; DeKeyser, 1998, 2007). Both of these accounts draw on the information-processing approach in which learners take in information, process it and produce it in order to achieve automatisation in language use.

The third theoretical account, sociocultural theory, views language learning differently from the cognitive approaches. In this view, language learning is considered to be a socially co-constructed activity in which peer feedback is perceived as assistance or mediation that enables learners to appropriate language forms to perform intended actions such as task performance (Lantolf, 2012; Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2010). In sum, oral peer feedback that is examined in the aforementioned

accounts is considered to play an important role in language production accuracy and language development. The next section reviews studies that investigated the benefits of peer feedback, the roles of peer feedback and the variables affecting its frequency and characteristics.

Peer feedback in oral L2 task-based interaction

Early L2 interaction studies examined peer feedback in the context of negotiation for meaning that arises from communication breakdown and often compared it to feedback provided by native-speaking interlocutors. For instance, in examining lab-based interaction, Varonis and Gass (1985) and Porter (1986) found that learners negotiated meaning, including providing feedback, more often than they did with native-speaking partners during interaction. Gass and Varonis (1989) also documented that learners were able to provide feedback to each other on many aspects of language. Additionally, Bruton and Samuda (1980) observed classroom interactions and found that adult learners were able to self-correct and correct others' language errors. Overall, these studies showed that peer feedback as part of negotiation moves occurred in peer interaction and that these interactional moves provided learners with an opportunity for comprehending input and modifying output, which is considered essential and conducive to L2 learning.

However, these studies noted some issues with peer feedback in the form of negotiation for meaning. First, since peer feedback was examined as part of the learners' negotiation for meaning whose primary purpose is to achieve comprehension, it is not clear how many instances of negotiation for meaning were perceived as corrective feedback on language form (Mackey, Oliver & Leeman, 2003). Second, the number of learners' corrections following feedback was observed to be very low, which also corresponds to classroom-based interaction where little peer feedback occurred (Tognini, 2008; Williams, 2001). Third, despite recognizing language errors when interacting with peers, learners were not always able to correct and produce target-like forms. Considering both the low rate and quality, it is not clear whether peer feedback was useful and how well learners were able to make use of this feedback. Fourth, because the focus of the interaction was to achieve comprehension, the feedback in the form of negotiation for meaning often concerned lexical issues. Thus, the quantity and quality of peer feedback on morphosyntactic aspects of language remains unclear. Finally, these early studies on peer feedback in the context of negotiation for meaning did not provide clear evidence about the impact of peer feedback on language learning outcomes.

To address the issues of peer feedback in relation to L2 learning and move away from examining it as part of negotiation for meaning, subsequent studies specifically targeted peer feedback, primarily in a lab-based setting. For instance, Pica et al. (1996) examined peer feedback's characteristics in comparison with native-speaker feedback and found that peer feedback (1) was often in the form of segmentation of individual words and/or repetition of partner's previous utterances, (2) provided no structural and lexical changes in the feedback move (e.g., no alternative words, phrases and structures), and (3) had no clear intention of questioning, clarifying or drawing the partner interlocutor's attention to language issues. Based on these findings, Pica et al. suggested that despite its simplified form as compared to native-speaker interlocutor feedback, peer feedback could be a source of L2 input that encourages other learners to adjust their L2 utterances (i.e., modified output). Also examining peer feedback in relation to native speaker feedback, Mackey et al. (2003) found that, despite there being a smaller amount of peer feedback as compared to that of native speakers, peer feedback provided more opportunities for learners to produce modified output. This finding was supported by Sato and Lyster's (2007) study, which found that learners produced more modified output following peer feedback than native-speaker feedback. Sato and Lyster ascribed the greater frequency of modified output following peer feedback, especially elicitation feedback, to the learners' feeling of comfort when working with peers rather than with native speakers.

Other L2 interaction studies also investigated the link between peer feedback and L2 learning (e.g., language production accuracy). For example, Adams (2007) reported that learners performed better on post-tests of the linguistic forms that they received peer feedback on than those forms that they received no feedback on. Learners were also shown to have greater production accuracy of verb forms when receiving peer feedback, especially recasts (i.e., a partial or complete reformulation of learners' errors). Investigating Thai EFL learners' interaction in terms of peer feedback (e.g., recast, clarification request, explicit correction) and modified output following peer feedback, McDonough (2004) found that the greater the learners' involvement in peer feedback and modified output, the more they were able to improve their language production of grammatical features (i.e., real and unreal conditionals). In addition, a few other studies compared peer feedback to teacher feedback, and suggested that peer feedback in some

situations was superior to teachers' corrective feedback because it triggered greater attention to form due to learners being both the feedback provider and receiver (Lynch, 2007; Sippel & Jackson, 2015). In summary, the peer feedback studies reviewed above have suggested a pivotal role for peer feedback in promoting L2 language production and learning due to its provision of positive evidence (i.e., L2 input models) and negative evidence (i.e., input consisting of corrective information) (see a review in Philp et al., 2014; also see Adams et al, 2011 for the counter-effect of peer feedback on L2 learning).

However, the impact and frequency of peer feedback have been shown to be mediated by multiple contextual, social, affective, and individual factors. These factors include (1) learners' perceptions of partner interlocutor (Sato & Lyster, 2007), (2) their tendency to avoid correction to save each other's face (Fujii & Mackey, 2009; Mackey et al., 2003), (3) their limited linguistic ability and confidence (Mackey et al., 2003), (4) perceived proficiency levels (Dao & McDonough, 2018; Sato & Viveros, 2016), (5) task features (Dao, 2019; Lambert et al, 2017; Philp & Mackey, 2010), and (6) factors pertaining to learners' interaction mindset such as reticence to provide peer feedback due to its inappropriateness, their language proficiency level or limited L2 knowledge, and desire to focus on meaning rather than accuracy during interaction (Foster & Ohta, 2005; Philp et al., 2010; Sato, 2017; Tognini, 2008). In addition, it should be noted that learners' preference with regard to the feedback provider also affects the effectiveness of the feedback. That is, when compared to peer feedback, a majority of learners reported that they prefer teacher feedback, reasoning that it is the teacher who should be giving feedback rather than the learners (Chu, 2013; Sippel & Jackson, 2015). In sum, these studies suggest that a careful consideration of these influencing factors is needed for peer feedback to be used as a strategy for promoting L2 learning. Also, these studies pointed out that the frequency and quality of peer feedback pose certain issues that need to be addressed for peer feedback to be effective and beneficial for L2 learning.

To address the issues of low occurrence and limited quality of peer feedback, recent research has attempted to introduce various pedagogical interventions. They include providing learners with pre-task modelling of a collaborative pattern in interaction (Kim & McDonough, 2011), teaching them explicitly how to provide peer feedback (Sato & Lyster, 2012) Sato, 2013; Sato & Loewen, 2018), training learners to collaborate and raise their awareness about peer language learning strategies (Fujii et al., 2016; Sato & Ballinger, 2012), guiding them to reflect on previous interaction experience to increase their attention to form and feedback provision (Dao, Nguyen & Chi, 2020), developing learners' meta-cognition in peer interaction (Sato, 2020), and instructing them to use interaction strategies (Dao, 2020). Overall, these pedagogical treatments appear to be effective in increasing the quantity and quality of feedback, which thus leads to improved language production.

In summary, peer feedback has been found to increase production accuracy and development as it triggers learners' attention to form, which is likely to result in learning. However, its quality and low occurrence have been considered as issues that need to be addressed further. Despite providing insights into peer feedback, one of the major limitations of existing peer feedback research is that a majority of participants were adults learners of English. Very little is known about the extent to which peer feedback occurs in intact classroom interaction among younger learners (e.g., adolescents) and whether its frequency and characteristics are similar or different to those of adults' peer feedback. Given that young learners are still in the early stage of cognitive development and have less social interaction experience than adult learners, the frequency and characteristics of peer feedback among them may be affected by and more vulnerable to social and contextual factors such as the relationships between learners and their perceptions of peers and task types. In addition, the current findings on peer feedback's frequency, characteristics and quality are mainly based on lab-based studies. Consequently, the frequency of peer feedback provided by young learners in intact EFL classroom interactions, the characteristics of that peer feedback and the factors that affect its frequency and characterstics are largely unknown. To address these gaps, the current study explored the frequency, characteristics and factors affecting peer feedback provided by EFL adolescent learners in an intact EFL classroom context. Specifically, the current study addresses the three following research questions.

Research questions

1. To what extent do adolescent learners provide peer feedback in intact classroom L2 task-based interaction?

2. What are the characteristics of peer feedback provided by adolescent learners?

3. What factors do learners perceive to affect their feedback provision?

2 Method

Participants

The participants were 68 K–12 learners (32 males and 36 females) from eight secondary schools in a city in the South of Vietnam. At the time of data collection, they were in their Grade 6 (n = 3), Grade 7 (n = 3), Grade 8 (n = 7), and Grade 9 (n = 55). Their age range was from 11 to 15 years old (M = 14.162, SD = 1.23). The students' English proficiency was assessed using a TOEIC test, a proficiency test which was commonly used in the learners' course to assess their English proficiency level. Their average TOEIC score was 429.26 (SD = 152.23), equivalent to A2 level based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). They were also asked to self-rate their language proficiency using a nine-point Likert scale (1=poor, 9=excellent) for four skills: Speaking (M = 5.82, SD = 1.31), Listening (M = 5.59, SD = 1.47), Reading (M = 5.85, SD = 1.47), and Writing (M = 5.40, SD = 1.47). The learners reported they had learned English for a mean of 6.94 years (SD = 1.93) and that they had not studied or visited an English-speaking country before.

Although the participants were studying at different grades and at different secondary schools, they joined two Communicative English classes (Classes A and B) organised as part of their extra-curricular activities. These two classes shared the same objectives, teaching content, materials, activities and assessment. Both classes took place in the evenings in order not to interfere with the participants' regular daytime classes at their schools. Class A was taught by a young and enthusiastic English teacher (23 years old) who held a Bachelor's degree in English Teaching and had one year of teaching experience. Meanwhile, Class B was taught by an experienced teacher (28 years old) who held a Master's degree in TESOL and had six years of teaching experience. Data analysed in this study were collected from the classes taught by these two teachers.

Instructional context, teaching materials and approach

As described above, the English classes that the learners were taking were part of a voluntary extra-curricular program. The aim of these extra-curricular English classes was to develop learners' English conversational skills, integrating four skills (e.g., speaking, listening, reading and writing). Additionally, 10% of the total teaching hours (400 hours in total) was dedicated to teaching grammar and pronunciation.

The lessons were claimed to be organised according to the communicative language teaching approach, specifically Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), with activities including different interaction formats (e.g., pair work, small group work and whole-class work). Materials used in the program were commercial textbooks such as the American series of English File –1A/B and 2AB (Oxenden & Latham-Koenig, 2008) and a set of teaching materials compiled from different sources (e.g., other commercial English textbooks, the Internet and newspapers). The assessment of this English course consisted of two mid- and final-term paper-and-pencil exams and two oral tests. Each learning session lasted for 90 minutes and took place three times per week over a period of 12 weeks.

Design

The study aims to explore the frequency and characteristics of peer feedback in an intact classroom-based interaction setting, as well as to identify factors that affect the occurrence of peer feedback. Since the study was exploratory and classroom-based, no manipulation of the class activities and teaching materials was conducted. All activities were designed by the teachers and followed their regular English curriculum. Another reason for not introducing any pedagogical interventions or manipulations which are often implemented in experimental research was that the learners were still at a young age and the school curriculum was strictly regulated. This was also to avoid and reduce any potential damage to the students' normal learning progress in their regular classes.

The data for the present research consisted of (1) the learners' background information questionnaire, (2) the recordings of interactions between participants as they carried out different language learning tasks in their intact classes, (3) learners' responses to an open-ended questionnaire and (4) focus-group interviews. While the interaction data were used to investigate the frequency and characteristics of peer feedback in classroom task-based interactions, the data from the open-ended questionnaire and the focus group interviews were to examine learners' perceptions of factors affecting their provision of peer feedback in L2 classroom task-based interaction. Given the study's exploratory nature, the learners were left to interact freely to complete the tasks; no attempts were made to require them to purposefully provide feedback to their peers. This design was to achieve the study's focus, which was to explore the frequency and characteristics of peer feedback in intact K–12 second language classrooms.

3 Instruments

The instruments for the study included (1) a background information questionnaire, (2) an open-ended questionnaire, (3) semi-structured focus-group interviews, and (4) ten communicative tasks designed collaboratively by the two teachers of Classes A and B. The background information questionnaire elicited the learners' information about their age, gender, proficiency, English learning experience, self-ratings of their proficiency regarding four skills: reading, speaking, listening and writing. Data elicited using this tool are reported in the Participants section presented above.

The open-ended questionnaire and the semi-structured focus-group interviews shared the same goal of investigating the learners' perceptions of giving peer feedback and factors affecting their provision of peer feedback. The open-ended questionnaire comprised six questions adapted from previous research (Sato, 2013): *(1) Do you think you notice your classmates' mistakes/errors in English? If yes, to what extent? Give examples; (2) What do you do when you notice a mistake in your classmates' English? Why?; (3) Do you feel comfortable correcting your classmate's mistakes?; (4) Do you feel comfortable being corrected by your classmate?; (5) Do you prefer talking and being corrected by your teacher or your classmate in English? Why?; (6) Do you think you and your classmates can help each other correct errors? If yes, how. If no, why not?* Questions in the open-ended questionnaire were provided in both English and Vietnamese (the learners' first language) (see Appendix 1 for the Vietnamese version of the open-ended questionnaire). The semi-structured focus-group interviews were a follow-up activity after the open-ended questionnaire. Their aims were to clarify what was unclear and to ask for further explanation and/or justification of the learners' responses in the open-ended questionnaire.

Finally, in this study, ten communicative tasks were used to elicit the interaction data. Descriptions of these ten communicative tasks designed by the teachers are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Communicative tasks used in the K–12 learners' L2 classrooms

Task	Characteristics of a task in TBLT (Ellis, 2003)				Other task features and procedure				
	Focus	Information gap	Linguistic resources	An outcome	Task input	Target linguistic feature/ skill	Size	Pre-task modeling	Speaker role
1. Picture description (Accident at home)	Meaning & form	Yes	Yes	Open: a written text	Pictures	Past tense verbs, writing, fluency	Pair	No	Equal
2. Problem-solving discussion (Teen problems)	Meaning	No	Yes	Open: a list of problems & solutions	No	Fluency	Pair	No	Equal
3. Narrative collaborative writing (Great toy robbery)	Meaning & form	Yes	Yes	Open: a written text	Video	Past tense verbs, writing, fluency	Pair	No	Unequal
4. Scenario discussion (Hot Balloon)	Meaning	No	Yes	Open: a list of characters	No	Fluency	Pair	No	Equal
5. Vacation plan discussion (Family vacation)	Meaning & form	No	Yes	Open: a vacation plan	No	Future tense verbs, fluency	Pair	No	Equal
6. Personal story-retell	Meaning & form	Yes	Yes	Open: Not clear	No	Past tense verbs, fluency	Pair	Yes	Equal
7. Role-play (Nursing home)	Meaning	No	Yes	Closed: A decision of whether to go to the nursing home	No	Fluency	Pair	No	Equal
8. Party plan discussion (Birthday party)	Meaning	No	Yes	Open: a party plan	No	Fluency	Pair	No	Equal
9. Picture sequencing (Vacation incident)	Meaning & form	Yes	Yes	Open: a written text	Pictures	Past tense verbs, writing, fluency	Pair	No	Equal
10. Problem-solving discussion (Family issues)	Meaning	No	Yes	Open: a list of problems & solutions	No	Fluency	Pair	No	Equal

It should be noted that the descriptions of the tasks presented in Table 1 were based on an informal conversation between the first author and the teachers in which the first author asked the teachers to describe their tasks. As shown in Table 1, all tasks designed by the two teachers featured many characteristics of a TBLT task such as (1) involving a primary focus on meaning, (2) having some kind of 'gap', (3) requiring a clearly defined outcome, and (4) requiring learners to choose and use their own linguistic resources during the course of task completion (Ellis, 2003). However, only four tasks (1, 3, 6, and 9) appeared to fulfill the information gap criterion, while the rest did not seem to feature this characteristic of a TBLT task. Notably, the teachers indicated that all the tasks were meaning-based but they added some target language features to five tasks (e.g., Tasks 1, 3, 5, 6 and 9), so-called 'focused tasks' (Ellis, 2003). In addition, nine of the ten tasks shared an 'open-ended' non-linguistic outcome, while one task, Task 7, had a 'closed' outcome.

Furthermore, all the tasks were conducted in the form of pair work without any linguistic input provided to the students, except Tasks 1, 3 and 9 where students were provided with pictures or a video. Also noteworthy is that the teachers emphasised that all tasks were focused on developing the learners' fluency, which was reported to be the learners' weakest skill, with some tasks having additional target features (e.g., Tasks 1, 3, 5 and 9) and/or including a writing component such as Tasks 1, 3 and 9. Moreover, there was no pre-task modelling for any of the tasks, except Task 6. Finally, the speaker role was equally shared between the paired learners in all tasks, except Task 3 where one learner had more of the speaking floor in the first part of the task since he/she retold the video story, but both learners equally shared the speaking floor later in the task to discuss and write a story of the video.

4 Data collection procedure

The data collection took place in 11 sessions over a four-month period, with activities summarised in Table 2.

Table 2
Details of data collection procedure

Session	Activity	
1	Orientation week • Contacting the teachers of the target English course regarding visiting the students • Introducing the research project to the students and students' parents • Collecting consent from students, parents and teachers	
2	A week later: Deliver to all students • A background information questionnaire • A TOEIC test	
	The Communicative English course's schedule	
	Week 1	Introduction of the Communicative English course Welcoming activities
	Week 2	Regularly scheduled classroom activities Practise using the recorders
	Week 3	Regularly scheduled classroom activities Practise using the recorders
3	Week 4	*Task 1. Picture description (Accident at home)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
4	Week 5	*Task 2. Problem-solving discussion (Teen problems)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
5	Week 6	*Task 3. Narrative collaborative writing (Great toy robbery)* *Task 4. Scenario discussion (Hot Balloon)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
		Break
6	Week 7	*Task 5. Vacation plan discussion (Family vacation)* *Task 6. Personal story-retell* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
7	Week 8	*Task 7. Role-play (Nursing home)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities

8	Week 9	*Task 8. Party plan discussion (Birthday party)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
9	Week 10	*Task 9. Picture sequencing (Vacation incident)* *Task 10. Problem-solving discussion (Family issues)* Other regularly scheduled classroom activities
10	Week 11	Regularly scheduled classroom activities Delivery of the open-ended questionnaire Ask for volunteers for focus-group interviews
	Week 12	Course assessment
11	One week later: Focus-group interviews	

As shown in Table 2, during the orientation week, the first author contacted the teachers, introduced the project and asked for permission to visit the students when they were participating in the orientation activities. The first author then introduced the research project to the students and students' parents, and collected consents from all students, parents and teachers. Those students whose parents were not attending the orientation week were asked to seek written approval from their parents and to send the form back to the first author. A week later, students completed a TOEIC test and a background information questionnaire.

The students were given recorders to practise recording their interactions in the second and third weeks of their Communicative English course. The collection of interactional data started in the fourth week of the course when students were familiar with using the recorders and possibly felt more comfortable with having their interactions recorded. The collection of interactional data lasted for seven consecutive weeks, from Week 4 until Week 10. The main motivation for collecting data in the middle of the course was because the learners were given time to (1) practise using recorders to avoid any potential issues associated with the fact of being recorded during the interaction, (2) get familiar with the course activities, and (3) avoid the course exams, which took place before and at the end of the course. Since all tasks were carried out in pairs, each pair was handed a recorder and all their interactions were recorded. At the end of each class, the teachers collected the recorders and handed them to the first author for transcription. Interactional data collected for this study were all from the recordings of pair work activities. In Week 11 of the course, the learners completed the open-ended questionnaire and indicated whether they were willing to join follow-up focus-group interviews. The focus-group interviews were conducted one week after the course's assessment week. Four focus-group interviews (five learners per interview, two interviews from each class) were carried out in the learners' first language (i.e., Vietnamese). The interviews lasted for 30 minutes and were audio-recorded.

5 Coding

Learners' audio-recorded classroom interactions were transcribed verbatim following a simple transcription convention used in previous research (Dao & McDonough, 2017) (see a summary of transcription convention in Appendix 2). The transcripts were then verified by two research assistants and the first author. Instances of peer feedback, as defined earlier as a peer's response to a partner's erroneous utterance (Iwashita & Dao, 2021), were identified following five categories of corrective feedback described in the feedback frameworks of previous research (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Sheen & Ellis, 2011). They included (1) recast (i.e., partial or full reformulation of a peer's utterance that has errors), (2) explicit correction (i.e., reformulation of a peer's erroneous utterance and indication of what the error is), (3) clarification request (i.e., phrases or utterances that signal an error in a peer's previous utterance such as 'pardon', 'sorry', 'what'), (4) repetition (i.e., partial and complete repetition of a peer's erroneous utterance with a stressed or emphasised intonation on the error), and (5) metalinguistic comment (i.e., discussion or comments about language issues with a peer's previous erroneous utterance).

After instances of peer feedback were identified in the transcripts, they were coded for their characteristics: linguistic focus (e.g., morphosyntax, lexis and pronunciation), accuracy of peer feedback (accurate and inaccurate), opportunity for modified output or MO (e.g., present versus absent), and occurrence of modified output (e.g., correct MO, incorrect, no MO but with acknowledge of correction, no MO and no acknowledgement of correction). Because no peer feedback in the form of repetition and metalinguistic comments occurred in the dataset, only examples of recast, explicit correction and clarification request were provided in Examples 1 to 6. In addition, given few instances of explicit correction and clarification request identified in the dataset (see the Results section), only recast instances were further coded with regard to their characteristics.

Example 1 is an instance of morphosyntactic recast taken from Pair 9, Task 1 (Picture description—Accident at home), Class A.

Example 1
Morphosyntactic recast (accurate reformulation, absent opportunity for MO, no MO and no acknowledgement of correction)

Line	Learner	Excerpt
14	P2:	Yes…she has a breakfast at 7 o'clock and then uh she go to school
15	P1:	She went to school but after that I guess umm at eleven o'clock=
16	P2:	=Uhm yeah eleven o'clock
17	P1:	At eleven o'clock when she…

In Example 1, Learner P2 produced an erroneous utterance 'she go to school' (line 14) when she described a picture of an event in a series of story events. Learner P1 reformulated it 'she went to school' (line 15) and continued with a new idea 'after that I guess umm at eleven o'clock...' (line15). With regard to its characteristics, this recast is focused on a grammatical feature (i.e., past tense of "go" which is "went"). The recast or reformulation illustrated in Example 1 was judged as accurate. In addition, since Learner P1 moved on to a new utterance after her reformulation of her peer's error (line 15), it was coded that no opportunity for MO was given and there was neither MO nor acknowledgment of correction by Learner P2 following the recast.

Example 2 is an instance of lexical recast taken from Pair 17, Task 4 (Scenario discussion, Hot Balloon), Class B.

In Example 2, two learners were discussing which seven characters should be saved in a hot air balloon which is losing height rapidly due to being overweight. During the discussion, Learner P1 used the word 'kill' (line 25) in order to save the hot air balloon but Learner P2 replaced it with the word 'sacrifice' (line 26) and repeated it in a subsequent turn (line 27). This recast was acknowledged by Learner P1 (line 27) who, however, did not modify her output accordingly even though there was an opportunity for output modification twice in lines 26 and 28.

Example 2
Lexical recast (accurate reformulation, present opportunity for MO, no MO but with acknowledgement of correction)

Line	Learner	Excerpt
24	P2:	It's have uh seven people uh
25	P1:	Kill uh seven of them
26	P2:	We need to sacrifice 7
27	P1:	Okay
28	P2:	Just just... so sacrifice 7 out of 12

Example 3
Pronunciation recast (accurate, present opportunity for MO, correct MO)

Line	Learner	Excerpt
9	P1:	One have uh one man he travel to the work uh he drive his his house
10	P2:	Horse [raise his intonation]
11	P1:	Horse [correct pronunciation
12	P2:	yes horse
13	P1:	Ok ah and uh he uh met a Santa uh đúng rồi [correct] Santa yes [laugh]... Santa is ông già [Mr.] Noel Mr. Noel

Example 3 illustrates an instance of pronunciation recast which is taken from Pair 5, Task 3 (Narrative collaborative writing, Great toy robbery), Class A.

In Example 3, Learner P1 mispronounced the word 'horse' as 'house' (line 9). As a result, Learner P2 corrected his partner's incorrect pronunciation as 'horse' and also raised his intonation when providing the reformulation (line 10). This gave Learner P1 an opportunity for modifying his output, who subsequently modified his pronunciation accurately by repeating his partner's correct pronunciation of the word 'horse' (line 11). Learner P1's correct pronunciation of the word 'horse' was then subsequently confirmed by his partner—Learner P2 (line 12).

Example 4 illustrates an instance of lexical recast taken from Pair 20, Task 6, (Personal story-retell), Class B.

Example 4 is an instance of an inaccurate reformulation of a non-erroneous utterance in L2 task-based interaction. In line 20, while Learner P1 was retelling her story and uttered "we uh walked on Nguyen Hue [street]" which is accurate in terms of preposition usage. Learner P2 thought that the use of the preposition on was inaccurate, and thus interrupted her partner, who had not finished the utterance, and reformulated with an inaccurate phrase "walk at". Learner P1 acknowledged the reformulation "uh okay" (line 22) but continued finishing her utterance without modifying her previous utterance (line 22).

Example 4
Lexical recast (inaccurate reformulation, present opportunity for MO, no MO but with acknowledge of correction).

Line	Learner	Excerpt
20	P1:	and uh in this night in this night we uh we come to Ben Thanh market and uh... and... and we uh walk on Nguyen Hue [street]=
21	P2:	=walk at
22	P1:	=uh okay...Nguyen Hue street
23	P2:	Nguyen Hue street

Example 5
Explicit correction (lexical, present opportunity for MO, correct MO)

Line	Learner	Excerpt
83	P1:	So she hurt her foot or hurt something of her so she go to the hospital have herself check and what bring the cat to the veg—vegetarian? *[the learner slowed down to signal the language difficulty.]*
84	P2:	Nooo [the learner lengthened the word "no"] It's vet because...vegetarian I think it's a person who just eat vegetable. It's the wrong word.
85	P1:	Ah...so she took the cat to the vet and what that's it she they live happily ever after

Example 5 illustrates an instance of explicit correction taken from Pair 18, Task 1 (Picture description, Accident at home), Class A.

In Example 5, Learner P1 attempted to use the word 'veterinarian' but ended up saying 'vegetarian' (line 83). Learner P2 explicitly corrected it with 'vet' and explained that "vegetarian it's a person who just eat vegetable" and emphasised "it's the wrong word" (line 84). This explicit correction as an opportunity for modified output was acknowledged by Learner P1 "Ah", who then accurately reformulated her utterance "so she took the cat to the vet" (line 85).

Example 6 is an excerpt of clarification request taken from Pair 2, Task 3 (Narrative collaborative writing, Great toy robbery), Class B.

In Example 6, Learner P2 attempted to say "gift" to describe a scene where a robber stole gifts from Santa Claus but he mispronounced and uttered "given" (line 10). Learner P1 did not understand so made a clarification request "given là cái gì [what is "given"]? (Line 11). This made Learner P2 recognise his pronunciation error by acknowledging that he made an error "ủa lộn [sorry mistake]" (line 12), and then correcting it "gift gift là quà á [is gift] (line 12) and repeating it again in a subsequent turn "quà là gift [present is gift]" (line 14).

Example 6
Clarification request (pronunciation, present opportunity for MO, correct MO)

Line	Learner	Excerpt
10	P2:	They are là bạn họ *[are their friends]* gồm3 người *[including three persons]* and have 3 person and they are rob rob là *[is]* cướp *[they are robbers]* rob uh uh given=
11	P1:	=given là cái gì [what is "given"]?
12	P2	given ủa lộn *[sorry mistake]* gift gift là quà á *[is gift]*, quà là *[present is]* gift
13	P1:	Ah là là 3 người đó là *[are three persons]*
14	P2:	quà là gift *[present is gift]*

Inter-rater reliability

The whole dataset was coded by the first author and the second author coded 10% of the data. Pearson coefficient *r* between the two coders for the frequency of peer feedback identified in the transcripts was 0.93, showing a high agreement. Cohen's kappa was used to determine the inter-rater reliability of classifying peer feedback by types (k = 0.95) and characteristics such as linguistic focus (k =0.91), accuracy of peer feedback (k = 0.85), opportunity for MO (k = 0.87), and occurrence of MO (k = 0.81).

Analysis

To answer the first research question that examined the extent to which peer feedback occurred in classroom-based interaction, a total number of instances of oral peer feedback identified in the dataset was calculated for the whole cohort (both Classes A and B), and for each individual class. The sums of each peer feedback type (i.e., recast, explicit correction, and clarification requests) per interaction were also tallied and compared between the two classes. To answer the second research question concerning the characteristics of peer feedback, descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) of peer feedback with regard to each of its dimensions (e.g., linguistic focus, accuracy, opportunity for MO, occurrence and target-likeness of MO) were conducted and reported.

For the third research question, which examined the factors affecting the occurrence of peer feedback, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. For the quantitative analyses that targeted the task factor, descriptive statistics of peer feedback per task (sum, mean and standard deviation) were calculated and compared across the ten tasks. To examine the potential impact of proficiency pairing on the occurrence of peer feedback, all pairs were grouped into two categories: similar- and mixed-proficiency groups. Frequencies of peer feedback per group were calculated and compared between the two groups. To identify additional factors affecting the frequency of peer feedback in intact L2 classroom task-based interaction of K–12 learners, learners' responses in the open-ended questionnaire and the focus-group interviews were analyzed using content-based analysis (Dörnyei, 2007). First, the qualitative data were read through and common emergent themes were identified. Themes were then grouped together, and labels were added to represent the factors.

6 Results

RQ1. To what extent do adolescent learners provide peer feedback in classroom L2 task-based interaction?

To answer the first research question, a corpus of interactional data was created from the learners' audio-recorded interactions that were collected from the two classes (Classes A and B) from weeks 4 to 10 throughout the period of 12 weeks. During this period, learners in the two classes carried out multiple classroom communicative tasks in their regularly scheduled classes. However, for each week, only interactions of two tasks (10 tasks in total) were randomly selected and recorded, for reasons of convenience and to not disrupt the learners' regularly scheduled classroom activities. A description of the corpus is detailed in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the whole corpus was comprised of 170,152 words (13,386 turns), with Classes A and B accounting for 35.93% and 64.07% of the total words, respectively. This corpus was created based on the total of 297 interactions. Although all interactions of the ten tasks were collected from the two classes, there was a difference in the number of interactions, with Class A contributing 97 (32%) interactions in total as opposed to 200 (67.24%) interactions from Class B. The uneven number of interactions was due to technical issues where the learners forgot to turn on the recordings during their interaction or absence from classes. However, the average numbers of turns and words per interaction in the two classes were quite similar, with Class A having 46.35 turns (630.23 words) per interaction as compared with 44.45 turns (545.10 words) in Class B.

Table 3
Description of the corpus of interactional data

	Whole corpus	Class A		Class B	
		N	%	N	%
Total words	170,152	61,132	35.93	109,020	64.07
Total turns	13,386	4,496	33.58	8,890	66.42
Total interactions	297	97	32.66	200	67.24
Words per interaction (average)	572.90	630.23	--	545.10	--
Turns per interaction (average)	45.07	46.35	--	44.45	--

After the corpus was created, instances of peer feedback were identified in the transcripts and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that a sum of 258 instances of oral peer feedback were identified in the dataset. Of the 258 oral peer feedback instances, 83.33% (215) were recast, followed by 8.92% (23) clarification requests and 7.75% (20) instances of explicit correction. Both classes A and B share a similar pattern, with instances of recasts accounting for the majority of the feedback episodes (87.82% and 81.82%, respectively). Meanwhile, clarification requests and instances of explicit correction accounted for a small percentage, being 5.63% and 7.04 % (Class A), and 10.16% and 8.02% (Class B), respectively.

To obtain a more nuanced picture of the frequency of oral peer feedback in each interaction, the frequency of each type of oral peer feedback per interaction was calculated and the results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 4
Frequency of oral peer feedback in L2 classroom task-based interaction

	Whole corpus		Class A		Class B	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	258	100	71	27.52	187	72.48
Recast	215	83.33	62	87.82	153	81.82
Clarification request	23	8.92	4	5.63	19	10.16
Explicit correction	20	7.75	5	7.04	15	8.02

As shown in Table 5, frequencies of oral peer feedback in each interaction were very low across all feedback types. On average, fewer than 1 instance of oral peer feedback (*M* = 0.87, *SD* = 1.37) occurred in each interaction, with recast being 0.72 instances (Whole corpus), 0.63 instances (Class A) and 0.77 instances (Class B), and clarification requests and explicit correction being 0.08 and 0.07 (Whole corpus), 0.04 and 0.05 (Class A), and 0.09 and 0.08 (Class B), respectively.

The raw data reported in Table 5 shows that learners in Class B provided more instances of feedback (*n* = 187) than those in Class A (*n* = 71). Table 5 also shows that the mean score of all feedback types in Class B was higher than Class A. With the distribution normality assumption being met, an independent t-test was then carried out to compare the frequency of peer feedback per interaction between the two classes. To control for speech differences which could be a potential confounding factor due to the variation of time allotted for the tasks, normalised scores for the frequency of peer feedback per interaction were obtained by dividing the number of instances of peer feedback by the number of words in each interaction.

The results of t-tests using the normalised scores shows that Class B (*M* = 0.0018, *SD* = 0.0029) generated a significantly higher number of peer feedback instances per peer interaction than Class A (*M* =0.00012 *SD* =0.00021), t(261) = 2.14, p = 0.03 d = 0.25

RQ2. What are the characteristics of peer feedback provided by adolescent learners?

Since very few instances of clarification requests and explicit correction (less than 9% of the total feedback instances) occurred in the corpus (see Tables 4 and 5), only characteristics of oral peer feedback in the form of recast (215 instances in total) were examined. Instances of recast were coded according to multiple characteristics, including linguistic focus (e.g., morphosyntax, lexis and pronunciation), accuracy of feedback (accurate versus inaccurate), opportunity for modified output (present versus absent), and occurrence of modified output (MO) (correct MO, incorrect MO and no MO). The results are summarised in Table 6.

Table 5
Frequency of oral peer feedback per interaction

	Whole corpus		Class A		Class B	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Recast	0.72	1.20	0.63	1.13	0.77	1.24
Clarification request	0.08	0.29	0.04	0.20	0.09	0.33
Explicit correction	0.07	0.28	0.05	0.26	0.08	0.28
All feedback types	0.87	1.37	0.72	1.30	0.94	1.40

Table 6 shows that 63.26% of recasts in the corpus (136 out of 215) targeted morphosyntactic features of English. Meanwhile, lexical recasts accounted for 32.09%, with pronunciation recasts being the least frequent, taking up 4.65% of the total number of recasts. In addition, a majority of recasts (190 instances or 88.37%) provided by the learners were accurate, leaving only 25 recasts (11.63%) perceived as inaccurate. With regard to the opportunities for modifying output following peers' recasts, the results show that for more than two-thirds of the time (77.67%) the learners provided their partner with an opportunity to reformulate his or her perceived-as-inaccurate utterances following their feedback.

When given a chance to modify their output, the learners were able to reformulate correctly only 39.07 % of their non-target-like utterances as opposed to 6.05% of incorrect reformulations. For nearly 45% of the time, the learners did not modify their output or showed acknowledgement of recasts given by their peers. The learners agreed or acknowledged 10.23% of their peer's feedback, but they did not modify their output accordingly and thus moved on with their interaction.

Table 6
Characteristics of oral recast in L2 classroom task-based interaction

		N	%
Linguistic focus	Morphosyntax	136	63.26
	Lexis	69	32.09
	Pronunciation	10	4.65
Accuracy	Accurate	190	88.37
	Inaccurate	25	11.63
Opportunity for MO	Present	167	77.67
	Absent	48	22.33
MO	Correct MO	84	39.07
	Incorrect MO	13	6.05
	No MO but with acknowledgement	22	10.23
	No MO and no acknowledgement	96	44.65

RQ3. What factors do learners perceive to affect their feedback provision?

Learners' responses in the open-ended questionnaire and focus-group interviews provide a more nuanced understanding of the different factors that affected the occurrence of peer feedback, including learners' perceived proficiency difference, inter-personal and affective factors, task-related factors, and interaction mindset.

Impact of learners' perceived proficiency difference

With regard to the perceived proficiency difference factor, the learners reported that when they thought their partner's English proficiency was more advanced than them, they would not attend to or correct their partner's language issues or errors. This is illustrated in Excerpt 1 taken from a pair of two learners of similar proficiency level.

EXCERPT 1. Perceived proficiency difference in an actual similar proficiency pair.

"I think my partner had better English skills than me, so I did not pay attention to her English. Actually, I felt I made more errors than my partner. Thus, I focused on my English during the conversation rather than examining whether my partner made any language errors. Also, since I was not good at English, I did not think I would be able to recognise my partner's errors or correct them. [Learner 27].

In Excerpt 1, Learner 27 perceived that her partner was more advanced and thus would not make errors, which led her to not attend to the partner's language errors. In addition, due to perceiving herself as being "not good at English" and "not able to recognise the partner's errors", the learner focused more on her errors rather than attending to or correcting the peer's language errors.

However, when the learners perceived their partner as less proficient, there were two possibilities. They would either correct their partner's errors or let them go and just focus on their own language issues. Excerpts 2 and 3 are taken from two pairs of mixed proficiency levels.

EXCERPT 2. Perceived proficiency difference in a mixed proficiency pair: Feedback provided

I know my partner's English level was not high, so whenever I noticed the issues, I would help correct them because it was good for her to improve. [Learner 15, translated comment]

EXCERPT 3. Perceived proficiency difference in a mixed proficiency pair: No feedback provided

Although my partner had issues with English and I noticed her errors, I tended to focus on my issues. As long as I understood the sentences [what she said], I did not care much about language errors. [Learner 21, translated comment]

While in Excerpt 2 the more proficient partner provided feedback on her less proficient partner's error when noticing the errors, the more proficient partner in Excerpt 3 did not correct the less proficient partner's errors if she understood the partner's idea. The learners' comments in both Excerpts 2 and 3 show that the actual or measured proficiency difference did not always result in learners providing peer feedback. It is possible that how learners perceived each other's proficiency in mixed dyads affected their decision to provide feedback. To further explore whether actual or measured proficiency difference affected the frequency of peer feedback provision in peer interaction, pairs in the dataset were grouped into two groups: similar versus mixed proficiency dyads. Descriptive statistics of peer feedback frequency in these two groups were carried out and the results are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7
Frequency of peer feedback per interaction by proficiency pairing

	Feedback frequency		
Proficiency pairing	**Sum**	**M**	**SD**
Similar proficiency (*n* = 19 pairs)	323	1.91	0.98
Mixed proficiency (*n* = 15 pairs)	308	1.94	0.71

Table 7 shows that 19 pairs or interactions of learners of similar proficiency level generated 323 instances of peer feedback as opposed to 308 instances of peer feedback provided by pairs of mixed proficiency levels. However, the average frequency of peer feedback occurring in each interaction between the similar proficiency group (M = 1.91, SD = 0.98) and mixed proficiency group (M = 1.94, SD = 0.71) was similar. An independent t-test was conducted, with the results showing no significant differences between the two groups, $t(33) = 0.131$, $p = 0.89$, $d = 0.046$. Thus, these results overall showed that the actual proficiency pairing did not seem to affect the frequency of peer feedback. Rather, it was the learners' perceived proficiency difference that affected the self-reported degree of learners' attention and provision of feedback on errors.

Impact of inter-personal and affective factors

Apart from the perceived proficiency difference, the analyses of open-ended questionnaire and interview data also revealed the impact of inter-personal and affective factors on the learners' self-reported degree of feedback provision. Excerpts 4, 5 and 6 demonstrate the effect of inter-personal and affective factors.

EXCERPT 4. Inter-personal and affective factor: Avoiding confrontation

My partner was very confident in his English speaking skill. I just did not want to confront him that he had errors. That would hurt him. [Learner 29, translated comment]

EXCERPT 5. Inter-personal and affective factor: Maintaining social relationship

I knew that my partner would lose his temper easily if I corrected his errors frequently. Thus, I just let them [errors] go and only asked for clarification when I did not understand the idea. I did not want to destroy our conversation and our relationship. [Learner 68, translated comment]

EXCERPT 6. Inter-personal and affective factor: Fear of upsetting partner

I noticed my partner's errors and language issues, but I did not provide feedback because I was afraid of being "scolded" by my partner. He often did that to the others. [Learner P29, translated comment]

As shown in Excerpt 4, the learner decided not to provide feedback on his partner's errors in order to avoid confrontation during the conversation. This was to maintain the positive social relationship between learners as shown in Excerpt 5 where the learner clearly stated that correcting the partner's errors would result in him "losing his temper easily" and consequently "destroy" their conversation and relationship. Interestingly, Excerpt 6 shows that Learner 29 felt reluctant to correct his partner's errors due to not wanting to be "scolded" by the partner.

In addition, face-saving was reported to be another important aspect of learners' affect and inter-personalness. Excerpt 7 demonstrates this perception.

EXCERPT 7. Interaction mindset: Saving partner's face

Although I think that correcting each other was important for learning, if my partner reacts strongly to my correction, I would not continue correcting the partner's errors. I understood that no one wanted to lose face when being corrected so I had to be very careful. [Learner 58, translated comment].

In Excerpt 7, the learner considered error correction as necessary but saving her partner's face was reported to be more important. Therefore, the frequency of peer feedback provision was dependent on whether peer feedback on errors violates the social rule of saving each other's face in the interaction. In sum, different inter-personal and affective factors (i.e., avoiding confrontation and arousal of negative emotions, maintaining the social relationship, and face-saving) affected learners' self-reported degree of feedback provision in peer interaction.

Impact of task features

Task features were also reported by learners to affect their provision of peer feedback. The impact of task features is illustrated in Excerpt 8.

EXCERPT 8. Impact of task features: Abstraction and meaning-focused aspects of the tasks

All of the tasks required us to communicate and collaborate in order to complete them, so I think it is important to focus on the task and the content rather than correcting errors. I guess the tasks were all to develop our communicative skills, so we just focused on conversation. However, some tasks [topics] were very abstract such as the Nursing Home task [Role-play] task. We were still young, so we did not know what to say about sending our parents to the nursing home. We did not think our conversation was effective. [Learner 40, translated comment]

In Excerpt 8, Learner 40 perceived that the focus of all tasks was on meaning and communication; as a result, she concentrated on the content and task completion rather than correcting partner's errors. In addition, task topics (e.g., nursing home) that were abstract and did not match their age, did not promote their effective interaction nor their feedback provision. However, for tasks that they had not done before or for those tasks that required learners' imagination and writing, the learners appeared to enjoy the conversation and paid attention to accuracy or error correction. Excerpt 9 illustrates this point.

EXCERPT 9. Impact of task features: Fun and new aspects of the tasks

I like the picture-description tasks [Task 1—picture description and Task 9—picture sequencing] and the video story-retell task [Task 3—Narrative collaborative writing]. I did not do tasks like these before. They were new and fun to me. They required us to do a lot of imagination to connect the pictures and retell the stories. Also, these tasks required [language] accuracy as well because we needed to write the stories down. [Learner 59, translated comment].

In Excerpt 9, Learner 59 stated that Tasks 1, 3 and 9 were new, fun and required imagination as well as accuracy, which made them enjoy the interaction as well as focus on language accuracy (e.g., error correction). To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of task features on the learners' provision of peer feedback, descriptive statistics of peer feedback across ten tasks were conducted, and the results are presented in Table 8.

As shown in Table 8, the learners generated the highest number of peer feedback instances in the Narrative collaborative writing task (Task 3), followed by picture description tasks (Tasks 1 and 9) and problem-solving discussion tasks (Tasks 2 and 10), all of which involve a writing component in the task. For the other fluency-based tasks (Task 4, 5, 6 and 7), the number of peer feedback instances was low. These results confirm the learners' self-reports that task features appeared to affect the frequency of peer feedback.

Table 8
Frequency of peer feedback per interaction by task

Task	Feedback frequency		
	Sum	**M**	**SD**
1. Picture description (Accident at home)	49	1.441	1.761
2. Problem-solving discussion (Teenager problems)	19	0.558	0.785
3. Narrative collaborative writing	70	2.058	2.102
4. Scenario discussion	14	0.700	0.978
5. Vacation plan discussion	9	0.450	0.998
6. Story-retell	8	0.400	0.598
7. Role-play	3	0.088	0.378
8. Party plan discussion	5	0.147	0.4357
9. Picture sequencing (Vacation incident)	46	1.353	1.368
10. Problem-solving discussion (Family issues)	35	1.029	1.242

Impact of learners' interaction mindset

Finally, the responses in the questionnaire and interviews also show that the learners' mindset toward an effective interaction determined their feedback provision. Learners reported different dimensions of their mindset that decreased their provision of peer feedback. The first dimension of their mindset was related to their focus on completing the task (Excerpt 10).

EXCERPT 10. Interaction mindset: A focus on task completion and meaning

I knew but did not correct my partner's errors because we could understand each other despite the grammar issues. Actually, it is important to focus on the task and get it done. [Learner 62, translated comment].

In Excerpt 10, the learner noticed his partner's errors but did not correct them because his focus was on completing the task and the errors did not impede his comprehension. Like learner 62 in Excerpt 10, learners in Excerpts 11 and 12 also shared the view that when the errors did not cause comprehension troubles or when they were not serious or were infrequent, they could just continue with the conversation

EXCERPT 11. Interaction mindset: Minor errors

I paid less attention to my partner's errors unless they were serious errors that occurred repeatedly. Often, when the errors were minor or small, I could feel okay to move on with the conversation. [Learner 55, translated comment].

EXCERPT 12. Interaction mindset: Repeated errors

I could recognise the [my partner's] errors but there were only few of them, so I did not correct them since they were not serious or cause any troubles. [Learner 35, translated comment].

As shown in Excerpts 11 and 12, the learners suggested that when the frequency of errors was low and the errors were minor, they would not correct them but focused on the conversation instead. That learners prioritised maintaining the flow of the conversion over error correction was also reported as a factor affecting the occurrence of peer feedback (Excerpt 13).

EXCERPT 13. Interaction mindset: Maintaining the flow of the conversation

When I noticed my partner's errors, I did not correct them right away. It was a conversation, so it was impolite to interrupt when she was talking. I waited until the end of the conversation and told her about them, but I just told her the major errors only. At times, I forgot about my partner's errors, so I did not say anything in the end. [Learner 36, translated comment].

In Excerpt 13, the comment of Learner 36 shows that correcting errors during the conversation was not appropriate mainly because it interrupted the conversation flow. She waited until the end of the conversation to discuss just their major errors, but she admitted that she sometimes forgot these errors and did not tell her partner at the end of the conversation.

The results also show that the learners' mindset toward effective interaction was affected by the teacher's instruction, which subsequently impacted on their feedback provision. Excerpt 14 show different mindsets toward effective interaction established by the teacher's instruction.

EXCERPT 14. Interaction mindset: A focus on language facilitated by the teacher

*I thought it was impolite and not appropriate to correct each other's errors frequently during the conversation; however, my teacher later told us that since it was for learning, we should attend to each other's errors and correct them where relevant while we were completing the tasks. Thus, my partner and I purposefully paid more attention to errors than we often did [*Learner 47, translated comment, Class B].

We just carried out the conversation as usual without correcting each other much because the task was for communication. We thought it was the right way to do it because that was what the teacher instructed: completed the task in pairs using our own language abilities. [Learner 61, translated comment, Class A].

In Excerpt 14, it was evident that the teacher's task instruction played a role in shaping the learners' peer feedback behaviour. Learner 47 in Excerpt 14 reported focusing more on peer feedback due to the teacher's instruction of "attending to more errors and correct them where relevant since it was for learning". Meanwhile, Learner 61 also in Excerpt 14 perceived that carrying out the task was the main focus.

In sum, the degree of peer feedback provision was affected by different aspects of learners' mindset toward interaction, which included the learners' focus on task completion and meaning, avoidance of disrupting the conversation flow, characteristics of the errors (e.g., minor or major), the occurrence of the same errors over time, and face-saving/threats.

7 Discussion

Frequency and characteristics of oral peer feedback in the L2 classroom

The current study explored the extent to which K–12 adolescent Vietnamese learners of English provided each other with feedback on language issues in L2 intact classroom interactions. A total of 258 instances of oral peer feedback were identified in the whole corpus. These results show that the learners provided peer feedback on language issues during the interaction; however, the frequency of peer feedback was low, with an average of less than one instance of peer feedback per interaction. These results support previous research findings that peer feedback or error correction does not typically occur in L2 classroom task-based interaction (Fujii & Mackey, 2009; Philp et al., 2010).

The evidence of the occurrence of oral peer feedback indicates that although the learners were young, aged from 11 to 15 years old, they helped correct each other's errors. These results are encouraging, suggesting that young learners at pre-intermediate/ intermediate (A2 level based on CEFR) were capable of identifying errors and providing feedback accordingly, which is essential for language development (Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006). In addition, the results of young learners infrequently providing oral peer feedback in L2 classroom task-based interaction suggest that young learners are similar to adult learners, who also rarely provide feedback in natural classroom contexts (Fujii & Mackey, 2009; Philp et al., 2010). Thus, pedagogical interventions are necessary if peer feedback is to improve learners' production accuracy (Chu, 2013; Dao, 2020; Sippel, 2020; Sippel, 2019; Sippel & Jackson, 2015; Sato & Lyster, 2012; Sato, 2021; also see Fujii et al., 2016).

With regard to the characteristics of peer feedback observed in this study, the results revealed that a majority of peer feedback instances provided were in the form of recast, with few instances of explicit corrections or clarification requests. The more frequent provision of recast compared to other types of peer feedback could be due to the fact that the learners were not aware of a variety of pedagogical techniques in providing feedback. That is, feedback types such as elicitation, metalinguistic cues and repetition with an adjusted intonation require not only linguistic but also pedagogical knowledge, which the learners do not seem to possess, especially when they are young. Another possible reason for the frequent use of recast could be that it is less intrusive and thus does not seem to undermine other learners' confidence and affect the flow of the conversation, which the learners reported wanting to maintain. Thus, the results overall suggest that recast is the most common type of peer feedback occurring in an intact EFL classroom. However, it is worth noting that research on teachers' corrective feedback in the classroom also reported a higher number of recast over other types of feedback (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Panova & Lyster, 2002; Sheen, 2004). These results indicate that recast seems to be the preferred type of feedback provided by both the learners and the teachers. However, whether recast is more effective than other feedback types is still debatable (Goo & Mackey, 2013; Lyster & Ranta, 2013).

As for the linguistic focus of recast, the results showed that two-thirds of recasts targeted morphosyntactic as opposed to lexical and pronunciation errors. The frequent focus on morphosyntactic errors could be due to the learners' learning background. The learners in this study reported that they were exposed to an extensive amount of grammar instruction throughout their experience of learning English. This exposure might have helped develop their grammatical knowledge, which could potentially enable them to identify errors that concern morphosyntax of the English language; as a result, they tended to provide more peer feedback on morphosyntactic errors. An alternative possibility explaining the learners' focus on grammatical features is that half of the tasks targeted a certain linguistic feature. It is possible that these focused tasks elicited the learners' production of these forms and thus they might have had higher frequency of errors when producing these forms.

Another main finding in this study was that more than 88% of the learners' oral peer feedback was accurate (see Table 6). Previous research reported that there were doubts among learners and teachers that peer feedback might be of low quality (Chu, 2013; Yoshida, 2008; also see Sato, 2013). The results of this study are encouraging and suggest that young learners with limited language proficiency not only provided peer feedback but also provided accurate feedback. However, it is worth noting that although the learners provided their peers with opportunities (77.67%) for modifying their output, more than half of the time (54.88%) modified output did not occur following peer feedback. Previous research suggests that modified output is associated with subsequent learning (Ellis & He, 1999; McDonough, 2004; Swain, 2005). Since the

learners in this study did not modify their output frequently, it is unclear to what extent the peer feedback (i.e., recast) facilitated their language development. In addition, even when the learners modified their output following their partner's feedback, only 39.07% of the modified output was correct. Despite the small percentage of correct modified output, it should be noted that these results are encouraging and that pedagogical interventions to improve learners' quality of peer feedback as well as modified output are necessary (Sato & Lyster, 2012; Sato & Loewen, 2018).

Factors affecting oral peer feedback in L2 classroom

This study also explored factors affecting peer feedback occurrence in a non-interventionist classroom interaction. The results revealed a multitude of factors either decreasing or increasing the frequency of peer feedback. They were categorised into four groups of factors: proficiency, inter-personal and affective factors, task features, and interaction mindset. The fact that the learners did not provide peer feedback frequently in L2 classroom interactions, as reported above, could be ascribed to these factors.

More specifically, the learners' perceived difference in proficiency was reported to be the first factor decreasing the frequency of oral peer feedback in L2 classroom. As reported in the results section, when the learners perceived their partner as being more advanced, even when both the learners and his/her peer were actually of a similar proficiency level, he/she was more likely to refrain from providing feedback to their partners. These results are similar to Sippel's (2020) findings that learners did not appear to actively correct each other's errors unless they were encouraged to do so. Notably, the results presented in Table 7 show that pairing learners of mixed and similar proficiency based on the measured proficiency levels did not automatically result in differences in the frequency of learners' oral peer feedback. These results supported Watanabe and Swain's (2008) argument that the learners' perceived proficiency difference seemed to have an impact on their provision of peer feedback rather than their actual measured proficiency difference. In addition, previous research suggests that pairing learners of mixed proficiency levels could increase learners' attention to form (e.g., noticing errors and providing feedback) (Dao & McDonough, 2017). However, while some learners corrected their partner's errors, other learners in this study reported that even though they noticed errors in their less proficient partners, they would not always correct them since they perceived that those errors did not impede their comprehension and that they often focused on their own language issues instead. This suggests that it is not learners' measured proficiency that matters the most, but how the learners perceive the proficiency difference and what they decide to focus on determines the frequency of peer feedback.

The second factor affecting the learners' provision of peer feedback was the characteristics of the tasks. As shown in Table 1, the ten tasks the teachers used in this study were purely communicative with an emphasis on developing the learners' fluency. Although some were 'focused tasks' which target both meaning and form (Ellis, 2003), the target forms were implicitly embedded in the tasks. This does not guarantee that learners would attend to using these forms in the interaction, and thus they were less likely to provide feedback on these target forms. Excerpt 10 shows that the learners reported a focus on communication, task content and task completion rather than the target forms; as a result, they tended not to provide feedback on errors of these target forms. In addition, when the task topics (e.g., nursing home or retirement) did not match their age and experiences, the learners reported being less likely to be engaged in the interaction and thus rarely provided feedback (see Excerpt 8).

In addition, Excerpt 9 indicates that when the learners perceived tasks as being fun, consisting of a writing component, and including a focus on accuracy, they were more likely to attend to language aspects and provide feedback on errors. However, only three tasks 1, 3 and 9, as described in Table 1, included a writing component. The results presented in Table 8 show that these tasks appeared to increase the learners' focus on language form. These findings support an argument in previous studies that tasks including a writing component tend to promote learners' greater focus on form and provision of feedback than those which are purely oral and communicative (see Gass & Mackey, Ross-Feldman, 2005; García Mayo & Azkarai, 2016).

The third factor reported to affect the learners' provision of peer feedback was related to the learners' affect and inter-personalness. Previous studies report that the social relationship between learners was a mediating factor for peer interaction (Sato, 2013; Tulung, 2008; also see Sato, 2017), Similarly, the learners in this study perceived the frequent provision of peer feedback as potentially detrimental to their social relationship; therefore, they felt reluctant to correct their peers' errors. As shown in Excerpt 4, one learner reported refraining from providing feedback because she did not want to confront or "hurt" her partner who appears to be confident in English.

Excerpt 5 also indicates that correcting peers' errors could potentially "destroy" the relationship and conversation, especially for those learners who could "lose their temper easily" due to being corrected. Notably, in Excerpt 6, the learner reported feeling "reluctant" to provide feedback on errors made by his partner, who could potentially "scold" peers. It should be noted that the learners in this study were young and were sensitive to peers' feelings and behaviour; as a result, they did not want to confront their partner by pointing out their errors, which could damage their relationship and potentially threaten their partner's face. In this case, it appears that young learners are similar to adult learners who reported deliberately avoiding corrections in order to save face during the interaction (Fujii & Mackey, 2009). These results overall confirm that feedback provision is a face-threatening act, and it is thus relatively vulnerable to learners' affect and inter-personalness in the interaction.

In addition, the learners' mindset toward an effective interaction could also be deemed as a factor explaining the infrequent provision of peer feedback in this study. As reported in the Results section, the learners perceived giving peer feedback as unnecessary in an interaction, especially when they could comprehend each other, and the priority was task completion. This appears to reduce the frequency of peer feedback occurring in interactions. Additionally, the learners reported that they did not provide feedback to their peers because they perceived that minor errors, those that do not cause difficulties in comprehension and did not occur repeatedly, do not need to be corrected. Moreover, they perceived that it was important to focus on the meaning and completing the tasks rather than correcting each other's errors because peer feedback may affect the flow of the conversation.

Finally, it is possible that the learners' low provision of peer feedback could be related to the teacher's task instruction. As illustrated in Excerpt 14, the learners in Class B stated that their teacher reminded them to attend to errors and help correct each other's errors where relevant during their interaction. This appeared to have an impact on the frequency of peer feedback as demonstrated in Table 4 where learners in Class B, whose teacher emphasised attending to form, provided more peer feedback than those in Class A, whose teacher simply asked the learners to complete the task with their partners. These results support Sippel's (2020) findings that teachers' pedagogical treatment, albeit brief, could increase the provision of peer feedback.

8 Conclusion, limitations and implications

This study examined adolescent K12 learners' classroom interaction with regard to the frequency and characteristics of peer feedback, and factors affecting feedback occurrence. The results revealed that although peer feedback occurred in the classroom, its frequency was relatively low. In addition, peer feedback in the L2 classroom interactions observed in this study was focused mostly on targeted morphosyntactic issues. Regarding its quality, the majority of peer feedback was accurate, and learners generally provided opportunities for the partners to modify their erroneous utterances or output following their feedback. However, only a third of peer feedback resulted in learners correcting and modifying their output, leaving the rest not modified or incorrectly modified. The learners reported a multitude of factors affecting their feedback behaviours, including their perceived proficiency differences, affect and inter-personalness, task features and interaction mindset. These factors are argued as reasons for the low frequency of peer feedback in this study. The results overall suggest that young learners could identify each other's errors and provide peer feedback accordingly.

Inevitably, the study has limitations that need to be taken into consideration and addressed in future studies. First, given its goal of exploring intact classroom interaction and its focus on a group of young EFL learners sharing the same L1 and similar cultural backgrounds, the study has limited generalizability; therefore, more investigations of peer feedback in other intact L2 classroom contexts with different learner populations are needed. Second, the study is descriptive and no measures of L2 learning following peer feedback were used. These limitations need to be addressed in future studies by gauging L2 learning as a function of peer feedback and using inferential statistics to provide further insights into the impact of peer feedback on L2 learning. Third, the study used an open-ended questionnaire and focus group interviews in order to identify factors affecting the frequency of peer feedback. Apart from using interviews and an open-ended questionnaire, future studies could employ a closed Likert-scale questionnaire, delivered to a larger group of participants for identifying factors using inferential statistics (e.g., exploratory factor analysis) in order to obtain more robust results and thus a more comprehensive picture of factors affecting peer feedback in an L2 classroom context.

Despite the limitations, the study has some pedagogical implications. First, given that young learners can provide accurate peer feedback, teachers could use peer feedback as a potential strategy for promoting learners' language production accuracy and development. It is important for the teacher to explicitly encourage the provision of peer feedback in peer interaction; otherwise, the learners might just focus on task completion as reported in this study. Second, given the learners' reported desire for their errors to be corrected, pedagogical training on how to provide peer feedback together with awareness raising about the benefits of peer feedback and peer interaction is also suggested as a way to increase the occurrence of peer feedback. Third, peer feedback is vulnerable to multiple factors, such as learners' perceived proficiency, affect, inter-personalness, task features and interaction mindsets; thus, all of these factors need to be taken into consideration in order for peer feedback to be facilitative and beneficial to L2 learning. Possibly, raising learners' awareness about these factors could be a strategy the teacher could use to ensure the positive impact of peer feedback on interaction and subsequent L2 learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: An open-ended questionnaire

Question	Response
Do you think you notice your classmates' mistakes/ errors in English? If yes, to what extent? Give examples Khi nói Tiếng Anh với bạn trong cặp/nhóm, bạn có để ý những lỗi mà bạn làm chung mắc phải không? Nếu có, ở mức độ nào? Cho ví dụ	
What do you do when you notice a mistake in your classmates' English? Why? Bạn thường làm gì khi thấy bạn mình mắc lỗi trong nói Tiếng Anh? Tại sao?	
Do you feel comfortable correcting your classmate's mistakes? Bạn có cảm thấy thoải mái khi sửa lỗi mà bạn làm chung mắc phải khi đang nói với bạn ấy không?	
Do you feel comfortable being corrected by your classmate? Bạn có thấy thoải mái không nếu bạn làm chung sửa những lỗi mà bạn mắc phải khi đang nói?	
Do you prefer talking and being corrected by your teacher or your classmate in English? Why? Bạn thích nói và được sửa lỗi bởi giáo viên hơn hay là bạn cùng học Tiếng Anh? Tại sao	
Do you think you and your classmates can help each other correct errors? If yes, how. If no why not? Bạn có nghĩ bạn và bạn làm chung trong cặp/nhóm có giúp đỡ sửa lỗi lẫn nhau không? Nếu Có thì giúp như thế nào? Nếu Không tại sao?	

Appendix 2: Transcription conventions

The symbols for transcription used in the study are shown.

Symbol	Description of the symbol convention
—	Self-repair [italics]
Uhm	Agreement or affirmative reply
[]	Transcriber's comments or translation of learners' Vietnamese into English.
?	Rising intonation
ah	Comprehension signal
...	Unfilled pause (one second or longer)
uh	Filled pause
=	Interrupt or continue a peer's utterance/turn

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