The authors co-chaired this symposium, entitled *How to Make Peer Feedback Work* and hosted online by the Malaysian Association of Applied Linguistics (MAAL) on 1 September 2022. The speakers, Juuso Henrik Nieminen (Assistant Professor, University of Hong Kong), James Wood (Associate Teaching Professor, Seoul National University), Wei Wei (Associate Professor, Macao Polytechnic University), Tingting Liu (PhD candidate, Nanyang Technological University), and Vahid Aryadoust (Associate Professor, Nanyang Technological University) delivered enlightening presentations to over 50 participants, in turn, discussing topics related to authentic assessment, dialogic peer screencast feedback, self-efficacy, teacher video feedback, and gender and academic major bias in relation to peer assessment.
The first presenter, Juuso Henrik Nieminen, in the field of higher education assessment policy, delivered a presentation entitled *Towards authentic self- and peer-assessment practices*. He pointed out that self-assessment and peer-assessment have been hot research topics in recent years and that many studies are published every year, but the reality of assessment design is not promising. These two types of assessment are always seen as activities that follow the learning process, are formalistic and teacher-driven, and are not given the attention they deserve by teachers and students. In response to this regrettable situation, he argued that learners are missing out on a valuable opportunity to practise their self- and peer-evaluation skills, and that this lack of competence will carry learners through their work and life situations after their studies on campus. To address this problem, he introduced the concept of authentic assessment, which requires students to “use the same competencies, or combinations of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, that they need to apply in the criterion situation in professional life” (Gulikers et al., 2004, p. 69), to prepare students for future challenges, and to give them a sense of significance of the assessment. In contrast to most peer feedback studies that focus on formal rubrics or measuring the benefits of these practices, Juuso proposed that self- and peer-assessment in the form of authentic assessment are often manifested as talk, chat, and conversations that students have together. He also proposed some features of authentic peer assessment, such as a social dimension with different disciplinary characteristics, and a material dimension using digital and non-digital tools (Nieminen et al., 2022). To give participants a better understanding of authentic assessment, he gave two real-life examples of podcast reflections in teacher education, as well as self- and peer-feedback in archaeology. He concluded that although not all peer assessments have to be authentic, it is undeniable that teachers need to provide learners with some authentic forms of self- and peer-assessment to train them for future working practices.

Next, in conjunction with two articles he published in 2022, James Wood delivered a speech, entitled *Supporting learners’ understanding, emotions and agency with dialogic peer screencast feedback*. As an experienced feedback designer, he began by reviewing the general concerns of teachers and students about the effectiveness of the peer feedback process, such as emotional concerns about criticising the work of others and the work being criticised, and the tendency for peer feedback to focus on the sentence level rather than the substantive or ‘global’ aspects. To realise the full power of peer feedback in facilitating student learning and to contribute to the shift from the old teacher-centred paradigm to a new student-centred paradigm, Wood (2022a) adopted peer screencast combined with technology mediated dialogues with 14 learners who were engaged in distance learning under the influence of COVID-19. He trained the learners on peer feedback and introduced them to relevant cognitive concepts, such as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and growth mindset, prior to conducting peer feedback. In a semester-long writing class, the students used digital platforms such as Loom and Google Docs to provide feedback on their peers’ draft essays. To understand the actual effects of dialogic peer screencast feedback practices on feedback provision, engagement, uptake, and learning community development during the emergency remote teaching, the researcher used an in-depth, triangulated, qualitative approach to analyse the data from 8 learners and developed four themes. Firstly, screencast peer feedback was more understandable, in-depth, and expanded on written comments, improving understanding and uptake. Secondly, peer screencast feedback focused on global argumentative aspects, while textual feedback focused on sentence-level aspects. Thirdly, peer screencast feedback supported positive affect and encouragement, mediating the development of an online community. Lastly, extended technology-mediated dialogues supported co-regulation and a shared meaning making process.
developing the quality of actionable feedback generated. These themes were further validated by Wood’s (2022b) adoption of a qualitative case-based approach, exploring the use of dialogic teacher screencast feedback using written data, reflections, and surveys with 13 undergraduate students in South Korea. This paper further demonstrated that students perceived screencast feedback to be easier to use, that where ‘transmission’ of feedback failed, technology-mediated dialogues helped them understand and apply feedback, and learners found video feedback to motivate feedback use. Based on these combined findings, James concluded with a summary of the benefits and implications of using dialogic peer screencast feedback in the EAP/ELT setting: workload sustainable ‘new paradigm’ feedback practices, peer feedback that works, and the activation of learner agency to generate feedback, make comparisons, and act agentically within the feedback uptake process.

Our third speaker, Wei Wei presented a session, entitled Comparing self-reflection and peer feedback practices in an academic writing task: a student self-efficacy perspective, which was also based on a study he published in 2022. He began by adding classic forms of peer feedback, such as recast, explicit correction, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, clarification request and repetition, and these tend to fall into the old paradigm of teacher-centred, knowledge-transferring peer feedback research. He acknowledged that, as one of the previous speakers, James, had said, to facilitate learners’ uptake of peer feedback, scholars are increasingly looking at the new paradigm in the form of dialogue. In Wei et al.’s (2022) study, he focused on the effects of peer feedback giving practice and self-efficacy in academic writing. This is because research has shown that giving feedback contributes more to self-efficacy than receiving feedback, improves performance at a macro level, and makes feedback providers more reflective, critical, and active in terms of feedback-seeking. At the same time, self-efficacy helps students to feel confident in generating ideas, conventions, and self-regulations. In order to test the two hypotheses that self-reflection makes feedback providers compare their own work with rubrics or exemplars, while in the process of providing peer feedback learners compare the work of others with expected outcomes, Wei recruited 29 undergraduate students from a university in Hong Kong and compared their self-reflections and feedback comments provided to two other participants’ written works, in terms of content and language. Guided by self-efficacy theory, this study provided three main findings. Firstly, by comparing self-reflections and feedback given to peers in five aspects, Wei found that students tended to provide feedback based on self-reflections rather than classmates’ work. Next, by comparing similar types of peer feedback between high and low self-efficacy groups, Wei also found that self-efficacy played a huge role in learners’ efforts to provide peer feedback, such as generating and delivering ideas to others’ work. On the one hand, low self-efficacy students reported that they had great difficulty in generating ideas and conducting self-reflections, and as a result, their advice tended to address similar areas to different peers, making it difficult to give targeted, specific advice based on different work profiles. On the other hand, feedback providers with high self-efficacy were more active in seeking advice from instructors and gave feedback based on both self-reflection and their peers’ work. Finally, Wei Wei also gave his insights into the pedagogy of peer feedback, pointing out the need for more attention and training for low-efficacy learners as they learn how to give feedback from the feedback of others, as well as rubrics and exemplars. Only then can peer feedback sessions become a learning opportunity to achieve the desired learning outcomes.

Next, Tingting Liu presented a report, entitled Impact of in-class and one-on-one video feedback on EFL learners’ English public speaking competence and anxiety, which was based
on a study she recently published in 2022. Firstly, she introduced the importance of public speaking competence, and previous studies on the impact of video feedback on public speaking competence, including self-directed viewing, self-critique, peer video feedback and teacher video feedback. As teacher video feedback is seen as authoritative information by most students, especially for novice students developing public speaking competence, Liu and Aryadoust (2022) investigated how to make teacher video feedback more sustainable. She went on to introduce the concept and therapy of public speaking anxiety (PSA) as any class intervention should consider its emotional impact. With several research gaps identified in the previous studies, this study seeks to investigate two research questions: (i) how do in-class video feedback and one-on-one video feedback affect students’ public speaking competence? and (ii) how do in-class video feedback and one-on-one video feedback affect students’ public speaking anxiety? To address these questions, they adopted a quasi-experimental pretest and posttest design and collected data from 74 students in three intact second-year English classes at a Chinese university. After validating the professional ratings using Many-Facet Rasch Measurement (MFRM), they conducted ANOVA of the gain score of students’ fair measures for answering the first research question and ANCOVA of video feedback on public speaking anxiety for the second research question. They found that the in-class video feedback group had significant improvement in delivery skills and global speaking competence compared with the control group. Nevertheless, no improvement was observed in the oral presentation skills of the one-on-one video feedback group. As for public speaking anxiety, students in the in-class video feedback group had significantly lower levels of anxiety than those in the control group. She summarised some of the practical implications of in-class video feedback. Firstly, with large class sizes and reduced classroom time, many universities do not have teaching assistants or tutors to help teachers with assessment tasks, and in-class video feedback relieves teachers of their workload and helps to make feedback activities sustainable. In addition, in-class video feedback helps to improve students’ oral presentation skills and reduces public speaking anxiety, especially in a peer-to-peer learning context, effectively demonstrating non-verbal communication skills to students.

As our final speaker, Vahid Aryadoust gave a presentation, entitled Gender and academic major bias in peer assessment of oral presentations, in which he informed the participants of the investigations conducted by researchers into the fairness and precision of peer assessment, in particular a study he published in 2016. He began by describing the importance of oral presentation skills for academic and career development and categorised academic oral presentations into three different dimensions, namely verbal communication, non-verbal communication, content, and organisation skills. Performance on these three dimensions can be measured on a scale that Vahid developed and published in 2015, The Tertiary-Level English Oral Presentation Scale (TEOPS). To examine bias induced by gender and academic major in the peer assessment of oral presentations, Aryadoust (2016) collected data from 66 undergraduate students (28 girls and 38 boys), aged between 18 and 21 years, from six classes at a university in Singapore. The participants’ majors were life sciences (n = 24), mathematics and statistics (n = 9), chemistry (n = 23) and physics (n = 10). He trained the students at the beginning of the semester on how to use the TEOPS to evaluate their peers’ oral presentations, and for the end-of-semester test, the students were asked to give a 10- to 12-minute presentation on one of the selected books. Each student in each class was asked to rate his/her peer speakers. Thus, each speaker received between 10 and 15 sets of ratings from his/her peers, as well as ratings from their teacher. Students’ ratings of their peers’ speeches were anchored to the
teacher’s ratings and submitted to a Many-Facet Rasch Measurement (MFRM) using Fair Average Measures (FAMs). The analysis revealed that although students’ ratings fit the model well (i.e., psychometric quality), their peer assessment was influenced by sex and disciplinary major biases. Specifically, students consistently overestimated their peers of the opposite sex and underestimated their peers of the same disciplinary major. Vahid concluded that after adjusting for these biases, peer assessment can be a reliable and useful form of formative assessment.

Although the benefits of peer feedback have been increasingly confirmed by empirical studies, it is undeniable that it comes with some shortcomings that need to be overcome to be most effective. James Wood employed engaging forms, such as dialogic peer screencast feedback, to meet urgent practical needs of remote teaching. Wei Wei pointed out the need for frontline teachers to pay more attention to low self-efficacy learners in the process of peer feedback. In addition to this, several teaching and assessment practices that are closely linked to peer feedback should also be of greater interest to researchers. Juuso Henrik Nieminen suggested that informal authentic assessment can help learners to develop the skills needed for future work in the process of self- and peer-assessment. Tingting Liu proposed that in-class video feedback from the instructor could be conducted to enable students’ vicarious learning to promote their oral presentation competence and reduce public speaking anxiety. On this basis, Vahid Aryadoust reminded the participants that there are inevitable gender and academic major biases in the peer assessment process of oral presentation performance. This online symposium provided an open platform for experts in the field to share their research findings on how to make peer feedback more effective, and hopefully promote the development of peer feedback research among researchers and frontline teachers.

REFERENCES


