

Effects of Peer Revision on Taiwanese Senior High School Students' English Writing*

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ABSTRACT

“Peer revision,” a trend in current writing instruction, offers learners opportunities to work in pairs or in small groups and to give appropriate feedback on one another’s writing. It has long been claimed to be an effective writing technique and is now a widely adopted teaching method in first, second and foreign language writing instruction (Mangelsdorf, 1992; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997; Spear, 1988). In Taiwan a number of researchers have attempted to explore the usefulness as well as effects of peer revision at university level classes (Chou, 2000; Huang, 1995; Li, 2002; Su, 1995; Tu, 1997). However, little is known about how peer response works for Taiwanese senior high school students. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the effectiveness and effects of training for peer revision in a Taiwanese senior high school. Thirty-nine senior high school students participated in this study and received instruction in English writing in which peer revision was incorporated for six weeks. The effectiveness and effects of training for peer revision were assessed in terms of (a) students’ ability to critique peer writing; (b) operations and purposes of students’ revision; and (c) students’ attitudes toward peer revision and English writing in general. Various methods,

* The writer is grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

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including pre- and post-training questionnaires, and subjects' revision and response sheets were used to examine the effects of the training for peer revision on students' ability to critique peer writing, on their actual revision, and on their attitudes toward peer evaluation. It is hoped that this research may contribute to the study of peer revision in Taiwan and provide writing teachers with useful as well as effective ways to instruction in English writing in Taiwanese senior high schools.

KEYWORDS

peer revision, peer response, EFL writing

1. INTRODUCTION

“Peer revision,” a trend in current writing instruction, offers learners opportunities to work in pairs or in small groups and to give appropriate responses to one another's writing. It has long been claimed to be an effective writing technique and has become a widely adopted method in first (L1), second (L2) and foreign language (FL) writing instruction (Mangelsdorf, 1992; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997; Spear, 1988). Additionally, the benefits of using peer revision (PR, hereafter) in the writing process have been identified as, for example, helping students to develop the ability to diagnose problems in the text, to monitor their writing process, and to cultivate audience awareness (Benrich, 1989; Herrington & Cadman, 1991).

In Taiwan a number of researchers have attempted to explore the usefulness as well as effects of peer revision at university level (Chou, 2000; Huang, 1995; Li, 2002; Su, 1995; Tu, 1997). English teachers in senior high schools, however, seldom make good use of it to enhance students' writing due to the large enrollments in each class, the limited hours of English writing instruction, or negative student attitudes toward revision. Hence, most senior high students in Taiwan are hardly aware of the benefits of PR, let alone able to put it into practice. Therefore, it is urgent and necessary to conduct a related study on the issue to familiarize both classroom English teachers and students with the benefits of peer revision in English composition classes.

This current study aims to incorporate peer revision activities in writing instruction and to explore the effectiveness as

well as effects of peer revision on Taiwanese senior high school students. It is intended to conduct a peer revision program, to evaluate senior high school learners' ability to critique peer writing, to unveil the operations and purposes of their revision, and finally to investigate their attitudes toward peer revision prior to and after the peer revision program. The research questions are listed below:

1. What are the comments students with different proficiency levels make on one another's writing?
2. What are the effects of peer feedback on the revision of students with different proficiency levels?
3. How do the students with different proficiency levels differ in their attitudes toward peer evaluation before and after the PR project?

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to provide theoretical support for the current study of peer revision on EFL writing of Taiwanese senior high school students, a survey of some related theories and research is essential. Specifically, the focuses of this review are on peer revision in the second/foreign language classroom and research about peer revision in Taiwan.

2.1 Peer Revision in the Second/Foreign Language Classroom

In recent decades, the process of writing, including planning, the act of writing and the revision of drafts, has gradually attracted writing researchers' as well as instructors' attention. Among the different elements of the process, "revision" is often referred to as an essential part of writing in modifying the writers' original thoughts or ideas and improving their writing (Birdwell, 1980; Murray, 1978).

Peer revision, one of the various methods which can be used for revision, has been frequently adopted in L1/L2 writing classes. Many studies have been conducted to endorse the effectiveness of peer revision. It is a suggested way of monitoring writing process, negotiating meaning, and cultivating audience awareness (Benrich, 1989; Chase & Hynd, 1987; Herrington & Cadman,

1991; Zamel, 1982). L1 and L2 research on peer revision have centered on two major issues: the effectiveness of peer feedback and students' ability to provide useful feedback that may lead to improved writing. Additionally, an increasing number of researchers have intended to investigate students' perceptions toward peer revision. Hvitfeldt's (1986) study, for example, examined the effects of peer revision on student writing development, revealing that ESL university students in Malaysia showed a development in critical abilities concerning the global features of writing. Davies and Omberg (1986) further assessed ESL students' attitudes toward peer revision. They indicated that a great majority of students reacted favorably to the use of peer interaction, attributing changes in their own writing to peer sessions and offering suggestions to their classmates during those periods. Adding support to the findings of Davies and Omberg, Mendonca and Johnson (1994) also showed that students thought highly of peer response and used peer suggestions to revise their work; they selected and incorporated those comments they considered helpful in revising.

In spite of the above-mentioned benefits, some other studies are against peer feedback, revealing a number of possible problems. Three potential limitations are elaborated below. First of all, students may not refer to their peers as a real audience, and even not trust their peers themselves (Danis, 1982; Flynn, 1982; Freedman, 1987). Many students tried to identify what their teacher wants rather than make good use of the peer group to engage each other in discussions of their experiences as readers. Secondly, students often avoid evaluating one another's writing negatively (Freedman, 1992). They might be afraid of hurting others by giving negative comments. This phenomenon could prohibit students' willingness to offer helpful comments and might reduce the efficacy of peer revision to a certain degree. Thirdly, L2/FL language proficiency and the various communication styles of ESL/EFL students may also play important roles in peer revision (Mangelsdorf, 1992; Tu, 1997). Sometimes they might lack critical abilities to respond to peer writing. However, few studies have been conducted to examine

whether different levels of language proficiency influence the ability to offer peer response. More research reports in these areas are thus needed.

2.2 Research on Peer Revision in Taiwan

Although recent studies discussed above have started to shed more light on the effectiveness of peer response, this kind of research has not been widely emphasized in Taiwan. A small number of researchers have attempted to explore the usefulness as well as effects of peer revision at university level (Chou, 2000; Huang, 1995; Li, 2002; Su, 1995; Tu, 1996). Most of them suggested positive effects of peer response groups on students' attitudes and their writing ability. Huang (1995), for example, investigated students' revision process and the quality of the comments students made about the writing of their peers. Stronger students were found to make more substantive revisions than weaker ones who mostly focused on surface-level revisions. Recently, in an empirical study examining Taiwanese university-level students' perceptions of peer review, Li (2002) found that the Taiwanese university students appreciated the opportunity to review others' writing and considered peer review beneficial in improving their writing skills.

Though the effectiveness of peer response groups in EFL composition classes at university level has been validated, we still have few ideas about how the peer response works for Taiwanese senior high school students. Therefore, the present study adopts the use of peer revision to investigate the effects as well as effectiveness of peer response in the senior high school English composition classes and to explore the possible differences in the students' attitudes toward peer revision prior to and after the training program.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This section will first describe the participants in the study, the sources of data, the procedures of data collection, and a data analysis.

3.1 Participants in the Study

The subjects participating in this study were 39 third-graders in a senior high school in Kaohsiung. They belonged to one intact class. Prior to this study, the students had already studied at least five years of English at school, but they had had no experience with peer response. They took part in this study for two hours a week for six weeks. They were required to write three compositions (My Hometown, An Unforgettable Person, and An Embarrassing Moment) in the Peer Revision (PR) program during the study.

The 39 students were further divided by the researcher into two groups (HPG & LPG) for peer revision and data analysis according to their English proficiency. The high proficiency Group contained the 18 students in the class who had scored over 80 in English in the previous semester. The less proficiency group contained the 21 students who had scored below 80.¹ To form dyadic pairs for peer evaluation, they were asked to choose their own partners in their own groups. In each group, there was at least one highly proficient learner. This group formation was done to promote cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999) and to offer learners appropriate scaffolding, one of the associated concepts of Vygotsky's (1986) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), is that a more expert partner can facilitate a novice learner's progress to a higher level of language development. All together, there were 13 sub-groups, each consisting of three students. Each student received feedback from the other two partners in the group each time. After the collection of peer feedback, the researcher, also the instructor, monitored students' feedback to ensure the feedback was appropriate and held further discussion on their writing with the whole class in the following writing classes.

3.2 Sources of Data

The major research sources of data in this study include pre- and post-training questionnaires, subjects' drafts and response

¹ The group formation was done simply to divide the intact class into two groups and the cut-off point happened to be 80.

sheets.

The pre- and post-training questionnaires were designed to explore the students' attitudes toward English writing and perceptions of peer revision and to examine the possible differences in their responses to peer evaluation before and after the PR program. The pre-training questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed in three parts: Part I (Items 1 ~ 13) (adapted from Kann, 2001) was associated with students' attitudes toward English writing. In Part II (Items 14 ~ 19) and Part III (Items 20 ~ 25), students' perceptions of peer revision and of teacher revision were elicited respectively. Responses to Items 1 to 25 were to be given according to a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree" and "strongly disagree." As in the pre-training questionnaire, the post-training questionnaire (Appendix B) concerned students' attitudes toward English writing (Items 1 ~ 13), their perceptions of peer revision (Items 14 ~ 19) and of teacher revision (Items 20 ~ 25). Additionally, students' perceptions of peer revision activities were included in Items 26 to 35. In this study, participants were invited to fill in the pre-training questionnaire before taking part in the PR program, and to fill in the post-training questionnaire when the PR program was finished.

Apart from the questionnaires, students' first and revised drafts served as another source of data in this research. The drafts revealed what comments student readers had made on one another's writings and what revision student writers had made in their final drafts. The third instrument adopted in the current study was response sheets: "Reader Response Sheet" and "Writer Response Sheet," adapted from Tu's response forms (1997) and respectively presented in Appendix C and Appendix D. In the "Reader Response Sheet," which was used after the first draft, the student readers were encouraged to read their peers' drafts critically, to list some errors, weaknesses or strengths, and to provide suggestions for improving the essay. The student writers then had to fill in "Writer Response Sheet" to express their feelings toward the peer evaluation. Both the drafts and response sheets were gathered at the end of the PR project for further

analysis.

3.3 Procedures of Data Collection

The overall experiment was divided into three phases: the pre-training phase, the while-training phase and the post-training phase. In the first phase, the participants were requested to answer the Pre-training Questionnaire in Chinese. All thirty-nine questionnaires were collected and read by the researcher before the explicit training of peer revision was conducted.

In the second phase, the participants received explicit writing instruction (adapted from Lai, 2002) for two hours for six weeks. The whole writing instruction, repeating in the same class time, was divided into three periods, including "Introduction Session," "Writing Session" and "Peer Revision Session." In the "Introduction Session," the instructor introduced the topic for the writing and gave students some guidelines on how to compose a piece of good writing. After that, in the "Writing Session" the instructor left the students forty minutes to organize their ideas into two-paragraph compositions. In the final "Peer Revision Session," the students divided into 13 groups and offered some suggestions for peer writing by answering the questions on the "Reader Response Sheet." Meanwhile, the teacher made an effort to visit each student, offering suggestions for improvement.

Based on the written peer feedback, the student writers then revised their first drafts and made any change they considered necessary with red pens on their drafts. Meanwhile, the student writers had to complete the "Writer Response Sheet" to express their feelings toward the peer feedback on their writing. For each participant, the original draft with revisions, together with two Reader Response Sheets and one Writer Response Sheet, were collected two days² after the Peer Revision Session and discussed in the next writing class. These procedures occurred recursively throughout the six-week PR project.

² The participants did the revision in class. But, some of them found the class time insufficient to finish all of the work, including reading reader response, writing writer response, and doing the revision. Therefore, two days after the writing class were given for the participants to finish the work and to ensure the better quality of their revision.

Following the second phase, all the participants were requested to finish the Post-training Questionnaire in Chinese in Phase III. All thirty-nine questionnaires were gathered and analyzed to show whether different attitudes toward peer evaluation existed among students before and after the PR project. The results are described in the subsequent section.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis for the present study centers on the following three items: students' written comments (from the reader response), actual revision (from the drafts with revision and from the writer response) and attitudes toward the PR project (from the questionnaires). To begin with, students' written comments could be classified into three categories – “local, global, and evaluative – according to their contents” (McGroarty & Zhu, 1997: 14). Global comments are related to development of ideas, audience and purpose and organization of writing; local comments are mainly related to usage of words, phrases, clauses, grammar and mechanics (capitalization, spelling and punctuation); evaluative comments express students' overall evaluation of the peer writing, including both positive ones (well-done or perfect) and negative ones (poor handwriting or not interesting enough.)

Second, the revisions made on the final drafts were also analyzed for the purpose of deriving the possible reasons that had prompted the student writers to make any changes. Two major purposes of revision – local and global – could be identified based on the revised drafts as well as in the comments on the Writer Response Sheet. The local revision was related to grammar, words, phrases, clauses, and mechanics, whereas the global revision was associated with information, style, organization and audience.

From the questionnaires, the students' attitudes toward English writing and perceptions of peer revision activities were the third focus of data analysis. SPSS software was first employed to compute the data obtained from the pre- and post-training questionnaires. A t-test was also applied to examine the possible differences in the subjects' attitudes toward English

writing and peer evaluation activities before and after the PR project.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section shows the results of the peer revision and questionnaires. The findings of the study are presented in the order of the three research questions.

4.1 Students' Comments on One Another's Writing

Table 1: Statistical Results of Students' Written Comments on Peer Writing

I. LOCAL	HPG			LPG			p	t-value
	M	SD	%	M	SD	%		
1. Grammar	3.53	1.54	15.69%	2.95	1.73	24.54%	.28	1.10
2. Word	2.26	0.74	10.04%	2.55	2.27	21.21%	.00	1.05*
3. Phrase	1.66	1.63	7.38%	0.83	0.59	6.91%	.00	2.04*
4. Clause	1.13	0.86	9.47%	0.76	0.61	6.32%	.36	1.58
5. Mechanics	2.83	1.72	12.58%	1.79	1.67	14.89%	.70	1.92
Subtotal			55.16%			73.88%		
II. GLOBAL	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	p	t-value
6. Audience or purpose	1.59	0.82	7.07%	0.25	0.49	2.08%	.01	6.05*
7. Development of ideas	2.06	0.67	9.16%	0.41	0.59	3.41%	.50	8.16
8. Organization	2.11	1.59	9.38%	0.46	0.36	3.83%	.00	4.40*
Subtotal			25.60%			9.32%		
III. EVALUATIVE	M	SD	%	M	SD	%	P	t-value
9. Positive	2.20	1.06	9.78%	1.42	0.56	11.81%	.11	2.93
10. Negative	2.13	1.22	9.47%	0.60	0.65	4.99%	.00	4.78*
Subtotal			19.24%			16.81%		
Total	2.83	1.17	100%	1.78	1.08	100%	.43	2.92

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Table 1 presents the statistical results on the amount and quality of feedback, displaying the mean, standard derivation and percentage of students' written comments for peer writing. There are obvious differences ($p < 0.05$) among these types of comment at the levels of words ($p = 0.00$), phrases ($p = 0.00$), audience & purpose ($p = 0.01$), organization ($p = 0.00$) and negative evaluation ($p = 0.00$) (Relevant examples could be found in Appendix C). Nevertheless, there is no significant deviance at the other levels.

In terms of the three major categories, both the HPG and the LPG applied local comments more frequently. The overall percentage of responses under local comments for the LPG

(73.88%) was notably higher than that for the HPG (55.16%). However, the LPG seemed to use responses under global comments (9.32%) approximately one-third as frequently as the HPG did (25.60%). To put it differently, the HPG was more adept at using the global evaluation than the LPG. This result corresponded to Cziko's (1980) finding in which readers with less competence appeared less sensitive to contextual information, consequently attending more to graphic information and giving more local comments on peer writing.

With regard to the 10 subcategories in Table 1, student readers' comments on grammar were most frequent (15.69% for the HPG and 24.54% for the LPG). Comments on lexis were second frequent (10.04% for the HPG and 21.21% for the LPG). Comments related to the audience or the writing purposes were made least (7.07% for the HPG and 2.08% for the LPG). In other words, student readers paid most of their attention to a local response, especially at the grammatical and lexical levels. Grammar and word usage seemed to be their primary concerns in evaluating peer writing, which is consistent with the findings of McGroarty & Zhu (1997). Students, who have received traditional English instruction in grammar and words, might tend to concentrate on these two levels while evaluating peer writing. This was probably due to students' limiting their attention to only a small unit at a time, the lack of necessary skills to handle global evaluation, or a tendency to avoid suggesting large-scale revisions.

4.2 Effects of Peer Feedback on Students' Revision

Table 2: Statistical Results of Students' Revisions at Different Levels

	HPG			LPG			p	t-value
	M	SD	%	M	SD	%		
I. LOCAL								
1. Grammar	2.83	0.92	18.45%	3.40	2.65	33.30%	.00	-0.92*
2. Word	1.83	0.60	11.93%	2.24	1.48	21.94%	.00	-1.15*
3. Phrase	2.46	1.87	16.04%	1.68	0.86	16.45%	.00	2.22*
4. Clause	1.68	0.86	10.95%	0.53	0.36	5.19%	.00	5.34*
5. Mechanics	2.19	1.09	14.28%	1.27	1.37	12.44%	.19	2.28
Subtotal			71.64%			89.32%		
II. GLOBAL								
6. Audience or purpose	1.28	0.78	8.34%	0.13	0.16	1.27%	.00	6.19*
7. Development of ideas	1.76	1.05	11.47%	0.64	0.90	6.27%	.22	3.59
8. Organization	1.31	0.32	8.54%	0.32	0.31	3.13%	.70	9.40
Subtotal			28.36%			10.68%		
Total	2.07	0.55	100%	1.86	1.33	100%	.00	0.64*

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Table 2 illustrates the statistical results of the two groups' revisions at the eight different levels. A significant difference could be found between the two groups at the overall levels ($t=0.64$, $p < 0.05$), especially in grammar, lexical, phrase, clause and purpose.

In light of the two major categories (local revision & global revision), both the HPG and the LPG adopted local revision more often than global revision. However, the percentage of responses under local revision for the LPG (89.32%) was obviously higher than those for the HPG (71.64%). Regarding the global revision, the LPG seemed to use (10.68%) approximately one-third as frequently as the HPG did (28.36%). In other words, the HPG was better at applying the global revision than the LPG. Similar to the findings in the previous section, the possible reason for the LPG's poor performance in the global revision was that learners with less language proficiency tend to pay more attention to the lexical information and ignore the contextual meanings as well as global perspectives.

With reference to the eight subcategories, the most frequent was revision at the grammatical level (18.45% for the HPG and 33.30% for the LPG). The next most frequently altered revision was at the phrasal level for the HPG (16.04%), but at the lexical

level for the LPG (21.94%). In both groups, the least made revision was related to the readers or to the writing purpose (8.34% for the HPG and 1.27% for the LPG).

As a whole, students in both groups directed most of their attention to the lexical and phrasal levels. Word usage and phrase appeared to be their primary concern in revising, which echoes the findings of Perl (1979) and Sommers (1980). Similar to the comments the participants made on peer writing, these lower-level revisions or surface-level revisions may result from their limited attention on a small unit at a time, the lack of skills to deal with global revision, or the avoidance of large-scale revisions.

4.3 Students' Attitudes toward English Writing and Peer Evaluation

This subsection will present the results of students' attitudes toward English writing and peer evaluation before and after the PR project, followed by a detailed discussion. The focuses will be on students' attitudes toward English writing (Items 1 ~ 13), their perceptions of peer revision (Items 14 ~ 19) and of teacher revision (Items 20 ~ 25), and their responses toward peer revision activities (Items 26 ~ 35). We will first present the findings of the statistical tests and then offer a general discussion on the statistical results.

Table 3: Comparison of the Attitudes of the HPG and LPG before the PR Project

Item	Group	N	M	SD	p	t-value
Item 1	HPG	18	3.50	0.51	.38	10.73
	LPG	21	1.57	0.60		
Item 2	HPG	18	3.50	0.79	.39	7.93
	LPG	21	1.67	0.66		
Item 3	HPG	18	3.50	0.79	.68	4.70
	LPG	21	2.19	0.93		
Item 4	HPG	18	3.50	0.51	.02	3.22*
	LPG	21	2.76	0.89		
Item 5	HPG	18	3.06	0.94	.51	2.82
	LPG	21	2.14	1.06		
Item 6	HPG	18	3.28	0.83	.30	1.80
	LPG	21	2.76	0.94		
Item 7	HPG	18	3.44	0.62	.40	3.94
	LPG	21	2.57	0.75		
Item 8	HPG	18	3.83	0.62	.61	7.30
	LPG	21	2.05	0.86		
Item 9	HPG	18	3.89	0.47	.00	6.63*
	LPG	21	2.43	0.87		
Item 10	HPG	18	3.94	0.42	.00	6.42*
	LPG	21	2.57	0.87		
Item 11	HPG	18	3.50	0.71	.29	4.20
	LPG	21	2.38	0.92		
Item 12	HPG	18	2.89	0.96	.34	3.19
	LPG	21	1.95	0.86		
Item 13	HPG	18	3.39	0.61	.58	8.77
	LPG	21	1.57	0.68		
Item 14	HPG	18	3.56	0.70	.65	2.50
	LPG	21	2.95	0.80		
Item 15	HPG	18	3.72	0.75	.74	1.77
	LPG	21	3.29	0.78		
Item 16	HPG	18	3.50	0.79	.37	2.39
	LPG	21	2.90	0.77		
Item 17	HPG	18	3.17	0.99	.66	1.75
	LPG	21	2.67	0.80		
Item 18	HPG	18	3.56	0.62	.43	4.25
	LPG	21	2.62	0.74		
Item 19	HPG	18	3.56	0.62	.22	3.66
	LPG	21	2.67	0.86		
Item 20	HPG	18	3.61	0.50	.69	-0.48
	LPG	21	3.71	0.78		
Item 21	HPG	18	4.44	0.62	.30	0.07
	LPG	21	4.23	0.75		
Item 22	HPG	18	4.33	0.49	.10	-0.81
	LPG	21	4.48	0.60		
Item 23	HPG	18	4.44	0.62	.32	0.29
	LPG	21	4.38	0.74		
Item 24	HPG	18	4.33	0.77	.52	1.19
	LPG	21	4.00	0.95		
Item 25	HPG	18	4.33	0.49	.07	0.86
	LPG	21	4.10	1.09		
Overall	HPG	18	3.92	0.35	.00	6.39*

Items	LPG	21	2.83	0.68
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* $p < 0.05$ N = Number M = Mean

Table 3 shows the statistical results of the attitudes of the HPG and the LPG before the PR project. A significant difference could be identified in the overall items ($t=6.39$, $p<0.05$), revealing that there was some obvious deviance between the attitudes of the HPG and the LPG before the project. Among the 25 items (Items 1 ~ 25 in Appendix A & B), these two groups responded differently to Item 4, 9 and 10, as listed below:

Item 4: I view writing as a way of communicating with readers.

Item 9: I can make good use of English words, phrases, or sentence patterns I have learned to improve my writing.

Item 10: I only make a few grammatical errors in English composition.

Table 4: Comparison of the Attitudes of the HPG Prior to and After the PR Project

Item	PR Project	N	M	SD	p	t-value
Item 1	Before	18	3.50	0.51	.83	-2.12
	After	18	3.94	0.73		
Item 2	Before	18	3.50	0.79	.13	-1.41
	After	18	3.83	0.62		
Item 3	Before	18	3.50	0.79	.00	-2.65*
	After	18	4.06	0.42		
Item 4	Before	18	3.50	0.51	.26	-3.42
	After	18	4.22	0.73		
Item 5	Before	18	3.06	0.94	.41	-2.93
	After	18	3.89	0.76		
Item 6	Before	18	3.28	0.83	.42	-2.167
	After	18	3.83	0.71		
Item 7	Before	18	3.44	0.62	.65	-1.10
	After	18	3.67	0.59		
Item 8	Before	18	3.83	0.62	.66	-1.84
	After	18	4.22	0.65		
Item 9	Before	18	3.89	0.47	.58	-0.70
	After	18	4.00	0.49		
Item 10	Before	18	3.94	0.42	.00	2.39*
	After	18	3.44	0.78		
Item 11	Before	18	3.50	0.71	.44	-1.05
	After	18	3.78	0.88		
Item 12	Before	18	2.89	0.96	.04	-3.99*
	After	18	4.00	0.69		
Item 13	Before	18	3.39	0.61	.53	-0.76
	After	18	3.56	0.70		
Item 14	Before	18	3.56	0.70	.02	-1.86*
	After	18	3.94	0.54		
Item 15	Before	18	3.72	0.75	.02	-1.53*
	After	18	4.06	0.54		
Item 16	Before	18	3.50	0.79	.03	-2.15*
	After	18	4.00	0.59		
Item 17	Before	18	3.17	0.99	.37	-1.56
	After	18	3.61	0.70		
Item 18	Before	18	3.56	0.62	.58	-0.99
	After	18	3.78	0.73		
Item 19	Before	18	3.56	0.62	.48	-1.35
	After	18	3.83	0.62		
Item 20	Before	18	3.61	0.50	.07	-4.09
	After	18	4.44	0.71		
Item 21	Before	18	4.44	0.62	.10	-1.20
	After	18	4.67	0.49		
Item 22	Before	18	4.33	0.49	.49	-2.47
	After	18	4.72	0.46		
Item 23	Before	18	4.44	0.62	.22	0.00
	After	18	4.44	0.78		
Item 24	Before	18	4.33	0.77	.15	0.00
	After	18	4.33	0.59		
Item 25	Before	18	4.33	0.49	.20	1.05
	After	18	4.11	0.76		
Overall	Before	18	3.92	0.35	.03	-0.69*

Items	After	18	4.03	0.58
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* $p < 0.05$ N = Number M = Mean

Table 4 describes the statistical results of the attitudes of the HPG toward English writing and peer feedback before and after the PR project. A significant deviance could be identified in the overall items ($t=-0.69$, $p<0.05$), demonstrating some evident change in the attitudes of the HPG prior to and after the project. The six significant differences revealed in the responses of the HPG to the questionnaire were for Items 3, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 16.

Item 3: Writing an English composition is interesting to me.

Item 10: I only make a few grammatical errors in English composition.

Item 12: I revise my writing until I feel satisfied.

Item 14: I regard my classmates as a real audience.

Item 15: I highly value my classmates' comments on my writing.

Item 16: I adopt my classmates' comments for revision.

Table 5: Comparison of the Attitudes of the LPG Prior to and After the PR Project

Item	PR Project	N	M	SD	p	t-value
Item 1	Before	21	1.57	0.60	.84	-9.88
	After	21	3.38	0.59		
Item 2	Before	21	1.67	0.66	.93	-5.22
	After	21	2.76	0.70		
Item 3	Before	21	2.19	0.93	.18	-3.57
	After	21	3.09	0.70		
Item 4	Before	21	2.76	0.89	.02	-3.40*
	After	21	3.52	0.51		
Item 5	Before	21	2.14	1.06	.45	-4.29
	After	21	3.42	0.87		
Item 6	Before	21	2.76	0.94	.16	-1.21
	After	21	3.10	0.83		
Item 7	Before	21	2.57	0.75	.57	-3.16
	After	21	3.29	0.72		
Item 8	Before	21	2.04	0.86	.55	-5.37
	After	21	3.38	0.74		
Item 9	Before	21	2.43	0.87	.03	-5.69*
	After	21	3.71	0.56		
Item 10	Before	21	2.57	0.87	.69	-3.09
	After	21	3.42	0.93		
Item 11	Before	21	2.38	0.92	.98	-1.98
	After	21	3.00	1.09		
Item 12	Before	21	1.95	0.86	1.00	-4.78
	After	21	3.19	0.81		
Item 13	Before	21	1.57	0.68	.58	-4.57
	After	21	2.62	0.80		
Item 14	Before	21	2.95	0.80	.67	-1.42
	After	21	3.29	0.71		
Item 15	Before	21	3.28	0.78	.58	-2.10
	After	21	3.86	0.96		
Item 16	Before	21	2.90	0.77	.036	-9.24
	After	21	4.71	0.46		
Item 17	Before	21	2.67	0.80	.15	-4.41
	After	21	3.62	0.59		
Item 18	Before	21	2.62	0.74	.00	-7.34*
	After	21	4.05	0.50		
Item 19	Before	21	2.67	0.86	1.00	-3.78
	After	21	3.67	0.86		
Item 20	Before	21	3.71	0.78	.65	-2.21
	After	21	4.19	0.60		
Item 21	Before	21	4.43	0.75	.06	-0.241
	After	21	4.48	0.51		
Item 22	Before	21	4.47	0.60	.41	2.18
	After	21	4.05	0.67		
Item 23	Before	21	4.38	0.74	.12	.23
	After	21	4.33	0.58		
Item 24	Before	21	4.00	0.95	.06	-0.19
	After	21	4.04	0.67		
Item 25	Before	21	4.09	1.09	.14	-0.52
	After	21	4.24	0.62		
Overall	Before	21	2.83	0.68	.04	-5.57*

Items	After	21	3.80	0.68
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* $p < 0.05$ N = Number M = Mean

Table 5 presents the statistical results of the attitudes of the LPG toward English writing and peer evaluation before and after the PR project. Some significant deviance could be identified in the overall items ($t=-5.57$, $p<0.05$) and three major differences in the responses of the LPG to the questionnaires were for Items 4, 9, and 18.

Item 4: I view writing as a way of communicating with readers.

Item 9: I can make good use of English words, phrases, or sentence patterns I have learned to improve my writing.

Item 18: I think peer revision is very helpful to my writing.

Table 6: Comparison of the Attitudes of the HPG and LPG After the PR Project

Item	Group	N	M	SD	p	t-value
Item 1	HPG	18	3.94	0.73	.96	2.68
	LPG	21	3.38	0.59		
Item 2	HPG	18	3.83	0.62	.34	5.02
	LPG	21	2.76	0.70		
Item 3	HPG	18	4.06	0.42	.03	5.29*
	LPG	21	3.10	0.70		
Item 4	HPG	18	4.22	0.73	.22	3.49
	LPG	21	3.52	0.51		
Item 5	HPG	18	3.89	0.76	.33	1.75
	LPG	21	3.43	0.87		
Item 6	HPG	18	3.83	0.71	.77	2.96
	LPG	21	3.10	0.83		
Item 7	HPG	18	3.67	0.59	.64	1.79
	LPG	21	3.29	0.72		
Item 8	HPG	18	4.22	0.65	.25	3.75
	LPG	21	3.38	0.74		
Item 9	HPG	18	4.00	0.49	.03	1.70*
	LPG	21	3.71	0.56		
Item 10	HPG	18	3.44	0.78	.37	0.06
	LPG	21	3.43	0.93		
Item 11	HPG	18	3.78	0.88	.83	2.42
	LPG	21	3.00	1.09		
Item 12	HPG	18	4.00	0.69	.24	3.33
	LPG	21	3.19	0.81		
Item 13	HPG	18	3.56	0.70	.65	3.83
	LPG	21	2.62	0.84		
Item 14	HPG	18	3.94	0.54	.02	3.27*
	LPG	21	3.29	0.72		
Item 15	HPG	18	4.01	0.54	.00	0.80*
	LPG	21	3.86	0.96		
Item 16	HPG	18	4.00	0.59	.52	-4.22
	LPG	21	4.71	0.46		
Item 17	HPG	18	3.61	0.70	.44	-0.04
	LPG	21	3.62	0.60		
Item 18	HPG	18	3.78	0.73	.01	-1.32*
	LPG	21	4.05	0.50		
Item 19	HPG	18	3.83	0.62	.10	0.69
	LPG	21	3.67	0.86		
Item 20	HPG	18	4.44	0.70	.17	1.21
	LPG	21	4.19	0.60		
Item 21	HPG	18	4.67	0.49	.14	1.19
	LPG	21	4.48	0.51		
Item 22	HPG	18	4.72	0.46	.67	3.60
	LPG	21	4.05	0.67		
Item 23	HPG	18	4.44	0.78	.09	0.51
	LPG	21	4.33	0.58		
Item 24	HPG	18	4.33	0.59	.61	1.40
	LPG	21	4.05	0.67		
Item 25	HPG	18	4.11	0.76	.51	-0.57
	LPG	21	4.24	0.62		
Overall	HPG	18	4.02	0.58	.15	1.34

Items	LPG	21	3.81	0.43
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* $p < 0.05$ N = Number M = Mean

Table 6 shows the statistical results of the attitudes of the HPG and the LPG toward English writing and peer revision. There was no obvious deviance in the overall items between these two groups, as the actual p value (0.15) was larger than the set p value (0.05). Responses to five individual items, however, were found to be apparently different: Item 3, 9, 14, 15 and 18.

Item 3: Writing an English composition is interesting to me.

Item 9: I can make good use of English words, phrases, or sentence patterns I have learned to improve my writing.

Item 14: I regard my classmates as a real audience.

Item 15: I highly value my classmates' comments on my writing.

Item 18: I think peer revision is very helpful to my writing.

Table 7: Comparison of the Perceptions of the HPG and LPG to Peer Revision Activities

Item	Group	N	M	SD	p	t-value
Item 26	HPG	18	4.00	0.59	.11	2.00
	LPG	21	3.62	0.59		
Item 27	HPG	18	3.78	0.65	.48	2.38
	LPG	21	3.29	0.64		
Item 28	HPG	18	3.94	0.73	.32	1.20
	LPG	21	3.71	0.46		
Item 29	HPG	18	4.39	0.50	.25	0.76
	LPG	21	4.24	0.70		
Item 30	HPG	18	3.72	0.89	.12	2.23
	LPG	21	3.14	0.73		
Item 31	HPG	18	3.67	0.89	.37	3.70
	LPG	21	2.81	0.81		
Item 32	HPG	18	3.67	0.59	.80	2.60
	LPG	21	3.14	0.65		
Item 33	HPG	18	3.67	0.59	.80	2.60
	LPG	21	3.14	0.65		
Item 34	HPG	18	3.78	0.81	.65	2.25
	LPG	21	3.19	0.81		
Item 35	HPG	18	3.67	0.91	.82	1.36
	LPG	21	3.29	0.85		
Overall Items	HPG	18	3.83	0.49	.41	2.23
	LPG	21	3.45	0.57		

* $p < 0.05$ N = Number M = Mean

Table 7 presents the statistical results of the attitudes of the

HPG and the LPG toward peer revision activities. No significant difference could be identified in the overall items between these two groups as the actual p value (0.41) was larger than the set p value (0.05). Judging from the mean scores of both groups (3.83 for HPG and 3.45 for LPG), which were above the average score of the five scales (2.5), we could infer that students in general held positive attitudes toward the PR project and enjoyed the peer revision activities.

General Discussion

According to the results shown above, the peer revision activities seem to have been effective in changing the attitudes of both the HPG and the LPG toward English writing and peer evaluation. The peer revision activities not only offered learners a more communicative environment for English writing, but also made English composition class more interesting to them.

For the learners of higher English proficiency, a significant difference was found between their attitudes toward English writing and peer evaluation before and after the PR project (Table 4). After taking part in the peer revision activities, students in the HPG had apparently different responses in the following aspects: They changed to regard their peers in the same group as a real audience (Item 14) and highly valued peer comments (Item 15). With the help from their peers, the student writers were more aware of their errors in their writing and found they did not make as few grammatical errors as they thought they had done before (Item 10). After adopting peer comments for revision, they also did more revision until they felt satisfied with the writing (Item 12). After the interaction with peers, they considered writing English more interesting than before (Item 3).

As for those with a lower English proficiency, the peer evaluation activities, shown in Table 5, enabled them to view writing as a way of communicating with readers (Item 4), and to make good use of English words, phrases or sentence patterns they have learned to improve their writing (Item 9). Similar to the HPG, the LPG considered peer revision beneficial to their writing (Item 18). But, different from the responses for the HPG, no

significant difference could be found for the LPG with respect to viewing their classmates as a real audience (Item 14).

After the PR program, the deviance between the attitudes of the HPG and the LPG attitudes toward English writing and peer evaluation was not as obvious as that before the program. The mean score for the HPG (3.91) was higher than that for the LPG (2.83) before the program, and the mean score for the HPG (4.02) was still higher than that for the LPG (3.81) after the program. These results imply that the PR project made the difference between the HPG's and the LPG's responses to English writing and peer revision smaller. Learners in the LPG showed a certain degree of improvement in attitudes after the program, but they still considered the process less favorably than those in the HPG.

With regard to students' opinions about the teacher revision, no obvious difference was identified between the two groups. Both the HPG and the LPG seemed to hold relative positive attitudes toward teacher revision prior to and after the PR project. They not only referred to teachers as a real audience who could offer specific, accurate and relevant feedback, but also considered teacher revision helpful to their writing. This finding implies that a PR project will never substitute for teachers but will offer new opportunities to become better writing skills. It is thus recommended that writing teachers should combine peer feedback and teacher feedback to facilitate effective revisions.

As for the peer revision activities, the HPG and the LPG displayed little deviance in their perceptions of the activities they took part in. Both the mean scores of the HPG (3.83) and the LPG (3.45) were above the average of five scales (2.5), explicitly demonstrating their positive attitudes toward the peer revision activities in general.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the effects of a peer revision project on Taiwanese senior high school learners' English writing. On the basis of data analysis, there are two major findings in the current research. First of all, students with a lower English proficiency were found to give more local responses and to utilize

more local revision than those with a higher English proficiency. When reading, most learners in the LPG focused primarily on the immediate sentence, latching onto the words they were familiar with and thus offering mainly local-level comments. When writing, they directed much of their attention to the surface levels, lexical and phrasal levels in particular. By contrast, learners in the HPG, when reading, were more likely to attend to the wider context and to more global evaluation. When writing, they, in addition to the local revisions, were concerned more with the content or organization of their writing in the revision. This finding is consistent with the studies of Hvitfeldt (1986) and Huang (1995), in which ESFL/EFL university students, especially with higher English proficiency, tend to make more substantive as well as global revision. To have a better command of different writing levels and to become proficient readers or writers, learners should develop an awareness of the levels of comments or revisions they currently use and learn to manipulate all levels effectively as well as flexibly.

Second, in terms of attitudes toward English writing and peer evaluation, some significant difference was identified in both the HPG and the LPG after the PR project. Learners with a higher English proficiency regarded their classmates as a real audience and highly valued peer comments on their writing. They were also found to do more revision until they felt satisfied with their writing. Learners with a lower English proficiency learned to view writing as a way of communicating with readers and to make good use of the English words to improve their writing. Similar to the HPG, the LPG considered peer revision beneficial to their writing and found English writing more interesting than before. Furthermore, with regard to the gap between the attitudes of the HPG and the LPG toward English writing and peer evaluation, it was narrowed after the PR project. Although the HPG responded more positively than the LPG before the project, the LPG's progress was greater than the HPG in light of their attitudes toward English writing. The chances are that the PR project may have made the difference between the HPG's and the LPG's attitudes smaller. The benefits of the PR project found in

the current study have echoed the findings of previous research reports, such as Davies & Omberg (1986), Mendonca & Johnson (1994) and Li (2002).

As for the pedagogical implications, the outcome of the study has successfully demonstrated a valuable alternative to the traditional way of the teaching of English composition in an EFL classroom in Taiwan. It has been proved that the PR project substantially helps arouse learners' interests and improve their attitudes toward English writing. Additionally, when given more opportunity to revise and to learn collaboratively with peers, students may make their drafts better. Furthermore, to incorporate peer evaluation activities, a clear "revision guide" (e.g. Appendix C & D), an aid for students to focus on both the local and global levels, is also essential. Also, a peer response project may be extended to other language classrooms, such as reading classes and listening & speaking classes. In reading classes, the Reader Response Theory centers on the readers' entire experiences of the reader-text transaction (Rosenblatt, 1985) and can be applied to reinforce learners' reading and writing abilities. Reading and writing are viewed as transactions among readers, writers and texts. Learners can promote their reading and writing skills through active interaction with each other and exchange of proper peer response. Also, in listening and speaking classes, Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (1996) claim that it is useful to have peers serve as both monitors and givers of feedback to sharpen learners' listening and speaking skills. The effects of peer response beyond writing, such as reading and speaking, are worth investigating in further studies.

Though this study has yielded some findings regarding the peer revision for Taiwanese senior high school learners, several limitations exist in the current research. This study involved only thirty-nine students writing on three topics for six weeks. The result might not be generalizable to other styles of writing or to other students at other educational levels in different areas. Additionally, because of a time limitation, this study only asked the students to revise once, which might not be sufficient, for writing needs much time. The results might have been different if

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the subjects were given more chances to repeat the peer revision procedure. Future studies may be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of peer revision over a longer period, with larger number of students writing about more topics or to compare the effects of peer revision for senior high school students and university students. In this way, the results of future studies will be more general and convincing.

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APPENDIX A Pre-training questionnaire (English version)

*** Background Information**

School: _____ Class: _____ Sex: _____ English average score: _____

*** Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 ~ 5:**

1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – No opinion; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree

I. Attitudes toward English writing:

1. I love to write down my ideas in English.
2. I am able to write down my ideas in English quickly.
3. Writing an English composition is interesting to me.
4. I view writing as a way of communicating with readers.
5. I consider who my readers are going to be and modify the content of my writing.
6. I first brainstorm, write a draft, and then finish a composition.
7. I always wholeheartedly participate in the classroom writing activities.
8. I can apply the writing skills I learn in class to improve my writing.
9. I can make good use of English words, phrases, or sentence patterns I have learned to improve my writing.
10. I only make a few grammatical errors in English composition.
11. I like to discuss my composition with my classmates and exchange ideas.
12. I revise my writing until I feel satisfied.
13. I am very interested in taking part in an English composition contest.

II. Perceptions of peer revision:

14. I regard my classmates as a real audience.
15. I highly value my classmates' comments on my writing.
16. I adopt my classmates' comments for revision.
17. I think my classmates can offer specific, accurate, and relevant feedback.
18. I think peer revision is very helpful to my writing.
19. I feel my classmates may avoid evaluating my writing negatively for fear of hurting my feelings.

III. Perceptions of teacher revision:

20. I regard my teacher as a real audience.
21. I highly value my teacher's comments on my writing.
22. I adopt my teacher's comments for revision.
23. I think my teacher can offer specific, accurate, and relevant feedback.
24. I think teacher revision is very helpful to my writing.
25. I feel my teacher may avoid evaluating my writing negatively for fear of hurting my feelings.

APPENDIX B Post-training Questionnaire (English version)

*** Background Information**

School: _____ Class: _____ Sex: _____ English average score: _____

<p>* Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 ~ 5: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – No opinion; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree</p>

I. Attitudes toward English writing:

1. I love to write down my ideas in English.
2. I am able to write down my ideas in English quickly.
3. Writing an English composition is interesting to me.
4. I view writing as a way of communicating with readers.
5. I consider who my readers are going to be and modify the content of my writing.
6. I first brainstorm, write a draft, and then finish a composition.
7. I always wholeheartedly participate in the classroom writing activities.
8. I can apply the writing skills I learn in class to improve my writing.
9. I can make good use of English words, phrases, or sentence patterns I have learned to improve my writing.
10. I only make a few grammatical errors in English composition.
11. I like to discuss my composition with my classmates and exchange ideas.
12. I revise my writing until I feel satisfied.
13. I am very interested in taking part in an English composition contest.

II. Perceptions of peer revision:

14. I regard my classmates as a real audience.
15. I highly value my classmates' comments on my writing.
16. I adopt my classmates' comments for revision.
17. I think my classmates can offer specific, accurate, and relevant feedback.
18. I think peer revision is very helpful to my writing.
19. I feel my classmates may avoid evaluating my writing

negatively for fear of hurting my feelings.

III. Perceptions of teacher revision:

20. I regard my teacher as a real audience.
21. I highly value my teacher's comments on my writing.
22. I adopt my teacher's comments for revision.
23. I think my teacher can offer specific, accurate, and relevant feedback.
24. I think teacher revision is very helpful to my writing.
25. I feel my teacher may avoid evaluating my writing negatively for fear of hurting my feelings.

IV. Perceptions of peer revision activities:

26. I like reading my classmates' compositions.
27. I like the way my classmates gave comments on my composition.
28. I often take into consideration my classmates' comments when revising my compositions.
29. I often take into consideration my teacher's comments when revising my compositions.
30. I think peer revision helps me get new ideas and make my composition richer.
31. I think peer revision helps me to improve the organization of my composition.
32. I think peer revision helps me to improve the language (including grammar and vocabulary) of my composition.
33. I find peer revision quite useful in improving my composition and my writing skills.
34. I enjoy peer revision activities during this semester.
35. I hope my teacher will continue to use this approach next semester.

APPENDIX C Reader Response Sheet

While responding to the drafts of the members of your group, please consider the strengths and weaknesses of the writing, raise questions about them, and provide some suggestions for revision by answering the following questions in either English or Chinese. (Original in Chinese)

Topic: Writer's Name: Your Name:
--

1. Check if the passages contain any of the following errors and list them below:

- (1) Errors in grammar (e.g., disagreement between the subject and verb):
- (2) Inappropriate word usage (e.g., Please lend/*borrow me your English dictionary. I would like to look up these new words in it.):
- (3) Inappropriate use of phrases (e.g., Last night, the old John passed away/*passed on.):
- (4) Inappropriate use of clauses (e.g., run-on sentences or fragments):
- (5) Errors in mechanics (e.g., improper capitalization, spelling or punctuation):

2. What do you think of the content and organization? Does the writer take into consideration the readers or the writing purpose?

- (1) Writing purpose (e.g., Does the writing have clear purposes? Does the writing consider the target audience/reader?):
- (2) Development of ideas (e.g., Is it interesting? Should more information be added? Is the development of ideas clear?)

- (3) Organization (e.g., Is it well-organized with clear topic sentences, supportive ones and concluding ones?)
3. Any overall evaluation: (Both positive and negative ones are welcome.)
4. Any other comments for improving this essay:

APPENDIX D Writer Response Sheet

After looking at the reader response, please make any change that you think necessary with red pens on your draft. After that, write your final draft on the appended paper and then answer the following questions in either English or Chinese.

Topic: Your Name:

1. Did you use peer suggestions or comments to revise your first draft? Check and list them below:
 - (1) Errors in grammar (e.g., disagreement between the subject and verb):
 - (2) Inappropriate word usage (e.g., Please lend/*borrow me your English dictionary. I would like to look up these new words in it.):
 - (3) Inappropriate use of phrases (e.g., Last night, the old John passed away/*passed on.):
 - (4) Inappropriate use of clauses (e.g., run-on sentences or fragments):
 - (5) Errors in mechanics (e.g., improper capitalization, spelling or punctuation):
2. Do you think of the content and organization or take into consideration the readers & the writing purpose in revising your first draft?
 - (1) Writing purpose (e.g., Does the writing have clear purposes? Does the writing consider the target audience/reader?):
 - (2) Development of ideas (e.g., Is it interesting? Should more information be added? Is the development of ideas clear?)
 - (3) Organization (e.g., Is it well-organized with clear topic sentences, supportive ones and conclusive ones?)

3. Please express your feelings toward peer response in general (e.g., What did you appreciate? Do you find peer response helpful?):

Yi-shiu Lai, Raung-fu Chung