摘 要

英语写作是英语教学中的重要组成部分，它既是教学的目的，又是教学手段，而作文批改则是学生练习写作必不可少的重要环节。近二十几年来，随着写作教学模式从成果法到过程法的转变，国外学者开始将协作学习运用于第二语言教学，并将同伴互评作文用于第二语言写作教学中。由于近年来各中专、大学扩大招生而教师资源有限，从事英语教学的教师疲于费时的作文批改，但学生的写作能力却未见显著提高。

本文以实验的方法分析和研究同伴互评作文对于中专学生英语写作的影响。作者从新生班中随意挑选两个班共106名同学参加了为期一学期的实验。实验班的同学接受同伴互评作文的训练，而对控制班的同学仍采用常规化的教学方法。实验采用了前、后测，以及前、后问卷调查。本研究旨在探讨：在英语基础较差的中专学生中，同伴互评作文法是否比传统的教学法更能提高学生的写作成绩以及在同伴互评作文过程中，学生作文水平的提高是在内容和组织结构还是语法和词汇方面？此次实验的数据的采集主要有：问卷调查，前、后测作文，同学评语，作文初稿及修改稿。对实验前后问卷调查及写作成绩用SPSS(Statistic Package for Social Science)进行对比，及相关分析结果表明实验班的写作成绩比控制班的写作成绩有所提高，对同伴互评作文持肯定态度的人数也明显多于控制班；实验班比控制班更注重作文的内容和整体结构，而不是一味的强调拼写、句子语法等局部错误。

通过此次实验研究结果表明，同伴互评作文在英语写作教学中是值得采用的教学方法。同伴互评作文培养了学生的读者意识、合作意识和责任感，减少了对写作的焦虑，增强了写作的流利程度，提高了部分学生学习的主动性，同时也可以减轻教师的工作压力，在中国大班教学中起到积极的作用。但是，此次实验也表明，进行有效的同伴互评作文，必须花费足够的时间对学生进行有的放矢的方法训练和科学合理的分组安排。

关键词： 过程写作法　同伴互评作文　协作学习　英语写作　内容和组织结构　语法和词汇

Abstract

The teaching of writing is one of the important parts of ELT, and composition correction is a compulsory step for students to practice writing. With the transition from product approach to process approach in teaching writing in the last 20 years or so, researchers abroad have begun to employ collaborative learning theory in second language teaching and peer revision in teaching writing skills in a second language. Due to the rapid increase in enrollment in the past few years in vocational schools as well as colleges and the shortage of teachers of English, teachers usually spend a lot of their precious time responding to their students' writing. Yet the students' writing skills have not been improved significantly.

The present paper is an experimental analysis of the influence of peer revision on vocational school students' writing skills in English. The author selected 106 first-year students who were divided into two classes randomly and conducted a one-semester-long experiment. The experimental group received peer revision training while the controlled group was taught in the traditional method, and both pre-test and post- test and questionnaires were carried out. The research project aims at exploring whether peer revision is more effective than the traditional method in improving low-leveled vocational school students' achievement in writing and whether the students' major achievements are in contents and structures or vocabulary and grammar. The data collection methods of this research project are questionnaires, pre- and post-experiment testing, peer comments, first draft and revised draft compositions. Comparison of the results of the pre- and post-tests, questionnaires and the students achievements indicates that writing achievements of the experimental group improved more than those of the controlled group, that the number of students in favor of the employment of peer revision in the experimental group is much more higher than that of the controlled group, and that the students from the experimental group are more concerned with the contents and global structures rather than local errors in their compositions.

The results of this research suggest that peer revision is an efficient method in teaching writing skills in English in that it develops students reader awareness, sense of cooperation and responsibility, reduces their anxiety for writing, increases their fluency in writing and

enhances most students' learner initiative. Meanwhile, it can reduce the teachers' burden in responding to students' writing and thus can play quite an active role in teaching large classes in China. Yet the present research also reveals that effective peer revision can never be conducted easily because students have to be trained on how to carry out peer revision and purposeful practice tasks as well as reasonable grouping plans need to be developed.

Keywords: process-oriented writing; peer revision; collaborative learning; EFL writing; contents and structures; vocabulary and grammar

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Peer feedback in process-centered EFL writing in Vocational School

1. Introduction

1.1 Writing gives language new scope and uses.

The study of language in the twentieth century has tended to concentrate on spoken language. Written language was thought by some to be spoken language put into written form. Many linguists from Saussure through to Chomsky, for what seemed like good reasons at the time, neglected the written mode in favour of the spoken. However, most of those who are practicing teachers have been aware that the skill of writing well in a second language is important and needs separate and special attention.

Writing gives language new scope and uses that speech does not have. Though speech is considered as the primacy medium of language, this is not to deny the importance of writing. First, writing allows messages to be carried through time. Our desk drawers, filing cabinets and computer hard disks are full of previously recorded written information that we may need at some time in the future. Secondly, messages can be transmitted through space. Letters, faxes and e-mail can send messages more reliably than spoken words. Thirdly, oral messages are subject to distortion, either unintentional or otherwise. Written messages, on the other hand, remain exactly the same whether read a thousand years later or ten thousand miles away.

1.2 Teaching EFL writing in China.

Teaching EFL writing in China has been neglected for many years owing to various reasons. Many people thought that in teaching English as a foreign language in China, the most important thing was 'intensive reading', listening comprehension' and 'conversation', but not writing which is good to have but not indispensable, since most of our students would not have to write in English a lot in their future work.

However, since China opened its door to the outside world in 1979, the Chinese people have been enjoyed new opportunities, many of which require an ability to write in English. Teaching EFL writing has been emphasized on much more than before. As early in 1980's,

China Education Committee issued college English teaching program in which writing is listed as a required part of national English grade examination, and English composition writing is also an examined part in College Entrance Examination in the late ten years, which all show the extent to which China attaches importance to English writing.

In China, teaching writing in English is deeply ingrained in the traditional teacher-centred method in which teachers give the instructions, students write the products, and teachers correct and grade the students' writing. In other words, in this traditional writing classroom, writing is treated as a finished product. Teachers expect students to be fluent and competent users of the language. Very little attention is given to more important considerations such as the purpose of writing, its audience and the process of writing itself. Recent research (Emig, 1983) claims that writing is a very complex intellectual-linguistic process. If writing is viewed as a process, then giving treatment only to the written product is certainly not a good and sufficient way to teach writing.

For students to learn to write, they need to be actively involved in the writing process. Only when students are actually involved in the writing process, can they learn the necessary strategies of rehearsing, drafting and revising by going through the whole writing process.

Though more and more attention has been attracted to EFL writing, and more and more practice the students have made, their EFL writing facility improves little. This problem has puzzled many teachers who teach EFL writing. In order to meet the demand of the new market where high-qualified talent people are needed, teachers have to face the problem and try hard to solve it.

1.3 The process-oriented writing

Over recent years, process approach to writing has dominated much of the teaching of writing that happens in EFL classrooms. This approach seeks to shift emphasis away from an endless stream of compositions assigned by the teacher, written by the learners, handed in for marking by the teacher, handed back to the learners, and promptly forgotten by them as they start on the next assignment. Instead, the emphasis is on the process of writing itself,

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and involves pre-writing work to generate ideas, and the writing of multiple drafts to revise and extend those ideas.

Feedback is seen as essential to the multiple-draft process, as it is 'what pushes the writer through the various drafts and on to the eventual end-product' (Keh 1990:294). Various types of feedback are possible, including peer feedback, conferencing, and written teacher-feedback, as well as more innovative methods such as the use of taped commentaries (Hyland 1990) and computer-based response. In fact, the possible approaches to feedback are so varied and numerous that Lynch (1996: 155) suggests that teachers should 'offer learners a range of feedback types...[which] may stand a greater chance of success than reliance on a single technique'.

In process approaches, the teacher primarily facilitates the learner's writing, and providing input or stimulus is considered to be less important. Like babies and young children who develop, rather than learn, their mother tongue, second language learners develop, rather than consciously learn, writing skills. Teachers draw out the learners' potential.

The process approach encourages students to pay more attention to:

- Self-discovery and authorial 'voice';
- Meaningful writing on topics of importance (or at least) to the writer;
- The need to plan out writing as a goal-oriented, contextualized activity;
- Invention, pre-writing tasks, and multiple drafting with feedback between drafts;
- A variety of feedback options from real audiences, whether from peers, small groups, and/ or the teacher, through conferencing, or through other formative evaluation;
- Free writing, and journal writing as alternative means of generating writing and developing written expression, overcoming writer's block;
- Content information and personal expression as more important than final product grammar and usage;
- The idea that writing is multiple recursive rather than linear as a process-tasks are repeated alternatively as often as necessary;

- Students' awareness of the writing process and of notions such as audience, voice, plan, etc. (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 87)

The development of the process approach instruction passes through several historic periods. The first stage is the expressing stage. The focus is the writer expresses his internal feelings about the world around him. It begins to alter its direction from the formal aspect to the content aspect. The major problem with the expressive model is that it assumes the writer already has all the intellectual resources s/he needs and is merely looking for an appropriate outlet for expression. It ignores the context of writing and the social context in which writing is performed in the real world.

The second stage is the cognitive stage. This approach views writing activity as recursive rather than linear. It pays tremendous attention to the significance of pre-planning and editing as ongoing activities, and the importance of writer's errors as a source of data. Flower and Hayes (1991) define the cognitive model treats the composing processes as interactive, intermingling, and potentially simultaneous, and composing is a goal-directed activity.

The third stage is the social-context stage. This model thinks that a writing-as-a-process approach has little meaning outside of the social context, which defines the particular writing purpose. They emphasize writing can only be understood from the perspective of a social context and not as a product of a single individual. The meaning of any writing should be put in the surrounding social context in which it tends to interact with. As is stated by Cooper (1989), "writing can not be seen as isolated from the social structures". Flower (1994) and Witte (1992) argue that a comprehensive theory of writing needs to recognize the various social factors which influence writing; at the same time, recognition must also be given to the idea that writing itself is produced through the cognitive activities of the writer. Thus, disregarding either major component---cognition or social context---will be necessarily inadequate.

Process approaches have a somewhat monolithic view of writing. The process of writing is seen as the same regardless of what is being written and who is writing. So while the

amount of pre-writing in producing a postcard to a friend and in writing an academic essay are different (Tribble 1996), this is not reflected in much process teaching. While a process approach may ignore the context in which writing happens, this is unusual. Summarizing, process approaches see writing primarily as the exercise of linguistic skills, and writing development as an unconscious process which happens when teachers facilitate the exercise of writing skills.

During the last decade, in response to the impact of collaborative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1987, cited in Nelson and Murphy 1992b:135) and a shift in the teaching of composition from an emphasis on product to an emphases on process (Johnson & Johnson, 1987, cited in Nelson and Murphy 1992b:135), many L2 writing instructors began to use peer revision groups in their writing classes. So peer revision is the natural result when process writing is emphasized on and the enlarging enrollment of colleges, universities and professional schools in recent years in China.

1.4 The definition of peer revision

Peer revision is also called peer feedback, peer response, peer editing, or peer evaluation. It refers to an activity in the revising stage of writing in which students share their working drafts with others as the drafts are developing in order to get guidance and feedback on their writing (Leki, 1990, p. 22). The essence of peer revision is students' providing other students with feedback on their preliminary drafts so that the student writers may acquire a wider sense of audience and work toward improving their final version. In relation to peer feedback, students are doing more than simply editing and evaluating another student's essay: they are responding to what the essay says as well as how it says.

For EFL students, peer revision sessions usually consists of a group of two to four students reading or listening to a peer's draft and commenting firstly on what they find most interesting, what they want to know more about, where they are confused, and so on, and later, they pay more attention to the draft's thesis, unity, development, focus, and so on. In other words, in the earlier composing stages, content is responded, and in the later stages, form is focused. Students can use these responses that naturally emerge from a discussion to

decide how to revise their writing.

1.5 The significance of peer revision

Many investigators have argued that in L1 instructional settings the peer interactions that occur during peer revision sessions have cognitive benefits because they provide students with opportunities to assume a more active role in their own learning (Barnes, 1976; Brief, 1984). Researchers in L2 instructional settings argue that the peer interactions that occur during peer reviews represent an important component of effective L2 writing instruction. Mangelsdorf (1989) advocates the integration of different ways of using language (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), claiming that peer interactions help L2 students communicate their ideas and can enhance the development of L2 learning in general. Furthermore, she states that audience feedback is important in second language acquisition, as L2 students must test out and revise their hypotheses about the L2 in meaningful contexts. Peer interactions during peer feedback, she concludes, give students "more ways to discover and explore ideas, to find the right words to express these ideas, and to negotiate with their audience about these ideas---all of which are critical in second language acquisition and cognitive growth".

As several ESL composition researchers have noted, the peer revision has the potential to be a powerful learning tool. Mittan (1989) has written that peer revision achieves the following: provides students with an authentic audience; increases students' motivation for writing; enables students to receive different views on their writing; helps students learn to read critically their own writing; and assists students in gaining confidence in their writing. He also points out that peer feedback discussions allow students to use oral language skills.

Berg (1999) concludes that peer revision enables students to make progress in writing than if taught by conventional methods; provides students with an opportunity to discover ideas and ways to communicate these ideas; enables students to see errors in their own writing; allows students act as writer and audience, which makes them more aware that they, indeed, are writing for others; adds perspective to students' perception of the writing

process, both their own and others'; improves students' ability to assess their own strengths; improves class atmosphere by actively involving students; uses all four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, thus developing students' general language proficiency.

As described and researched by many composition researchers, peer revision promotes students' confidence in their ability to assess the work of others and provides the opportunity to develop skills for working in a team. The feedback from students has been positive. They felt that this technique, in comparison with a 'blanket mark' where all students in the group received the same mark, was fair. Students also pointed to the benefits of 'finding out about how they work with others, some, admittedly, with a greater degree of approbation than others. They also agreed that peers shared perspectives on writhing problems and they felt less threatened by feedback from peers than that from their teachers.

All in all, peer revisions do have many benefits in EFL writing classes, and large classes are very common in China today, effective peer revision can be helpful to reduce the great stress of teachers' hard burden on evaluating and comment on the students' writing work.

2. Literature review

Peer revision has been long widely accepted pedagogy in the L1 English composition classroom. More recently, many ESL composition teachers have responded to the persuasion of L1 composition theorists and have included peer revisions in their course outlines. In fact, some empirical evidence has accumulated to justify this inclusion. Studies of both native and nonnative English composition classrooms suggest that peer revision can provide student writers with a wide range of benefits, including reduced writing anxiety, improved sense of readers, and increased fluency.

Elbow (1981) contended that student writers derive great benefit from recognizing an audience in their peer revision group members. He noted that as student writers see confusion or incomprehension in their group partners' response or in their faces, writing becomes a task of communicating, rather than merely an exercise to be completed for the teacher. Kastra (1987) argued students who participated in peer revision demonstrated a more positive attitude toward writing than did the students who had received teacher response alone. She also found a significant increase in writing fluency in the group that had participated in peer revision sessions. Clifford (1981) found that students whose classwork included participation in peer revision sessions showed significant improvement on holistically scored writing samples. Bruffee (1984) contended that the collaborative environment created in peer groups encourages writers to address high-order composition concerns, such as focus and idea development.

Researchers like Danis (1980), who found that 75 percent of the students in her study correctly identified both major and minor writing problems, Danis noted that students are not always sure of their group role. Writers in the freshman composition classes she studied were commonly unable to elicit necessary information regarding their essays from group members and were hesitant to ask for clarification. Danis further observed that students often do not regard their peers as the real readers, merely as interim arbitrators. Gere (1985), who felt that student responses did deal with meaning, seem to support Bruffee's contention that students in peer groups do more than simply act as proofreaders of each other's work.

Recent research by Gere and Abbott (1985) has reaffirmed the power of peer writing groups to stay focused on discussions about writing. Their research also shows that group discussions where teachers are present are significantly different from those where teachers are absent.

Other studies have considered whether peer revision surpasses teacher response. Ford (1973) and Karengianes, Pascarella and Pflaum (1980) found peer revision to be more beneficial than teacher response in producing improved drafts. Partridge (1981) found the opposite: teacher response resulted in more improvement. Pfeiffer (1981) and Putz (1970) found that peer revision produced neither better nor worse final drafts than did teacher response. In a study of L2 students, Chaudron (1984) found no overall difference between those revisions resulting from peer revision and those resulting from teacher response.

In recent years, some dissenting views of the efficacy of peer revision have surfaced. A national survey of 560 composition teachers has revealed a substantial level of doubt regarding the helpfulness of peer revision (Freedman, 1985). Increasingly, composition teachers have begun to articulate their reservations in print. Flynn's (1982, cited in Jane Stanley 1992: 218) found that, in freshman composition classes, students offered unhelpful and unfocused responses to their peer-group partners. Significantly, she noted that students tended to supply meaning to essays they read, to close coherence gaps that the writer had left open. Flynn attributed this willingness of students to "overinterpret" their partners' essays to their unfamiliarity with the genre of student writing. She argues that students are experienced readers of professionally crafted prose; this leads them to expect that all writing is coherent and well-focused. Thus, student evaluators commonly read for global meaning, use their schemata to fill in cohesive gaps, and infer information even where the writer has failed to provide the necessary background to authorize such as inference. As a result, student readers are insufficiently critical of student writing, presuming that the comprehensibility shortcomings lie with them as readers, rather than with the writer. Finally, Flynn suggests that students' skill as evaluators would be sharpened if they were introduced to the genre of the student essay.

Leki (1990) identified a broad range of problems with peer revision in the ESL classroom. Primary among these is students' tendency to address surface errors of grammar and mechanics while failing to respond to more problematic issues of meaning. Another concern is that students sometimes resort to inappropriate rubber stamp advice when at a loss to comment. Leki reported a further disincentive for using peer revision as the possibility that peer comments may lack tact or a constructive spirit. Finally, she noted that the experienced ESL writers sometimes find it difficult to judge when their peers' advice is valid.

According to Vygotsky (1978), students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. Group diversity in terms of knowledge and experience contributes positively to the learning process. Bruner (1985) contends that cooperative learning methods improve problem-solving strategies because the students are confronted with different interpretations of the given situation. The peer support system makes it possible for the learner to internalize both external knowledge and critical thinking skills and to convert them into tools for intellectual functioning. Beaven (1977), discussing peer evaluation, claims that the collaborative method allows students to develop audience awareness, to check their perceptions of reality, to strengthen their interpersonal skill, and to take risks; the entire process results in improvement in writing and students' ability to revise.

Cheong's (1994) results showed that students use three kinds of feedback— self, peer, and teacher— but mostly adopted the changes suggested by the teacher. In Berger's (1990) study, peer revision appeared to have more favorable effects than self revision. In Zhang's (1995) survey study, which gathered students' perceptions through a questionnair, peer feedback has yielded mixed findings. Mendonca and Johnson (1994:765) also discover that student writers may not always trust their peers, but the same comment from a teacher will be taken into account when they revise. Carson and Nelson (1996) believe that culture factors, such as harmony-maintenance strategies, guide Chinese learners when they participate in peer feedback.

Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) compare teacher and peer feedback in two intact EFL groups: the experimental group — peer revision — performed on an equal level as that of the control group — teacher feedback. In Chaudron's (1984, cited in Villamil & De Guerrero 1998:492) study, peer feedback had as much impact as teacher feedback on revision in terms of improvement. Likewise, Caulk(1994) found that intermediate and advanced ESL students seemed to provide as much feedback to each other as their instructor. He finds that teacher's comments were general, aimed particularly at the whole piece, whereas peer comments were more specific in focus. In his opinion, teacher and peer feedback are complementary rather than redundant.

Ana Frankenberg-Garcia (1999: 101) has found that peer feedback is versatile, with regard to focus and implementation along the process writing continnum. Villiamil and De Guerrero (1998: 508) conclude that peer revision can contribute to writing development in many important ways. The experience of peer revision provided students with an unparalleled opportunity to discuss textual problems, internalize the sense of audience and in general become sensitive to the social dimension of writing.

Cazde (1998, cited in Mendonca and Johnson 1994: 746) characterizes peer feedback as enabling students to reconceptualize their ideas in light of their peers' reactions and to establish a didactic relationship with their audiences by giving and receiving feedback. Mangelsdorf (1989, cited in Mendonca and Johnson 1994: 746) states that peer feedback give students more ways to discover and negotiate with their audience about these ideas — all of which are critical in second language acquisition and cognitive growth. Sima Sengupta (1998: 19) says student writers take selective account of peer's comments while revising, preferring to depend more on their own knowledge.

Support abounds for the cognitive, social and linguistic benefits of peer feedback, and some recent research has begun to investigate not only what L2 students actually do during peer feedback but also the problems that tend to arise during the peer revision process. A problem that has been pointed out both in L1 and L2 peer feedback is that students tend to concentrate more on surface revisions rather than on changes that affect meaning. Leki

(1990) warns that L2 students will continue to focus on surface errors while ignoring broader issues of meaning. Berger's (1990) study, which examined the effects of peer and self feedback among ESL college learners on three categories-linguistic structures, content and form, shows that most revisions were made in the area of linguistic structures in both groups, followed by revisions in content. Stanley (1992) found that coaching L2 writers on ways to be effective peer evaluators enabled them to be more engaged in the peer review task, communicate more effectively about their peers' writing, and make clearer suggestions for revisions.

Some researchers concern how the exact configuration of peer reviews influences the type of peer interaction that occurs during the peer review process. Some researchers support peer reviews in the form of peer response groups (three or more students) whereas others favor peer dyads (student-student). Some claim that preparing students to work in peer response groups or peer dyads is essentially the same (Brief, 1984), but others argue that peer response groups provide writers with a wide range of feedback on their writing whereas peer review dyads tend to foster more writer-based analysis of written texts (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1984; Spear, 1984).

Shuqiang Zhang (1995) examined the affective values of teacher-, peer-, and self-directed feedback, and the result denied the affective advantages of peer feedback. Duqing Wang (2001) applied collaborate writing in a college students. The writing program lasted one semester, and the result was opposite to that of Zhang's. At the end of the term, 81.7% students accepted peer revision, and most of the students believed peers' comments and suggestions very instructive. Wei Zhu (1995) investigated the effects of training for peer response in university freshman composition classes over a semester. The students in the experimental group received training through teacher-student conferences in which the teacher met students in groups of three to develop and practice strategies for peer response. She found that the trained students for peer response made significant progresses.

3. Theories of peer revision

3.1 Krashen's theory of the monitor model

Krashen's Monitor Model has enjoyed considerable prominence in SLA research. This model consists of five central hypotheses. Each hypothesis is briefly summarized below.

3.1.1 The acquisition learning hypothsis

Krashen identifies two types of linguistic knowledge in SLA: an implicit way, termed "acquisition", and an explicit way, termed conscious language "learning". "Acquisition" occurs automatically when the learner engages in natural communication where the focus is on meaning and where there is comprehensible input. "Learning" occurs as a result of formal study where the learner is focused on the formal properties of the L2. "Acquisition" knowledge consists of subconscious L2 rules which the learner can call upon automatically; "learnt" knowledge consists of metalingual knowledge which can only be used to monitor output generated by means of "acquired" knowledge. Krashen argues that the two knowledge types are entirely separate and unrelated.

Krashen claims that the classroom can do much better than informal environments when learners, especially adult beginners, learn a second language. He summarizes his position with regard to the role in the classroom:

> The value of second language classed, then, lies not only in the grammar instruction, but in the 'teacher talk', the comprehensible input. It can be an efficient place to achieve at least the intermediate levels rapidly, as long as the focus of the class is on providing input for acquisition. (1982: 59)

The implication of this hypothesis is that teacher adjusts the context of learning a second language to acquisition environment, and peer response group can be such an environment in which natural communication occurs.

3.1.2 The natural order hypothesis

The natural order hypothesis holds that learners may follow a more or less invariant order in the acquisition of formal grammatical features. The hypothesis affirms that grammatical structures are 'acquired' in a predictable order. Thus when the learner is engaged in natural communication tasks, he will manifest the standard order. The order in

which grammatical features are taught will govern the order in which they are learnt. Language syllabuses are organized in such a way as to facilitate the correlation between the teaching order and the learning order. This hypothesis gives the implication that some errors of the students be tolerated since they may be on the late part of the continnum and the students not make such mistakes when they acquire the knowledge later.

3.1.3 The monitor hypothesis

The Monitor is the device that learners use to edit their language performance. It utilizes 'learnt' knowledge by acting upon and modifying utterances generated from 'acquired' knowledge. This can occur either before the utterance is uttered or after. In either case its use is optional. Krashen argues that Monitoring has an extremely limited function in language performance, even where adults are concerned. He gives three conditions for its use:

1) Time. In situations where little processing time is available, the Model predicts learners will rely primarily on the 'acquired' knowledge.

2) Focus on form. Learners must focus on form correctness.

3) Know the Rule. Learners can often be able to express formal rules of grammar, they cannot use them correctly in spontaneous communication, such as in writing process, but they must know them well for practice and accumulation.

Since the students have learnt enough grammatical rules when they are asked to write compositions in English, and they have studied English consciously, they have already had the ability of monitoring their own language production to some extent.

3.1.4 The input hypothesis

Krashen argues that for SLA to take place, learners need input that contains exemplars of the language forms that according to the natural order are due to be acquired next. If a learner is at stage 'i', the input he understands should contain 'i + 1'. Krashen (1982: 21) writes:

...a necessary (but not sufficient)condition to move from stage 'i' to stage 'i + 1' is that the acquirer understand input that contains 'i + 1', where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focused on the

meaning and not the form of the message.

The language that learners are exposed to should be just far enough beyond their current competence so that they can understand most of it but still be challenged to make progress. Input should neither be so far beyond their reach that they are overwhelmed, nor so close to their current stage that they are not challenged at all. Krashen emphasizes that 'acquisition' is the result of comprehensible input. Input is made comprehensible with the help of the context. Therefore, teachers should adjust the difficulty level of input and design tasks suitable to students' current ability. They also should turn classroom context to optimal situation with comprehensible input. Since there is no great difference among peer students' knowledge and experience, peers' feedback will be more comprehensible input than the teacher, and to some extent, their feedback should be more acceptable for the student writers.

3.1.5 The affective filter hypothesis

The affective filter hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filter. Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong affective filter---even if they understand the message, the input will not reach that part of the brain responsible for language acquisition, or the language acquisition device. Learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety have low filters and so obtain and let in plenty of input. The affective filter influences the rate of development, but it does not affect the route. In peer response group, students can have lower filter because they face their peers, not their teacher who is thought of as a judge not a companion. In such situation, students are more self-confident and have less anxiety. They have higher motivation to check their and their peers' writing production rather than relying on their teacher's evaluation. Figure 3.1 (Krashen, 1982) illustrates the relationship between input and affective filter and how these two main causative variables influence one's language

acquisition.

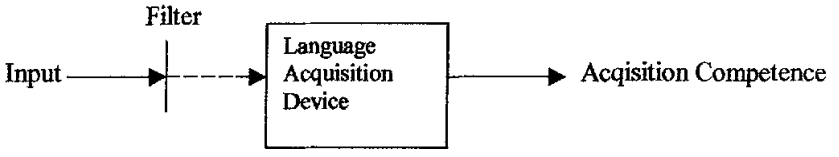

Figure 3.1 Operation of the "affective filter"

The "affective filter", posited by Dulay and Brut (1977), acts to prevent input from being used for language acquisition. Acquires with optimal attitudes are hypothesized to have "low" affective filters. Classrooms that encourage low filters are those that promote low anxiety among students, that keep students " off the defensive" (Stevick, 1976, cited in Krashen, 1982: 32) .

3.2 Vygotsky's theory of ZPD

Len Semyonovitch Vygotsy was born in 1896 in Byelorussia (Soviet Union). He began his career as a psychologist in 1917 and only pursued his career for 17 years before his death. His work, the volume "Thought and Language", was done between 1924 and his death in 1934. The first translations that made his work available were published in 1962.

The major theme of Vygotsy's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. In Vygotsy's opinion all the higher functions originate in actual relationships between individuals.

A second aspect of Vygotsy's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a certain time span that he calls the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Furthermore, full development during the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skills that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone. The ZPD is the gray area between the things the learner can do alone and the things the learner can learn with help from a more knowledgeable person or peer group. This gray area encompasses the functions in a child that have not matured yet, but are in the process of maturing and developing. In other words, the ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving without guided instruction and the level of potential

development as determined through problem solving under teacher guidance or collaboration with more capable school aged peers.

The implication of " zone" is that at a certain stage in development, children can solve a certain range of problems only when they are interacting with people and in cooperation with peers. Once the problem solving activities have been internalized, the problem initially solved under guidance and in cooperation with others will be tackled independently. The notion here seems to be that one's latent, or unexpressed ability could be measured by the extent to which one profits from guided instruction. Instruction directed at the level of completed development can, of course, increase the knowledge base, but will have minimal effect upon the student's cognitive ability. Instruction directed beyond the proximal level will tend to be incomprehensible to the student and thus will affect neither knowledge nor cognitive ability. The most effective teaching is therefore somewhat, but not too much, in advance of development.

The ZPD has powerful methodological significance for educational researchers. The implications stem from questions about the extent and character of the zone itself, in particular the way the conceptualization of the ZPD suggests that the mind is not fixed in its capacity but rather provides a range of potential. The mind, therefore, is both elastic in terms of the different directions cognitive growth may take depending on the sociocultural environment in which it develops, and unbounded in terms of its potential for growth and the physical space it occupies.

Vygotsy's theory was an attempt to explain consciousness as the end product of socialization. For example, in the learning of language, our first utterances with peers or adults are for the purpose of communication but once mastered they become internalized and allow inner speech. In other words, Vygotsy felt that the intellectual ways of knowing the world that a student displayed were not primarily determined by innate factors, that is, inherited intelligence or mental abilities. Instead, Vygotsy saw patterns and levels of thinking as products of the activities practiced in the social institutions of the culture in which the individual was immersed.

Like Piaget, Vygotsy saw interaction as the key by which learning proceeds. Unlike Piaget's emphasis on symmetrical, reciprocal relationships, however, Vygotsy emphasized complementary relationships in which one of the interactants is more knowledgeable and expert than the other and thus able to instruct, guide and encourage his or her partner. Complementary or symmetrical interactions define the exchanges that Vygotsy saw as occurring within the zone of proximal development and stretching the learner to the leading edge of their comprehension.

ZPD is a psychological space where latent abilities are vulnerable to maturation with the appropriate aid of another person. Effective other regulations as provided by adults or more expert peer can lead to self-regulation, or the capacity for independent problem solving.

Whereas traditional interpretations of the APD clearly pose the presence of a more expert partner and suggest that assistance is unidirectional, L2 researchers within sociocultural theory have been investigating the effects of mutual help in novice-novice interactions. The crucial question is whether L2 learners at similar stages of development can help each other advance through their respective ZPD. As Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994, cited in Villamil and De Guerrero 1998: 495) point out, effective feedback in the ZPD should be contingent on, and tailored to, the learners' specific needs and potential level of development. In their views, peer feedback offers a formidable opportunity to observe the effects of such intervention and growth in the L2 writing classroom.

3.3 Bruffee's collaborative learning theory

Collaborative learning is a means of study where learners work together, sharing their knowledge and resources to produce better learning outcomes, for example, better essays, than if they worked in isolation without the input of their peer. It began with a concern that the hierarchical authority structure of traditional classrooms can impede learning. In a traditional classroom, the teacher is the authority, the governor and the judge. This kind of hierarchical authority isolates students from one another, silence them, pacify them and fuel competitiveness among them. Collaborative learning models the conversation by which communities of knowledgeable peers construct knowledge (Bruffee, 1999). The use of peer

response in writing classes has long been touted as a means of granting students increased authority over their reading and writing. By instituting peer responding, the theory goes, the teacher gives up his or her place as the only authority in the classroom, allowing students to share authority in the evaluation of their own and their peers' writing.

Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers.

There is a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among group members for the groups actions. The underlying premise of collaborative learning is based upon consensus building through cooperation by group members, in contrast to competition in which individuals best other group members. CL practitioners apply this philosophy in the classroom, at committee meetings, with community groups, within their families and generally as a way of living with and dealing with other people.

Bruffee holds that every person belongs to several "interpretative or knowledge communities" that share vocabularies, points of view, histories, values, conventions and interests. The job of the instructor is to help students learn to negotiate the boundaries between the communities they already belong to and the community represented by the teacher's academic discipline, which the students want to join.

Kenneth A. Bruffee argues in "Collaborative Learning and the Conversation of Mankind" that we learn through social conversation; in fact, social conversation teaches us how to use reflective thought--the very kind of thought that is crucial to good writing. For Bruffee, when we write, we are taking earlier external conversations we have had ... and re-externalizing them on paper. For Bruffee, the ability to converse is thought, and thought is directly related to the ability to write. This means that students need to engage in a

conversation about what they are writing in order to write it better. As writing tutors, we offer students a chance to engage in conversation that "can be emotionally involved, intellectually and substantively focused, and personally disinterested" (642). And according to Bruffee, this type of conversation mirrors the type of writing professors look for in college. So the students, by conversing with peer tutors, become better writers.

During the 1970s, says Bruffee, college professors became increasingly alarmed that students seemed to be having difficulty with the transition into writing at the college-level. Researchers looking into this problem decided that the help being offered to students was too similar to classroom learning. They needed "not an extension of but an alternative to traditional classroom teaching" (Bruffee 86). Though collaborative learning may share some characteristics of traditional classroom teaching, such as the tutor possessing more knowledge about writing than the student, collaboration means that both the student and the tutor provide input into and take insights out of the tutoring session. In the traditional classroom, there is no mandate suggesting that a teacher will learn from his students. But this mandate is an integral part of collaborative learning.

But this discussion does not explain how collaborative learning actually works. After researching the workings of conversation, Bruffee contended that thought is internalized conversation. Thus, these two processes take place in a similar fashion (Bruffee 87). He says, "To think well as individuals we must learn to think well collectively -- that is, we must learn to converse well" (Bruffee 88). When people collaborate, they need to converse to share their ideas. The more they converse, the more they sharpen their thinking skills.

Writing and talking are unavoidably connected. When people write, they are putting their thoughts onto paper. If thought is just conversation internalized, then writing is little more than putting that conversation onto paper (Bruffee 88). Collaborative learning provides a social context where students can practice conversation. This is equivalent to practicing thinking, and as we all know, the more we practice, the better our performance. The more one converses and collaborates, the more ammunition one acquires to fight in the struggle of writing.

4. The present study

This chapter shows a detailed description of the research design. It gives information about the objectives and participants of the experiment, the overall design and the specific steps of the experiment. Teacher-students training conference and the arrangement of student peer feedback sessions are also showed in this chapter.

4.1 Objectives of the study

As we all know, EFL writing has become more and more important in EFL teaching, and it also has been attracted more and more attention to. Correcting and scoring students' compositions is a hard time-consuming work for each EFL writing teacher. Based on the assumption that peer feedback strategy is possible in EFL environment, this study set out to investigate how peer feedback strategy influences the EFL learners---their writing proficiency as well as perception about writing and revision. The overall aim of the paper is to investigate the effect of peer feedback on the freshmen's writing ability in our school.

The traditional practice is to get students to produce only one draft of 6-8 compositions in one term. Owing to the limited time and manpower-consumption, it is impossible for teachers to seriously correct the students every composition.

The study seeks to test the following hypothesis:

1. Peer feedback strategy leads to more gains in EFL writing than traditional way of practice and revision in vocational schools where the students' English writing competence is not so good.

2. The students pay more attention to content and organization than that to grammar and lexical items after they have taken part in peer revision sessions.

4.2 Participants

The participants were chosen from the freshmen of two classes in which all students' major is Electricity-generating. There were more than 50 students in each class, with one teacher teaching all these students without the help of any other teaching assistant. In Class A, there are 52 students (32 boy students and 20 girl students). In Class B, there are 54 students (31 boy students and 23 girl students). On average, the students in Class A were

required to write 7 compositions and the students in Class B 5 in one term of 16 teaching weeks. The students were 15- to 19-year-old boys and girls coming from Gansu Province. The language for most class activities and the social language were standard Chinese. English was mainly used when the students answered questions and the teacher explained the texts. There were no writing classes for the students and the teacher had not taught writing class specifically before.

Table 4.1 Design of the Study of Peer Revision Training

Controlled Group	Experimental Group
Pretest	Pretest
Pre-study Questionnaire	Pre-study Questionnaire
Non-peer Revision Training	Peer Revision Training
Posttest	Posttest
Post-study Questionnaire	Post-study Questionnaire

In Class A, the controlled group, the teacher gave different topics which were related to the taught texts and asked the students to write after class without giving the students sample compositions. Three days later, the teacher would collect the students' compositions. The teacher corrected the grammatical and lexical errors and gave some comments and suggestions on the compositions of the students' in Class A. She didn't ask them to discuss the compositions, nor did she ask them to rewrite them. The students were required to look through their errors and corrections made by the teacher, but not required to do any recorrections. Then the whole class moved to another topic.

Class B was experimental group, in which peer feedback was required. As freshmen, they hadn't received any feedback in English writing before the new school. Before they were asked to perform their peer feedback work, the teacher would hold teacher-students conference to train them on how to do it. They were asked to pay attention to three aspects of their peers' compositions: content, grammar and lexical items. During their peer revision activities, the students could write their opinions and suggestions and point out the errors on

their peers' drafts and/or on the peer revision sheets. After their discussion, they were asked to rewrite their tasks.

According the pre-questionnaire, only 17.6% of the students had some experiences with peer review in Chinese composition classes before they came to this school. Most of them got feedback for their English compositions from their teachers. Thus, the research can be made sure that the two groups were at the same starting point so far as peer feedback was concerned.

4.3 Division of groups

In Class B, the students were divided into 12 groups of 4 students and 2 groups of 3 students. All the groups were divided according to their relative seats for keeping the natural settings of class. Another reason of such division was that the students' seats were evenly arranged by their head teacher according to their subject grades and gender. The head teacher wanted the students could help each other in their study. In each group, the two front-seated students turned back to the student seated behind them to form a peer group. The teacher appointed a monitor (timekeeper) to make sure each member gets time to respond to writing and to make sure the group performs the group tasks in time.

4.4 Procedures of the study

Prior to the study, all the students in the two classes were administered a pre-test and pre-study questionnaire (Appendix A) that assessed their ability of writing and their attitude towards writing. They were required to write a same topic about 100 words within 30 minutes in class and to hand in their compositions to the teacher on time. Three teachers who teach English in Lanzhou Electric Power School and who didn't taught the two classes were asked to help mark the compositions according to the criteria of CET-2 writing. The average scores of the two classes were respectively 63.7 and 62.5, which indicated there was no significant difference between the students in the two classes.

The teacher who taught the two classes should be familiar with the teacher's guidelines (Berg, 1999) (Appendix C) and guide the students in Class B with students' guidelines (Berg, 1999) (Appendix D). At the beginning, the teacher must convince the students that peer

revision is a worthwhile activity, make the students familiarize them with the idea of working in groups, instruct them to focus discussions on particular aspects of writing, suggest them to use appropriate language in their group work. The students must be well clear of that the purpose of peer response is not for someone else to tell them how to change their writing, but for them to gain a different perspective on their writing so that they can reexamine and improve it.

Peer writing groups need training in two areas: group roles and writing critiquing. A monitor acts as the group caretaker, making sure each member gets time to respond to writing and time to have writing discussed. The historian records group discussions, insuring continuity from session to session. When groups are first formed, handouts to elected members, as well as a handout detailing the responsibilities of a member in general-attendance, support, sharing, and so on--can speed the training in this area.

Teaching each other to talk about writing can be initiated by the teacher, reinforced by the class text, and nurtured by whole class discussion, but it will be brought to fruition in the group itself as members learn to improve their writing. The teacher may begin by teaching the class necessary terminology (concerning writing process and writing analysis) and by training writers and readers to work together through such activities as role playing and reviewing sample essays. Groups can work to answer set questions or can learn to develop their own critical concerns for papers. If composition terms such as prewriting, drafting, revising, focus, organization, and tone are introduced in class discussion, show up on group handouts, are reinforced in peer writing group discussions and recorded in group minutes, such terms will soon become part of the peer group's working vocabulary.

The training process lasted several classes at the beginning of the course, during which time students also learnt about English writing through a variety of means, received specific instructions about their first writing assignment, explored the process of writing, and discussed topics for their writing assignments. The peer revision training courses were designed 90 minutes each session per week over five weeks. The teacher had five training classes in the language lab, using video projector to show the students examples for the

teacher to demonstrate peer revisions.

As part of teaching writing as a process, the teacher should explain to students that each writing assignment for the course will involve at least two drafts, and that these drafts will be read both by the teacher and their classmates. The teacher also encourages the students to give examples of specific recommendations to the author, making sure that their comments are not stated as fact but offered as impressions and suggestions. Sometimes, the teacher asks the students to reread the responses they had written earlier to their classmates' compositions, and have them revise their responses using the expressions in the previous discussions. This will make them more sensitive to the emotional effects that their response can have on a classmate and think about how to communicate ideas effectively while expressing them appropriately and correctly.

While the students in the experimental group were trained to familiarize themselves with the procedures of peer revision and the guidelines for peer revision, the first assignment was offered for them to finish and the first draft of this topic was made peer revision in the following week. The teacher picked out one successful peer response and one unsuccessful peer response as examples to discuss appropriate revisions, again stressing the importance of revising on a rhetorical level for clarity of meaning, changing the organization, supporting ideas rather than making sentence-level changes. During the students' peer revision time, the teacher played a role of observer, and sometimes a partner when necessary.

The peer response sheet (Appendix E) offers students a framework with which to consider the writing and helps them focus on important areas of the writing assignment. The peer response sheet will help them in writing their initial peer response and subsequent text revisions. It helps them focus their attention on the meaning of a text by asking specific questions about the writing. The response sheet allows students to formulate their ideas, comments, and suggestions.

In the third week, the students handed in their second drafts that were revised according to their peers' response. The teacher marked and gave comments on their compositions

Then, the class went on with the next topic. In this way, the controlled group wrote 7 compositions by every two weeks a piece, and the experimental group 5 compositions by every three weeks a composition.

At the end of the term, all the students both in controlled group and experimental group were asked to finish a composition with the same topic in 45 minutes in the classroom as the posttest, and they were also asked to finish the post-study questionnaire after they took the test. All the data collected from the two questionnaires, peer revision sheets, and the tests will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Data analysis

5.1 Analysis on the pretest score

Before the study, a protest was held in the controlled class and the experimental class to make sure if the students writing ability was at the same level which was used to examine the validity of the study. The scores were put into the computer, and descriptive statistic and ANOVA in SPSS were used to analyze the scores in different group. Table 5.1 shows the mean of the two groups from SPSS.

Table 5.1 Pretest Means and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics on Pretest Scores in Two Classes

Groups	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Controlled Group	59.23	52	7.16
Experimental Group	60.37	54	7.63

The total number of the two groups for descriptive statistics was 106. Mean for the experimental group was a little higher than that of the controlled group but not too much. That means there was no significant difference between the two groups' writing ability. The standard deviation for the controlled group was a bit lower than that of the experimental group. The higher the standard deviation , the more varied and more heterogeneous a group is on a given behavior, since the behavior is distributed more widely within the group (Seliger & Shohamy, 1999). That means the controlled group was a less homogeneous group than the experimental group, but the difference was also slight.

5.2 Analysis on the pre-study and post-study questionnaires

The author also used the pre-study and post-study questionnaires to examine the attitude changes in the two groups. Table 5.2 shows the attitudes of the two groups towards EFL writing before the study, and Table 5.3 demonstrates the attitudes of the two groups after the study.

The figures in Table 5.2 were gained from the 3rd, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th questions in the Pre-study Questionnaire, and the figures in Table 5.3 were obtained from the 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th,

11th and 12th questions in the Post-study Questionnaire.

Table 5.2 The Result of the Pre-study Questionnaire

Groups	Positive	Mixed	Negative
Controlled Group	10(19.2%)	25(48.1%)	17(32.7%)
Experimental Group	11(20.4%)	23(44.5%)	20(25.1%)

Table 5.3 The Result of the Post-study Questionnaire

Groups	Positive	Mixed	Negative
Controlled Group	12(23%)	24(46%)	16(31%)
Experimental Group	28(51.9%)	16(27.3%)	10(21.8%)

The author rated each student response as "positive" if only positive comments were given, "mixed" if a combination of positive and negative comments were given, and "negative" if only negative comments were given. The overall responses before the study showed that 10 students in the controlled group, or 19.2 per cent, had positive attitude, 25 students, or 48.1 per cent, had mixed response, and 17 students, or 32.7 per cent, had negative response toward peer revision; 11students in the experimental group, or 20.4 per cent, had positive attitude, 23 students, or 44.5 per cent, had mixed response, and 20 students, or 25.1 per cent, had negative response toward peer revision. The overall responses after the study showed that 12 students in the controlled group, or 23 per cent, had positive attitude, 24 students, or 46 per cent, had mixed response, and 16 students, or 31 per cent, had negative response toward peer revision; 28 students in the experimental group, or 51.9 per cent, had positive attitude, 16 students, or 27.3 per cent, had mixed response, and 10 students, or 21.8 per cent, had negative response toward peer revision. Comparing the two tables, we can clearly see that peer revision training had greatly changed the experimental group's attitude towards peer revision, and a little more than half the group held a positive attitude towards peer revision, but there was almost no change in controlled group.

5.3 Analysis on the scores of posttest

As Beason (1993) holds that peer response in writing classes has long been touted as a

means of granting students increased authority over their reading and writing, and Krashen (1982) shows in the affective filter hypothesis that learners with high motivation and self-confidence and with low anxiety have low filters and so obtain and let in plenty of input, the following data analysis are intended to the first hypothesis of the author: Peer feedback strategy leads to more gains in EFL writing than traditional way of practice and revision in vocational school.

The figures in Table 5.4 were collected from the posttest. These figures are mean and standard deviation of the student scores in the test.

Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics on Students' Posttest Scores

Groups	Mean	Number	Standard Deviation
Controlled Group	67.69	52	10.40
Experimental Group	75.93	54	11.92

The figures in Table 5.1 and Table 5.4 show that the controlled group's mean has been averagely increased over 8 scores and the experimental group's mean more than 15 scores. After a term's EFL writing training, the two groups both have made great progresses. However, it is clear that the experimental group students have averagely improved about 7 scores than the controlled group students in EFL writing, and the standard deviation of the controlled group has been decreased over 3 and the experimental group's more than 4. In the experimental group, there are 21 students who got scores more than 80 in the posttest while there was only 1 student in the pretest, and there are 5 students whose scores are below 60 in the posttest while there were 33 in the pretest. In the controlled group, there are 6 students who got scores more than 80 in the posttest while there was only 1 student in the pretest and there are 17 students whose scores are below 60 in the posttest while there were 36 in the pretest. Though the standard deviation in the experimental group is higher 1.52 than that of the controlled group, there are much more students who got high scores in the former group than in the latter group. So it may be declared that peer revision can help

students improve more than students taught in traditional way. The students' writing competence has been improved, and their writing competence differences have been increased.

5.4 Analysis the amount of revision done based on first drafts peer revision sheets

Leki (1990) identified that students tended to address surface errors of grammar and mechanics while failing to respond to more problematic issues of meaning. Danis (1980) found that the majority of peer-group participants in her study of college-level writers identified both superficial and substantive problems in each other's essays. Considering all the research results of showing a positive attitude towards the peer revision, the author wants to further discuss: The students pay more attention to content and organization than grammar and lexical items after they have taken part in peer revision sessions in the vocational school.

The figures in Table 5.5 were collected in the experimental group from the student's first drafts and the peer revision sheets. These figures are the numbers of peer revision both on content and organization and on grammar and lexical items.

Table 5.5 Descriptive Statistics on Peer revision numbers in experimental group

Variable	1C	2C	3C	4C	5C	TN
Grammar and Lexical Items	153	162	159	167	161	802(45.41%)
Content and Organization	197	193	209	203	206	1008(54.59%)

Note: 1C= the first composition 5C= the fifth composition

TN= total number of peer revision

The figures in the above table show that there were totally 1810 peer responses to the five compositions which the students have written in one term. 802 responses to grammar and lexical items and account for 45.41% of the total responses, while 1008 responses to content and organization and account to 54.59%. So the result can be concluded that the students in vocational school paid more attention to content and organization than to grammar and lexical items. The first reason is that when they were trained, they were asked

to do so owing to the marking standard of PETS. The second reason is that nearly half of the students had had poor English grammar knowledge when they entered the school, and could not point out some grammatical and lexical errors, but they could use their native language knowledge to value their peers compositions on content and organization.

5.5 Discussion

This study aims at finding out the answers to the two questions: whether peer revision is more effective than traditional way of correcting compositions and whether peer revision helps student writers more on content and organization of the writing work than on grammar and lexical items. The answers are positive. During peer revision, the students were forced to exercise their thinking as opposed to passively receiving information from the teacher, and some of them were aroused to seek answers to some problems in their peers' writing works. Otherwise, the peers' questions seemed to have helped student writers see what their peers found unclear in their works, confirming Zamel's assertion that peer revision allows students to develop audience awareness. Sometimes the students in this study chose not to use their peers' comments in their revision activities, confirming Berkenkotter's (1984) claim that some writers consider their audience but also judge their audience's comments, making decisions about them.

Peer revision project using peer assessment presented challenges for students. They were forced to reconsider their role in higher education in general and their responsibilities to others in their group in particular. Some groups worked very well together in terms of process and production of the project. Whereas many groups found it challenging to work collaboratively, they did not necessarily see the experience of group work as negative. Indeed, students' comments reveal that not only was learning accomplished for the task at hand, but many gained insight into group process, the management of conflicts (at least by witnessing others' management) and how to improve oral and written communication. There is evidence to suggest that knowledge of group work developed from this experience will be carried or transferred to group tasks in the future, both in any subsequent university assignments and at work following graduation.

6. Conclusion

The findings suggest that peer revision does lead to more gains in EFL writing than traditional method, and is worth spending time on peer revision training to make it more effective and reliable. Peer revision improves students' sense of audience, reduces their writing anxiety, and increases writing fluency. In peer revision groups, writing becomes a task of communicating, rather than merely an exercise to be completed for the teacher. Because students' writing ability is in some way on different levels, and each student has his or her own preference toward working with partners, teachers should pay some attention to the division of the groups. In addition, peer revision should be combined with teachers' feedback to help students improve their writing ability.

Several limitations constrain the extent to which the findings of this study can be generalized. First, the study lasted only for one semester, and it may be a question whether the findings would be more trustworthy if the time had been longer. Second, the students participating in this study are those most of whom failed in senior school entrance examination and are not good at English, so the findings cannot be generalized to ESL writers at other proficiency levels. Third, the differences in the students' Chinese writing competence might have been considered.

Further research should be devoted to whether the way of grouping, such as group size and distribution of genders, affect the effects of peer revision. More research should also investigate the relationship between the students' native language writing competence and their English writing competence. Amount of teacher intervention in the peer revision process, differences in preference for collaborative learning associated with gender and ethnicity, and differences in preference and possibly effectiveness due to different learning styles, all merit investigation. Also, a psycho- analysis of the group discussions will reveal useful information.

From the perspective of the study, peer revision can contribute to writing development in many important ways. The practice the students acquired in the process of peer revision could not have been acquired elsewhere, and the experience of peer revision provided the

students with an unparalleled opportunity to discuss textual problems, develop self-regulatory behaviors, acquire a sense of audience, and become sensitive to the global issues of writing. Above all, through peer revision the students were involved in the process of acquiring strategic competence in revising a text, a competence which will help them much in their future academic and professional life.

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Appendix A: Pre-study Questionnaire

调查问卷（一）

1. 你以前的英文写作是一稿完成还是数稿完成？

   a. 一稿　　b. 两稿　　c. 数稿

2. 你认为英语作文最重要的是什么？

   a. 思想明确，主题突出　　b. 语法准确，语言流畅

3. 你在写作过程中会考虑到读者吗？

   a. 会　　b. 偶尔　　c. 不会

4. 你对老师的评判满意吗？

   a. 满意　　b. 一般　　c. 不满意

5. 你对老师对你作文的评判会：

   a. 认真考虑　b. 偶尔考虑　c. 不在意

6. 你会看完老师对你作文的评判后会自觉重写吗？

   a. 会　　b. 偶尔　　c. 不会

7. 你喜欢每次写新的题目吗？

   a. 喜欢　　b. 无所谓　c. 不喜欢

8. 你以前有过同学阅读并给你的作文提出修改意见的经历吗？

   a. 有　　b. 没有

9. 你愿意你的同学阅读并给你的英语作文提出修改意见吗？

   a. 愿意　　b. 无所谓　　c. 不喜欢

10. 你认为你的同学对你英语作文的修改意见会对你有帮助吗？

    a. 很有帮助　b. 略有帮助　c. 没有帮助

11. 你认为你对你的同学英语作文的修改意见会对他/她有帮助吗？

    a. 很有帮助　b. 略有帮助　c. 没有帮助

12. 你愿意与谁同组讨论？

    a. 学习成绩比你好的 b. 学习成绩和你差不多的 c. 学习成绩不如你的　d. 无所谓

谢谢！

Appendix B: Post-study Questionnaire

调查问卷（二）

1. 现在的英文写作是一稿完成还是数稿完成？

   a. 一稿　　b. 两稿　　c. 数稿

2. 你认为英语作文最重要的是什么？

   a. 思想明确，主题突出　　b. 语法准确，语言流畅

3. 你对老师的评判满意吗？

   a. 满意　　b. 一般　　c. 不满意

4. 你在写作过程中会考虑到读者吗？

   a. 会　　b. 偶尔　　c. 不会

5. 你对老师对你作文的评判会：

   a. 认真考虑　b. 偶尔考虑　c. 不在意

6. 你会看完老师对你作文的评判后会自觉重写吗？

   a. 会　　b. 偶尔　　c. 不会

7. 你喜欢每次写新的题目吗？

   a. 喜欢　　b. 无所谓　c. 不喜欢

8. 你愿意你的同学阅读并给你的作文提出修改意见吗？

   a. 愿意　　b. 无所谓　c. 不喜欢

9. 你认为你的同学对你作文的修改意见会对你有帮助吗？

   a. 很有帮助　b. 略有帮助　c. 没有帮助

10. 你认为你对你的同学作文的修改意见会对他/她有帮助吗？

    a. 很有帮助　b. 略有帮助　c. 没有帮助

11. 你认为你同学对你作文的修改意见侧重于：

a. 思想内容　　b. 语法错误　c. 拼写错误

12. 你认为你对你同学作文的修改意见侧重于：

a. 思想内容　　b. 语法错误　c. 拼写错误

13. 你愿意与谁同组讨论？

a) 学习成绩比你好的 b. 学习成绩和你差不多的 c. 学习成绩不如你的　d. 无所谓

谢谢！

Appendix C: At –a-Glance Teacher Guidelines for Preparing EFL Students for Peer Revision (E.C. Berg)(1999)

1. Create a comfortable classroom atmosphere that promotes trust among students by conducing a number of in- and-out-of-class, get-to-know-you activities.

2. Establish the role of peer response in the writing process and explain the benefits of having peers, as opposed to just teachers, respond to students' writing.

3. Highlight the common purpose of peer response among professional and student writers by examining the acknowledgments in textbooks and other publications, and discuss how both ask others to read their work.

4. Demonstrate and personalize the peer response experience by displaying several drafts of a text written by someone who the students know that demonstrate how peer comments helped improve the writing.

5. Conduct a collaborative, whole-class response activity using a text written by someone unknown to students and stress the importance of revising clarity and rhetorical-level aspects rather than sentence-level errors.

6. Address issues of vocabulary and expressions by comparing inappropriate comments with appropriate ones.

7. Familiarize students with the response sheet by showing samples and explaining its purpose as a tool designed to help them focus on important areas of the writing assignment.

8. Involve students in a response to a collaborative writing project by having them use the peer response sheet to respond in pairs or groups to a paragraph written by another group of students. Based on the responses, have the pairs or groups them revise their original collaborative paragraph.

9. Allow time for questions and expressions of concern by talking to students about their writing, the peer response, the revisions they made, the difficulties in judging classmates' comments, and lack of confidence in their revision abilities.

10. Provide revision guidelines by highlighting good revision strategies and explaining

that peer response helps authors understand the difference between intended and perceived meaning.

11. Study examples of successful and unsuccessful peer responses using videotapes or printed samples to examine level of student engagement, language used, and topics discussed.

Appendix D: At –a-Glance Student Guidelines for Preparing EFL Students for Peer Revision (E.C. Berg)(1999)

1. Read your classmate's writing carefully several times.

2. Focus your attention on the meaning of your classmate's text.

3. Because it is difficult for writers to separate information they wish to express from the actual words on their page, you can help your classmate discover differences between his or her intending meaning and what he or she has actually written.

4. Avoid getting stuck on minor spelling mistakes or grammar errors unless they prevent you from understanding your classmate's ideas.

5. Keep in mind that peer response is used by writers of all ages and types, including student and professional writers who want to know if their writing is clear to others.

6. In responding to writing, try to be considerate of your classmate's feelings, and remember that it is very difficult for most writers to write clearly.

7. Realize that you have the opportunity to tell your classmate what you do not understand about his or her writing, to ask questions about it, and to point out what you like about it. This is important information to the writer.

8. When a peer responds to your writing, remember that you, as the writer, have the ultimate responsibility for making final changes.

9. The peer response activity provides several sources of ideas for how to improve your writing, including your classmate's comments about your writing; your classmate's texts, from which you may learn new words, expressions, and ways of organizing writing, as well as discover errors you may have made in your own text, and discussions of issues you may not have thought about before.

10. If you have any questions or do not know how to respond to your classmate's writing, be sure to ask your teacher for help.

Appendix E: Peer Revision Sheet

Respondent _____

Author_____

* Please answer the following questions, keeping in mind that the purpose of peer revision is to help each other write better.

1. Can you find the subject of your classmate's composition?

2. Please underline what you think is the subject with a double line.

3. Can you find a topic sentence in each paragraph?

4. Please underline what you think is the topic sentence in each paragraph with a single line.

5. What do you like the best about the composition?

6. What questions, comments, and/or suggestions do you have for the author.

* After you have answered these questions, discuss your answers and the composition with the author(s). Remember that you are trying to help your classmates improve their writing, so it's important that they understand your answers.

Appendix F: 全国英语等级考试（PRTS）第二级（L20402）写作评分原则和要求

一、评分原则

1. 本题总分为 25 分，按 5 个档次给分。
2. 评分时，先根据文章的内容和语言初步确定其所属档次，然后以该档次的要求来衡量，确定或调整档次，最后给分。
3. 词数少于 80 和多于 120 的，从总分中减去 2 分。
4. 评分时，应注意的主要内容为：内容要点、应用词汇和语法结构的数量和准确性及上下文的连贯性。
5. 拼写与标点符号是语言准确性的一个方面，评分时，应视其对交际的 程度予以考虑。英、美拼写及词汇用法均可接受。
6. 如书写较差，以至影响交际，将分数降低一个档次。

二、各档次的给分范围和要求

第五档 （21-25）	完全完成了试题规定的任务 - 覆盖所有内容要点。 - 应用了较多的语法结构和词汇。 - 语法结构或词汇方面有些错误，但为尽力使用复杂结构或较高级词汇所致；具备较强的语言应用能力。 - 有效地使用了语句间的连接成分，使全文结构紧凑。 完全达到了预期的写作目的。
第四档 （16-20）	完全完成了试题规定的任务 - 虽漏掉 1、2 个次重点，但覆盖所有内容要点。 - 应用的语法结构和词汇能满足任务的要求。 - 语法结构或词汇应用方面基本正确，些许错误主要是因尝试较复杂语法结构或词汇所致。 - 应用简单的语句间连接成分，使全文结构紧凑。 达到了预期的写作目的。

第三档 （11-15）	基本完全完成了试题规定的任务 - 虽漏掉一些内容，但覆盖所有内容要点。 - 应用的语法结构和词汇能满足任务的要求。 - 有一些语法结构或词汇方面的错误，但不影响理解。 - 应用简单的语句间连接成分，使全文内容连贯。 整体而言，基本达到了预期的写作目的。
第二档 （6-10）	未适当完成试题规定的任务 - 漏掉或未描述清楚一些主要内容，写了一些无关内容。 -语法结构简单、词汇项目有限。 - 有一些语法结构或词汇方面的错误，影响对写作内容的理解。 - 较少使用语句间的连接成分，内容缺少连贯性。 信息未能清楚地传达给读者。
第一档 （1-5）	未适当完成试题规定的任务 - 明显遗漏主要内容，写了一些无关内容，原因可能是未理解试题要求。 -语法结构简单、词汇项目有限。 - 较多语法结构或词汇方面的错误，影响对写作内容的理解。 - 缺少语句间的连接成分，内容不连贯。 信息未能传达给读者。
0	未能传达给读者任何信息：内容太少，无法评判；写的内容均与所要求的内容无关或所写内容无法看清。

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