THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER FEEDBACK ON GRADUATE ACADEMIC WRITING AT HO CHI MINH CITY OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

On thorough examination and analysis of English writing and comments by TESOL graduate students of Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMC OU), this study aims to address a useful instructional activity in teaching academic writing: employing peer feedback for revision processes. Data for analysis were collected from 37 students who have been in the first phase of Master Program in TESOL at HCMC OU. During a fifteen - week Academic Writing Course, the students were asked to write different types of paragraphs and essays, working in groups to provide comments on their peers' writing. The descriptive statistics has shown that students produce more feedback on local areas than on global areas. The four most frequent types of comments belong to alteration, clarification, suggestion and explanation.

By comparing the participants' drafts and revised essays, the study can confirm the correlation between peer feedback and students' effective writing revision. A high percentage of recorded mistakes in the participants' 1st drafts had been successfully corrected. Those positive results of the research have yielded a fresh insight into the deployment of peer feedback in teaching academic writing, especially at graduate level.

Keywords: peer feedback, local and global areas, writing revision.

Introduction to the study

With the need for L2 writing as a written means of communication, writing is now becoming an integral and important part of language learning and is necessary for academic and professional purposes. The change of view on writing skill altered the view of L2 writing instruction. The instruction has gradually shifted from a product-centered approach to a more process-oriented approach (Smith, 2000; Andrade & Evans, 2012). In process approach to writing, "revision is a recursive process" (Olson, 1996, p.160) that greatly contributes to effective writing. Revision offers writers a good opportunity to have a look back at a piece of writing and improve it (Atlee, 2005). Revising incomplete drafts is, therefore, suggested to "occur several times so that the message becomes more clear and focused" (Hosokawa, 2010, p.46). Revision can be more effective if students' drafts are viewed and judged in other people's eyes because in this way, your drafts will be examined by readers' points of view. The readability of the writer's statement will then be

tested appropriately because "the test of statement is not whether you understand it but whether a new reader will able to" (Coyle & Law, 2009, p.106).

In such an activity of process-writing methodology, the response or feedback from readers is a contributing factor that assists students in the revision process. In this situation, the teacher plays a very important role to plan and carry out proper instruction from beginning to end in all steps of the writing process (Björk, Blomstrand & Corona, 2006) in order to help students improve their writing in both content and form. The teacher can be an active reader reading and commenting on students' writing to help students make their following drafts better than previous ones. However, in sizeable classes, this kind of work seems to overload the teacher.

At graduate level, this problem is even becoming more serious when graduate students are required to write longer written assignments or research papers because graduate project demands a different type and higher level of writing (Jeske, 1985). Instructors of graduate writing classes seem to be exhausted when teaching students how to write good academic papers. In fact, "many graduate students find they need structured writing support in order to succeed" (Phillips, 2012, p.1). However, the duration for coursework in class is very limited. Most of the time, graduate students work on their own or with their peers rather than the instructor. Apparently, students do not often receive feedback on their writing after handing in their final written products to the lecturer. The situation is similar at Ho Chi Minh City Open University where a written assignment is usually a compulsory requirement for graduate students to complete each subject during coursework period. At this University, regularly, the final written papers are submitted to lecturers for assessment. The score of the assignments will be noticed afterwards but the feedback on those papers seems to be ignored.

At Ho Chi Minh City Open University, graduate students' academic writing is also evaluated as being highly problematic (Pham-Ho, personal communication, 16 March 2013). There is a strongly urgent need for a solution to the problems of graduate academic writing to help students improve writing quality in order to keep up with internationally standardized academic writing.

As "a successful paper is usually composed in stages, not dashed off in a single sitting" (Coyle & Law, 2009, p.xiii) and students need to be "exposed to a greater diversity of perspectives than just those of their tutor or lecturer" (Pearce, Mulder & Baik, 2009, p. 3), there should be an environment for students to work hard during writing process and receive comments from different people on their writing.This problem may be solved with the assistance of collaborative learning in which peer groups work together to check ideas of the task, enhance their social skills and improve writing by generating their motivation for revision and raising an awareness of audience (Topping & Ehly, 1998). In fact, peer feedback did really exist in English learning under different forms. e.g. students evaluating and commenting on their classmates' presentations in class, students helping their close friends to proofread written work before handing in to the teacher… Still, this activity has not been considered as a powerful technique but a small section to engage students in the lesson.

Lierature review

While peer feedback has now become a common feature of L2 instruction (Liu & Hansen, 2002), variety of the research

studies have investigated the impact of peer feedback on writing development in both traditional and computer-assisted modes.

In order to investigate the student attitude towards peer feedback, Jacobs, Curtis, Braine & Huang (1998) collected questionnaire data on learners' preferences of using peer feedback from first- and second-year undergraduate ESL students of lower intermediate to high proficiency a university in Hong Kong and a univesity in Taiwan. The statistical analysis indiated that they preferred to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on their writing. Though the result contributed to setting a light to applying peer feedback in L2 writing, it failed to give more descritption of what student really did in peer feedback activity to help each other.

Berbache (2007) and Moloudi (2010) undertook research on the effectiveness of peer review in the dissertations for their degree. The findings of these two research studies shared the same conclusion: participants' writing quality has been significantly improved after the treatment. It has proved that despite different formats of peer review, it still has good effect on L2 writing development. However, the result would be much more useful when it is applicable to the situation of graduate students who have to do more research and regularly write longer research papers in their training programs.

Other researchers, Ting & Qian (2010) investigated the employment of peer feedback in Chinese EFL Writing Classroom. The research findings were slightly negative as it was shown that most of revisions were of surface level. Peer review activities cannot guarantee the overall improvement in a piece of writing. However, students can become more critical readers and revisers through reading others' writings critically. One of the major drawbacks of this study is that the students' perception and attitude were not carefully examined during peer feedback activities.

Farrah (2012) filled the gap of Ting & Qian's research when having drawn out from his study that students really appreciated the experience of using peer feedback to enhance students' social interaction, critical thinking, confidence, creativity, and motivation. Farrah's findings were based on the analysis of data from the sample of 105 male and female students from five sections of an undergraduate writing course offered by the English Department at Hebron University. One limitation from this research is that it did not involve the investigation of type of feedback that students offered and received during experimenting period.

Wichadee & Nopakun (2012) made the bridge between Farrah's study and Mei Ting & Yuan Qian's research and when they focused on investigating the effect of two forms of peer feedback (peer feedback on Facebook and peer feedback in class) on students' writing ability as well as examine their attitudes toward peer feedback activity. The research finding indicated that two kinds of peer feedback can contribute to the improvement of students' writing skill. Nevertheless, the peer feedback activity conducted on-line was more effective in enhancing English writing ability. One optimistic result is that this activity was supported by students as being useful in improving writing ability. As both mode of peer feedback were valued by students, this raises a question about the combination of online peer feedback and in - class peer feedback in L2 writing instruction.

Another research study also

conducted in the educational setting at Bangkok University by Srichanyachon (2012) reported the different result from the work of Wichadee & Nopakun (2012). Results showed that the students have a neutral attitude toward the two revision methods. Most of the respondents chose teacher feedback as a more effective and preferable revision method. This finding is somehow conflicting with the previous study by Puritchaya Puegphrom and Tanyapa Chiramanee in the city of Thailand (2011).

One recent study on the relation between peer feedback and writing performance revealed a surprising result. Lei (2012) involved 51 fourth-year English major students from a business-and-economics-oriented university in Shanghai, China in her study. All students were given a writing assignment. Students were required to revise and write the second version of the essays after receiving their peers' comments. The analysis of the data sources proposes that students did improve their writing performance significantly after commenting activities. However, this improvement largely attributed not to the feedback students received but the feedback they offered. Surprisingly, whatever students' attitude towards peer feedback may not affect students' writing improvement under all circumstances. Despite the very clear findings of this study, this is something of pitfall when the researcher did not provide elaborate explanation about how students improve their writing performance, which aspects they improved, whether the content or the essay organization is developed.

Research on peer feedback in Vietnamese educational context

In Vietnam, there have been several research studies that directed attention to the impact of peer feedback on enhancing students' writing ability. Two typical

research will be summarized as below:

A research carried out in 2009 by Hien (2008) at Can Tho University showed good result of the impact of online peer feedback on EFL learners' writing motivation and performance. The research participants were 75 second-year students majoring in English Language Studies in a four-year B.A. program at Can Tho University. Evidence from the data highlighted the contribution of online peer feedback to motivating students in writing classes. The students' attitude towards using online peer feedback as a formative assessment is also very optimistic. However, this study failed to describe the details about the type of feedback students have made, which can be helpful for the evaluation of student's writing improvement.

Pham-Ho and Usaha (2011) conducted a research on peer feedback in L2 writing revision and found that students collaborated in the learning process when frequently giving suggestion or advice to help each other revise for better writing. There were four primary types of comments used by students in the experiment including suggestion/ advice, clarification, confirmation and evaluation, among which suggestion/ advice' and 'clarification were two types that most students frequently used. In the research, comments on global areas were used more regularly than local areas. It was also confirmed by the students that their writing quality were improved in term of content and language. Happily, most students favoured using blogs and found it useful for English writing classes. Although the research results are very positive in the way that peer feedback can be a good technique in undergraduate writing courses, it would be better news for ESL teachers if this technique can be applicable to master courses in which

students are required to write a large number of research and critique papers.

By being aware of the feasibility of applying peer feedback to teaching writing, many international and Vietnamese researcher started to do more research on the employment of peer feedback in writing instruction. However, most of the researches tend to describe different aspects of peer feedback and therefore fail to draw an overview of using peer feedback in writing classrooms. Also, students' revised drafts in peer feedback activities are not actually analyzed to prove the helpfulness of peer feedback in writing revision process.

Research questions

In order to examine the effective use of peer feedback in writing instruction, the study is designed to answer two major questions:

1. What types of feedback do graduate students at Ho Chi Minh City Open University provide on their peers' papers?

2. How does peer feedback affect graduate students' writing revision?

Methodology

Participants and setting

Thirty-seven graduate students were chosen randomly as participants in this research. The participants consist of 5 males and 32 females who were undertaking a diploma course in TESOL at HCMC Open University. All of the participants were supposed to possess IELTS 6.5/ TOEFL 550/ TOEFL CBT213/ TOEFL iBT 79 or more in order to be admitted to the training program. They could also be considered to reach the advanced level of English proficiency as they all got the bachelor degree in TESOL or related fields of study. When the students were

pursuing their Bachelor degree, they did some fundamental courses of academic writing in their undergraduate training programs. Though most of the participants possess similar professional and training background, they did not achieve the equality in language proficiency. The learning groups, thus, could be regarded as consisting of mix-ability students.

These 37 graduate students were taking fifteen-week Academic Writing Course when the research data were collected. In the course, the students were taught several writing genres such as descriptive essays, process essays, classification essays, comparison-contrast essays, cause-effect essays, and argumentative essays... The topics of each type of essay were given by the instructor. For descriptive essay, the students were asked to describe one of the provided pictures. For process essays, the students were assigned the topic: "How to get an A in the Academic Writing for Grad student course"; for cause-effect essays, they had to work on "effects and student perceptions of collaborative writing in L2", etc. At the end of the writing course, students were required to write a sample researcher papers.

As being regulated from the beginning of the course, the students had to work in group of 4-5 to support each other during the course. Every member of the groups was asked to work closely with other mates, helping each other improve writing assignments. After completing each writing assignment, they needed to share their papers with their peers to seek for feedback, and then made careful revision before submission. Meanwhile, they had to read their peers' papers and provide comments to help them correct mistakes and word usage, reorganize the ideas, make it in logical order, improve their writing quality in terms of coherence, and

organization, etc. (Pham-Ho and Usaha, 2011). All of the students' comments were carried out through Microsoft Word Processing. These peer feedback activities were ruled to be accounted for 10% of the students' total score. Though students were not offered any official training in giving peer feedback, they were instructed on how to use Word Processor to give comments. The students were also encouraged to give comments on ideas and organization of essays rather than on grammar mistakes.

Procedure

Detailed procedure for collecting data can be described as follows. Before joining the study, participants were instructed how to give comments on other people's writing through Word Processor. Some basic criteria and guidelines for giving feedback were also provided.

Participants of the selected class were divided into groups of 4-5 members. Each student was asked to write an essay for each writing genre. After finishing the drafts, students were required to send their draft essays to other mates in their group for response or feedback. Each student received at least 4 comments from their group members. When the essays were sent back with given comments through Word Processor, students proceeded to judge the comments and revise their drafts for the final product. The final written work was then handed to the instructor for feedback. For each writing genre, the instructor randomly picked up 4-7 essays to leave comments. The teacher's comments were shown in class afterwards as a sample of teacher feedback. The procedure of the study can be summarized as follows (fig. 1):
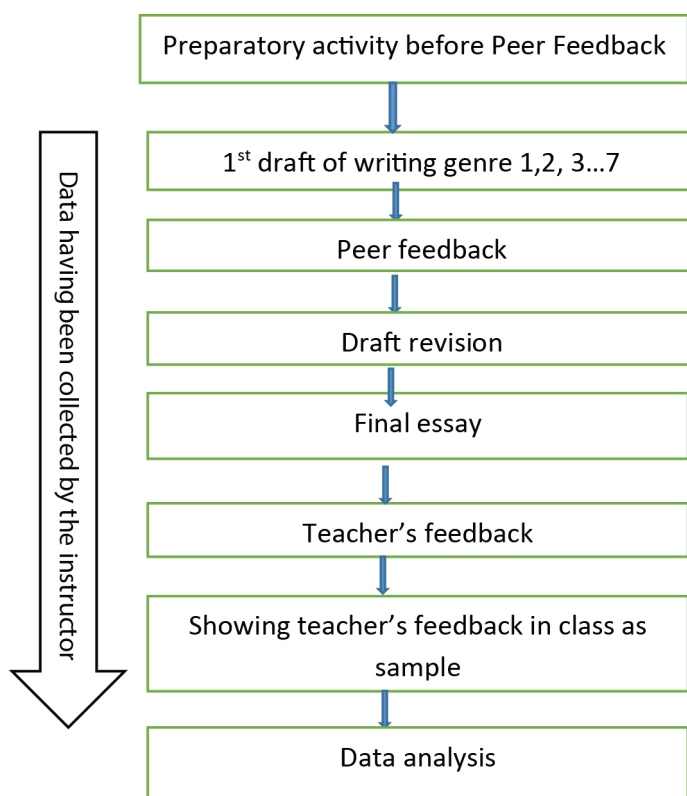

Fig 1. Procedure of the study

Data collection and analysis

Data obtained in this research including students' drafts and comments, teacher's feedback were classified as quantitative data. The quantitative data (frequency of peer feedback) were analyzed by descriptive data analysis.

Specially, data collection and

analysis are described as below:

After each assignment, students' written drafts, peer comments and revised writing were collected for analysis. All of written data were obtained by email under the format of Word Processing. With available data, the three types of assignments including descriptive essays, process essays and cause-effect essays were gathered as typical data for analysis.

The average number of words of each writing type is as following: 121 words for descriptive essays, 532 words for process essays and 178 words for cause-effect essays.

Results for research question 1 was achieved by adapting coding scheme for language functions by Pham-Ho (2010) and basing on Mean Score to identify the most frequent type of feedback.

Types of comments		Global Areas		Local Areas	
		Revision-oriented	Non-revision-oriented	Revision-oriented	Non-revision-oriented
Evaluation	Generally				
	Specifically				
Clarification	Specific ideas				
	Particular word choices, phrases, or sentences				
	Cohesion				
Alteration					
Suggestion/ advice	Generally				
	Specifically				
Explanation					
Statement					
Plagiarism					

Adapted from (Pham-Ho, 2010)

By comparing students' first drafts and revised essays, and calculating the percentage of students who did effectively revise their essays after receiving comments from their peers, the researcher is able to obtain general view of the impact of peer feedback on students' draft revision. To answer research question 2, the researcher also summarizes and classifies the errors/mistakes that students have made before and after peer feedback to see whether they could successfully

correct their errors/mistakes. The ideas for the students' errors/mistakes were based on the work about writing problems by Weir (Weir, 1988).

Coding procedure

The students' comments were copied to Microsoft Excel for calculation and analysis. The classification of the students' type of comments was based on the following coding:

Evaluation: If students give their own opinions about their peer's writing in general or about a specific point in the writing, that comment was sorted as general or specific evaluation. For example, the comment "*you have a very clear description of the class in the picture. Moreover, I like the way that you describe objects with their functions*" is classified as "evaluation type and global non-revision". Most of these types of comments are compliments, and therefore are usually non-revision. A few comments such as: "*I think this sentence is not suitable to the picture*" which pointed out some problems and evaluate a particular weak point in writing may lead to a revision.

Clarification: When the students were unsure about any particular ideas, uses of word choices, phrases, sentences or grammar use in their peers' writing, they gave comments to clarify that point, which were classified as "clarification type". In this type of comments, students can raise some questions about meaning or the coherence of a specific idea or sentence to the topic. Some common phrases can be found in this type of comment include "*what does that mean?", "How does it relate to..?", I don't quite understand*…,

Alteration: When students discovered that their peers made mistakes about grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling…, they can suggest the correct replacement. For example, instead of using past tense "*collapsed*", a student carelessly wrote "*collapses*". In this case, the suggestion for the correct word was considered belonging to alteration type.

Suggestion/ advice: When students consider their peers' ways of writing, using structure or vocabulary, they may come up with a better idea to make the writing better; they can make suggestions for another version. The suggestion can be general or specific. For example, the original draft was "*Next to the man is a lovely white dog looking at its master*". Some students suggested that the dog should be personalized as a human and "the personal pronoun "*he*" should be used in the sentence. Another example is "*It is not very interesting. You can write: There are 3 soldiers in uniform with guns in their hands.*" These comments are typical of specific suggestion. One example of general suggestion can be "Try to lengthen it. It will be more logical and smooth". In suggestion/advice comments, students have the right to decide whether they should follow their friends' comments or not.

Sometimes the alteration type can be confused with suggestion type. However, the researcher decided to distinguish the two types as follow: the alteration type is for correcting mistakes and suggesting the correct replacement. Suggestion type is to raise awareness of some inappropriate points and instruct the writer toward better writing though the current writing is not grammatically incorrect.

Explanation: With this type of comments, the students not only point out the problems in writing but also provide reasons or language knowledge about why the writing should be changed. For example, "*we use too for negative thing*" can be classified as an explanation. Explanation is highly valued when giving comments as it may provide students with

knowledge that they haven't known or at least they can be satisfied about why their writing should be rewritten.

Plagiarism: This type of comment touches one sensitive issue in the research: copy other's ideas or work without giving citation or references. It is really essential in academic writing, especially in academic writing. Some comments like "*Should give a citation & reference*" was arranged to lie into the category of plagiarism.

Statement: Any statement which did not belong to the six types of comments was coded as "statement." For example, after commenting on an essay, a peer wrote, "*This is just my opinion, I hope it will help you a lot*" or another said, "*These are some points I give you. I hope they help you much.*" They were coded as "statement." (Pham-Ho, 2010)

Revision/Non-revision: After making the comparison between the 1st draft and revised essays, if students did make changes to the points that their friends had made comments, this was counted for revision; otherwise it was written as non-revision.

Global and local areas

Global areas refer to feedback about the content idea development, purpose, and organization of writing. *Local areas* refer to feedback about mechanics (spelling, capitalization, paragraph…), grammar, and punctuation. (Lam, 2010)

Findings and discussions

Research question 1: What types of feedback do graduate students at Ho Chi Minh City Open University provide on their peers' papers?

Descriptive statistics were analyzed to answer this research question. 53 drafts of the first three writing genres were selected for data analysis. An average draft received a minimum of 3 comments and a maximum of 38 comments. With 53 drafts, a total of 798 comments were given. Each draft received an average of about 15 comments per average essay of 281 words, which showed that the students were quite enthusiastic in giving comments on their peers' writing.

Table 1. Type of comments in peer feedback activity

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	%
Alteration	53	457	8.62	6.75	57.3
Explanation	53	61	1.15	1.40	7.6
Statement	53	1	.018	.13	1
Plagiarism	53	1	.018	.13	1
evaluation	53	46	.86	1.11	5.8
clarification	53	127	2.39	2.52	15.9
suggestion	53	105	1.98	2.39	13.2
Total types	53	798	15.05	7.71	

Descriptive statistics

As mentioned earlier, the scheme including seven types of comments was adapted to identify the types of most frequent comments produced by the students. Table 1 illustrates that alteration, clarification, suggestion and explanation are the four most frequent comments that were usually used by the students during peer feedback activity. Among the four most popular comments, the top frequent comment belongs to Alteration (57.3%). For each draft, there is up to maximum

of 34 comments of alteration type with the Mean of 8.62 comments. The high percentage of Alteration comments may drop a very unhappy hint about the students' writing. There is no evident relationship between type of comments and students' writing quality. However, according to the coding scheme described in previous part of this study, the Alteration type of comment was counted when the students suggested the correct replacement for their peers' incorrect writing point. Therefore, the high portion of Alteration comments may signal a high percentage of mistakes made in the writing. The detailed of the students' mistakes will be dealt in later part of this study. The second most frequent comment lies into the category of Clarification (15.9%). The total of 127 clarification comments was produced in 53 drafts. The Mean 2.39 indicates that for each average draft, a student made themselves misunderstood for 2 points of specific ideas, particular word choices, phrases and sentences or made the reader confused about the relevance of a certain point with the other parts of the essay. This result also poses a worry about students' expressing ability. Next, suggestion was accounted for the third place of most frequent comment with slightly lower percentage (13.2%). As it may be seen in the table below, nearly 2 comments of suggestion type were produced for each average draft. This type of comment is very useful because it reflects the students' critical thinking and judgment in writing. As coded before, suggestion was only recognized when the students suggested a better way of writing to their peers though the current way of writing was quite acceptable in terms of grammar and ideas. Not only did the students help their peers to correct mistakes, they also evaluated their peer's piece of writing to suggest a more professional and academic way of writing. With this type of comment, the students may assist their friends in writing as well as enhance their evaluation skills. Last but not least frequent comment was awarded to Explanation (7.6%). The Mean 1.15 proved that the students also put their efforts to raise other students' awareness of a certain language point to help their peers understand what was wrong with their writing. In this case, the lower level students may receive more benefits as they can learn new knowledge from the higher level students.

The findings are broadly consistent with the research by Pham-Ho and Usaha (2009, 2011) in term of the type of comments. There are two mutual frequent types of comment withdrawn from the statistics: Suggestion and Clarification. However, the appearance of high percentage of alteration expressed a growing concern about graduate academic writing. This problem needs a practical solution since the graduate students have to write longer and complicated writing at this level. Significantly, the explanation was included as one of the four most frequent comments, which partly helps students reduce a certain number of mistakes before producing the final writing product. Explanation comments involve both clarification and suggestion comments. The peers need to clarify the specific writing problem, then explain what's wrong with certain types of mistakes or errors.

Table 2. Global and local comments

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Local	12.84	53	7.27	.99
	Global	2.16	53	2.30	.31

In term of global and local comments, the result of this study was rather limited in the way that students produced more comments on local areas (Mean= 12.84) rather than global areas (Mean=2.16). It can be inferred that students put more focus on the mistakes and errors rather than on the content and organization. Most of the comments were directed to mistakes about words and structure… Not many comments were considered for the organization and ideas of the essays. This result contradicts the findings of some previous research studies such as Pham-Ho & Usaha (2009; 2011). Ironically, Pham-Ho & Usaha (2009; 2011) found that undergraduate students provided comments more on global than on local areas after the trained peer review while the graduate students in this study, most of them were instructors, provided comments on local rather than on global areas. This indicates that the graduate students need careful training before participating in peer feedback activity. They need elaborate instructions on how to comment, what to comment, how to give a good comment, what to focus when giving comment, etc.

If the beforehand training is provided in advance, the results may be more realistic and optimistic and the peer feedback activity may reach the maximum of its effectiveness.

Research question 2: How does peer feedback affect graduate students' writing revision?

To answer this question, the researcher broadly summarized the mistakes that the students have made in the original of the three assignments. There are 11 common mistakes recorded: lack of grammar accuracy; lack of structure variety; use of inappropriate vocabulary, use of inappropriate grammatical structures, untidiness, inability to express themselves clearly, inappropriate format, cohesion, poor spelling, poor punctuation, plagiarism (adapted from Weir, 1988). According to the table below, lack of grammar accuracy (Mean=1.22), use of inappropriate vocabulary (Mean=1.26) and use of inappropriate grammatical structures (Mean =1.15) are three most frequent mistakes that occurred in the students' writing.

Table 3. Writing revision after receiving peer feedback

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	% mistake correction
Gr.accuracyC	53	65	1.22	1.56	85.5
Lack.StrVarietyC	53	1	.02	0.13	100
Inappro.VocabC	53	67	1.26	1.36	98.5
Inappro.GramC	53	61	1.15	1.35	93.8
UntidinessC	53	12	.22	0.54	100
ExpressingC	53	18	.33	0.61	94.7
FormatC	53	4	.07	0.26	100
CohesionC	53	4	.07	0.26	100
PoorspellingC	53	24	.45	0.77	100
PoorPunctuationC	53	5	.09	0.29	83.3
PlagiarismC	53	0	.00	0.00	0
totalcorrection	53	261	4.92	3.77	
Valid N (listwise)	53				

Descriptive statistics

As can be seen from table 3, after peer feedback activities, a very high percentage (more than 80%) of all mistakes has been successfully corrected. In the revised essays, students following their friend's comments tended to edit and use more variety of grammatical structures. Every essay receiving feedback on this problem has been completely revised (100%). With similar results, 100% of careless mistakes in local areas such as format, spelling … were totally corrected. 100% mistakes about organization of the essays (mistake about untidiness) and cohesion was also improved in revision process. Another high percentage of successful revision belongs to the correction of the inappropriateness of vocabulary use (98.5%) and grammatical structures (93.8%). The mistakes about grammatical accuracy and punctuation were also highly aware.

From the above statistics, the study may succeed in asserting the effectiveness of peer feedback activity in revision process. Students can also benefit from this activity in terms of evaluation skills, collaboration skills as well as commenting skills. In fact, students did not follow all comments received. They had to evaluate their peers' comments and consider the most useful ones for revision.

This finding of the study greatly supports the benefits of using peer feedback to improve writing revision process. The results of this research questions also assembled the view of other previous researchers which highly value the positive effect of peer feedback on assisting students to produce better writing quality.

Conclusion and limitation

Although limited sample size made the study unable to be generalized for the official application of peer feedback activity in teaching writing at graduate level, the positive results of using peer feedback in this study has raised high awareness of the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching academic writing, especially in revision process. There were four frequent types of comments recorded in peer feedback activity including alteration, clarification, suggestion and explanation. In fact, the peer feedback activity can be effective and helpful for the teachers and graduate students when the initial training should be carried out before starting the activity so that students can get a general picture of what and how they are going to do. The benefits of taking part in this activity should be made clear to the students beforehand. Only when students believe they are doing something useful, they can be more enthusiastic to contribute their efforts to make the activity lively and practical.

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