
Attitudes Towards Peer Review and Reaction to Peer Feedback in Chinese EFL Writing Classrooms¹

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Writing is a major skill that EFL students need to develop. And the realities of the school setting often cause a student to believe only writing for teachers to be writing that “counts” because teachers are often considered authority figures and the people who give grades (Earls, 1987). Thus, students may be more willing to revise their compositions according to teacher feedback. But for teachers to review each student’s paper throughout the drafting process is painfully time consuming. It is especially so with Chinese EFL teachers and learners (Qi, 2004; Wang, 2004). To ease the pain, some suggest that peer review is a good choice which can be applied to the foreign language classroom at any level (Byrd, 1994).

Though numerous studies show that peer review is effective in improving student writing (Althaus & Darnall, 2001; Bean, 1996; Byrd, 1994; DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994), this issue has not been adequately researched in China. Situated in a Chinese university EFL writing class, the present study sought to examine students’ attitudes toward and reaction to peer review.

Literature Review

In the past three to four decades, ESL writing instructors have become interested in the process approach to writing, which argues that writers create and change their ideas as they write and that writing is recursive (Stewart & Cheung, 1989). Early supporters of the approach claimed that the essential task of writing instructors was to help students develop the skills necessary to come up with ideas, explore ways of expressing the ideas, and examine and refine their writing (Caulk, 1994). A key component of this process approach is peer review (Pennington, Brock, & Yue, 1996).

Though some researchers believe that peer review is nothing more than the blind leading the blind with unskilled editors guiding inexperienced writers in a process neither understands well (Pianko & Radzik, 1980; Roessier, 1983), peer review has been studied and has won numerous proponents (Althaus & Darnall, 2001; Bean, 1996; DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Moffett, 1968). Classroom teachers also favor peer review because:

¹This project was funded by Research in Humanity and Social Science, the Chinese Ministry of Education (the Youth Fund—06JC7400100) in 2006.

Dealing with the large quantities of writing necessary for a good writing program calls for an unconventional classroom management whereby students as well as the teacher process the writing. The fact is that a teacher alone cannot process the quantity of writing students need to do to get good at it. If you limit the amount to what you can “correct,” you become a bottleneck—an awful thought for any serious teacher (Moffett, 1968, p. 81).

In practice, many studies show that peer review improves student writing effectively (Althausser & Darnall, 2001; Bean, 1996; Byrd, 1994; Caulk, 1994; DiPardo & Freedman, 1988; Glatthorn, 1980; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Mendonça & Johnson 1994; Qi, 2004), though there are studies that have shown the opposite result (Earls, 1987).

In order to compare the effectiveness of teacher and student responses, Earls (1987) conducted a study which involved four intact classes of average-ability high school sophomores. Two classes peer reviewed a first draft of each week’s writing assignment, the other two received teacher evaluation of the first drafts, and all classes had the teacher evaluate the final draft of each week’s writing assignment. Pretest and posttest writing samples were collected and rated holistically after the 10-week writing unit ended. There were two major findings. First, the teacher-evaluation group wrote significantly better posttest essays than the student-evaluation group. Teacher evaluation of first drafts proved to be an effective approach to the teaching of writing. Second, the students did not write significantly better on the posttest essays than on the pretest essays, which could be explained by the fact that the ratings for the peer evaluation of students’ essays were lower than the pretest ratings. Thus, the researcher concluded that teacher evaluation of writing was valuable.

In Caulk’s (1994) study, 28 compositions (15 second and 15 third assignments) were randomly selected from a total of 43 students with an age range of 18 to 25. Due to various reasons, each paper had a different number of peer responses. Analyses of the data revealed that (1) the student responses provided students with helpful information for rewriting their paper, but they did not substitute for the teacher’s responses and (2) the teacher’s comments tended to be general and often aimed at the whole piece of writing, while the student responses tended to be very specific and rarely contained suggestions for the whole piece. Thus, the researcher stated that teacher and student responses could be complementary, which gave students alternative ways to think about the process of revision.

Qi (2004) examined the difference between Chinese college students’ attitudes toward and strategies to deal with teacher and peer responses. For this purpose, he collected two first drafts from 33 fourth-year English majors along with their peer responses and revised drafts. In addition, he administered an 11-item questionnaire to the students and interviewed three survey respondents. Analyses of the data revealed that (1) teacher and

peer feedback were similar in terms of frequency, range, and distribution, which was claimed by the researcher due to the announcement that peer response would be assessed, (2) the teacher focused more on grammar while the students paid more attention to the content and word formation, (3) teacher feedback was more effective than peer feedback, (4) the participants implemented teacher suggestions more than those given by their peers in their revised drafts, and (5) grammar and vocabulary accounted for a large percentage in both teacher and student feedback. The researcher also found that the participants preferred teacher feedback rather than student suggestions and that they took a much more serious attitude toward the teacher feedback while few would revise their drafts based on the peer response.

With a focus on the implementation of peer response and comparison of teacher and student feedback, many studies on peer review have revealed that it can be a complementary approach to teacher feedback in ESL/EFL writing classrooms, though teacher feedback proved to be more favored by the students in some studies. Nevertheless, this issue needs to be further researched considering the complex nature of learner characteristics and the writing process itself.

Targeting Chinese advanced-level undergraduate EFL learners, the present study aimed to explore their attitudes toward and reaction to peer review and their correlations with the students' writing performance. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent are the students willing to do peer review?
2. What attitude do the students hold toward peer review?
3. How do the students react to peer feedback?
4. What is the relationship between the students' survey responses regarding their willingness and attitude toward peer review and their reaction to peer response and their performance in English writing?

Question one aimed to explore whether the students were consciously willing to review their peers' English compositions and have their own reviewed by peers. Question two sought to examine whether the students considered peer review a valuable and useful process for the reviewers and the reviewees. Question three tried to investigate how seriously the students treated peer feedback, whether they would read the feedback provided by their peers carefully and incorporate it into their revised drafts and whether they believed their peers would do the same. These questions were postulated considering the possibility that a student's willingness to do peer review and positive attitude toward it may not necessarily position them to treat it seriously in their revised drafts, since there is often a reported mismatch between what students believe and what they want to do or actually do (Jackson, 2002; Liu, 2006).

Research Method

Context of the Study

The present study was conducted at a top Chinese university in Beijing in the *English Writing* course, which trained students for and required them to engage in peer review. The course had three classes of the same level with the same teacher and teaching assistant. Each class met once a week for 90 minutes and each student was required to write 6 assignments of different genre for the course. Each assignment was assessed by the teacher and the assistant according to the same criterion and the average became the final grade for the assignment. The assignment scores accounted for 80% of the final course grade. The same process applied to peer review, which was done twice and took up 20% of the final course grade.

Participants

The participants were 84 advanced-level undergraduate EFL learners who were enrolled in the English Writing course and all majoring in Economics and Management. With an average age of 18.3 years old, 69% (58) of the participants had participated in peer review before entering the university.

Prior to the study, all the participants signed a consent form which indicated that the study involved their experiences about English writing. To preserve their privacy, pseudonyms are used when presenting the results.

Instruments

In order to examine the students' attitudes towards peer review and their implementation of peer responses, both survey and semi-structured interviews were used as detailed below.

Survey

To examine the students' willingness and attitude toward peer review, and reaction to peer feedback, a 24-item survey was developed. The survey consisted of the following four parts: 1) previous experience with peer review, 2) willingness to do peer review, 3) attitude toward peer review, and 4) reaction to peer feedback. Each section is described further below. All the items except the first were accompanied by a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

The first section, previous experience with peer review, had only 1 item which asked whether, before entering the university, they had ever had an English composition reviewed by a peer and then subsequently revised it using the feedback.

The second section, willingness to do peer review (reliability $a = .923$), consisted of 3 items and measured the extent to which the students were willing to review their peers' English compositions and have their own reviewed by peers.

The third section, attitude toward peer review ($a = .91$), consisted of 16 items and indexed to what extent the students believed peer review was beneficial. It reflected students' attitude toward the overall value of peer review (items 5-9), towards peers reviewing one's own English compositions (items 10-16), and towards reviewing peers' English compositions (items 17-20).

The fourth section, reaction to peer feedback ($a = .83$), contained 4 items and examined to what degree learners reacted to peer responses positively. It investigated not only the participants' own reaction to their peers' responses (items 21 to 22) but also their belief about their peers' reaction to peer responses (items 23 to 24).

Semi-structured Interview

To get a more comprehensive insider view of peer review, five survey respondents were invited for a semi-structured interview. Interview questions covered such aspects as willingness to do peer review, attitude toward peer review, and reaction to and implementation of peer responses. Since the students' real English compositions (original drafts), peer responses, and the implementation of the peer responses in the revised drafts were presented and related questions were asked during the interview, part of the interview had the nature of "stimulated recall" (Woods, 1989). In case the interviewees might have difficulty understanding the questions in English or did not like speaking English, all the interviews were carried out in Mandarin Chinese.

Sample Compositions

To examine how the students who were interviewed implemented the peer responses in their revised drafts, the following were collected: the first and revised drafts of the second peer review assignment (a free writing task) composed by the five interviewees and a peer response done by a peer.

Performance in the English Writing Course

To examine the relationship between the students' attitudes toward peer review and reaction to peer feedback and their writing performance, all the students' final scores for writing assignments were collected to measure their performance in the English Writing course (Aida, 1994; Saito, Horwitz & Garza, 1999).

Procedures

The study was conducted during the first 16-week term of the academic year 2007-2008. The questionnaires were administered at the beginning of a normal teaching period in the thirteenth week. By this time in the semester, the students had been trained how to do peer review and had actually done it once as required by the course teacher. The questionnaire was administered just before the second peer review. In the end, 84 questionnaires were valid for statistical analyses (the others were discarded because of incompleteness or absence). The semi-structured interviews were held a week after the

questionnaire was administered, which was just after the second peer review. Conducted in Mandarin Chinese, each interview lasted for about 20 minutes and was audio-recorded. Each assignment score and the final course grades were collected at the end of the term.

Data Analysis

The results of the survey were computed using SPSS (a software widely used to analyze quantitative data) in terms of reliability, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, mode, median and range to investigate the students' willingness to do peer review, attitude toward peer review, and reaction to peer feedback. Correlational analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between the survey responses and the students' writing performance. The interviews were transcribed, checked twice, and subjected to a thematic content analysis with patterns and significant issues identified and categorized (Krippendorff, 1980). The analyses of the interview data are incorporated into the discussion of the survey data below.

Results and Discussion

Willingness to Do Peer Review

Table 1 summarizes the participants' responses to the second section of the survey, which reflects participants' willingness to do peer review in EFL writing classrooms. As Table 1 shows, the majority of the participants self-reported to be willing to do peer review in the University EFL writing classrooms, which is indicated by their responses to items

Table 1

Willingness Items with Percentages of Students Selecting Each Alternative (N = 84)

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. I am willing to have my English compositions reviewed by peers.	0 (0%)	3 (3.6%)	5 (6%)	42 (50%)	34 (40.5%)
3. I am not willing to have my English compositions reviewed by peers because we are at a similar English proficiency level.	26 (31%)	50 (59.5%)	5 (6%)	3 (3.6%)	0 (0%)
4. I like to review my classmates' English compositions.	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	35 (41.7%)	33 (39.3%)	8 (9.5%)

2 to 4. Question two indicates that 76 of the participants (90.5%) reported being willing to have their English compositions reviewed by peers and 76 (90.5%) reacted negatively to question 3, which was a counterbalancing question and expressed an unwillingness to have their peers review their compositions. However, only 48.8% of them expressed that they liked to review their classmates' English compositions in question four.

Further analysis confirms the willingness of the participants to have peers review their compositions. With 3 items and values of 1 to 5 assigned to the five descriptors of each item respectively, the possible range of tallied scores for this second section of the survey was 3 to 15. The actual range of responses was 7 to 15 and the mean score for the 84 participants was 11.94 (SD = 1.69). Coupled with a median of 12 and a mode of 12, all far above the scale midpoint 9, these data suggest that the participants had a stronger willingness to do peer review with English writing at the tertiary level.

Participants' willingness to do peer review as revealed by the survey data is again confirmed by the interview data. Among the five interviewees, only one expressed an unwillingness to do peer review in that "the students haven't become used to writing in English and it is impossible for them to express an idea clearly in English" (Sun, male). The other four reported a willingness and liked to review each other's English compositions owing to various reasons: (1) reading peers' compositions could remind them of something enjoyable because most of them were about their own life, (2) some mistakes or errors in the compositions such as the inappropriate use of words were fairly funny and ridiculous, (3) it helped correct one's own mistakes, (4) it helped one become aware of something not previously known, (5) it helped one to learn more about ideas and uses of words, and (6) it helped one assess one's own proficiency in English writing. This can be best illustrated by the following self-report, "I feel agreeable when reading my classmates' compositions. During the process, I try to understand their flow of thoughts and identify the mistakes and errors. Meanwhile, I can learn a lot because I have to do some research when coming across something I don't know or understand" (Dai, female).

Attitudes Toward Peer Review

Table 2 summarizes the students' responses to the items implicative of attitudes towards peer review in EFL writing classrooms. Most probably because of the (strong) willingness to do peer review, the respondents were fairly positive about the overall value of peer review, as supported by their responses to items 5 to 9 summarized in Table 2. Though only 13.1% of the respondents believed that peer review was more effective than teacher review (item 6), 77.4% of them held that the former was as valuable as the latter (item 5) and 88.1% agreed with statement 8 "Peer review helps improve one's ability in English writing." By contrast, 94% rejected statement 7 "Peer review does no help to improve one's ability in English writing" and 89.3% disagreed with statement 9 reflective of the uselessness of reviewing their classmates' English compositions.

Table 2

Attitude Items with Percentages of Students Selecting Each Alternative (N = 84)

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Peer review is as valuable as teacher review.	0 (0%)	7 (8.3%)	12 (14.3%)	39 (46.4%)	26 (31%)
6. Peer review is more effective than teacher review.	5 (6%)	24 (28.6%)	44 (52.4%)	9 (10.7%)	2 (2.4%)
7. Peer review does no help to improve one's ability in English writing.	31 (36.9%)	48 (57.1%)	4 (4.8%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)
8. Peer review helps improve one's ability in English writing.	0 (0%)	3 (3.6%)	7 (8.3%)	62 (73.8%)	12 (14.3%)
9. It's a waste of time to review my classmates' English composition	36 (42.9%)	39 (46.4%)	5 (6%)	4 (4.8%)	0 (0%)
10. My classmates can evaluate my English compositions appropriately.	0 (0%)	6 (7.1%)	19 (22.6%)	51 (60.7%)	8 (9.5%)
11. Peer review helps improve the structure of my English compositions.	0 (0%)	1 (1.2%)	14 (16.7%)	54 (64.3%)	15 (17.5%)
12. Peer review helps improve the structure of my English compositions.	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	19 (22.6%)	42 (50%)	15 (17.9%)
13. Peer review helps reduce grammatical mistakes in my English compositions.	0 (0%)	12 (14.3%)	20 (23.8%)	40 (47.6%)	12 (14.3%)

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Peer review helps enrich the vocabulary in my English compositions.	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	7 (8.3%)	49 (58.3%)	20 (23.8%)
15. My classmates are able to identify the mistakes and errors in my English compositions.	0 (0%)	14 (16.7%)	33 (39.3%)	31 (36.9%)	6 (7.1%)
16. My classmates are able to identify the mistakes and errors in my English compositions.	21 (25%)	49 (58.3%)	9 (10.7%)	5 (6%)	0 (0%)
17. Reviewing my classmates' English compositions helps inspire me to write in English.	1 (1.2%)	9 (10.7%)	12 (14.3%)	49 (58.3%)	14 (16.7%)
18. Reviewing my classmates' English compositions helps structure my own compositions.	0 (0%)	6 (7.1%)	12 (14.3%)	54 (64.3%)	12 (14.3%)
19. Reviewing my classmates' English compositions helps reduce grammatical mistakes in my own compositions.	2 (2.4%)	7 (8.3%)	21 (25%)	47 (56%)	7 (8.3%)
20. Reviewing my classmates' English compositions helps improve the use of words and sentence structures in my own compositions.	1 (1.2%)	9 (10.7%)	12 (14.3%)	49 (58.3%)	13 (15.5%)

To be more specific, the majority of the participants maintained that their classmates could appropriately evaluate their English compositions, as suggested by their responses to items 10 and 16. In addition, their responses to items 11 to 15 revealed that it was their belief that peer review could help better their writing in English in terms of content, structure, use of words and sentence structures, and grammar. For example, 82.2% of the respondents endorsed item 11 “Peer review helps enrich the content of my English compositions” and 67.9% agreed with statement 12 “Peer review helps improve the structure of my English compositions.”

Generally speaking, more than 70% of the students reported that reviewing others’ English compositions helped to improve their own in the aspects of content, structure, grammar, and the use of words and sentence structures, as proven by their responses to statements 17 to 20. For instance, 75% of the participants claimed that they could be inspired by reviewing others’ English compositions and 78.6% believed that it helped structure their own English compositions.

This finding, likewise, conforms to the finding revealed by the statistical analyses of the attitude data, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Statistical Analyses of the APR (N = 84)

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	Range
Attitude toward the overall value of peer review (AOVPR)	19.31	2.38	19	19	11-25
Attitude toward peers reviewing one’s own English compositions (APREC)	26.43	3.98	26	25	14-35
Attitude toward reviewing peers’ English compositions (ARPEC)	15.01	2.62	16	16	5-20
Attitudes toward peer review (APR)	60.75	8.06	61	62	30-78

As previously described, the APR comprised three subscales—attitude toward the overall value of peer review (AOVPR), attitude toward peers reviewing one’s own English compositions (APREC), and attitude toward reviewing peers’ English compositions (ARPEC). Thus, a total score of more than 20 for the 5-item AOVPR implies a strongly positive attitude toward the overall value of peer review, a total score of 15 to 20 implies a moderately positive attitude, and a total score of less than 15 signifies a (strongly) negative attitude. A total score of more than 28 for the 7-item APREC indicates a strongly positive attitude toward peers reviewing one’s own English compositions, a total score of 21 to 28 implies a moderately positive attitude, and a total score of less than 21 suggests a (strongly) negative attitude. A total score of more than 16 for the 4-item ARPEC demonstrates a strongly positive attitude toward reviewing peers’ English compositions, a total score of 12 to 16 implies a moderately positive attitude, and a total score of less than 12 suggests a (strongly) negative attitude.

As shown in Table 3, the mean score of 19.31 and a median and a mode of 19 on the AOVPR, all far more than the scale midpoint of 15, indicate that the majority of the respondents held a fairly strong positive attitude about the overall value of peer review. A mean score of 26.43, a median of 26, and a mode of 25 on the APREC, all well above the scale midpoint 21, imply that the participants were positive about having English compositions reviewed by their peers. Meanwhile, a mean of 15.01 and a median and a mode of 16 on the ARPEC, all exceeding the scale midpoint 12, suggest that the majority of the respondents were fairly confident that reviewing their peers’ English compositions was useful and benefited their own writing in English. Finally, a mean of 60.75, a median of 61 and a mode of 62 on the APR, all well exceeding the scale midpoint 48, reveal that the participants on the whole thought fairly highly of peer review in university EFL writing classrooms. All these findings are consistent with the results of frequency analyses of the attitude items presented in Table 2.

These findings are further confirmed by the students’ self-reports in interviews. Generally speaking, all the five interviewees reported that peer response was valuable although peer response had some drawbacks when compared with teacher feedback because peers could not identify all the mistakes and tended to praise more than criticize, as found in other studies (Pianko & Radzik, 1980; Qi, 2004; Roessier, 1983; Wang, 2004). According to them, sometimes the teacher would misunderstand them and then change what they had written into something different, which would not happen with a peer reviewer. And it was easier for peers to understand and communicate with each other while occasionally it was difficult to understand the teacher’s comments, (i.e., Zamel, 1985). Moreover, they could discuss issues with their reviewers while usually simply accepting the teacher’s suggestions without further interaction. Moreover, because peers

often made similar mistakes and shared many ideas, they found it easier to revise their drafts according to the peer responses, as found in Qi's (2004) study.

Four of the five interviewees believed that most of their classmates could evaluate their English compositions appropriately in that they were proficient in English and at similar proficiency levels. As one interviewee reported, "I think so. The class seems to be quite good at English. Sometimes I didn't realize the mistakes, but they can help me identify and correct them. In addition, they can also help me substantiate the view" (Chen, male). Although one interviewee was not so positive, he acknowledged that peers were able to identify grammatical mistakes and phrases and clauses that were difficult to understand. At the same time, three of the interviewees were confident that they were able to point out the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' English compositions because they were so careful when reviewing peers' papers. Two interviewees were not so confident either because of a lack of English proficiency or because of the comparison with teacher suggestions.

In addition, all five interviewees confided that peer review was conducive to bettering their own English writing. It helped them (1) know more about grammar and reduce grammatical mistakes, (2) have an overall picture of others' English proficiency and assess their own, (3) become aware of what had been neglected such as organization of paragraphs and logic, (4) better organize ideas, (5) learn more about the use of words, and (6) learn to write more clearly. This is best supported by the following self-report:

First, I used to be poor at organizing my ideas. Thanks to peer suggestions and discussion with my peers, I can write much more clearly now in terms of the flow of thoughts and organization. The next is about grammar. I often write with mistakes that I fail to notice, but my peers can identify and correct them. This urges me to be more careful when writing again (Dai, female).

In a similar way, the other four interviewees reported that reviewing peers' English compositions could help better the quality of their own in terms of grammar, structure, ideas, and substantiation of views.

In addition, when doing peer review, according to the interviewees, most of the reviewers primarily focused on grammar (especially tense) and vocabulary (especially the use of words), and then on content and structure, just as found in a number of existing studies (Berger, 1990; Cohen, 1987; Ferris, 1995; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988).

Reaction to Peer Feedback

Table 4 summarizes the students' responses to the items reflective of reaction to peer feedback in EFL writing class. As seen in Table 4, the majority of the participants reported that they carefully read peer feedback (94% for item 21) and revised their English compositions accordingly (83.3% for item 22). Most also believed that their peers read the peer responses carefully (72.7% for item 23) and revised their English compositions

Table 4

Reaction Items with Percentages of Students Selecting Each Alternative (N = 84)

Survey Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I carefully read peer feedback of my English compositions.	0 (0%)	2 (2.4%)	3 (3.6%)	52 (61.9%)	27 (32.1%)
22. I carefully revise my English compositions according to peer feedback	0 (0%)	8 (9.5%)	6 (7.1%)	48 (57.1%)	22 (26.2%)
23. I believe my classmates carefully revise their English compositions based on my comments	0 (0%)	3 (3.6%)	20 (23.8%)	47 (56%)	14 (16.7%)
24. I believe my classmates carefully revise their English compositions based on my comments	0 (0%)	3 (3.6%)	23 (27.4%)	47 (56%)	11 (13.1%)

accordingly (69.1% for item 24). Moreover, generally fewer than 5% of the respondents disagreed with the four items. These data clearly suggest that the participants were serious about peer feedback and intended to implement it in their revised drafts carefully.

When interviewed, four reported that they usually read the peer feedback carefully and revised their compositions accordingly and that they often discussed with the reviewers if they failed to understand or disagreed with some of the suggestions. Thus, they could benefit most from peer suggestions. These four interviewees also believed that their classmates would react to peer feedback in the same serious manner, in that the mistakes really existed, and their peers often came to discuss the suggestions with them. In contrast, one interviewee was not so positive about the students' reaction to peer

feedback although he admitted that grammatical mistakes and not well-written parts would be corrected and revised thereafter. Since in his eyes the students were not so proficient and professional as the course teacher, they were not able to offer any constructive suggestions more than apparent mistakes and phrases or clauses that needed revising. Consequently, he generally did not take a very serious attitude when implementing peer suggestions, nor did he think his peers would.

Despite the four interviewees' self-reported serious attitude towards peer response, the comparison of peer suggestions and the students' revised drafts presented a different picture. Suggestions about grammatical mistakes and the use of words and phrases were generally implemented, but those on discourse level such as substantiating an idea, reordering the paragraphs, making the clauses more logical and coherent, and rewriting a paragraph were often neglected. When asked about this during the interview, the interviewees presented a surprising explanation that they had allocated little time for writing the composition and even less for the revised draft. Therefore, since they were in such a hurry, they really did not have time to implement all the suggestions into the revised draft, which needed to be handed in soon. Hence, "the idea that the peer may profit from reading and responding to another's writing would not take place" (Earls, 1987: 51). One of them offered one more unexpected excuse that she was inexperienced in implementing the comments probably due to the lack of practice of peer review.

Relationship Between the Students' Survey Responses and Their Writing Performance

To explore the correlations between the students' survey responses and their performance in English writing, correlational analyses were conducted, the results of which are shown in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, the students' responses to each section of the survey were all significantly correlated with each other with a coefficient range of .434 to .934. For example, the students who were more willing to do peer view tended to think more highly of reviewing each other's English compositions and react to peer responses more seriously. Meanwhile, strangely, the survey responses negatively correlated with the students' performance in English writing with the exception of the RPFQ (reaction to peer feedback) which was positively but insignificantly related to the latter. Though negatively correlated, the coefficients were insignificantly low except the correlation between the AOVPR (overall value of peer review) and the students' writing performance with a coefficient of $-.037$ ($p < .01$).

Table 5: Relationship between the Survey Responses and Writing Performance (N = 84)

	WDPR	AOVPR	APREC	ARPEC	APR	RPF
AOVPR	.687*	1				
APREC	.597*	.710*	1			
ARPEC	.547*	.662*	.706*	1		
APR	.676*	.862*	.934*	.870*	1	
RPF	.545*	.614*	.527*	.434*	.584*	1
Performance	-.045	-.037	-.072	-.053	-.064	.072

* = $p < .01$

Notes: WDPR = willingness to do peer review (the willingness section)

AOVPR = attitude toward the overall value of peer review

APREC = attitude toward peers reviewing one's own English compositions

ARPEC = attitude toward reviewing peers' English compositions

APR = attitude toward peer review (the attitude section)

RPR = reaction to peer feedback (the reaction section)

Conclusions and Implications

The following conclusions can be drawn concerning the study on Chinese undergraduate advanced EFL learners' attitudes toward peer review and reaction to peer feedback.

First of all, the majority of the participants expressed a (strong) willingness to review each other's English compositions, which they felt could benefit them in many ways such as reducing grammatical mistakes, learning more about the use of words, and enriching

their ideas. This might be closely related to the fact that these students were proficient in English and that they had been trained to do peer review.

Probably because of their strong willingness, the respondents were highly positive about the value of peer review. They believed that they could evaluate each other's compositions appropriately and that peer review was beneficial not only to the reviewee but also the reviewer. Though peers sometimes were unwilling to be critical and sometimes unable to point out all the mistakes and errors in a composition, it was easier for them to understand each other, to discuss what needed to be improved and how, and to better learn from each other. And to our delight, no interviewees reported feeling uncomfortable making or receiving negative criticisms of each other's work, as claimed by Roessier (1983) and Pianko and Radzik (1980).

Likewise, the participants reported to be highly serious about the peer responses, reading carefully the peer feedback and revising their drafts accordingly. Nevertheless, it did not mean the participants really did that when implementing the peer responses into their revised drafts. As previously discussed, peer feedback often primarily focused on grammar and vocabulary, and the implementation of the peer responses also enormously concentrated on grammar and vocabulary. The feedback on the discourse level was rarely incorporated into the revised drafts due to reportedly limited time, which was actually due to the limited attention paid by the participants.

Finally, the correlational analyses revealed that the measured variables were all highly significantly correlated with each other but insignificantly negatively correlated with the students' performance in English writing. This might explain why one interviewee scored low on the survey and self-reported to think low of peer review but wrote fairly well in English.

It may be important to train students how to do peer review and help them realize what review really means, as suggested by Wang (2004). This may help students become more willing to do peer review and improve the quality of the feedback. If the feedback is of low quality, few students will treat it seriously (Earls, 1987). More importantly, it is useful to help students be aware of what revision entails because many students are unwilling to revise a paper after it is finished (Sultan, 1988; Wright, 1988). Often, if students do revise a draft, it is "just to 'clean it up' so that they can turn in a neat looking paper" (Wright, 1988, p. 64). This type of rewrite is far from being a revision (Byrd, 1994). Students need to understand that good writing is well-revised writing.

What is also worth noting is that participants were trained to do peer review in the present study; their participation in peer review was both required and assessed; and the participants were fairly proficient in English. All of these reasons might partially explain why the majority of the participants were positive and serious about doing peer review.

Otherwise, the students might have treated peer review differently, which deserves further research.

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Conference Announcements

The English as an International Language Journal. October 14-17, 2009. Supported by the *Asian EFL Journal* and Dokuz Eylul University announce the inaugural International EIL Conference to be held in Izmir Turkey in October 2009.

12th IADA Conference. October 15-18, 2009. “Polyphony and Intertextuality in dialogue.” Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. The deadline for abstract submission has been extended until 31 December 2008. E-mail Cornelia Ilie at cornelia.ilie@gmail.com. Web site <http://www.upf.edu/df/activita/IADA2009/index.html>

MexTESOL October 22-25, 2009. "Social Echoes of ELT." Cintermex Convention Center, Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. Contact Natalia Aguirre Benavides. E-mail naguirreb@yahoo.com.mx. Web site <http://www.mextesol.org.mx>

Symposium on Second Language Writing. November 5-7, 2009. Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona USA. E-mail sslw@asu.edu. Web site <http://sslw.asu.edu/2009/>

The First International EFL/ESL Conference. November 5-7, 2009. “ELT in India Today and Tomorrow: Decolonising English Studies.” Held at Udaipur. Co Hosted: *Asian EFL Journal* & Rajasthan Association of Studies in English. E-mail asian_efl_journal@yahoo.com

6th International ELT Conference. November 14-1, 2009. “Reaching Out ... for Success” Azerbaijan English Teachers’ Association (AzETA) at Baku Slavic University, Baku, Azerbaijan. E-mail: elmira_e40@hotmail.com. Web site: <http://www.az-eta.org/>

JALT 35th Annual International Conference November 21-23, 2009. Language Teaching and Learning & Educational Materials Expo Granship, Shizuoka, Japan. Web site <http://jalt.org/conference>

The 14th English in South East Asia (ESEA) Conference. November 26-28, 2009. “English Changing: Implications for Policy, Teaching, and Research.” Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. Web site <http://www.ateneo.edu>

Globalization and Localization in Computer-Assisted Language Learning. December 8-11, 2009. Lotus Hotel Pang Suan Kaew, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Deadline for proposal submissions June 15. E-mail sonjb@usq.edu.au. Web site <http://glocall.org/>

2nd International Conference on the Development and Assessment of Intercultural Competence. January 29-31, 2010. The University of Arizona Tucson, AZ. Web site http://www.cercll.arizona.edu/pdf/ICC_2010_Call_for_Proposals.pdf

44th Annual TESOL Convention and Exhibit. March 24–27, 2010. Boston, Massachusetts USA. Web site http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/convention2009/docs/BostonTESOPartyFinal.pdf