The Effect of Peer Feedback on EFL Writing: Focusing on Japanese University Students

Reina Wakabayashi
Kyoto University

Abstract
University requires a commitment on the part of students towards autonomous learning. However, in order to encourage students’ autonomous engagement in English academic writing, explicit and supportive instruction is necessary on the teacher’s part. In an attempt to explore effective instruction in the Japanese university setting, this study examined the effects of peer feedback on learners’ writing quality, revision behavior, and perceptions of the task. Learners composed essays using a TOEFL essay topic, and then engaged in peer feedback and revision activities. Essay scoring of the first and the revised drafts, conducted by five independent raters, revealed significant increases in mean scores. This study was an attempt to analyze Japanese learners’ revision behaviors after peer feedback, and the results showed that they focused more on content level problems than on surface level problems. The post-task questionnaire results revealed learners’ positive perceptions towards peer feedback, indicating its usefulness in the Japanese context. Moreover, the learners’ suggestions for future peer feedback use in a classroom highlighted the teacher’s role of...
providing a proper classroom environment, task training exercises, and task materials.

Introduction

In Japan, the shift from high school to university often entails pedagogical changes of English and of the roles of both students and teachers. What used to be a school subject in high school becomes an ongoing academic skill at university. University students are expected to be autonomous learners who engage in academic pursuits on their own, and teachers act as facilitators who support the students’ existence as autonomous learners. Under this shift in the academic environment, Japanese university students are expected to learn to write in English beyond the translation or composition exercises that typically take place in high school (Takagi, 2001).

This study seeks to examine the utility of peer feedback as a support for the Japanese university students to learn and engage in English academic writing. Peer feedback is not limited to the comments made by peer readers, but it is also a learning task by which learners engage in collaborative revision to develop their self-revision skills. The pedagogical benefits of peer feedback have been well reported (e.g.,
Wakabayashi, “The Effect of Peer Feedback on EFL Writing...”

Berg, 1999; Chaudron, 1984; Min, 2006; Paulus 1999), yet there still is a paucity of research in the Japanese context. Through assessing the revision impacts of peer feedback and the students’ affective reactions towards peer feedback activities, this study attempts to examine the utility of peer feedback in Japanese university classrooms.

**English Writing as a Study Skill**

English academic writing, or English writing required in university such as essays or theses, is most often a new task for Japanese students who have just entered university. Therefore, the nature and the process of the writing should be explicitly taught during the early years of their English education at university. An important question asks how teachers should approach the teaching of writing basics.

**Process Approach**

In the process approach (Hayes, 1996; Hayes & Flower, 1980), the writing process is schematized by a recursive model of three main phases: planning, translating (writing), and reviewing. In the reviewing phase, writers look back on what they wrote and check for linguistic errors or problems that cause communication breakdown (e.g., poor logical connection). Although both linguistic errors and meaning problems are important factors to attend to, research on skilled versus unskilled writers’ revision strategies indicates that successful revision results from the focus on text meaning rather than on linguistic errors (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Hayes et al., 1987; Sommers, 1980; Zamel, 1983).

The advantage of the process approach is that drawing attention to the constant need to draft and revise fosters the sense of ownership of one’s writing and encourages students to make improvements by themselves. In other words, learners who adopt the process approach become self-critical and objective writers who able to reflect on their writing. However, effective self-revision is still quite difficult in the early stages of learning, and reader feedback is crucial to assist learner development.

**Feedback on Writing**

The significance of reader feedback lies in its role of supporting the writing of multiple drafts in order to improve the communicative effectiveness of the texts. Teachers and peers are the two major feedback
The utility of teacher feedback has been observed when teachers provided specific, idea-based feedback, leading to student revision improvements both in L1 (English as a first language) (Hillocks, 1982) and ESL (English as a second language) classrooms (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997). Teacher feedback usually takes written form, but for more effective teacher feedback, teacher-student conferencing has been proposed as an alternative method. According to Zamel (1985), the advantage of teacher-student conferencing was that learners could respond to teacher comments on site in order to arrive at solutions for problems within the texts. However, there has been little empirical research on the teacher-student conferencing, and written teacher feedback continues to be used. The large size of university classes is thought to make teacher-student conferences difficult, and another possibility for interactive feedback is found in peer feedback.

In peer feedback, learners work collaboratively to exchange ideas and provide feedback on one another’s writing for revisions. This typically involves both written and oral peer comments. Since learners can respond to peer comments on site, peer feedback is beneficial in terms of interactivity, immediacy, and clarity, which are the advantages presented in the teacher-student writing conferencing method. Research indicates that both teacher feedback and peer feedback contribute equally to the improvement of revision quality, suggesting the possible substitution of teacher feedback with peer feedback (Chaudron, 1984; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992).

Peer feedback is not merely an alternative for teacher feedback. The dual benefit of peer feedback is that learners receive feedback from others, but also act as feedback providers themselves. That is, learners can gain more insight into writing and revision processes by critically reading each other’s texts, thereby gaining a better understanding of the necessary steps required for successful revision. The advantages of peer feedback are examined in various studies (e.g., Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990; Lockhart & Ng, 1993; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Tsui & Ng, 2000) are summarized as below:

1. Learners receive more feedback than from the teacher alone
2. Learners receive comments from the learners’ perspectives
3. Learners gain audience awareness
4. Learners focus on ideas for better revision
5. Learners can develop an understanding of good writing
6. Learners can improve their self-revision skills
7. Learners can enhance critical reading and critical thinking skills
8. Learners build a sense of community in the classroom

Nevertheless, peer feedback may not always be successful due to insufficient L2 proficiency, lack of task training (Leki, 1990; Nelson, & Murphy, 1993), and learner reluctance (Carson, 1992; Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995). Research focusing on these problems reported the positive outcomes of trained peer feedback (Berg, 1999; Min, 2006; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995), and one possible explanation of learner reluctance was given as a cultural maladaptation, specifically within the East-Asian context (Carson, 1992; Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996; Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995).

In Japan, some studies (Hosack, 2003; Yakame, 2005) examined the utility of peer feedback in university settings. They reported that students perceived peer feedback favorably (Hosack, 2003) and that revision quality improved (Yakame, 2005). However, peer feedback in the Japanese context has not undergone enough thorough research to determine its utility. This classroom action research aims at examining the effects of peer feedback on the post-revision quality of writings by Japanese university students, their revision behaviors, and their affective reactions towards this rather unfamiliar task.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were 25 university students enrolled in a five-day intensive English course offered at a national university in the Kansai area at the end of September 2006. The participants were all female with varying majors. Not all the applicants were able to attend the course, but were selected on the following two criteria: 1) self-reported motivation to learn English, 2) TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) score of under 600 (self-reported proficiency level of elementary and intermediate).
Materials

**TOEFL Essay Test**

An essay topic from the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) writing test was used for the participants to compose their first drafts. The TOEFL writing test was a good option for this study, because it was developed to assess the test taker’s basic academic writing skills required at English-mediated universities. The topic chosen for this study was the following:

Some people prefer to live in a small town. Others prefer to live in a big city. Which place would you prefer to live in? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice.

**Peer Response Sheet**

The participants used a Peer Response Sheet during the peer feedback session (see Appendix A). A Peer Response Sheet is a set of questions about the given text for use by the reviewers to write down their comments during the peer feedback session. A Peer Response Sheet serves three functions. First, as a peer feedback guide, followed by a method to write commentary notes for revision, and finally as a peer negotiation facilitator.

Since a Peer Response Sheet needs to be both task-based and learner-based, the researcher developed one for this study in reference to the TOEFL writing task and the existing versions (Berg, 1999; Connor & Asenavege, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Hosack, 2004; Mangelsdorf, 1992; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Min, 2005; Ng, 1994; Paulus, 1999; Sengupta, 1998; Zhu, 2001).

**ESL Composition Profile**

The essay scoring tool applied in this study was the ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al., 1981). It is a holistic evaluation scale originally developed to assess the basic academic writing skills of ESL students. The primary focus of the profile is on the communicative effectiveness of a written text to the reader. The Profile contains a five-component scale, each of which is weighted according to its estimated significance for effective written communication: content (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). The total weight of each component is further broken down into numerical ranges that correspond to four proficiency levels of “excellent to very good,” “good to average,” “fair to poor,” and “very
poor.” The ESL Composition Profile was selected for the present study because the major factor of academic writing discussed in this study is the communicative effectiveness of a text. That is, good academic writing conveys the writer’s meaning successfully to readers.

Post-Task Questionnaire
The participants responded to a post-task questionnaire (see Appendix B) at the end of the course. The questionnaire asked the following questions:
1. Did you find the peer feedback effective?
2. Please write freely about the peer feedback task.
3. Would you like to work on a peer feedback task in the future?

The response choices for the first question were “very effective,” “fairly effective,” “not very effective,” and “not effective.” The response choices for the third question were “very much,” “fairly,” “not very much,” and “not effective.”

Procedure
The data were collected during the last two days of the five-day intensive English course that took place in September 2006. The data collection procedure is shown in Table 1. First, the researcher provided a mini-lecture in which she explained the requirements of academic writing and the basic requirements of TOEFL writing. The learners then worked on a TOEFL writing test for 30 minutes. Learners could refer to dictionaries and a TOEFL sample essay during the test. The learners were divided into 11 pairs and one group of three to engage in 30 minutes (10 minutes spent writing comments on the Peer Response Sheet and 20 minutes in giving oral feedback) of peer feedback in Japanese by the use of the Peer Response Sheet. Revising the first drafts was assigned as homework for the next day. On the second day, both the first and revised drafts and the Peer Response Sheets were collected. The participants were then asked to answer the questionnaire. Post-interviews were conducted with three voluntary participants after class.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay composition (30 mins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired peer feedback (30 mins)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

The effect of peer feedback on the learners’ text quality was assessed by the comparative analysis of the types of revisions made to the texts and writing quality. Since learners choose to learn, the learners’ affective reactions were also investigated.

**Types of Revision**

The revision behaviors and the types of revisions learners engaged in were analyzed according to Faigley and Witte’s (1981) taxonomy of revisions (see Table 2). Although previous research on peer feedback effects on the writing of Japanese students reported an improvement in the overall quality of written essays (Yakame, 2005), no study to date has attempted to examine the learners’ revision behaviors in terms of revision types. It is important to examine revision types in comparison with essay quality improvement, since the justification of implementing peer feedback into revision is made on the grounds that more meaning changes lead to text improvement. All changes in the revised drafts were marked, categorized, and counted based on Faigley and Witte’s (1981) taxonomy of revisions in Table 2.

The taxonomy distinguishes revision types between those changes that affect the meaning of a text (i.e., meaning change) and those that do not (i.e., surface change). The basic distinction between meaning change and surface change is “whether new information is brought to the text or whether old information is removed in such a way that it cannot be recovered through drawing inferences” (Faigley & White, 1981, p. 402).

As a result, as Table 3 shows, a total of 414 written peer comments provided on peer response sheets were categorized into 187 surface changes (45.2% of the total comments) and 227 meaning changes (54.8%). Surface changes were further broken down into 43 formal changes 4 (10.4%) and 144 meaning-preserving changes 5 (34.8%).
Meaning changes were divided into 128 microstructure changes (30.9%) and 99 (23.9%) macrostructure changes.

Table 2
Taxonomy of Revisions (Faigley & Witte, 1981)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Changes</th>
<th>Meaning Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal Changes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Microstructure Changes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense, Number, Deletions and Modality</td>
<td>Substitutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Permutations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Distributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Consolidations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Summary of Types of Revisions from First Draft to Revised Draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface Changes</th>
<th>Meaning Changes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>187 (45.2%)</td>
<td>227 (54.8%)</td>
<td>414 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Changes</td>
<td>Meaning-preserving Changes</td>
<td>Microstructure Macrostructure Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 (10.4%)</td>
<td>144 (34.8%)</td>
<td>128 (30.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Writing Quality**

In order to examine the effect of peer feedback on revision quality, both first and revised drafts were evaluated for comparison. The photocopied drafts were randomized and numbered from 1 to 50 in the place of the writers’ names for evaluation. The 50 essays were independently evaluated by five raters using the ESL Composition Profile. The raters were all native speakers of American English, who had been teaching English at Japanese universities for a number of years. The differences in mean essay scores between first and revised drafts, as rated by the five raters, were analyzed by a means of a t-test. \( p < .05 \). The mean score of the first drafts and the revised drafts were compared to examine the amount of improvement. Since improvement of the whole sample of writing as a unit of discourse was the focus of the study, instances of which revision resulted in which text improvement were not measured.
The inter-rater reliability of both the first and the revised drafts’ scoring results were estimated by Spearman’s correlation (see Table 4 and 5).

Table 4
Inter-rater Reliability for the First Draft Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater 1</th>
<th>Rater 2</th>
<th>Rater 3</th>
<th>Rater 4</th>
<th>Rater 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1 -</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.600**</td>
<td>.478*</td>
<td>.603**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.554**</td>
<td>.504*</td>
<td>.616**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.641**</td>
<td>.701**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.680**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 5
Inter-rater Reliability for the Second Draft Scoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater 1</th>
<th>Rater 2</th>
<th>Rater 3</th>
<th>Rater 4</th>
<th>Rater 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1 -</td>
<td>.674**</td>
<td>.550**</td>
<td>.750**</td>
<td>.770**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.568**</td>
<td>.588**</td>
<td>.626**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.712**</td>
<td>.643**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.781**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01

The scores were normally distributed, and thus, the data was analyzed by means of a t-test. A paired t-test (two-tailed) was conducted to analyze the score change between the first and the revised drafts. As Table 6 indicates, the mean scores of the first and the revised drafts were 65.96 (SD =11.31) and 73.24 (SD =7.90) respectively.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Writing Quality Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SK</th>
<th>KU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Draft</td>
<td>65.96</td>
<td>11.31</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Draft</td>
<td>73.24</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 25
The mean score of the essays increased by 7.28 from the first to the revised drafts. A t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between the score means of the first and of the second drafts, \( t(24)=4.38, \ p<.01 \). This score improvement corresponds to the shift from low-advanced to high-intermediate in the score range of the ESL Composition Profile. The change in the standard deviation was relevant to the writings of relatively less-skilled writers, whose writing quality improved significantly after peer feedback and revising.

**Correlation between Writing Quality and Types of Revisions**

Given the claim that revision results in text improvement by meaning changes rather than by surface changes, the score gains were compared with the types of revisions learners made. In order to determine whether there was a significant correlation between the amount of improvement and the types of changes made to the texts, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, a measurement of the correlation between two variables, was calculated between the amount of improvement and the percentage of meaning changes made to the texts. However, no significant correlations were found.

**Use of Peer Comments in Revision**

The learners’ revision behaviors, i.e. how the writers processed the received peer comments, was examined. The first and revised texts were compared in light of the peer written comments on the peer response sheets.

As a result, five writers received peer comments only for question items that looked for the basic requirements of the essay (Q1, 3, and 9) and which made positive comments (Q10). Due to the nature of these question items, those five learners did not receive any doubts, critical comments, or specific suggestions. The remainder of the twenty five writers received a total of 29 suggestions made for question items which clarified writers’ intentions (Q8), identified problems (Q4), explained the nature of problems (Q6), and made specific suggestions (Q5). Among those who received the suggestion type of peer comments, roughly four kinds of treatment of the given comments were found: incorporation of peer comments, substitution of new text in the referred area, deletion of the area commented on, and disregard of peer comments. Table 7 is the summary of the writers’ treatments of the given peer comments.
Table 7
Summary of Treatments of Given Peer Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Response Sheet Question Item</th>
<th>Incorporation</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Deletion</th>
<th>Disregard</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the 24 suggestions made, 14 instances were incorporated into revision. The most given and incorporated suggestions were made for Q5 (“Do you think the writer has said enough about the topic? If not, write down the points you think should be included.”)

Disregard of the given suggestions occurred mostly when the suggestions were made on linguistic matters, except for one that recommended a more thorough explanation of a concept in the text. The disregarded suggestions on linguistic matters were, for example: “same words are repeatedly used,” “I think it’s logically structured, but you’d better use words that the readers can understand,” “Maybe it’s a good idea to change the phrases such as ‘can,’ ‘live in,’ or ‘want to.” Interestingly, these comments were made for Q10, where reviewers are expected to write complimentary comments for the texts.

Learners’ Affective Reactions towards Peer Feedback

The learners’ affective reactions towards the peer feedback task they engaged in were analyzed by the responses to the questions in the post-task questionnaire:

1. Did you find peer feedback effective?
2. Please write freely about the peer feedback task.
3. Do you have any suggestions for peer feedback task?
4. Would you like to work on a peer feedback task in the future?

The responses were categorized into the type of reactions for
analysis. As a result, for the first question (“Did you find peer feedback effective?”), 18 participants chose “very effective” and the remaining seven answered “fairly effective” out of the choices of “very effective,” “fairly effective,” “not very effective,” and “not effective.”

For the second question (“Please write freely about the peer feedback task”), the perceived usefulness of peer feedback was reported from both the reviewer’s and the writer’s perspectives. Their opinions about pair and group work were also reported. As reviewers, the learners found the peer feedback task a good opportunity to read and learn from others’ written texts, and considered that comparing each other’s essays provided them with text varieties and idea variations. The perceived usefulness of peer feedback was expressed even more strongly from the writer’s perspective. The major appreciation of peer feedback was that it was helpful to receive comments from reviewers on what the writers could not notice by themselves. An increased reader awareness was reported, as well.

Collaborating with other students was perceived both positively and negatively. The positive side was that collaborating with others was empowering, in that they could engage in a task while helping each other. On the negative side was that exchanging comments with others was not quite as comfortable, especially if they did not know their partners very well. On the other hand, it was also reported that working with someone one knows well was regarded as limiting the critical and useful comments, and that working with someone one hardly knows facilitates more active comment exchange.

The response to the third question (“Do you have any suggestions for peer feedback task?”) revealed three major types of student needs: 1) working in a group of more than three; 2) more question items on the peer response sheet; 3) need for peer feedback training. These expressed needs emphasize the teacher’s supporting role.

For the fourth question (“Would you like to work on a peer feedback task in the future?”) nine learners answered “very much” and 12 learners answered “fairly” from the choices of “very much,” “fairly,” “not very much,” and “not effective.” The remaining four participants left answers blank.

Discussion

The analysis results of revision types indicate that the learners made more meaning changes than surface changes. However, at the level
of the subcategories, the most utilized revision type was meaning-preserving change categorized under surface change. This finding supports previous research, namely, that meaning-preserving changes occur with the highest frequency (Paulus, 1999). It is possible that these results are due to learners engaging in meaning-preserving changes also as an attempt to engage in meaning level problems. This assumption may be supported, though hypothetically, by the fact that the learners made more meaning-level changes overall than surface changes.

As for writing quality, given that the focus of the ESL Composition Profile was the communicative effectiveness of a text as a whole, thus, the score gains appear to indicate a significant degree of improved communicative effectiveness, especially for the relatively less-skilled writers. This result suggests the positive effect of peer feedback on revision. However, the observed score increase cannot be attributed entirely to the effect of peer feedback, as there were other contributing factors involved in the revision process. One obvious factor is that the learners revised the first drafts at home through free access to additional revision sources, including computer word processors and the internet. Moreover, rewriting itself could be a powerful source of improvement, because the self-initiated revisions were also made.

The high ratio of inclusion of peer comments given for Q5 (seven incorporated, two substituted, two deleted, one disregarded) indicates learners’ high degree of acceptance of peer comments. The acceptance of peer suggestions is also supported by the question that asked for the most effective question items, as Q5 received the highest marking. On the other hand, learners marked Q5 as the second most difficult question as reviewers. That is to say, the learners perceived specific peer comments to be helpful as reviewers but difficult to provide as writers, indicating their lack of confidence in giving feedback. This indicates the need of peer feedback training.

The overall positive perceptions of peer feedback of the learners provided counter-evidence to the claim made that peer feedback is not effective in an East Asian context.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the effects of peer feedback on EFL writings by Japanese university students. The results revealed positive effects of peer feedback on the students’ writing quality, their revision behaviors,
and their perceptions. Overall, the writing quality improved from the first drafts after peer feedback in terms of communicative effectiveness. That is, through revision, the students made their writing ideas clearer to the readers. As for the revision behaviors, the learners made more meaning changes than surface changes, which supports the claim in the literature that peer feedback supports writers to attend more to meaning level problems. The learners expressed their appreciation of peer feedback tasks in almost all aspects, including reader awareness, and the perceived usefulness of peer discussion over each other’s texts. The learners’ suggestions for the future peer feedback regarding the pairing or grouping of more than three learners, the need for peer feedback training, and the enrichment of peer response sheets with a larger variety of question items highlight the teacher’s role in supporting the learners to become confident feedback providers and autonomous writers. The limited number of the participants, the lack of oral records, and the unadjusted composition conditions for the first and the revised drafts are some of the limitations of this study. However, this study still indicated the pedagogical utility of peer feedback in Japanese university classrooms.

Further examination is necessary in the future. A methodology is needed to specify the revision changes that contribute to the increase in communicative effectiveness (i.e., writing quality). Moreover, it is hoped that a longitudinal study will help to assess the impact of peer feedback on long-term improvement of learners’ self-revision skills.

Notes
1. Rearrangements (e.g., springtime means to most people → springtime, to most people means).
2. Material in one text segment broken up into more than one separate segments, sentences, etc. (e.g., I figured after walking so far the least it could do would be to provide a relaxing dinner since I was hungry. → I figured the least it owed me was a good meal. All that walking made me hungry).
3. Elements in two ore more units consolidated into one unit. (e.g., And there you find Hamilton’s Pool. It has cool green water surrounded by 50-foot cliffs and lush vegetation → And there you find Hamilton’s Pool: cool green water surrounded by 50-foot cliffs and lush vegetation).
4. e.g., If I live → If I lived (word/tense/formal change)
5. e.g., injured heavily ➔ badly injured (phrase/substitution/meaning preserving)
6. e.g., there are a lot of companies, which can develop economy. ➔ there are a lot of companies, which can develop society. (lexical/substitution/microstructure)
7. e.g., I have some reasons why I like life in a big town. ➔ This is my experience (sentence/substitution/macrostructure).

References


Sommers, N. (1980). Revision strategies of student writers and


**Appendix A.**

**Peer Response Sheet**

1. このエッセイの主題文は何ですか？文中に下線を引いてください。
   What is the central idea (thesis) of this essay? Underline it in the text.

2. このエッセイの主張が明確でないと思う場合、作者が言おうとしている主張を考えて述べてください。
   If you don’t think the central idea is clearly stated, say it clearly in one sentence.

3. 主張をサポートする例（反例含む）はいくつあげられていますか？
   How many reasons and supporting proof are provided?

4. 例はトピック、主張に適切に関連していますか？トピック、主張との関連が不適切だと思う例に○をつけしてください。
Are these examples relevant to the main points? Circle the irrelevant examples.

5. 主張は十分に論じられていますか？もし論じられていなければ、付け加えるべきと思う点を述べてください。

Do you think the writer has said enough about the topic? If not, write down the points you think should be included.

6. エッセイは首尾一貫して論理的ですか？もし論理的でなければ、その原因は何か述べてください。

Is this essay logical? If not, state why.

7. 読んでいて混乱するところはありませんか？あれば下線を引いて横に「？」を記入してください。

Is there any part you find confusing? Underline it and write “?” next to it.

8. 混乱するところについて、作者が言おうとしていることを考えて述べてください。

About the confusing part, clarify the idea that you think the writer is trying to say.

9. 結論に主張が再度述べられていますか？文中に下線を引いてください。

Is the central idea restated in the conclusion? Underline it in the text.

10. このエッセイについて気に入ったところは何ですか？自由に述べてください。

What did you like the best about this essay?

Appendix B.
Post-task Questionnaire

1. ペア（グループ）ワークは役立ったと思いますか？

Did you find peer feedback effective?

2. ペア（グループ）で見直し・修正をした感想を自由に述べてください。

Please write freely about the peer feedback task.

3. このようなペア（グループ）ワークを改良するための提案・要望はありますか？

Do you have any suggestions for peer feedback task?

4. このようなペア（グループ）ワークを今後もやりたいと思いますか？

Would you like to work on a peer feedback task in the future?