The Question of Peer Response in the Written Performance of Adult L2 Learners of English: What does it Mean to Qassimi (KSA) Female University Students?

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Abstract

The present study explored the effect of peer response on the writing of 50 advanced students enrolled in a writing course of levels seven & eight, College of Science & Arts, English Department. Throughout the Spring Semester of 2012, the subjects were introduced to peer response technique and given three writing tasks, of which the last one was chosen in this study and positive, mixed, and negative scales for evaluation were used. Procedures in the peer response sessions were based on two models; "The peer response model" (PRM) described by Elbow (1973), used by Tang and Tithecott (1999) and adapted to this study. Its function was to guide both authors and peers on how to go through the essays. "The monitor prompt model" (MPM), adapted from Saito (1994), was used as a catalyst. Students were supposed to apply the MPM in order to alter their outputs after all the PRM steps were applied. A control group of 50 advanced students of the same levels were given the same writing tasks but evaluated according to the teacher correction checklist introduced by Knapp (1965) and configurated by Osman (2002). All students in both the experimental and the control groups were given a pretest and a posttest before and after the experiment, respectively. Analysis of students' perceptions, benefits, responses and sociocognitive activities was discussed and conclusions were drawn.

Key Words: *Peer Response, L2 Learners of English, Monitor Prompt Model*

Introduction

It has long been believed that participation in verbal interaction provides language learners with a wide variety of new words and structures to which they have been exposed during language lessons and continuous in-context practice. The input and feedback which language learners obtain can serve as linguistic data for grammar building and can modify and adjust their output in ways that expand their current interlanguage capacity (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Hatch, 1983; Long, 1983,

1985, 1990, 1996; Pica, 1991; Pica et al., 1996; Schachter, 1986, 1991; Swain, 1985; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Tsui & Ng, 2000)

For many learners of English as a second language (ESL), however, opportunities for either small or wide ranging interaction and collaboration among L2 learners themselves or with native speakers (NSs) are too infrequent and often impossible. This is shown clearly either with learners in foreign language contexts where communication is mostly in the native tongue, or with learners "where classrooms of nonnative-speaking teachers and other L2 learners are the basis for most of their interaction" (Pica et al., 1996, p. 60). Wong Fillmore (1992) believes that even when NS or near NS teachers are available, learners still experience greater non-oriented verbal contact with each other, in peer groups, than with their teachers for much of class time.

Peer response groups stand at the center of convergence of theories of language learning and teaching in ESL classrooms and theories of language acquisition. The use of such technique has increased with the shift to the process approach to writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981). It helps students acquire strategies "for getting started … for drafting … for revising … and for editing" (Silva, 1990, p. 15). Added to this peer response groups provide increased opportunities not only for comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) but also for comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) and for negotiated interaction (Gass & Selinker, 1994, p. 217) which are considered crucial factors in L2 acquisition. "Negotiation requires attentiveness and involvement, both of which are necessary for successful communication" (Tang & Tithecott, 1999, p. 21).

Background of the Study

Beneficial Effects of Feedback

Over the past twenty years, studies on language learning have given considerable attention to the issue of how to provide feedback to students' writing. Literature on ESL writing shows various ways of providing such feedback, and there are commonly practiced ways that are followed in both L1 and L2 situations such as teacher correction (Gwin, 1991; Knapp, 1965; Robinett, 1972; Zamel, 1985). Among negative suggestions given in this respect, was Zamel (1985). She revealed that ESL teachers' comments tended to ignore the content or ideas in students' writing in favor of attention to grammatical errors. Other researchers (Cardelle & Como, 1981) have given positive suggestions to positive written comments along with comments on grammatical errors.

Osman (2002) has conducted a study to evaluate students' drafts and rewrites through two correction scales, namely grammar correction and teacher comments where teacher comments concentrated on ideas and content. In both evaluation criteria, students improved their writing ability through both grammar correction and comments made by teachers. No verbal interaction was considered in the study, but it has been found that teacher comments worked well with advanced students rather than with beginners.

Another way of providing feedback is error identification in which feedback on composition is done through the process of writing cycles and self-correction (Hobleman & Wiriyachitra, 1990; Kroma, 1988; Zamel, 1987).

A third technique of providing feedback to students' writing is teacher-student conference where a teacher and a student talk individually about what the student has written. This technique has become a more popular tool in L1 settings (Carnicelli, 1980; Jacobs & Karliner, 1977; Murray, 1979, 1985; Sokmen, 1988; Sperling, 1990) as well as L2 contexts (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990).

Teacher-Student Negotiations

In his study on teacher-student conference in L1, Carnicelli (1980) reviewed students' opinions towards writing conferences and found that a two-way communication in a writing conference proved more effective than written comments because the conference allowed students to explain their opinions to their teachers and also understand their teachers' comments.

In line with teacher-student conference in L1, Zamel (1985) investigated the responses of ESL writing teachers and suggested that writing conferences could be applied to second language learners:

> We should set up collaborative sessions and conferences during which important discoveries can be made by both reader and writer. The reader can discover the underlying meaning and logic of what may appear to be an incoherent text and instruct the writer how to reshape, modify, and transform the text; the writer can simultaneously discover what lies behind and motivates the complex reactions of the reader and help the reader understand a text that up to this point may have been ambiguous, elusive, or unintelligible (p. 97).

In light of Zamel's (1985) suggestions, a breakthrough in the field of language teaming and especially on feedback to L1 and L2 students' writing emerged.

Freedman and Katz (1987) analyzed transcripts of several student-teacher conferences and found that the composition discourse in these conferences followed systematic and predictable patterns: "openings, student-initiated comments and questions, teacher-initiated comments and questions, reading of the paper, and closings" (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990, p. 444). Native-speaker students and teachers in these conferences followed interactional rules in the form of turn taking where teachers used to initiate questions to which students supplied content or vice versa. It was supposed that students' input and control of content account for the effectiveness of conferences in improving student writing.

Freedman and Sperling (1985) went further to study the variations among native speaker student-writers within conferences. Earlier, Jacobs and Karliner (1977) compared the conferences of two native-speaker students to determine the effect of roles played by teacher and student and its influence on subsequent drafts. They found that students who engaged in exploratory talk and who initiated more discussion made deeper and more analytic revisions than those who sought teachers' suggestions.

In their research on student-teacher negotiation in writing, Goldstein and Conrad (1990) warn against extending the insights and conclusions drawn from the above studies on native speakers to ESL student-teacher conferences:

> First, there is very little research that examines actual conference discourse and/or conference discourse in relation to subsequent revision. Second, we cannot extrapolate from studies where the subjects were native speakers of English because we cannot assume that normative speakers will behave in conferences in the same ways that native speakers behave (p. 445).

Although research on the comparison between first and second language learning shows that the process of learning a second language, if successful, is the same as that of teaming a first language (Corder, 1967; Dulay & Burt, 1974; Richards, 1974; Selinker, 1972) and although "What is true for language acquisition, as we understand it from Krashen (1982), also applies to learning to write" (Zamel, 1985, p. 96), ESL student writers may develop unproductive outputs if we read to them primarily for error.

To insist only on technical propriety is to underestimate (the) power (of composing) as a heuristic … Conversely, to accentuate the role of composing in discovering new knowledge is to show students why their writing matters, therefore to increase their motivation to write, and therefore, ultimately, to increase the likelihood of improvement because they have become more aware of the purpose and value of making meaning (Knoblauch & Brannon, 1983, p. 468).

Peer Review Negotiations

Peer review is defined as "an activity in the revising stage of writing in which students receive feedback about their writing from other students, their peers" (Richard & Schmidt, 2002, p. 390). Hyland (2003) seeks to develop in her learners an awareness of their own writing processes through activities like drafting, revising and editing. Viewing writing as a process (Cooper, 1975, 1977; Flower & Hayes, 1977; Garrison, 1985; Harris, 1984; Moffett, 1983; Zamel, 1987), peer correction and peer feedback have been dealt with and have been paralleled to student-teacher feedback.

L1 Settings

In first language settings (George, 1984; Herringlon & Cadman, 1991; Jacobs, 1987; McKendy, 1990), peer correction results in a "greater concern for achieving accuracy in written expression in individual students and creates a better classroom atmosphere for teaching the correctional aspects of composition" (Witbeck, 1976, p. 325).

As early as 1970s, Hawkins (1976), Bruffee (1973) and Elbow (1973), have argued convincingly for the value of peer interaction during the writing process. In her work with peer groups, Diana George (1984) did not argue the value of group inquiry for teaching writing as much as the role of interaction itself among members of the group. She did a thorough investigation into group session taping together with her own recording of responses to group sessions. She worked with other teachers who were interested in arranging discussions in peer groups which she termed "task-oriented", "leaderless", and "dysfunctional".

Newkirk, (1984) emphasized the systematic investigation of the responses of the peer audience,

If students are asked to write for their peers, one must assume that the evaluation criteria used by these peers are consistent with the goals of the writing course. But is this the case? If students approach peers' writing with values, interests, and emphases different from those of writing instructors, the status of the peer response becomes problematical (p. 301).

Therefore, he examined differences between instructor and peer evaluations in a study which highlighted two serious points when writing to peers. The first is that the teacher is fully aware of the criteria used by peers, and the second is that those criteria are consistent with the aims of the writing course.

These criteria for evaluation have led McKendy (1990) to legitimize peer response in order to avoid perplexity on the part of peer response students. In doing so, he depended on "students' consensus score" which may account for the legitimate questions: "What if the writer had a bad day, was sick or nervous or turned off by the topic?" (p. 90).

Herrington and Cadman, (1991) applied the above peer response criteria in a native college anthropology class. Student peers wrote comments on each other's drafts followed by an exchange of these drafts-Herrington and Cadman believe that "this process of active, reciprocal decision-making represents the primary value of peer review, not only for writing classes, but also for classes in any discipline where students are asked to write" (p. 184). They illustrate other characteristics of peer review exchanges like students' giving sound advice to their peers, the double benefit students get from their own drafts and from reading the drafts of others, and students' focus on both substantive and organizational and stylistic matters.

L2 settings

In second language settings, Rothschild and Klingenberg (1990), and Bell (1991), have shown that "peer response techniques seemed to work well with upper intermediate and advanced ESL students in a college setting"(Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Saito, 1994).

In Mendonca and Johnson's (1994) peer conferences, "students asked questions, offered explanations, gave suggestions, restated what their peers had written or said, and corrected grammar mistakes" (p. 745). Through such cooperative learning, positive social relations among classmates are fostered and peers work "together with others toward a

common goal largely free from competition" (Sharan, 1990, p. 174). Many studies in L1 instructional settings have emphasized the cognitive approach to cooperative learning (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1998) and the cognitive benefits of peer reviews in so far as these benefits provide students with opportunities to assume a more active role in their own learning (Bames, 1976; Brief, 1984; Carl, 1981; Fonnan & Cazden, 1985). Cazden (1988) used the metaphor "discourse as catalyst", and Bames (1976) used the term "exploratory talk" which altogether support the Vygotskyian notion that language use, whether written or oral, is deeply rooted social act and, therefore, that peer interactions bring together the cognitive and social aspects of language by allowing peers to construct meaning within the context of social interaction (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994, p. 746). Lantolf and others (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002) suggest that L2 learners can achieve higher levels of linguistic knowledge by receiving appropriate "scaffolding" eventually enabling the learners to be "self regulated" and allowing them to use the L2 independently and autonomously. See Rollinson (2005) and Min (2006) for detailed discussion on peer review as a valuable method for its cognitive, social, linguistic and affective benefit.

According to Brief (1984), conversing and writing during conferences are related because "the way they (L1 students) talk with each other determines the way they will think and the way they will write" (p. 642). Insights from the above L1 research, researchers in L2 instructional settings argue that L2 student conferences that take place during peer reviews enhance the development of L2 learning in general, not to mention their effect on L2 writing (Kroll, 1991; Leki, 1990; Mangelsdorf, 1989; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992).

Peer review process is not without problems whether in L1 setting (McKendy, 1990; Newkirk, 1984) or L2 setting (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Leki, 1990; Manglesdorf & Schlumberger, 1992). Leki (1990), for instance, warns that without careful instruction on how to carry out effective peer reviews, L2 students will continue to focus on surface errors while ignoring broader issues of meaning. According to Allaei and Connor (1990), Mukundan & Nimehchisalem (2011), the value of peer advice can be affected by cultural factors/differences and accordingly influence the success of peer reviews. Fujieda (2009) asserts that "cultural beliefs and assumptions have a strong impact on learners' behavior and peer feedback management" (p. 114).

The exact configuration and grouping of peer reviews can influence the type of peer interaction. Some researchers organize peer reviews in the form of peer response groups consisting of three or more students each, whereas others favor peer dyads consisting of two students

only. Every researcher chooses the configuration that suits his/her experiment although there has been argumentation for one method of organization against the other. To Mendonca and Johnson (1994),

> Peer response groups may in fact foster more varied peer feedback; however, research on peer review dyads has shown that such interactions not only foster learning but also allow students to enact a range of social roles, including receiving and giving advice, asking and answering questions, and acting as both novice and expert (P.747).

To recapitulate, the use of peer response technique is "supported by general theories of language learning, principles of cooperative learning, the cognitive process theory of writing, and theories of second language acquisition" (Tang & Tithecott, 1999, p. 21).

A final crucial point in L2 setting peer reviews is how much control writing teachers exert over peer reviews during writing instruction. In Freedman's (1987) study, the more teachers assign peer edit sheets, the more time students spend filling out the edit sheets than interacting with their peers. This means that if teachers want to get real benefits from applying peer reviews, then they need to be careful about maintaining control over students' territory. Any overwork allotted to teachers can easily influence the negotiations that occur during peer reviews, the instructor's role here should be one of facilitator and monitor.

 Although peer reviews have become a common activity in ESL writing, there are only a few relevant investigations of Arabic speaking learners and fewer in Saudi Arabian context (Al-Hazmi &Scholfield, 2007; Jahin, 2012). Jahin (2012) reports positive impacts of peer reviewing on writing apprehension level and essay writing ability of Saudi prospective EFL teachers. This study investigates, through "peer response model" (PRM) and "monitor prompt model" (MPM), the effect of the negotiations that occur during peer reviews (student-student dyad) on the subsequent revision activities of Saudi L2 university students.

Problem of the Study

The following paragraphs describe the problem of this study from different angles.

The problem of this study stems from lack of interaction and collaboration in the target language (TL). It is an established fact that our students in this foreign or second language context in Qassim University

use their native language (NL) much more as compared to their TL. Most of the interaction takes place in Arabic which restricts the use of the TL.

With the enrollment of large numbers of students in English Departments at the college of Arts, in recent years, in Qassim university and the difficulty of grouping these students and of providing them with qualified writing instructors, it has become urgent to introduce and apply insights from cognitive psychology, sociocultural perspectives and theories of language learning in order to promote such learning in our students. However, student-teacher writing conferences are challenging due to the large number of students.

It has been noticed by the researcher that students seldom interact with instructors. If they do, they initiate their questions in Arabic. They only ask but rarely introduce to what they say, and they hardly comment on what is said.

One of the consequences of the enrollment of large numbers of students is lack of negotiation and communication of genuine ideas on the part of our students when they write. The latter have viewed writing as a one-shot activity in which communication through ideas is either de-emphasized or utterly ignored (Zamel, 1982, 1985).

So, why not exploit student-to-student verbal interaction during much of class time and direct it toward helping our students become more effective writers in the composition pedagogy?

Teachers are still teachers; they have deep-rooted beliefs that they are the authorities in the teaching-learning situation. In terms of writing, they still make assumptions about the text and take control of it. This, among other things, represents a permanent problem. So why not go to the source and let peers hold conferences and reach a consensus that would, hopefully, be closer to the teacher's assumption about the text?

Although peer reviews have become a common activity in L2 instruction and despite what social, cognitive, and linguistic knowledge they offer, to the best of my knowledge, no researchers of Qassim University investigated the problem. In depth research is still needed to broaden our understanding of the nature of the interactions that occur during peer response groups (three or more students) or peer dyads (student-student) reviews and to determine the extent to which such interactions shape L2 students' revision activities.

Rationale

The linguistic logic underlying this study stems from the "theory of attention" which was termed by Rutherford (1987), Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985), and Sharwood Smith (1981) "consciousness raising" (CR) or "input enhancement". Rutherford defined it as "the drawing of the learner's attention to features of the target language" (p. 189). Rutherford's beliefs go "back to the Middle Ages, where grammatical study was regarded as a central discipline" (Johnson, 1996, p. 105). Schmidt (1990, 1994) concluded that "noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversion of input into intake for learning" (1994, p. 17); and then "conscious processing is a necessary condition for one step in the language learning process, and is facilitative for other aspects of learning" (1990, p. 131). Ellis (1990) also said that "learners who receive formal instruction, outperform those who do not" (p. 171). Ellis (2011) argues that retrieval and use of explicit knowledge may indirectly facilitate L2 development. Krashen (1982) has defined learning, versus acquisition, as "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them" (p. 10).

More recent studies in cognitive psychology and second language acquisition suggest that attention to formal features in the input plays a vital role toward a reviewed output (Schmidt 1990, 1995; Tomlin & Villa, 1994; Robinson, 1995). The aim of this study was to address that issue of noticing through use of peer response. The study did not intend to include peer conversation or meta-talking after composing first drafts on the part of the students. It was designed to draw learners' attention to follow certain peer review steps (see peer response model (PRM)) and then alter their outputs by following certain prompts (see Appendix 1). The prompts function as catalyst for language structures embedded in students' written texts and students are involved in text reconstruction tasks (Izumi, 1990, 2000; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara & Fearnow ,1990) i.e.,

> The activity of producing the target language may prompt
> L2 learners to recognize their linguistic problems and bring
> relevant aspects of the L2 to their attention.

The subjects' first drafts in this research represented language input which was called by Krashen (1972a, 1982) acquisition or unconscious knowledge of the L2. Work here concentrated on L2 outputs, called by Krashen (ibid.) learning or conscious knowledge and is in no way contradicting input but both are in complementary distribution. Output is used here as a vehicle to promote language acquisition by making

learners cognizant of their problems and to do something about those problems, for example, to seek out relevant input with more focused attention, to look for alternative means to express the given intention in the target language, and to modify or alter their input upon receiving peer response.

Significance of the Study

Like their native-language counterparts, EFL/ESL teachers hold the belief that students rarely revise the text before submitting it. In responding to their student's writing, EFL/ESL teachers "often reflect the application of a single ideal standard rather than criteria that take into account how composing constraints can affect writing performance" (Zamel, 1985, p. 79). Teachers sometimes "misread the text", and they could have understood the student if, in Zamel's words, "the student (had) read the paper aloud" (p. 86), teachers' responses to students' writing could make students' compositions "less coherent", teachers commonly respond to certain problems but not others and their reactions seem arbitrary and idiosyncratic.

The significance of this study, then, was twofold; first, it attempted to eliminate teachers' deep-rooted misconceptions and long-held assumptions about student writing. Such misconceptions generated by remarks and comments that are, in most cases, confusing, arbitrary, and inaccessible. Second, this study aimed at introducing peer response technique as a substitute to teacher response technique in ESL writing. So, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Were students positive about peer response?
2. Did they favour peer response to teacher response?
3. What social benefits did the students get as they worked together?
4. What cognitive benefits did the students get as they worked together?
5. What linguistic benefits did the students get as they worked together?
6. Did these input-output activities result in improved production of ESL composition?

Finding answers to the above questions would pinpoint the peer response technique and highlight its importance to Saudi university students in general and Qassimi female students in particular so that they may obtain a handy and actual feedback.

Hypotheses

1. Advanced female students enrolled in levels seven & eight college of Arts & Science in Onaizah city have been evaluated according to "Teacher response technique" in writing throughout their previous years in college.
2. These students have never been introduced to either "peer response groups" or "peer review dyads".
3. Subjects would be able to modify and alter their first drafts by providing improved outputs due to noticing or attention given by their peer dyads.

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects in this study were 50 advanced female students, representing the experimental group, enrolled in a writing class in levels seven & eight Department of English, College of Science & Arts, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The subjects were a homogenous group whose grades during their academic study ranged between "Good" and "Very Good". All the students willingly participated in the experiment. They all had their previous education in Saudi schools where English is taught as a foreign language and they all speak, read and write Arabic as their first language. The control group was 50 advanced female students enrolled in the same levels and same department. They were evaluated according to Knapp's (1965) composition checklist (see Appendix 3).

Instrumentation and Data Collection

This study utilized three sources of data: students' written texts which were in the form of drafts and reviews, monitor prompts (see Appendix 1) which involve the conscious representation of pedagogical rules, and a post questionnaire (see Appendix 2) answered by the subjects. Students' drafts and reviews were graded holistically out of 10 marks each and the questionnaire was analyzed to identify the effect of revisions on the written texts and to probe the students' attitude toward peer response.

The tools of the study meant to explore the following questions:

1. How did L2 students use the monitor prompts to write comments for their peers?
2. How did L2 students use their peers' comments in their revision

activities?

3. What were L2 students' perceptions of the usefulness of peer reviews?
4. Were L2 students going to read to each other primarily for errors or for ideas or for both?

The Monitor Prompt Model

The monitor prompt model for ESL writing students has been adapted from Saito (1994) and applied to this study (see Appendix 1). The idea was derived from earlier analyses of the thinking processes that skilled ESL students use when they write in their second language (Gumming, 1989, 1990) and also from Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model of "procedural facilitation" to enhance cognitive activities while composing. The function of the model is analogous to that of Krashen's (1975, 1977a) "monitor model" for adult second language performance. The monitor prompts claim that adult second language performance have two means of internalizing the rules of a target language: (1) language acquisition, which is primarily subconscious, is not influenced by overt teaching or error correction and is very similar to primary language acquisition in children, (2) language learning, which involves the conscious representation of pedagogical rules, and is influenced by teaching and error detection. Like Krashen's (1977a) model, the prompts hypothesize that learning is available to the adult second language performer only as a monitor -that is, ESL adult learners use conscious grammar only to alter the output of the acquired writing skill. The tips in the model are meant to help peers accomplish consciousness of social, cognitive, and linguistic knowledge toward producing modified and revised essays.

Conduct of the Study

The experimental group was asked to write a composition (see topic below). Then, students' drafts were corrected holistically by three raters. The results of the drafts represented the pretest scores for this group. After that, these students were introduced to the study by the researcher and they were also briefed on the procedure of the study. The briefing was followed by a training session in which the researcher explained to the students how to use the monitor prompts (see Appendix1) after having each partner read her draft aloud while the other took notes. Students were instructed by the researcher to refer to all of these prompts while they read, listen, or write to each other, and then to use them for feedback. Throughout the study, the instructor's role was that of facilitator and monitor. She introduced the topic for the composition as follows:

At certain times in our lives we come under the influence of a person who affects us in important and beneficial ways. Write an essay of 400 - 500 words in which you identify such a person in your own life. Explain how that person came to influence your life. Give a clear and detailed illustration of a specific change or specific changes that resulted because of that person's influence on you (Gregg, 1993, pp. 26-27).

Procedures in the peer response sessions are based on a model described by Elbow (1973) and summarized by Tang and Tithecott (1999) and adapted to this study in Table (1) below:

Table 1: The Peer Response Model

Step	Author's Activities	Peer's Activities
1.	Reads essay aloud	Listens attentively-no writing
2.	Self corrects if any	Writes down general impression of essay
3.	Reads essay aloud again	Listens and writes down specific responses to essay
4.	Listens to and takes down notes of peer feedback	Peer reports
5.	Revises essay	

Using monitor prompts (See Appendix 1) as catalyst, the first student in each peer dyad reads her essay through from beginning to end while the other listens attentively without taking notes. Once the first reading is completed, the second student takes a few minutes to write her reaction to the essay as she has understood it within the framework of the monitor prompts. The author, during this stage, may jot down anything in her text that might need to be changed. Then the same essay is read a second time. During this second reading the second student writes down other specific responses to the essay.

After the second reading, the second student comments orally on the essay referring to the notes she has taken. The author listens to and writes down all comments; positive as well as negative. Once the author

has received and has written all comments, it is then the next student's turn to present her writing for response. Finally, authors revise their essays and present their reviews to the teacher for grading. This step represented the posttest scores for the experimental group.

The benefits of choosing the above peer response model is linked to Vygotsky's (1986) views of speech, which he defines as a "self-monitoring, or thinking aloud which is intermediate between public utterances and inner speech" (p. 94). This model provides students with the amount of time needed for oral/aural interaction. The peer dyad represents a social institution bringing together language, thought, and action. Another benefit is that speaking about writing gives students further opportunities for practice in the target language for negotiating meaning.

The control group was asked to write a composition on the same topic that was introduced to the experimental group. Compositions were corrected holistically out of ten marks by three raters. The results of the drafts represented the pretest scores for this group. Mistakes made by the students were "marked" in her paper and a "no negative mark" is given (Osman, 2002, p. 46). Teacher's positive notes were written to help students rewrite the composition. Students' rewrites were corrected holistically out of ten by the same raters and this represented the posttest scores for the control group.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data in this study depended on qualitative, quantitative, and interpretative parts. The qualitative part included description of students' perceptions about peer reviews and the usefulness of different kinds of feedback. This analysis was based on students' answers to the items of the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). The quantitative part depended on statistical analysis of students' scores on both drafts and reviews. This quantitative part included both the experimental and control groups.

The following section provides the results of the study.

First: Qualitative Data

1. Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire

a) The subjects' responses to the first section of the questionnaire (section 1: feedback) were stated, classified and summed up. The instruction to

that section was: "Please circle one choice that best describes the usefulness of each type of feedback and please write down reasons". The following are the types of feedback that were dealt with in this study together with the students' responses.

Table 2: Subjects' Responses to Section 1 of the Questionnaire

Type of Feedback	Students' Responses				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Totally Useless	Useless	Neither Useless nor Useful	Quite Useful	Very Useful
1- Teacher correction (to grammar)	2	1	1	17	29
2- Teacher correction (with comment)	2	-	1	12	35
3- Peer correction (st.-st.)	-	-	6	33	11
4- Self correction	-	1	17	25	7
5- Correction using prompts	-	-	1	21	28

To sum up, the quantitative results of the first section of the questionnaire in Table 1 above showed that the majority of the subjects viewed all types of feedback as quite useful for them in their writing. From the 50 subjects, 17 students considered "teacher correction to grammar" as quite useful and 29 students considered it as very useful. Those students were perhaps exposed to teacher correction in their essays in their earlier stages of learning. This result supports hypothesis 1 in this study. Regarding "teacher correction with comments", the qualitative analysis above showed very similar results. From the 50 subjects, 12 students considered teacher correction with comments as quite useful and 35 considered it as very useful.

As for "peer correction", the qualitative analysis in Table 2 above showed results which contradict hypothesis 2 in this study. It was surprising to find out that although it was hypothesized that those students have never been introduced to either "peer response groups" or "peer review dyads", 33 students out of the 50 subjects considered "peer

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correction (student-student)" as quite useful and 11 students considered it very useful. This is interesting as it showed that those students have preconceived ideas that no standard is better than the teachers' standards. To these students, 29 out of 50 and 35 out of 50 considered teacher correction as very useful, whereas 33 out of 50 and 25 out of 50 regarded peer correction as quite useful. What is more interesting is the fact that 28 out 50 found correction using prompts as practically very useful.

On the other hand, the students' choices regarding "self correction" were different from the previous types of corrections in the sense that "self correction" was viewed differently from "peer correction". Out of 50 subjects, 17 students considered it "neither useless nor useful", while 25 viewed it quite useful.

The overall results of the quantitative analysis of the last type of feedback "correction using prompts" showed almost equal results to "teacher correction". Rather, compared with the 17 and the 12 students who viewed "teacher correction to grammar" and "teacher correction with comments" respectively as "quite useful", 25 students viewed "self correction" as "quite useful" and 21 viewed "correction using prompts" as "quite useful" as well. Moreover, 28 students considered "correction using prompts" as "very useful", which was significant to this study. It was a significant result in the sense that it reflected the real response of the students in the post-questionnaire. It also showed a coefficient correlation between the students' views on "feedback" and "usefulness of prompts" on the one hand and their "improved outputs" on the other.

b) The subjects' responses to the second section of the post questionnaire (section 2: usefulness of prompts) were stated, classified, and summed up. The instruction to that section was; "Please circle one that best describes the usefulness of each type of the monitor prompts and please write down reasons". Table 3 below gives the students' responses to section 2 of the questionnaire. The following are the types of the monitor prompts together with the degree of the usefulness of each type.

Table 3: Subjects' Responses to Section 2 of the Questionnaire

Type of Prompt	Students' Responses				
	1	2	3	4	5

	Totally Useless	Useless	Neither Useless nor Useful	Quite Useful	Very Useful
1- Word	-	-	5	23	22
2- LI / L2	-	-	2	25	23
3- Goals	1	1	6	27	15
4- Fit	-	-	8	27	15
5- Rules	-	-	-	9	41

Table 3 above showed that it was obvious from the students' responses to the second section (usefulness of prompts) of the post questionnaire that the students were able to modify and alter their first drafts by providing "improved outputs" due to "noticing" or "attention" given by their peer dyads. This statement confirms hypothesis 3 in this study.

The qualitative analysis of how far the students benefited from the different types of prompts in Table 3 above showed that out of the 50 subjects, 23 and 22 found "word" prompt as "quite useful" and "very useful" respectively. In the "monitor prompt model" (see Appendix 1), the question which the peer dyad asked was: "is this the right word or expression, and whether there were any possible alternatives"? Enhancing cognitive activities and making students conscious of new and other possible words made learning available to the students and they used words to alter their output of their already acquired writing skill.

Regarding "L1/L2" prompt, out of the 50 subjects, 25 and 23 students viewed this prompt as "quite useful" and "very useful" respectively. The question which the peer dyad asked was: "How do I say it in my language? Does it make sense in English?"

As for "goals" and fit" prompts, students' responses showed similar results. Out of the 50 subjects, 27 and 15 students in both prompts viewed "goals" and "fit" as "quite useful" and "very useful" respectively. The questions that students addressed to each other were: "Will people understand this? What do I want to tell my reader? Does this part fit with the other parts?" Students were able to ask these questions, to offer explanations, to give suggestions, and to restate what their peers had written or said (Menconda & Johnson, 1994). The usefulness of the "rules" prompt showed better results than the other prompts in Table 3 above.

Out of the 50 subjects, 9 students considered "rules" prompt as "quite useful". Moreover, 41 students found that this prompt was "very useful". This meant that they used this prompt often when they tried to alter their outputs.

The following are some of the actual drafts written by the subjects and their altered outputs:

1. Draft: But, I did not give the right answer to myself.

Altered output: I did not give myself the right answer.

2. Draft: some of my friends left me and I was love them a lot.

Altered output: ... some of my friends left me although I loved them very much.

3. Draft: When I received his advice ...

Altered output: By following his advice ...

4. Draft: ... I doesn't forget my father ...

Altered output: ... I didn't forget my father ...

5. Draft: ... kindly and sometimes be harsh.

Altered output: ... kindly and sometimes treated me harshly.

Second: Quantitative Data

The following table represents the scores of the subjects; the control group (50 students) and the experimental group (50 students) in the first drafts and the rewrites respectively.

Table 4: Scores of Subjects

Groups / Test		Control Group	Experimental Group
Pre	M	6.14	6.16
	SD	0.66	0.64
Post	M	6.98	8.34
	SD	0.62	0.62

The following figure illustrates the subjects' performance in the pre- and post tests for the two groups; the control and the experimental:
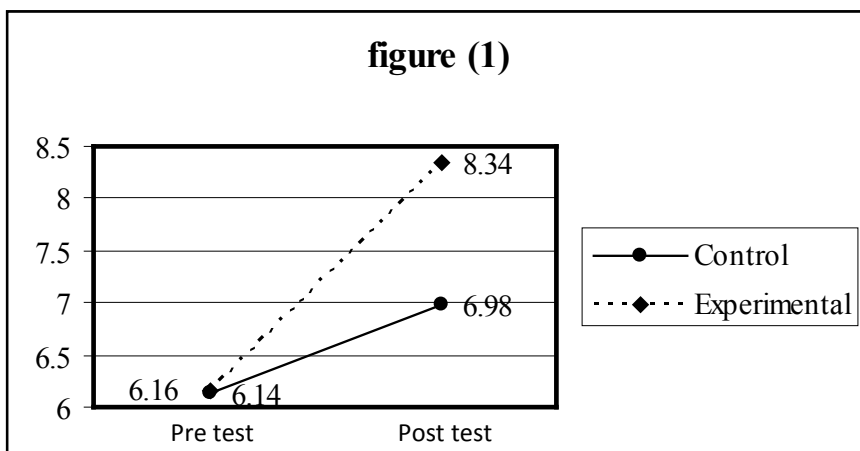

Figure 1: Subjects' Performance in Pre/Post Tests for Two Groups

The above figure clearly shows that there is a statistically significant increase in the improvement of writing with regard to the experimental group. Both groups showed development but the experimental group was much better. The means in the scores of the control group changed from 6.14 to 6.98 whereas with the experimental they changed from 6.16 to 8.34 which is a statistically significant mean score.

To determine the significance of differences between the means of the pretest scores of the subjects in the two groups; the control and the experimental groups, the T-test was applied.

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviation of Subject's Scores of Pretest for both Groups

Comparison Groups	Mean	SD	N.	T.	Sign. level
Control Group	6.14	0.66	50	0.15	Insign.
Experimental Group	6.16	0.64	50		

N1 = N2 = N = 50

Total = N1 +   N2 - 2 = 98

T =1.98   Significant at 0.05

    =2.63   Significant at 0.01

Table 5 above shows the significance of differences between the means of the scores of the subjects in the control and the experimental groups. The T-test score indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the two groups in the pretest. This also means that they are almost equal to each other.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviation of Subjects' Scores of Posttest for both Groups

Comparison Groups	Mean	SD	N.	T.	Sign. level
Control Group	6.98	0.62	50	10.46	0.01
Experimental Group	8.34	0.62	50		

N1   = N2 = N   = 50

Total = N1 +   N2 - 2 = 98

T = 1.98   Significant at 0.05

    = 2.63 Significant   at 0.01

Table 6 above shows the significance of differences between the means of the scores of the subjects in the control and the experimental groups. The T-test score indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the posttest scores of the students in the control and the experimental group. It is obvious also that the experimental group made improvements in the writing performance. The SD clearly shows that both groups improved. This improvement was in very close degrees and was not deviated.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviation of Subjects' Scores in
Control Group both before and after Experiment

Comparison Groups	Mean	SD	N.	T.	Sign. level
Control Group Pretest	6.14	0.64	50	6.46	0.01
Control Group Posttest	6.98	0.62	50		

N1   = N2 = N = 50

Total = N1 + N2 - 2 = 98

T =1.98   Significant at 0.05

   = 2.63   Significant   at   0.01

Table 7 above clearly shows that within the control group, the subjects benefited from teacher correction and they learned. The T-Test score indicates that there are differences between the results of the pretest and posttest scores. The differences are statistically significant.

Table 8: Means and Standard Deviation of Subjects' Scores in
Experimental Group both before and after Experiment

Comparison Groups	Mean	SD	N.	T.	Sign. level
Experimental Group Pretest	6.16	0.64	50	16.77	0.01
Experimental Group Posttest	8.34	0.62	50		

N1   = N2 = N   = 50

Total =   N1 + N2 -   2 = 98

T   = 1.98   Significant at   0.05

     = 2.63   Significant at   0.01

Table 8 above clearly shows that within the experimental group, the subjects greatly improved. The T-test score indicates that there are differences between the results of the pretest and posttest scores. These differences are statistically significant.

Limitations and Conclusions

Depending on the given situation in which we had an experimental group of 50 Qassimi female university students in the Department of English, the question of peer response is almost limited to peer dyads. No attempt had been done/made before, to the researcher's knowledge, to draw students' attention to learning through peer response groups or peer dyads by other Qassimi researchers. In this study, no native-speaking interlocutors have been attempted to help promote language acquisition or raise consciousness. No recording has-been done on the student-student negotiations. No teacher-student conferences regarding students' input, students' output, or text reconstruction have been applied. The teachers' role was of facilitator and organizer, before and after the writing process. Students have been briefed on how to go through the steps of the PRM and on how to apply the prompts in the MPM. They used the two models after they had finished their first drafts in order to alter, reshape, and promote their reviews. The results of the experiment reflected the significance of the use of peer response to Qassimi female university students at the present time and showed what it means to them.

The question of peer response is in fact a broad topic. In this study, it reflects the presupposition that there existed language acquisition. Students had unconscious knowledge about language. With this acquisition (comprehensible input), they produced output. In the presence of the peer dyads, Sharwood Smith's (1981) "consciousness-raising" or "input enhancement" has taken place. Each of peer dyads listened to the other and both became aware of the content. From the actual students' writings, each student took notes and each informed the other about prompts that modified the output. From the actual answers of the students on the questionnaire, the students in all peer dyads were positive

about peer response. They felt socially close to each other and they preferred peer to teacher feedback.

Cognitively speaking, they learned from each other through the MPM. They said they learned new words. They remembered pedagogical rules and reinforced their use of them. They negotiated the expressions that fit the situation and over and above all, the linguistically correct and socially acceptable ways of saying and writing in the target language. Finally, with peer dyads, the process worked well with Qassimi female university students. Now peer response awaits application.

It is true from the above statistical analyses that the seaming activities performed by the subjects in this study promoted the development of writing skill in these subjects with regard to both the control and the experimental groups. Although the study concentrated on conscious, social, overt peer feedback, very little was dealt with regarding the actual cognitive processes involved in students' drafts or reviews. The only attempt to deal with cognitive processes was the use of the monitor prompts, not to observe, analyze, or determine what cognitive activities come about while composing (Emig, 1971; Stallard, 1972) but to enhance these cognitive activities so that they could be put to conscious knowledge and therefore could be negotiated, deserved and fed.

Emphasis has been on the benefits of peer cooperation in language learning. The benefits that were significant, as peculiar to Qassimi female L2 learners of English, included: student-student social interaction. Through PRM steps, self correction helped in triggering self-confidence and peer feedback, increased social relations that came about from students' answers to the post questionnaire, and enhanced vocabulary through usefulness of word prompts, fit, and rules prompts. Students learned more vocabulary, as in Krashen's (1979b) position, "more vocabulary means more comprehension of input, which in turn means more acquisition of syntax" (p. 163). The subjects and procedures were, as it was aimed, properly structured; student writers assisted each other and created a "scaffolding" (Cazden, 1988) so that each two (dyads) together were able to accomplish the task of writing within the larger group (50 students) and under the circumstance given in this study.

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Appendix 1

Monitor Prompt Model for ESL Writing Students

1. Word: Is this the right word or expression? Possible words are ...

2. L1/L2:   How do I say it in my language? Does it make sense in English?

3. Goals: Will people understand this? What do I want to tell my reader?

4. Fit? :   Does this part fit with the other parts?

5. Rules: Do I know a grammar or spelling rule for this? The rule is ...

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

The following questionnaire, adapted from Saito (1994), consists of two sections Please answer all items in both sections

1. Feedback

There are different ways to provide feedback on student writing. Please circle one choice that best describes the usefulness of each type of feedback and please write down reasons:

	Totally Use-less	Use-less	Neither useless nor useful	Quite Use-ful	Very Use-ful
1. Teacher correction (of grammatical errors)	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					
2. Teacher correction with comments	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					
3. Peer correction (student-student)	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					
4. Self correction	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					
5. Correction using prompts	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					

2. Usefulness of Prompts

Please circle the one that best describes the usefulness of each type of the monitor prompts and please write down reasons:

	Totally Use-less	Use-less	Neither Useless nor Useful	Quite Use-Ful	Very Use-ful
1. Word	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					
2. L1/L2	1	2	3	4	5
Comment					

		1	2	3	4	5
3.	Goals	1	2	3	4	5
Comment						
4.	Fit?	1	2	3	4	5
Comment						
5.	Rules	1	2	3	4	5
Comment						

Appendix 3

Knapp's (1965) Composition Checklist

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus: _____