

## Complementarity of Peer and Teacher Feedback in Korean High School English Classes

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The present study is interested in examining the issue of complementarity of peer feedback and teacher feedback as employed in Korean secondary English classes. Specifically, the complementarity of the two feedback sources was examined in three respects: the nature of feedback, the incorporation of feedback into revision, and the effects of feedback on the improvement of the revised drafts. The overall findings seem to support the complementarity of the two types of feedback. First, teacher feedback was predominantly concerned with the surface level of writing, while some of the peer feedback concerned content and organization. Second, almost all of the teacher feedback was accepted or adapted in revision, while the students in the peer feedback group were selective in choosing which peer feedback to use in revisions. Lastly, the quality of the second drafts of the two groups did not significantly differ, and both the teacher and peer feedback were found to be effective in promoting revisions. Despite a few methodological limitations, these findings indicate that Korean EFL secondary learners could benefit from peer feedback in different ways from teacher feedback.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Seventh National English Curriculum from the Ministry of Education (1997) states that English education aims to help students become interested and confident in English and to enable them to communicate in English. Accordingly, the textbooks, syllabuses, and classroom practices of the secondary English classes have been changed to enhance students' communicative competence in all four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, with the overwhelming emphasis on techniques to develop listening and reading skills, writing has gone somewhat neglected in the secondary

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English education (Byung-Bin Im, 2002). This can be accounted for by many reasons. The first and foremost reason could be the washback effects of the Korean College Scholastic Ability Test, which includes only listening and reading questions. Another important reason for the scarcity of writing instruction in secondary schools can be that “responding to the student’s writings takes much time and demands a great deal of intellectual activity” (Eui-Kap Lee, 2000, p. 194). In other words, given the number of classes taught and the number of students in each class, English teachers in secondary schools might feel overwhelmed by the amount of the task of responding to student writings. One way to alleviate such burdens of the task is to employ peer feedback along with teacher feedback.

Over the last thirty years, many writing instructors in ESL contexts and Korean tertiary English classes have used some form of peer feedback out of the belief that second language writers can learn something of value by looking critically at peers’ writing, and that they may acquire a wider sense of their audience by receiving peers’ feedback (Hvitfeldt, 1986; Nelson & Murphy, 1993). Given the popularity of peer feedback, a relatively large amount of research has sought to assess the effects of peer feedback upon revision in the ESL and EFL contexts (e.g., Berger, 1990; Caulk, 1994; Yunkyong Cho, 2005; Mendonça & Johnson, 1994; Young-in Moon, 2000; Nelson & Murphy, 1992, 1993). Particularly, given the need for good criterion with which to determine the effectiveness and usefulness of peer feedback in L2 writing classrooms, researchers often have turned to a comparison of teacher feedback and peer feedback (e.g., Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Paulus, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000). Yet, few studies have compared teacher feedback and peer feedback as they are employed in Korean EFL secondary classes. The present study is interested in examining the issue of complementarity of peer feedback and teacher feedback as employed in Korean secondary English classes.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The research on the comparison between teacher feedback and peer feedback in the L2 writing classrooms perhaps has been conducted out of the presumption that the validity of peer feedback becomes questionable if learners and teachers have different norms with regard to good writing; that is, if they constitute distinct interpretive communities (Fish, 1980).<sup>1</sup> This underlying assumption does not seem to be justified, however, since we cannot infer simply on the basis of a certain divergence between the two sources of

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1 According to Fish (1980), distinct interpretive communities have different norms when it comes to producing and evaluating texts; thus, “a reading that might be appropriate in one community might not be considered appropriate in another” (p. 284).

feedback that peer feedback is inferior to teacher feedback. Rather, the results of the previous studies have observed that both types of feedback can be equally plausible ways of viewing a text; that is, teacher feedback and peer feedback complement each other, providing students with two different perspectives. Such a complementarity of the two feedback sources has been observed in each step of the revision process: problem identification, diagnosis, feedback incorporation, and the quality of revised drafts.

## 1. Readers' Identification and Diagnosis of Problems

Conducted at the stage of identifying problems in writings, Nelson and Murphy's (1992) study investigated whether the four members of a group of low-intermediate ESL students were able to identify two major problems as these were pointed out by two raters in 22 writings. They found that in 91 percent of the compositions, the students were able to identify at least one of the two problems pointed out by the two raters. This finding seems to suggest that peer feedback can be recommended even for low-intermediate students. In addition, the students were found to be able to identify macrolevel problems in organization and content development, a finding that should lessen teachers' worries about students' tendency to focus more on grammar than on content or organization (Leki, 1990).

A different way of assessing students' ability to identify problems in writings is to determine how well they are able to identify good writing. Devenney (1989) compared 39 ESL college students against 13 ESL teachers in the ranking of seven compositions and in the criteria they used to evaluate them. The results show that the correlation of ranking made by the students and the teachers did not reach a level of statistical significance, and that the difference between the criteria that the two groups used was significant at the .001 level. These results appear to indicate that teachers and students constitute different interpretive communities. In order for the results to be validated, however, homogeneity ideally would have to be ensured within each group. The results of the statistical analysis show that neither of the groups constituted a homogeneous interpretive community. Hence, students and teachers should not be perceived as distinct groups with fixed and opposing concepts of good writing.

The complementarity of peer and teacher feedback is also observed at the stage of readers' diagnosing problems. Caulk (1994) analyzed 25 ESL students' written comments on 28 writings of their peers, and compared them to the comments made by the teacher and researcher. The finding indicates that the students were able to provide their peers with helpful advice; 89 percent of the writings received peer suggestions that the teacher considered to be valid, and 60 percent of them contained suggestions the teacher did not make but considered valuable. However positive this finding may be, it should be noted that all the procedures were carried out solely by the teacher and researcher, thus leading to

the risk of losing its reliability. In addition, a calculation of percentages based on each of the suggestions, rather than on the entire writing, might have provided more valuable and accurate information. Nonetheless, Caulk's (1994) finding that the teacher's comments constituted generalizable advice whereas students' comments were very specific, suggests that the two sources of feedback can indeed provide a writer with different ways of viewing the suggestions.

## 2. Writers' Incorporation into Revision and Quality of Revised Drafts

The studies which examined how much feedback writers would incorporate into revision have reported that students tended to use teacher feedback more than peer feedback. And yet, it is warned that their results should be interpreted with caution due to their methodological defects. For instance, comparing peer feedback and teacher feedback, Connor and Asenavage (1994) examined two peer-feedback sessions of two groups, with each group consisting of four ESL college students. The results show that only 5 percent of the total revisions resulted from peer suggestions, whereas 35 percent were based on teacher comments and the rest on either their own opinion or that of others (e.g., tutors). This finding seems to reflect that students are aware of the teacher-as-evaluator. Quite simply, the teacher who will ultimately evaluate their writing is an inevitable reality for students. Furthermore, such a low impact of peer feedback upon revisions in their study does seem to challenge the argument that peer comments "provide more compelling impetus" for revision (Clifford, 1981, p. 50).

This interpretation could be rejected, however, because Connor and Asenavage's (1994) study seems at risk of losing the validity of its results. The students were asked to read their essays to the group without providing the reviewers with a copy of them, and the reviewers were asked to provide oral feedback. Such procedures cause one to wonder whether the reviewers with only limited listening ability were capable of understanding the essay and offering useful advice, and whether the writers were actually taking notes of their peers' oral comments to use them in later revision. In addition, in Connor and Asenavage's study peer oral feedback was compared to teacher written feedback; thus, the results inevitably reflect the combined effects of the modes (i.e., oral vs. written) and the sources (i.e., peer vs. teacher) of feedback.

Similar confounding effects can be found in Tsui and Ng's (2000) and Paulus' (1999) studies. Both studies were similar in that the students revised their writings once after peer feedback and again after teacher feedback. The findings showed that most students used more teacher feedback than peer feedback when revising their drafts. These findings, however, should be interpreted with caution due to several problems with the research design. First of all, some possible confounding effects between the source and time of

feedback could have existed. In other words, the students received teacher feedback at the last stage before submitting the final draft. Aware that they were to submit the final draft, which would ultimately be evaluated by the teacher, the students may have invested more efforts into revising and polishing their writing than they would have on the first draft (Abbuhl, 2005). Besides, Tsui and Ng (2000) failed to control the number of the drafts that feedback was provided for: the students received teacher feedback twice on the same writing (i.e., on the second and third draft). By doing so, the students may have had a wider pool to uptake teacher feedback than when receiving it only once.

Furthermore, even if peer feedback is not more compelling than teacher feedback, nonetheless it clearly does provide motivation for revision, especially when students are given peer feedback alone. Thus, Berger (1990), in examining 46 ESL college students, half of whom were given peer feedback and half not, found a greater number of revisions in the former group. In a similar way, Mendonça and Johnson (1994), after examining one peer-feedback session of six dyads of ESL graduate students in an EAP writing course at a US university, found that in 53 percent of the cases, students implemented their peer's suggestions; in 10 percent of the cases, they did not incorporate the suggested changes; and in the rest of the cases, they made changes not mentioned by their peers. Based on the results of these two studies, where peer feedback was the only source of feedback, it can be argued that students incorporate about half of their peers' suggestions in their revisions.

The fundamental purpose of revision subsequent to feedback is to promote the creation of subsequent drafts of higher quality. Several studies (e.g., Chaudron, 1984; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Partridge, 1981) were interested in examining the overall improvement of revised drafts and have yielded conflicting findings. An early study by Partridge (1981, cited in Chaudron, 1984) found that teacher feedback was more effective than peer feedback in improving revised drafts, and that the students "doubted the quality and accuracy of their peers' corrections and comments" (pp. 3-4). Later research, however, yielded rather different results. For instance, Chaudron (1984) examined the differences in scores for a first and a revised draft on two writing assignments done by 23 ESL students, with each essay being given either of the two kinds of feedback but not both. He found that neither teacher nor peer feedback was superior in terms of promoting improvement in revision.

A similar result was also reported by a more recent study carried out by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992). They examined two writing assignments done by two groups of college-level learners of French having English as their L1, with one group of 14 learners being given peer oral feedback and the other 16 learners being given a teacher's written comments. A comparison of the mean scores for the final drafts between the two groups reveals no significant difference. Hence, the findings of Chaudron (1984) and Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) suggest that although peer feedback does not produce remarkably

higher-quality compositions, it does not result in inferior writing, either.

This interpretation could be challenged, however, because the two studies seem at risk of losing the validity of their results. First, the comparison of the two groups by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992) involved two different factors: peer vs. teacher feedback, and oral vs. written comments. Thus, the results perhaps show the mixed effects of these two factors. Furthermore, the researchers measured the differences between the two groups only on the basis of final drafts, not in the improvement between-drafts; thus, the results cannot provide us with an idea of the exact impact of peer and teacher feedback on the improvement of revised drafts. Furthermore, Chaudron (1984) notes that the students showed a great deal of variability in the improvement of their final drafts. This suggests that, rather than the sources of feedback, some uncontrolled factors may have intervened to cloud the results.

Nonetheless, the complementarity of teacher and peer feedback, as reported by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992), deserves our careful attention. They found that the learners who received teacher feedback were more concerned with the grammatical accuracy of their revisions, whereas the learners given peer feedback made more revisions with respect to content and organization. This finding may serve as evidence that peer feedback does indeed complement teacher feedback, with each sort of feedback leading students to attend to different aspects of their writing.

### 3. Research Questions

The review of the studies that compared peer and teacher feedback in problem identification, diagnosis, feedback incorporation, and the quality of revised drafts indicates that peer feedback can complement teacher feedback. It should be noted, however, that most of the studies discussed thus far were concerned with ESL students. Of course, there have been a number of studies examining the use of each type of feedback in EFL writing classrooms. Many journals and conference proceedings have reported the results of the use of teacher feedback *or* peer feedback in the Korean EFL writing classrooms (e.g., Yunkyung Cho, 2005; Young-suh Kim, 1996; Jeong-Won Lee & Young-Joo Hong, 2001; Young-in Moon, 2000; Mi Jeong Song, 1998). However, research on the comparison between peer feedback and teacher feedback is scarce. Furthermore, those studies conducted in the Korean EFL contexts dealt mostly with tertiary learners, and very few studies have examined secondary EFL learners who are relatively less mature and less competent L2 writers.

For this reason, the present study is interested in whether peer feedback can complement teacher feedback when they are provided for Korean EFL high school students. Specifically,

the complementarity of the two feedback sources is examined in three respects<sup>2</sup>:

- (1) Does peer feedback differ from teacher feedback in terms of its nature?
- (2) Does peer feedback facilitate as many revisions as teacher feedback does?
- (3) Does peer feedback help improve the quality of the second drafts as much as teacher feedback does?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 1. Participants and Setting

The participants in this study were 48 female students in two intact second-grade English classes and two female English teachers at a high school in Busan, Korea. All the students were on the science track and planning to take the College Scholastic Aptitude Test to apply to a university. One of the two teachers was the English teacher of those students and conducted four class sessions for this study. At an informal interview conducted prior to the experiment, she emphasized the importance of writing instruction in secondary English classes and suggested that class activities to help students improve their writing ability could include on-line writing games and group journal writing. She also mentioned that teachers themselves might feel difficulty with providing feedback to students' writing and thus need cooperative work with native speakers. The other teacher provided feedback to the students' writing. The reason that another teacher, not the students' English teacher, was asked to provide feedback was to examine the nature of teacher feedback in a more objective way. She had had twelve years of teaching experience in secondary schools. At an informal interview conducted prior to the experiment, the teacher emphasized that a good piece of writing should convey in a very clear way what the writer wants to express, and that feedback would be defined as correcting grammar and expressions in order to make content understood clearly.

The two classes were randomly assigned to a teacher feedback group (N=21) and a peer feedback group (N=21). In order to ensure the homogeneity of the two groups in terms of their general English ability, the average scores of two English achievement tests that they took for the midterm and final exam prior to the experiment were compared via an independent samples t-test. The results suggested that the two groups did not differ in their achievement test scores ( $t=-1.301$ ,  $p=.201$ ).

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<sup>2</sup> Although acknowledging that the comparison should also be made in terms of students' perceptions of the two feedback sources, the present study does not deal with this issue due to the space constraint.

## 2. Data Collection Procedures

The study took place for four curricular sessions over two weeks after the final exam period in December, 2005. The English teacher of the two classes administered all the class sessions. Prior to the experiment, one of the researchers had several meetings with the teacher to explain the purpose of the study and data collection procedures and to discuss appropriate teaching materials and writing topics. The researcher then asked the students in the two classes for their permission to participate in the present study after explaining the data collection procedures.

The writing topic chosen for the present study was “For or against using a cell phone at school,” which the teacher and the researchers thought would be a familiar topic for the students. The procedures for the teacher feedback group and peer feedback group were the same for the four class sessions except the third one. In the first session, the teacher explained to the students what a paragraph is and how it can be constructed, by asking them to engage in several activities adapted from those in Zemach and Islam (2005). The activities lasted for 30 minutes. The teacher then asked the students to write in the brainstorming activity sheet the five reasons why they were for or against using a cell phone at school. Those who did not finish this brainstorming activity were asked to do so at home.

In the second session, the students were asked to discuss the writing topic in a group with three or four members and then to write up their first draft individually for 30 minutes. After writing their first drafts, they were given a self-feedback checklist and asked to revise their own draft based on the checklist and submit the first draft and the checklist to the teacher.

In the third session, the two classes received different treatments. In the peer feedback class, as a number of writing researchers and teachers have emphasized the significance of training in order to enhance the effectiveness of peer feedback activities (Berg, 1999; Hyland, 2003; Liu & Hansen, 2002; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995), the students in the present study had a peer feedback training session. In this training session, the teacher brought a writing sample written by a student who did not participate in the present study and led the discussion based on a peer feedback training sheet. Particularly, the students were asked to discuss the structure of the paragraph, the consistency of the theme, and the accuracy of the sentences. The teacher also emphasized the usefulness of specific suggestions as opposed to vague and general statements, and advised the students to provide feedback on global concerns such as idea development and organization as opposed to local concerns such as grammar and mechanics. After this whole-class discussion, the students were asked to make a group of three or four members and to give feedback on their peers’ writings. They were provided with two or three peers’ first drafts and a peer feedback activity sheet, and



were instructed to fill out the activity sheet. In addition to the activity sheet, they were also asked to write comments directly on their peer's paper. This was followed by a peer discussion session during which peer comments were discussed in groups. In the meantime, the students in the teacher feedback class received their first drafts with their teacher's feedback, and the teacher explained the common errors the students had made.

In the last session, the two groups were asked to produce the second drafts on the basis of the written and oral comments they received. Table 1 is a diagrammatic representation of this writing cycle.

**TABLE 1**  
**The Writing Cycle of the Teacher and Peer Feedback Group**

Class session	Teacher feedback group	Peer feedback group
1 <sup>st</sup>	Explanation of the paragraph structure Activities on writing a paragraph Brainstorming activity: Making a list	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Brainstorming activity: Group discussion Drafting: Producing the first draft Self-revision based on self-check list	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Teacher feedback (written) Discussion of student errors	Peer feedback training Peer feedback (written) Peer discussion
4 <sup>th</sup>	Revision: Producing the second draft	

### 3. Data Analysis

The data analyzed in this study consisted of (a) students' first drafts, (b) written teacher/peer feedback, and (c) students' second drafts.<sup>3</sup> In order to examine whether peer feedback differs from teacher feedback in terms of their nature (Research Question 1), the researchers categorized peer and teacher feedback as global and local based on the coding scheme adapted from Elbow (1981). Global feedback concerns the development of ideas, audience, purpose, and organization of writing, while local feedback is related to word usage, grammar, and punctuation.<sup>4</sup> The interrater agreement was 99.2%. Teacher and peer feedback were also categorized as specific or vague feedback in order to examine the specificity of the feedback that the teacher or the students provided with regard to the writings. Specific feedback provides directions for revision in clear and concrete terms,

<sup>3</sup> The present study failed to record the discussion sessions and thus excluded oral feedback from the data analysis.

<sup>4</sup> The present study also observed other types of feedback such as evaluative and interpersonal responses (e.g., "Good!", "I like your writing!"). However, these types were not analyzed in the present study.

whereas vague feedback offers nonspecific and general comments. Again, the interrater agreement reached 98.9%.

The researchers then cross-examined the first drafts, the feedback from the teacher and the students, and the second drafts to analyze whether peer feedback facilitates as many revisions as teacher feedback (Research Question 2). When the change was traceable to either the comments on the peer feedback activity sheet or the comments written directly on the essay by the peer reviewer, a revision was considered to be the result of the peer feedback activity. The change which resulted from the comments written by the teacher, on the other hand, was regarded as the results of the teacher feedback. Furthermore, to confirm the source of revision, the students were asked to indicate the changes attributable to feedback and to explain the rationale for their revision.

After the source of revision in the second draft was identified, the writers' incorporation of feedback into revision was analyzed in terms of acceptance, adaptation, rejection, and deletion. The "acceptance" of peer suggestions refers to cases where the student-authors completely incorporated peer suggestions into revision, whereas "adaptation" refers to cases where they took peer suggestions into account but incorporated them in their own way. "Rejection" means that they did not accept peer suggestions, and "deletion" refers to cases in which they deleted the whole sentence or phrase involved with peer suggestions.

Lastly, in order to investigate whether peer feedback helps improve the quality of the second drafts as much as teacher feedback does (Research Question 3), the researchers independently scored the first and revised drafts based on an analytic scoring system adopted from Jacob, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Hughey (1981) and Hidetoshi and Tomoko (2004) that assesses the content, organization, and language in a piece of writing (For the analytic scoring system, refer to Appendix A). The overall interrater reliability was .94 as measured by Pearson product-moment correlation. Prior to comparing the scores of the second drafts written by the two groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted on the first draft scores of the two groups. The results suggested that the two groups significantly differed in their first draft scores ( $t=-2.503$ ,  $p=.017$ ). Therefore, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with the scores on the first draft as a covariate was performed to compare the second draft scores of the two groups.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Nature of Feedback**

One of the major reservations of employing peer feedback activities in writing classrooms is that student writers may not know what to look for in their peers' writing and

cannot give specific, helpful feedback (Ferris, 2003; Keh, 1990; Leki, 1990). In the present study, the students were found to be able to point out problems with content and organization of writing and to give specific responses to their peers' writing, possibly due to the appropriate training session provided prior to the peer feedback activity.

In order to examine what kind of feedback the high school students in the present study provided for their peers' writings and how their feedback differed from teacher feedback in terms of their characteristics, the researchers first categorized peer and teacher feedback (i) as global or local (Elbow, 1981) and then (ii) as specific or vague.<sup>5</sup> Let us discuss the results of the first categorization: global or local. Global feedback addresses the development of ideas, audience, purpose, and organization of writing, whereas local feedback concerns word usage, grammar, and punctuation, as shown in Examples (1) to (4).

Example (1): Global feedback [teacher feedback; S21022, L2-3<sup>6</sup>]

Text: Frankly speaking, students don't necessary cellular phones. They don't need them.

Feedback: 다음 문장(They don't need them)과 중복됨. [Translation: It expresses the same message as the next sentence ("They don't need them") does.]

Example (2): Global feedback [peer feedback; S20925, L1]

Text: [No text]

Feedback: 주제문이 없음. "Cellular phone is very useful." [Translation: There is no main thesis. "Cellular phone is very useful."]

Example (3): Local feedback [teacher feedback; S21003, L2-3]

Text: If cellular phone is rang in class, many student are injured.

Feedback: If cellular phone rings in class, many students are interrupted.

Example (4): Local feedback [peer feedback; S20908, L8]

Text: so, using cellular phone is very convenience.

Feedback: so, using cellular phone is very convenient.

Table 2 shows the frequency of global and local feedback observed in the data.

<sup>5</sup> The present study also observed some inappropriate feedback both in the peer and teacher feedback. The frequency of and the students' incorporation of appropriate and inappropriate feedback deserve further research.

<sup>6</sup> Each of the examples taken from the data is identified by the student number of the writer (indicated by S) who received teacher or peer feedback, and by the line number in the first draft (indicated by L).

**TABLE 2**  
**Frequency of Global vs. Local Feedback**

	Teacher feedback		Peer feedback	
	F	%	F	%
Global feedback	1	1%	30	19%
Local feedback	137	99%	132	82%
TOTAL	138	100%	162	100%

Note:  $X^2=25.465$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$

As Table 2 shows, almost all (99%) of the teacher feedback was concerned with the linguistic aspects of writing such as grammar and vocabulary, as opposed to its content and organization. Such a plethora of local feedback was also observed in the peer feedback data (82%). The dominance of local feedback in the data reached a level of statistical significance ( $X^2=25.465$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$ ). These findings may suggest that both the teacher and the students viewed feedback as correcting grammatical errors and perceived a good piece of writing as one without any grammatical errors. Nevertheless, some of the students were found able to provide global feedback for their peer's writing. Given that commenting on the content and organization of writing requires much more cognitive efforts compared to giving local feedback (Young-in Moon, 2000), the amount of global feedback observed in the peer feedback (19%) might not be unsatisfactory. This finding may indicate that students could benefit from peer feedback by having a wider range of perspectives on their writing.

Feedback was also categorized as specific or vague in order to examine the specificity of the feedback provided with regard to the writings. Specific feedback provides directions for revision in clear and concrete terms as in Examples (5) and (6), while vague feedback provides nonspecific and general direction for revision as in Examples (7) and (8).

Example (5): Specific feedback [teacher feedback; S21001, L9-10]

1st draft: But if students controll themselves, any problem would not occur.

Feedback: But if students control themselves, no problem would occur.

Example (6): Specific feedback [peer feedback; S20904]

1st draft: First, when I busy I can talk with the other by the cellular phone. It is very convenient. And, I can send message easily by the cellular phone. Second, when I want know the time, I can watch the time at the phone.

Feedback: First, when I busy I can talk with the other by the cellular phone. It is very convenient. Second, I can send message easily by the cellular phone. Third, when I want know the time, I can watch the time at the phone.

Example (7): Vague feedback [teacher feedback; S21027, L2-3]

1st draft: Because sending message better than using in urgent work in class

Feedback: 의미? [Translation: Meaning?]

Example (8): Vague feedback [peer feedback; S20912]

Feedback: 부연 설명이 너무 없네요. [Translation: There are few supporting explanations.]

Table 3 shows the frequency of specific and vague feedback found in the teacher and peer feedback data.

**TABLE 3**  
**Frequency of Specific vs. Vague Feedback**

	Teacher feedback		Peer feedback	
	F	%	F	%
Specific feedback	135	98	135	83
Vague feedback	3	2	27	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100</b>

Note:  $X^2=17.391$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$

The results reveal that specific feedback accounted for 98% of the teacher feedback and 83% of the peer feedback, and that the difference in the frequencies of specific and global feedback reached a level of statistical significance ( $X^2=17.391$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.000$ ). In other words, the students were found able to provide specific feedback with regard to their peer's writing. This finding may reduce some teachers' reservation that students tend to provide vague and thus unhelpful comments (e.g., Keh, 1990; Leki, 1990). Such positive results in the present study might be attributable to the emphasis made during the training session that specific comments and suggestions are more helpful than vague ones. This in turn points to the importance of providing training sessions prior to peer feedback activities (Berg, 1999; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Paulus, 1999; Stanley, 1992; Villamil & DeGuerrero, 1996; Zhu, 1995).

With respect to Research Question 1 ("Does peer feedback differ from teacher feedback in terms of its nature?"), both the teacher and the students tended to be preoccupied with giving feedback on the surface level of writings. However, the finding that some of the peer feedback also addressed the content and organization of writing while almost none of the teacher feedback did, seems to show the complementarity of the two kinds of feedback (Caulk, 1994; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Paulus, 1999).

## 2. Incorporation of Feedback into Revision

In order to examine whether peer feedback facilitates as many revisions as teacher feedback does, the writers' incorporation of peer suggestions into revision was analyzed in terms of acceptance, adaptation, rejection, and deletion. The frequency of each type of revision observed in the present data is shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**Frequency of Each Revision Type in Teacher and Peer Feedback Group**

	Teacher feedback		Peer feedback	
	F	%	F	%
Acceptance	116	84	112	69
Adaptation	18	13	3	2
Rejection	4	3	42	26
Deletion	0	0	5	3
TOTAL	138	100	162	100

The results show that the students in the teacher feedback group tended to accept and adapt almost all the teacher feedback (97%) in revision. This overwhelming incorporation of teacher feedback may suggest that the students thought of their own writing as being problem-filled and viewed their teacher as the one who would hold complete knowledge and wisdom and could best correct those problems (cf. Hofstede, 1984, 1986; Nelson & Carson, 1998). Those in the peer feedback group, on the other hand, were shown to incorporate the peer feedback selectively into their revision. These results appear to show that teacher feedback would lead to more revision, similarly to the findings of Connor and Asenavage (1994), Paulus (1999), and Tsui and Ng (2000).

The finding in the present study, nevertheless, that in 71 percent of the cases the students implemented their peer's suggestions by completely or partially accepting them indicates that peer feedback does provide motivation for revision. Furthermore, the rationales for accepting or rejecting peer feedback that the students provided seem to indicate that their selective incorporation of peer feedback was based on their own judgment of the appropriateness or validity of peer feedback. These can be shown in Examples (9)-(12), with the rationale provided by the writers in response to peer feedback.

### Example (9): Accepting peer feedback [S20927, L12-14]

1st draft: A class is interaction between students and teacher. Cellular phones destroy the connection between teacher and students.

Peer feedback: 연결이 어색해. "But" is 좋지 않을까? [Translation: The transition

is awkward. Isn't "but" good?]

Writer's response: 넣었을 때 연결이 더 자연스러워서 [Translation: The transition became more natural when it was added.]

2nd draft: A class is interaction between students and teacher. But, cellular phones destroy the connection between teacher and students.

Example (10): Adapting peer feedback [S20924, L1]

1st draft: Using the cellular phone is a big problem

Peer feedback: Using the cellular phone is a big problem in class. 그냥 휴대폰 사용이 큰 문제라고 할 수 없으므로 [Translation: Using a cellular phone in itself is not a big problem.]

Writer's response: 내용상 내가 적은 것 보다 더 자연스러워서 [Translation: In terms of the content, it becomes more natural than what I have written.]

2nd draft: Using the cellular phone in class is a big problem.

Example (11): Rejecting peer feedback [S20928, L4]

1st draft: I think it is very dangerous for them in studying.

Peer feedback: I think it is very dangerous for them while in studying.

Writer response: *while* 이 굳지 필요하지 않고 문맥상 어울리지도 않다고 생각한다. [Translation: I think the word *while* is neither required nor appropriate in this context.]

2nd draft: I think it is very dangerous for them in studying.

Example (12): Rejecting peer feedback [S20915, L1]

1st draft: These days, the problem is that students use cellular phones in school.

Peer feedback: These days, most big problem is that students use cellular phones in school.

Writer response: *the problem* 만으로도 문제를 충분히 표현함. [Translation: "the problem" is sufficient to express (the seriousness of) the issue.]

2nd draft: These days, the problem is that students use cellular phones in school.

Such selective incorporation based on their judgment of the validity of peer feedback was also observed in Young-in Moon's (2000) study, which examined the revision process of Korean EFL college students. The results of her study and the present study seem to indicate that although the participants in the present study were more novice writers than those in Young-in Moon (2000), they also tried to be independent decision makers and to claim their authorship of their writings. This finding is encouraging, because "the goal of any writing class, and any activities within the writing class, is to help students become

independent decision makers” (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 25).

It should be pointed out that a rather great proportion of peer feedback incorporation observed in the present study might be attributed to the fact that peer feedback was the only source of feedback the students received. The previous studies have often reported that when given teacher and peer feedback simultaneously, students may not pay much attention to peer feedback. The students in Connor and Asenavage’s (1994) study, for instance, were found to incorporate only 5% of peer feedback. Of course, it is difficult to compare the results of the previous studies and the present study because of different settings and different research designs, but nevertheless it could be suggested that in order to promote the effectiveness of peer feedback activities, peer feedback and teacher feedback should be provided for different drafts (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

With respect to Research Question 2 (“Does peer feedback facilitate as many revisions as teacher feedback does?”), more incorporation of teacher feedback was observed than that of peer feedback. It was found, however, that the students had justifiable reasons at the level of their own English and writing ability for incorporating or not incorporating peer feedback.

### 3. Effects of Feedback on the Quality of the Revised Drafts

In order to compare the effects of teacher feedback and peer feedback on the quality of the revised drafts, the researchers independently rated the first and second drafts using an analytic scoring system that assesses the content, organization, and language in a piece of writing. The mean and standard deviation of the total scores and of each category on the first and second drafts are shown in Table 5.

The mean scores of the writings of the teacher feedback group increased 5.95 points (out of 60 points) from the first to the second draft, while those of the peer feedback group increased 2.86. For the teacher feedback group, specifically, the mean score of the organization and language of the writings increased 1.67 and 4.29 from the first to the second draft respectively, while the mean score of the content does not change at all. On the other hand, for the peer feedback group, the mean score of the content and organization rose by .48, and the score of the language improved 1.90.



**TABLE 5**  
**Descriptive Statistics of Scores on the First and**  
**Second Drafts of Teacher and Peer Feedback Group**

		Teacher feedback (N=21)		Peer feedback (N=21)		Mean difference
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Total scores (60 points)	1 <sup>st</sup> draft	32.38	11.25	41.43	12.16	9.05
	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	38.33	10.41	44.29	12.38	5.95
	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup>	5.95		2.86		
Content (20 points)	1 <sup>st</sup> draft	12.62	3.75	14.52	3.84	1.90
	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	12.62	3.75	15.00	3.87	2.38
	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup>	0.00		0.48		
Organization (20 points)	1 <sup>st</sup> draft	10.71	4.82	14.76	5.58	4.05
	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	12.38	3.75	15.24	5.36	2.86
	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup>	1.67		0.48		
Language (20 points)	1 <sup>st</sup> draft	9.05	3.75	12.14	4.35	3.10
	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft	13.33	4.28	14.05	4.64	0.71
	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 <sup>st</sup>	4.29		1.90		

Subsequently, to compare the second draft scores of the two groups while adjusting for the first draft scores, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted on the second draft scores with the first draft scores as a covariate. The results are shown in Table 6.

**TABLE 6**  
**Results of ANCOVA on the Differences between the Scores on the Second Draft**  
**of Teacher and Peer Feedback Group**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	5027.668 <sup>a</sup>	2	2513.834	170.412	.000
Intercept	196.942	1	196.942	13.351	.001
First draft	4655.644	1	4655.644	315.605	.000
Group	51.459	1	51.459	3.488	.069
Error	575.308	39	14.751		
Total	77275.000	42			
Corrected Total	5602.976	41			

As shown in Table 6, the results indicated that while the first draft scores were adjusted for, the second draft scores of the two groups did not differ ( $F(1, 41)=3.488, p=.069$ ). The same results were also observed for the subscores on the content, organization, and language of the writings (for the content subscores,  $F(1, 41)=2.544, p=.119$ ; for the organization subscores,  $F(1, 41)=.582, p=.450$ ; for the language subscores,  $F(1, 41)=4.021, p=.052$ ). In other words, the results suggested that the peer feedback group performed on a level equal to that of the teacher feedback group.

Given no differences between the second draft scores of the two groups, a matched pairs

t-test was then conducted on the scores received on the first and revised drafts of each group in order to examine whether the overall quality of the essays of each group significantly improved as a result of the feedback and revision process. The results are shown in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**  
**Results of T-tests on the Differences between the Scores on First and Second Drafts**

Scores	Group	Mean difference (2nd – 1st)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total	Teacher feedback	5.95	8.027	20	.000
	Peer feedback	2.86	3.009	20	.007
Content	Teacher feedback	.00*			
	Peer feedback	.48	1.451	20	.162
Organization	Teacher feedback	1.67	3.162	20	.005
	Peer feedback	.48	1.451	20	.162
Language	Teacher feedback	4.29	6.000	20	.000
	Peer feedback	1.90	3.508	20	.002

\* The standard deviation of the mean difference is 0 and t-value cannot be measured.

The matched pairs t-test on the total scores of the teacher feedback group was found to be 8.027 ( $p=.000$ ), indicating a statistically significant improvement in the scores from the first to the second drafts. In a similar way, the t-test on the total scores of the peer feedback group was found to be 3.009 ( $p=.007$ ), suggesting that the quality of the writings of the peer feedback group significantly improved from the first to the second draft at the .05 level. These results may indicate that both teacher feedback and peer feedback are effective in helping learners revise their first draft, the results being similar to those of Caulk (1994), Chaudron (1984), and Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1992).

Particularly, teacher feedback was found to be effective in the improvement of the organization and language of the writings, while peer feedback was effective in the improvement of the language. This in turn supports that peer feedback is not a case of “the blind leading the blind” (Bruffee, 1984, p. 10), at least not in the area of error corrections of grammar and vocabulary (cf. Yunkyong Cho, 2005; Jacobs, 1989)

## V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study has sought to examine whether peer feedback can complement teacher feedback when they are provided to Korean EFL high school students. Specifically, the complementarity of the two feedback sources was examined in three respects: (a) the nature of feedback, (b) the incorporation of feedback into revision, and (c) the effects of

feedback on the improvement of the revised drafts. The overall findings seem to support the complementarity of the two types of feedback. First, teacher feedback was predominantly concerned with the surface level of writings, while some of the peer feedback concerned the content and organization of writings. Second, a majority of teacher feedback was accepted or adapted in revision, while the students in the peer feedback group were selective in choosing based on their own judgment of the appropriateness or validity of peer feedback which peer feedback they would use in revising their drafts. Lastly, the quality of the second drafts of the two groups did not significantly differ after the first draft scores were adjusted for, and both the teacher and peer feedback were found to be effective in promoting revisions.

These results, however, should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations of the present study. First, the participants of the present study were limited in that only the feedback given by one teacher was examined and that the students were all female students on the science track. Thus, it may be hard to generalize the findings to the general population of all the Korean EFL high school teachers and students. Furthermore, the present study examined the short-term effects of feedback by providing the students with teacher or peer feedback only one time. It is therefore difficult in the present study to discuss the effects of teacher feedback and peer feedback when they are provided as a part of regular class activities for a longer period.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study seem to have provided supportive evidence that peer feedback “constitutes a satisfactory way of managing revision” in the Korean high school English classrooms (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992, p. 266), indicating that secondary EFL learners could benefit from peer feedback in different ways from teacher feedback. Yet, given that “the peer review process is extremely complex” (Paulus, 1999, p. 267), the incorporation of peer feedback in the secondary classes requires careful training and structuring in order for peer feedback activities to serve as effective sources for revision in writing classrooms (Berg, 1999; Hyland, 2003; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 1995).

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### APPENDIX

#### Analytic Scoring Rubric

		Excellent (20)	Good (15)	Satisfactory (10)	Poor (5)
Content	Coherence	All the sentences support the thesis	Most sentences support the thesis	Some sentences support the thesis	Few sentences support the thesis
	Development of thesis	Appropriate development of the thesis	Limited development of the thesis	Inadequate development of the thesis	No development of the thesis
Organization	Logicity	Logical sequencing	Logical but incomplete sequencing	Lacks logical sequencing	No logicity
	Cohesion	Cohesive	Loosely organized	Little cohesion	No cohesion
Language	Vocabulary	Effective word and expressions	Occasional errors of word and expressions	Frequent errors of word and expressions	Little knowledge of word and expressions
	Grammaticality	Few grammatical errors	Minor grammatical errors	Frequent grammatical errors	Dominated by grammatical errors
	Mechanics	Few errors in correct spelling, punctuation, and indent	Occasional errors in correct spelling, punctuation, and indent	Frequent errors in correct spelling, punctuation, and indent	Dominated by errors in correct spelling, punctuation, and indent

Applicable levels: secondary education

Key words: peer feedback, teacher feedback, revision, Korean EFL secondary learners, process-oriented writing instruction

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