

Effects of blog-based peer response and students' attitudes

Dr. Pham Vu Phi Ho
Asst. Prof. Dr. Siriluck Usaha

Introduction



Key Literature Review



Research Methodology



Results and Discussions



Conclusion

- ✓ Writing is seen as a developmental process rather than a finished product (Wennerstorm, 2006).
- ✓ Peer response => learner-centered approach => collaborative learning (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).
- ✓ CMC => better writing products and better quality peer response (Braine, 1997; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996).

Two of Brown's (2000) strategies based on the social-cultural theory were:

1. the learning process is based on collaboration in which learners work with one or more peers to provide and obtain feedback and to pool information or to model a language activity from one another, and
2. while working collaboratively, learners can learn from others instead of from only the instructor. That is, each student becomes a teacher to others himself.

- Stanley (1992) coached student writers to be effective peer evaluators and found that coached groups made substantially more comments in every response category and more specific guidelines for revision.
- Tuzi (2004), Min (2005) and Rodriguez (2003) found that the students provided response on macro levels (global areas) more than micro levels (local areas). Additionally, e-feedback affected L2 writers' revisions at a higher structural level.

- Min (2006) found that most of the revisions after peer review training were improved in terms of idea development, unity, and organization. 77% of the trained peer review feedback was incorporated into students' revisions, which constituted 90% of the total revisions.
- Pham and Usaha (2009) revealed that the students were able to provide specific comments in order to help each other improve their writing quality and that they expressed positive attitudes on blog-based peer response activities.

Research Gaps

Despite the researchers' efforts to address the affects of comments on students' writing revision, some issues are still questionable.

- ✓ First, though Stanley (1992), Tuzi (2004) and Min (2005) were successful in helping peer reviewers focused on global areas rather than on local areas, the differences of revision-oriented comments between global and local areas are not clarified.
- ✓ Second, the ratios of incorporating comments into revisions by student writers need to be qualitatively investigated, including the reasons for unrevised features.
- ✓ Third, few studies have explored the students' attitudes on using e-peer response. => to get the most collaboration in the learning process. Treglia (2006) claimed that the methods that match a particular student's learning styles or preferences often worked best.

Research Questions

The research question addressed in the present study thus included:

1. Do students provide greater comments on global than local areas? If so, are there any differences of revision-oriented comments between the two areas?
2. What are the ratios of students' incorporation of blog-based peer comments into revision? And why do the student writers not incorporate some peer comments into revision?
3. What attitudes do students express on the use of blog-based peer response activities?

Research design

A Single-Group Pretest – Posttest Design (Robson, 1999; Nunan, 2001; Charles & Mertler, 2004; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).



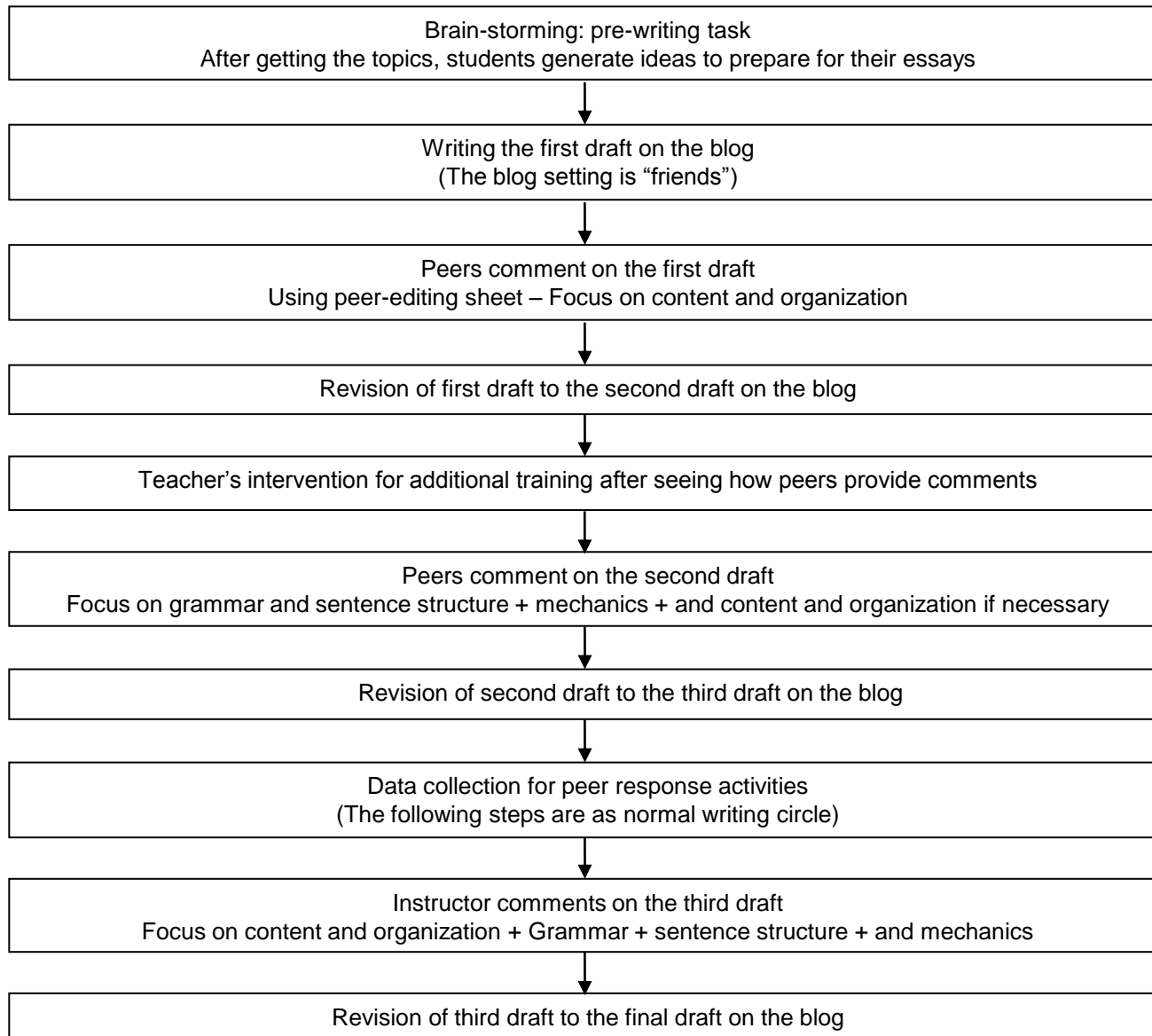
Participants

- ❖ 32 sophomores majoring in English at Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- ❖ Course focus => to develop students' writing skills in Cause/Effect and Chronological Order essays.
- ❖ Class meeting => twice a week/15 wks

Procedure

- 32 participants took a PBT TOEFL to estimate their English proficiency.
- Participants, with 401-493 TOEFL scores (sample test), were divided into 8 groups based on the TOEFL scores.
- The peer response training => in-class training (3 hours) and one-on-one student - teacher conferences (15 – 20 mins.)

Writing Cycle



Data collection procedure

- Collecting drafts, revisions, and peers' comments
- Post-training questionnaire, in-depth and semi-structured interviews

4.2.1 Research Question 1: Do students provide greater comments on global than local areas? If so, are there any differences of revision-oriented comments between the two areas?

- ✓ Global (comments refer to content and organization) and local areas (comments refer to word usage, grammar, spelling and punctuation)
- ✓ Revision-oriented comments

Research Question 1(Cont.):

Global and local areas

Table 1

Mean differences in number of comments addressed to global and local areas

	Mean	SD	Std. Error	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Global1	15.88	5.841	1.032		
Local1	12.16	8.729	1.543		
Global2	17.25	6.075	1.074		
Local2	11.41	7.107	1.256		
Global1 - Local1	3.719	10.946	1.935	1.922	.064
Global2 - Local2	5.844	10.961	1.938	3.016	.005

- Global1 means the number of comments on global areas of Draft 1
- Local1 means the number of comments on local areas of Draft 1
- Global2 means the number of comments on global areas of Draft 2
- Local2 means the number of comments on local areas of Draft 2

Of the 897 comments made on the first drafts, 508 comments (56.6%) were related to global areas and 389 comments (43.4%) to local areas. On the second drafts, out of 917 comments, 552 comments (60.2%) were addressed to global areas and 365 comments (39.8%) to local areas.

Research Question 1(Cont.):

Revision-oriented comments

Table 2 Mean differences in number of global and local revision-oriented comments

	Mean	SD	Std. Error	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gl-revision-oriented1	9.91	5.509	.974		
Lo-revision-oriented1	11.91	8.574	1.516		
Gl-revision-oriented2	10.34	4.632	.819		
Lo-revision-oriented2	11.00	7.085	1.252		
Gl-revision1 - Lo-revision1	-2.000	10.367	1.833	-1.091	.284
Gl-revision2 - Lo-revision2	-.656	9.921	1.754	-.374	.711

* Gl-revision-oriented1 means the number of global revision-oriented comments of Draft 1

* Lo-revision-oriented1 means the number of local revision-oriented comments of Draft 1

* Gl-revision-oriented2 means the number of global revision-oriented comments of Draft 2

* Lo-revision-oriented2 means the number of local revision-oriented comments of Draft 2

Among 897 comments delivered by peers of Draft 1, there were 698 revision-oriented comments of which 45.4% (n = 317) were related to global revision-oriented comments, and 54.6% (n = 381) to local revision-oriented comments.

Of 917 comments of Draft 2, 683 of them were revision-oriented of which 48.5% (n = 331) belonged to global revision-oriented, and 51.5% (n = 352) to local revision-oriented comments.

Research Question 2 (Cont.):

The findings contradicted to

Liu and Sadler's (2003) that the technology-enhanced group made more comments overall in the local areas than in the global areas.

The findings corresponded with those of

Rodriguez's (2003), Tuzi's (2004), Min's (2005), and Jones et al.'s (2006) => the students were able to provide a greater number of comments on macro levels (global areas) than micro levels (local areas).

The findings of the present study suggested that although the total comments on global areas were greater, they did not guarantee the greater qualified comments (revision-oriented).

4.2.3 Research Question 2: What are the ratios of students' incorporation of blog-based peer comments into revisions?

Level of revision

1. Revisions across different levels of linguistic units
2. Ratios of incorporation of peer comments into revision

Level of non-revision

1. Unnecessary
2. Incorrect
3. Unknown

Research Question 2 (Cont.): Level of revision

Table 3 Revisions across different levels of linguistic units

	Mean	Std. Error	S.D	Total	%
Punctuation	20.33	11.650	28.535	122	7.0
Spelling	7.33	2.728	6.683	44	2.5
Grammar	13.50	2.742	6.716	81	4.7
Word	94.83	36.299	88.914	569	32.9
Phrase	60.00	16.555	40.551	360	20.8
Clause	7.83	2.088	5.115	47	2.7
Sentence	62.83	9.464	23.181	377	21.8
Paragraph	22.00	3.011	7.376	132	7.6
Total-level	288.67	77.475	189.773	1732	100.0

Tuzi (2004) also found four most levels of revision: “word”, “sentence”, “phrase”, and “paragraph” in total. Also, Min (2006) found “sentence”, “paragraph” and “word”.

Research Question 2 (Cont.): Level of revision

Table 4 Ratios of levels of revision affected by peer comments

	Based on peers'		Partly based on peers'		Non-comments		Total n
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
punctuation	3	2.5	6	4.9	113	92.6	122
spelling	21	47.7	8	18.2	15	34.1	44
grammar	33	40.7	11	13.6	37	45.7	81
word	104	18.3	54	9.5	411	72.2	569
phrase	76	21.1	62	17.2	222	61.7	360
clause	7	14.9	12	25.5	28	59.6	47
sentence	93	24.7	105	27.9	179	47.5	377
paragraph	42	31.8	33	25	57	43.2	132

The findings suggested that at lower levels such as ‘word’ (72.2%) or ‘phrase’ (61.7%), the student writers could revise by themselves more than with help from peers’ whereas at higher levels, such as ‘sentence’ (52.6%) or ‘paragraph’ (56.8%), the students needed more help from peers.’

Research Question 2 (Cont.): Level of revision

Table 5 Ratios of incorporation of peer comments into revision

	Mean	Std. Error	S.D.	Total	%
totalbased	47.38	13.782	38.983	379	21.9
totalpartly	36.38	12.431	35.16	291	16.8
totalnon	132.75	47.745	135.045	1062	61.3
totalrevision	216.50	68.598	194.027	1732	100

* totalbased means the number of revisions made based on peer comments

* totalpartly means the number of revisions made partly based on peer comments

* totalnon means the number of revisions made without any peer comments

Of 1,372 revision-oriented comments (698 on Draft 1 and 683 on Draft 2) which triggered a total of 1,732 revisions of Draft 2 & 3. This means there were a total of 126.2% expected revisions made by the student writers. The findings suggested that the blog-based peer response did affect the L2 writing revisions.

Research Question 2 (Cont.):

Level of revision – Qualitative analysis

- Huyentrang (S₂₁) stated that she revised her essays based mostly on her peers' comments:
 - ✓ “In this part, they just told me how to keep not off the topic, but they didn't tell me how to do it. Therefore, I did some changes so that the readers did not find it off the topic.”
 - ✓ “They just suggested that I should have a transitional paragraph, but they didn't tell me what to do exactly.”
 - ✓ They said, “off the topic,” so I made more examples to prove in order that they found nothing “off the topic” anymore.
- Sometimes, her peers asked her to delete something, but she did not follow; instead, she added more ideas to convince the readers, “I wanted to make it more convincing.”

Research Question 2 (Cont.):

Level of revision – Qualitative analysis

- Latern (S_{10}) stated that her revisions were made mostly by herself because her peer comments were mainly on what she had written on the text,
 - ✓ “I did it by myself because I had more supportive sentences for my ideas but lacked of examples, so I added it,”
 - ✓ “My friends just commented on the existing ideas.” “It means they commented on what I have written down and what they didn’t understand, or on the fragment of my writing.”
- Latern (S_{10}): “when I read my essay, if I found satisfied about it, so did the readers. I had to be satisfied with my writing first.”
- Tuzi (2004) and Liu and Hansen (2005) => receiving multiple e-feedback encouraged students to re-think their paper and revise more.

Research Question 2 (Cont.):

Level of revision

- Results corresponded with those of Min's (2006) and Tuzi's (2004). However, Tuzi was not sure why e-feedback had a greater impact on macro-level changes than on micro-level changes.
- The findings of the present study suggested that revisions at lower levels needed less help from the peers; at higher levels, more help from the peers.

Research Question 2 (Cont.): Level of non-revision

Table 6 Levels of non-revision of Draft 2 & 3

	Unnecessary		Incorrect		Unknown		Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
punctuation	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50.0	6
spelling	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	1
grammar	0	0.0	4	13.3	26	86.7	30
word	37	40.7	5	5.5	49	53.8	91
phrase	30	46.2	5	7.7	30	46.2	65
clause	1	25.0	1	25.0	2	50.0	4
sentence	45	34.9	4	3.1	80	62.0	129
paragraph	4	14.8	1	3.7	22	81.5	27

Research Question 3 (Cont.):

Qualitative Analysis - Levels of non-revision

Reasons for not revising some features:

- when nothing wrong was found in their writing
- when doubted the correctness of a comment
- when they did not find out the best solutions for such particular problems in their writing.

Research Question 3 (Cont.):

The findings were mixed in literature

- ✓ Min (2006) found 10% of the peer comments did not impact revisions. Rodriguez (2003), Tuzi (2004), and Liou and Peng (2009) found more than 50%, Liu and Sadler's (2003) found 70% revision-oriented comments did not impact revisions.
- ✓ In the current study, 13.3% and 17.6% of peer comments did not trigger revisions.
- ✓ However, as compared with the percentages of the total revisions (about 124% (D. 1), 126% (D. 2) revisions were made), the student writers made greater revisions than the percentages they did not revise.

Research Question 3: What attitudes do students express on the use of the blog-based peer response?

Of the 20-item post-training questionnaire,

- a. items 1 – 5 explored their preferences of using the blogs for peer response in an L2 writing class,
- b. items 6 – 13, the usefulness of the blogs for peer response activities, and
- c. items 14 – 20, the affects of the blog-based peer response for writing quality.

The criteria for the Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) and was set as following:

1. low evaluation: 1 – 2.66;
2. medium evaluation: 2.67 – 4.33; and
3. high evaluation: 4.34 – 6

The Cronbach's Alpha of reliability analysis reached at 0.88.

Research Question 3: (Cont.)

Post-training questionnaire

No.	Items	Mean	S.D
Preferences of using the blogs for peer response in an L2 writing class			
1	Writing on a blog is an enjoyable way to share information with other people.	5.19	.821
2	I feel very interested in connecting and discussing with my friends about my writing via a blog.	4.75	.622
3	Using the blog enables me to get closer to my friends in order to help one another in learning.	4.97	.647
4	I enjoyed using the blog to post and provide comments on my peers' writing.	5.09	.777
5	I like my friends in my group to read and comment my writing via the blog.	5.19	.78
The usefulness of the blogs for peer response activities			
6	I feel that learning to write an essay, revise my drafts, and comment on my peers' writing via the blog is very useful.	5.16	.628
7	The convenience of commenting via a blog is that every member of the group is able to provide comments whenever he/she has free time, not necessary to do it in the classroom.	5.09	.777
8	Thanks to the comments from my peers via the blog, I can realize that my writing has a lot of mistakes that I cannot point them out by myself.	5.31	.693
9	Thanks to the peer response activities via the blog, I understand more about the method of writing an academic essay.	4.75	.803
10	Thanks to reading my peers' essays (in order to provide comments) via the blog, I learn different writing styles and ideas from my friends'.	5.16	.808
11	Commenting via the blog, reading and providing suggestions for my friends and vice versa, helps me to come up with new ideas to revise my own writing.	5.03	.782

Research Question 3: (Cont.)

Post-training questionnaire

No.	Items	Mean	SD
12	Posting and commenting essays via the blog is very effective for me because it not only helps me but also my friends to improve our writing ability.	5.25	.718
13	Thanks to the peer response activities via the blog, I realize that learning activities are not only based on the teacher but also on my friends in order that every class member can help one another improve.	5.22	.751
The affects of blog-based peer response for writing quality			
14	Posting my writing on the blog for my friends to read and comment makes me take more care about my writing quality.	5.16	.723
15	I found that my peers' comments on my blog are very useful for my writing revision.	5.06	.564
16	Peer response activities via the blog provide me more spare time to think about my peers' opinions on my writing.	4.69	.693
17	Thanks to the peer comments via the blog, I can reorganize the ideas in my writing more logically.	4.88	.871
18	After each revision based on my peers' comments, the content of my writing is much more abundant.	4.91	.734
19	After each revision based on my peers' comments, the vocabulary, structure, grammar, and spellings of my writing get much better.	5.06	.801
20	I prefer my peers commenting on the content and organization of my writing to spellings or grammar, or structure.	4.94	1.162

Research Question 3: (Cont.)

Qualitative Analysis

Preferences of using the blogs for peer response in an L2 writing class

The findings contradicted those of

- DiGiovanni and Nagaswami's (2001), and Tuzi's (2004)

but echoed those of

- Hsu and Lin's (2008) and Noytim's (2010) that the students had positive attitudes towards blog use.

Research Question 3 (Cont.):

The usefulness of the blogs for peer responses

- ❖ The present study found that the blog, as one of the CMC tools, was confirmed to be useful as other tools such as e-mail (Li, 1999; Rodrigez, 2003; Lightfoot, 2006), LAN (Local Area Networked) (Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Braine, 1997 & 2001), MOO's (multi-user domains object-oriented) (Liu & Sadler, 2003), Database-driven website (Tuzi, 2004), MaxQDA software (Jones et al., 2006).
- ❖ Lin et al. (2006) claimed that blog => an effective tool that enabled students learning in an e-learning environment and also fostered the atmosphere to make these conversations happen and grow.

Research Question 3: (Cont.)

Qualitative Analysis

The affects of blog-based peer response for writing quality

The findings echoed those of

- ❑ Halic et al. (2010) => blogging to enhance their learning and facilitated understanding of other points of view and sharing knowledge with peers for a high majority of respondents.
- ❑ Noytim (2010) => the students perceived blog as a tool for the development of their English, in terms of writing, reading, vocabulary, and recording their learning experience.

- ✓ The findings were inventible compared to those of Chaisuriya's (2003) and Tsui and Ng's (2000) that the students were not confident in giving comments and did not believe much in the peers' comments.
- ✓ Therefore, the findings of the present study would provide new light, to say the least, for Vietnamese educators who look for effective technological tools for students in their writing classes.

THANK YOU