

**The Effect of Teacher-Feedback, Peer-Feedback, and Self-Revision
on Iranian EFL Learners' Form and Content Revision**

Bahram Mowlaie*

Islamic Azad University

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of peer-feedback and teacher-feedback on form and content revision in high and low proficient Iranian EFL learners' writings in comparison with self-revision in control group. For this purpose, six intact EFL classes were selected from available classes at Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch and Kish Language School with 180 learners aged about 20 in high and low proficiency levels. One group in each proficiency level received peer-feedback, another teacher-feedback, and the other was instructed to self-revise. The findings showed that there was no significant difference between the effects of teacher- and peer-feedback groups on the frequency means of preposition errors in the high or the low proficient groups. However, each of these experimental groups differed significantly from the no-feedback control groups. In spelling errors, while in the low proficient group, both the teacher- and the peer-feedback groups outperformed the no-feedback control group; in the high proficient group, the no-feedback control group managed to do as well as the peer-feedback group and only the teacher-feedback group managed to outperform the control group. In content revision, there was no significant difference in the high proficient learners' text revision among any of the three groups. However, although there was a significant difference between the experimental groups in the low proficient learners, neither of them differed significantly from the control group, indicating that self-revision was as effective as both the teacher- and peer-feedback. The findings suggest that the effect of feedback is not straightforward to interpret.

Keywords: content-revision, error, form revision, peer-feedback, teacher-feedback

* Islamic Azad University, Tehran South
-Received on: 30/06/2013
Email: bahrammowlaie@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Gradual awareness about the nature of writing has shifted the emphasis from product to process approach to writing based on which successive revisions are indispensable parts of composition (White & Arndt, 1991). It seems affectively and educationally beneficial to give EFL learners the awareness that only with successive revisions can they approach the final perfection (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This will hopefully lead to a reasonable expectation about writing on the part of both writing teachers and learners. Gradual betterment in the quality of writing is associated with giving and receiving feedback from either teachers or peers, each with its own advantages and disadvantages (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Each of these will be dealt with in depth.

2. Literature Review

The first positive feature of teacher-feedback is that according to Fathman and Whalley (1990) EFL learners view teacher-feedback of great value in improving their writing proficiency and, as a result, they prefer to be corrected by their teachers. Tsui and Ng (2000) believe it is of better quality, more specific, can explain what the problems are, and can make concrete suggestions for revision. Besides, it serves roles that peer-feedback does not: Hyland (1990) believes it can help students shift their focus from surface features of the text to the content aspects which need improving. These content changes refer to changes at the macro level of the text such as the reorganization of chunks of text and changes in the direction of the idea presented as opposed to surface revisions which include most, but not all, conventional copy-editing operations which do not add new information to the text (Faigley & Witte, 1981). According to Connor and Asenavage (1994), content changes cannot be induced by peer-feedback because peers can only respond to what is written and provide feedback on whether the points are relevant or whether they need elaboration. However, they cannot suggest a better organization.

On the negative side, Chiang (2004) believes that teacher-feedback is often confusing, vague, and inconsistent, and that most comments focus exclusively on form. By chiefly addressing the grammatical and lexical errors in writing, students are led to thinking that good writing is equal to correct grammar and thus they may neglect or never understand more global elements of good writing, such as clarity and organization of ideas (Yang, 2006). Besides linguistic inefficiency,

teacher-feedback has affective drawbacks too; it fails to encourage learner independence, it can be intimidating for students to have ‘the teacher’ correcting their mistakes, and students might feel embarrassed, no matter how sensitive the teacher might be (Chiang, 2004). Also, too much teacher correction might be demoralizing for students and other students might feel left out of the lesson while a mistake is being corrected (Riddle, 2003).

Peer-feedback enjoys some advantages. Riddle (2003) and Tsui and Ng (2000) believe that students might find it easier to be corrected by a peer because of the closer affective relationship between them. This gives them self-confidence as they are expected to deal with peers of their own proficiency level, not the teacher whose higher linguistic competence can easily dwarf learners’ proficiency and their self-confidence, encourages other students to stay involved in the lesson as members of the peer group and to feel the responsibility to fulfill their duty of providing suitable feedback, and finally, encourages an atmosphere of cooperation. In addition, Tsui and Ng believe learners’ enthusiasm towards writing can be enhanced with the help of more supportive peers, while their anxiety can be lowered. Furthermore, more time is spent on a draft during peer reviewing compared to that in teacher-feedback and because of the immediacy of peer-feedback, writers can receive the response right after they finish their drafts. Moreover, as Rollinson (2005) states, because the sense of linguistic affinity is higher among peers than between students and teachers, the interaction is more efficient through peer review. According to Tsui and Ng (2000), all of these points indicate that the advantages of peer-feedback cannot be served by teacher-feedback.

On the negative side, Riddle (2003) cautions that if students do not have the correction skill, peer-feedback will be slow and less effective, which in turn can lead to a common problem of unintelligibility between the reviewers and those reviewed. Moreover, some students who have been mainly in teacher-fronted classes may feel it is the job of the teacher to correct and the peer may not provide the same good feedback as the teacher whom students often prefer (Nelson & Carson, 1998; Tsui & Ng, 2000). The proficiency gap is another potential problem while low-proficient students are doing peer review with their more proficient peers; and finally, as stated by Riddiford (2006), students might feel reluctant to show their writings to others owing to fear caused by their incapability.

A clear picture of advantages and disadvantages of teacher- and peer-feedback does not resolve all the research problems. In fact, there

are at least two reasons why further research is needed, especially in EFL context: L1 and L2 differences and methodological problems. Although studies on feedback in L1 provide a preliminary understanding of the benefits of peer- or teacher-feedback on students' own L1 writing ability, there are still difficulties in assuming that these benefits would be similar in the L2 writing classroom, where language and culture may add unanticipated challenges (Carson & Nelson, 1996). Carson and Nelson, and Nelson and Carson (1998) believe this is partly because of the fact that the L1 studies do not address complications introduced by differences in language proficiency or cultural expectations of students.

The methodological problem is that although the possible impacts of peer-to-peer interaction in L2 writing classes on enhancing learners' grammar accuracy are asserted theoretically, not many empirical studies are available to verify the actual effects of the designs based on this concept (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This is because most of the studies do not use experimental research methods (i.e., they do not quantitatively compare two groups), and do not examine the types of improvements students make whether in content or surface aspects of writing, nor do they include a non-feedback control group (Ferris, 2004). Students' proficiency still poses another problem in that it is either neglected or not reported exactly in most of the major feedback studies (Guénette, 2007).

Therefore, based on the aforementioned problems, the following research questions were posed to address the issues mentioned above:

1. Is there any significant difference among a peer-feedback group, a teacher-feedback group, and a self-revising control group in the frequency of preposition errors in high or low proficient Iranian learners' revised expository texts while controlling for this error frequency in their pre-revised texts?
2. Is there any significant difference among a peer-feedback group, a teacher-feedback group, and a self-revising control group in the frequency of spelling errors in high or low proficient Iranian learners' revised expository texts while controlling for this error frequency in their pre-revised texts?
3. Is there any significant difference among a peer-feedback group, a teacher-feedback group, and a self-revising control group in content revision (reflected in the raters' global scores) in high or low proficient Iranian learners' revised expository texts while controlling for the global score in their pre-revised texts?

3. Method

3.1. Design

Because of the problems associated with experimental designs (Dornyei, 2007), the design used in this study was quasi-experimental. The main reason for this was the long treatment phase of the experiment as it took about three months. Using pre-existing intact classes reasonably obviated attrition or experimental mortality as a major problem because the researcher was able to have nearly all of the participants in all groups during the treatment.

Feedback with two levels (teacher-feedback and peer-feedback), was the independent variable. The frequency means of preposition and spelling errors in surface revision and raters' global ratings in content revision in post-revised texts were the dependent variables. The frequency means of these dependent variables in the pre-revised texts were the covariates. High and low linguistic proficiency level was the moderator variable. The main reason for selecting preposition and spelling errors in surface revision was their high frequency in the writing samples.

3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 180 male and female Iranian EFL learners in six intact classes in high and low proficiency levels which were determined by Babel proficiency test. Two classes in the second term and two classes in the eighth term at Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch and one class in the Elementary level and one class in the Upper-intermediate level in Kish Language School were selected from among the available classes for the present study. Passive consent was used in this study which involved the participants not opting out or not objecting to their participation in this study. The average number of the participants in different experimental and control groups was 33 and their average age was 20.

3.3. Instruments

The first instrument used in this study was the PBT version of Babel English Language Placement Tests for learners' placement in either high or low proficient levels. It consisted of four sections which were ascending in difficulty. The tests were in multiple-choice format and consisted of items measuring the recognition of correct responses to reading prompts, grammatical forms, and lexical choices in context. Using Cronbach alpha, the reliability of this test in the present study was 0.71. The scoring system was based on the conversion of raw scores described in the test manual to rule out guessing. A safe margin was considered between the scores of low and high proficient learners to have

two different groups: Scores between 20 and 45 were put in the low and scores from 50+ were put in the high proficient group. The writings of four participants between these two margins were excluded from data analysis. The significant difference between the high and low proficient groups was approved by the independent-samples t-test. The second instrument, to assess content revision, was the essay scoring rubric (Paulus, 1999) used by two raters to assess the essays before and after the revision. The final instrument was a checklist adopted from White and McGovern (1994) (See Appendix). This was used by the participants in peer-feedback group and self-revising control group and included points on both form and content revision. It was given to the participants in both English and Persian (their L1) to resolve any comprehension problems.

3.4. Procedure

The Participants in all three groups (teacher- and peer-feed groups and no-feedback, self-revising control group) were instructed to write on three topics (the topics were: *Why they admired a certain person?*, *The reasons and solutions for air pollution in Tehran*, and *The reasons and solutions for road accidents in Iran*). The number and length of the topics (around 200 words) and time on task (around 40 minutes for each writing task) were kept the same for all of the groups. The mode of writing in these topics was expository because it is the most frequently used type of writing by students in colleges and universities (Smalley, Ruetten, & Kozyrev, 2001). In the peer-feedback group, after writing their first drafts in the class, the participants submitted them to their teachers. In the following session, the texts were returned to the peers in each group with specified members, each with clearly assigned roles. Based on the checklist they had been provided with, members read their peers' texts and gave their written feedback in about 15 minutes which was followed by their negotiation for 15-20 minutes either in English or Persian. Using mock-peer response activities, peers, two in each group, were instructed how to use feedback exchanges such as turn-taking and linguistic strategies appropriately prior to the treatment. In the next step, the participants received their own writings to revise. They were instructed to incorporate their peers' feedback based on their own discretion and write the revised version on a separate piece of paper. After completion of the task, both pre- and post-revised texts were submitted to their teachers. This procedure was repeated on three different topics.

In the teacher-feedback group, after receiving the participants' first drafts, the researcher-teacher underlined each error and wrote the type of errors in code form (i.e. indirect feedback). Content feedback was in the form of comments on the margin of papers. In the subsequent

session, the first drafts were returned to the participants and they were asked to use the terminology checklist they had been given, which explained and exemplified each error code, and incorporated the teacher-researcher's feedback based on their own discretion to revise their texts and rewrite the revised texts on a separate piece of paper. They submitted both pre- and post-revised versions to their teacher. This was repeated for three writing tasks.

In the no-feedback, self-revising control group, after writing the first versions, the participants submitted them to their teacher. In the subsequent session, they were asked to use the checklist they had received previously to revise their first versions. After producing the second-revised copy, they submitted both copies to their teacher. Before the treatment, they had been instructed as to how to read their own writings critically and revise them in terms of their form and content.

In revising the form, the data analysis was restricted to preposition and spelling errors because of their high frequency and because the data did not violate the statistical assumptions necessary for running ANCOA. In content revision, using a scoring rubric (Paulus, 1999), two raters rated the pre- and post-revised texts holistically. To improve the inter-rater reliability, they were asked to study the rubrics and discuss any ambiguous points before scoring the writings. If they differed, the problem was resolved by discussion among the raters and the researcher. Using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, the inter-rater reliability in the pre- and post-tests was estimated as 0.85 and 0.82 respectively ($P < 0.01$).

3.5. Data Collection

The data consisted of pre- and post-revised versions for three topics from all three groups. The first versions were copied and all of the corrections were done on the copied versions. The original copies were kept intact so that the researcher or the raters could analyze the texts or give global scores without the difficulty and interference of the red marks or scribbles.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The first part of data analysis was testing the difference in proficiency levels between the groups because text revisions were analyzed in both high and low proficient groups.

As Tables 1 and 2 show, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the proficiency scores of the participants in high and low proficiency levels. There was a significant difference in scores

for participants with high proficiency (M = 68.90, SD = 6.015) and low proficiency (M = 38.62, SD = 8.698); $t(187.76) = 27.7, p = .00$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 31, 95% CI: 29-33) was large (eta squared = .80).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of the Proficiency Test

level		N	Mean	Std. Error	SD	Skewness	Std.Error
High	proficiency	90	68.90	.634	6.015	.537	.254
Low	proficiency	93	38.62	.857	8.698	-.148	.238

Table 2
Independent-Samples t-Test between High and Low Proficient Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	7.298	.00	27.2	191	.000	30.656	1.127	28.4	32.8	
Equal variances not assumed			27.700	187.753	.000	30.656	1.107	28.4	32.8	

4.1.1. *Preposition Errors*

Concerning the effect of feedback or self-revision on prepositional errors in high and low proficient groups, the descriptive statistics in Table 3 shows the same patterns in both high and low proficient groups: First, the frequency means of preposition errors decreased in post-treatment in comparison with pre-treatment. Second, teacher feedback group had the maximum reduction followed by peer feedback group, which was in turn followed by no feedback group with the minimum reduction.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Preposition Errors in Teacher-, Peer-, and No-Feedback in the High and Low Proficient Learners' Writings

Category		N	Mean	S.D	Skewness	
					Statistic	Std. Error
TFGH	Preposition. pre	30	1.87	1.432	.884	.427
TFGH	Preposition. post	30	.40	.563	.642	.427
TFGL	Preposition. pre	30	3.15	1.348	.385	.378
TFGL	Preposition. post	30	.85	.779	.281	.378
PFGH	Preposition. pre	30	1.20	.664	-.242	.427
PFGH	Preposition. post	30	.80	.887	.692	.427
PFGL	Preposition. pre	30	1.97	1.245	.874	.427
PFGL	Preposition. post	30	1.17	.874	.319	.427
NFGH	Preposition. pre	30	1.83	1.206	.721	.427
NFGH	Preposition. post	30	1.80	.925	.706	.427
NFGL	Preposition. pre	30	2.47	1.308	.890	.403
NFGL	Preposition. post	30	2.41	1.777	.214	.403

Note. TFG= teacher-feedback group, PFG=peer-feedback group, NFG= no-feedback group, H=high proficiency, L=low proficiency

To test the difference in preposition errors in post-treatment among the three groups using ANCOVA, the necessary prerequisite is Levene's test of equality of error variances. It shows the significance level of .144 in high and .07 in low proficient groups which are both greater than .05, indicating that all three groups had equal variances in both proficiency groups. The most important assumption for conducting ANCOVA is the homogeneity of regression slope which requires that the relationship between the covariate and the dependant variable for each of the groups is the same. Based on the result, the $F(2) = 2.823$, $P > .065$ in the high and $F(2) = 4.9$, $P > .06$ in the low proficient groups in both cases were above the cut-off ($P = .05$), indicating that this assumption was met.

After adjusting for pre-treatment frequency means of preposition errors, there was a significant difference, $F(2, 86) = 27.26$, ($P < .05$), partial eta squared=0.388 in the high and $F(2, 99) = 27.84$, ($P < .05$), partial eta squared=0.36 in the low proficient groups. There was a strong relationship between the pre-treatment and the post-treatment frequency means of preposition errors as indicated by a partial eta squared value of

0.166 and .26 in the high and the low proficient groups respectively. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

ANCOVA on Preposition Errors in Peer-, Teacher-, and No-Feedback in the High and Low Proficient Learners' Writings

Source	Proficiency level	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	High	8.217	1	8.217	14.90	.00	.148
	Low	1.487	1	1.487	1.332	.25	.01
Pretest. Prep.	High	9.401	1	9.401	17.05	.00	.166
	Low	38.956	1	38.956	34.894	.00	.26
Group	High	30.056	2	15.02	27.26	.00	.388
	Low	62.179	2	31.09	27.848	.00	.36
Error	High	47.399	86	.551			
	Low	110.523	99	1.116			
Total	High	178	90				
	Low	416	103				

The Bonferroni post-test was used to control for Type I error across the three pair-wise comparisons ($\text{sig} = .05/3 = .017$). The results showed that there was no significant difference between teacher-feedback ($M = 0.40$) and peer-feedback groups ($M = 0.80$), $\text{sig} = .17$ in the high proficient group. Nor was there any significant difference between teacher-feedback ($M = .85$) and peer-feedback groups in the low proficient learners' writings ($M = 1.17$), $\text{sig} = .84$. However, in both high and low proficient groups, both teacher- and peer-feedback groups differed significantly from the no-feedback control group in high ($M = 1.80$), $\text{sig} = .00$ and low proficient groups ($M = 2.41$), $\text{sig} = .00$.

4.1.2. Spelling Errors

Regarding spelling errors, as presented in Table 5, compared to preposition errors, a similar pattern of error reduction from pre- to post-treatment in both high and low proficient groups was found. In both groups, teacher-feedback group had the most reduction followed by peer-feedback group. No-feedback control group had the minimal amount of reduction in both high and low proficient groups.

The significance level in Levene's test of equality of error variances was .87 in high and .06 in low proficient groups which were greater than .05, indicating that variances were equal. The $F(2, 84) = 2.251$, $P = .112$ in high and $F(2, 97) = 14.155$, $P = .07$ in low proficient groups were both above the cut-off ($P < .05$) indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of regression was met indicating that the

relationship between the covariate and the dependant variable for each of the group was the same.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Spelling Errors in Teacher-, Peer-, and No-Feedback in the High and Low Proficient Learners' Writings

	Category	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	
					Statistic	Std. Error
TFGH	Spelling Pre	30	2.07	1.780	.454	.427
TFGH	Spelling post	30	.73	1.112	.838	.427
TFGL	Spelling Pre	30	4.46	3.386	.615	.378
TFGL	Spelling post	30	1.46	1.430	.049	.378
PFGH	Spelling Pre	30	2.40	1.773	.668	.427
PFGH	Spelling post	30	1.23	1.591	.950	.427
PFGL	Spelling Pre	30	2.97	2.846	.420	.427
PFGL	Spelling post	30	1.60	1.303	.118	.427
NFGH	Spelling Pre	30	2.70	1.705	.378	.427
NFGH	Spelling post	30	1.97	1.450	.734	.427
NFGL	Spelling Pre	30	4.35	3.733	.621	.403
NFGL	Spelling post	30	3.74	3.203	.313	.403

Note. TFG = teacher-feedback group, PFG = peer-feedback group, NFG = no-feedback group, H = high proficiency, L = low proficiency

After adjusting for pre-treatment frequency means of spelling errors in high proficient group (see Table 6), there was a significant difference, $F(2, 86) = 6.62$, ($P < .05$), with partial eta squared = .13. There was a strong relationship between the pre-treatment and post-treatment frequency means of spelling error category as indicated by a partial eta squared value of .48. Similar pattern was seen in low proficient group; there was a significant difference, $F(2, 86) = 25.02$, ($P < .05$), partial eta squared = .33 (see Table 6). There was also a strong relationship between the pre-treatment and post-treatment frequency of spelling errors as indicated by a partial eta squared value of .57.

Table 6

ANCOVA on Spelling Errors in Peer-, Teacher-, and No-Feedback in the High and Low Proficient Learners' Writings

Source	Proficiency level	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	High	.685	1	.685	.83	.36	.01
	Low	5.216	1	5.216	2.62	.10	.02
Pretest. Spelling	High	99.902	1	99.902	122.21	.00	.48
	Low	269.03	1	269.03	135.556	.00	.57
Group	High	10.829	2	5.414	6.62	.00	.13
	Low	99.324	2	49.662	25.02	.00	.33
Error	High	70.298	86	.817			
	Low	196.48	86	1.985			
Total	High	348	90				
	Low	1100	90				

The Bonferroni post-test however showed that the proficiency level made a difference in this error category as the results were different between high and low proficient groups: in high proficient group, there was no significant difference between teacher-feedback (M= .73) and peer-feedback group (1.23) sig= .5. Neither was there any significant difference between peer-feedback and no-feedback control group (sig= .13), but teacher-feedback group differed significantly from no-feedback group (M = 1.97), sig = .003. In low proficient group, however, there was no significant difference between teacher-feedback (M= 1.46) and peer-feedback groups (M = 1.60), sig = .1, but both of these experimental groups differed significantly from no-feedback group (M = 3.74), sig= .00.

4.1.3. Content Revision

As Table 7 shows, in spite of slight variations between teacher- and peer-feedback groups in high proficient groups, they both outperformed no-feedback control group with the first rater's global M= 6.7 and the second rater's global M= 7.07. However, in the low proficient group, both peer-feedback and no-feedback control group had higher global scores than teacher-feedback group.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics of the Effect of Teacher-, Peer-, and No-Feedback on Content Revision in High and Low Proficient Groups

category		N		Mean		SD		Skewness		Std. Error	
		High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Statistic	Std. Error	High	Low
TFG	Rater1.Pre	30	30	6.67	4.41	1.826	1.312	.059	.427	.427	.378
	Rater1.Post	30	30	7.23	4.87	1.501	1.301	-.493	-	.427	.378
									.203		
	Rater2.Pre	30	30	7.07	4.64	1.760	1.158	-.068	.334	.427	.378
	Rater2.post	30	30	7.70	5.00	1.685	1.192	-.511	.000	.427	.378
PFG	Rater1.Pre	30	30	6.60	4.67	1.133	1.470	-.800	.556	.427	.427
	Rater1.Post	30	30	7.30	5.50	1.022	1.306	-.452	.149	.427	.427
	Rater2.Pre	30	30	6.93	4.93	1.413	1.530	-.268	.677	.427	.427
	Rater2.post	30	30	7.43	5.93	1.073	1.230	.095	-	.427	.427
								.104			
NFG	Rater1.Pre	30	30	6.23	4.85	1.478	1.132	-.569	.039	.427	.403
	Rater1.Post	30	30	6.70	5.24	1.179	1.103	-.179	-	.427	.403
									.066		
	Rater2.Pre	30	30	6.53	5.24	1.252	1.075	-.024	.276	.427	.403
	Rater2.post	30	30	7.07	5.47	1.285	1.107	-.864	.079	.427	.403

Note. TFG = teacher-feedback group, PFG = peer-feedback group, NFG= no-feedback group

The significance level in Levene's test of equality of error variances was .37 in high and .36 in low proficient groups which were greater than .05, indicating that all three groups enjoyed equal variances.

The $F(2, 84) = .896$, $P = .41$ in high and the $F(2, 97) = 1.068$, $P = .34$ in low proficient group were both above the cut-off ($P < .05$) indicating that the assumption of homogeneity was met.

After adjusting for the pre-treatment scores, as Table 8 demonstrates, there was no significant difference, $F(2, 86) = 0.914$, $P > .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$ in high proficient group. The result changed in low proficient group however because there was a significant difference, $F(2, 99) = 5.59$, ($P < .05$), $\eta^2 = .102$.

Table 8

ANCOVA of the Content Revision in Peer-, Teacher-, and No- Feedback with High Proficient Learners

Source	Proficiency level	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	High	32.936	1	32.936	46.488	.00	.35
	Low	30.043	1	30.043	48.63	.00	.32
Pretest. Rater	High	71.845	1	71.845	101.407	.00	.54
	Low	59.545	1	59.545	96.39	.00	.49
Group	High	1.295	2	.648	.914	.40	.02
	Low	6.914	2	3.457	5.59	.005	.102
Error	High	60.93	86	.708			
	Low	61.152	99	.618			
Total	High	4854.750	90				
	Low	3025.5	103				

The Bonferroni post-test in low proficient group confirmed that there was a significant difference between the teacher-feedback ($M = 4.93$) and peer-feedback group ($M = 5.71$). Nonetheless, there was no significant difference between either of these experimental groups and the control group ($M = 5.35$).

4.2. Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to investigate the comparative effect of teacher- feedback, peer-feedback, and self-revision on EFL learners' text revision. Based on the findings, the effect was neither straightforward nor simple to interpret. There was no significant difference between the effects of teacher- and peer-feedback groups on the frequency means of preposition errors in the high or the low proficient groups. However, each of these experimental groups differed significantly from the no-feedback control groups. The result was supported by Bitchener, Young and Cameron (2005), who found a significant effect of feedback on accurate use of prepositions in new pieces of writing. However, it was contrary to Rashtchi and Ghandi's

(2011) report based on which the peer revision group was better than neither the self-revision group nor teacher revision group.

The result with spelling errors was not straightforward; while in low proficient group, both teacher- and peer-feedback group outperformed the no-feedback control group, in the high proficient group, no-feedback control group managed to do as well as the peer-feedback group and only teacher-feedback group managed to outperform the control group. The significant difference in revision based on teacher- and peer-feedback in the present study on spelling as an indicator of form revision showed that, besides teacher's comments, students took assessing the work of their fellow students seriously, and incorporated peer-feedback in the revision of their work, a point supported by Van den Berg, Admiraal and Pilot (2006) and Mendonça and Johnson (1994). Another support came from Villamil and De Guerrero (1996), who found that the majority (74%) of trouble sources discussed and revised during peer-feedback were incorporated into the final drafts. This finding, generally, concurred with the general consensus that both peer- and teacher-feedback were considered effective and significant in the process of revision (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Zhang, 1995)

The significant difference between teacher-/peer-feedback groups and no-feedback control group on the one hand and the insignificant difference between teacher- and peer-feedback groups themselves on the other indicate that, in spite of potential EFL cultural barriers affecting peer feedback negatively (Carson & Nelson, 1996) and the long-established teacher feedback in EFL context, both peer and teacher feedback were equally effective, showing that in spite of EFL learners' preference for teacher feedback (Chen & Lin, 2009; Li, 2006), they also had equally positive attitudes towards peer feedback, provided they were trained and prepared in advance for it (Rollinson, 2005). This concurred with Chen and Lin's (2009) findings in which non-native speakers did enjoy the process of peer feedback as collaborative learning, and most of them acknowledged the efficiency of the whole contextual guided writing sessions. Tsui and Ng (2000) emphasized this point even more in that, in their study, not only did students have positive attitude to peer feedback, but they also preferred it to classes dominated by teacher talk. The reason given was a sense of awareness, autonomy, and ease in working with someone with the same level of proficiency. Generally, the efficiency of peer feedback found in the present study was in line with most of the findings in the literature (Min, 2005; Riddiford, 2006; Tang & Tithecott, 1999; Zhu, 2001).

The results of the present study were contrary to Truscott's (1996) notion of the inefficiency or even harm of providing EFL learners with corrective feedback of any kinds because it presumably deprived them of the necessary time to practice and improve their writing. The rationale proposed by Kepner (1991), Semke (1984), Sheppard (1992), and Truscott (1996) for the inefficiency of feedback and the caution in interpreting the positive effect of either peer or teacher feedback was that, as stated in Oxford's (1990) avoidance strategy, the low frequency of errors in learners' writings after receiving feedback was because corrected students tended to shorten and simplify their writing. The negative effect of feedback on revision was emphasized even more by Polio et al. (1998) and Sheppard, (1992) who not only found correction ineffective and even harmful, but also showed absolute gains in the absence of correction, a conclusion which was rejected by the present study and by Ferris (1995, 1997) who did not regard no-feedback as an option.

The equal effectiveness of peer- and teacher-feedback in the present study was also contrary to Feng and Powers' (2005) proposal that if editing were conducted among students themselves, they might not have the ability to identify the errors in the first place because they might be uncertain to correct those errors. The effect of this kind of editing would not be as strong as the teacher desires. Therefore, Feng and Powers (2005) advised that at least at the beginning of the school year, conferencing with the teacher would be more beneficial to the students than peer conferencing. As far as the role of language proficiency level in using feedback was concerned, the findings in the present study were in contrast with this assertion, because besides high proficient writers' revision, significant difference was also found in low proficient students' form revisions. This result was supported by Tsui and Ng's (2000) findings that even for L2 learners who were less mature L2 writers, peer-feedback played an important role and their low language proficiency did not deprive them of using it to optimize their writings. This point was in line with the modified definition of scaffolding based on which the dynamic nature of interaction between even low proficient learners enabled them to help each other and even more proficient learners to perform a task they could not perform by themselves (Jacobs, 2001; Ohta, 1995, as cited in Ellis, 2003).

Concerning the effect of feedback on content revision, the data analysis showed no significant difference among the effect of teacher-feedback, peer-feedback, and self-revision in control group in high proficient learners' text revision, indicating that content revision was

impervious to feedback; a result which concurred with Al-Hazmi and Scholfield (2007) who found a similar result with Arab students. Therefore, Zamel's (1985) suggestion for teachers to alter their feedback practices to focus more on meaning did not seem to be productive in this context. With low proficient learners, there was a significant difference between experimental groups themselves (teacher-feedback and peer-feedback groups). However, there was no significant difference between either of these experimental groups and the control group- a strange result. It was as if the control group performed as well as the experimental groups. The possible explanation might come from Fathman and Whalley's (1990) study in which the no-feedback group wrote the longest essays. Similar result was reported by Raschtchi and Ghandi (2011) in which self-revising group outperformed teacher feedback group. They believed that revising one's own writing on the basis of the guidelines provided in a checklist was more effective. It seemed that checklists could help learners concentrate on their writings, make judgments, and come up with decisions. Likewise, students tended to write less when given feedback, perhaps because they tried to incorporate the feedback given into their subsequent writing. Another explanation might come from Oxford's (1990) avoidance strategy based on which, to avoid making mistakes and consequently receiving negative comments either from their teachers or peers, the participants in experimental groups might opt for less complex or less challenging structures in the first place.

5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study suggest that peer-feedback, teacher-feedback, or even self-revision can help both high and low proficient L2 students improve their writing to different degrees in both surface and content levels. Therefore, they both support and reject part of what Truscott (1996) asserts about the effect of corrective feedback on writing revision. As far as surface level is concerned, Truscott's position on the uselessness or even harmfulness of feedback is rejected. Of course, for having positive effect, the nature of particular error, students' proficiency level (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996), the role of preparation (Rollinson, 2005), cultural factors (Carson & Nelson, 1996) and other cognitive, affective, and situational factors, to name a few, must be taken into account.

Impermeability of content revision to feedback in high proficient learners' writing can indicate that learners' image of the content or general organization must be too solid to be affected by feedback either

from their peers or even from teachers. However, the result becomes more complicated with low proficient learners in whom feedback causes a significant change between peer- and teacher-feedback groups themselves, but not between these two as the experimental group and the control group. One might tentatively consider Truscott's (1996) attitude that mere continuous writing and not feedback can make a change. Whatever the result, the role of preparation and training should be emphasized even more especially in EFL contexts where cultural factors might work against this approach. It is writing teachers' and learners' responsibility to acknowledge the fact that writing means rewriting and successive revision is far from a punitive act; rather it must be regarded as the inextricable and indispensable part of writing.

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Appendix

Evaluation Checklist (White & McGovern, 1994)

1. Main idea
What is your overall idea?
2. Purpose
 - 2.1 Is your primary purpose clear? Is the purpose to:
 - inform?
 - persuade?
 - both?
3. Content
 - 3.1 Have you written enough about the topic adequately?
 - 3.2 Is all the information relevant to your topic?
 - 3.3 Are the main ideas supported by specific examples or evidence?
 - 3.4 Are there gaps in the information?
 - 3.5 Is there too much information on some points?
4. Structure of text
 - 4.1 Does your essay have a clear introduction and a clear conclusion?
 - 4.2 Is the sequence of your ideas clear - earlier to later, general to particular, thesis to supporting points, supporting points to conclusion, weaker arguments to stronger arguments? If not would it help to rearrange the order of ideas?
 - 4.3 Paragraphs
 - a. Does your essay have clear paragraph divisions?
 - b. Is each paragraph built around one main idea?
 - c. Do paragraph divisions match the organization of ideas in the plan?
 - d. If not, should any of the paragraphs be:
 - joined together?
 - divided into smaller units?
 - rearranged?
5. a. Cohesion
 - 5.1 Do the connections between the ideas need to be made clear or explicit?
 - 5.2 If connecting words like the ones below have been used, have they been used appropriately? Do they give the reader a sense of flow in your ideas? Or do the ideas simply read like a list?
Types of connectors
And' type: therefore, as a result, accordingly, consequently, thus
'Or' type: in other words, to put it more simply
'But' type: however, yet, nevertheless
Other connectors include: who, which, that, when, where, because, since, although, etc.
5. b. Response as readers
 - 5.1 Does the opening paragraph make the reader want to read on?
 - 5.2 Do you feel satisfied with the way your essay comes to an end?
 - 5.3 Indicate your interest in your essay as a whole, using a scale from 1 to 6.
6. Vocabulary
Is specialist or technical and general vocabulary accurately used?
7. Grammar
Do subjects and verbs agree? Are verb tenses correctly formed and correctly used?
Check the correct use of prepositions, articles, adjectives, passive forms.

8. Mechanical accuracy

8.1 Punctuation: Does each sentence end with an appropriate mark of punctuation?

8.2 Capital letters: Are capital letters used where they are needed?

8.3 Spelling: See if your spelling of words that you are not sure is correct?