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# Effectiveness of Peer Feedback in Teaching Academic Chinese Writing for CSL Students

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## Abstract

Peer feedback has been widely used in English as a foreign language writing, but rarely in CSL (Chinese as a second language) students' academic Chinese writing. In order to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing, this study was conducted among junior CSL students (n=16) majoring in TCSOL (teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages) at International College of Southwest University. Multiple sources of data were collected, including peer feedback rubric, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews and student assignments. Data analyses revealed that, firstly, according to peer feedback rubric, students paid most attention to language, less attention to structure and least attention to content, they focused on the use of vocabularies, grammar and punctuation in language, and focused on cohesion and coherence, completeness and moderation of content in structure and content. By comparing students' first draft and second draft assignments, it was found that the effect of peer feedback on improving students' academic writing performance was slight, but it could cultivate students' abilities to discover, analyze and solve problems, improve students' thinking abilities, stimulate students' awareness of self-preparation and learning autonomy, train students' awareness of self-reflection. Secondly, the effect of peer feedback was susceptible to student's Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge, personality, social culture of native country and academic authority hierarchy. Among them, student's Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge affected the breadth and depth of evaluation, personality, social culture of native country and academic authority hierarchy affected the subjective willingness and enthusiasm of evaluators.

## Keywords

Peer feedback, teaching of academic Chinese writing, effectiveness, influencing factors

## 1. Introduction

Peer feedback refers to an activity in which students give written or oral evaluations and suggestions on their peers' learning behaviors or outcomes (Liu & Hansen, 2002; Liu et al., 2023; Yu & Lee, 2016). As a form of formative assessment and cooperative learning, peer feedback has been widely used in L2

writing curricula and courses (Yu & Lee, 2014), especially in the context of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages). Although several studies doubted reliability and validity of peer feedback (Bai, 2013; Zeng & Liang, 2017), a great deal of researches have confirmed positive effect of peer feedback on L2 writing and found that it could enhance students' independent learning and problem-solving abilities (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Tsui & Ng, 2000), improve students' learning autonomy (Miao et al., 2006), raise students' reader awareness (Hung, 2016), reduce students' writing anxiety (Gu & Wang, 2004; Kurt & Atay, 2007), develop students' critical reflection abilities (Liu et al., 2017; Mangelsdorf, 1992), strengthen students' self-confidence and writing self-efficacy (Martinez et al., 2011; Wu, 2013).

However, in the context of TCSOL (teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages), few studies explored the effectiveness of peer feedback in Chinese writing, let alone in teaching of academic Chinese writing. Wang & Wang (2023) examined the characteristics of Chinese L2 learners' peer feedback, their cognition of peer feedback and its influence factors. Shu (2022) explored the feasibility and characteristics of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing. To fill this research gap, this study was conducted to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing by combining quantitative and qualitative research methods.

## 2. Literature Review

In recent years, with the high-quality development of International Chinese Language Education, CSL (Chinese as a second language) students' academic Chinese writing has attracted increasing attention (Gao & Liu, 2016; Wu, 2020), and a growing body of research has been carried out to explore academic Chinese writing accordingly.

There has been a large number of studies on types and topics of CSL students' theses, they found that there was a growing diversity in types (e.g. thematic thesis, research investigation, teaching experiment report, case study, teaching design), but the application of these types was not distributed evenly, thematic thesis and research investigation were prevalent, while other types remained scarce relatively (Li et al., 2017). The topics tended to be extensive, interdisciplinary and country-specific. Nevertheless, there still existed problems like overlap and inappropriateness in topics (Li & Li, 2023).

Furthermore, a growing number of research has been conducted on generic structure of parts of CSL students' theses (e.g. abstract, introduction, literature review, conclusion). It was concluded that there were two research perspectives, the first was "top-down" perspective, that was, to describe and analyze generic problems in CSL students' theses based on a certain generic structure (Liu, 2018; Liu & Liu, 2022; Li & Wu, 2022). Zhang Shan (2015) revealed that there existed such problems as steps missing, redundancy and repetition in abstract of CSL students' theses. The second was "bottom-up" perspective, that was, based on corpora of Chinese academic journal papers, to summarize features of a certain generic structure, and then put the structure into teaching (Li, 2018). On the whole, most of existing studies adopted the "top-down" perspective to describe and analyze generic problems in CSL students' theses.

Another strand of research has been conducted on linguistic features of CSL students' theses. Qi et al (2022) examined lexical complexity, grammatical complexity, and accuracy in undergraduates' and masters' dissertations and found that all students tended to use complex long sentences in their theses, with the improvement of language proficiency, the lexical diversity developed, but the lexical density and the use of function word did not develop accordingly. Wu (2023) investigated linguistic characteristics in three dimensions of lexical richness, syntactic complexity and textual cohesion in CSL Korean students' theses. Liu & Song (2018) found several patterns in the use of meta-discourse in abstract of CSL students' theses. Some research summarized linguistic features of academic Chinese writing written by the students majoring in information science and engineering technology (Zhou, 2017), as well as in Chinese economic and trade (Li, 2017). Ji (2016) explored the use of "classical Chinese structure"

in Korean CFL (Chinese as a foreign language) students' theses and found that students seldom used "classical Chinese structure" in their theses and their stylistic abilities were weak. Wang (2017) investigated master's theses written by CSL Thailand students and found that language used in their theses was colloquial. Additionally, some research explored academic word list (Qian et al, 2023; Wang & Wang, 2022; Zhang, 2022; Zhang et al., 2020).

Some studies have probed into teaching of academic Chinese writing, focusing on "what to teach" and "how to teach". Regarding "what to teach", there were two approaches of preparing content, one was to borrow content from relevant textbooks, the other was to develop content on teachers own according to teaching needs (Chen, 2012; Li et al., 2020). With regard to "how to teach", existing research focused on teaching strategies, teaching models and methods. In terms of teaching strategies, Chen (2016) found that the "explicit" strategies had more obvious "scaffolding" effect than the "implicit" ones, and revealed that teachers' and students' understanding of their respective roles, deficiency of student's comprehension, and learners' identity confusion in dual contexts were important factors affecting the effectiveness of strategies in academic Chinese writing. As for teaching models and methods, Guo (2016) regarded teaching of academic Chinese writing as a "continuum" that integrates task and research, and built a model that combines task-based and research-based models. Shu (2022) applied Process Genre Approach to teaching of academic Chinese writing. Zhou et al (2022) applied Genre Analysis Approach to academic Chinese writing courses based on corpora.

Several studies have explored students' cognition about academic Chinese writing. Zhang (2017) found that language expression was the major challenge faced by CSL students in academic writing, especially the lack of stylistic awareness of thesis. Some studies investigated the identity development of CSL students during the process of writing academic theses. Wang & Huang (2021) found that the development of CSL students' academic writing abilities was accompanied by multiple changes of identity and sound inside and outside the text. Chen (2015) revealed that students' identity developed in a nonlinear way. Zhang (2020) focused on the cognitive process involved in academic Chinese reading and found that academic vocabularies, grammatical structures, learning motivation, Chinese proficiency and strategies of vocabulary recognition were identified as key factors influencing the cognitive process. Moreover, a few studies focused on the course and the textbook of academic Chinese writing. There were two types of academic Chinese writing courses, one was tailored for CSL students majoring in Chinese, and another was designed for CSL students with other majors. Studies have explored the orientation, objectives, content, teaching syllabus, teaching materials, teaching methods and teaching evaluation of academic Chinese writing courses (Chen, 2012; Chen, 2020; Li et al., 2020). Regarding the textbook, considerable attention has been given to the orientation and principles in compilation (Gao & Li, 2018; Wang & Jin, 2019).

To sum up, previous studies have focused more on academic texts written by CSL students, while haven't given due attention to CSL students' cognitive process in academic Chinese writing and teaching of academic Chinese writing. As a strategy to explore students' cognitive process, peer feedback has been proved to play a great role in the field of L2 writing at home and abroad. However, there were few studies on peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing. To fill this research gap, this study set out to investigate the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing. Research questions that guided the study were:

1. To what extent can peer feedback improve CSL students' academic Chinese writing?
2. What factors may affect the effect of peer feedback on teaching of academic Chinese writing?

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were junior students (n=16, male=3, female=13) from one class, majoring in TCSOL at International College of Southwest University in China. Among them, 14 students were

from Thailand, 2 students were from Russia and Vietnam respectively. The age area was 20-23 years old (average age=21.3), and the duration of Chinese learning was 4-8 years (average year of Chinese learning=5.8). The study was implemented in academic Chinese writing course *Thesis Writing Guidance* for CSL undergraduates, which was offered in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester and lasted 2 class hours per week (45 minutes/class hour).

### 3.2 Design

This study started from the 12<sup>th</sup> week to the 20<sup>th</sup> week. The whole study was divided into 3 stages.

*Preparation.* According to the principle of “inter-group homogeneity and intra-group heterogeneity”, based on students’ final exam scores in last semester and latest HSK5 scores, this study established cooperative learning groups, and designed peer feedback rubric to ensure the implementation of peer feedback.

Table 1

*Cooperative Learning Groups*

Level	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Advanced	Student 12	Student 4	Student 10	Student 6
Quasi-advanced	Student 11	Student 1	Student 15	Student 8
Intermediate	Student 9	Student 16	Student 3	Student 14
Quasi-intermediate	Student 5	Student 2	Student 7	Student 13

*Implementation.* In order to enable students to understand peer feedback well, the course teacher (researcher) explained the content of peer feedback rubric and the rules of giving feedback, and then conducted the demonstration of peer feedback before its implementation. After students were familiar with the rubric and rules, peer feedback was carried out, students needed to revise their assignments according to peers’ feedback. At the end of the course, all students were interviewed to share their attitudes and cognition towards peer feedback.

*Analyzation.* Multiple data were collected and analyzed, for example the records of classroom observation and the results of peer feedback rubric were analyzed by the course teacher. Students’ academic writing assignments (including the first draft and the second draft) and transcriptions of interviews were analyzed by the course teacher and another veteran teacher.

### 3.3 Peer feedback procedures

The peer feedback was administered in following procedures. Firstly, the course teacher divided the four students from one cooperative learning group into two pairs according to the method of “the advanced to the quasi-advanced” and “the intermediate to the quasi-intermediate”, asked the two pairs to exchange writing assignments with each other, and read assignments within 7 minutes to understand the content. Secondly, two students in a pair were asked to evaluate peer’s assignments mutually from three dimensions of language, content and structure in turn. Each dimension had about 7 minutes to evaluate. Finally, peers exchanged evaluations and explained suggestions on revision, and then students revised their assignments to be the second draft according to peer’s feedback.

### 3.4 Instruments

Four instruments were used to collect data in this study. The first one was classroom observation. The second was the students’ academic writing assignments such as introduction writing, conclusion writing

and abstract writing. These assignments (the first drafts) were handed out to cooperative learning groups, and were evaluated by group members, and then according to peer's feedback, students revised the first drafts to be the second drafts, which could be the tool to collect data.

The third instrument was peer feedback rubric. As it known that in the field of foreign language education, many researchers at home and abroad had designed peer feedback rubrics for different types of writing according to teaching practice (Chen, 2021; Dixon, 2007; Mo, 2018; Xu, 2012). These studies reached a consensus that language expression, content of writing and structure of text were the main dimensions in peer feedback. Based on this consensus, peer feedback rubric in this inquiry was co-designed by the course teacher and another veteran teacher.

Table 2

*Peer Feedback Rubric*

Dimension	Description	Agree	Disagree	Evidence
Language	1.Vocabularies, grammar and punctuation were used correctly.			
	2.Academic vocabularies and sentences or phrases were used correctly.			
	3.Language was concise and formal, in line with written expression habits.			
Content	4.The content was closely related to the topic.			
	5.Elements of genre were complete.			
	6.The length of each element of genre was well controlled and suitable.			
Structure	7.Text was written coherently and cohesively.			
	8.The elements of genre were written clearly and logically.			
	9.The structure of genre was clear, and the elements of genre could be analyzed quickly.			

The fourth instrument was a semi-structured interview. All students were interviewed at the end of the semester. Students' responses were audio-recorded, and then the recordings were transcribed into texts. All transcriptions were analyzed, but several of them were quoted in this study, because the rest reflected similar attitudes and cognition towards peer feedback.

### 3.5 Data analysis

In this study, the data consisted of the results of peer feedback, classroom observation, transcriptions of interviews and students' academic writing assignments (including the first and the second draft). The results of peer feedback and classroom observation were analyzed by the course teacher. As for the rest of data, another veteran teacher was invited to analyze with the course teacher together to guarantee the objectivity and consistency. The transcriptions were analyzed qualitatively with the help of NVIVO 12 in the guide of Grounded Theory.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Finding from peer feedback rubric

It was found that most students could identify their peers' problems with the reference to peer feedback rubric. Apart from few misjudgments and vague problems, most of problems were clear and valid. The statistic of problems has been made as follows.

Table 3

Statistic of Problems Found by Peer Feedback Rubric

Dimension	Description	Amount	Total
Language	1.Vocabularies, grammar and punctuation were used correctly.	16	26
	2.Academic vocabularies and sentences or phrases were used correctly.	2	
	3.Language was concise and formal, in line with written expression habits.	8	
Content	4.The content was closely related to the topic.	2	9
	5.Elements of genre were complete.	3	
	6.The length of each element of genre was well controlled and suitable.	4	
Structure	7.Text was written coherently and cohesively.	7	14
	8.The elements of genre were written clearly and logically.	4	
	9.The structure of genre was clear, and the elements of genre could be analyzed quickly.	3	

As shown in Table 3, students paid most attention to language, less attention to structure and least attention to content in the process of peer feedback. In the dimension of language, students tended to focus on the use of vocabularies, grammar and punctuation, in the dimension of structure and content, students paid more attention to cohesion and coherence, completeness and moderation of content. Here was an excerpt from peers' feedback as follows.

Student 9 gave feedback on student 12's introduction assignment:

1.*disagreed. In the last second sentence, “让” could be deleted. (original sentences: 找出学生学习汉语“把”字句的偏误和偏误产生的原因进行分析,以便让泰国学生能更快地了解和掌握汉语语法中的“把”字句, 以为未来研究提供参考。)*

2.*agreed.*

3.*agreed.*

4.*agreed.*

5.*agreed.*

6.*disagreed. The background was a little redundant.*

7.*agreed.*

8.*agreed.*

9.*agreed.*

Student 12 gave feedback on student 9's introduction assignment:

1.*disagreed. It should add“ 的 ”in the middle of the phrase “把”字句偏误 (to be“把”字句的偏误). The conjunction“ 然而 ”in the fourth line was used incorrectly, because the relationship here was causality, therefore it should use“ 由于 ”. (original sentences: “把”字句偏误不仅影响到学习者使用汉语表达,而且还影响到汉语整体水平的提高。然而,目前有关泰国留学生使用汉语“把”字句的研究比较匮乏。因此本研究 ……)*

2.*agreed. (you) used some suitable words and phrases such as“ 众所周知 ”“ 日益增加 ”“ 匮乏 ”“ 以为 …… 提供参考 ”.*

3.*agreed.*

4.*agreed.*

5.*agreed.*

6.*agreed.*

7.agreed.

8.agreed.

9.agreed.

They exchanged the ideas and explained the feedback:

*Student 12: Thank you XX!*

*Student9: My pleasure! Thanks for your feedback too, I really agreed on your feedback. For example I forgot to put“ 的 ”in the phrase“ 把 ”字句 偏误. As for“ 然而”, I thought the relationship was adversative, because the former sentence said that“ 把 ”字句 was very important, but its research was scarce at present.*

*Student 12: I thought the relationship was causality, because its research was scarce, therefore I did this research. Maybe you were right. I did agree on your feedback that the background was not concise and it was written redundantly. Thank you XX!*

*Student 9: It was all right.*

## 4.2 Finding from classroom observation

According to the results of classroom observation, it was found that there was a correlation between student's personality and the activeness in giving feedback.

Table 4

*The Correlation between Personality and Activeness in Giving Feedback*

Student	Personality		Times of giving feedback			Total
	Extroverted	Introverted	Introduction	Conclusion	Abstract	
S1		√	2	2	3	7
S2		√	2	2	2	6
S3	√		3	3	4	10
S4	√		6	4	4	14
S5		√	2	2	2	6
S6	√		3	3	4	10
S7		√	2	2	3	7
S8	√		3	4	5	12
S9	√		3	3	4	10
S10		√	3	2	3	8
S11		√	2	2	4	8
S12	√		3	3	5	11
S13	√		2	3	3	8
S14		√	2	3	2	7
S15	√		2	3	3	8
S16	√		3	1	3	7

As could be seen from Table 4, compared with introverted students, extroverted students (the gray part) were more willing to participate in giving their feedback and discussing them with their peers in peer feedback. It was concluded that the personality of student had a certain influence on peer feedback, the more extroverted student's personality was, the more active the student was in giving feedback.



### 4.3 Finding from transcriptions of interviews

With the help of NVIVO 12, the transcriptions were coded and analyzed in the guide of Grounded Theory.

*Question 1: How do you think about peer feedback?*

Through the analysis of transcriptions, it was found that most students had positive attitudes towards peer feedback, they reckoned that peer feedback was helpful for them to learn academic Chinese writing. Specifically speaking, firstly, peer feedback could train students' abilities to discover and resolve problems, develop their thinking abilities in learning academic Chinese writing. For example, student 10 said:

*"In this way, we could not only improve our abilities to find problems and give suggestions to peers, but also apply good methods and techniques in peer's writing to my writing. In addition, the feedback from peers could also make me think more about the content of writing, and then I could identify problems in content of peer's writing, and gave suggestions. In this way, it would be good for my thesis writing in the future."*

Secondly, peer feedback could motivate students to prepare themselves and take the initiative to learn academic Chinese writing. For example, student 4 and student 12 said respectively:

*"At that time, I had to understand what the conclusion was, otherwise I could not identify where my peer's problems were, so before peer feedback, I had to prepare myself well to understand the conclusion deeply, to review the conclusion comprehensively on my own, otherwise I could not find out where my peer's problems existed."*

*"This activity was a good and innovative way to teach, which could inspire students to try their best to complete the work, think well what you should write, rather than just do it casually. I thought that if you did not complete your homework carefully, it would be read not only by teacher, but also by peers, so in this way, it would make me humiliated. I wanted to bring out all my potential in academic Chinese writing."*

Thirdly, peer feedback could help students find their own problems in writing, understand peer's merits and demerits, and then reflect on their own writings and learn from peers. For example, student 11 and student 7 said respectively:

*"In peer feedback, we could check homework each other, and give suggestions to each other, in this way, I could notice peer's strengths and weaknesses on his writing, which made me reflect on my work, learn from him, and reminded me to write carefully."*

*"If I knew how did the peer think and write when discussing homework with her, I could learn from her, because when I was writing, I did not think it deeply and read carefully. If the peer wrote better than me, I could remember what she wrote. At the same time, the peer could also point out the places where I did not write well, gave me some suggestions, and then I could revise my homework to be better."*

*Question 2: How do you think about peers' feedback and teacher's feedback?*

Although students thought peers' feedback was helpful for them to learn academic Chinese writing, they all preferred to teacher's feedback, because they thought that teacher had more knowledge and experience than peers, and teacher's feedback was more detailed, concrete, and reliable. For example, student 8 and student 12 said respectively:



*"I preferred teacher's feedback, because peers' knowledge was not enough, and teacher also had more experience, he could find out problems quickly and accurately, sometimes, teacher could not only identify your mistakes, but also give you more suggestions to modify and perfect your homework. He would suggest you to write in a real thesis way. However, peers did not know about these."*

*"I liked to read teacher's feedback, because teacher had a lot of knowledge and experience, could give more detailed feedback than peers. I thought teacher's feedback was more reliable than peers' feedback. I could follow teacher's suggestions to revise my homework, which could improve my writing abilities."*

*Question 3: What factors might affect you to give feedback?*

Students' responses revealed that three factors might affect them to give feedback. Firstly, it was student evaluator's insufficient Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge. Due to their insufficient Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge, students were difficult to identify problems in peer's assignments, at the same time, students were skeptical of peer's feedback. Here were excerpts from students' interviews.

*"Because my Chinese was not good, sometimes I could not find out where problems were." (excerpt from Student 9's interview)*

*"When I asked him(peer), he replied with a feeling of uncertainty, he wasn't sure about the problems. Then I confused, should I believe him or not? How could I revise my work?" (excerpt from Student 4's interview)*

*"To be honest, my peer was ZZ, her Chinese level was the same as mine, so when she evaluated my assignment, she could not identify the problems, neither could I." (excerpt from Student 7's interview)*

Secondly, the social culture of native country may affect peer feedback. The subject class was comprised of students from Thailand, Vietnam and Russia. Among them, most students were from Thailand. Through the interviews, it was found that Thailand and Vietnam students "pretended" to be more polite and paid more attention to each other's emotion in peer feedback, while Russian student was outspoken and tended to pointed out peer's problems straightly, and believed that peer feedback should be like this. Here were excerpts from students' interviews.

*"Most students performed politely and dared not point out your problems directly and straightly." (excerpt from student 10's interview)*

*"My classmates performed always politely in peer feedback, maybe she was worried about my anger. In fact, I also had such worries every time when I evaluated my peer's work, I was afraid that my evaluation may offend my friend." (excerpt from student 14's interview)*

*"They really disliked to evaluate other's works, and they were not used to criticizing, you knew sometimes it should be. Their culture maybe like that everything was fine, it was ok. They would not tell you where problems were, it may get you angry. I was different, and I would tell you where problems were, so the classmates may angry with me. It was ok, let it go." (excerpt from student 8's interview)*

Thirdly, academic authority hierarchy may affect peer feedback. Before the implementation of peer feedback, the students were divided into cooperative learning groups according to their Chinese

proficiency. However, they had their own knowledge and judgment about the level or abilities of their classmates in real study or life, so these students dared not evaluate works of their classmates whose Chinese proficiency was better than themselves. For example, student 1 said: “*when I evaluated SR’s assignment, I thought his Chinese level was higher than mine, so I did not dare to evaluate his work.*”

In summary, the students’ interviews indicated that the effect of peer feedback was susceptible to student’s Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge, social culture of native country and academic authority hierarchy. Moreover, student’s personality also affected the effect of peer feedback. Among these factors, student’s Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge could affect the breadth and depth of feedback, social culture of native country, academic authority hierarchy and personality could affect the subjective willingness and enthusiasm of evaluators.

#### 4.4 Finding from students’ assignments

In order to understand the effect of peer feedback on students’ writing performance, this study organized two teachers to evaluate and analyze the scores of students’ first draft assignments and the second draft assignments. The second draft assignments were revised by students themselves according to peers’ suggestions. Students’ assignments included introduction writing, conclusion writing and abstract writing.

Figure 1

*Comparison between the First Draft Introduction and the Second One*

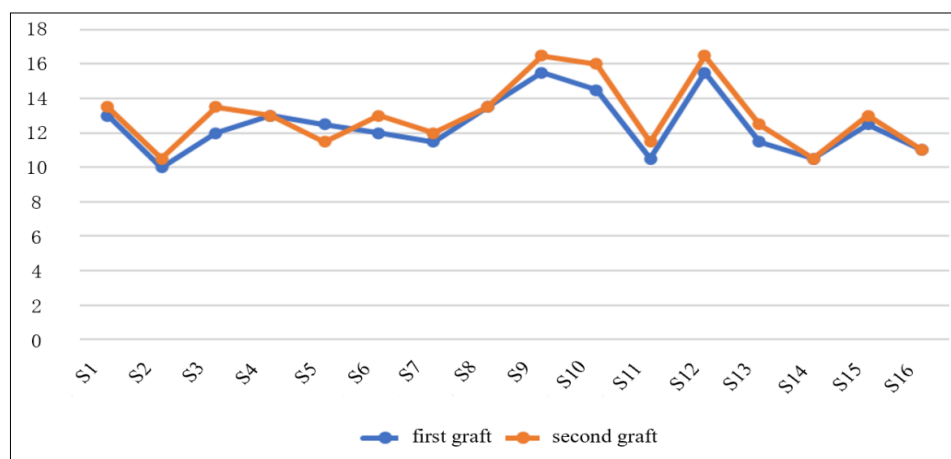


Figure 2

*Comparison between the First Draft Conclusion and the Second One*

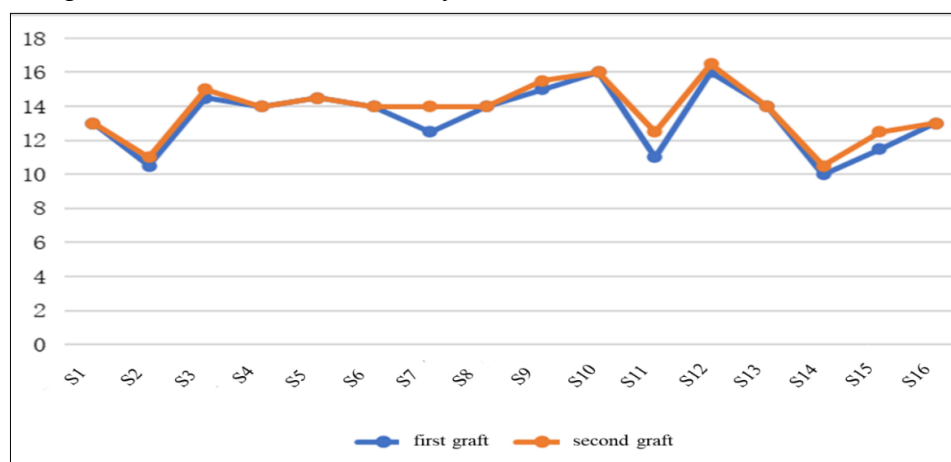
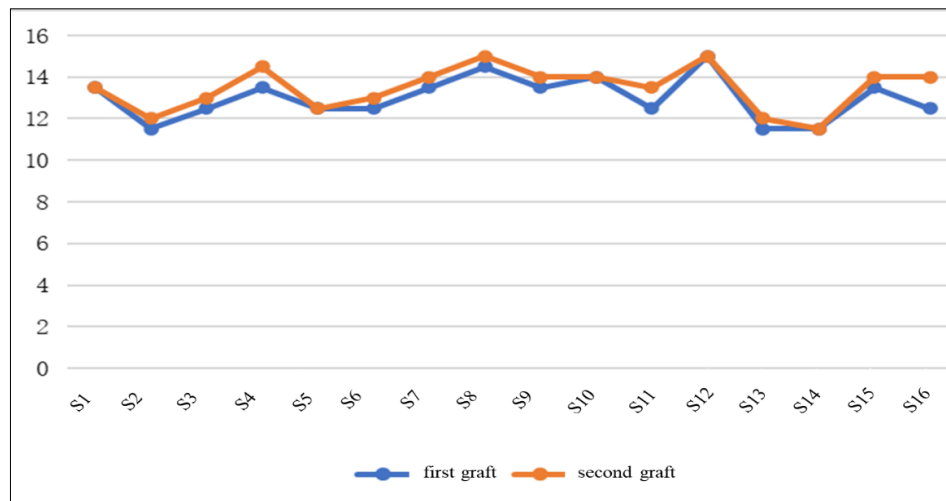


Figure 3

*Comparison between the First Graft Abstract and the Second One*



As could be seen from these figures, the performance of the second drafts were a little better than the first ones. In order to know whether peer feedback had a significant impact on students' writing performance, a paired samples T test was conducted between the first and second grafts, the results revealed that there was a significant difference between the second and the first draft in introduction assignments ( $P=0.004<0.005$ ) and in abstract assignments ( $P=0.001<0.005$ ) respectively, while there was no significant difference between the second draft and the first draft ( $P=0.007>0.005$ ) in conclusion. It was concluded that peer feedback could improve students' writing performance to some extent, but the improvement was slight and limited.

## 5. Discussion

In order to explore the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing, this study collected and analyzed multiple data from classroom observation, peer feedback rubric, students' academic writing assignments and transcriptions of students' interviews. The findings above have testified the effectiveness of peer feedback and found some factors which might affect the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing, and answered two research questions in literature review.

In response to the first research question "*To what extent can peer feedback improve CSL students' academic Chinese writing?*", the analysis of data revealed that, firstly, from the perspective of the effect on improving students' academic writing performance, the results confirmed that peer feedback could improve students' academic Chinese writing performance, which was consistent with the findings of existing research. However, this positive effect was slight and limited, take students' academic writing assignments for example, peer feedback was effective in introduction and abstract writings, while was ineffective in conclusion writing. Furthermore, according to peer feedback rubric students tended to pay most attention to linguistic problems (Leki, 1990; Sippel, 2019; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998; Ware, 2011; Zhao, 2010), such as the use of vocabularies, grammar and punctuation, while less attention to structure and least attention to content such as cohesion and coherence, completeness and moderation of content (Chen & Cui, 2022; Qi, 2004). Secondly, from the perspective of students' cognition, most students held a positive attitude towards peer feedback and reached a consensus that peer feedback could cultivate students' abilities to discover, analyze and solve problems, improve students' thinking abilities, stimulate students' awareness of self-preparation and learning autonomy (Astrid et al., 2021), train students' awareness of self-reflection. These findings were consistent with results of existing research.

As for the second question “*What factors may affect the effect of peer feedback on teaching of academic Chinese writing?*” This study found that the effectiveness of peer feedback was susceptible to student’s Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge, social culture of native country, academic authority hierarchy and personality. Among them, student’s Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge affected the breadth and depth of evaluation, social culture of native country, academic authority hierarchy and personality affected the subjective willingness and enthusiasm of evaluators.

*Student’s Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge* determined the quality of feedback. For example, student’s insufficient Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge will cause uncertainty and diffidence in giving feedback (Chong, 2017; Zhang & Hyland, 2023), and constrain himself/herself from finding and solving “higher-level” problems in structure and content. However, students’ Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge could be supplemented by observing high-level peers’ works, reflecting and revising themselves in the process of peer feedback (Gong, 2007).

*Personality* could affect willingness and acceptance in peer feedback. This study revealed that extroverted students were more willing to participate in giving their feedback and discussing them with their peers, the more extroverted student’s personality was, the more active the student was in giving feedback. Hu (2015) investigated that students would like extroverted students to give feedback because these students were easy going and would not embarrass them.

*Social culture of student’s native country* was macro-contextual factor in peer feedback (Ellis, 2010). This study revealed that Thailand and Vietnam students were more sensitive to maintain the relationship and harmony between peers, while Russian student was more critical and straight in giving feedback. Previous studies have reported that students in Asian countries might refrain from making critical comments for fear of upsetting group harmony or threatening their peers’ face (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Nelson & Carson, 1998).

*Academic authority hierarchy* was an easy-neglected factor in peer feedback. Previous studies have proved that students preferred teacher’s feedback to peer’s feedback. However, in giving feedback, students’ perception of academic authority hierarchy would hinder the low-level students from giving feedback to the high-level students psychologically, even though teacher had encouraged and helped them with peer feedback rubric. Gong (2007) put forwarded “i+1” model in which the high-level students evaluated the low-level, and the low-level appreciated the high-level, thought the process of appreciation as the process of finding the gap (“1”) between themselves and high-level students, after a period of learning and reflecting, the low-level students could improve their level and finally became high-level students.

In addition, existing studies have explored other influence factors in peer feedback such as cognitive factors, affective factors, sociocultural factors, instructional factors (Wu, 2019). Hu (2015) revealed that acceptance of peer’s feedback was affected by language proficiency, gender, personality and familiarity. These explorations of factors will have implications on further studies in peer feedback.

## 6. Conclusions

To conclude, this study investigated the effectiveness of peer feedback and its influence factors in teaching of academic Chinese writing. It addressed the gaps in the literature by presenting a qualitative and quantitative methods mixed study on CSL undergraduates in academic Chinese writing course. The findings showed that by giving feedback on peers’ academic writing assignments, the student evaluators improved their academic writing skills, developed their abilities to discover, analyze and solve problems, deepened their thinking abilities, raised their awareness of learning autonomy and self-reflection, which testified the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing.

However, it must notice that the positive effect of peer feedback on improving CSL students’ academic writing performance directly was slight and limited, because in the process of identifying problems, students paid most attention to linguistic problems, while less attention to structure problems

and least attention to content problems. For example, among linguistic problems, students focused on the use of vocabularies, grammar and punctuation, among structure and content problems, they focused on cohesion and coherence, completeness and moderation of content, these showed that the quality of peer feedback needed to be improved. Moreover, the effect of peer feedback was susceptible to student's Chinese proficiency, writing knowledge, social culture of native country, academic authority hierarchy and personality. Among them, student's Chinese proficiency and writing knowledge affected the breadth and depth of feedback, social culture of native country, academic authority hierarchy and personality affected the subjective willingness and enthusiasm of evaluators. Therefore, when apply peer feedback to teaching of academic Chinese writing, we should pay attention to these factors to improve the effectiveness of peer feedback.

Lastly, several limitations in this study must be acknowledged: due to the impact of COVID-19, academic Chinese writing course was conducted online, so the effect of peer feedback may be different from the one in traditional off-line class. Additionally, the sample size was relatively small, and the procedure of implementing peer feedback could be improved to optimize the effectiveness of peer feedback in teaching of academic Chinese writing.

## Notes

In this study, student's personality was self-identified and confirmed by head teacher and classmates rather than tested psychologically by personality scale in case of misunderstanding questions or items in Chinese version scale. At last, 14 students were interviewed at the end of the course, 2 students were absent due to internet problem.

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# 学术汉语写作教学中同伴互评的有效性探究

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## 摘要

研究以西南大学汉语专业留学生为对象，将同伴互评应用于学术汉语写作教学，通过教学实验、课堂观察、访谈等方法，对同伴互评的有效性进行了探究，结果发现：学生对学术写作的语言问题关注最多，其后依次是结构和内容问题。通过对比学生两稿作业发现，同伴互评对提高学生学术写作表现的作用较小，但学生普遍对同伴互评持正向态度，认为同伴互评能够培养学生发现、分析和解决问题的能力，提升学生思考能力，激发学生自主学习和自我反思的意识。同伴互评的有效性易受学生的汉语水平和写作知识、性格、母语的社会文化、学习等级观念等影响，其中，汉语水平和写作知识影响评价的广度与深度，性格、母语的社会文化和学习等级观念影响评价者的积极性。

## 关键词

同伴互评，学术汉语写作教学，有效性，影响因素

舒敬斌，西南大学讲师，研究方向：中文教学资源开发、学术汉语写作及教学。