

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the main findings of the study based on the three research questions posited. It begins with the summary of the main findings, followed by discussion of the findings in relation with past research, implications, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This qualitative study on the students' revision of compositions based on the class teacher and peer feedback was conducted in a Form Four ESL writing class in Sarawak. The participants of this case study included an ESL teacher and six students (three high-proficiency level students and three intermediate-proficiency level students) who were purposively chosen. The students' writing tasks were based on the Form Four English Language writing syllabus. The study was carried out in a naturalistic classroom environment. The data collected included audio-taped teacher-student and student-student interactions during the pre-writing, composing and peer response sessions; students' rewrites (first and final drafts of all the four compositions), field notes of in-class observation sessions, as well as interviews with the class teacher and students. The teacher-student and student-student interactions during the pre-writing, composing and peer response sessions were transcribed and analysed. All the data collected were analysed systematically and triangulated to answer the three research questions posited in this study.

The summary includes the discussion of the main findings of the study based on the following topics: teacher-student and student-student interactions during peer response sessions, role of the class teacher and peers during the peer response sessions, types of

class teacher and peer scaffolds, class teacher feedback and peer feedback, types of students' revision on the first drafts of their compositions, as well as conclusion.

5.2 Teacher-student and Student-student Interactions during Peer Response Sessions

5.2.1 Pattern of Development of Ideas

The findings in this study revealed that multiple patterns of development of ideas emerged as a result of the lengthy teacher-student and student-student interactions during the peer response sessions which served as a platform for students to share their thoughts, knowledge and skills as well as to provide constructive feedback to help their group members in the revision of the individual first drafts of their Compositions 1, 2, 3 and 4. These multiple patterns of development of ideas comprised a total of 68 primary and secondary patterns of development of ideas that transpired during the teacher-student and student-student interactions. Among the primary categories of the patterns of development of ideas, the category that occurred most frequently was 'Identify-correct'. This was followed by 'Identify-suggest', 'Identify-rectify', 'Probe-rectify', 'Probe-explain', 'Evaluate-suggest', 'Evaluate-correct' and 'Inquire-define'. Among the secondary categories of the patterns of development of ideas, the category that occurred most regularly was 'Inquire-explain'. This was followed by 'Inquire-confirm', 'Inquire-locate', 'Suggest-accept', 'Reiterate-confirm', 'Inquire-select', 'Inquire-inform', 'Inquire-suggest' and 'Correct-accept' (just to name a few).

What is interesting in this present study is the interplay between the primary and secondary categories of the patterns of development of ideas that led to the building of scaffolds upon scaffolds by the peers and the class teacher which assisted the group members to construct and reconstruct meanings in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions. These findings contradicted that of Cumming & So's (1996) study which

found that the tutor discourse followed the transactions of problem identification, negotiation, and resolution; Lockhart & Ng's (1995) study which identified only four categories of reader stances which included the authoritative, interpretive, probing and collaborative stances; as well as Lockhart & Ng's (1995) extended study which identified only two major patterns of development that emerged in the peer discussion which included the 'evaluate-suggest' pattern and 'observe-discover' pattern'.

The finding in this present study that the 'Identify-correct' pattern of interaction occurred the most frequently when the students were responding to each others' first drafts is perhaps because the students are second language learners. Thus, they needed direct correction to help them understand and to rectify their errors. This reaffirms the finding of Cho et al.'s (2006) study which indicated the effectiveness of the use of direct comments by the undergraduates. Likewise, this is in agreement with Guénette's (2007) view that "second language acquisition is slow, gradual, and often arduous, and that corrective feedback is only one of the many factors that contribute to that process" (p. 52). It was found that through the understanding of the errors and in knowing the correct form from their peers and class teacher that they internalised and learnt the correct form. Hence, subsequently, they were seen to be able to apply this knowledge to correct their own errors or to correct the errors in their peers' first drafts. This supports Guénette's (2007) view that "They [Students] have to notice the feedback and be given ample opportunities to apply the corrections" (p. 52).

Similar to the finding of Mohd. Sofi's (1994) study which examined the speech acts of 28 teacher trainees, the present study indicated that both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students were able to evaluate their peers' drafts.

All the group members in this present study were found to be very meticulous in identifying errors of all aspects (which included grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, adequacy of contents and relevancy of elaborations) when they were responding to the

first drafts of their peers' compositions. This finding is in contrast to studies done by Lockhart (1994) and Mendonca & Johnson (1994) which found that peer response group helped students to focus attention on ideational aspects of a draft and to consider audience and purpose. In the present study, the students provided more verbal feedback during the peer response sessions as compared to the class teacher. Nevertheless, the students were found to emphasise the importance of all aspects of writing which were highlighted by the class teacher before the students worked in their group during the peer response sessions. In other words, the teacher talk prior to the peer response sessions had an influence on the area of focus during the student-student interaction of the peer response sessions. This finding on the teacher's influence upon the peer discourse concurs with Lockhart's (1994) study which found that the content of the peer discourse reflected what the teacher taught and what they had learnt from textbook. This view is also similar to that of DiPardo & Freedman (1988) who opined that teachers' intentions and expectations for the written texts have an influence on the negotiations that occur during the peer interactions.

Unlike the students, the class teacher in this present study emphasised the importance of the correct organisation of contents and the correct usage of linkers during the peer response session. This is perhaps the students had taken note of those aspects while composing the individual first drafts of their compositions. Thus, there were fewer mistakes detected by the students on those areas concerned.

As the pattern of interaction flowed smoothly from one to another, the students provided useful feedback to assist their peers in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions. The peer response sessions provided an opportunity for the students to be engaged in meaningful discussion to assist one another in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions. The high-proficiency level students (particularly, Cathy and Ted) played outstanding and dominant roles in initiating, facilitating and maintaining the peer

discussions throughout all the four peer response sessions. This contradicts the finding in Zhu's (2001) study in which the ESL students took fewer turns and used fewer language functions during the oral discussion of their writing. In Zhu's (2001) study, the ESL students were in less control of the discussions of their own writing; but in this present study, the high-proficiency level students were in control of the discussions while the rest of the group members were comfortable with each other and they collaborated to provide feedback to assist one another in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions.

It is interesting to note that although the students in this present study were from diverse cultural backgrounds, they were not intimidated by some of the harsh feedback given by their peers. Instead, they accepted and respected each others' views and criticism as constructive feedback. This is perhaps by performing the revision exercise as part of a group and knowing that the rest of the group members were also reworking their drafts made them felt at ease and not shy of making numerous corrections. There is also evidence from interviews with the students as they reported that they did not feel shy when their peers commented on their work as they were already acquainted with each other who were of the same level (see INW3/S4/234 and INW4/S5/135 for interview excerpts with Amy and Aini on page 259 in Section 4.2.2; and field notes in FW2/D2/1108, lines 53 to 59 in Appendix Q which have been mentioned earlier on page 222). Instead, they welcomed their peer feedback to help improve their revisions. The students seemed to value the peer talk which Cazden (1988) described as:

The only context in which children can reverse interactional roles with the same intellectual content, giving directions as well as following them, and asking questions as well as answering them, is with their peers. (p. 134).

This corresponds with the findings in several studies (McCarthy, 1994; Mitchell, 1992; Yang et al., 2006) which revealed that as the students worked together collaboratively, they get accustomed to the social norm of the writing community.

According to Mitchell (1992), the students felt at ease with their group members because “as community spirit grows, trust allows students to criticize well” (p. 398). This view is also similar to the findings of studies done by Brown (1984) and Smagorinsky (1991) in that peer response session provided the audience to help improve the writing of peers and at the same time develop the analytical and critical thinking skills to guide the readers’ own writing.

However, this differs from the findings of Carson & Nelson (1996), Hyland (2000), Nelson & Carson (1998) and Zhang (1995) in that students faced difficulty in providing peer feedback as they were from a culture that respected the teacher as the figure of authority. Thus, the finding in the present study shows that cultural differences did not hinder the students from accepting their peer feedback as a source to assist them in their revision. This implies that if students are to provide responses to each others’ writing, they need to see the social norms of the writing group applied to their work (Newkirk, 1984).

The findings in this present study which revealed that the student-student interaction during the peer response sessions was smoothly carried out amongst the group members who were comfortable with each other concurs with the findings in Daiute & Dalton’s (1993) study which found that the peers felt more at ease with each other of equal social status and this enabled productive communication. Daiute & Dalton (1993) have positive view about peer collaboration as they mentioned:

... each child brought strengths to the collaborative writing experiences and used his or her strengths as a writer to organize the writing experience and contribute to the collaborations. Because the children had not planned the course of their collaboration or composing activities ahead of time, the expert shifted throughout the collaboration. (p. 322)

Reither & Vipond (1989) also advocated that “We make our meanings not alone, but in relation to others’ meanings, which we come to know through reading, talk, and writing” (p. 862). This view is supported by Gebhardt (1980) who pointed out that

“They [Students] need to feel, when they open up in a writing group, that others understand their hesitancy and look at their writing with sympathetic candor” (p. 71).

Likewise, the importance of peer interaction and collaboration in contributing to the development of writing is asserted by Shaughnessy (1977) as she alleged:

... writing is a social act, a kind of synthesis that is reached through the dialectic of discussion, the teaching of writing must often begin with the experience of dialogue and end with the experience of a real audience, not only of teachers but of peers. (p. 83)

The active participation of the group members during the peer discussion in this present study also conforms to the finding in McGroarty & Zhu’s (1997) study which portrayed that the peers in the experimental group were actively engaged in group discussion and negotiation of meaning through seeking, clarifying and providing information as well as giving suggestions for improvement in their revisions.

Conversely, in Zhu’s (2001) study, the ESL students encountered difficulties in competing, sustaining and regaining interrupted turns. Likewise, the finding in this present study differs from Smith-D’Arezzo’s (2004) study which yielded mixed findings in that the college students felt uncomfortable in assigning scores to the writings of their young partners who were sixth-graders; but the sixth-graders were eager and empowered to score the papers of the older students. Nevertheless, both the college students and sixth-graders in Smith-D’Arezzo’s (2004) study felt that two meetings in a semester were insufficient and they requested for more time to meet each other to discuss their writing.

Besides that, the high-proficiency level students in this present study also displayed their skills and knowledge in providing explanation to assist the weaker ones to understand the need to correct certain errors. Most of the discussions initiated by Cathy and Ted were found to be well-developed by the group members as all of them collaborated as a team in providing feedback to help one another in the revision of the

first drafts of all their compositions. In other words, the findings in this present study indicate that the group members were self-driven to work as a group which was termed as 'Task-oriented' group in George's (1984) study. This corroborates with the findings of studies done by Tsui & Ng (2000) and Cotterall & Cohen's (2003) which revealed that peer discussion was accepted as a collective inquiry which provided opportunity for the learners to share information, exchange views and comments as well as to develop self-confidence in their writing. Thus, the knowledge which is socially derived through the process of interaction and negotiation constitutes learning (Bruffee, 1984). This corresponds with the finding of Lockhart's (1994) study which found that peer interaction helped the writer to discover meanings and build ideas to improve the revision of text. Storch's (2005) study yielded similar findings in that collaborative writing in pairs enabled students to work together in generating more ideas to produce shorter but more grammatically accurate and complex texts.

According to Reither & Vipond (1989), one of the primary benefits of collaboration is:

... writers thereby establish and maintain immediate communities which function within the larger, "disciplinary" communities where their knowledge claims might find a fit. Developing claims cooperatively, collectively, collaboratively, the members of such a community-within-a-community learn from one another, teach one another; they support and sustain one another. (p. 859)

It was found that not only the intermediate-proficiency level students benefited from the student-student interaction, but the high-proficiency level students as well. In other words, there was mutual learning between the high and intermediate-proficiency level students as they were engaged in lengthy and meaningful discussions throughout the peer response sessions. The findings indicate that with the guidance from the more competent peers (specifically, Cathy and Ted) and the class teacher, the less capable students could perform at a higher level as they could apply their knowledge learnt from the more capable ones to help their peers and also themselves to rectify problem areas.

The more capable students also learnt among themselves and from the feedback given by the class teacher as well as the less capable ones. This concurs with the findings of Tsui & Ng (2000) and Jacobs et al. (1998) in which the students reported that through providing and giving feedback to their peers, they learnt both the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' writing. In brief, group discussion provides the students with "a range of knowledge, attitudes, ... assumptions on a given subject, ... and provide a writer with a cross-section of possible audience diversity" (Gebhardt, 1980, p. 74).

In addition, the students in this present study were found to be tactful in providing response to their peers' work. They were found to display two types of scaffolding behaviours which De Guerrero & Villamil (2000) termed as 'contingent responsivity' (ability to sense the writer's cue and respond tactfully) and 'psychological differentiation' (ability to allow the writer to establish ownership of his own writing by giving the writer the freedom of voice). This finding contradicts that of Freedman's (1992) study which revealed that although the peers collaborated with one another to complete the response sheets in order to get their work done, most of the students avoided negative criticism about their peers' work. This finding is also in contrast to Cho et al.'s (2006) study which found that critical comments have negative influence on the students' revisions. Unlike the finding in Nelson & Murphy's (1992) study which indicated that critical comments impede students' discussion on improvement of their writing, it is interesting to find that constructive critical comments given by the students (especially, by Ted and Cathy) in this present study, had made them to be more careful about the words that they used and the information that they gave as well as to think of ways to correct them. This finding corroborates with the finding of Holt (1993) in that the students valued the peer written criticism to help the writer to strengthen his argument. Likewise, this substantiated the finding of Nelson & Carson (1998) in which the students preferred negative comments that identified the problems in their drafts.

Moreover, the findings in this study indicated that both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students reflected on the feedback given by the class teacher and peers before making their own decision to utilise those feedback which they deemed were useful in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions. In other words, the feedback given by their class teacher and peers through the social interaction helped to sharpen their critical thinking skills. Thus, this espoused the views of Piaget (1959) and Vygotsky (1978) that recognised the importance of social interaction to develop higher cognitive skills. Similarly, Cazden (1988) stated that “Confrontation with alternative ideas, whether from adults or peers, cannot be expected to produce immediate change” (p. 128) as students need time to reflect and associate those feedback to their writing tasks (Cazden, 1994).

5.2.2 Role of the Class Teacher and Peers during the Peer Response Sessions

It was found that as the student-student interaction progressed during each peer response session, both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students played multiple roles (such as modelling like a *teacher*, a *facilitator*, an *advisor*, an *examiner*, an *expert*, an *evaluator*, a *team-player*, a *problem-solver*, a *mentor*, a *referee*, a *coach*, a *translator*, an *interpreter*, a *negotiator*, a *motivator*, a *reminder*, a *catalyst*, a *self-evaluator* and a *mediator*) to assist one another in the revision of the individual first drafts of their compositions. This is akin to the findings in research on appropriation of student texts which reported that students as writers assumed numerous roles as “readers, responders, coaches, and expert members of the academic discourse community” (Reid, 1994, p. 289). According to Reither & Vipond (1989), “as circumstances and needs change, different people bring to bear different roles, different talents, different modes and areas of expertise” (p. 865).

The findings in this present study indicated that there was a difference in the roles played by the class teacher and the students during the peer response sessions. An interesting finding unveiled in this study is that the students were found to perform more roles as compared to the class teacher. Among the six students, Cathy, followed by Ted played the most dominant roles in modelling like a *teacher*, an *advisor*, an *examiner*, an *expert*, an *evaluator*, a *mentor*, a *referee* and a *coach* in guiding the less competent ones in the revision of the individual first drafts of all their compositions. On the other hand, Ted was more prominent as compared to Cathy in modelling as a *facilitator*, a *problem-solver*, a *negotiator*, an *interpreter*, and a *catalyst* in leading the student-student interaction during the peer response sessions.

The findings in this study which showed that the students (especially, Cathy and Ted) were able to model the roles of a ‘teacher’ and an ‘expert’ is in concordance with the findings yielded in Daiute & Dalton’s (1993) study which indicated that “novices can be masters” (p. 322) as the young peers acted as ‘teachers’ during the peer discussion. Akin to Daiute & Dalton’s (1993) finding that the young peers were engaged in generative and reflective processes; in this present study, the group members were found to collaborate and work closely with Cathy and Ted (the more capable ones) who provided guidance to help them to understand, internalise rules and concepts; and eventually, to perform at a higher level. This finding also conforms to that of Mitchell’s (1992) study which revealed that the students learnt to be like ‘experts’ in a particular type of writing.

It is fascinating to unveil in this present study that learning was driven by the high-proficiency level students as they had taken control over the task of the teacher as ‘young experts’ in initiating, facilitating and maintaining the student-student interaction. They provided various types of scaffolds to assist the less competent learners in their writing. What is even more amazing is how interaction shapes learning as the role of

the 'young experts' seemed to multiply among the less competent writers as the peer response session progressed from the writing of one composition to another. Thus, this created a community of 'young experts' working together through student-student interaction to share their knowledge, explore and discover new meanings in their writing. As Azmitia (1988) asserted that collaboration can facilitate learning because each individual brings different skills to the task. The students were also found to have learnt from reading each others' writing, a finding which confirms Yang et al.'s (2006) study. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that with the guidance from more capable peers, a learner will be able to function beyond his or her 'zone of proximal development'.

It is noted that the students in this present study were given the opportunity to undertake multiple roles as the class teacher (Liza) gave them the freedom to discuss and respond to each others' first drafts of their compositions. In other words, the class teacher empowered the students to respond to each others' drafts, a finding which is similar to that of earlier studies done by Mitchell (1992) and Yang et al. (2006).

The role of the reader as a mediator found in De Guerrero & Villamil's (2000) study was skillfully performed by an intermediate-proficiency level student in this present study to help another intermediate-proficiency level student to disseminate information to the rest of the group members.

It was found that although the class teacher performed fewer roles as compared to the students in this present study, she played several roles as a *facilitator*, an *expert*, an *advisor*, a *consultant*, a *monitor*, a *motivator*, an *evaluator*, a *problem-solver*, a *translator*, a *catalyst* and an *instructor* in assisting the students to solve their problems. These multi-faceted roles engaged the class teacher in a joint-effort with the students to advance the development of their thoughts. This conforms to the findings of several studies (Denyer & LaFleur, 2001; Reid, 1994; Shahrina & Norhisham, 2006) which

found that the teacher acted as a facilitator, clarifier and scaffolder to help enhance the students' thinking skills. As a facilitator, the class teacher in this present study also provided support in terms of feedback guidelines to assist the students in giving feedback to their peers' writing. Likewise, this finding is in congruent with Davydov's (1995) study that the teacher played important roles as a facilitator and a guide. This is akin to the finding in Jacobs et al.'s (1998) study which revealed that the teachers supported the students' peer feedback by providing feedback guidelines.

Another finding in this present study in which the class teacher played the role of a monitor and provider of model of student's writing is similar to the findings in Mitchell's (1992) study in which the teacher monitored the progress of the students' projects and helped to search for model samples of students' writing.

Besides that, the finding in this present study that the class teacher played her role as an *expert* also concurs with the finding in Tsui & Ng's (2000) study in which the students respected the teacher as being "more experienced and a figure of authority" (p. 160). Reid (1994) also supported this view that the teacher is an expert resource and an authority. In addition, the class teacher in this present study was found to provide opportunity for the students to identify their own errors and to decide on changes to be made to form or content. According to Carroll (1996), Messer (an expert teacher) agreed to this freedom accorded to the students as she opined that "it helps students assume responsibility for their writing, and it, along with oral reading of their work, helps ... students become more effective editors of their own writing" (p. 29).

Moreover, the finding that the class teacher in this study played the role of an evaluator supported Shahrina & Norhisham's (2006) view that the teacher played important role as an evaluator. Similar to Shahrina & Norhisham's (2006) view, the finding in this study found that as an evaluator, the class teacher pointed out the

strengths and weaknesses of the writers and this helped the writers to rectify their errors and to improve their writing skills.

Thus, this indicates that both the class teacher and students play vital roles in facilitating and guiding the group members to improve in their writing skills.

5.2.3 Types of Class Teacher and Peer Scaffolds

5.2.3.1 Types of Class Teacher and Peer Scaffolds during Pre-writing Sessions

The findings in this study indicated 38 types of scaffolds were provided by the class teacher and peers throughout the pre-writing sessions of all the four compositions. There were common and distinctive types of scaffolds provided by both the class teacher and peers to assist the group members to generate ideas during the pre-writing sessions throughout all the four compositions. A range of common types of scaffolds were provided by both the class teacher and peers which comprised *paraphrasing, providing advice, providing appropriate or alternative words, providing clarification, providing elaborations, providing examples, providing explanation, providing guidelines, providing information, providing suggestions, redirecting thoughts to topic, repeating information, setting a context, sharing personal experience, translating words, using mind-mapping and using questions.*

The distinctive types of scaffolds provided by the class teacher during the pre-writing sessions were *asking the students to give examples, commenting on the lack of clarity, providing modelling of student's composition, providing clues, providing compliments, providing encouragement, providing sequence connectors and referring to the internet.* In contrast, the distinctive types of scaffolds supplied by the peers during the pre-writing sessions were *asking for the definition of terms, Malay-English codeswitching, defining words or terms, identifying spelling errors, providing terms, providing confirmation, providing corrections of errors, providing the spelling of*

words, recapping points, reminding not to repeat errors, rephrasing words or phrases or sentences, selecting the correct words and summarising points. The occasional use of *codeswitching to Malay* is interesting as it enabled the students to convey information in a language understood by their group members (especially, the less proficient ones). This shows that codeswitching acts as a mediating tool to provide a social context for shared meaning and to maintain the group discussion. This is similar to the findings in studies done by Raimes (1985) and Yeong (2001) which revealed that sometimes the students switched to their L1 to help them out in their writing. In other words, all the scaffolds provided by both the class teacher and peers served as guided assistance in the students' revisions.

The high-proficiency level students in this present study were found to provide more scaffolds as compared to the intermediate-proficiency level students during the pre-writing sessions of all the four compositions. Among the scaffolds provided by the high-proficiency level students, the most frequently utilised type of scaffold by this group of students to guide their peers in generating ideas to compose the individual first drafts of all their compositions included *providing information*, followed by *providing elaboration, using questions, providing examples, repeating information or points or words*, and *providing explanation*. *Providing information* being the most popularly employed type of scaffold by the high-proficiency level students was perhaps because the high-proficiency level students were more outspoken and had more information about the topic of their composition which they could share with their group members.

It is noted that among the four topics assigned for the writing task, the students (especially, the high-proficiency level students) provided the most number of scaffolds during the pre-writing session to assist their group members (the intermediate-proficiency level students) to brainstorm for ideas to compose their Composition 4 on 'How to lead a healthy lifestyle'. This is because the students were familiar with the

topic as they were from the science stream. As such, they could associate more with the topic concerned. This is in accordance with Perl's (1980) notion that writing is a recursive process in which throughout the writing process, writers often go back and forth to reread the topic of the writing task. Hence, the selection of a topic which is familiar to the students is important as they can draw upon their background knowledge to generate and share more ideas on the topic concerned with their group members during the peer interaction session.

Conversely, among the scaffolds provided by the intermediate-proficiency level students, the most regularly employed type of scaffold by this group of students throughout all the pre-writing sessions of all the four compositions was *providing examples*, followed by *providing information*, and *repeating information or points or words*. *Providing examples* being the most frequently used type of scaffold by the intermediate-proficiency level students was because they built scaffolds (by *providing examples*) upon the scaffolds (in the form of *information or ideas*) provided by the high-proficiency level students to help facilitate their learning.

On the other hand, among the scaffolds provided by the class teacher, the most frequently utilised type of scaffold by her was the *use of questions*, followed by *providing information*, *providing guidelines*, *providing examples* and *providing explanation*. The frequent usage of questions by the class teacher during the pre-writing stage was to elicit information from the students by relating their prior knowledge to the current writing task. This is consistent with the findings of several studies (Denyer & LaFleur, 2001; Lim, 1994; Sim, 1997) which also revealed that the class teacher used questions which helped learners to associate their knowledge with their writing task. It was found that the class teacher in this present study served as the source in supplying initial input on the background information of the topic to set the context for further peer discussion on the topic of the compositions. This initial input given by the class teacher

is important as it set the context for the students to draw upon their background knowledge of the topic concerned so that they could work together as a team throughout the pre-writing sessions to generate further ideas and to compose the individual first drafts of their compositions. In addition, the class teacher also monitored closely the progress of the students during the pre-writing sessions and she provided the necessary scaffolds whenever she felt her students encountered problems. In other words, the class teacher had confidence in her students and she provided the opportunity for them to be engaged in meaningful exchanges to assist one another in generating ideas to compose the individual first drafts of their compositions.

5.2.3.2 Types of Class Teacher and Peer Scaffolds during Peer Response Sessions

The findings in this study unveiled that a wide range of scaffolds were provided by the class teacher and students during the peer response sessions to the individual first drafts of all the students' compositions. This is in contrast to the findings of studies done by Komathy (2000) and Mendonca & Johnson (1994) which identified only five different types of negotiations (suggestion, restatement, grammar correction, explanation and use of questions during peer feedback sessions); and Zhu (2001) which discovered that the non-native speakers performed limited language functions such as announcing, reacting, questioning, advising, and justifying, with announcing (30%) and questioning (40%) being the two major functions. It was found that in this present study, there were common and distinctive types of scaffolds provided by the class teacher and peers during the peer response sessions to the individual first drafts of all the students' compositions. The common types of scaffolds provided by both the class teacher and peers were *codeswitching to Malay, using questions, providing advice or advising to use dictionary, providing appropriate or alternative words, providing compliments or praises, providing confirmation, providing correction of errors,*

providing definition of words, providing explanation, providing guidance, providing missing alphabet or words or suffixes, redirecting thoughts or content to the topic, repeating words or questions or suggestions, rephrasing words, selecting the correct word form, and using dictionary. These scaffolds provided by both the class teacher and students served as mediating tools through the interaction process to assist the students to understand, internalise and operate at a higher cognitive level. According to Le Pham (2003) ‘mediation is the mechanism through which external, socio-cultural activities are transformed into internal, mental functioning’ (p. 33). Le Pham accentuated that social mediation through interaction can occur as ‘expert-novice’ mediation (teacher and student) or as peer mediation (more competent peers as ‘experts’ and students).

It is interesting to note that *codeswitching to Malay* was also occasionally used by the students to act as a mediating tool for shared meaning and to facilitate discussion among the group members. This is in concordance with the findings of previous studies (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996) in which the students also used interlanguage knowledge during the revision process.

The distinctive type of scaffold supplied by the class teacher during the peer response sessions of this present study was *providing sequence connectors*; whereas the distinctive types of scaffolds provided by the peers were *dictating correct words or spelling of words, identifying errors, omitting words or punctuation marks, providing clarification, providing examples, providing interpretation, providing suggestion, reminding the correct word order or punctuation mark, and reminding not to repeat errors.*

Nevertheless, the types of peer scaffolds yielded from this present study which were found to be similar to findings of other studies included *providing suggestion* (Komathy, 2000; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994); *restatement, grammar correction, explanation* (Komathy, 2000; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994); the *use of*

questions (Komathy, 2000; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Sim, 1998; Zhu, 2001); *elaboration* (Sim, 1998; Zhu, 2001); providing specific response types such as *announcing, pointing, advising* (Cho et al., 2006; Stanley, 1992; Zhu, 2001); *collaborating* (Stanley, 1992; Storch, 2005); *using repetition* (Daiute & Dalton, 1993; DiCamilla & Anton, 1997; Sim, 1998); *eliciting, confirming, and justifying* (Zhu, 2001); *seeking information* (McGroarty & Zhu, 1997); *clarifying information* (Stanley, 1992; McGroarty & Zhu, 1997); *providing information* (McGroarty & Zhu, 1997); *providing compliments or praises* (Cho et al., 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2001); using The Modified-Interaction Strategies (such as *checking for comprehension and clarification, giving assistance and repairing*) and using The Social-Interaction Strategies (such as *elaborating, facilitating flow of conversation, responding* [e.g., agree or disagree], and *paraphrasing*) in Bejarano et al.'s (1997) study; and using *interlanguage knowledge* (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996).

The types of peer scaffolds found in this present study which were different from other studies included *codeswitching to Malay, advising to use dictionary, providing guidance, providing appropriate or alternative words, providing definition of words, redirecting thoughts or content to the topic, rephrasing words, selecting the correct word form, using dictionary, providing examples, providing interpretation, reminding the correct word order or punctuation mark, and reminding not to repeat errors.*

The findings in this study indicated that the high-proficiency level students (especially, Cathy and Ted) were more dynamic as they furnished more scaffolds as compared to the intermediate-proficiency level students to assist the group members in the revision of the individual first drafts of all their four compositions. It is noted that Cathy and Ted provided the most number of scaffolds during the peer response session to assist their peers in the revision of the individual first drafts of their Composition 2 on 'How to attract local and foreign tourists to Malaysia'. This is because this topic was

the most familiar among all the four topics of the compositions assigned to them. This is substantiated by Ted's view which he shared during an interview (see the interview excerpts with the students and class teacher [INW1/S6/2, INW1/S6/6, INW1/S6/20, INW1/T/4 and INW1/T/6] which have been exhibited earlier in Section 4.2.2 on pages 253 and 255). The importance in the selection of a topic which is familiar to the students is also stressed by Roller (1988) who opined that the "transfer of language skill is facilitated by familiar content" (p. 316).

Besides that, the intermediate-proficiency level students (especially, Amy and Aini) in this present study were also found to be able to provide useful scaffolds in assisting the group members in their revisions. This shows that there was collaboration and mutual peer scaffolding among the high and intermediate-proficiency level students which led to learning (intersubjectivity). It is interesting to note that with the assistance and guidance from the more capable ones, the less competent learners had understood and internalised some of the grammatical rules; and thereby, could perform on their own. Mutual scaffolding between both the reader and writer was also found to exist in De Guerrero & Villamil's (2000) study as the students became active partners in the negotiation of meanings as they worked within the ZPD.

Among the scaffolds provided by the high-proficiency level students in this present study, the most extensively utilised type of scaffold by this group of students throughout the peer response sessions to the first drafts of all the students' compositions was *providing correction of errors*; followed by *using question; repeating words or questions or suggestions; providing confirmation; identifying errors; providing appropriate or alternative words; and rephrasing words*. On the other hand, among the scaffolds provided by the intermediate-proficiency level students, the most regularly employed type of scaffold by this group of students throughout the peer response sessions to the first drafts of all the students' compositions was *providing correction of*

errors; followed by *repeating words* or *questions* or *suggestions*; *providing explanations*; and *providing suggestions*.

It is interesting to find that *providing correction of errors* was the most effective and widely utilised type of scaffold by both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students to assist one another in their revisions. This is perhaps because all the subjects in this present study were ESL learners and they lacked appropriate vocabularies and were not proficient in applying certain grammatical rules (especially, the intermediate-proficiency level students). Thus, by helping one another through providing the correct words or grammar was effective in assisting them to revise the first drafts of their compositions. It is amazing to discover that this help provided by the peers in correcting errors was well-received as a learning process for all the students in that over a period of time, they were able to apply the grammatical rules and concepts learnt earlier to improve their writing in the subsequent compositions. In other words, learning had taken place as with the guidance from the high-proficiency level students, the intermediate-proficiency level students were able to understand, internalise and function beyond their 'zone of proximal development'. This is in congruent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning in that for learning to take place, it must first happen in the inter-psychological plane and then, in the intra-psychological plane.

The *use of questions* by the students (especially, by the high-proficiency level students) in this present study served as an effective scaffold in guiding and encouraging the less proficient writers to exercise their mental reasoning skills in order to perform at a higher level; and thereby, to rectify their own errors. This was found to yield positive results as there is evidence of the breaking away of the scaffolds provided as the less proficient writers were found to be able to understand, internalise and apply the knowledge that they had learnt on grammatical rules, new concepts and correct usage of the specific article in their subsequent compositions as the process writing approach

progressed along. The *use of questions* as an effective form of scaffold to assist learners is espoused by Zinn (1998) as she maintained that “questions are more apt to inspire student to think about what they know and are learning about writing” (p. 29).

The *usage of repetition* as a type of scaffold by the students in this present study concurs with the finding in Daiute & Dalton’s (1993) study which found that the use of a lot of repetitions of words or phrases by the students had helped them in the internalisation of concepts. In the present study, *repetition* was used by the high-proficiency level students to remind the less proficient writers of the correct usage of certain grammar (for instance, the correct usage of the singular and plural form of words as well as the correct usage of the specific article) and concepts. On the other hand, the intermediate-proficiency level students did not only use *repetition* to remind each other to apply the correct grammatical rules and new concepts learnt earlier, but they also used ‘self-repetition’ by repeating what others say. This self-repetition is similar to Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of private speech. The finding that repetition helped the students (especially, the intermediate-proficiency level students) in this present study to attain ‘intersubjectivity’ in order to function within his or her ‘zone of proximal development’ which eventually led to higher mental functioning is in congruent with DiCamilla & Anton’s (1997) investigation into the role of repetition in collaborative interaction of five dyads second language learners. In DiCamilla & Anton’s (1997) study, the use of repetition by the subjects was found to help to hold the peer scaffolds in place; thereby enabling students to ‘think, hypothesize and evaluate’ issues under discussion and to generate more ideas. According to Tomlinson (2003), repetition “facilitate[s] comprehension”, “personalize[s] what is coming to us from the outside world”, and “enables us to create meaning for ourselves” (p. 179).

Besides that, the types of class teacher scaffolds yielded from this present study which were found to be similar to findings of other studies included the *use of questions*

(Applebee & Langer, 1983; Denyer & LaFleur, 2001; Ferris, 1997; Lim, 1994; Sim, 1997; Sugita, 2006); *assigning topics linked to existing study themes*, having a *predetermined essay structure*, *identifying appropriate texts* to assist learners, *modelling* of the composition process, *focusing on language used* to signal the relationship between ideas (Cotterall & Cohen, 2003); *'instructional scaffolding'* (Applebee & Langer, 1983); *giving explanation* (Lim, 1994; Sim, 1997); *giving general positive comments* (Ferris, 1997; Gascoigne, 2004); *exclamations* (Gascoigne, 2004); *imperatives*, and *statements* (Gascoigne, 2004; Sugita, 2006); *modelling* (Palincsar, 1986; Tsui, 2003); *providing corrective feedback*, *encouragement*, *promote self-evaluation*, and *reintroduce explanation* (Palincsar, 1986); *use of repetition* (Boyle & Peregoy, 1990; Daiute & Dalton, 1993); *'preformulating'* and *'reformulating' questions* (Cazden, 1988); *'reconceptualization'* (Wertsch, 1985) or *'recontextualization'* (Cazden, 2001).

However, the types of class teacher scaffolds unveiled in this present study which were distinct from other studies included *codeswitching to Malay*, *providing advice* or *advising to use dictionary*, *providing appropriate or alternative words*, *providing definition of words*, *providing missing alphabet or words or suffixes*, *redirecting thoughts or content to the topic*, *rephrasing words*, *selecting the correct word form*, and *using dictionary*.

The types of scaffolds most frequently utilised by the class teacher included *providing compliments* or *praises* and *providing guidance*, followed by *providing confirmation*. The *compliments* and *praises* utilised by the class teacher in this present study were in response to the good points raised and less grammatical errors made by the students. This is in agreement with the finding of Ferris' (1997) study in which the teacher provided a number of positive comments. However, this contradicts the finding in Hyland & Hyland's (2001) study that the two teachers often employed 'praise' as a

form of feedback on their students' drafts to soften criticisms and suggestions rather than complimenting good work.

In addition, in this present study, it was found that the *provision of guidelines* by the class teacher prior to each of the peer response sessions served as a scaffold which had an influence on the areas of focus by the students while they were responding to the individual first drafts of their peers' compositions. Nevertheless, although the class teacher input prompted the students to follow the guidelines and to collaborate in providing useful scaffolds to assist one another in their revisions, ultimately the learners took control of the output. At the same time, the class teacher monitored the progress of the peer response sessions and she provided the necessary scaffolds whenever her students needed help. In other words, instead of having a lot of teacher talk, she facilitated the peer response sessions and provided the platform for the students to sharpen their critical thinking skills as they were given the freedom to respond to each others' first drafts of their compositions. This is because the class teacher believed that the students have the capabilities to help one another in their revisions.

Thus, this indicates that explicit help and appropriate scaffolds are needed by ESL learners to enable them to understand their errors; and thereby, to rectify those errors concerned. By helping learners to understand their errors is important as it would enable them to learn from their mistakes.

5.2.4 Class Teacher Feedback and Peer Feedback

It was revealed that both the class teacher and peers provided verbal as well as written feedback to assist the students in the revision of the first drafts of all their compositions. However, the peers provided more verbal feedback as compared to the class teacher.

The findings in this present study indicated that there were similarities and differences in the feedback provided by the class teacher and peers. Both parties were found to provide more feedback to correct errors at the Surface level as compared to feedback to correct errors at the Text-base level. Nevertheless, the peer feedback provided were mostly on Surface level Formal Changes at the sentence level while the class teacher feedback were mostly on Surface level Meaning-preserving Changes. The peer feedback emphasised more on the correction of errors in '*numbers*', followed by the substitution of Surface level errors while at the same time preserving the meaning of the text, whereas a small percentage of the peer feedback focused on the substitution of Text-base Macrostructure errors. This is similar to the findings in studies conducted by Cumming & So (1996) and Tsui & Ng (2000) which revealed that the peer feedback emphasised more on Surface level Changes.

The finding that the class teacher feedback focused mostly on the correction of Surface level errors was consistent with the findings in previous studies done by Bhajan (1995); Chuang (1995); Cumming & So (1996); Mahaletchey (1994); Sim (1997) and Zacharias (2007). Cumming & So (1996) found that the tutors' feedback primarily emphasised the local levels of the compositions (that is, grammar, word choice, spelling, punctuation). Likewise, the teacher feedback in Bhajan (1995); Chuang (1995); Mahaletchey (1994); Sim (1997); and Zacharias' (2007) studies focused more on form and language used.

In addition, the class teacher in this present study was found to provide more feedback on the correction of errors at the Text-base level (including Microstructure Changes and Macrostructure Changes) as opposed to the peers. Nevertheless, the class teacher furnished the most number of feedback on the substitution of Surface level errors while at the same time preserving the meaning of the text; followed by the substitution of words, phrases and sentences at the Text-base Macrostructure level and

the correction of Surface level Formal errors in '*numbers*'. These findings suggest that the class teacher feedback not only concerned Surface level Formal Changes (especially, obvious grammatical errors) but also the relevancy and adequacy of content. This finding is in agreement with Samuel's (1992) study which found that although both the teachers practised different pedagogies in their teaching, they emphasised the correctness of form and content. Similarly, this corroborates with the findings in Ferris' (1997) study that although the teacher provided comments which emphasised more on students' ideas, she also indicated errors on form in the endnotes which were accompanied by in-text underlining of sample errors. However, this contradicts the finding in Tsui & Ng's (2000) study which indicated that the teacher emphasised macro-text-based changes.

It is interesting to find that the students (especially, the high-proficiency level students) in this present study were highly interactive in providing feedback (particularly, on Surface level errors) to help correct the errors of their peers. This conforms to the finding of Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger's (1992) study which revealed that the peer written feedback emphasised grammatical accuracy rather than content. Conversely, the findings in Mendonca & Johnson's (1994) study showed that the students tended to concentrate on ideas rather than on grammatical correctness. Likewise, this differs from the finding in Freedman's (1992) study in which the students faced difficulty in discussing local errors and they even made up their own rules to help correct those errors.

Besides that, the finding in this present study that most of the feedback provided by the intermediate-proficiency level students were on Surface level errors at the sentence level concurs with the finding in Raimes' (1985) study which found that the unskilled ESL writers concentrated on the challenge of finding the right words and sentences to express their meaning.

Moreover, both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students in this present study were found to utilise the class teacher feedback, peer feedback as well as the self-correction of errors when they revised the first drafts of all their compositions. This is because both the class teacher feedback and peer feedback were deemed useful as they complemented each other in assisting the students in the revision of the first drafts of their compositions. This echoes the findings in studies done by Yang et al. (2006) and Tsui & Ng (2000) in which although the students expressed their preference for their teacher feedback, they did not discard the importance of their peer feedback. They regarded their teacher as an 'expert' and a figure of authority. The students in Tsui & Ng's (2000) study also reckoned four roles of the peer comments which contributed significantly to the writing process: "enhance a sense of audience, raise learners' awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, encourage collaborative learning, and foster the ownership of text" (p. 147). Likewise, this corroborates with the findings in Roskam's (1999) study in which the students were found to value the usefulness of their peer feedback.

This finding is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of learning that with the help from a more capable person, a learner would be able to function at a higher level. In other words, the intermediate-proficiency level students learnt from the high-proficiency level students (particularly, Cathy and Ted). At the same time, Cathy and Ted needed the help of the class teacher who was more capable to help them perform at a higher level.

Furthermore, both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students were found to be able to reflect upon the feedback (verbal and written) given by the peers and class teacher; and thereafter, made their own decision on whether to use them or not. In other words, they did not accept those feedback blindly. This is consistent with the findings of studies done by Komathy (2000) and Mendonca & Johnson (1994) in that the

students were selective in accepting only those feedback which they deemed were useful in their revisions.

Other than that, it was found that both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students were in favour of receiving both the peer feedback and class teacher feedback. This is in concordance with the findings in studies done by Mendonca & Johnson (1994) and Tsui (2003) in which the students were found to welcome both the teacher comments and peer comments. The students in this present study felt that the peer feedback were more thorough in assisting them in the revision of their drafts. This is in congruent with the findings of earlier studies (Jacobs, 1989; Jacobs et al., 1998) which revealed the effectiveness of the peer feedback. The participants in Jacobs et al.'s (1998) study not only preferred peer feedback as one type of feedback, but they also reckoned the importance and necessity to receive the teacher feedback on their writing.

There is also evidence from interviews with the students in this present study who mentioned that their peers could point out errors that they made but their class teacher has limited time to do so due to the large number of students and the numerous compositions that she had to mark (see examples of interview excerpts INW4/S2/134, INW2/S2/120, INW2/S5/331, INW3/S1/72, INW3/S1/74, INW2/S6/178, INW2/S6/180, INW2/S3/90, INW2/S3/98 and INW2/S4/84 which have been presented earlier in Section 4.3.5 on pages 448 and 449). This view is also supported by the opinion of the students in studies conducted by Mendonca & Johnson (1994) and Tsui (2003). In Mendonca & Johnson's (1994) study, the students reported that the peers helped them to identify unclear points which they could not see and that they learnt some new ideas through reading their peers' essays. Nevertheless, the class teacher feedback were also well-received by the students in this present study, especially the high-proficiency level students. This is because Cathy and Ted reported that the class teacher could detect the more complex mistakes which others could not see (see interview excerpt INW1/S1/122

which has been mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.5 on page 447). Akin to the findings in Tsui's (2003) study, the class teacher written feedback in this present study were found to be encouraging, useful and helpful in providing directions on how to improve ideas. This reaffirms the findings of Zacharias (2007) who found that both the teachers and students preferred the teacher feedback which was more specific to help facilitate the revision process. The students in Zacharias' (2007) study felt that the teacher feedback provided them with a sense of security (especially, for the weaker students). They considered the teacher feedback as "more 'qualified', 'experienced', 'accurate', 'valid', 'reliable' and 'trustworthy'" (Zacharias, 2007, p. 51). According to Blake (an expert teacher) whom Carroll (1996) interviewed, mentioned that a combination of the teacher and peer response is beneficial for L2 writers as:

Nothing holds a candle to the teacher's input in the non-native speaker's eyes. The non-native speaker needs to feel the constant guidance and support of the teachers as the 'real' source of feedback but can learn to appreciate peers feedback with training and over time. (p. 29)

Similarly, this echoes the findings in Newkirk's (1984) study which indicated that while the students used their background knowledge "to identify with a text and 'read in' details that the writer has not included, ... the instructors ... expect greater explicitness" (p. 310). In short, both the class teacher and peer feedback complemented each other to assist the students in their revisions.

However, the finding in this present study that the students were in favour of both the class teacher and peer feedback is in contrast to previous studies (Nelson & Carson, 1998; Zhang, 1995) in which the students expressed their preference for their teacher feedback as opposed to their peer feedback. The students in studies done by Nelson & Carson (1998) and Zhang (1995) regarded their teacher as an 'expert' in finding problems.

Thus, the findings in the present study imply the usefulness of both the peer feedback and class teacher feedback to assist students in their revisions.

5.2.5 Types of Students' Revision on the First Drafts of their Compositions

The findings in this study revealed that both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students emphasised the revision of Surface level errors at the sentence level. On the whole, the intermediate-proficiency level students were found to make more revisions as compared to the high-proficiency level students. This is in contrast to the findings in Connor & Asenavage's (1994) study which indicated that those students who made the most number of changes made more text-based changes; whereas those who made fewer changes made more surface changes.

The high-proficiency level students in this present study were found to make more revisions in the area of substituting words, phrases and sentences while preserving the meaning of the texts, whereas the intermediate-proficiency level students made more Surface level Formal Changes by correcting errors in '*number*' on the first drafts of their compositions. This is because the intermediate-proficiency level students made more grammatical errors in the first drafts of their compositions as compared to their counterpart; thus, the former needed more revisions to improve those grammatical errors concerned. This concurs with the findings in studies done by Ferris & Roberts (2001) and Komathy (2000) which found that the students emphasised the correction of surface features (spelling, vocabulary and grammatical errors). On one hand, this also echoes the findings of earlier studies (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Sommers, 1980) which indicated that the inexperienced writers focused on word, phrase and sentence level revision. On the other hand, this differs from the findings in Faigley & Witte's (1981) and Sommers' (1980) studies which reported that the experienced writers focused on content changes while revising their drafts. Likewise, this contradicts the findings in Hedgcock &

Lefkowitz's (1992) study in which the peer-feedback group made more positive changes in the areas of content, organisation, and vocabulary, whereas the control group which received teacher feedback attended more to grammatical accuracy. Similarly, this contrasted the findings in Sim's (1998) study in that only the more capable students rather than the less capable students were able to make changes and produce comprehensible sentences at the individual level. It is interesting to note that the finding in this present study that the high-proficiency level students did not focus their revisions on content unlike the findings by other researchers (Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Sommers, 1980) was because there were enough contents written by the high-proficiency level students in the first drafts of their compositions. As such, they did not make many changes in the area of content.

Besides that, this present study revealed that the high-proficiency level students and also the intermediate-proficiency level students (with guidance from the high-proficiency level students) were able to rectify their errors. This differs from the findings in Sim's (1998) study in that all the students including the more capable ones could not rectify most of the grammatical errors made in the collaborative texts.

It is noted that the high-proficiency level students in this present study focused on making Surface level Meaning-preserving changes to errors rather than making Text-base Changes. This is because they have enough points which were well-developed in the first drafts of their compositions. Thus, when they revised their first drafts, they only corrected minor surface level errors and improved on the words, phrases and sentences which they had constructed. On the other hand, the intermediate-proficiency level students focused on the revision of Surface Level Formal Changes to errors rather than Text-base Changes. This is because they lacked grammar and vocabularies but they have enough points which they have gathered through their group discussion during the pre-writing sessions.

In addition, both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students were found to revise the first drafts of all their compositions based on not only their peer feedback but also their class teacher feedback and the self-correction of their own errors. The students were found to utilise more of their peer feedback as compared to their class teacher feedback in their revisions. This contradicts the findings in Connor & Asenavage's (1994) study in which the students employed only a few of the peer feedback during the peer group response to assist them in their revisions. Similarly, this is in contrast to the findings in Yang et al.'s (2006) study in which the students incorporated more of the teacher feedback as compared to the peer feedback in their revision. This finding also differs from earlier studies (Hittleman, 1983; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992) which found that the peer feedback and teacher feedback group were on par in their performance.

Moreover, the findings in this present study revealed that the correction of errors in '*number*' (subject-verb agreement) by the students was based on majority of the feedback from the peers, followed by the class teacher, and the self-correction of the errors concerned. This is in contrast to the findings yielded in Paulus' (1999) and Tsui & Ng's (2000) studies in which the students used more teacher feedback to improve their revision; but at the same time, they recognised that the peer feedback also contributed to the improvement of their revision.

It was found that in this present study, the students' revision of their errors through the substitutions of words or phrases at the Text-base Macrostructure Level that led to meaning changes was based on slightly more of the feedback from the class teacher as compared to the peers; and a handful of the substitutions of the words and phrases was based on the self-correction of the errors concerned. This was followed by the students' revision of the spelling errors by utilising majority of the feedback from the peers as compared to the class teacher. The finding that the students utilised more of the class

teacher feedback to make Text-base Macrostructure Changes conforms to the finding in Tsui & Ng's (2000) study but contradicts the finding in Yang et al.'s (2006) study. In Yang et al.'s (2006) study, the peer feedback led to more meaning-changes revision while teacher feedback led to more surface-level changes revision.

Other than that, the findings in this study revealed that the students made fewer Text-base Microstructure Changes in the first drafts of their compositions. The high-proficiency level students (particularly, Cathy and Ted) were found to make more revision of errors by *substituting* and *adding words and phrases* at the Text-base Microstructure level as compared to the intermediate-proficiency level students. This is because the high-proficiency level students were able to make a few adjustments to improve on their sentences.

However, the intermediate-proficiency level students made more revision of errors at the Text-base Macrostructure level as compared to the high-proficiency level students. The intermediate-proficiency level students revised errors at the Text-base Macrostructure level through *substitutions*, followed by *additions*, *deletions*, *distributions*, and *consolidation of words or phrases or sentences*; while the high-proficiency level students revised errors at this level through *substitutions* and *additions of words or phrases or sentences*. This is because the intermediate-proficiency level students needed more amendments to improve their contents as compared to their counterpart who did not need much amendment to their contents.

Although both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students were found to have improved in their writing skills as they progressed from one composition to another through the practice of the process approach to writing, the intermediate-proficiency level students had improved the most (especially, Aini and Amy). Aini made tremendous improvement in terms of using the correct grammar, inserting the article *'the'* at the correct place and providing adequate elaboration of points in her

compositions. Besides, the intermediate-proficiency level students had also improved in their writing as they made less grammatical errors, their points in each paragraph were more developed and their compositions were more organised as they progressed from the writing of one composition to another. There is evidence from interviews with the students as they disclosed that they felt motivated to work in a group and had gained confidence through the peer response sessions and the process approach to writing (see examples of interview excerpts INW2/S4/108 and INW2/S4/110 in Section 4.3.4.1 (a) on page 392; INW2/S5/305 in Section 4.3.4.2 (b) on page 433; and INW4/S2/84 in Section 4.3.5 on page 451 which have been exhibited earlier). They were able to apply the knowledge on grammatical rules that they had learnt through the various peer response sessions. In brief, peer collaboration and feedback encouraged students to gain autonomy over their writing. As Montero (2005) maintained that “collaboration brings personal satisfaction and boosts self-confidence. ... Motivation and enthusiasm also increase ...” (p. 36). This is in agreement to the findings of Mohd. Sofi bin Ali (1994) which found that the intermediate group improved the most in their content, organisation, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. However, this is in contrast to the finding in Komathy’s (2000) study in which the students’ revised compositions showed only slight improvement.

On the other hand, the high-proficiency level students have also improved in their writing skills through the practice of the process approach to writing as they progressed from the writing of one composition to another. Cathy has sharpened her critical reading skills as she learnt to be more careful in her writing and she could detect and rectify her own errors when she revised the first drafts of her compositions. As Taylor (1981) pointed out “One of the most crucial skills to acquire in order to make self-revision possible is critical reading” (p. 11). Similarly, Ted had learnt to relate his points to the topic of each composition. Likewise, Eva had improved as she made less

grammatical errors and her ideas were more developed as the writing process moved from one composition to another. This echoes the findings in Mohd. Sofi's (1994) study which found that the advanced group demonstrated significant improvement in the areas of vocabulary, organisation and language use. On one hand, this also concurs with the findings of Conrad & Goldstein (1999) in that the students in their advanced ESL composition course were successful in revising problems (for example, giving details, adding examples, increasing cohesion, paragraphing, purpose or lexical items). On the other hand, Conrad & Goldstein's (1999) study reported that the students were unsuccessful in revising problems related to explanation, explicitness, and analysis; a finding which contradicts the finding of this present study.

There is evidence from interviews with the class teacher and the more competent students in this present study which indicated that the latter also benefited from the weaker ones (see examples of interview excerpts INW3/T/54 in Section 4.1.5.1 (f) on page 166; INW4/T/50 in Section 4.3.4.2 (b) on page 435; INW1/S1/124 in Section 4.3.5 on page 447; INW2/S2/72 in Section 4.3.5 on page 448; INW2/S3/90 and INW2/S3/98 in Section 4.3.5 on page 449; as well as INW4/S1/112 and INW4/T/46 in Section 4.3.5 on page 452 which have been displayed earlier). The class teacher mentioned that through the peer response sessions and the practice of the process approach to writing had enabled the weaker ones to learn from the good ones and vice versa. One of the high-proficiency level students (Ted) also disclosed that he had learnt from the weaker ones as sometimes they could detect the problem area which he could not do so. The benefit of this mutual learning as a result of the peer response sessions is also agreed by the students in other studies (Tsui, 2003; Tsui & Ng, 2000). This also reaffirms the findings of an earlier case study conducted by Daiute (1986) which revealed that collaborative writing helped the students to share their creative ideas and writing strategies.

Furthermore, the process approach to writing was found to be well-received by the students in this present study. It is interesting to note that both the high and intermediate-proficiency level students viewed the revision process as recursive that led to the discovery of meaning (Flower & Hayes, 1977; Raimes, 1985) which helped to develop their writing skills over a period of time. Through the practice of the process approach to writing and the peer response session, students could talk through their ideas. This gives them the opportunity to view things in a different light and to correct their errors with the help of the group members. This is similar to findings in Paulus' (1999) study which revealed that multiple-drafts writing helped to improve the quality of the students' writing. Nevertheless, this differs from the findings in Sommers' (1980) study in which the experienced writers perceived process writing as 'recursive' but the inexperienced writers viewed it as a "rewording activity" (p. 381).

This implies that students need to be taught how to give text-specific and constructive comments to help their peers in the revision of their drafts.

5.3 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest several important implications for L2 writing instruction. The first implication is that since writing is a complex process and peer response session is time consuming, systematic and careful planning needs to be considered by teachers at the beginning of each semester before the commencement of the writing class to ensure that enough time is allocated for group work and peer response sessions. This will enable all the students to benefit from the continual practice of process writing and at the same time, teachers can cover the syllabus. Teachers need to break the task of writing into stages – pre-writing, drafting and composing, providing peer feedback during the peer response session, revising and editing. In the pre-writing session, activities need to be devised to provide both time

and methods for students to generate ideas on the topic through brainstorming among the peers. Time needs to be allocated for drafting in class, with feedback and assistance from the peers and class teacher. It also entails having a peer response session so that the students can work collaboratively with their group members to explore and discover new meanings in their texts. Besides that, the teacher needs to treat revision as a normal and essential part of the work of writing with the aid of the feedback from both the class teacher and peers. This view is agreed by Carroll (1996) who stressed that students need to be given extra time to revise their draft as during her interview with Camalo (an expert teacher), the latter mentioned that “teachers must recognise that drafting and revising are more time-consuming for these[the] writers ...” (p. 32). Thus, by allocating more time for students to reflect on their writing and to correct their errors would provide a more conducive ambience for students to enjoy learning and to gain new insights into their writing. Raimes (1985) also shared similar views in that by giving enough time for students is pertinent to enable them to generate adequate vocabularies which are necessary to explore topics, develop and present ideas. Likewise, according to Zamel (1982), “we must provide them (students) with ample time to write and rewrite, to learn that several drafts may be needed before intention and expression become one” (p. 205) and even Shaughnessy (1977) described the composing process as a process which is ‘messy’ (p. 22). In addition, students also need to be encouraged to meet outside class at their own time. This is because what is ultimately useful for the students is the learning process of writing through teacher-student and student-student interactions which provide constructive feedback to help shape and refine their writing through reflection of their errors. According to Taylor (1981), “Revision, ... is that crucial point in the process when discovery and organisation come together, when writers refine and recast what they have written and shape it into a coherent written statement” (p. 7). In other words, with systematic preparation, feedback and

opportunities for revision, students of different proficiency levels can be engaged in the discovery of meaning.

The findings in this present study indicated the usefulness of both the peer feedback and class teacher feedback in enabling students to become more conscious of themselves as writers. Through the peer feedback, writers can develop a greater sense of audience as the peers as readers can provide a variety of responses to assist them in their revisions. Besides, through giving feedback to others, the peers can become critical readers. The usefulness of having peer response group is also pointed out by Berne (2004) who stressed, "Groups are the ideal sites for peer feedback as they support many of the cognitive tasks in which literacy students engage" (p. 44). This implies that teachers need to teach students to write for a variety of audience which will help to develop their writing skills in anticipating the needs of the readers. As Nystrand (1989) exerted "... meaning is a social construct negotiated by writer and reader through the medium of text" (p. 78). In addition, the class teacher feedback also helped to develop the students' thoughts and ideas. Thus, both the class teacher and peer feedback complemented each other to assist students in their revisions in order to produce more meaningful texts for the audience.

The third implication from the findings in this study is that class teacher needs to assign composition topic which is familiar to students. This is to enable students to generate more ideas by drawing upon their prior knowledge on the topic concerned. Hence, this will lead to more sharing of ideas during the peer interaction as knowledge will build upon knowledge amongst the students.

The fourth implication of this present study is the need to expose existing teachers and pre-service teachers on how to teach process approach to writing and how to provide appropriate scaffolds to facilitate students' learning. Teachers need to realise that they need to go beyond their role of providing a rich language environment to

learners. They need to realise that in order for learning to take place, it is not merely correcting the students' surface level errors but that teachers need to provide a variety of scaffolds to guide learners to develop their thinking skills. The class teacher needs to be able to coordinate or as Mitchell (1992) described it as 'orchestrate' by seeing to the students' needs, providing models or samples of students' writing to expose students to the genre, language and style of writing. Besides that, the teacher can organise the necessary workshop to highlight common errors made by the students. It is from this guidance and understanding of their errors that could help to enhance the students' writing skills, thereby elevating them to a higher cognitive level.

The fifth implication is that teachers need to be more specific in their feedback on the strengths and weaknesses in their students' writing. This directness in identifying errors or problem areas is also highlighted by Hyland & Hyland (2001) as they stressed that "indirectness carries the very real potential for incomprehension and miscommunication" (p. 185). This is because for learning to take place among ESL learners, error correction has to be explicit in nature. In other words, teachers need to reflect and look critically at their own responses so as to be more flexible in providing clearer feedback to assist students in their revisions. This is crucial as students will indirectly learn from the verbal and written feedback given by their teachers. As Guénette (2007) stressed "... for students to improve their writing, ... they have to be provided with appropriate feedback, given at the right time and in the proper context"(p. 52). This view is also hailed by Ferris (2004) who advocated the helpfulness in receiving error feedback for ESL students as this will lead to improvement in accuracy in the long term. In addition, teachers need to give positive comments side-by-side with constructive comments to encourage, inspire and boost students' confidence to improve their writing skills.

The sixth implication is the importance of giving clear instruction and guidance to the students to guide them in their revisions. This is because a child's level of development is related to the teacher instruction (Cazden, 1994; Wertsch, 1985). Teachers need to train students by providing them with guidelines on how and what to respond to each others' work as well as teaching them the interpersonal skills and small group skills to promote sharing and respectful attitude towards the writer's ownership of his or her writing in order not to distort the message of the writer. This will help to empower students in their writing. In other words, writers need to be given the freedom of voice as Shor & Freire (1987) stressed that voice "is a means to transform social relations in the classroom, and to raise awareness about relations in the society at large" (p. 11). This view that students' voices are meant to be heard in the process of writing is also supported by Graves (1983) as he advocated:

To ignore voice is to present the process as a lifeless, mechanical act. Divorcing voice from process is like omitting salt from stew, love from sex, or sun from gardening. Teachers who attend to voice listen to the person in the piece and observe how that person uses process components.

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing. It is the part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process. Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight. (p. 227)

Besides that, students need to be taught how to give text-specific comments, to be less vague, provide less criticism and give more constructive feedback to help their peers in the revision of their drafts. In addition, teachers can make students aware that positive criticism which is given in a tactful manner can help students improve in their writing by making them to be more alert and careful in the selection of appropriate words as well as to disseminate the correct information to their readers. According to Berg (1999), "... the discussion of ideas and language in peer response may even help students discover viable text alternatives to unclear aspects of their writing" (p. 232). Moreover, teachers need to create purposes of writing which are meaningful and valuable to help develop students' abilities.

Other than that, the finding of this present study which revealed that the peer response session provided opportunities for the students to talk, explore and negotiate their ideas implies the need for peer response session to be carried out systematically among members of mixed-proficiency levels. By having group members of mixed-proficiency level enables the more competent writers to provide guidance and assistance to the less competent ones in their revisions. This is to ensure that the task of learning is ultimately turned over to learners as they become empowered to engage in independent learning. This is in concordance with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that with the guidance from more capable peers, a learner will be able to perform beyond his or her 'zone of proximal development'. Thus, this in turn will help to reduce the paper load of teachers.

The eighth implication is that teachers need to ensure that students are placed in a group in which they can work with each other comfortably. This helps to create an ambience in which they will feel free to interact, receive and give varied peer feedback to each other without any barrier, and allow students to enact a range of social roles to assist one another in the process approach to writing.

The ninth implication is that teachers need to redefine their role as "grammarian(s)" (Keh, 1990, p. 301) or "authorities but act instead as consultants, assistants, and facilitators" (Zamel, 1985, p. 96). They should not under-estimate students' abilities and take authority over the students' writing. Instead, teachers need to provide suggestions, pointers and directions to help students gain ownership of their own writing through solving problems on their own. Even leading questions can be useful as "questions are valuable to direct a student's attention to unclear content or organisation or to lack of details" (Raimes, 1983, p. 144). This will provide opportunities for the students to explore and further develop their writing skills.

The tenth implication is that learners need peers as mentors and facilitators to guide and nurture their mental capacity in order to master the writing skills. Thus, a writing

group should include students of mixed ability so that the more competent students can guide the less competent writers to improve in their writing skills. Hence, this indicates that with proper guidance from adults or more competent peers, the 'novices' can learn to be 'experts' after they have understood, learnt and internalised the necessary rules and concepts; and eventually function on their own by applying these rules and concepts learnt to a different context. This is in concordance with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that with the guidance from more capable peers, a learner will be able to function beyond his or her 'zone of proximal development'.

The eleventh implication is that teachers need to allow room for students to voice their perceptions on the usefulness of the teacher and peer feedback so that writing will be more meaningful to both parties concerned. They need to realise that collaboration between teachers and students is of utmost importance for effective teaching and learning of writing.

In addition, the analysis of the peer interaction in assisting students in the revision of their compositions provides a window into students' writing process. Thus, this implies that researchers interested in writing processes need to give more attention to writing groups as a source of information about what writers do as they write. This is because in understanding what transpires when students work collaboratively – in particular, how they interact to facilitate learning and how they utilise the class teacher and peer feedback in their revisions is crucial to understanding how this approach to learning can be used more effectively in classrooms to achieve academic and social goals. Besides, this indicates that innovative interactive learning contexts can create opportunities for students to provide useful scaffolds which served as the key to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness. This will also help to promote greater confidence and improve the English language competency of ESL learners in the field of writing which is consistently advocated by the Ministry of Education and government policy makers. In

view of this, there is a need to re-examine the present English Language Curriculum which is designed by the Ministry of Education, and the testing procedures which were implemented by the Examination Syndicate to ascertain whether the examination format reflects the testing of the thinking and writing skills as outlined in the English Syllabus; and to make the necessary changes so that both the thinking and writing skills can be tested effectively.

Another important implication from the findings of this study is that the authorities concerned should think about having smaller English Language classes so that the students can benefit from the peer and class teacher feedback. This is because by having smaller classes enable the students to get more guidance from their class teacher whenever the latter's help is needed. Likewise, working in a smaller class reduces the marking workload of the class teacher and this permits the teacher more time to be engaged in careful reading of the students' composition in order to provide a more detailed feedback to guide the students in their revisions. Besides, it will be easier for the teacher to keep track on the writing progress of each student in a smaller class.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This present study has several limitations. Firstly, the small sample size used in this study does not allow generalisations to other writers in other contexts.

Secondly, due to time constraint, this study could only capture the brainstorming stage of the pre-writing sessions of all the students' compositions, part of the composing session of the first draft of the students' Composition 1; as well as the teacher-student and student-student interactions during the peer response sessions of all the students' compositions. This study could not witness the composing session of the individual first drafts of the students' Compositions 2, 3 and 4. Nevertheless, all the students wrote the

first drafts of all their compositions based on the outline and points which they had discussed during the brainstorming stage of each pre-writing session.

Thirdly, since this study was based on the revision of two drafts (one first draft and then a final draft) for each of all the four compositions, this may have affected the responding behaviour of the students. Hence, this in turn may have affected the findings in this study.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

This present study provides some insights into the directions for future research. First, future research can consider an extension of the present study into a longitudinal research involving a larger population of more collaborative group work to investigate how teacher-student and student-student interactions during the pre-writing and peer response sessions help students to generate ideas and to revise the first drafts of their compositions. With this, researchers can compare the findings with the present study. In light of this, an in-depth research can address the following research questions which the present study has not looked into:

1. How do students assist their peers during the composing stage of the first draft of their composition?
2. To what extent should teachers guide their students since they were not shown the appropriate way/ fixed criteria in/ no objective way of commenting students' writing?
3. To what extent does the improvement in the final drafts reflect the students' understanding of the teacher and peer feedback as well as the corrections in their first drafts?

Second, a longitudinal study can be conducted to examine how a student's responding experiences shape the writing of his or her subsequent compositions which are done individually over a period of time. It can also look in the direction of the students' cultural background differences and the extent of their exposure to English that may influence the findings. Besides that, think-aloud protocols can be used when students are constructing their text and at the same time, teachers can observe students' behaviour during the composing process.

Third, since this present study examined students' revision of the first draft and the production of a final draft for four compositions, future research of the same nature can be carried out to examine the effectiveness of peer feedback and teacher feedback provided during the peer response session in aiding students' revision of multiple-draft compositions. It can also investigate the types of effective teacher and peer scaffolds provided during the teacher-student and student-student interactions in assisting students in the revision of their multiple-draft compositions.

Fourth, since this present study had only examined expository compositions, an aspect that might deserve more attention in future research is to investigate the types of scaffolds; peer feedback and teacher feedback that would benefit less competent writers the most when they handle different writing tasks (such as descriptive, narrative and argumentative compositions).

Fifth, future research can even examine the effectiveness of peer verbal and peer written feedback or teacher verbal and teacher written feedback. This will help educators to identify the most effective way of providing feedback to enhance their students' writing skills.

Sixth, future trends can investigate the extent of teachers' influence in their teaching of writing on the students' responding strategies. Researchers can monitor teacher's teaching of writing skills and relate this to the students' patterns of interaction during

the pre-writing, composing and peer response sessions. In this way, researchers can identify the writing skills taught by the teacher and find out how much they were internalised by the students.

In addition, this present study had only identified some patterns of teacher-student and student-student interactions during the pre-writing and peer response sessions. Perhaps there are other factors that exist that may influence the outcome of the productivity and effectiveness of group writing. The school learning environment, the facilities available for the learning of writing and the teachers' English proficiency level, as well as teaching aids and methodology for the teaching of writing should also be taken into consideration in future research.

To conclude, there is still greater need for an in-depth study on teacher-student and student-student collaboration and feedback in enhancing the process approach to writing. Future research should also look into ways on how to motivate students to talk and write in groups, as well as to investigate in greater depth on how students' interaction shapes their writing.

5.6 Conclusion

The findings from this present study showed that through the practice of the peer response sessions and the process approach to writing, writers have the opportunity to develop their sense of authorship and feelings of responsibility of their own written work. The results of this study yielded some insights into the patterns of interaction on how negotiation shapes learning; the roles of the class teacher and students; how the various types of class teacher and peer scaffolds facilitate learning; and how students revise the individual first drafts of their compositions. This study found that peer response session provides the platform for the co-construction of knowledge among peers of equal status. It is through the collaboration in this social context that novices

can learn to become experts when they eventually could take charge of their own writing. According to Sommers & Saltz (2004), “It is the cumulative practice and sustained instruction – the gaining of expertise – that gives students opportunities to participate in the world of ideas, first as novices and later as experts” (p. 147). Besides that, it is learnt that scaffold acted as a mediating tool which facilitated learning. In addition, the finding in this study indicated that the students perceived the value and usefulness of their peer feedback in aiding the class teacher feedback.

Based on the findings of the literature review and the several implications discussed earlier, the findings of this present study should not be generalised to the whole population of Malaysian schools but are limited to the scope of the samples. Future research trends have been suggested to further examine how teacher-student and student-student interactions during peer response session can facilitate learning. Nonetheless, the present study provides positive indications on the usefulness of the class teacher and peer scaffolds in enhancing the students’ thinking and writing skills. Besides that, the present study also indicates that the class teacher and peer feedback complemented each other in assisting the students in their revisions. Thus, it can be concluded that the implementation of the peer response session and the process approach to writing require intensive training for both teachers and students to ensure that both parties can collaborate to benefit from the teaching and learning of writing.