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PEER RESPONSE INTERACTION AND LEARNER MOTIVE

INTERACCIÓN DE RESPUESTA ENTRE PARES Y MOTIVO DEL ALUMNO

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ABSTRACT: This paper reports a qualitative case study which adopted Leont'ev's theory of human activity (1978) as the interpretive lens and explored student peer response interaction in relation to learner motives in the Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) setting. Two research questions guided the study: 1) What is the nature of CFL student interaction during peer response? and 2) How do learner motives influence peer response interaction? Multiple sources of data were collected from two CFL students and analyzed for the purpose of the study. Findings indicated that the students focused on language-related issues and assumed a combination of collaborative and authoritative reviewer stances in peer response interaction. Also, the students held language-oriented learning motives for peer response as well as motives oriented toward mutual learning; these motives directed the students' peer response interaction. Implications of the study are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Peer response interaction, learner motive, case study.

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta un estudio de caso cualitativo adoptando la teoría de la actividad humana de Leont'ev (1978) como lente interpretativa. En el trabajo se exploró la interacción de respuesta de los estudiantes teniendo en cuenta sus motivos para estudiar el chino como lengua extranjera (CFL). Dos preguntas de investigación guiaron el estudio: 1) ¿Cuál es la naturaleza de la interacción de los estudiantes de CFL durante la respuesta de sus compañeros? y 2) ¿Cómo influyen los motivos para el aprendizaje de CFL en la interacción de respuesta de pares? Se recopilaron múltiples fuentes de datos de dos estudiantes de CFL y se analizaron para los fines del estudio. Los hallazgos indicaron que los estudiantes se centraron en cuestiones relacionadas con el lenguaje y asumieron una combinación de posturas colaborativas y autoritarias de revisor en la interacción de respuesta entre pares. Los estudiantes tenían motivos de aprendizaje orientados al lenguaje, así como motivos orientados al aprendizaje mutuo; estos motivos dirigieron la interacción de respuesta de los estudiantes entre pares. Se discuten las implicaciones del estudio.

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PALABRAS CLAVE: Interacción de respuesta entre pares; motivo del alumno; estudio de caso.

RESUMO: Este artigo relata um estudo de caso qualitativo que adotou a teoria da atividade humana de Leont'ev (1978) como lente interpretativa e explorou a interação do feedback entre pares em relação aos motivos dos alunos no contexto de Chinês como Língua Estrangeira (CFL). Duas questões de pesquisa orientaram o estudo: 1) Qual é a natureza da interação dos alunos de CFL durante o feedback por pares? e 2) Como os motivos dos alunos influenciam a interação do feedback entre pares? Múltiplas fontes de dados foram coletadas de dois estudantes de CFL e analisadas para fins do estudo. Os resultados indicaram que os alunos se concentraram em questões relacionadas à língua e assumiram uma combinação de posturas de revisão colaborativas e autoritárias na interação de feedback entre pares. Além disso, os alunos apresentaram motivos de aprendizagem orientados para a língua no feedback pares, bem como motivos orientados para a aprendizagem mútua; esses motivos direcionaram a interação de feedback entre pares dos alunoss. As implicações do estudo são discutidas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Interação de feedback por pares; motivo do aluno; estudo de caso

INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades, peer response in which students provide written and/or oral feedback on one another's writing has been widely adopted to support student learning and writing development in various university learning contexts (Finkenstaedt-Quinn et al., 2024; Liu & Hansen Edwards, 2018; Mochizuki & Starfield, 2021; Schillings, et al., 2021; Vuogan & Li, 2023). Supported by sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the role of social interaction and mediation in learning, peer response provides opportunities for meaning negotiation during the writing process, and, as such, is seen to be beneficial for both writing and language development (Liu & Hansen Edwards, 2018).

In the context of second language (L2) learning, peer response has generated a growing body of research. Extant research has examined various aspects of peer response, including 1) the impact of peer feedback on student writing and feedback literacy development (e.g., Ruegg, 2018; Weng et al., 2024), 2) student engagement with peer feedback (Cheng, et al., 2023; Fan & Xu, 2020; He, et al., 2025), 3) the role of language proficiency in peer response performance (Allen & Mills, 2016; Wu, 2019), and 4) student interaction during peer response (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Zhao, 2018; Yu & Lee, 2015). L2 peer response research has significantly advanced our understanding of the role of peers in L2 writing; however, as will be detailed later, some notable gaps remain in current research, including 1) limited research in contexts where a language other than English is the target language, 2) a need for more fine-grained analysis of student interaction, and 3) a need to better understand and explain student peer response behaviors. More research is necessary to provide new insights into students' performance of peer response activity.

The case study reported below aimed at addressing the gaps in current research by providing a detailed analysis of peer response interaction in the Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) context and offering an explanation of student interaction through the lens of Activity Theory (Leont'ev, 1978). In the following sections, I discuss relevant research literature and theoretical perspective, describe research methodology, report the findings, and discuss the implications of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on L2 Peer Response Interaction

Peer interaction provides opportunities for meaning negotiation and learning and is critical to understanding student peer response activity. Given its importance in peer response, peer interaction has attracted attention in L2 writing research (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996; Yu & Lee, 2015; Zhao, 2018). One line of research on peer response interaction which is directly pertinent to the present study concerns student stances during peer response. More specifically, this line of research has examined how L2 learners negotiate meaning during peer response, focusing on the ways in which students enact their roles as peer feedback providers (reviewers) or receivers and position themselves in relation to the peers, peer texts or peer response task (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Mangelsdorf & Schlumberger, 1992; Min, 2008; Yu & Lee, 2015). In these studies, student stances are identified by analyzing students' written comments or oral interactions.

In their pioneering study on reviewer stances, Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger (1992) analyzed 60 English as a Second Language (ESL) students' written reviews on an essay and identified three different reviewer stances: interpretive, which was oriented toward the peer reviewer's own ideas or views about the topic; prescriptive, which was driven by the reviewer's concern for prescribed rules and forms; and collaborative, which was motivated by the reviewer's desire to help the writer more effectively communicate meaning to the intended audience. In Mangelsdorf and Schlumberger's study, the stance adopted most frequently was prescriptive.

Using transcripts of ESL students' peer response sessions as data, Lockhart and Ng (1995) analyzed reviewer stances in peer response interactions of 27 pairs of college ESL students. Through constant comparison, Lockhart and Ng (1995) identified four types of reviewer stances: authoritative, interpretative, probing, and collaborative. Readers assuming the authoritative stance were concerned with deficiencies in peer writing while those adopting the interpretative stance mainly reacted to ideas in peer writing based on their own preferences and interests. In contrast, readers taking the probing and collaborative stances engaged in meaning negotiation with the writer. While readers in the probing stance elicited the writer's intended meaning and sought clarifications, those in the collaborative stance worked with the writer to achieve the writer's communicative goals. In Lockhart and Ng's (1995) study, the authoritative and probing stances were observed the most and the collaborative stance the least.

In another study, Min (2008) examined the impact of training on student reviewer stances in a university-level EFL writing class. To assess the impact of training which consisted of in-class teacher demonstration and explanation and

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after-class individual reviewer conferences, peer written comments before and after training were analyzed and compared. More specifically, each sentence in a written comment was coded into one of the four steps in the training procedure: clarification of writer's intention, identification of a problem, explanation of a problem, or provision of a suggestion. Subsequently, the stance underlying each step was identified as probing, prescriptive, tutoring, or collaborative. This analysis made it possible to capture multiple stances in a comment. Min (2008) found that students assumed more types of stances after training and that the collaborative stance became the most frequently adopted stance after training.

More recent studies aimed at describing the kinds of stances students adopt in peer response as well as providing reasons for the stances observed (Yu & Lee, 2015; Zhu & Mitchell, 2012) although such studies are limited in number. For example, taking Leont'ev's (1978, 1981) Activity Theory as the interpretive lens, Yu and Lee's (2015) case study examined ESL students' peer response stances in relation to the students' motives for peer response. The two participants demonstrated contrasting peer response stances: while Jack took an active role in peer response with a "reviewing, coordinating, and eliciting" stance (p. 579) and interacted with peers in a collaborative manner, Kevin took a "passive listener" (p. 586) stance and was a silent observer during peer response. Jack's and Kevin's peer response stances were influenced by their divergent motives for participating in peer response. Jack held motives oriented toward learning from the peer response process as a reviewer and providing help to peers; hence, he was actively engaged in peer response and was collaborative. In contrast, Kevin's motives for participating in peer response were oriented toward completing peer response as a required task and receiving (instead of giving) peer feedback. Therefore, he adopted a passive stance, rarely initiating interaction or meaningfully engaging in discussion.

Several research gaps can be observed in extant research. As shown above, research on peer response interaction focusing on reviewer stances has largely been conducted in the ESL context. Little is known about the stances students assume in peer response interactions in other language contexts. Additionally, existing research has largely focused on the overall or dominant reviewer stance; variation in stances within a peer response interaction has not received due attention. To fully understand the nature of student peer response interaction as a learning activity, attention also needs to be given to what students focus on in their stance-taking during the interaction. Last but not least, given the limited amount of research exploring why students assume certain stances in their interactions, it is instructive to continue to examine the "why" of student stance-taking in peer response interaction. It is with the intent to examine the "why" of peer response stance-taking that I turn to the theoretical framework which guided the present study.

Activity Theory and Motive

The study adopted Leont'ev's (1978) Activity Theory (AT) perspective as the interpretive lens. Extending sociocultural theory, Leont'ev's AT perspective accentuates the role of motive in understanding human behaviors. For Leont'ev (1978), human behaviors may be understood at three levels: activity, driven by motive; action, driven by goal; and operation, namely the specific conditions surrounding the performance of actions. Motive lies in the object of an

activity (Leont'ev, 1978) and is closely connected to motivation and need (Kaptelinin, 2005). From Leont'ev's (1978) theoretical perspective, "the motive/object gives meaning and direction to actions" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p.219); human activity is driven by the motives of the agents of activity and realized in goal-directed actions. Motive explains why people participate in an activity and hence provides a lens instrumental to understanding human behaviors.

Motive, as a theoretical construct in Leont'ev's (1978) AT perspective, has guided examinations of second language learners' participation in pedagogical tasks, including peer response and other tasks involving learner interaction (Cho, 2017; Storch, 2004; Tigchelaar, 2020; Yu & Lee, 2015; Zhu & Mitchell, 2012). Findings of this line of research indicate that learners bring their own motives and goals to learning tasks, and that learners' motives and goals influence their approaches to and orientations toward task performance. As discussed above, research has revealed that the stances ESL students assume when interacting with peers during peer response are influenced by the learners' motives for peer response participation (Yu & Lee, 2015; Zhu & Mitchell, 2012). However, such studies are small in number and have concentrated on the ESL context.

Adopting Activity Theory and motive (Leont'ev, 1978) as the interpretative lens, the present study examined CFL student peer response interaction through a fine-grained analysis of peer reviewer stances and provided an explanation for student stance-taking behaviors through learner motives. The following research questions guided the study:

1) What is the nature of CFL student interaction during peer response?

1a). What do CFL students focus on during peer response interaction?

1b). What stances do CFL students adopt when interacting with each other during peer response?

2) How do learner motives influence CFL student peer response interaction?

METHOD

Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative case study design (Duff, 2014), focusing on two CFL students who participated in peer response in an upper-division CFL course. A qualitative case study approach is appropriate for the study as it allows an in-depth examination of the research phenomenon in its natural context. It is helpful to note that case study research aims at providing a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (i.e., analytical generalization) rather than generalizing findings from sample to population (Duff, 2014; Yin, 2018).

Context of the Study

The study took place in an upper-division CFL writing course in the Chinese program at a large public research university in the United States. The Chinese program offers a variety of Chinese language courses for learners of beginning to advanced Chinese language proficiency levels. Lower-division courses in the program focus on fostering

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oral communication skills through immersing students in authentic language input and providing ample opportunities for practicing oral communication in various communicative scenarios.

The upper-division Chinese writing course from which data for the present study were collected aimed at developing CFL students' reading and writing skills and provided students opportunities to practice a variety of written genres in Chinese. After studying genres such as notes and letters earlier in the semester, students progressed to descriptive essays later in the semester and were required to complete two longer essays toward the end of the semester, one describing their favorite book and the other their interest in Chinese culture. Students were expected to provide necessary details in their essays and demonstrate written Chinese skills.

Peer response was conducted on the first drafts of the two descriptive essays described above. Training for peer response was provided through a discussion of the purpose and rationale of peer response. The training also highlighted areas of writing which students ought to consider when providing feedback.

Participants

Among the seven students enrolled in the Chinese writing course, four were willing to participate. The present study focused on two of the students, Ruolan and Ping (both pseudonyms). Ruolan and Ping were selected as the focal participants for the present study not only because they provided complete data sets but also because their data were rich. In other words, Ruolan and Ping represented information-rich cases bearing on the research phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Ruolan and Ping had somewhat different CFL learning experiences and Chinese writing proficiency. Ruolan had studied in the Chinese program for one year and her Chinese writing proficiency was Intermediate-High, as evaluated by the course instructor according to the ACTFL writing proficiency guidelines (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2012). Ping had studied in the Chinese program for only one semester prior to the study, but she was a more advanced learner with her Chinese writing proficiency evaluated to be Advanced Mid. However, neither had taken a Chinese writing course prior to the study.

Data Collection

Multiple sources of data were collected for the purpose of the study, with audio-recording of Ruolan and Ping's peer feedback session and individual interviews with Ruolan and Ping constituting the primary data sources.

Ruolan and Ping's oral peer feedback session took place during a 50-minute class period. Before the peer response session, the teacher, an experienced CFL instructor, assigned students into peer response dyads based on considerations of students' Chinese writing proficiency and collected and distributed students' first drafts to their partners. The teacher also provided a peer feedback form and prompted students to comment on different aspects of writing: organization (essay structure), content, grammar, and vocabulary. Students were instructed to review peer essays and provide notes and/or written comments on the draft and/or the peer feedback form before they met in class for the oral feedback session. Students were also told that they could use either English or Chinese when

providing feedback. During the oral peer feedback session conducted in class, which was recorded, Ruolan and Ping discussed their essays of 654 and 540 Chinese characters respectively as well as their feedback. Subsequently, they revised their drafts taking peer feedback into consideration and submitted the revised drafts to the teacher.

I interviewed Ruolan and Ping after they completed the peer response session and audio-recorded the interviews for analysis. The semi-structured interviews (Dörnyei, 2007) were conducted in English and addressed topics in several areas. Of particular relevance to the present study were interview questions focusing on the importance of writing, purposes for writing and for peer response, and the participants' writing and peer response experiences (e.g., "How important is writing well in Chinese for you?" "Can you tell me your experience with the writing assignments?" and "For you, what are the purposes of peer response?"). I asked follow-up questions when necessary and checked my understanding of the participants' responses during the interviews.

Course artifacts (course syllabus and textbook) and Ruolan's and Ping's initial and revised drafts were also collected for relevant information.

Data Analyses

The first research question addressed the nature of CFL student peer response interaction. To answer this research question, I transcribed the recorded peer feedback session and analyzed the transcript. This analysis consisted of three main steps: identifying peer response episodes, examining the areas of writing the students focused on in the peer response episodes (sub-question 1a), and analyzing reviewer stances the students adopted in the peer response episodes (sub-question 1b).

For a fine-grained analysis, I adopted Peer Response Episode as the analytical unit, drawing from the concept of Language-Related Episode (Swain & Lapkin,1998). Swain and Lapkin (1998) define Language-Related Episode as "any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (p. 362). Language-Related Episode has been used in research on student interaction and writing (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Neumann & McDonough, 2015; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) and has allowed researchers to examine what students focus on as well as how they negotiate meaning during specific moments of an interaction. In this study, I extended the concept of Language-Related Episode to the examination of student peer response interaction and adopted the term Peer Response Episode. A Peer Response Episode is defined as a specific segment of a student dialogue during peer response interaction devoted to the discussion of a specific writing issue or a feedback point on peer writing.

Following the definition of Peer Response Episode, I segmented the transcript of Ruolan and Ping's peer response session into peer response episodes. To do this, I read through the transcript and noted the specific writing areas or issues the students discussed during the peer response session. Any part of the students' dialogue that addressed a specific writing issue or feedback point was considered a peer response episode and was coded as such. A shift in the writing issue under discussion would signal a new peer response episode. Consider the following example:

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Ruolan: Okay. Then. And over here you said [reading] '爱得华卡伦最后终于' ('Edward Cullen at last finally'). I don't think that 最后 is necessary, cause you

Ping: Okay, you say 终于

Ruolan: Yeah, does that mean "finally" anyways?

Ping: Yeah

Ruolan: Alright. I don't think that is necessary

This excerpt represented a peer response episode devoted to the discussion of a lexical issue concerning Ping's use of two lexical items "最后" ("at last") and "终于" ("finally") which have subtle differences in semantic meaning. Ruolan's articulation of the writing issue in the first line of the excerpt marked the beginning of the peer response episode. This episode ended when Ruolan wrapped up the discussion by reiterating her opinion ("Alright. I don't think that is necessary").

After peer response episodes were identified, they were first examined for their foci. Depending on the specific issue discussed, each peer response episode was coded as addressing content, organization or language-related issues (grammar or vocabulary).

The peer response episodes were subsequently analyzed for reviewer stances. The analytical process involved generating categories of reviewer stances by adapting categories and their definitions from previous studies (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Min, 2008) and applying the adapted categories to coding the data for the present study. Prior to this, stance categories from previous studies were applied to the data but this application did not result in a good fit perhaps because peer response interactions based on which the stance categories were derived in previous studies focused on different aspects of writing. To resolve this issue, I adapted the categories based on key features of the original categories as well as the nature of data for the present study. I then applied the adapted categories, defined in Table 1, to coding the reviewer stances reflected in the peer response episodes. In this process, each peer response episode was coded as demonstrating an authoritative, collaborative, or evaluative stance.

I coded all episodes twice, one month apart, and achieved an intra-coder agreement of 93%.

Table 1. *Definitions of Stance Categories*

Reviewer Stance	Definition

Authoritative	A reviewer taking the authoritative stance acts as a tutor or advisor to the writer. In this role, the reviewer conveys feedback, provides suggestions or solutions to the writer, and may offer justifications for the suggestions and explanations of relevant rules. Communication is largely one way and is dominated by the reviewer although the reviewer may soften the tone of the stance by using mitigating expressions and check writer understanding of the suggestion. Episodes in this category tend to be initiated by the reviewer. Interacting with an authoritative reviewer is a writer who acknowledges or accepts the reviewer's suggestion but provides little input into solving the problem.
Collaborative	A reviewer taking the collaborative stance acts as a partner to the writer. In this role, the reviewer responds to the writer's questions, elicits and considers the writer's point of view, and engages the writer in joint problem solving. Communication is two way and involves meaning negotiation. Episodes in this category may be initiated by the reviewer or the writer. Interacting with a collaborative reviewer is a writer who is engaged in the interaction and does more than simply accepting the reviewer's suggestions.
Evaluative	A reviewer taking the evaluative stance acts as an evaluator to the writer. In this role, the reviewer assesses and reacts to what is in peer writing based on prescribed rules or criteria or personal preferences and conveys their opinions to the writer. Episodes in this category are typically initiated and dominated by the reviewer. Interacting with an evaluative reviewer is a writer who provides little input in the interaction.

The second research question examined the influences of learner motives on student peer response interaction. To answer this question, I transcribed the interviews verbatim and analyzed the interview transcripts to identify the students' motives. I adopted an inductive analytic approach (Patton, 2015) to identifying the students' motives, paying particular attention to the students' comments and remarks regarding their conceptions of writing, their writing goals and needs, and their understanding of the purposes of peer response. I read the interview transcripts repeatedly, noting specific expressions the students used to indicate conceptions of writing, writing goals and needs, and purposes of peer response. I then compared the specific expressions within data from each participant and across data from both participants and grouped them into categories of learning-related motives and role-related motives. After the students' motives were identified, the next step of analysis involved connecting the students' peer response interaction behaviors, namely their focus and stances in the peer response episodes, to their motives, as shown in the Findings section.

Course artifacts and the participants' drafts were reviewed for information about the course, about the writing assignments, and about textual contexts for the issues discussed in the peer response session.

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FINDINGS

In this section, I report findings concerning Ruolan's and Ping's peer response interaction and motives for peer response.

Peer Response Interaction

In their peer response interaction, Ruolan and Ping discussed Ruolan's essay on her interest in Chinese music and Ping's essay on *Twilight* as her favorite book.

Focus of Peer Response Interaction

Analysis of peer response episodes revealed that Ruolan and Ping focused on language-related issues when sharing feedback on each other's writing. As shown in Table 2, discussion on Ping's paper with Ruolan as the peer reviewer consisted of 11 episodes, eight of which (73%) addressed language-related issues. Of the eight peer response episodes devoted to language-related issues, six focused on grammar and two on vocabulary. Discussion on Ruolan's essay with Ping as the peer reviewer consisted of 12 peer response episodes, with 10 (83%) episodes devoted to language related-issues. Four of the ten episodes focused on grammar and six episodes on vocabulary. Although the participants were instructed to address content, organization (structure), grammar and vocabulary issues in peer writing, Ruolan seemed to focus on grammar more in her feedback while Ping gravitated more toward vocabulary; however, both clearly centered on language issues in writing.

Table 2. *Focus of Peer Response Episodes*

Reviewer	Content & Organization	Language-related Grammar	Language-related Vocabulary	Total
Ruolan	3	6	2	11
Ping	2	4	6	12

Reviewer Stances Adopted during Peer Response Interaction

Reviewer stances adopted by the two participants in their peer response interaction are summarized and displayed in Table 3. As shown in the table, each participant displayed multiple types of reviewer stances, including collaborative, authoritative, and evaluative. Of the three types of stances, the evaluative stance was used the least by each participant. Notice that in neither case was there a clear, dominant overall stance. The stances assumed are illustrated below with excerpts from the transcript of the peer response session to demonstrate how reviewer stances varied during the interaction. Translations of all Chinese expressions used by the participants are provided in parentheses. Where appropriate, the specific issue focused on in an excerpt is underlined at first mention.

Table 3. *Participants' Reviewer Stances*

Reviewer	Collaborative Stance	Authoritative Stance	Evaluative Stance	Total
Ruolan	6 (55%)	4 (36%)	1 (9%)	11
Ping	5 (42%)	6 (50%)	1 (8%)	12

Ruolan as reviewer. Ruolan served as the reviewer of Ping's essay discussing why *Twilight* was her favorite book. Ruolan adopted the collaborative stance in six episodes and the authoritative stance in four episodes, with the evaluative stance being used only in one episode. Ruolan opened the discussion on Ping's essay by assuming the collaborative reviewer stance, as shown in Excerpt 1, which focused on the usage of "来的" (verb "come" plus particle "的" for emphasis).

Excerpt 1 (Collaborative Stance, Episode 1)

> Ruolan: Okay, this one, here you say [reading] '贝拉斯旺本来很不愿意搬到这里来的' ('Originally, Bella Swan was not willing to move here'). But is it necessary to say 来的？Cause you are saying
>
> Ping: 搬到这里? (move here?)
>
> Ruolan: Yeah, take out 来的.
>
> Ping: mm-hmm [indicating agreement]

In this excerpt, Ruolan and Ping focused on if "来的" was necessary. Note that Ruolan did not simply convey feedback. Rather, she first elicited Ping's opinion by asking "is it necessary to say…?" Ping then joined Ruolan in resolving the issue by proposing an alternative without "来的", and Ruolan subsequently expressed her agreement. Collaborative problem solving was demonstrated in this segment of the interaction.

After a few episodes, Ruolan adopted the evaluative stance when commenting on a specific content-related issue in Ping's essay, as illustrated in Excerpt 2. Ping mentioned a character's name, "布莱克" ("Blake"), in her essay but did not provide any information about the character. As shown below, Ruolan dominated the interaction, conveying her reaction as a reader and articulating her opinion to draw Ping's attention to the potential problem.

Excerpt 2 (Evaluative Stance, Episode 4)

> Ruolan: and then after that was okay. But for me, like when you mention 布莱克 (Blake), I didn't know who he was [both laughed]. I was kind of confused, I was stuck on this sentence for a while
>
> Ping: Oh, I am sorry

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Ruolan: I had to look it up [laughed]. So, I feel like you should have put more thought into that or did something with that. Okay then [moving on to a different point]

In Episode 6, shown in Excerpt 3 below, Ruolan reverted back to the collaborative stance when providing feedback on the use of a vocabulary item in Ping's essay. Ping juxtaposed two lexical items "最后" ("at last") and "终于" ("finally"), which have overlapping but not identical semantic meaning. Ruolan initiated the discussion by suggesting that "最后" ("at last") was not necessary. However, instead of presenting her suggestion as the final solution, Ruolan elicited Ping's view ("Yeah, does that mean 'final' anyways?") and engaged Ping in joint problem-solving.

Excerpt 3 (Collaborative Stance, Episode 6)

Ruolan: Okay. Then. And over here you said [reading] '爱得华卡伦最后终于' ('Edward Cullen at last finally'). I don't think that 最后 is necessary, cause you

Ping: Okay, you say 终于

Ruolan: Yeah, does that mean "finally" anyways?

Ping: Yeah

Ruolan: Alright. I don't think that is necessary

During the peer response interaction, Ruolan also adopted the authoritative reviewer stance, positioning herself as a more knowledgeable advisor/tutor. Ruolan's authoritative reviewer stance is exemplified in Excerpt 4, which focused on a missing grammatical subject "他" ("he") in a sentence in Ping's essay. In this segment of the interaction which occurred toward the end of the discussion on Ping's essay, not only did Ruolan directly point out the problem but she also provided an explanation/justification as to why the grammatical subject was necessary.

Excerpt 4 (Authoritative Stance, Episode 10)

Ruolan: And over here, you forgot a 他 (he)

Ping: Oh, my god,

Ruolan: 他, I guess the other guy. Where is the other guy? [Looking for the place where a character was mentioned in the essay]

Ping: Oh, that James?

Ruolan: Yeah, James, you said 最后 (at last), but you didn't say who, so it's kind of like, wait, who did it?

Ping: Who did it? yeah, 他 (he)

Ping as reviewer. In the feedback session, Ping reciprocated roles with Ruolan and was reviewer of Ruolan's essay on Chinese culture with a specific focus on Chinese music. Ping adopted the authoritative stance in six episodes and collaborative stance in five episodes respectively. Like Ruolan, Ping took up the evaluative stance only in one episode.

Towards the beginning of the discussion on Ruolan's paper, Ping adopted the collaborative stance in Episode 2 to engage in meaning negotiation with Ruolan on the use of two connectives. As illustrated in Excerpt 5 below, the discussion focused on two semantically close connectives "所以" ("therefore"), which co-occurs with "因为" ("because"), and "于是" ("consequently"), which is used to emphasize the result of a sequence of events. Ruolan used "于是" in her essay following a clause introduced by "因为", and Ping suggested correctly that "所以" be used to replace "于是".

Excerpt 5 **(**Collaborative Stance, Episode 2)

Ping: …所以 (therefore), what do you have before?

Ruolan: 于是 (consequently)

Ping: I am not sure if that would work. 于是

Ruolan: I thought that's the same thing. Is it the same thing? Cause I remember I used 所以 too much, Professor X kept saying

Ping: 于是 is like more like this happened so that happened

Ruolan: Oh, the result

Ping: The result. Does that make sense? [laugh], 所以…[moving on to another point]

In the excerpt above, Ping identified the problem, but instead of conveying her suggestion directly, she first expressed uncertainty about the expression Ruolan used ("I am not sure if that would work"), prompting Ruolan to ask for a clarification of meaning ("I thought that's the same thing. Is it the same thing?"). In response to Ruolan's request, Ping explained the meaning of 于是 and sought to check Ruolan's understanding of her explanation ("Does that make sense?"). As shown above, Ping demonstrated efforts to engage Ruolan in meaning negotiation in this episode.

Ping adopted the authoritative reviewer stance when she conveyed feedback and offered advice to Ruolan on how to revise her writing in Episode 5, which focused on the connection between two sentences in Ruolan's draft. As illustrated in Excerpt 6 below, Ping offered a suggestion (adding a new sentence) and provided a justification for her

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suggestion in a monologue. Notice that Ping softened the tone of her feedback through hedging expressions such as "maybe" and "would be" in her second turn.

Excerpt 6 **(**Authoritative Stance, Episode 5)

> Ping: I added this [a new sentence]…, cause I thought like here you kind of just jumped, there is no smooth transition to that, cause you just said I love Chinese music and oh, researchers
>
> Ruolan: [laugh] Alright, I see
>
> Ping: So, I just, maybe it would be better to have something leading into talking about researcher going studying about Chinese music, so I added 'Chinese music'. You can follow it like 'seven thousand years ago…', then you talk about researchers, they can actually preserve it.

Ping adopted the evaluative stance in a brief episode (Episode 8) to evaluate the main point and flow in Ruolan's writing, shown in Excerpt 7 below.

Excerpt 7 **(**Evaluative Stance, Episode 8)

> Ping: I don't think you really need it. But I think your main point, you pretty much got it. Just need some transitions words and flow and make it better.

At the end of the discussion on Ruolan's paper, Ping assumed the collaborative stance when commenting on the use of a vocabulary item "其中" ("among") in Ruolan's essay. As shown in Excerpt 8 below, communication was two-way with meaning negotiation between Ping and Ruolan. In her first turn, Ping cast doubt on the use of "其中" but when Ruolan raised questions regarding the meaning and use of "其中", Ping acknowledged Ruolan's questions and responded by explaining her own understanding of the meaning and use of the word ("其中 usually talks about one of them"). When Ruolan asked subsequently if "其中" could be used with more than one item, Ping considered Ruolan's point and indicated her agreement that "其中" was actually used correctly in Ruolan's essay ("I guess 其中 , I guess it works."). In this episode, Ping acted as a partner who was willing to discuss, consider, and accept the peer writer's point of view.

Excerpt 8 (Collaborative Stance, Episode 12)

> Ping: You say [reading] 其中这个乐器用 (among others, this instrument uses…)
>
> Ruolan: so, I looked this one up, 其中 is like "amongst them", like, right?
>
> Ping: um
>
> Ruolan: So that's not what you would use here?

Ping: 其中 usually talks about one of them

Ruolan: Oh

Ping: Let me see. Usually when I use 其中, I talk about one item in that group. It's part of that. 其中, oh, include among these, included among these

Ruolan: So, it could be used for more? I don't know

Ping: I don't know, I guess 其中, I guess it works.

As illustrated above, both Ruolan and Ping assumed a combination of collaborative, authoritative and evaluative stances in the peer response interaction, enacting roles of partner (collaborative stance), tutor (authoritative stance), and evaluator (evaluative stance). Reviewer stances shifted and varied in the discussion of each essay.

Motives for Peer Response

Ruolan's Motives

Analysis of Ruolan's interview responses indicated that she held a grammar-oriented learning motive for peer response and believed that peer response provided students an opportunity to enhance knowledge of and skills in grammar. Ruolan's grammar-oriented peer response learning motive was connected to her motive for learning to write in Chinese and her conception of writing in Chinese. Indeed, Ruolan conceptualized learning to write in Chinese as learning Chinese grammar, asserting that "I think that it [writing] is very important because the fact that you learn the grammar, the grammar structure, you know the correct ways of how to write things done, the correct ways of how to say it, yeah". Ruolan explicated that grammar was her focus and motive for writing because this was an important aspect of language and also because she perceived grammar as a challenge or area of development of her own. She explained: "I still have some like sentence structure problems…" and "when I write it down, I think in my mind like an American person, so that really, you know, the grammar doesn't match." Learning grammar was a motive underpinning Ruolan's peer response interaction and guided her focus on grammar as a peer reviewer.

Additionally, Ruolan held an interaction/role-related peer response motive oriented toward mutual learning. For Ruolan, an important goal of peer response was for peers to help each other learn. Ruolan stated that peer response was done "so that…what other students know can help me, like they correct me, they can help me learn too". At the same time, she was also cognizant of the reciprocal role she could play in assisting her partner, Ping. Although Ping had a higher level of Chinese language proficiency, Ruolan did not perceive herself as the mere feedback recipient. Rather, she believed she could provide helpful feedback on some aspects of Ping's writing and thus positioned herself as a collaborative partner and even as a more knowledgeable peer on some aspects in the peer response interaction. Ruolan commented that although she asked herself "do I know how to give her feedback?", she knew "there were still issues with her paper, so I just tried to find whatever I KNEW (she emphasized this word) was there." Ruolan's

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interaction behaviors as reflected by her collaborative and authoritative reviewer stances were aligned with her mutual learning motive.

Ping's Motives

Analysis of Ping's interview responses indicated that Ping held a vocabulary-oriented learning motive for peer response. For her, the goal of peer response was to improve vocabulary and wording: "to know our mistakes and make it better. Always better, like *wording* cos there is always a better wording of a sentence no matter what." This peer response learning motive was well aligned with Ping's motive for learning to write in Chinese and with her conception of writing in Chinese. For Ping, learning to write in Chinese to a great extent meant learning to use vocabulary since "if I can't write that [words], there is no way that I can include interesting information or making it interesting." Ping viewed writing well in Chinese as synonymous with "being able to write what you want, like when I want to write a sentence, I will be able to write every single character." She considered a solid control of vocabulary in Chinese indispensable to successful writing, and, despite her advanced-level proficiency in Chinese, described herself as "a horrible writer" due to her self-perceived limited ability to produce Chinese characters. Ping commented that vocabulary posed a major challenge for her when performing Chinese writing "Coz there was a lot, like if you want me to write a sentence, there will be a lot of words I can't write" and asserted that "using the right word" constituted her focus and motive when performing Chinese writing. The vocabulary-oriented learning motive guided Ping's peer response interaction behaviors, as can be observed in her focus on vocabulary when providing peer feedback.

Similar to Ruolan, Ping held an interaction/role-related peer response motive oriented toward mutual learning. Ping stated that a purpose of peer response was "to better their writing or to better my writing when they look at it [so] I would know my mistake and stuff," which indicated that she perceived peer response to be an instructional activity in which the participants would reciprocate roles and support each other's writing. Ping remarked that in her role as a peer reviewer she "just pretty much reading through their paper and just changing what I think might sound better cos …there is always a better way of wording stuff." At the same time, Ping was also "like trying to understand what they were trying to convey through the writing." Ping's comments suggested that she perceived two roles for herself as a peer reviewer: a more knowledgeable peer ("changing what I think might sound better") and a collaborator interested in the meaning the peer writer was trying to convey ("trying to understand what they were trying to convey through the writing"). These roles and associated authoritative and collaborative reviewer stances were well aligned with her mutual learning motive for peer response.

As discussed above, Ruolan and Ping both held peer response motives oriented toward language learning although Ruolan's learning motive focused on grammar while Ping's motive emphasized vocabulary. Neither articulated motives related to improving content or organization of writing. Both participants held similar interaction/role-related motives oriented toward mutual learning. The participants' learning and role-related motives guided their

interaction behaviors and were the underlying reasons for their focus and reviewer stances during peer response interaction.

DISCUSSION

This case study addressed gaps in current peer response research by examining students' peer response interaction and learner motives in the context of CFL writing. In the study, peer response interaction was examined in terms of students' focus and reviewer stances during peer response, and the participants' interaction behaviors (i.e., focus and stances) were interpreted through the lens of motives. Regarding Research Question 1 addressing the nature of CFL student peer response interaction, data analyses revealed that the students in the study focused on language-related issues in their interaction and adopted multiple types of reviewer stances, particularly collaborative and authoritative stances. Regarding Research Question 2 addressing the influence of learner motives on CFL student peer response interaction, the findings indicated that the students held motives which prioritized learning language as well as motives oriented toward learning from and assisting each other. Further, the students' motives directed their focus and stances during peer response interaction.

Interpreting the participants' peer response interaction behaviors in relation to their motives sheds interesting light on their peer response activity. In this study, both Ruolan and Ping held motives oriented toward language learning. Ruolan's and Ping's learning motives reflected a "writing-to-learn language" (Manchon, 2011) orientation to writing, namely "engaging in writing as a tool for language learning" (Manchon, 2011, p. 4), versus a "learning-to-write" orientation, which places a focus on learning to write for purpose of effective communication. Ruolan and Ping conceptualized learning writing in terms of learning the grammatical and lexical aspects of the target language respectively and viewed peer response as an opportunity for learning grammar and vocabulary. Ruolan's and Ping's learning motives directed the focus of their peer response interaction. Although they were instructed to consider content, structure, grammar, and vocabulary when providing feedback, Ruolan and Ping capitalized on the potential of writing for second language learning (Williams, 2012) and, as reflected in the focus of their interaction, performed peer response as a language learning activity in alignment with their learning motives.

Ruolan and Ping also held peer response motives to learn from and to support the learning of each other. It is heartening to see that they had motives oriented toward mutual learning, similar to Jack in Yu and Lee's (2015) study. This motive underpinned the roles they enacted in the reviewer stances during peer response interaction. Notably, Ruolan and Ping enacted roles as collaborators (collaborative stance) and tutors (authoritative stance) when serving as peer reviewers. Although taking an authoritative stance may not always feel comfortable, especially for Ruolan, both participants were cognizant of their role as the more knowledgeable partner on some aspects of peer writing and were willing to convey their knowledge to their peer. At the same time, Ruolan and Ping were motivated to learn from their partner as demonstrated by their behaviors when the peer reviewer was providing feedback as well as in their interview comments—"what other students know can help me" (Ruolan) and "to better my writing when they

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look at it [so] I would know my mistake and stuff" (Ping). They were willing to negotiate meaning and consider peer feedback. Ruolan's and Ping's motives for mutual learning guided their enactment of peer response roles and stances; they performed peer response as a mutual learning activity in alignment with their motives.

A methodological contribution of the study lies in the adoption of peer response episode as the unit of analysis in the examination of reviewer stances. Unlike prior research which examined the overall or dominant reviewer stance in a peer response interaction (e.g., Lockhart & Ng, 1995), the current study examined the stance a peer reviewer assumed in each episode of a peer response interaction. This methodological approach allowed a more nuanced examination of reviewer stances and shed new light concerning reviewer stance variation in peer response interaction. In the present study, reviewer stances varied throughout the peer response interaction, indicating that peer response interaction is fluid and dynamic. This fluidity, which is an important dimension of peer response interaction, would not have been captured by an overall reviewer stance. Further, a nuanced analysis as shown in the present study would provide new insight into the role of reviewer stance in student revision, contributing to a better understanding of the relationship between peer response process and the student written product. Analyzing reviewer stances at the episode level makes it possible to connect specific reviewer stances and related feedback in peer response episodes to textual revisions, thus linking peer response process to student written products.

Findings of the study offer some pedagogical insights worthy of attention. In the present study, both participants were motivated to learn language through peer response and writing and, in accordance with their learning motives, carried out peer response as a writing-to-learn language activity. Each participant, however, underscored a different aspect of language in the peer response interaction in alignment with their motive. This indicates that students individualize instructional tasks assigned to them based on their own motives and understandings, and such individualized task performance may lead to unexpected and divergent learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be aware of students' learning motives. Pre-peer response discussions and/or post-peer response reflections may provide valuable opportunities for teachers to learn about students' motives and goals. In addition, findings of the study revealed that both participants assumed multiple and similar types of stances and roles regardless of their language proficiency. One question that often arises in classroom implementation of peer response concerns whether students who are not at the same level of language proficiency can provide mutual support for learning and hence should be grouped together. The data of the present study, albeit limited, suggest that students with somewhat different levels of language proficiency can engage in meaning negotiation and scaffold each other's learning through adopting multiple types of reviewer stances and roles.

CONCLUSION

This case study examined peer response interaction and learner motives in the CFL context. In addition to revealing the fluid nature of peer response interaction, the study shows that students' peer response interaction is guided by their learning-related and role-related motives, shedding new light on student peer response activity. The study also

provides methodological procedures that may be applied or adapted for an examination of peer response interaction in other learning contexts. Nevertheless, the data analyzed in the study were limited. Future research may further examine peer response interaction in CFL or other learning contexts by analyzing a larger data size. Future research may also focus on peer response tasks involving different types of writing assignments. Further, future research may examine the complex web of factors which may influence the formation of learner motives. Peer response provides opportunities for learning in language-related and disciplinary learning contexts (Finkenstaedt-Quinn et al., 2024; Schillings, et al., 2021). Continued research will deepen our understanding of how students interact and negotiate meaning during peer response, why students focus on certain issues or adopt certain stances in their interaction, and how peer interaction and feedback promote student learning and development.

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