

A Study on Peer Collaboration and Its Effects in Teaching Writing to English Majors at a University in Hanoi

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ABSTRACT: This research examines how peer collaboration impacts the writing proficiency of English majors at a university in Hanoi. Using an experimental approach, 112 students were divided into experimental and control groups with the former engaged in peer collaboration activities over 8 weeks, such as collaborative writing, group discussions, and joint projects. Quantitative results showed significant improvement in the experimental group's writing scores, with a mean difference of 0.94 ($t = 15.24$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative data from classroom observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups revealed that students gained more confidence, experienced less writing anxiety, and found specific activities effective in enhancing their writing. Additionally, students reported improved ability to organize ideas, which are crucial challenges in writing. They also highlighted joint outlining, peer feedback and group discussions as particularly beneficial in refining their writing structure. The study concludes that peer collaboration is an effective method for improving writing skills among English majors. The results suggest incorporating structured collaborative activities in language curricula for better learning outcomes. Future studies should explore peer collaboration's long-term effects on other genres or academic disciplines.

KEYWORDS: Peer Collaboration, Writing Proficiency, Group Discussions, Collaborative writing, Joint Projects

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

Writing skills are essential in language learning, contributing significantly to learners' overall proficiency and communicative competence. As a key aspect of human communication, it allows learners to express ideas, develop structured arguments, and participate in academic and professional discussions (Hyland, 2003). Additionally, writing fosters reflection and revision, deepening understanding and improving the ability to convey accurate and nuanced meanings.

Consistently writing helps learners express ideas clearly and coherently, which is crucial for developing writing fluency and overall language proficiency (Hyland, 2003). Writing fluency is a key component of language proficiency, as it enables learners to communicate thoughts effectively and with greater ease. Moreover, writing involves critical thinking, organizational skills, and the ability to revise, which are essential for effective learning (Raimes, 1983). Through writing activities, learners can practice structuring their ideas, receive feedback, and better communicate complex information. Writing is also closely linked to other language skills, such as reading and speaking (Harmer, 2007). For instance, writing tasks often require learners to engage with reading materials, reinforcing comprehension, while discussing or presenting written ideas strengthens spoken communication, creating a more integrated language learning experience.

In practical settings like workplaces, academic assignments, and personal expression, strong writing skills are indispensable (Hyland, 2003). This real-world applicability encourages students to prioritize improving their writing. Developing effective writing not only cultivates critical thinking, organizational abilities, and clarity, but also supports the integration of other language skills. Furthermore, writing fosters self-confidence, promotes cultural awareness, and significantly contributes to successful language acquisition. Consequently, it stands as a fundamental component of comprehensive language development, equipping learners with crucial tools for diverse communicative scenarios.

Peer collaboration, a teaching method where students work together on their common academic goals, proves highly effective for enhancing writing abilities. This approach capitalizes on the social aspect of learning, allowing students to benefit from each other's knowledge, writing skills, and diverse perspectives. By participating in collaborative writing activities, students actively engage in drafting, revising, and providing feedback, fostering a supportive environment that improves their ability to produce clear, organized, and effective written work.

Benefits of peer collaboration

One of the key benefits of peer collaboration is the establishment of a supportive learning atmosphere. Working as a team lessens

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the pressure of flawless performance and encourages risk-taking, which is vital for developing fluency. In fact, peer feedback is often more readily accepted than teacher feedback, as it comes from someone who understands the learner's challenges. As Donato (2000) pointed out, "collaborative dialogue enhances learners' ability to negotiate meaning," improving their language comprehension. Not only does it reduce anxiety, making the learning process less intimidating, peer collaboration significantly boosts academic skills, especially writing. As Vygotsky (1978) suggested, "learning is a social process," and by sharing ideas and learning from each other, students actively engage in drafting, revising, and providing feedback. This interaction exposes them to diverse writing styles and improving their own skills. In short, collaborative learning reduces isolation and increases motivation, while also promoting critical thinking as students evaluate and reflect on peer feedback. This process strengthens not only writing but also communication, problem-solving, and teamwork abilities.

Types of peer collaboration activities

Implementing peer collaboration in writing requires strategic activities, including but not limited to peer review, with rubrics, which cultivates critical analysis, collaborative writing projects, like joint essays, which enhance teamwork, group brainstorming which stimulates idea generation, collaborative editing which refines grammatical accuracy, and discussion throughout the learning process in which participants share their thoughts in depth. Donato (2000) added that "collaborative dialogue enhances learners' ability to negotiate meaning," thus enriching the writing process. Furthermore, as Hyland (2003) stated, "collaboration offers students the chance to engage with the writing process more deeply, as they can provide support to one another," highlighting the supportive nature of collaborative writing.

Challenges and considerations

In spite of its benefits, peer collaboration in teaching writing skills also involves challenges. One is varying student proficiency, which requires careful group formation and clear guidelines. As Liu and Hansen (2002) noted, "peer response provides a valuable opportunity for students to learn from each other." Teachers must also train students in giving constructive feedback and manage time and resources effectively so as to maximize the benefits of peer collaboration.

In summary, collaborative learning is a highly effective method for improving university English majors' writing. It fosters a positive and encouraging atmosphere, encourages active participation, and offers real-world writing experiences. By strategically designing and implementing collaborative writing tasks, teachers can substantially help improve their students' writing proficiency.

1.2 Research problems

Writing is a key aspect of language proficiency and is vital for students' academic and professional achievements. Effective teaching methods are crucial for enhancing the skill, especially for English majors who frequently encounter various difficulties in mastering expressing themselves in the written form. To address this, and improve students' writing proficiency, teachers must prioritize effective teaching strategies for multiple reasons.

Addressing Writing Anxiety and Skill Gaps

English majors frequently face challenges like writing anxiety, and limited experience with different writing styles. These obstacles can prevent them from fully engaging in writing assignments. Implementing effective teaching techniques can help create a supportive, low-stress environment where students feel encouraged to write without the fear of judgment. Methods such as freewriting, peer reviews, and structured writing exercises are effective in alleviating anxiety and boosting students' confidence (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Improving Clarity and Accuracy

Clarity and accuracy are fundamental to writing success. Clarity refers to the ability to present ideas in a clear and logical manner, while precision focuses on the careful use of grammar, and vocabulary. Teaching strategies should address both of these areas to ensure holistic language development (Williams & Bizup, 2017). Techniques like process writing and task analysis encourage students to engage in purposeful writing exercises that promote both clarity and accuracy, helping them develop their skills in context-driven tasks (Swales, 1990).

Encouraging Active Participation and Ongoing Revision

Active participation and continual revision are crucial to effective writing development. Teaching strategies should promote an interactive learning atmosphere where students collaborate with peers and instructors. Peer feedback, for example, enables students to learn from one another, receive constructive feedback in real time, and practice revising their work in a supportive environment (Storch, 2013). Methods such as group editing sessions, and peer review groups can significantly improve writing proficiency (Elbow, 1973).

Supporting Continuous Growth Through Feedback

Ongoing improvement is vital for mastering writing skills. Teaching strategies should incorporate regular assessments and feedback to track students' progress and highlight areas for development (Sommers, 1982). Formative assessments, like draft evaluations and portfolio reviews, combined with constructive feedback, allow students to reflect on their work and make necessary adjustments (Bean, 2011). In conclusion, the need for effective teaching strategies to improve writing skills is evident in addressing writing anxiety and skill gaps, improving clarity and accuracy, providing authentic language practice, encouraging active participation, and

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fostering continuous improvement. By utilizing these strategies, teachers can significantly better their students' writing abilities.

1.3 Research objectives

The primary aim of this research is to evaluate how peer collaboration impacts the development of writing skills. It seeks to understand whether collaborative learning methods help improve aspects such as clarity, accuracy, and overall writing competence. By exploring the effectiveness of peer collaboration, the study aims to assess if this approach can effectively replace or enhance traditional writing teaching methods.

The secondary goal of the research is to identify the specific peer collaboration activities and strategies that lead to the most significant improvements in writing proficiency. The research will explore various collaborative techniques, such as peer editing, group discussion, group writing activities, and peer feedback sessions. By identifying the most effective strategies, the study aims to provide practical recommendations for teachers on how to incorporate peer collaboration effectively into their writing teaching practices.

1.4 Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions.

1.4.1. To what extent does peer collaboration improve the writing proficiency of English majors as measured by standardized writing tests?

1.4.2. What specific peer collaboration activities are most effective in improving writing skills?

The first research question aims to investigate the impact of peer collaboration on English majors' writing skills. It seeks to determine whether working with peers results in noticeable improvements in areas like clarity, accuracy, and overall writing competence. By examining this impact, the study will evaluate whether peer collaboration is a more effective method for enhancing writing skills than traditional approaches.

The second research question seeks to identify which specific peer collaboration techniques yield the greatest benefits for improving writing abilities. It intends to analyze activities such as peer editing, group discussions, brainstorming, and peer feedback sessions to assess their effectiveness. The goal is to identify the most beneficial activities for enhancing writing proficiency, offering practical insights for educators on how to refine their teaching methods.

1.5. Significance of the study

This research holds significant potential to enhance our understanding of how peer collaboration impacts the development of writing skills among English majors. The findings will have substantial implications for both writing teaching and collaborative learning strategies.

A primary objective of this research is to guide and enhance educational practices. Specifically, it seeks to equip educators with evidence-based strategies for integrating peer collaboration techniques into their writing instruction. By identifying which collaborative activities most effectively improve writing skills, teachers can tailor their instructional approaches to better meet the diverse needs of their students. This will foster more interactive and student-centered classrooms, where writing lessons are not only engaging but also significantly contribute to improving writing proficiency and encouraging active student participation. Furthermore, this study aims to demonstrate the direct correlation between effective peer collaboration strategies and improved writing proficiency. By pinpointing the most successful collaborative techniques, the research will provide teachers with concrete methods for enhancing students' writing abilities. Strong writing skills are fundamental for academic achievement, professional development, and social integration. The study might also reveal that peer collaboration boosts students' motivation, confidence, and overall engagement in writing tasks, thereby creating a more positive and enriching learning environment.

Curriculum developers will benefit from this research by gaining practical insights on how to design writing programs that effectively utilize peer collaboration, thereby prioritizing writing skills development. Furthermore, policymakers can use the study's evidence to promote and support the implementation of collaborative learning strategies in writing teaching across educational institutions.

Finally, this research will lay the groundwork for future studies exploring the multifaceted aspects of peer collaboration in the realm of writing. It will open up new avenues for investigating the impact of collaborative learning on diverse student populations, across various writing skills, and in terms of the long-term effects on writing development.

In conclusion, this study offers practical recommendations for educators and curriculum developers, supports evidence-based policymaking, and provides a foundation for further research into peer collaboration in teaching writing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study on the effectiveness of peer collaboration in improving writing skills among English majors is based on Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory. This theory emphasizes that cognitive growth is fundamentally a social process (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky argues that learners build knowledge via collaborative exchanges. In these settings, they share ideas, challenge perspectives, and collectively build understanding. Therefore, peer collaboration provides a vital social context for

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improving writing skills, as learners actively participate in knowledge creation.

Central to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). Peer collaboration provides an ideal context for learners to operate within their ZPD, as peers can offer support, feedback, and scaffolding that enable learners to perform tasks beyond their current abilities.

Johnson and Johnson's Collaborative Learning Theory (1989) underscores the advantages of structured group work, where students work together towards a common goal. The theory highlights several key elements essential for effective collaboration, including positive interdependence, individual accountability, and the development of social skills. Positive interdependence ensures that group members rely on each other for success and individual accountability to contribute. Additionally, the theory emphasizes the importance of fostering social skills, as working effectively with others requires communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Collaborative Learning Theory provides a useful framework for designing peer activities that encourage active participation, shared responsibility, and a collective effort to enhance learning outcomes.

The Community of Practice perspective, developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), views learning as a social process that occurs within a community of shared practice. In the context of writing, peer collaboration can establish such a group, where students learn from each other's experiences and progressively develop their writing expertise. This approach moves beyond the mere acquisition of isolated skills, embedding learning within the dynamic interactions of a group. Through collective practice, students share feedback, co-construct knowledge, and contribute to each other's learning, fostering an enriching environment where they collectively enhance their understanding and abilities in writing."

Empirical research consistently underscores the positive effects of peer collaboration on the clarity and accuracy of writing. Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) explored peer revision and found that students participating in collaborative feedback sessions showed a significant improvement in their awareness of the audience, leading to more precise language and fewer ambiguities. Similarly, Swain and Lapkin (2001), in their study on collaborative writing tasks and "Language- Related Episodes" (LREs), discovered that students' discussions of meaning during peer interactions directly enhanced the clarity of their written work. Additionally, Rollinson (2005) focused on peer feedback and error correction, demonstrating that collaborative revision processes significantly improved grammatical accuracy, with a reduction in syntactic errors and better sentence structure. Lundstrom and Baker (2009) also found that collaborative writing projects contributed to a clearer logical flow and more cohesive organization in students' writing, as they actively worked with peers to negotiate meaning and structure. Together, these studies provide strong evidence that peer collaboration not only creates a supportive learning environment but also leads to tangible improvements in writing clarity and accuracy.

In summary, this research is based on Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, Sociocultural Theory, Collaborative Learning Theory, and the Community of Practice perspective. These theories collectively highlight the significance of social interaction, and collaboration in language learning. Through examining the impact of peer collaboration, this study seeks to deepen the understanding of how collaborative activities can improve writing skills among English majors.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Constructivism in Peer Collaboration for Writing

Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is highly effective when students work "in collaboration with more capable peers". In the context of writing, this means that students benefit greatly from working with others who are slightly more advanced in their writing skills. Through peer collaboration, students can receive guidance, feedback, and support that help them develop their writing abilities more effectively. The interaction between students allows them to move beyond their current capabilities and grow as writers, as they gain insight from their peers' perspectives and expertise.

In addition to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, constructivist theories also offer valuable insights into the role of peer collaboration in writing. Constructivism posits that knowledge and skills are not passively received but actively constructed through social interactions. In the case of writing, this means that learners develop their writing abilities by engaging in collaborative, interactive processes with peers. According to Wells (1999), "Learning is the process of making meaning through participation in social practices, and it is best supported when learners are engaged in collaborative, interactive activities." By working together, students co-construct their understanding of writing, helping each other to refine their ideas and improve their writing techniques. This process of co-constructing knowledge encourages active engagement, critical thinking, and deeper learning.

Both Sociocultural Theory and constructivism highlight the power of peer collaboration in enhancing writing skills. Through social interaction and collaborative learning, students can improve their writing, learn from each other's experiences, and develop a deeper understanding of writing as a skill.

Definition of Peer Collaboration and its relevance in teaching writing to English Majors

Peer collaboration is an effective educational strategy that harnesses the social nature of learning to improve language acquisition. In language learning, it entails students engaging in various interactive activities that foster communication, critical thinking, and mutual assistance. In written communication, this approach involves students participating in activities that promote critical analysis, constructive feedback, and collaborative problem-solving. This method is especially beneficial as it offers learners chances to

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practice and refine their writing in practical, goal-oriented settings. A significant benefit of peer collaboration is the creation of a supportive writing community. This aligns with Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Peer Collaboration's relevance in Writing

In the context of writing, peer collaboration enables students to refine their writing. Through working together to analyze drafts, suggest revisions, and strengthen arguments, students develop a shared understanding of what constitutes good writing, thereby enhancing both the quality of their work and their ability to communicate effectively. This collaborative environment reduces anxiety, particularly for novice writers who may feel overwhelmed by the challenges of academic writing (Topping, 2005).

Peer Collaboration's Relevance for English Majors

For English majors, peer collaboration is particularly valuable. Writing proficiency is essential for success in both academic and professional spheres, and it requires both personal effort and constructive external feedback. English majors at university are often required to produce essays, and research papers that demonstrate their mastery of language and writing techniques. In this context, peer collaboration serves as a crucial tool for enhancing their writing. By engaging with their peers, students gain diverse perspectives and insights that can help them refine their work and address potential weaknesses.

As Smith (2018) emphasizes that writing proficiency is not just a requirement, but a tool for success in both academic and professional contexts. For English majors, besides helping improve general writing skills, such as clarity, structure, and argumentation, and strengthens communication, peer collaboration fosters deeper literary engagement by encouraging nuanced discussion, interpretation, and critique of complex texts. It enhances their ability to analyze and produce a written work on a sophisticated level, which is central to their field, in a certain allocated time.

In summary, peer collaboration is a powerful strategy for improving writing skills, especially for English majors. By working together, students can enhance their writing, deepen their understanding of writing practices, and better prepare for academic and professional success.

2.2. Main types of peer collaboration in writing

2.2.1. Brainstorming Sessions

Brainstorming is a crucial step that takes place early in the writing process. It allows students to collaborate in pairs or small groups to generate and share ideas before starting their writing. This helps organize thoughts, expand their vocabulary, and feel more confident about the writing task ahead. As Leki (2001) notes, brainstorming in a supportive environment can overcome initial writing barriers, making the process less stressful. This highlights how brainstorming provides students with a safety net to share and refine ideas before putting them down in writing.

2.2.2. Discussion-Based Prewriting

Discussion-based prewriting involves students talking about their writing topic before they begin drafting. These conversations help students clarify their thoughts and organize their arguments. For EFL students, it's a useful way to vocalise their ideas in English before writing. According to Swain (2000), discussion-based prewriting offers an opportunity for students to articulate their ideas orally, refining them before committing to written form. This highlights how verbal discussions help students refine and organize their thoughts, ultimately improving the clarity of their writing.

2.2.3. Outlining

Outlining is an organizational strategy where students plan the structure of their writing before drafting, helping to organize ideas logically and improve clarity. In peer collaboration, students can share their outlines to refine their ideas, organization, and flow. Outlining is particularly helpful, as it breaks down complex tasks into manageable parts. Flower and Hayes (1981) emphasize the importance of planning in the writing process, and outlining serves as a valuable tool for ensuring coherence and structure in writing.

2.2.4. Drafting

Drafting is when students start to put their planned ideas into written form. When paired with peer collaboration, this process becomes even more helpful. Students may exchange drafts and then offer suggestions to each other, such as together developing their arguments or supporting details. Research by Kitjaroonchai and Suppasetseree (2021) observed that peer interactions during collaborative drafting, when grounded in outlines, helped students stay focused, reinforce language use, and maintain logical flow.

2.2.5. Peer Review

Peer review is the process in which students evaluate each other's drafts. This is a more formalized form of peer collaboration where students, especially in EFL contexts, focus on both the content and language of their peer's work. According to Rollinson (2005), peer feedback encourages students to take more responsibility for their work by actively engaging with peer suggestions. Lundstrom and Baker (2009) also found that giving feedback benefits the reviewer's writing skills, not just the writer's.

2.2.6. Peer Editing

Peer editing often takes place where students focus on improving the mechanics of writing, such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Unlike peer review, which addresses broader elements like content and structure, peer editing concentrates on language accuracy, such as grammatical and

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syntactical features (Kepner, 1991). For EFL students, this process is particularly beneficial as it enhances their attention to detail and helps them develop a stronger command of the language. Additionally, according to Hyland and Hyland (2006), peer editing encourages students to become more reflective and autonomous in their writing as they learn to identify and address issues in both their own and their peers' writing.

In summary, each of the above-mentioned peer collaboration methods offers unique benefits for EFL English majors at university. The collaborative activities provide learners with opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, leading to better English proficiency, and more effective writing.

Comparative analysis of peer collaboration versus traditional methods

A comparative analysis of peer collaboration versus traditional writing instruction reveals distinct approaches to learning and skill development.

Structure and Authority

One of the most prominent differences between peer collaboration and traditional methods lies in the structure of authority within the learning environment. Peer collaboration fosters a learner-centered, interactive environment where students co-construct knowledge through dialogue, negotiation, and shared authorship. This approach aligns with Vygotskian sociocultural theory. Storch (2013) highlights that collaborative activities involve shared responsibility and joint decision-making throughout the learning process, leading to deeper engagement and enhanced learning outcomes. In contrast, traditional method is typically teacher-centered, focusing on individual performance and the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. While this method often emphasizes grammatical accuracy and structural coherence, particularly beneficial for novice writers who require foundational support, it may restrict learner autonomy and limit opportunities for interaction (Hyland, 2003).

Motivation and Engagement Motivation differs significantly between traditional and peer collaboration methods. Traditional instruction often relies on extrinsic motivators such as grades, teacher approval, and standardized assessments, which can encourage discipline and goal-oriented behavior but may not effectively foster intrinsic interest among learners. In contrast, peer collaboration provides an interactive learning environment with greater autonomy and relevance, resulting in higher engagement as students actively participate and recognize the value of their contributions within a group.

Additionally, peer collaboration helps reduce anxiety by building supportive peer networks, making the process more enjoyable and less isolating. Conversely, traditional classrooms, where students work individually and depend primarily on teacher feedback, can make learning more like a chore than a meaningful process. Research by Wigglesworth and Storch (2012) shows that collaborative learning environments help lower learners' affective barriers, making writing more engaging and productive.

Feedback and Error Correction

In traditional instructional settings, feedback is primarily delivered by the teacher in a formal and corrective manner, emphasizing accuracy. While this approach ensures consistent error identification and correction, it may inhibit students' willingness to take risks and experiment with their writing (Harmer, 2007). In contrast, peer collaboration fosters a more supportive and informal feedback environment where students receive immediate responses from their peers. This dynamic cultivates a collaborative atmosphere that enhances learner confidence and promotes iterative improvement (Topping, 2005; Gillies, 2016).

Peer-generated feedback offers diverse perspectives and encourages critical self-reflection, thereby improving students' evaluative and revision skills. However, such feedback may lack the depth and reliability of teacher input. Ferris (2003) observes that although teacher feedback tends to be authoritative and explicit, it often lacks the immediacy and dialogic engagement characteristic of peer interactions.

Writing Skill Development and Outcomes

Traditional and peer collaboration methods each contribute uniquely to writing development. Peer collaboration has been associated with improvements in higher-order writing skills, such as idea development, organization, and sensitivity to audience, as students negotiate meaning and co-construct texts in real-time. Li and Kim (2016), for example, found that collaborative writing tasks enhance students' coherence and content generation by promoting shared responsibility and interactive problem-solving. Conversely, traditional classrooms, typically characterized by teacher-led feedback and structured exercises, fosters grammatical accuracy and syntactic control. Integrating both traditional instruction and peer collaboration can provide a comprehensive approach to writing development, balancing the acquisition of linguistic accuracy with the cultivation of advanced writing competencies.

To conclude, traditional and peer collaboration methods each offer unique benefits in writing instruction. Traditional approaches provide structure and focus on linguistic accuracy, while peer collaboration fosters learner autonomy, motivation, and higher-order skills. Combining both methods can create a balanced and effective learning environment that supports comprehensive writing development.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study utilizes a quasi-experimental design to explore how peer collaboration impacts the writing proficiency of English-major students. This design is selected for its feasibility in educational contexts, allowing the comparison between an intervention group

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and a control group without randomization. By doing so, the study can assess potential causal effects while maintaining the authenticity of the classroom environment.

3.2. Participants

The study includes 112 English-major students from English writing courses at Dai Nam University, divided into two groups. The experimental group comprises 50 students engaged in peer collaboration activities, while the control group consists of 62 students who received traditional language teaching methods. Both groups were matched in demographic factors, language proficiency, and educational background to ensure comparability.

3.3. Intervention

The experimental group participates in structured peer collaboration activities aimed at improving writing skills. These activities include peer tutoring, group brainstorming, joint drafting, and peer feedback sessions. The intervention spans an 8-week period, with regular sessions incorporated into the existing curriculum. Each session targets specific aspects of writing proficiency, such as idea development, organization, grammar accuracy, and coherence.

3.4. Data collection

Quantitative data are collected through pre- and post-tests, surveys, and tracking the frequency and duration of writing activities. Both the experimental and control groups complete standardized writing assessments before and after the study to evaluate various writing aspects including coherence and cohesion, grammar accuracy, and overall quality. Surveys are used to collect students' self-evaluations of their writing proficiency and confidence before and after the intervention. Additionally, the frequency and length of writing activities during peer collaboration sessions are documented to measure participants' engagement in writing practice.

3.5. Data analysis

The collected data are analyzed using statistical techniques to evaluate the effect of peer collaboration on writing proficiency. Descriptive statistics are utilised to present summaries of the pre- and post-test results as well as survey responses. Within-group differences between pre- and post-test scores are evaluated using paired samples t-tests, while independent samples t-tests compared outcomes between the experimental and control groups. The analysis primarily aims to identify statistically significant improvements in writing skills among the experimental group compared to the control group. Additionally, survey data are analysed to identify patterns and assess changes in students' self-perceived writing confidence and competence.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Quantitative Findings

A paired samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the effect of peer collaboration on the writing proficiency of English major students. This statistical test is appropriate when comparing the means of two related groups, in this case, the same students' writing scores before and after participating in the peer collaboration intervention. The goal was to determine whether the observed changes in performance were statistically significant and reflective of the intervention's impact.

The analysis revealed a mean difference of 0.94 between the post-test and pre-test scores, indicating that, on average, students improved their writing scores by nearly one point after engaging in peer collaboration. This positive mean difference suggests that the intervention contributed to measurable gains in writing ability among the participants.

The standard deviation of the difference scores was 0.436, and the standard error was 0.062, reflecting moderate variability in student responses and a high level of precision in the mean estimate. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranged from 0.819 to 1.061, providing further statistical support for the improvement. Since this interval does not include zero, we can be confident that the observed mean difference is not due to chance.

A t-statistic of 15.24 with 49 degrees of freedom was obtained, and the resulting p-value was less than 0.001, which is well below the standard alpha level of 0.05. This strong statistical significance confirms the effectiveness of the peer collaboration intervention. In summary, the results demonstrate that peer collaboration had a substantial and positive effect on the writing performance of English major students. The significant increase in post-test scores supports the use of collaborative learning strategies as an effective pedagogical approach in the context of EFL writing instruction.

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Table 1: Paired Samples t-test

		Paired differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std.Dev	Std.Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Post-test - Pre-test	0.94	0.436	0.062	0.819	1.061	15.24	49	.000

To assess the appropriate statistical test for comparing student performance gains, a Levene's test was initially performed to check for the homogeneity of variances of gain scores between students who participated in peer collaboration activities and those who received traditional methods. The test result, with a p-value of 0.054, exceeded the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference in the variability of gain scores between the two groups, thereby satisfying the assumption of equal variances. Consequently, it was deemed appropriate to proceed with the standard Student's independent samples t-test to compare the average gain scores.

The subsequent independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in performance improvement between the two groups. The treated group achieved a significantly higher mean gain score ($M = 0.94$, $SD = 0.44$) compared to the control group ($M = 0.62$, $SD = 0.32$). This difference was statistically significant, as indicated by a t-statistic of $t(108) = 4.33$ and a p-value of less than 0.001 ($p < .001$). These results strongly suggest that the peer collaborative activities had a substantial and statistically significant positive impact on student performance, leading to a greater improvement in the students who participated in the collaborative activities.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test

Group	Mean Gain Score	Standard Deviation	Sample Size
Treated (Group A)	0.94	0.44	50
Control (Group B)	0.62	0.32	63
Test statistics:			
• $t(108) = 4.33$			
• $p = 0.000034$ ($p < .001$)			

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The qualitative phase of this study aimed to investigate which peer collaboration activities most effectively enhanced the academic writing skills of English majors. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, student surveys, and focus group discussions. The analysis focused on identifying recurring themes in students' experiences and perceptions regarding the peer collaboration approach.

Participants described pre-writing activities such as discussion and outlining as key stages in their writing process. After a quick brainstorming that helped them generate ideas, pair or group discussion allow learners to share their thoughts, explore a wider range of new perspectives towards the assigned writing topic, and ease the difficulty of getting started. Students appreciated the opportunity to "bounce ideas off each other" and felt more confident developing content as a group. One student noted, "Discussing with my group helped me see the topic from angles I hadn't considered before. It was easier to start writing once we had shared ideas." Despite the drawbacks such as unequal participation or the tendency for discussions to go off-topic which might occur, outlining followed naturally, serving as a tool to organize ideas and clarifying the structure of the writing plan. As one student revealed, "the outline gave us a clear structure, made us stay focused and made it easier to follow." Another learner described outlining with peer as 'a roadmap - it made me feel more confident when it was time to write'.

Among the numerous activities implemented, peer review sessions proved particularly beneficial. Students found exchanging drafts and giving feedback to their peers helped sharpen their critical thinking and editing skills. Furthermore, providing feedback prompted them to reflect more profoundly on their own writing. As one student noted, "When I read my classmate's essay and gave feedback, I noticed things that I did wrong in my own work too. It made me more aware of structure and coherence in writing." This reciprocal process contributed not only to skill development but also to a greater sense of autonomy and responsibility in learning. Collaborative writing tasks, such as editing the composition in pairs or small groups, were also well-received. These assignments fostered a sense of shared ownership and encouraged active discussion about content, language use, and organization. Students reported that this interactive process improved their ability to build logical arguments, maintain coherence, and better accuracy. According to one participant, "Writing together helped me see how to organize ideas better. We had to agree on what to say and

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how to say it. And this made us think more about the logic of the writing.” Another student noted, “Peer editing was a great time for me, as my group showed me the mistakes in language use that I made without my awareness.”

In addition to academic benefits, students acknowledged the significant social and motivational advantages of peer collaboration. Working in close proximity with peers created a sense of community and reduced feelings of isolation often associated with writing tasks. The group dynamic facilitated mutual encouragement, which many participants found motivating. A student shared, “When I saw how much effort my peers put into their work, I felt more motivated to do my best too. We supported each other and celebrated improvements.”

A prominent theme that emerged was the increase in students’ confidence and reduction in writing-related anxiety. Many participants indicated that collaborating with peers alleviated the stress commonly associated with the demands of academic writing. The informal and supportive nature of peer interaction created a friendlier environment, thereby encouraging students to express their ideas via their language proficiency. As one student remarked, “I used to worry a lot about how to write a perfect composition the first time, but working with peers made me realize that writing is a process. Their suggestions helped me improve without feeling embarrassed.” This sentiment highlights the psychological benefits derived from a low-stakes, peer-supported environment.

Finally, participants reflected positively on the integration of peer collaboration into their writing, especially in comparison to more traditional, lecture-based methods. They viewed collaborative activities as more interactive, enjoyable, and conducive to long-term improvement. The majority expressed a desire for more peer-based writing opportunities throughout their coursework.

In conclusion, the qualitative findings highlight the effectiveness of peer collaboration in developing the writing proficiency among English majors. The increased confidence, diminished anxiety, constructive feedback, enhanced critical reflection, and stronger engagement all contributed to improved writing outcomes. These results suggest that peer collaboration is a valuable pedagogical tool that can complement traditional methods, particularly in improving writing skills and learner autonomy.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Discussion

The findings from this study provide substantial evidence that peer collaboration significantly enhances the writing proficiency of English majors. Quantitative data showed remarkable improvements in post-test writing scores, indicating that structured peer-based activities had a measurable effect on students’ academic writing performance. These results were further supported by qualitative insights, which shed light on the mechanisms that contributed to this progress.

One prominent identified benefit was the increase in students’ writing confidence and reduction of anxiety. Participants reported feeling more comfortable engaging with writing tasks when they were supported by classmates in a non-judgmental environment. This supportive atmosphere allowed them to take creative risks, revise drafts more openly, and develop a more positive attitude toward writing. These findings align with MacIntyre and Gardner’s (1991) research on affective factors in language learning, which emphasizes the importance of lowering anxiety to support performance.

Pre-writing collaboration, particularly group discussion and outlining, was frequently cited as valuable. Students noted that working together helped them clarify their ideas and plan their writing more effectively. This collaborative planning promoted logical organization and thematic coherence, in line with the cognitive model of the writing process described by Flower and Hayes (1981), which highlights the importance of planning in producing effective written work.

Peer review emerged as another key component. By exchanging feedback, students became more aware of audience expectations and developed their critical thinking and editing skills. Many participants remarked that both giving and receiving feedback helped them understand more about academic writing conventions and improved their ability to revise. These findings reflect the benefits of peer assessment practices described by Liu and Carless (2006), who argue that peer feedback fosters metacognitive development and learner autonomy.

Collaborative writing tasks, such as peer-editing essays or compositions, were also reported to better students’ writing fluency and cohesion. These interactions required negotiation of meaning, idea refinement, and attention to clarity, especially learner awareness to accuracy - all skills central to effective writing. Such outcomes align with Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory, which emphasizes learning through interaction and shared problem-solving.

In addition to academic gains, students experienced increased motivation, a stronger sense of community, and greater engagement with the writing process. Overall, the findings suggest that peer collaboration not only improves writing proficiency but also supports students’ learning process emotionally and socially, making it a valuable component in teaching writing skills to EFL learners majoring in English.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study presents strong evidence that peer collaboration is an effective strategy for enhancing the writing skills of English majors at university. The quantitative data demonstrated notable improvements in writing performance, while qualitative findings offered deeper insights into the collaborative processes that supported these outcomes. Key factors contributing to the success of the intervention included but is not limited to group discussion, joint outlining, peer review and editing, pushing the

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students' boundaries and exposing them to diverse writing styles, thereby increasing their motivation and boosting their confidence through group accountability, as well as helping improve learner autonomy in the course of studying.

The results suggest that integrating peer collaboration into writing instruction can substantially improve students' writing abilities and enrich their overall learning experience. Structured collaborative writing activities not only promote critical thinking and revision strategies but also help students develop a clearer understanding of purpose, accuracy and coherence in their writing. Teachers and instructors are encouraged to incorporate such collaborative practices into their curricula to foster more effective and engaging writing lessons. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of peer collaboration in instructing learners to improve their bandscore in a specific testing system, or examine its long-term impact on writing proficiency and explore its effectiveness across different genres, and academic disciplines.

Overall, this study underscores the transformative potential of peer collaboration in teaching writing skills, offering a pathway to more dynamic, reflective, and student-centered learning environments that support both linguistic competence and personal growth.

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