論文の内容の要旨

論文題目　**A Study on the Effects of Japanese University Students'
Peer Review Activities on Their Learner Communities, Autonomy,
and EFL Writing Learning**
（日本人大学生のピア・レヴュー活動が彼らの学習者コミュニティ、自律
学習、及び英語ライティング学習に与える影響に関する考察）

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　　　Even under the most ideal circumstances, teaching writing can be a daunting challenge for university teachers. Take into consideration the added factor of working with Japanese university students in EFL writing classes. As one might expect, supplementary skills and special considerations may be needed to help facilitate this process of teaching writing in a Japanese EFL university classroom. Some of these considerations include autonomous learning, peer review, varying language levels and group dynamics among the students in any given class. The most critical element among these concerns is perhaps autonomous learning, whereby students learn independently and manage all aspects of their learning by themselves (Dickinson, 1987).

　　　Applying these concerns in a broader academic context necessitates a closer examination of theoretical concepts in three distinct EFL (English as a foreign language) fields—writing learning, autonomous learning and learners' community.　From this theoretical base, this study was developed for the purpose of investigating peer review in Japanese universities' EFL writing classes and determining how it affected students' EFL writing learning as well as the learners' community within the classroom. The research questions forming the basis of this study are as follows: (1) How does the activity of peer review affect how students build their relationships with each other; or in other words, how their learners' community is formed?; (2) how does the type of students' community affect how they become or do not become autonomous in learning EFL writing?; and (3) if students become autonomous in learning EFL writing, what kind of impact does it have on their actual writing performances? Furthermore, this study also examined the nature and scope of differences between low- (Group A) and high-level (Group B) Japanese university students.

　　　The methodology of this study was applied to Japanese EFL writing classes in two different

Japanese universities. First, students in EFL writing classes were asked to write an essay and give feedback to each other by using a Peer-Editing Sheet. Secondly, after receiving feedback, they revised their essays accordingly. Then, they assessed other students' revised essays and in the final step submitted their essays along with the Peer-Editing Sheet and Peer-Assessment Sheet. Every time students wrote an essay, they followed this sequence of activities. During the course of a semester or a year, this sequence was adopted a total of seven times because they wrote seven essays. At the end of a semester or a year, students were asked to answer a questionnaire about their writing lesson. They were also invited to have an interview afterward with this researcher to elaborate on their questionnaire answers or any aspects of the writing sequence. Data was collected mainly from the three following sources: students' Peer-Editing Sheets, questionnaires and interview comments.

The data analysis revealed the following conclusions:

(1) The activity of peer review helped to form a unique type of learning community in each class. Lower proficiency level students (Group A students) tended to be excluded from "active and meaningful negotiations" and were subsequently "marginalized" into a peripheral section of the learning community. Oftentimes it also became a place for an "exchange of their inferior feelings" in the Group A students' writing class. Admittedly, this activity also reinforced the notion that lower level students are poor at English and eventually resulted in lower motivation. Conversely, among higher level English proficiency students, the results indicated there was very little purpose in conducting peer review due to a variety of reasons including, for example, the peer review itself was not a worthwhile activity, or they had a tendency to neglect other students' learning opportunities because they were influenced by their own past learning experiences.

In contrast, among the pre-advanced and advanced Group B writing classes, the activity of peer review basically helped to create the type of community where students were making comparisons with each other, to the point where they questioned their own academic ability, feeling that they might be considered inferior. Between the Group B pre-advanced and advanced classes, there was, however, a slight difference in the intensity of these feelings. In the pre-advanced class, the students were able to appreciate the good points of others' essays, thereby becoming much more concerned about the differences between their own and other superior students' writing performances. Conversely, the advanced class students focused on more "technical" aspects of writing: for example, academic writing, practical writing, techniques for writing a paper, etc.; or in other words, they were not as concerned about the differences between their own and other students' writing performances. These factors led to the following observation: Differences in the students' English proficiency level tend to create distinctly different types of learners' communities. In general, the higher students' English proficiency levels can be defined as "*mentally* other-regulated". Exceptionally high level students, however, tend to be "self-sufficient" and often do not need feedback from other students. Thus, the students who are good at English, but recognize that they still have some weaknesses in writing, are likely to be more conscientious

about giving feedback and can develop more self-awareness within their learners' community, rather than as an independent learner;

(2) Differences in the level of students' English proficiency helped to create different types of learners' communities, which in turn affected their autonomous learning. Some of the Group A students were observed to be eagerly engaged in one form of autonomous learning by, for example, consulting a dictionary. At the same time, they were not observed engaging in other forms of autonomous learning. One of the factors adversely affecting peer review among Group A students could be the fact that this activity was beyond their zone of proximal development (ZPD); or they were not competent enough in their language skills to make others' feedback meaningful for their learning. Going beyond this explanation, these students may have been regulated by others' feedback only *materially,* because they oftentimes adopted other students' feedback literally without doubting its correctness at all. Thus, their peer review behavior can be viewed as "*materially* other-regulated."

The behavior in Group B students' EFL writing class of making comparisons with other students while conducting peer review caused a certain amount of tension in their human relationships. At the same time this behavior was actually beneficial for autonomous EFL writing learning. It enabled students, for example, to become more aware of their own drawbacks locally or globally, become more careful about the logical connections or organization of their essays, and become more motivated to write essays which are easier for others to read, etc. The behavior of comparing one's own and others' writing is essentially a "*mentally* other-regulated" action, because this action drives learners to develop the mental attitude to assess their own writing performances in relation to others'. The Group B students, particularly those in the pre-advanced class, were considered to be in the first stages of this process. During the course of the semester, however, their writing attitudes or behavior had shifted, at first from the "mentally other-regulated" stage and then gradually moving up to the "self-regulated" stage, where they were able to recognize their own weaknesses and become more careful about repeating them. Thus, the "mentally other-regulated" stage is thought to be a crucial requirement for becoming "self-regulated." On the other hand, the Group B students in the advanced class who focused on more "technical" aspects of writing were already "self-regulated" or "autonomous" in learning EFL writing. Hence, the answer to the second research question is the type of learning community which can most facilitate students' autonomous learning is the one where many of the students are still in the "mentally other-regulated" stage. Thus the Group A students' and Group B advanced class students' communities cannot promote their autonomous learning very much, because the former students have not reached the "mentally other-regulated" stage and the latter have already passed this stage;

(3) Becoming an autonomous learner was observed to bring about the following positive effects for students' actual writing performance: detecting one's own weaknesses and then being more careful about repeating them, considering the organization of an essay and changing it radically if necessary, adding some words or phrases which can serve as a "guidepost" in order to make their essays easier to read and

understand, etc.

The findings from this study show that engaging in the action of "comparing," or being in the "mentally other-regulated" stage, is most effective for facilitating students' autonomous learning. This may lead to the following observation: "Mentally other-regulated" and "self-regulated" are actually closely linked to each other. This idea is in sharp contrast to the concept of autonomy, which has been traditionally and widely accepted in the West: that is, "self-regulated" is the ultimate goal and every learner should aim for this form of autonomous learning. In addition, developing students' sense of being "mentally other-regulated" to the fullest degree may be one of the best and most practical ways to facilitate Japanese students' autonomous EFL writing learning.

Finally, peer feedback, particularly among low level EFL students, revealed interesting findings about the classroom's substructure. The classroom's substructure consists of students' personal relationships and experiences in the classroom and allows them to "contextualize" classroom activities which they are engaged in based upon their relationships with other students in the class. This substructure also serves as a platform for their autonomous learning by forming a connection between their academic learning and their own personal needs. This connection is the first and most crucial step in successful autonomous learning. While some teachers may not recognize the value of the classroom substructure, actually, without it, any teaching method or classroom activity may not bring about a truly meaningful benefit for students' overall learning and education.