

國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士在職專班碩士論文

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同儕教導式重複閱讀法與國中生之英語口頭閱讀流暢度：

個案研究過程中的學習機會與挑戰

Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading with EFL Junior High School Students'

Oral Reading Fluency: A Case Study on Affordance and Challenges

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Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading with EFL Junior High School Students'

Oral Reading Fluency: A Case Study on Affordance and Challenges



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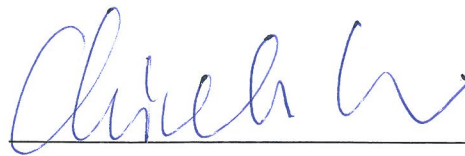
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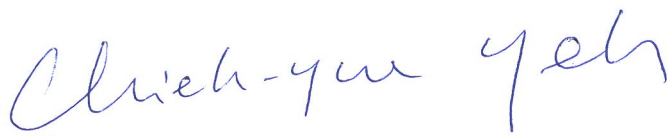
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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士在職專班

碩士論文提要

論文名稱：同儕教導式重複閱讀法與國中生之英語口頭閱讀流暢度：個案研究
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論文提要內容：

重複式閱讀法(repeated reading)最初在英語為母語的國家施行，藉由重複閱讀同一文章方式，達到認字自動化(automaticity)，用以提升閱讀的速度與理解度。多項實驗研究顯示，口語流暢度與閱讀能力有高度的正向相關，而重複式閱讀法能有效提升口語流暢度。此研究是為期十二週的同儕教導式閱讀教學法(peer-mediated repeated reading)運用於台灣北部一所國中英語課程中，參與者為二十八名八年級學生。以學校教科書內文章和學校採用的學習補充閱讀內容為學習教材。重複閱讀活動每週兩次，共二十四節活動。

此研究採個案研究法，選擇三組學習者作為觀察對象，以深入探討學習者於同儕教導式重複閱讀法中的學習過程，以及觀察探討關鍵事件(critical event)於學習的影響。資料蒐集包含質性資料：(1)課堂觀察記錄，(2)學生學習日誌，(3)四次個人訪談，以及(4)四次文章一分鐘口語閱讀正確字數(correct words read per minute)的量化資料。

根據三組個案研究得到的結果顯示，於國中英語課堂中實行同儕教導式閱

讀教學法，對口語流暢度產生的學習機會為：(1)因累積的練習影響與斷句運用而導致口語速度的增加。(2)口語閱讀準確度的增加。同儕提供的口語錯誤糾正，學習者自身對於正確度的自覺提升，以及自我學習狀態監測對正確度提升有正向影響。(3)因閱讀速度增加的學習成果或指導同儕提高自我信心而提升的英語學習動機。而在運用同儕教導式閱讀教學法於課堂活動，可能遭遇到的挑戰為：(1)同儕無法提供糾正性回饋，導致口語錯誤一再重複。(2)因欲增加口語速度或因重複的過程無聊，而未清楚地唸出英文字彙的發音，隨意帶過。(3)過度依賴同伴提供的立即口語回饋，以及標示的中文注音符號來念出不會的單字。最後，依據本研究結果，針對此三項挑戰提出建議。並基於此研究中同儕教導式重複閱讀法對於口語流暢度產生正向的增進效果和提供的學習機會，建議於國中英語課堂中採用此學習法，有助於增進國中生口語能力。



Abstract

This study was conducted to determine affordances and challenges pertaining to peer-mediated repeated reading (RR) as a regular classroom activity in junior high schools. Although RR has been widely used in L1 countries as a method to develop oral reading fluency, it has only been studied by Taiwanese researchers in the last decade. However, limited research has been conducted regarding the implementation of RR in junior high school English classrooms. Therefore, this qualitative study was conducted to obtain further understanding of the impact of RR regarding the improvement of oral reading fluency among junior high school students. Changes in oral reading performance among 28 participants from a junior high school in Northern Taiwan were observed over the course of a 12-week peer-mediated RR program; furthermore, the learning processes among all participants, which featured three focused dyads, and the critical events experienced along with the impact of these events, were observed. The collected data included classroom observation notes and videos, students' learning journals, four interviews, and quantitative oral reading rate data (correct words read per minute). The affordances of this method were determined as follows: (1) oral reading rates increased because of the effect of accumulated practice and more practice with sentence chunking; (2) oral reading accuracy was enhanced because participants were provided corrective feedback and developed a sense of accuracy; furthermore, some high achievers demonstrated an enhanced metacognitive ability; and (3) having a partner motivated the participants to learn and facilitated the development of a sense of self-competence during the RR sessions. The following challenges were also encountered: (1) repeated errors resulted from the lack of corrective

feedback from partners, (2) careless oral reading owing to the pursuit of a higher oral reading rate or the boredom arising from repetition, and (3) overreliance on corrective feedback from partners and the use of Mandarin phonetic symbols to read out unknown words. Overall, the findings of this study suggested that the peer-mediated RR method could be effectively applied as a regular classroom activity in junior high schools to enhance the oral reading fluency of students.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

In all types of standardized English proficiency tests, reading ability is always considered to be an important indication of an individual's language competence. Reading fluency is highly correlated to the reading comprehension, especially strong among the readers who are beginners (Jenkins, et al, 2003; Rupley, Willson, & Nichols, 1998; Spear-Swerling & Sternber, 1994). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) measured the fourth graders' oral reading on a large scale, and this study (Pinnell et al., 1995) found that these participants' oral reading fluency is a strong predictor of silent reading comprehension. Furthermore, oral reading fluency has long been used to test learners' reading competence or to diagnose the reading difficulty. Through the test of oral reading performance, several aspects are taken into consideration, such as speed, accuracy, and comprehension.

The training for better oral reading fluency can help learners become better readers (Samuels, 1979). When the learners' reading speed, accuracy and comprehension are enhanced, they are closer to the stage of 'automaticity (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974).' That means they can spend less time on decoding the meaning of the words one by one. Instead, they can devote more energy or processing time on the comprehension of articles.

In order to achieve the state of 'automaticity,' how to improve learners' oral reading fluency becomes an essential issue. In 2000, the National Reading Panel found that systematic, guided practice was the answer to increase oral reading

fluency. One way to provide guided practice is through repeated reading which was initially introduced by Samuels (1979) and Dahl (1974). Repeated reading literally means to have learners read out a passage several times until achieving a certain reading rate. With the increasing familiarity of an article, the reading speed, accuracy and comprehension of the material will increase.

During the repeated reading process, correction is important. Therrien (2004) noted that employing error correction in the reading fluency practice enhances reading comprehension. There are two types techniques of correction when repeated reading is employed in the classroom—teacher-student and student-student, also called peer-mediated repeated reading. It is widely acknowledged that when learners work together, their learning motivation is obviously promoted and the scaffolding is also provided. Most importantly, the chances of practice can be expected to increase and more feedbacks are provided by their peers in the classroom setting. These advantages are hardly realized when the teacher is the only one source of input and feedback. According to the study of Fuchs and Fuchs (1997), peer-mediated repeated reading (RR) can considerably increase learners' oral reading fluency and comprehension.

Repeated reading (RR) has been widely adopted as a way to foster beginners' oral reading fluency in L1 settings, and it has been demonstrated to be effective in improving the reading fluency and comprehension of learners with or without special needs (Homan, et al, 1993; Musti-Rao, 2006; Taguchi, et al, 2004; Yurick, et al, 2006). In Taiwan, there are a few thesis studies using repeated reading as a treatment to improve English learners' oral reading fluency and comprehension at elementary schools and a university (Fang, 2012; Hung, 2012; Liao, 2011; Lin, 2011; Tsai, 2012; Wang, 2009). Among the three most recent studies, Tsai (2012) found that an accumulated practice effect from repeated reading leads to the improvement

of reading accuracy, reading rate, and reading prosody. In Fang's study (2012), the repeated reading group outperformed the control group, especially with "phrasing and expression" and "pacing" abilities. Furthermore, Hung's study (2012) found that most of the fourth graders who received RR instruction gave positive evaluation on the influence of RR due to the progress of their English word recognition, oral reading fluency, and the increasing confidence and motivation in English picture book reading.

Although the results of these experiments all come to the conclusion that RR brings out positive effects on the reading fluency and should be applied in English classrooms, none of these research settings is a junior high school classroom. Up to now, no study has been done in Taiwan to focus on the process of how learners improve their oral reading fluency through repeated reading.

It is unfathomable that such a lack actually exists. Reading ability is emphasized as the main competence that should be fostered through junior high school English education in Taiwan given that the focused training in elementary school English classrooms tend to be listening and speaking. As the reading passage gradually lengthens in junior high school English textbooks, however, many students start to read laboriously word by word. The slow reading rate severely hinders them from learning from the reading materials in the textbooks and becomes one of the more salient problems in English learning. As many junior high school learners struggle with reading, the word number of the reading materials in the textbooks is still increasing and the sentence structures of them becomes more and more complex over time. What makes this situation worse is that in Taiwan, reading is the primary learning material in English classrooms. A lot of students give up learning English in junior high school because they encounter too much difficulty in reading the passages in the textbook or answering the items on the test papers. From

this period onwards, many of them will not be able to learn anything from the English textbook because the reading material will only become harder. Even worse, these junior high school students who give up learning English will also forget all the words they learned in elementary school. In other words, developing reading ability plays a critical role in the English education of Taiwanese junior high school. As a result, helping learners develop reading fluency becomes an essential issue. It is important to understand how repeated reading, one of the effective methods supported by previous studies, could be useful to these students. Through repeated reading, other students have been found to increase their reading rate gradually with their peers' assistance and increased opportunity of practicing.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to understand how exactly using peer-mediated RR in the junior high school as the main learning activity could impact on the beginners of English reading. More importantly, case study methods are adopted to further develop an understanding of the process of and experience how the peer-mediated RR activity is perceived by the learners.

Research Questions

Two research questions will be used to guide this study:

1. What are the processes of peer-mediated repeating reading like for three dyads of learners during a 12-week peer-mediated repeated reading program? What critical events do they experience?
2. Based on the process with the three dyads, what can be concluded about affordances and challenges of peer-mediated repeated reading, particularly for the development of oral reading fluency?

Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide a primary insight into the affordances and challenges when the peer-mediated RR is applied in the junior high school classroom. Furthermore, different from prior related quantitative studies in Taiwan, this study focuses on the learning processes of the learners to illustrate how oral reading fluency is improved through peer-mediated RR. The findings will provide a better understanding and insights of the implementation of this method for junior high school English teachers who would like to enhance students' oral reading fluency.





CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to present the literature related to the current study. The theoretical and literature background of oral reading fluency, repeated reading, and peer-mediated repeated reading is introduced respectively in the first three sections. The fourth section focuses on repeated reading research in L2 settings. At last, studies on repeated reading in Taiwan are discussed.

Oral Reading Fluency

Oral reading fluency is an essential part of reading competence. Archer et al. (2003) provide a clear measurable definition of oral reading fluency: accuracy of word recognition and reading speed. In fact, early in 1974, LaBerge & Samuels pointed out that reading fluency is highly correlated with reading proficiency because the more quickly and accurately the reader decode words, the more energy can be conserved for comprehension. Furthermore, they maintained that ‘automaticity’ is the key to build up reading ability. The automaticity theory is supported by many researchers. Meyer and Felton (1999) also suggested that fluency is “the ability to read connected text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading such as decoding (p. 284).” In order to achieve the state of “automaticity,” readers need a lot of deliberate practice. For instance, there are many examples of automatic activities performed in daily lives that require little consciousness, such as driving cars, swimming, or skiing. However, to make those activities an intuitive response requires considerable hours of cumulative

practice.

While teachers usually employ the prevalent silent reading method in the classroom to build up reading fluency to achieve the state of automaticity, the U. S. National Reading Panel (2001) found that reading fluency has more to do with the guided, practiced oral reading, rather with the extensive reading (ER) or sustained silent reading (SSR). Repeated reading is a promising guided oral reading method for learners. Moyer (1982) suggested that this practice is able to “facilitate general reading fluency for some unskilled readers, for normal readers given difficult texts, and in regular classroom instruction (p. 620).”

Repeated Reading

Repeated reading (RR) was first introduced by Samuels (1979) and Dahl (1974). Its concept is that the learners repeatedly read out a paragraph of an appropriate difficulty level until they achieve a required oral reading speed, that is, correct words read per minute. After the speed has been achieved, the readers can move on to another cycle of practice with more challenging materials.

Nowadays, a lot of research shows that the outcome of the assisted RR is more effective than non-assisted RR. Since Chomsky (1976) used the tape as a model for the learners to listen to and repeatedly read out the passage on it, different models of assisted RR have been created. The four main types are tape assisted reading (i.e., listening-while-reading assisted RR), choral reading, student-adult reading, and student-student reading, which is also called peer-mediated RR.

When the learners practice the tape assisted RR, they first listen to the audio source of an article three times, and then they read the text out loud by themselves. After this, they go back to listen to the taped reading again, and they can replay the part they cannot read well several times and repeated with the recording until they

can read the part fluently.

Another type of RR which also gives practice in oral reading is choral reading, sometimes called “unison reading.” As part of the classroom activity, teachers can also read to help set the pace and model the proper pronunciation.

Still another type of RR is student-adult reading. The student reads one-on-one with an adult or a more fluent, older reader. For instance, a seventh grader can be paired with a fluent ninth grader. The student can benefit from not only having a fluent model but also getting assistance and encouragement from the older reader. Furthermore, the more fluent reader can help with error correction. Apparently, it is preferable to have an error correction activity, so that the learner can avoid making the same errors repeatedly without awareness. Therrien (2004) noted that employing error correction in the reading fluency practice brings out better reading comprehension. There are two types of assisted RR that can offer error correction and feedback to the readers. One is student-teacher reading, and the other is student-student (peer-mediated) repeated reading.

However, in the common language classroom, there is only one teacher giving instructions, so learners usually have little time to get feedback from the teacher. To increase the opportunity of getting feedback and error correction, the latter model, peer-mediated RR would be more practical and feasible in the English classroom.

Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading

Peer-mediated strategies have been used by many researchers to deliver RR instruction (e.g., Fuchs et al., 2001; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005; Green, Alderman, & Liechty, 2004; Oddo et al., 2010; Staubitz, Cartledge, Yurick, & Lo, 2005; Yurick et al., 2006). The participants, six urban fifth-grade students, in the study of Staubitz et al. (2005) all read more fluently and with superior comprehension during the

peer-mediated RR phase of the study than they had during the sustained silent reading condition. Furthermore, Yurick et al.(2006) conducted three experiments to evaluate the effects of peer-mediated RR on the oral reading fluency and comprehension of learners. The results showed that the students who received peer-mediated RR instruction demonstrated a mean increase of 68 wpm over those students who adopted sustained silent reading.

The positive results, increased reading rate, accuracy and better comprehension, brought by peer-mediated RR is due to the immediate feedback and error corrections, the practice with a more competent reader, and, most importantly, partnership. During the oral reading practice, the proficient readers serve as good models. Rasiniski (2003) maintains that the more fluent reader is able to provide support and adjust the pace and volume to provide maximum assistance (p. 29).Moreover, the benefits gained are reciprocal because the more competent reader also get the confidence from helping his partner and become more motivated to read more.

In the study of Yurick et al. (2006), the partner took turns pointing out the following types of miscues: the omission, insertion, or substitution of words, the reader's self-corrections, and the incorrect or incomplete pronunciation of words. Moreover, in this study, when the researchers use peer dyads to provide feedback and error correction, a three step correction procedure is taught to the learners before the implementation of peer-mediated RR. The three steps are: "Stop and sound it out," "Say the group of words.", and "Say the group of three words fast." or "Say the group of words backward and forward." The exact phrasing and fixed procedure provide a clear framework for peer-mediated error correction.

While abundant research has been conducted to demonstrate the positive effects of RR in English L1 settings, an increasing number of studies on repeated reading implemented in ESL/ EFL settings also shows that RR could be a promising method

for building up L2 learners' reading fluency and comprehension.

L2 Research on Repeated Reading

Though the studies of RR in L2 is relative few comparing with the number of research conducted in L1, RR is getting more attention and being used as a English classroom activity.

Since 1997, Taguchi, Gorsuch, and their research colleagues have started to conducted a serious of experiential research to see if the Automaticity Theory also worked in the L2 settings because the relation between the improved reading fluency and reading comprehension was still not clear. After a series of studies, from ten-week RR program (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2002) to an extended 17-week RR treatment period with Japanese colleague students (Taguchi, Takayasu-Massa, Gorsuch, 2004) and with different group L2 learners — low-intermediate Vietnamese English learners (Gorsuch& Taguchi, 2008), the leading researcher found RR practice does increase L2 learners' reading speed and comprehension.

Among all of the L2 studies on repeated reading, there are only few studies conducted as qualitative studies. In the most recent case study, published in 2012, Taguchi et al. used diary entries to understand the effect of tape assisted RR on the oral reading fluency and comprehension of an advanced-level Japanese EFL reader. In this study, the researchers pointed out that the studies exploring what is actually happening while participants engage in RR are scarce in L2 settings, while most of the research has used quantitative approaches. In this in-depth case study, it was found that the decision on the number of repetitions should be based on reader's present level of fluency, instead of the suggested optimal number of times — that is, four repetitions, as suggested by O'Shea et al. (1985). Moreover, the study also found that the slow mean reading rate for this advanced-level reader's first reading

was associated with a rate for reading to learn (i.e., about 200 CWPM or less), even when the goal of the reading was not for learning, and the reader was not asked to take a follow-up test. This phenomenon could be confirmed by her reflection in several diary entries. The researchers suggested that the L2 readers usually read at a slower rate, comparing with L1 readers, because L2 advanced readers tend to constantly engaged in questioning semantically and syntactically ambiguous parts of the text in order to obtain a high-level of comprehension.

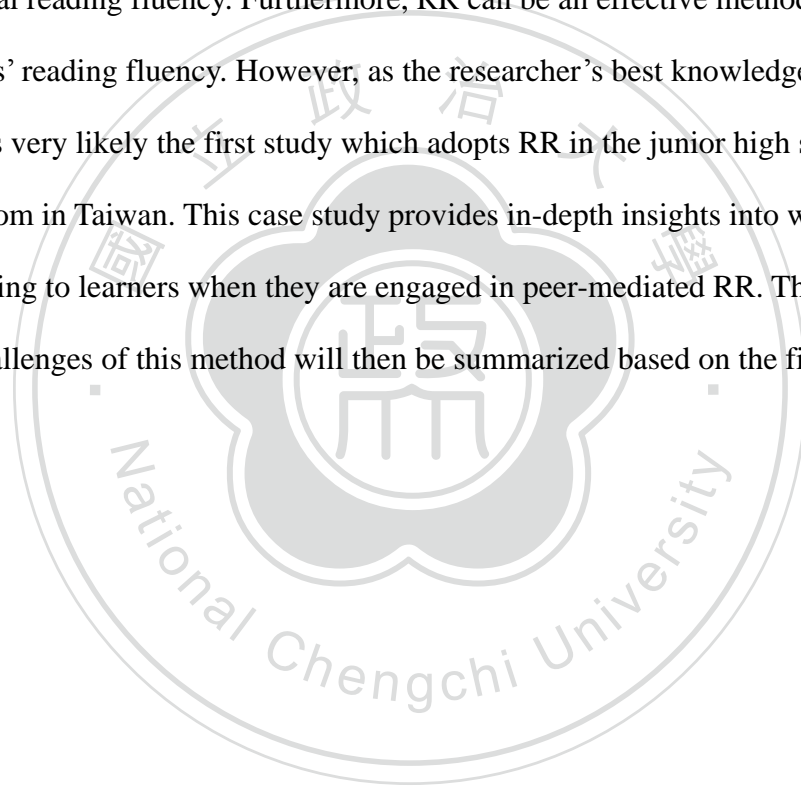
Studies on Repeated Reading in Taiwan

Repeated reading first appeared in the practice of Readers' Theater in Taiwan, and it was also applied in elementary school Chinese classroom (Hung, 2008; Peng, 2003; Wang, 2009). It was used as a method to help Taiwanese children's Chinese character recognition. Besides, RR was also implemented to teach students with special needs Chinese in elementary schools.

It is not until 2009 that some researchers (Chen, 2009; Hung, 2009) implemented a set of repeated-reading-based pedagogical and learning procedures to teach English in the school settings in Taiwan. The participants are elementary school students and college students respectively. Both of the studies focus on oral reading fluency and comprehension. Gradually, the research on repeated reading in elementary school English classroom has been increasing. For instance, Lin (2011) compared the effects of repeated reading and non-repeated reading on 59 fourth grader' oral reading rate and accuracy rate. Besides, Jan (2011) also compared the effects of extensive reading and repeated reading on EFL sixth graders' reading speed. Though findings of the studies show that the reading rate of the RR implemented classes did not outperform the classes which received non-repeated reading and extensive reading instructions respectively, Lin (2011) and Jan (2011)

still suggested that RR can be employed in English teaching because it still promoted students' reading speed and accuracy. This conclusion is similar to the suggestion of other research conducted in Taiwan, studying the impact of RR on different aspects, such as the effect on the oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, prosody, English word recognition, and reading speed (Fang, 2012; Hung, 2012; Liao, 2011; Tsai, 2012).

Based on the literature reviews, reading competence is strongly correlated with oral reading fluency. Furthermore, RR can be an effective method to enhance learners' reading fluency. However, as the researcher's best knowledge, this present study is very likely the first study which adopts RR in the junior high school classroom in Taiwan. This case study provides in-depth insights into what exactly is happening to learners when they are engaged in peer-mediated RR. The affordances and challenges of this method will then be summarized based on the findings.





CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The study employs the qualitative case study methods to obtain an inside look at the learning process and changes brought by peer-mediated RR through a close observation of three dyads. This chapter first introduces the context and participants, and then the peer-mediated RR program. The third section describes the classroom activities. After that, the research activities of data collection and data analysis are presented in the last two sections.

Context and Participants

This study was conducted in a junior high school located in northern Taiwan. The school adopted heterogeneous grouping policy; therefore, the students' English scores for all classes were presented as a bell curve, a normal distribution. The participants were eighth graders in an intact class, consisting of 15 males and 13 females, 28 in total. Their English performance also showed a normal distribution, and the majority was average-achievers. The researcher of the study had been their English teacher for a year in September, 2012. After teaching them for a year, the researcher noticed that as the reading material in the textbook gradually became lengthy, some students started to struggle in comprehending while reading these passages word by word laboriously. To facilitate the learners to have a better reading fluency, the peer-mediated RR program was introduced to the English class in the new school year, starting from September, 2013. The eighth graders had five English classes per week, lasting 45 minutes each period.

The Peer-mediated RR Program

The program of peer-mediated RR was conducted twice each week, lasting for 12 weeks and containing 24 sessions in total (see Appendix A). It started from the beginning of the school year, September 24th, 2013. Before the session of peer-mediated RR began, the researcher provided a reviewing session based on what the participants had learned in the seventh grade, including letter-sound correspondence, stress, intonation, and chunking. Reviewing these features would help learners read the written text orally with more confidence, while the timed reading was also practiced at the same time. The number of words read orally within a minute was measured, and this type of assessment was also used in the pre-test after the one-week reviewing session.

Materials

In this study, two kinds of reading materials were used. One was the “Reading” section of the school mandated textbook (Book Three, Kang Hsuan Edition, 2012). The other was the reading passages from a popular English teaching magazine, *Let's Talk in English*. The September, October, November, and December issues of the magazine in 2013 were used as an assigned extra learning material for all the students at the school. Learners were able to assimilate more useful daily words and expressions from the magazine, including topics like using GPS, traveling, or shopping.

Pre-test, Two Mid-Program Check Points, and Post-test

Oral reading fluency was measured by the amount of correct words read per minute (CWPM). This was conducted for all 28 participants who were evaluated pre-test, week 4 test, week 8 test, and post-test. The measurement used to represent fluency showed how they performed before, during and after the RR program.

Testing materials. In the test, the participants read out loud a short paragraph adapted from a passage of the GEPT (The General English Proficiency Test) oral test item. The passage has a meaningful context of reading about 100 words (see Appendix B). The reading level of the texts used is all at Grade 6, measured with the Fry Graph Readability Formula and its associated Graph, a readability metric for English texts, and it is often used to provide a common standard by which the readability of articles can be measured.

Table 3.1 Difficulty level of testing materials based on Fry Readability Formula

<i>Assessment of oral reading fluency</i>	<i>Reading passage</i>	<i>Difficulty level of the text</i>	<i>Word number</i>
Pre-test	Text 1	6th-grade level	102
Week 4 test	Text 2	6th-grade level	107
Week 8 test	Text 3	6th-grade level	105
Post-test	Text 4	6th-grade level	103

Scoring system. Oral reading fluency was measured with the form, correct words read per minute (CWPM). Reading errors were recorded through a well-established marking code developed by the Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) team (see Appendix D). The types of miscued words include mispronunciation, repetition, deviation, substitution, etc. Five comprehension questions followed the procedure designed to assess the comprehension level of the readers (see Appendix C). This evaluation aims to prevent the readers from attempting to speed up their oral reading rate without fully understanding the text. During the test, they read the text three times, and the reading speed was recorded after each round, in order to compare the differences after repeated reading (see

Table 3.2 below). This assessment method was adapted from the study of Taguchi et al. (2012).

Table 3.2 Comprehension and CWPM scores for five timed oral readings

pretest, week 4 test, week 8 test, and posttest			
correct words read per minute (CWPM)			five comprehension questions
1 st reading	2 nd reading	3 rd reading	(the number of correct answers)

Student Paring

Student pairing was based on their performance on the oral reading speed (i.e., correct words read per minute) on the pre-test, with slight adjustments made for the learners' personalities. First of all, the participants were divided into two groups based on the test results, i.e., the 14 learners who got better CWPM scores among all the students were placed in the same group, while the other 14 students were in a different group. Students in both groups were then ranked; the learner who got the highest score was *S1*, and the one who got the second highest score was *S2*, and so on. As for the other group, the learner who got the best grade in the group was *N1* (whose score was ranked number 15 in the whole class), and the one who got the second highest score was *N2*, the rest following suit. *S1* was paired with *N1*, and *S2* formed a dyad with *N2*, and so forth (see Table 3.3). This pairing method made each student of the weaker half practice with a more competent reader. Of primary interest to the researcher were how the more fluent readers assisted their partners with the oral reading and how the dyad members with proficiency gaps worked together during the peer-mediated RR program.

Table 3.3 Student pairing

<i>Group number</i>	<i>The stronger half</i>	<i>The weaker half</i>
1	S1	N1
2	S2	N2
3	S3	N3
4	S4	N4
...
14	S14	N14

After all the participants were assigned a partner, they simulated the peer-mediated RR with their partner and were taught what to do during the 24 sessions. They also learned the whole procedure, including how to record their reading speed and miscued words. When practicing repeated reading, students used the coding symbols (see Appendix D) and counted correct word read per minute. The members of a dyad remained the same throughout the following 12-week peer-mediated RR program.

Selection of Three Focus Dyads

The 28 participants in the class were divided into 14 dyads. Three of these dyads were selected as focus groups. The three targeted dyads, Holly and Lola, Hannah and Lily, and Hank and Lucy (all pseudonyms) were chosen for two reasons: the 6 members represented three distinct English proficiency levels (i.e., high, middle, and low levels), and they were willing and able to explain their learning processes.

The first criterion for selection was learning level; the 6 students contained two representatives of each learning level. The fluency levels of the students were determined using the reading speed results (measured in words correct per minute;

WCPM) of an oral reading pretest. Because no oral-reading-rate norms exist for Taiwanese junior high school students, reading-rate norms (Table 3.4) suggested by Rasinski (2004), based on several empirical data sources, were adopted in this study. Target oral-reading-fluency-rate norms are used in the United States for students from Grades 1 to 8. The reading materials in the four measurements of oral-reading rate were all at the sixth-grade level, based on Fry's Readability Formula, and the peer-mediated RR program started in fall; therefore, based on Rasinski's reading rate norms, the oral-reading-rate norm for learners in this study was 100 to 140 CWPM. The higher-level learners in this study were expected to be able to read at a speed above 140 CWPM. The average-level learners' reading rate was between 100 and 140 CWPM, and the lower-level learners' reading rate was under 100 CWPM.

Table 3.4 Oral Reading Fluency Target Rate Norms

Grade	Fall (CWPM)	Winter (CWPM)	Spring (CWPM)
1		10-30	30-60
2	30-60	50-80	70-100
3	50-90	70-100	80-110
4	70-110	80-120	100-140
5	80-120	100-140	110-150
6	100-140	110-150	120-160
7	110-150	120-160	130-170
8	120-160	130-170	140-180

Accuracy of the participants' oral reading also determined the learners' English proficiency level. Accuracy, measured using the rate of correct word recognition, is another component of oral reading fluency. It is counted by dividing the number of words read correctly per minute (CWPM) by the total number of words read (CWPM and misread words). In a study by Pinnell et al. (1995), higher-fluency readers not

only exhibited substantially faster reading rates, but also more accurately recognized spoken words. The accuracy levels in Table 3.5 were also suggested by Rasinski (2004), reflecting various levels of word-decoding accuracy. Readers are categorized into three levels: independent, instructional, and frustration.

The participants in this study were assigned to the three levels of word recognition based on their English proficiency level. The higher-level learners, assigned to the independent level, were able to accurately pronounce 97% or more of the words given, and read the assessment text or other texts without difficulty. The reading accuracy rate of the average-level learners was between 90% and 96%. These learners were assigned to the instructional reading level, and could read aloud the assessment text with some assistance. The lower-level learners were assigned to the frustration level. These learners could accurately read 90% or less of the words in the test passages, and the assessment text was challenging to them.

Table 3.5 Levels of Performance for Word Decoding Accuracy

<i>Level of reading accuracy</i>	<i>Correct Rate</i>
Independent Level	97-100%
Instructional Level	90-96%
Frustration Level	< 90%

The 6 members of the three chosen dyads (Dyads A, B, and C) consisted of two representatives of each of the three English proficiency levels. These learners' levels were mainly determined by their CWPM measured in pretest (see Table 3.6), and their oral reading accuracy of the same test was also examined based on the levels of word-decoding accuracy suggested by Rasinski (2004). The higher-level learners were Holly and Hannah (>140 CWPM, 97-100% correct rate) ; Hank and Lola were average-level learners (100-140 CWPM, 90-96% correct rate); and Lily and Lucy

were lower-level learners (<100 CWPM, <90% correct rate). An equal number of representatives from each level was selected to elucidate the learning processes and the effects of peer-mediated RR on learners of various levels.

Table 3.6 Pre-test result of the three focus dyads

<i>Dyad</i>	<i>Name (all pseudonyms)</i>	<i>Mean Score of Reading Speed</i>	<i>Mean Score of Correct Rate</i>	<i>English Proficiency Level</i>
A	Holly	151.66 CWPM	99.01%	high
	Lola	106.33 CWPM	93.33%	average
B	Hannah	186 CWPM	100 %	high
	Lily	82 CWPM	87.5%	low
C	Hank	102.33 CWPM	95.32%	average
	Lucy	63.66 CWPM	77.77%	low

The willingness and ability of the participants to share their learning processes with the researcher were also considered when screening the focus dyads. The interviews with the members of the three dyads and their journals provided abundant information about their learning processes. All participants were asked to write down their CWPM records and to describe their learning processes in class as much as possible. It was found that the focus and expression of students at various levels were slightly distinctive. Holly and Hannah, the higher-level learners, were able to describe in every journal entry the difficulties they encountered or events happened between them and their partners. For instance, they wrote down the words or phrases that were hard for their partners to pronounce and then analyzed the possible reasons that caused the difficulties for their partners to read, such as inflectional suffixes. Moreover, the higher-level learners in the present study described the emotions

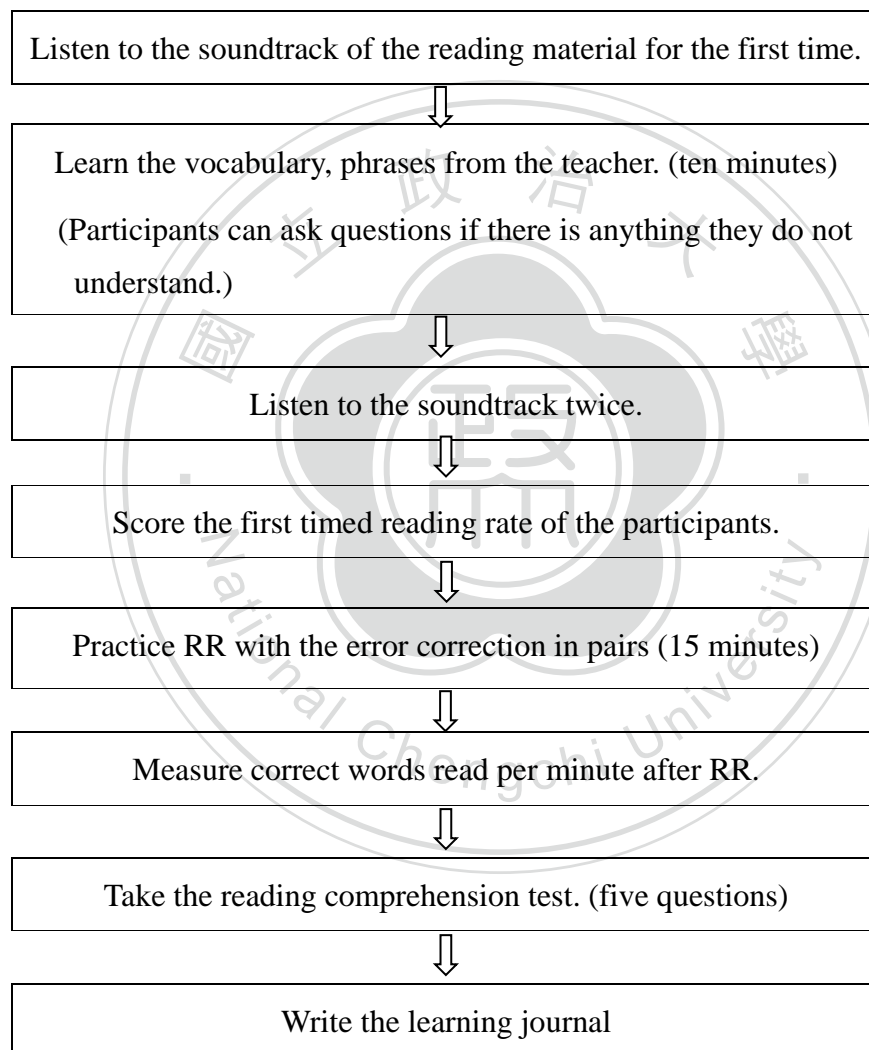
generated by interactions with their partners. The average-level learners, Hank and Lola, also tried diligently to describe their learning processes in their journals, but they revealed less about the difficulties they faced and what they learned during the RR sessions. Instead, they talked more about the feelings and emotions they experienced in class. The lower-level learners, Lily and Lucy, seldom discussed the difficulties they encountered and their feelings during the RR sessions. Lily often only gave a simple description of the classroom activity procedures, and rarely commented on her performance during the RR sessions. Lucy used the fewest words to depict the process, typically using CWPM numbers and a list of words read incorrectly, and occasionally one or two comments on her performance. Although Lucy did not provide adequate information in her journals compared with the other participants, the researcher was able to compile sufficient details about her learning process during her four interviews because she was willing to provide information. In summary, the three dyads were selected based on the willingness of the 6 members to convey their learning processes to the researcher and the sufficient amount of information about the peer-mediated RR program that they provided in their learning journals or interviews.

Although the whole class received peer-mediated RR instruction, the observation focused on the three dyads that were chosen to be the representatives of higher-, average-, and lower-level learners. The three dyads facilitated a broader understanding of how students perceive peer-mediated RR. Furthermore, based on the detailed information provided by the 6 dyad members, different from the prior quantitative studies on RR, the results of this research provide other teachers with a more holistic view and more in-depth insights regarding how learners of various reading fluency levels can cooperate and provide feedback for each other.

Classroom Activities

The participants had two repeated reading sessions per week, twenty-four sessions in total. The classroom activities in every session are shown in Figure 3.1 below. The procedure is adapted from the studies of Fuchs & Fuchs et al. (2001), Taguchi et al. (2012), and Yurick et al. (2006).

Figure 3.1 Classroom activities. (45 minutes per period)



The first part of a session took about 10 minutes, and then after participants read the passage for one minute and the rate was recorded by his or her partner, they started working with their partner and taking turns to repeatedly read aloud the text for 15 minutes, at least four times per person. During the process, the dyads

corrected their partner's miscued words. Within each pair, each student alternatively served as the reader and the tutor, who pointed out the miscued words, for an equal amount of time.

Drawing on the study of Staubitz et al. (2005), three steps of error correction were used in the present study as a required procedure for participants to mark the miscued words.

Table 3.6. A scripted correction procedure.

(Adapted from Oddo et al.,2010 & Staubitz et al., 2005)

While one student read, the other student followed along with her/his finger and corrected miscues using a scripted correction procedure as follows:

Step 1. "Stop."

Step 2. "The word is _____. Point to and say _____."

Step 3. "Good. Say the word three times fast."

After the 15-minute peer-mediated RR practice, the dyads were asked to look at the clock projected on the big screen in the front of the classroom with the overhead projector because they were going to take turns recording their partner's correct words read per minute and marking the miscued words.

Following the measurement of reading speed was a comprehension check. The participants answered five comprehension questions based on the content of the text they just read during the RR practice, and then exchanged their test papers and checked the answers for each other five minutes later. While answering the five questions, they were not able to refer to the text. This was to prevent the learners from only focusing on increasing their reading speed, at the expense of comprehension. According to Han and Chen (2010), the purpose of the timed reading is to improve reading speed to the optimal rate that supports comprehension rather than developing speedy readers. For the remaining class time, they wrote the

learning journal to describe what had happened during the session and to reflect back on the learning process.

The same procedure repeated at every session before the post-test, which was conducted after the 24th session. During the 12 weeks, two other assessments of oral reading fluency were carried out right after the 8th and the 16th sessions to record the progress.

Data Collection

The data was collected from multiple sources in four ways (1) four tests of the oral reading fluency, (2) classroom observation (assisted by video-recording), (3) weekly learning journals of the three dyads, and (4) interviews with the students from the three dyads individually.

(1) *Four tests of oral reading fluency.* To obtain an overview of performance of the whole class, the 28 participants took the pre-test, two mid-program assessments, and post-test during the RR session. The oral reading fluency of each participant was measured in terms of correct words read per minute (CWPM). The miscued words of students' oral reading were also counted. Another experienced English teacher, with a TESOL background, was also invited to measure the reading rate and accuracy at the same time, to allow for more accurate reading speed and correct rate to be recorded. Furthermore, the oral reading was audio recorded for later analysis. The two authors were 97.5% consistent in their calculation of reading speed and miscued words. Differences were resolved through discussion.

(2) *Classroom observation.* Three targeted dyads were closely observed during each of the 24 sessions. Besides the field notes the researcher took in class, the interactions of the three dyads during the peer-mediated RR practice were also video

recorded during every session. Accordingly, the researcher could have another source of data to analyze the information obtained from the interviews and students' learning journals. Once the students adjusted to the presence of the video camera, their nervousness subsided, and they started to act naturally. The content of the video reflected how the students behave in a typical classroom setting.

(3) *Learning journals.* The learning journals of the three dyads were analyzed. The content of the journal revealed certain problems that the participants encountered during the process of peer-mediated RR, the progress they made, the events that happened between the dyads, the benefit or drawbacks they considered about the program, and their personal perspectives or attitudes toward the program. Any contents from participants' journals presented in the present study were translated from Chinese into English. The learning journals of these 24 sessions provided rich, consistent, and prolonged qualitative data on the participants' learning process and attitude during the peer-mediated RR program. The journals captured the learners' introspective processes over time as well.

(4) *Interviews.* The researcher interviewed the six students from the three dyads individually four times — before the peer-mediated RR program, after engaging in 4 weeks of peer-mediated RR, after engaging in 8 weeks of peer-mediated RR, and after the RR program. The interview took place in a closure consulting room at school. The interviewer and interviewee were able to sit comfortably on the cushioned chairs on the opposite side, and the interview with each person was about 20 minutes each time. Before the interview, the researcher analyzed the collected observation data and learning journals first and then formulated questions. The interview data was aimed to obtain more information which was not revealed in the learning journal. In addition, the members of the three days also clarified or confirmed the circumstances described in the journals and the observation that the

researcher written down on the teacher’s log during the four interviews. All the interviews with the three dyads were conducted in Chinese, so their words presented in the study were transited into English by the researcher and were checked by another English teacher with a TESOL background. Table 3.7 presents the time and focus of the four semi-structured interviews.

Table 3.7 Timetable of the interviews and the focus

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Focus</i>
September, 2013	First interview (Pre-program interview)	prior English learning experiences
October, 2013 (After the 4 th week of RR program)	Second interview	1. Elaborate the learning processes of peer-mediated RR program and the interaction with the partner.
November, 2013 (After the 8 th week of RR program)	Third interview	2. Clarify or detail the reflections written on the learning journals.
December, 2013	Fourth interview (Post-program interview)	1. Retrospect the critical event that happened. 2. Exam the changes after 12-week peer-mediated RR program and provide perceptions toward RR.

Thanks to the openness of reveling learning experiences of the six learners of the three chosen dyads, aside from the video record data, the learning processes of peer-mediated RR were vividly recorded and understood through learning journals,

which were written after every RR session, and interviews.

Data Analysis

The results of the four oral reading measurements taken by the 28 participants — a pre-test, another two as check points during the RR program, and a post-test — was listed chronically in a table. Furthermore, by using interviews, learning journals, video-recording observation, and field notes, the data is triangulated, and the analysis is supported by more than a single source of evidence. In addition, to guard the trustworthiness of the study, an experienced teacher with TESOL background was invited to code the raw data with the researcher and exam the correctness of the verbatim transcribed interview data. While the researcher and the other teacher coded the data, the holistic-content approach (Lieblich et al., 1998) was used. The researcher reread the material several times to find out the reoccurring themes or patterns, and then reconstructed the learning processes of the three dyads to find out how the critical events affect the three dyads' English learning. The critical event is an event selected because of its unique, illustrative and confirmatory nature. Woods (1993 a) maintains that critical events promote student learning in accelerated ways. This learning involves a holistic change.

As the participants wrote the learning journal in and took the interview in Chinese, only the parts presented in the study were translated into English. The other experienced English teacher made sure the translation was correct and the content of the journal was not misunderstood, and the researcher also confirmed the content with three dyads.

Hence, this present qualitative study can provide an in-depth understanding of the learning process that junior high school students may have when peer-mediated repeated reading is employed to improve students' oral reading fluency. In the end,

based on the changes of oral reading fluency, the reconstruction of the learning process, and the critical events happening to the three dyads, the researcher was able to conclude the possibilities or challenges brought by peer-mediated repeated reading when it is applied in the junior high school English classroom in Taiwan.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the learning process that junior high school students may experience when peer-mediated repeated reading is employed as a classroom activity to improve oral reading fluency. This chapter presents the findings to the first research question:

What are the processes of peer-mediated repeating reading like for three dyads of learners during a 12-week peer-mediated repeated reading program? What critical events do they experience?

There are five sections in this chapter. The first one shows the oral reading performance of the whole class. The second section provides an overview of three dyads. As for the next three sections, each one focuses on the critical events and what the processes of peer-mediated RR like for Dyads A, B, and C respectively, addressing the second research question.

Oral Reading Performance of the Whole Class

In order to provide an overview of the performance of the whole class, the 28 participants took a pretest, week 4 test, week 8 test, and post-test. The participants' correct words read per minute (CWPM) results for oral fluency of each reading were calculated for each test and can be seen in Table 4.1. It can be observed that the mean CWPM reading rate for all 28 participants increased through repeated reading of the same text during each test.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics for CWPM reading rate for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd readings for the pretest, week 4 test, week 8 test, and posttest.

(n=28)

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	1 st CWPM	111.96	41.288	7.803
	2 nd CWPM	121.54	42.976	8.122
	3 rd CWPM	129.82	44.360	8.383
Week 4 test	1 st CWPM	115.14	43.689	8.256
	2 nd CWPM	120.71	44.888	8.483
	3 rd CWPM	133.64	46.593	8.805
Week 8 test	1 st CWPM	127.32	44.511	8.412
	2 nd CWPM	133.25	45.898	8.674
	3 rd CWPM	144.61	47.106	8.902
Posttest	1 st CWPM	136.93	49.097	9.278
	2 nd CWPM	150.89	51.203	9.676
	3 rd CWPM	160.29	51.474	9.728

Figure 4.1 The line graph for CWPM reading rate for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd readings for the pretest, week 4 test, week 8 test, and posttest.

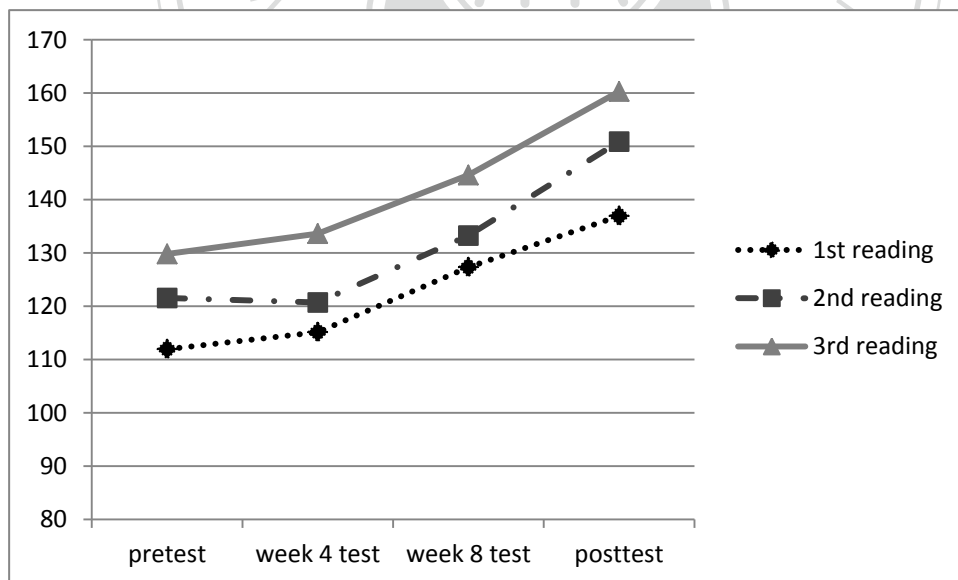


Table 4.2 presents participants' performances in the pre-test and the post-test.

Although there might be time and practice effects, the result shows that students did

perform better at the post-test.

Table 4.2 The comparison between the pretest and posttest.

	1st	2nd	3rd	Mean
Pretest	111.96	121.54	129.82	121.10
Posttest	136.93	150.89	160.29	149.37
Difference between pre and post test	24.97	29.35	30.47	28.27

The Three Focus Dyads

When the study was conducted, the class consisted of 28 students, who were grouped into 14 dyads. Three of the dyads that the researcher focused on included higher-, middle-, and lower-level English learners. The three dyads, Holly and Lola, Hannah and Linda, and Hank and Lucy (all pseudonyms) were closely observed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the affordances and challenges associated with the peer-mediated RR method implemented in a junior high school classroom. In the three dyads, Holly, Hannah, and Hank were the more capable learners, and they represented a higher level learner, high level learner, and middle-level learner, respectively. Their partners (Lola, Lily, and Lucy) were middle-, low-, and low-level (almost bottom) learners, respectively.

To gain a holistic understanding of the learning processes experienced by the three dyads during the peer-mediated RR program, the characteristics and the prior English learning experiences of each member of a dyad are first presented, followed by a report of the critical event experienced by the dyads and its impact on them. The learning processes associated with each dyad are then addressed in the last section on the findings of each dyad. In the last section, two essential aspects of the

peer-mediated RR activity — error correction and the measurement of the oral reading rate — are discussed to obtain a full picture of the learning processes.

The findings on all three cases are reported in the same sequence. The first case, Dyad A: Holly and Lola, is discussed first.

Dyad A: Holly and Lola

Holly

Holly, a higher-level learner, was in the eighth grade when this study was conducted. She was so sensitive to sounds that she was aware of off-key singing. This trait was also reflected in her singing. Because she could always sing at the right pitch, she always achieved the highest score for music class singing tests. This feature also affected her ability to learn English — she could detect slight differences in sounds when she read English sentences aloud. Holly stated in her first interview that whenever she caught herself reading words out strangely, she would stop to pronounce the words or phrases again and again until the articulation sounded correct to her.

When asked about her English learning strategies, Holly felt that her English learning methods or experience were the same as those of her peers. She added that her English grades were probably slightly better than most of her classmates' grades because she paid more attention in English class and ensured that she reviewed the vocabulary, phrases, and grammar that had been taught that day immediately after school. Although she seldom read English articles aloud while reviewing lessons, sometimes she spoke to her mom in the simple English that she had learned. However, after thinking further, she recalled a different method of learning vocabulary that she had used while studying in elementary school. Because Holly's mom, a waitress at a breakfast shop, recognized the importance of English education,

occasionally, approximately every 6 months, she gave Holly copies of English song lyrics to learn. Holly repeatedly listened to the songs and sang along with them to learn the pronunciation of the words in the lyrics. In this way, Holly naturally acquired new words by listening to the songs and understood their meanings by reading the translation. Her mom also hired an English tutor to teach her from the fourth grade to the sixth grade. Holly attended extra English classes twice a week for an hour each. Something that an English tutor once said had made a great impression on Holly, “If words are pronounced incorrectly, you would be a joke” (First interview, September, 2013). She remembered what her tutor said and realized that precisely and properly articulating words was important. In the first interview, she used the inflectional affix *-ed* as an example. “When I read the *-ed* form of a past tense verb, which we are learning now, I focus on whether it is read /t/ or /d/. If I don’t pronounce the words correctly, my oral reading feels very strange” (First interview, September, 2013).

In fact, Holly could correctly pronounce words and rapidly read passages aloud at approximately 180 words per minute. She said that “there is still room for improvement, but I think my oral reading fluency was fine (Holly’s journal, 10/04/2013).” Generally, she was not worried about her speaking ability at all. In her first interview, she felt that grammar was her biggest weakness. Although she usually scored over 90 on her English tests, she hoped that she could improve and achieve higher grades.

Lola

Lola was an outgoing, straight-forward girl. She mentioned that her teachers in the third grade regarded her as a responsible and pro-active person. However, she often went home crying in the third and fourth grades because she was bullied at

school. Although the situation improved after the fifth grade, at the time of the interview, she still experienced problems with relationships. Sometimes, when she quarreled with friends or when her friends ignored her, she expressed her negative feelings in a teacher-student communication notebook, in which students noted their assignments, the next day's tests, and a short record of their day. When issues disturbed her, she became more sentimental, moody, and tended to think negatively. During the first interview, she was hurt by a rumor that had been spread in class. She stated that many boys in the class had teased her about her weight, and some of them occasionally attacked her by calling her hurtful names in public. She also felt "inferior to other girls in the class."

I am one of the few girls who do not perform well academically in the class. The other girls all work diligently and get good grades. I really could not accept my lousy English grade from the recent monthly test. I could not keep getting such horrible grades. I need to make progress. (First interview, September, 2013)

Lola was not as proficient at English as those at the top of her class; she was ranked in the middle. Lola mentioned in the first interview that her mom had played a significant role in her English learning. Because her mom was in charge of international trade at her office, she used a tape recorder to record conversations with international visitors, especially people with heavy accents (such as British accents), and then tried to determine what had been said in the tapes. Because many jobs require proficient English, Lola's mother often encouraged and pushed Lola to perform well at English. Lola claimed during her first interview that she was only allowed to watch English-speaking programs most of the time, and her family watched English-speaking movies over the weekends. When she watched cartoons on the Animax Channel, her mom asked her to switch the spoken language from Chinese to English. The frequent exposure to spoken English helped Lola learn new

words and colloquial expressions.

When I watch English TV programs, I learn some words by listening to the sounds and learning the meaning from the Chinese subtitle. Sometimes when I hear strange or unique sounding words, I am curious and want to know their meanings. I then ask my parents the Chinese meaning of the spoken words.”(First interview, September, 2013)

Lola used the word *nasty* as an example. When she heard a cartoon character say “na-na-na-nasty,” she was curious about its meaning because it sounded unusual to her. After learning the Chinese meaning of the word from her mom, she could remember the word *nasty* ever since. Lola assessed that she was the type of learners who learned language through listening. This learning style, she believed, made it difficult for her to pronounce a word by looking at the spelling of a word in its written form, not to mention remembering its Chinese meaning. By contrast, it was far easier for her to speak English words or to read English sentences aloud when she knew their Chinese meanings beforehand.

For example, if you ask me in Chinese what the English word for 義大利麵 [yì dà lì miàn] is, I can answer you immediately — *spaghetti*. But when I see it written in a text, it is difficult for me to pronounce it or even think of its meaning.(First interview, September, 2013)

Despite the push from Lola’s mom and Lola’s own willingness to spend more time studying English, Lola had too much homework to complete after school and she needed to study other subjects. She also needed to spend some time learning and practicing street dance. Consequently, Lola was too busy to study English every day although her mom suggested that she read the articles in the textbooks aloud three times a day to improve her English test scores. In her second interview, Lola guiltily admitted that she knew that remembering the phrases or sentence structures of the articles in the textbook would help her pass her English tests and improve her grades. However, she barely had any time to review the learning materials after school.

The individual characteristics of the members of the dyad affected their interaction during the peer-mediated RR program. The following section presents a description of how Holly and Lola worked in a pair, their performance in the RR program, the critical event they experienced, and their learning processes.

Critical Events Experienced by Dyad A

A week after the 12-week peer-mediated RR program, the researcher conducted individual one-on-one interviews with the members of Dyad A, Holly and Lola.

Both of them stated that the crucial event that they had experienced occurred in the third RR session when the class was learning the reading section of Lesson 3.

In the third RR session, students learned an article that introduced a great inventor, Thomas Edison. The reading consisted of three paragraphs that described Thomas Edison's childhood, the difficulties he encountered while inventing the light bulb, and his contribution to the world. Many words used in the article were unfamiliar to the students and had not been learned before. Many of the students mentioned in their journals that it was extremely difficult to pronounce these words, although the teacher had taught the students the pronunciations, meanings and usages of these words in the previous class. The reading was even more difficult because it included longer and more complex sentence structures, and students needed to learn how to use *after*, *when*, and *before* as conjunctions in adverb clauses from the article.

Because of the sudden increase in difficulty, Lola experienced a great sense of frustration and was "scared" while reading (Second interview, October, 2013). She remembered that she was uncertain of the pronunciation of too many words, and the only thought in her mind was, "What can I do when there are so many words I don't know how to pronounce and the timed reading is going to begin in a few minutes?"

“It felt like I was taking a test, but there were too many things I didn’t know. So I could do nothing but leave the test paper blank” (Second interview, October, 2013).

During the peer-mediated RR practice, as usual, Holly identified words that Lola had pronounced incorrectly and asked Lola to immediately repeat the words three times after Holly’s demonstration of the correct pronunciation. However, because many words, such as *admire*, *inventor*, and *taught*, were completely new to Lola, she pronounced them incorrectly, even when repeating them immediately after her partner. Gradually, Holly grew increasingly impatient when Lola incorrectly repeated the same word too many times. When Holly could not stand it anymore, she gave up on correcting Lola and decided to practice on her own. Although she purposefully ignored Lola, Holly still “felt uncomfortable about the awkward silence between us at that moment and felt guilty for giving my partner the cold shoulder” (Second interview, October, 2013). After the RR session, Holly wrote in her learning journal about Lola’s difficulty in correctly repeating the words after her, and she also wondered whether her method of teaching Lola unknown words was effective.

I felt there was a huge gap between Lola and me. Maybe this was because I used to have a tutor who taught me English. Lola often pronounced words incorrectly and mumbled words and sentences. Besides, I was often unable to hear her and know what she had read. Was it because others made too much noise or due to her very soft voice? She had difficulty pronouncing *goose*, *geese*, and *early*, and I had to correct her pronunciations over and over again. This situation made me wonder whether the problem resulted from my method of teaching her. Why couldn’t she get what I said at all? I felt that my oral reading was all right. There was no word that I didn’t know. However, the reading must have been difficult for Lola. There were a bunch of words that she didn’t know how to pronounce. (Holly’s journal, 10/01/2013)

Although both Holly and Lola identified the event as critical to them, the changes each of them made were different. They also had different perceptions of the

same event and developed a higher awareness of various aspects. The following section describes the impact of this critical event on Holly and Lola.

The impact of the critical event. During the post-program interview, Holly claimed that the awkward silence during the session caused her to reflect on her own behavior. She thought that she should have been more patient. In Holly's journal entry after the following session, she reflected on her "terrible attitude" toward Lola while correcting Lola's mistakes.

I think that I am very demanding of pronunciation while learning a language. I set a high standard for it. If I find a small error, I correct my partner, Lola, right away. So being my partner must be a tiring job! I've never been a kind partner. Once she made me unhappy, and I would snarl and champ with rages. What a terrible attitude! I have to improve my attitude. (Holly's journal, 10/04/2013)

In retrospect, she found that she "became more patient" after the RR program (Third interview, November, 2013). For instance, Holly said when her younger sister asked Holly to teach her how to pronounce the vocabulary in an English textbook, she patiently repeated the sounds several times to make sure that her sister understood. However, before Holly had reflected on her attitude toward teaching others, she easily became irritated and told her sister to figure out the problems by herself. Other than the personal change that Holly observed in herself, she also felt that, in the long run, this experience working with Lola was beneficial for her to get along with others.

Although Holly and Lola identified the same critical event, Lola only mentioned the large gap between her and her partner's English proficiency after the event. In the post-program interview, Lola stated that she neither remembered nor experienced any unusual behavior exhibited by her partner. She was just really afraid that Holly would become impatient and would rather be paired with someone

with better oral abilities. Although Lola expressed in the interview that she was uncertain how Holly had felt at the time, she confessed in her journal that she was extremely worried that her partner would become impatient while teaching her.

I have an inferiority complex about my English ability. I am no match for Holly. I'm so afraid that the tolerance and patience Holly has toward me would be running out. She won't want to be my partner anymore! (Lola's journal, 10/01/2013)

This event was critical to Lola because this was the first time that she observed the proficiency gap and started to be more aware of the accuracy of pronunciation. Holly did not permit any articulation errors, thus she made Lola continuously repeat words after her until Lola correctly pronounced the word. During the third interview, Lola said that she started to slightly change her perception toward accuracy while speaking English after the event. The struggle she had experienced during the event was a wake-up call that made her focus more on precise pronunciation when learning new words.

Although Lola knew that she had some pronunciation problems and was more aware of her oral reading accuracy, she still felt that being fluent was more important than being accurate. Based on her previous successful communication experiences with international visitors, Lola believed that as long as the words she said resembled the correct sounds, she would be able to communicate with English native speakers because they mainly focused on the meaning conveyed, instead of the accuracy of the language structure or pronunciation. She claimed that, "if you talk to a native speaker in ungrammatical sentence structures, they will also reply with the same ungrammatical sentence structures" (Third interview, November, 2013).

The critical event experienced in the peer-mediated RR program made Holly

“more patient and more tolerant when helping others with their studies” (Third interview, November, 2013). The event was critical to Lola because it was the first time that she perceived the great English proficiency gap between her and her partner. After the session, Lola wrote in her journal for the first time that she was so “inferior” to her partner. (Lola’s journal, 10/01/2013) The following section presents the learning processes experienced by Dyad A during the peer-mediated RR program.

Dyad A: Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Learning Processes

Error correction. Holly worked as a peer tutor to teach and correct Lola’s pronunciation almost all the time. However, Holly and Lola held different views on accuracy in communication. Lola felt that delivering meaning was more important than carefully articulating words. As long as she could communicate with native English speakers, “precise articulation or grammatically correct sentences were not so crucial” (Third interview, November, 2013). When Lola encountered unfamiliar words, she pronounced them based on her impression, rather than stopping to ask her partner first. Although she knew her articulation of these words was “strange,” she just read them aloud anyway.

On the contrary, articulating words accurately was crucial to Holly. She stated in her journal:

It’s all right that Lola couldn’t pronounce *toothache* properly. This problem can be resolved by dividing the word into *tooth* and *ache*. It’s all right that she sometimes says *she* instead of *he* by mistake because I also make this kind of mistake. It would be fine if she was corrected. HOWEVER, what I consider the most important is CORRECT PRONUNCIATION! It is forbidden to speak indistinctively or in an inarticulate manner. She can’t pronounce *fix* as *fis*. The *x* sound should be pronounced precisely. And there is a great difference between *least* and *last*. Don’t mix them up. One contains a long vowel like in *tea* or *eat*. The other consists of a lax short vowel. It’s essential to clearly distinguish and pronounce the two sounds. I won’t stop correcting her until she can pronounce

the word correctly! (Holly's journal, 12/03/2013)

In the passage above, Holly even marked the three words — *however*, *correct*, and *pronunciation* — in yellow to emphasize her point.

Holly listened attentively to Lola's oral reading. Lola noticed Holly paying full attention to her oral reading and stated that "it is beneficial to have a partner who can correct errors" (Lola's journal, 10/11/2013). She always thought positively of and appreciated her partner's diligence. "Holly taught me conscientiously. I was really sorry that I sometimes kept pronouncing words incorrectly" (Lola's journal, 11/08/2013). However, Lola often pronounced words unclearly, especially the tense or lax vowels. Sometimes, when she was in a bad mood or was tired, she responded tersely to Holly's consistent and strict correction. Once, Holly was discouraged by Lola's indifferent response and reported,

When I corrected her pronunciation, she complained that the error correction was very troublesome. What she said hurt my feelings. Is it wrong that I corrected her whenever I heard something that was not right and detected incorrect pronunciation? (Holly's journal, 11/08/2013)

Other than Lola's occasional moody attitude toward error correction, her inability to correctly repeat words immediately after Holly also frustrated both of them at times. For instance, after Holly corrected Lola's pronunciation of "late" several times, she finally pronounced it precisely as a long vowel, *a-e*. At that moment, Holly was "extremely touched" (Holly's journal, 10/11/2013). However, during the oral reading speed test, Lola pronounced the word *late* as *let* again. Lola also felt discouraged by her repeated errors and claimed that her bad mood affected her oral reading performance.

I kept making the same mistakes this time... I never seem to progress and I always make the same mistakes. And then Holly said, "You read it wrong again!" She still listened to my reading conscientiously. It is just that recently I worry too much. There are too many things on my mind. And I don't know how to release my stress, so I don't feel like doing anything. I feel so tired. It's

so annoying! But I will still summon the energy to review and read the texts!
(Lola's journal, 10/11/2013)

These self-degrading words often appeared in her journals. Lola kept feeling sorry for not being unable to read correctly because she knew that her partner taught her with great effort. Although Holly was so strict that she corrected every misarticulated word, she also cheered Lola up and kept telling her "You've made progress! Cheer up!" This gave Lola the courage to keep working hard. (Lola's journal, 10/24/2013)

When repeating words after Holly, Lola hardly heard any differences between her pronunciation and Holly's. She admitted in the post-program interview that she could not detect any difference between the way she said certain English words and the way her partner said them. Lola felt that her reading was fluent and correct.

My oral reading speed is fine, and I am capable of reading correctly. But my partner often corrects my pronunciation. It is just because I add a few extra sounds at the end of a word, such as /s/ or /d/. (Fourth interview, December, 2013)

Lola could not perceive her own mispronunciations. For instance, Lola did not know that she had always read the word "have" incorrectly until Holly corrected her during the RR session. Lola described an event that occurred during practice in her journal. Holly continuously said that she read the sentence "We usually have snow in some cities in winter" incorrectly. Her reading of the sentence sounded like, we usually have "a" snow. After school, feeling frustrated and puzzled, Lola read the sentence to her mom. Her mom also found that, indeed, there was an extra "a" sound between the words *have* and *snow*. "At that moment, I just realized that I had always pronounced the word *have* as "hav-e." I never knew that I had pronounced the word incorrectly for such a long time (Lola's journal, 12/10/2013).

According to Lola, she could not correctly repeat five or six out of ten words pronounced by her partner, and she thought this occurred because her brain

“worked differently”(Fourth interview, December, 2013). She felt that if she kept pronouncing a word after her partner, this had the opposite effect, encouraging her to make the same mistakes over and over again. Although she would ask her mom how to correctly pronounce a word at home that day, she still had trouble pronouncing it correctly. However, when she said the same word the next day, to her surprise, she could pronounce it correctly without any difficulty. She finally realized that she could not immediately and correctly repeat a word after her partner, but she could easily pronounce it if she had practiced saying the word many times.

During the post-program interview, Lola also further explained the different methods that she and her partner used to learn a new word. Lola thought that Holly could pronounce words immediately after seeing their written forms because Holly had learned the Kenyon and Knott (KK) Phonetic Alphabet. Lola mentioned that Holly had also learned Japanese by spelling out the Roman alphabet, and this way of learning a language was different from her method. Lola remembered that she had learned the KK alphabet in the fifth grade, but she had forgotten almost all of it. When she learned new words, whether they were English or Japanese, she had to listen to their sounds and then simultaneously memorize them and their corresponding Chinese. It was easier for her to retrieve the sound of a word and say it out loud when its Chinese meaning was provided. Sometimes it was not helpful when Holly segmented the new words to help her remember how to pronounce them. “For instance, I could not relate the /s/ sound to the initial letter, *c*, in the word *celebrate*. So I sometimes wrote Mandarin phonetic symbols next to the uncertain words to help me remember how to pronounce them” (Fourth interview, December, 2013).

While Lola struggled with mispronounced words and sometimes found it difficult to remember new words during the RR program, her partner, Holly,

revealed during her fourth interview that she had learned most of the words in the texts before because she had learned the basic 2,000 words required by a junior high school student during the fifth and sixth grades. At the time, her tutor would read a word and an example sentence once, and Holly repeated the word and sentence after her. Holly's superior vocabulary knowledge resulted in an English proficiency gap between her and Lola. Lola recalled in her interview:

Throughout the whole RR program, I only taught Holly how to pronounce two words in the texts, such as the word *career*, which was unknown to her. Holly might not have needed to learn anything during the RR sessions because she already had a superb oral reading ability. Holly could read articles not only fluently but also accurately. (Fourth interview, December, 2013)

Although Lola praised Holly's oral ability, Holly occasionally felt uncertain of the pronunciation of a few words.

I am not sure whether I pronounced words incorrectly, although my partner, Lola, claimed that I didn't...I am not sure how to pronounce the word *race* in the phrase, *running race*. Is it a long vowel, like *a-e*? Or is it the sound, *i-e*? (Holly's journal, 10/25/2013)

She also wanted her partner to be able to point out the mistakes she made while reading if she had made any. In her journal from the final RR session, she stated that she wanted to have a partner who could offer feedback on her oral reading.

Lola and I were a nice dyad, but being paired with her seemed to be less helpful for my English learning. I hope that, occasionally, someone can correct me, whether the correction is about my pronunciation or the way I read English. Whatever is corrected will be fine. I want to make progress! (Holly's journal, 11/22/2013)

Although Holly was capable of supervising her own reading of English texts and correcting herself by rereading whenever she detected incorrect sounds, her need to be paired with a more capable partner to obtain feedback was obvious. She said that she could pronounce each and every word separately, but she felt that her tongue "twisted" when the words were combined into sentences. "It is terrible that I

can't articulate words clearly when the sentences are too long" (Holly's journal, 09/24/2013). Moreover, she speculated that her ability to self-correct might have resulted in a situation where it was always her who corrected her own errors.

Although Holly did not obtain any feedback on her oral reading during the RR sessions, she still exhibited a favorable attitude toward the RR activity because of her increased speaking rate. She said that when she occasionally talked to her mom in English, she found that she could naturally speak English sentences at a higher speed. Her mom also observed the difference. Holly attributed her increased speaking rate to the measurement of oral reading speed in the RR program.

To obtain higher scores for oral reading speed, Holly and Lola diligently practiced reading the text. During the measurement of oral reading speed, partners took turns reading the article and listening to each other. The next section presents a description of how the dyad worked together during the timed reading.

Measurements of oral reading speed (Correct Words Per Minute). During the timed reading, Holly circled words that required correcting in her own textbook because she did not want to disturb Lola's reading. Nonetheless, Holly's movement of circling words affected her partner. Lola claimed that she felt stressed because Holly listened attentively and immediately circled words once she detected mistakes. When Lola saw the high frequency of word circling from the corner of her eye, she felt nervous, wondering whether she had made more mistakes again.

To increase her reading speed, Lola used two methods to "make the record seem better" during measurement. She described that she first said "I don't know how to pronounce it" in Chinese ("不會唸 bú-huì-niàn") before skipping an unknown word. Interestingly, she said that she felt obligated to say the three Chinese

words before skipping a word, or her effort would have seemed perfunctory. She also stated that it did not take much time to say them. Her other method of increasing her reading speed was to read uncertain words based on her intuition, instead of inspecting them for a while to articulate them correctly. Although her enhanced reading speed came at the cost of accuracy, improving her oral reading speed record was more important to Lola.

Lola reported that sometimes she asked Holly how to pronounce a word, instead of asking what it meant, because oral reading was tested and not comprehension. She would then ask her mom the meaning of the word when she got home. She forgot some words that she had been taught before because she learned them a long time ago. In this situation, she would just read the words without understanding them.

Although Lola pursued a high speed oral reading record, she was often unsatisfied with her performance because she hesitated at many uncertain or unknown words. This unsatisfying reading speed made Lola criticize herself again with self-loathing words such as, “My first tested reading speed was really lousy” (Lola’s journal, 10/04/2013) or “It was awfully humiliating to read so slowly when the text was that easy. I was extremely unsatisfied with my oral reading speed” (Lola’s journal, 10/15/2013). This made her promise in her journals to practice reading the texts at home several times. Her partner’s strict method of error correction and her self-criticizing habits often made her feel pressure and fear that Holly would grow impatient toward her during the RR session. At the end of the RR program, Lola even asked during the interview whether she could have a different partner if the RR activity continued. Lola said, “I am afraid that Holly would not want to be my partner anymore. If it is possible I hope I could have a gentler partner who won’t lose his or her patience easily” (Fourth interview, December, 2013).

Holly was able to read at a high reading rate, and she hardly encountered any words in the articles that she had not learned. As a fluent reader, Holly used her metacognitive ability to reflect on her own oral reading. For instance, she noticed her flat intonation during the reading rate measurement.

The common problem Lola and I had was that we read so fast that we did not pay much attention to our intonation and monotonous voices. Thus, our reading sounded as flat as monks “reciting classics.” (Holly’s journal, 12/13/2013)

Holly also mentioned in her journal entries after the first few RR program sessions that although she could pronounce every word without difficulty, she struggled to combine words into sentences. Her reading of sentences became disfluent and she faltered during the oral reading speed measurement. In addition to scrutinizing her own reading condition, Holly also strictly supervised her recorded reading speed. Frequently, she encouraged herself or made suggestions in her learning journals. For instance, she wrote: “Today my reading speed was not good enough. The third one even decreased a lot. I should work harder” (Holly’s journal, 11/08/2013). “Hurray! All the words I read were correct! And I made some progress every time” (Holly’s journal, 11/12/2013).

To sum up, self-criticism and the inability to read correctly immediately after Holly’s error correction became repeated themes in Lola’s journals. Holly mentioned the problems she had encountered when correcting Lola’s errors and her self-evaluation of her oral reading most frequently in her journals. As a whole, the English proficiency gap caused Lola, the average achiever, to feel inferior and Holly, the higher-achiever, to obtain hardly any feedback from her partner. Although the dyad worked diligently during RR practice and their oral reading abilities improved because of the RR program, both of them asked the teacher/researcher whether they could have a different partner during the post-program interview.

Dyad B: Hannah and Lily

This section reports the learning experience of Dyad B. Similar to Dyad A, a clear proficiency gap also existed between the members of Dyad B, but the learning atmosphere and their experiences were quite different. Following the same pattern as the previous section, each of the two students in Dyad B is introduced first. The critical event that occurred and the learning process of this dyad during the peer-mediated RR sessions are addressed sequentially.

Hannah

Hannah was a considerate, gentle, and kind-hearted person. Moreover, she had an excellent academic performance record and her monthly test results were always among the top three in the class. She also performed well in English paper-and-pencil tests, almost always scoring over 90. Furthermore, as the assistant of the English teacher, she had to stand on the stage and read articles from the textbooks, which the class repeated, until the English teacher entered the classroom. However, she told the researcher in her first interview that she was afraid that the texts included words that she did not know how to pronounce or that she might pronounce words incorrectly in front of her classmates. Therefore, she always looked up unfamiliar words in the English dictionary beforehand and to make sure her pronunciation was accurate.

Hannah attributed her high level of English proficiency to an extremely strict English teacher at a cram school that she had attended in her fifth and sixth grades. It was a “stressful and intimidating learning experience” (Second interview, October, 2013) ; however, the experience strengthened her ability to pronounce any unknown word by using the KK phonetic alphabet, to fluently and accurately read English articles, and write grammatically correct sentences. In the second interview, Hannah stated that the English teacher at the cram school was a middle-aged female who had

lived in the USA. In her class, all of the students were required to pay full attention and they were not allowed to talk unless they were told to repeat something after the teacher, to read articles, or to answer the teacher's questions. If anyone broke the stipulated rules, she or he would be severely punished, for instance, by staying at the cram school late after class or copying articles from the textbooks up to 100 times. After each class, the students would always have completed both an oral test and a written test on the content that they had learned in the previous class. To pass the test, Hannah practiced reading the article aloud by herself at home. During this practice, she watched the clock to see how much time she had spent reading, and she would practice a reading passage several times until she could finish reading it in 30 seconds and had memorized the content. To prepare for the written test, Hannah tried to translate Chinese texts into English, while memorizing the sentence patterns and grammatical rules. Hannah said those students who did not finish reading an article within 30 seconds or pass the written tests would be asked by the teacher to repeatedly take the test until they achieved the desired standard.

Hannah felt extremely stressed while learning English there because of the atmosphere that the teacher created in the class. The teacher frequently scolded or shouted at students who performed poorly or broke her rules. Hannah recalled vividly:

The volume the teacher used while screaming at students was so high that it made my ears hurt. In addition, she often threatened us by saying that, "You can't escape from my control." Many of my classmates could not stand the oppressive and stressful atmosphere and decided to quit. (Second interview, October, 2013)

However, Hannah stayed until the end even though she sometimes went home crying because of the pressure. Because she knew the teaching method was improving her English ability, when her mom asked whether she wanted to leave the

cram school, she decided not to quit until she graduated from elementary school. This period of English learning exerted a great influence on Hannah's perception of English learning. "Learning English is very difficult. I don't like English at all. Almost all the other subjects, like Chinese, math, biology, and physics, are more interesting to me." (Fourth interview, December, 2013). As for extensive reading, even though she frequently borrowed various types of book from the public library that was five minutes from her home, it had never occurred to her that she could read English story books as a way of learning English.

Hannah could read English fluently and accurately, even though she said in her first interview that she seldom practiced reading English articles aloud after school, because she studied in a room with her family and she did not want to disturb them. However, she always read silently to be sure that she knew how to pronounce the words. She also listened to the *Let's Talk in English*, an English learning magazine CD, whenever she had free time because she was not confident about her listening ability. Hannah regarded speaking, listening, reading, and writing as equally important.

Lily

Lily was a trusting, carefree girl and a rather slow learner. Her English proficiency placed her among the lower achievers in the class. Although her English ability lagged behind her peers, her English pronunciation and intonation were quite natural. Her partner, Hannah, also felt that "Lily's pronunciation was pretty good" (Hannah's journal, 09/27/2013). Lily's ways of speaking English was probably influenced by her earlier learning experiences. When she was younger, she studied in an English kindergarten for a year, where she was immersed in an English environment all day and naturally acquired English while playing games. When

studying at elementary school, she learned English like other students that were her age in Taiwan. She attended two English classes per week. Compared with her intense exposure to spoken English in kindergarten, Lily told the researcher that, “My English proficiency deteriorated obviously because of the far fewer English classes at school” (First interview, September, 2013). However, she studied at Kang Chiao Bilingual Elementary School, a school that focuses on English learning, for a short period. When she was in second grade, she was transferred to that school and studied there for a year. This experience also exposed her to an English speaking environment, thus Lily had more opportunities to speak English than other students. She vividly remembered the experience of asking her foreign teacher questions after she had just been transferred to the school.

At the time, I had just been transferred to Kang Chiao Bilingual Elementary School. During the break, I went up to the foreign teacher to ask him the meaning and pronunciation of a word in the textbook. No matter how hard I tried, I simply could not make myself understood. I used different ways of asking the question, even pointing at the unknown word and said “question, question.”(First interview, September, 2013)

Although the foreign teacher still could not understand her, Lily claimed that she did not feel any sense of failure or frustration at that moment. Lily stated in the interview, “I just made up my mind that I would make the foreign teacher understand the questions I asked next time” (First interview, September, 2013). Therefore, she asked others how to ask the foreign teachers questions, and she successfully made herself understood the following day. In the interview, she recalled that she often asked teachers to explain the meaning of words to her in English. Although sometimes she could only partially understand them, she still frequently asked questions whenever the meanings of words were unclear to her. However, after a year of studying at the school, her parents transferred her back to her original school because they thought she was not performing well enough

academically. She would also be taught by a different homeroom teacher, not the teacher from her first grade who they had no confidence in.

After she left Kang Chiao Bilingual Elementary School and its immersive English environment, her English proficiency deteriorated again because she attended far fewer periods of English class per week at her public elementary school. She also admitted that she neither studied English on her own after school nor took any lessons at English teaching institutions. She found the English taught at school easy, and she could pronounce all the words that the elementary teachers taught her, but she did not try to memorize their spelling.

Lily's parents seldom pushed her to study hard, and they usually came home late from work. But her mom often reminded Lily that she should learn English in case she needed to use English at work in the future. Moreover, when taking a trip abroad, Lily would be able to use English as a tool to communicate with others.

My mom often says that learning English well is very important, and I think so too. I hope that I can speak English fluently because I want to travel abroad, especially to America or England. But I only study English when there is a test the next day. I don't spend enough time studying English after school because there are other things that are more interesting to do, such as watching TV. Sometimes, I will spend about one or one and half hours reviewing my English lessons over the weekend. But my family usually takes a trip to other parts of Taiwan on weekends, so I do not study English as frequently as I want to. I hope I can spend more time studying English. (First interview, September, 2013)

Lily frequently mentioned in her journals that she hoped her English would improve, and she also knew that she needed to study harder to achieve this goal.

To increase their oral reading fluency, Lily and Hannah both worked hard during the RR program. The following section describes the critical event experienced by Dyad B.

Critical Events Experienced by Dyad B

In the post-RR program interview with Lily, she claimed that her critical event had occurred during Session 11 in the ninth week of the peer-mediated RR program. The event of the session made her acutely aware of her habitual omission of the inflectional affix-*s* when reading, even though she had learned the affix -*s* at her English kindergarten. In the interview with Hannah, she was also asked which event was most critical to her. Hannah first replied that she could not identify a critical event because all of the RR sessions were similar. However, after thinking further, she felt that the event of Session 11 (the same session identified by Lily) was the most memorable. Hannah and Lily identified Session 11 for the same reason — Hannah had not really noticed that Lily consistently omitted the affix-*s* from the ends of words until this session.

In the previous lessons before Session 11, the past tense was the grammar focus of the articles. Lily had not encountered so many inflectional affixes -*s* until she learned the article from Session 11. The article was about different ways of helping others in your daily life, such as donating money or things to people in need, and visiting children's homes or the elderly. Lily wrote in her journal that her partner always read over 200 words during the timed reading without any miscued words. She praised Hannah's superb oral reading skills, and she stated that there was no word that Hannah did not know. Hannah was also a very considerate partner, who always encouraged Lily and taught her assiduously.

Every time after I finished reading the text, she would cheer for me or say "You've read more words than last time" or "Well done!" Besides, she always pointed out what I had read incorrectly and even told me the words that I frequently pronounced wrongly. She highlighted these words for me. What is more, when I asked her the pronunciation of many new words, she also read these words for me several times. I think this RR activity has helped me know whether my oral reading speed has increased and whether I read a lot of words

incorrectly. (Lily's journal, 10/29/2013)

Besides understanding her own oral reading speed, Lily appreciated the error corrections made by her partner during the peer-mediated RR program. The video recorded data also indicated that, throughout the RR session, Hannah always leaned closely toward Lily to listen attentively and the dyad interacted quite frequently.

According to Hannah's journal, Lily was able to read the article aloud rather fluently because none of the new words in the text were especially difficult to her. Whenever Lily encountered something she was uncertain of, she would immediately ask Hannah about it, such as the meanings of "put on plays" or "play a hen."

Nevertheless, Lily found it difficult to remember to read out the inflectional words.

When Lily pronounced these words — *donates*, *schools*, *wants*, *helps*, *thinks*, *plays*, and *kids* — she often forgot to read the *-s* sound. Thus, I especially highlighted these words with a yellow marker to remind her of the pronunciation of the words. This made her improve noticeably in the second and third timed readings. She was only a little forgetful about the correct pronunciations of *'the' elderly* and *plays*. (Hannah's journal, 10/29/2013)

Lily's awareness of the inflectional affix *-s* was finally aroused because Hannah frequently reminded her to pronounce the *-s* during the critical event, whether it was a third person singular present *-s*, a plural *-s*, or a possessive *-s* (or *s'*). During the post-RR program interview, Lily claimed that she hardly paid any attention to this type of errors until this event occurred. Hannah also remembered that it was the first time that she had used a yellow marker to highlight the affixes in the textbook that Lily had forgotten to pronounce.

If Lily had not become aware of the inflectional affixes in this session, she probably would have noticed her habitual error during the sessions following the critical event because the articles in the following sessions included more words with the inflectional affix *-s*. The impact of the critical event on Hannah and Lily is addressed in the next section.

The impact of the critical event on Dyad B. Lily recalled during her post-RR program interview that her awareness of *-s* affixes was first aroused when the critical event occurred. The omitted *-s* became a focal issue throughout the following weeks. For instance, Lily listed the words that were corrected during Session 12 (the session after the critical event) in her journal in this way: *children*^s and, *sisters*^s. In fact, the two errors with the affix *-s* only accounted for half of the mistakes that Lily made during her oral reading practice. She also mentioned difficulties encountered in Session 13:

I felt that my reading speed decreased greatly during the correct words per minute [CWPM] assessments. In the past, my CWPM was about 80 to 90 words. However, I pronounced too many words incorrectly this time and I read fewer words within a minute. I felt that the article in the textbook we read today was a little bit difficult, but I have no idea why it was more difficult. Perhaps the reason was that there were too many *-s* sounds in the article and I forgot to pronounce the affix *-s* every time. (Lily's journal, 11/05/2013)

This was the first time that Lily recognized that her decreasing oral reading accuracy rate was caused by the omission of *-s* affixes. The issue of omitting the affix *-s* frequently appeared in Lily's other journals, and she also found that the more *-s* affixes that occurred in an article, the slower her reading speed became. In her post-program interview (December, 2013), Lily revealed that, in fact, she did not feel that pronouncing the added *-s* was important, and that the *-s* sound was difficult for her to pronounce. She confessed in her interview that her omission of the inflectional affix *-s* might also be associated with her desire to read faster and improve her oral reading speed record.

During the critical event, to help Lily remember to pronounce the affix *-s*, Hannah first highlighted the *-s* that her partner habitually omitted. After this session, the issue of the omitted *-s* also became a repeated theme in Hannah's journals. For instance, in Session 12, Hannah reported that Lily still forgot to pronounce the

inflectional affixes, even though they were highlighted with a marker. Gradually, Hannah began to make some changes to effectively enhance Lily's oral reading accuracy. She developed various methods of reminding her partner to notice the *-s*. She even claimed that her "ultimate goal was to assist Lily to become an independent learner, who can read correctly without her reminders" (Hannah's journal, 11/01/2013). Hannah's journals from Sessions 13, 15, 17, and 18 reported on Lily's progress and the changes that she had adopted to help Lily be more aware of the omitted *-s* on her own. The reflections in Hannah's journals, which mainly address the changes in her own error correction methods, are discussed in the following section.

In her journal entry from Session 13, Hannah concluded that the difficulty that her partner encountered was mainly caused by the inflectional affix *-s*.

This article was a little difficult for Lily to read aloud because there were more words with *-s* affixes. She often forgot to pronounce them. Although I had told her verbally to notice these words, she still forgot to do so. (Hannah's journal, 11/05/2013)

This was the session in which Lily first attributed the increased difficulty of a text to the number of inflectional words ending in *-s*. It finally dawned on Lily that her problem with pronouncing the affix *-s* seriously affected her oral reading accuracy. Moreover, in the same session, Hannah also observed changes in her partner. She started to perceive that it was more important for Lily to self-monitor her own learning methods because that would be more effective at enhancing her awareness of *-s* affixes in the article.

When practicing reading the article, I noticed Lily underlining the *-s* affixes that she often forgot to pronounce with a red pen in order to remind herself of the *-s*. In the last CWPM assessment, she finally remembered to read out all of the *-s* affixes. (Hannah's journal, 11/05/2013)

She believed that Lily would focus more on the omitted *-s* if she marked the *-s*

herself. In this session, she was glad to find that Lily began monitoring her own reading and hoped that she would keep doing this in the following sessions.

Speaking English accurately was more important than pursuing a faster oral reading speed. I've helped her find ways to help herself to remember to pronounce the affix *-s* before. Now, she can use these methods to remind herself. This slight change is a great breakthrough for her. I hoped that she will also mark the affix *-s* and any unknown words by herself in the next sessions. In this way, she may have a deeper impression of the words that she easily pronounces incorrectly. (Hannah's journal, 11/05/2013)

This self-monitoring method was also continuously practiced in Session 15. Hannah stated that it was crucial for Lily to become fully self-aware of the mistakes she made in the oral reading.

This time, I made Lily circle the words she read incorrectly. I would point out the errors she made only when she hadn't circled the words. It's essential to make her aware of her own errors. Although it might be hard for her to detect the mistakes she makes, she will be able to listen to her own pronunciation attentively and learn more from her mistakes after practicing this method several times. (Hannah's journal, 11/19/2013)

In the next session, Hannah adopted another method to help her partner be a more independent learner. She decided to review all of the incorrectly pronounced words before Lily measured her oral reading speed. However, this time, Lily did not just passively repeat Hannah's correct pronunciations. Instead, Hannah made Lily think hard on her own in order to pronounce the words by herself.

A few seconds before the oral reading speed assessment, I told Lily to review the words she read incorrectly during the practice. I made her tell me how to pronounce them. If she made a mistake, I could correct her right away. I could only know whether she understood or not through the question and answer process. Her answers were all correct. Therefore, during the timed reading, she overcame the challenge of pronouncing the inflectional affix *-s* and other unknown words. (Hannah's journal, 11/22/2013)

Hannah's methods seemed to be successful. In the journal entry from the next session, Session 18, she wrote positively about the progress Lily had made.

To my greatest delight, there were so many words that ended in –s, but Lily correctly pronounced half of them. In the past, she could hardly remember to pronounce these inflectional words with –s affixes when she saw them.

(Hannah’s journal, 11/22/2013)

Although Lily had not fully overcome her habitual problem, Hannah felt positively about her partner’s improvement and she revealed her jubilation and optimism in the same journal entry.

With hard work from Lily, I believe she could make more progress in the future. Next time, I hope that the standard is raised even higher, and that she can read a little bit faster...I am looking forward to the next measurement of oral reading speed. She made such obvious progress, and she read even louder than I did! (Hannah’s journal, 11/22/2013)

This journal entry demonstrates that Hannah kept praising the efforts of her partner. Lily also noticed that Hannah constantly cheered for her. She also appreciated that Hannah always worked patiently and conscientiously to help her read faster and more accurately.

Hannah tried her best to help me remember to pronounce -s.In the end, I was aware enough to pronounce the –s at the end of every word, but this resulted in a declined reading speed. Nonetheless, my partner always encouraged me and told me that I had actually made progress. (Lily’s journal, 11/05/2013)

In conclusion, the critical event encouraged Hannah to think of different methods to manage Lily’s errors during the following sessions. She also assessed the effectiveness of her methods by observing that Lily was aware of and remembered to pronounce the affix –s. Because Hannah sincerely wanted to help her partner stop omitting the affix –s to improve her accuracy rate, the theme of the omitted affix–s appeared repeatedly, in every journal entry, after the critical event. The learning processes that Dyad B experienced during peer-mediated RR are addressed in the following section.

Dyad B: Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Learning Processes

Hannah, a higher achiever, could reflect on her own learning processes and correct her own mistakes while reading. During the peer-mediated RR program, she taught her partner, Lily, patiently all the time. The following two parts depict the process of error correction and the measurement of oral reading speed.

Error correction. Both Hannah and Lily exhibited gentle personalities. The video recorded data indicated that, during RR sessions, they sat closely together and their bodies leaned in toward each other to allow them to hear the oral reading more clearly. They were both thoughtful enough to consider their partner's learning needs. For instance, Lily mentioned that, although they followed the procedure and took turns reading the texts during practice, Hannah told her to read first so that there would be more time to correct her errors because Lily was a slow reader. However, because Lily did not want to take up too much practice time, she made the same suggestion.

I know I read too slowly, so when Hannah asked me to read first, I told her, "You read first. If I read first, there may not be enough time left for you to practice reading the article." So, in the end, we had an equal chance to read first. (Third interview, November, 2013)

During the RR session, the researcher also found that Hannah spent most of the practice time listening, correcting, and teaching Lily. The previous section stated that after Hannah identified her partner's habitual error—the omission of the inflectional affix *-s*—she started to slightly change her methods of error correction. She wanted to make Lily more aware of her own mistakes, instead of simply pointing out Lily's errors. Hannah considered that increasing Lily's awareness was more essential and effective at encouraging her to remember to pronounce the affix *-s*. Then Lily would be "aware enough to listen to her own oral reading and correct

herself in the future” (Hannah’s journal, 12/17/2013).

Hannah said in the post-program interview that once Lily’s mistakes were corrected, she correctly repeated the words after Hannah and remembered the sounds of the words after some practice. In her third interview, Lily said that she mainly learned new words by remembering their sounds, and that pronouncing an English word by looking at its written form. By contrast, Lily’s partner used a different method of learning words. Hannah thought that she had little problem pronouncing new words because she was capable of deducing the pronunciation of unknown words by using the KK phonetic alphabet. She attributed her use of the KK phonetic alphabet to her cram school teacher, “Thanks to the way that the teacher taught us the KK phonetic alphabet, now I can pronounce new words correctly and I know that clear articulation is very important” (Fourth interview, December, 2013).

Lily believed that her English proficiency was inferior to her partner’s, therefore she may not have been able to identify the errors her partner made. In addition, she concluded that the RR activity did not benefit her partner because Hannah helped her so much, but she was “not helpful to her at all” (Third interview, November, 2013). Although Lily would have liked to help Hannah to identify incorrect words, it was Hannah who always taught her. Lily felt that Hannah “did not learn anything from the RR program” (Third interview, November, 2013). Lily wrote in her journal, “...my partner often encouraged me, so I hope my English will become better, as good as Hannah’s. However, it is a little difficult”(Lily’s journal, 11/08/2013). According to the interview with Lily, the gap between them only made her want to work harder, rather than feel inferior. Lily stated in the post-program interview that she worked much harder during the RR program in class and spent more time on English after school.

Sometimes I became absent-minded when the teacher was lecturing on the stage. It is better to have a partner to work with in class. Besides, I look up words in the electronic dictionary to check the pronunciation of the words that I do not know during the RR session at school. If not for the peer-mediated RR program and my partner's assistance, I would not have learned so many words from the textbooks. In the past, there were too many unknown words in the textbook, so I did not like to read or review the articles in the textbook at home. (Fourth interview, December, 2013)

The peer-mediated RR program helped Lily to learn vocabulary, and thanks to her partner's feedback, she knew whether she had pronounced the words correctly.

Lily concluded that, because of the RR program, she studied English and read English articles aloud more often than before.

According to the video recorded data, the members of this dyad always worked diligently. Hannah said, "Both of us are not like other group members, who sometimes start chatting after practicing reading the article once or twice" (Fourth interview, December, 2013). Although Hannah, who was more proficient at English, did not receive any correction from her partner, she talked about Lily's progress during the RR sessions and always praised her and hoped that Lily would perform better in her journals. Hannah even said that, because her partner read rather slowly, she could "spot the errors easily and be more aware of the mistakes at the same time" (Third interview, November, 2013). Hannah also mentioned in her interview that she became more familiar with the content to be learned from teaching her slower-learning partner and carefully reading the text. She also constantly praised Lily for her inquisitive learning attitude. Whenever Lily had questions regarding meaning or pronunciation, she would ask Hannah. In the post-program interview, Hannah said, "Because Lily always works industriously during the practice, I also want to spend more time studying English at home." She watched English TV series three times a week. While watching the programs, Hannah focused more on the

intonation of the words and the meaning of the English by reading the Chinese subtitles.

In summary, both Hannah and Lily were thoughtful enough to consider their partner's learning needs. Moreover, they were encouraged to study English harder because they saw their partner's efforts and the merits of these efforts during the peer-mediated RR program. Because of the RR activity, both of them practiced reading the articles several times in class and became more familiar with the learning material.

The previous section addresses the interaction between the dyad when correcting errors and their learning methods. The following section presents a description of the problems that Hannah and Lily encountered during the measurement of oral reading speed, the changes the dyad experienced, and the effort they made to enhance their reading speed.

Measurements of oral reading speed (Correct Words Per Minute). Lily was a slow reader—she struggled with new words and sometimes she would forget the vocabulary she had learned. Nevertheless, her partner claimed that Lily's pronunciation was not bad. Hannah stated that Lily could read “fluently” (Hannah's journal, 10/25/2013), although her reading speed was quite slow. This may have resulted from her early exposure to an immersion English environment when she attended kindergarten and her one year of study in a private elementary school, which also provided an English environment.

After the peer-mediated RR program had been implemented for approximately 4 weeks, Lily described a difficulty she had encountered:

I felt that I was less likely to make mistakes if I read slowly, word by word.

Once I read a little faster, the number of mistakes I made increased a lot, even though I didn't read very fast. Nonetheless, I always hoped that I could read much faster, and my partner always encouraged me to do so. However, I was just unable to read very fast, and a lot of words I read were incorrect. I think the reason was that I was not familiar with some of the vocabulary, so I should read English books much more often. (Lily's journal, 10/18/2013)

In fact, it was rather unusual for Lily to closely observe and analyze her own learning progress and the possible reasons for the difficulties she encountered. The passage from Lily's journal reflects her desire to increase her oral reading speed and her hope to perform better on the CWPM assessment in the RR session. Lily also expressed in her interview that when her reading speed was slower than her previous speed, she felt "a bit disappointed" (Fourth interview, December, 2013). She often wrote in her journal that "I hope to read as fast as my partner. I will work harder" (Lily's journal, 11/12/2013; 11/21/2013) or "I hope I can read faster" (Lily's journal, 11/14/2013). These statements also indicate that she was mainly concerned about her oral reading rate.

Although Lily learned words and pronunciations from her more proficient partner, her reading speed did not change much between the pretest and posttest. She still constantly struggled to recognize and memorize the sounds of words. Furthermore, because her partner had identified her habitual error of omitting the inflectional affix *-s* during the critical event, she became aware that pronouncing the *-s* affixes in a text also slowed down her reading rate, and that omitting the *-s* greatly decreased her oral reading accuracy.

In addition to the affix *-s*, pronouncing the inflectional affix *-ed* also affected her oral reading rate. Hannah, who exhibited the metacognitive ability to observe her own oral reading, mentioned in her second journal that her reading speed slowed because she wanted to more clearly articulate grammatical affixes. Because she was a higher achiever, she could analyze a difficulty when she encountered it, which led

to a lower reading rate. She described this problem in her journals. “I couldn’t read smoothly when reading “pet cat” and “sweet smell went with us.” I hope I can read more fluently after practicing more” (Hannah’s journal, 09/24/2013). She also found methods of improving her own oral reading rate. “I circled some past tense verbs, past progressive tense verbs, and prepositions in the text to remind myself to pay attention to them” (Hannah’s journal, 10/25/2013).

Before the implementation of the RR program, Hannah could already read over 200 words per minute. Other than the previous training she had received from the strict English teacher in the fifth and sixth grades, in the third interview, she attributed her fast reading speed to reading repeatedly during the RR sessions and her efforts during the practice sessions. Because she was already able to read rapidly and accurately before the RR program, the sentence chunking activity and the expression of English intonation that the teacher had taught in class made the biggest impression on her. She found that sentence chunking—clustering words together to create meaning within a sentence—helped her comprehend a text better and kept herself from reading word by word. Hannah stated in her post-program interview that she would remind herself to vary her intonation and prevent herself from reading in a monotone. She also claimed that she had learned a great deal during the RR program from two of her classmates who exhibited fast oral reading speeds and obvious intonation. Lily stated in the post-program interview, “During the RR practice, I found that Diana and Tiffany always read fluently and very fast, with a rise and fall in the sound of their voices. I would like to learn from them.”

The critical event and the learning processes relevant to Dyad B demonstrated that the members of the dyad cooperated and exerted a positive impact on each other. Their partner’s industrious learning attitude or excellent oral reading ability

encouraged them to study English harder. The following section introduces the members of Dyad C and presents the learning experiences they encountered during the peer-mediated RR program.

Dyad C: Hank and Lucy

Hank

Hank had been diagnosed with emotional disorder syndrome, although he appeared to be a normal child. Certain features, such as his stubbornness and the inability to read emotions, could still be carefully observed when interacting with him for a long period of time. Because most of the students in the class were friendly, trusting, and gentle, Hank could find three to five classmates to talk to or play with, and these students seemed unaware of his disorder. It was difficult for him to detect the emotion of others and once he believed something, he would adhere to his belief and he was rather reluctant to change. In other words, he was inflexible. This trait sometimes damaged his relationships with others. One of his classmates once complained about Hank to the researcher, who was also their homeroom teacher at the time. On a Saturday morning, Hank had an appointment with some classmates to discuss a school report. One of the students, Ivan (pseudonym), called them to apologize that he would be late and to suggest that they play basketball before he arrived. All of them, except Hank, happily agreed and had a great time on the basketball court. However, Hank insisted on waiting for him instead of joining his peers on the court. In the end, he waited for half an hour, doing nothing at all. This made Hank angry and he blamed Ivan for being terribly late, even though he had known beforehand from the phone call that Ivan would not be on time. When Hank arrived home, he indignantly told the whole story to his father. His father, a meticulous man, called Ivan's father and scolded Ivan for his lack of

punctuality. However, Ivan thought the phone call was ridiculous and that Hank and his father had overreacted. Most of his classmates agreed with Ivan's viewpoint after hearing the story.

This anecdote demonstrates that once Hank is determined to do something, he will stick to his principles and is inflexible. This trait was also reflected in the way that he cooperated with others. According to Hank's classmates and the researcher's observations, when Hank worked with his group members to complete a task, he would try to improve his performance, and he pushed other group members to also do their best. However, some members wanted to just complete a task, and they did not consider the quality of their work. Consequently, those who Hank pushed to improve their performance complained to their homeroom teacher (the researcher). It was difficult for him to be sufficiently sensitive to perceive that some of his group members were unsatisfied with his behavior and felt that he was annoying. Sometimes, even if Hank knew that others opposed him when he pushed them to do things, he still stubbornly insisted on his decision. The counselor who attended a monthly meeting with Hank said that, "Hank's emotional disorder prevents him from recognizing and understanding emotions in others."

Because of this emotional disturbance, Hank kept a diary to record his feelings, emotions, and reflections from his daily life. He shared his diary with the counselor in the counselor's office during their monthly meeting. The counselor felt that this method provided Hank with an outlet for his emotional disturbance.

If Hank cannot find a method to vent his emotion, the accumulated emotion will explode suddenly one day, and the results are hard to predict. For instance, Hank used to scream in the classroom unpredictably in his sixth grade. This behavior disturbed his classmates at the time and they did not know what was happening to him. (Interview with Hank's counselor, 12/23/2013)

Hank's father, who is strict and meticulous, played an essential role in his life. His

father often informed Hank of the right method to deal with events at work and demanded that his son should be a righteous man. Hank was greatly influenced by his father, and this impact was reflected in his journal. For instance, his father frequently told him the value of time and the importance of English oral abilities at work. In his second journal, Hank wrote the following:

During the practice, if there were any words that Lucy didn't know, I would teach her. My goal is to make her English better and better. We won't fool around like our other classmates. They don't know that time is money. Don't waste time. If the time in class is used to practice speaking English, maybe our oral abilities will distinguish us in an interview when we go job hunting!
(Hank's journal, 09/27/2013)

Hank's father also taught him to complete tasks meticulously and honestly, allowing the results of high-quality work to make him a success at work. When he learned that the reading speed of some of his classmates were over 200 words per minute, he questioned the veracity of these records in his journal.

Ms. Tsai, I think you should listen to that student during the oral speed assessment to see whether he read diligently. I am afraid that it was pure baloney and that he just read it carelessly! I think people should achieve success honestly. The words they read should be clear and easy to understand, instead of blurring together. These requirements are the pre-requisite qualities that successful people must have. (Hank's journal, 10/01/2013)

During the interview, Hank said that his father had always demanded that he should be a righteous, honest, and meticulous person when completing tasks. Hank also believed that these qualities would make him successful at work. Furthermore, his father told him that society was fiercely competitive and that the ability to fluently speak English would be a great advantage at work. Therefore, Hank also felt that being able to read English was imperative.

Lucy

Lucy was an easy-going, straight-forward girl. Her personality prevented her

from fixating on trifles or bearing grudges. She described herself as a Tom boy, and it was easy for her to get along with the male students in the class. She often played with boys during breaks at school.

Lucy came from a single-parent family. Her mom worked hard and came home late at night to support the family of three. Lucy had an older sister, who used to attend the same junior high school. According to her sister's former homeroom teacher, her sister enjoyed making friends on the Internet and hardly studied after school. Influenced by her sister, Lucy also spent many hours on the Internet. When Lucy was an elementary school student, she had been transferred to different schools in her third, fourth, and sixth grades, and she had to become accustomed to a new environment almost every year. Although her life seemed unstable, because of Lucy's optimistic and open-minded personality, she became accustomed to each to each new environment. "I did not think that moving frequently was a big deal. I just lived in different places with my family" Lucy said when she was asked how she felt during that period time (First interview, September, 2013). In the summer before she attended junior high school, her family moved to Taipei and had stayed in the city ever since.

In her pre-program interview, Lucy recalled that she had started to learn English in her third grade. At the time, she had tried her utmost to keep up with her peers. However, she found that memorizing words was the most difficult part of learning English. When she prepared for vocabulary quizzes, she laboriously recited each letter several times to memorize the spelling of a word. Words that were longer were much more difficult for her to memorize. In the fourth grade, she was transferred to another school. At first, she tried to catch up with her classmates; however, she found that the difficulty of the English learning material had increased, and it was even more difficult for her to memorize the vocabulary. To make the

matter worse, her English teacher usually taught the students several new words in a period and then tested their spelling in the next class. Because Lucy did not spend much time studying at home, and some of the long words were too challenging for her to remember, she gradually stopped memorizing English words. Because of the increasing difficulty of the learning material and the frustration she experienced in English class, she even stopped paying attention to the teacher in class.

There were three other students like me who didn't memorize the spelling of words because the learning material became more and more difficult. At the time, five students formed a group and sat together in English class. Besides me, two other members of my group didn't listen to the teacher at all in class. We three sat side by side and chatted all the time in class. (First interview, September, 2013)

When the teacher taught the learning material from the textbook on the stage, she chatted with her classmates or daydreamed in class. However, her attitude toward learning English slightly improved after she moved to Hualien, a rather remote district of Taiwan.

When I was transferred to Hualien, interestingly, I found that the textbook I was going to study in my sixth grade was the same one that I had used during my fifth grade in the previous school. Because I had learned the words before, they became less difficult to me. I started to memorize vocabulary from the textbook to prepare for tests. When the words were not too long, I could remember them better and got better grades on quizzes. (First interview, September, 2013)

Because memorizing vocabulary was extremely difficult for Lucy, the researcher asked whether she knew how sound and spelling were connected in the first interview. Her answer was no — she was unaware of the connection. She claimed that she did not know how to memorize words by recognizing the sound-spelling connections and then spelling the words. In addition, Lucy confessed that when her junior high school teacher taught her class how to pronounce words by using sound-symbol relationships, she had not paid attention in class and she could

hardly remember the sounds of words. When the English teacher made the class repeat the articles she read from the textbook, Lucy only occasionally repeated the words. Even when she did repeat after the teacher, she sometimes had difficulty maintaining the reading speed of her teacher or peers, because there were too many words in the article that she did not sure know how to pronounce. She thought that not knowing the KK phonetic alphabet was the main cause of her problem with pronouncing English words. Although she vaguely remembered that her fourth grade teacher had taught her phonics, a system of teaching reading and spelling through sound-symbol relationships, she had not paid attention to the teacher because she had given up learning English. No one had ever told her that it was crucial to learn phonics or the connection between sound and spelling.

Lucy was easily distracted and hardly paid attention to the teachers in class. Most of her teachers told the researcher (Lucy's homeroom teacher) that they had noticed that Lucy was absent-minded during class.

I think almost all the subjects are extremely difficult for me, like English, math, and science. I can only understand the learning material for Chinese and social studies, and I am only capable of reading these two subjects by myself. Sometimes, when there is a Chinese pop quiz in class, during the break that day, I will memorize the explanation of the phrases in the textbook or the paragraphs that the Chinese teacher asked us to write down by heart. But, actually, I hardly study at home or bring textbooks home for reviewing. (First interview, September, 2013)

She did not complete her assignments at home. She usually copied her classmates' answers during the break at school. In the first interview, Lucy admitted that she spent a substantial amount of time on the Internet. Other than playing games online, she did not study or perform other activities after school. When the study was conducted, Lucy was an eighth grader who had been learning English since the third grade. However, her English competence based on her answers on English test

papers and her oral readings of texts in class indicated that Lucy recognized few words—probably fewer than 150 words. Words such as *spring*, *children* or *stay* were beyond her comprehension. Writing a complete English sentence that was grammatically correct was almost impossible for her.

From Lucy's perspective, learning English was such a difficult task that she thought she would never be able to learn it. Although many teachers at school often emphasized the importance of learning English, she did not know anyone who used English at work. In the first interview, Lucy claimed that her lack of English ability was unlikely to affect her future.

Hank's and Lucy's first interviews demonstrated that they held almost opposite perceptions of the importance of learning English, and their differing viewpoints were reflected in their learning attitudes during the peer-mediated RR program. The following section is related to the critical events experienced by Dyad C.

Critical Events Experienced by Dyad C

Unlike Dyads A or B, Hank and Lucy identified different events as the crucial events that occurred during the peer-mediated RR program. Hank's difficulties perceiving emotions and correctly explaining social context may explain the variation. For instance, when he cooperated with Lucy, he stubbornly insisted that she should read the texts aloud without considering her protests or any problems that she encountered. He expressed in the third interview that he was totally unaware of Lucy's slight irritation with his method of pushing her to complete the oral reading. In fact, when Hank was asked why the event he identified was critical to him, he described the difficulty he encountered when teaching Lucy and his own problem with liaison—the linking of sounds or words. After he was informed of Lucy's

critical event during the post-program interview, he stated that nothing special happened in the session during which her critical event occurred. By contrast, based on Lucy's jubilant tone in her journal and her description in her post-program interview, the progress she made in that session was unusual to her.

Because the critical events identified by the dyad were different. Hank's critical event is presented first, followed by Lucy's critical event.

Critical event experienced by Hank. The critical event occurred during the session when Hank and Lucy were repeatedly reading the article from Lesson 3. The title of the article was *Interesting Facts on Thomas Edison*. This lesson was particularly challenging to most of the students because of the increased complexity of the sentence structures and the increased number of new words. In addition, Hank mentioned in the post-program interview that the past tense verbs in the article were difficult to pronounce, whether they were regular or irregular. He said that the class had just started learning the past tense, but there were many past tense verbs in the text. It usually required a few seconds to determine whether the inflection affix *-ed* of a regular past tense verb was pronounced /t/ or /d/. Irregular verbs, such as *taught*, *could*, *became*, and *read*, were also new and difficult for them to remember.

These difficulties made Hank's partner, Lucy, feel that it was unprecedentedly complex to read the article, and she was reluctant to attempt it. According to Hank in the second interview (October, 2013), although Lucy did not know how to pronounce some words in the previous RR sessions, she still tried her best to read the whole article. However, in this session, Hank noticed that,

Whenever Lucy encountered words she didn't know how to pronounce in the article, she would be stuck there and fell into a state of trance. When this happened, I would say, "Stop day-dreaming. Keep reading." That's because time was running out. It was a timed reading! (Second interview, October, 2013)

Nonetheless, Hank recalled that it was exceptionally difficult for him to push Lucy to keep reading. Subsequently, he decided to read out the words for her whenever she stopped reading because of the unknown words. Hank then needed to read almost all of the words in the text for Lucy to repeat, even though it was her turn to complete the timed reading on her own. It seemed that he had to read all the words for Lucy, or she would stop reading and fall into a trance.

After encouraging Lucy to read the text approximately three times, Hank asked her to tell him the words she did not know. However, he did not expect Lucy to reply “I don’t know any of these words” in Chinese. In the post-program interview, Hank mimicked Lucy’s tone when she said these words, and he still felt indignant that she had replied to him in this way. At that moment, he felt that he had no choice but to continuously urge Lucy to repeat words after him, regardless of how unwilling she was. This was the first time that his partner had been reluctant to read out an article during the peer-mediated RR sessions.

In addition to his struggle to make Lucy practice reading by herself, another reason that the session was critical to Hank was his problem reading a group of words by attaching a final consonant to a succeeding vowel. He thought that there were more words in this lesson that could be linked together to increase the oral reading fluency than there were in other lessons. In the interview with Hank, he explained what he meant.

At first, when I read these words, “tested it out,” I hesitated for a few seconds and wondered how to read them. Then I pronounced them like this, “testi-d-i-t out,” because I didn’t know that I could link these words together by attaching the final consonants to the succeeding vowels. However, every time I read the words, I paused for a while and pronounced them like this, “testi-d-i-t out.” So I asked you [the researcher, his English teacher] personally, and then I finally learned how to link the three words together. It took me a while to practice the linking of words successfully. (Second interview, October, 2013)

Although the teacher had taught the students how to speak English more fluently by demonstrating the use of liaison, it was the first time that Hank truly understood how to link words by attaching a final consonant to a succeeding vowel because he did not read rapidly and fluently during the timed reading. Because of this difficulty, he spoke to the teacher and practiced the linking of words for the first time. Moreover, in Hank's learning journal, he also mentioned that he taught liaison to his partner after he successfully used liaison to read these words.

Lucy asked me how to read "tested it out," but she had difficulty understanding what I said and couldn't read these words well. So she said "skip" ("跳過 tiào guò") [in Chinese] when she encountered them. However, I said "absolutely not" ("絕對不行 jué duì bù xíng") [in Chinese] and insisted that she read them out. After I demonstrated how to read these words several times and had her repeat them after me, she could finally read the words. This time, I read the whole reading loudly for her so that she could listen carefully and repeat after me. When it came to the third assessment of oral reading speed, she also bravely read the article out! (Hank's journal, 10/01/2013)

This learning journal also reflected Hank's insistence that Lucy practice her oral reading. In Hank's next journal he mentioned again that when Lucy said "skip" in Chinese, he replied "Don't skip [reading the words]!" in Chinese.

Other than the difficulty Hank encountered when reading a group of words by attaching the final consonants to the succeeding vowels, the adjustment of his peer tutoring method was also the main reason that this session became his critical event. The following section describes the impact of the critical event on Hank.

The impact of the critical event on Hank. Because it was difficult to push Lucy to practice reading the article, Hank started to change his peer tutoring method in the RR program and began to analyze Lucy's learning attitude and her methods of learning English in his journal. After this session, he allowed Lucy to repeat words

after him or told her how to pronounce the words when she stopped reading because she had encountered unfamiliar words at the beginning of an RR practice session. The procedure stipulated by the peer-mediated RR program stated that a dyad should take turns reading an article during the practice session. Gradually, he noticed the progress that his partner had made over time. “Without helping her read the English text for the first three rounds of oral reading, I thought that she would have learned nothing and that her foundation of English competence would have greatly deteriorated” (Hank’s journal, 11/01/2013). This finding made him believe more firmly that he was using the correct method to teach Lucy English.

Furthermore, he began focusing on and analyzing the difficulties that Lucy encountered when reading an article. This was not something he would have considered before the peer-mediated RR program, and no one had asked him to do so. In the third interview, he described his observation.

When the sentences were easy, not so complicated, Lucy would try to read them out, and she was able to pronounce the words correctly. However, when the words were past tense verbs or newly learned ones, she had more problems reading them out. (Second interview, October, 2013)

In addition to the analysis of Lucy’s English learning difficulties, he also started to observe Lucy’s English learning attitude and comment on it in his journal. The following excerpt is from Hank’s journal entry that he wrote after the critical event. He used three question marks to indicate his strong dissatisfaction with Lucy’s indifferent response and unwillingness to try.

I asked Lucy to point out the words she didn’t know how to pronounce. But I didn’t expect that she would brazenly reply, “I don’t know any of these words” (“我全都不會 wǒ quán dōu bù huì”) [in Chinese]. Again! Ms. Tsai, if you were me, would you tolerate this huge lie? Hasn’t she gone too far??? (Hank’s journal, 10/22/2013)

Hank said in the third interview that he became slightly angry toward Lucy’s passive attitude because she replied “I don’t know any of these words” and because

of her reluctance to try. Although he still taught Lucy ardently until the end of the RR program, sometimes he complained that Lucy did not review the words she had learned in class. Therefore, he sometimes had to repeatedly teach her the same words in the RR sessions because she still had not learned how to pronounce the words. Furthermore, he stated that Lucy would never improve her English ability “if she did not see the importance of learning this subject” (Hank’s journal, 11/08/2013). He stated in his journal that he had made every effort to help Lucy read English articles, and if she did not also try her best to study harder, he did not know what else he could do to teach her. In his journal, Hank revealed his indignation at Lucy’s inattentiveness in class and identified what Lucy needed to do to improve her own English ability. Moreover, he drew the facial expression > ___< to show his dissatisfaction with the need to teach Lucy same basic words repetitively. The star icons he used emphasized each of his viewpoints.

I couldn’t “tolerate” teaching Lucy some basic key words > ___<. They are so “basic,” for example, *Jay*, *butterflies*, etc. Besides, the teacher had already repeatedly read them many times.

- ★ But she did not like to repeat after the teacher. If she had read the text diligently with everyone else, she would have had no problem pronouncing them, right?
- ★ I believe she is capable of catching up with us. But we are not able to change her “mind,” or her learning attitude. She has to make a change on her own! (Hank’s journal, 10/25/2013)

In summary, after the critical event occurred, Hank found that, because of Lucy’s reluctance to read out the text on her own, he had to change his peer tutoring method to teach her how to pronounce unknown words. For instance, instead of merely listening carefully and correcting her mistakes, he had to read first to allow Lucy to repeat after him even though it was her turn to read the text. He also began to notice and reflect on Lucy’s learning difficulties and attitude in his journals after each session.

The difficulties Hank experienced in the critical event caused him to make some adjustments to the remaining peer-mediated RR sessions. Although Lucy's critical event was different to her partner's, her event also started with an unprecedented difficulty that she encountered and it also led to changes to the following sessions. The following section reports the critical event experienced by Lucy and the impact of the event.

The Critical Event Experienced by Lucy. Lucy and Hank experienced different critical events. Lucy's event occurred after Hank adjusted his method of teaching Lucy unknown words. In this session, the topic of the text that they read was toothaches. Because the grammar focus in this lesson was frequency adverbs, such as *always*, *usually*, and *sometimes*, the sentence structures in the text were not complex or difficult. However, students needed to remember the new words taught in the lesson, that is, the frequency adverbs and vocabulary relating to toothaches, such as *dessert*, *brush*, and *dentist*. If they did not learn the words, the gist of the article would be difficult to grasp.

Lucy revealed in her post-program interview that this session was critical to her because the text was exceptionally difficult—almost all of the words were unknown to her. According to Hank's post-program interview, at the very beginning of this peer-mediated RR session, he noticed that Lucy had no idea what the text was about, thus he translated the sentences into Chinese for the first time. After his explanation, Lucy finally understood what she was reading. "Sometimes I practiced reading a text aloud and learned the pronunciation of new words without knowing the meaning of these words," Lucy said in her post-program interview (December, 2013). Although the teacher always explained the meaning of the sentences at the beginning of each RR session, Lucy admitted that she was easily distracted in class

and stopped paying attention to what the teacher said.

During the practice session, her partner segmented words into syllables for her and marked them in the textbook as in the following examples: *den/ti/st*, *af/ter*, and *te/rri/ble*. In addition, Lucy wrote the Chinese phonetic alphabet near the words she did not know immediately after her partner's demonstration. In this way, she could remind herself of the sounds of the words and then pronounce them by herself later.

The following quote refers to Lucy's reflection on this session in her journal. She recorded her reading speed from the four assessments during the session and the words that she pronounced incorrectly. The two types of record were written down by Lucy because all of the students were required to by the teacher, although they were encouraged to write a more detailed description of what occurred during each session.

In the very beginning, my reading speed for the first assessment was 63 CWPM, and I pronounced six words incorrectly. They were *toothache*, *twice*, *makes*, *seldom*, *dentist*, and *brush*. Hank taught me how to pronounce them, and I read them several times repeatedly. I also wrote down the Chinese phonetic alphabet near the words I didn't know. These techniques helped me make progress in the second timed reading. My reading speed was 52 CWPM. Although the number of words read decreased a lot, I read all the words correctly. The third timed reading was 66 CWPM. Incorrect words – zero! The fourth timed reading was 79 CWPM, and there were no incorrect words either! This outcome blew me away!! I think I worked the most diligently during this session. :D@@~~ (Lucy's journal, 12/03/2013)

Her journal recorded her progress and the process by which she overcame various difficulties. Lucy even used symbols :D and @@~~ to respectively indicate her joy and surprise at the progress. and During the post-program interview, Lucy felt that the process implemented during this session impressed her the most because there were many words that she did not know how to pronounce when she first read the text. However, with Hank's help and her repeatedly reading after him, she could

correctly pronounce words at the end of the session. The event also indicated that, as long as Lucy worked hard with her partner, she could remember the pronunciation of new words and could read an article aloud by herself. Her partner, Hank, also mentioned this point in his learning journal:

Lucy just needed someone to “accompany her” and “more time.” Everyone is the same, just like her. After I taught her to read the sentences once or twice, she could read them by herself. (Her voice and speed needed changing, though.) There was a little change I made this time — I translated some sentences for her. However, I am quite worried about whether she will practice reading this article again. (Hank’s journal, 12/03/2013)

Besides Lucy’s progress that he observed, Hank also expressed his concern in the last sentence of this journal entry, and Lucy’s reply in her interview confirmed Hank’s concern — she never reviewed the texts learned in the RR program. She did not even bring her English textbook or other learning materials home.

Although Lucy never practiced reading the text again, the satisfying learning outcome that occurred during this critical event encourage her to change slightly. Her journal recorded her delight toward the progress that she had made after Hank taught her, and the impact of this learning experience is reported in the following section.

The impact of the critical event on Lucy. Even though Lucy identified the event described in the previous section as critical to her, she did not think that it had exerted any impact on her behavior. However, based on two observations — the content of her learning journal and her method of practicing oral reading with her partner — Lucy’s learning attitude during the RR program did change slightly after this session.

Comparing the content of the journals she wrote before the critical event with

the journal entries that she wrote after this event reflected obvious differences in her behavior in class and her learning attitude. In her previous learning journals, she only recorded the results of the tested reading speed and her trouble concentrating in class. For instance:

Because I was extremely sleepy, I was not able to concentrate and my mind was miles away during the whole class. The reading speed of the first timed reading was 58 CWPM, the second time, 76 CWPM, and the third time, 75 CWPM. I was so sleepy. And I was completely unfamiliar with the content of this lesson. (Lucy's journal, 10/01/2013)

Some of Lucy's entries even mention that she drew in her textbook when it was her partner's turn to read the text.

After the critical event, she began to list the words she pronounced incorrectly, as well as the tested results of her reading speed. In her last five journals from the RR program, aside from the list of mispronounced words, she even briefly explained why she had pronounced the words incorrectly. Furthermore, she commented on the methods that Hank used to teach her.

...My third timed reading speed was 70 CWPM, and the incorrect words were – *August* and *rainy*. The two words looked easy. Nonetheless, they are so difficult to pronounce!! It is a good way to remember how to say a word by segmenting it into several parts. (Lucy's journal, 12/17/2013)

The journal showed her response to the method her partner adopted to help her pronounce unknown words. In another journal entry, she commented on a new method that Hank used to increase her reading speed. He sought to improve Lucy's reading speed by pointing at the words she was going to read. Hank explained in his third interview that he presumed that if Lucy could match his word-pointing speed with her reading speed, less unnecessary hesitation and time wasting would occur, enhancing Lucy's reading speed. However, Lucy commented on this method in her journal, "As for the measurements of reading speed, I don't care that much about how fast I read the text. I just hope to pronounce words correctly" (Lucy's journal,

11/08/2013).

In addition to the content of her journal, changes in her learning attitude were also reflected in the way that she worked with her partner when practicing oral reading. Her partner, Hank, mentioned in his post-program interview that she was more willing to read articles aloud and to follow his instruction without any protest after this event. Although Lucy did not feel that she had made any changes after the critical event, Hank believed that she had become more cooperative when he applied the same method of peer tutoring — making Lucy read first so that he would have more time to teach her unknown words during the practice session. He praised Lucy's improved performance and progress in his journal from the final RR session.

I couldn't believe that Lucy could read first by herself and that the outcome was not bad. "*She did make progress!*" Now, Lucy's performance was no different from last time's performance. She did very well. (Hank's journal, 12/20/2013)

After the critical event, even though Lucy still did not review what she had learned after school, her learning attitude during the peer-mediated RR program improved, and she included more feedback in her learning journal. Her partner also noticed these changes after the critical event. He found that she practiced oral reading more diligently and worked with him more cooperatively. To provide a clearer picture of how Hank and Lucy worked to improve their oral reading fluency, the next section presents their learning processes throughout the peer-mediated RR program.

Dyad C: Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Learning Processes

Error correction. Hank and Lucy were friends and often chatted or played together during breaks. They stated in the interview that they were glad to be in a

dyad together practicing their oral reading in the RR program. Hank was more proficient at English than Lucy. He was also an ardent person, who was willing to teach people whose English abilities were inferior to his. During the RR program interview, he told the English teacher/researcher that he would seek partners with inferior English abilities.

Do you notice that those students with better grades want to practice with those who also get good grades? Then what about those whose grades are not that good? When those lower achievers practice speaking English together, it's impossible for them to learn unknown words from one another. (Second interview, October, 2013)

He taught Lucy assiduously and pushed her to try her best during the practice sessions. Because Lucy hardly studied English after school, she did not recognize many words in the texts and had no idea how to pronounce them. To solve this problem, when they were reading a rather difficult article on Thomas Edison, Hank changed his peer tutoring method to help her read these words, assist her to learn, and “boost her confidence to read out English words” (Third interview, November, 2013). Instead of following the RR program procedure and merely correcting his partner's errors, Hank made Lucy repeat words after him or he pronounced words for her during the first three rounds of oral reading after noticing that Lucy stopped reading because of too many unknown words.

In fact, according to the stipulated procedure, Hank and Lucy were supposed to take turns reading the texts aloud, and the listener should only correct his or her partner's errors. However, Hank changed the procedure and explained the reason for this in his journal.

When it was Lucy's turn to read the reading, I taught her and read with her at the same time in order to help her know how to pronounce words and build a foundation of vocabulary. Without helping her to read the English text for the first three rounds of oral reading, I thought that she would have learned nothing and that her foundation of English competence would have greatly

deteriorated. Ms. Tsai, I think, when you were around us, you did hear me read to her word by word, right? (Hank's journal, 11/01/2013)

This journal entry indicated that Hank was aware of Lucy's low English ability and that he had thoughts about how to help her learn English. He said, "We do not know what she does at home. What we can do is to help her learn as much as possible in class" (Fourth interview, December, 2013). He even suggested that the teacher should adopt various methods for practice readings of the text, such as repeating after a recording, repeating after other classmates, or choral reading, before the measurement of oral reading rate. Thus, Lucy was more likely to remember the pronunciation of words and to read more fluently.

Hank worked hard to teach his partner the pronunciation of words and to correct her, but Lucy hardly corrected any of his own pronunciation errors because of her low English proficiency. During the practice and the measurements of oral reading speed, the teacher/ researcher listened to Hank's oral reading and found that sometimes Hank was totally unaware of his own mistakes and occasionally pronounced one or two words incorrectly in the text. Most of the errors resulted from misplaced stress or similar vowels. It was not until the teacher corrected him that he learned the correct pronunciations. Most of the time, he read all of the words correctly. Hank told the teacher, "There is no need to worry about me. Because whenever I am not sure how to pronounce a certain word, I will ask you or other classmates with higher English proficiency" (Hank's journal, 10/15/2013).

Moreover, he said that he always attentively listened to the teacher's oral reading to learn the pronunciation of words, and practiced reading with the whole class and repeated words after the sound track or the teacher. From the video recorded data of the classroom activity, the researcher found that Hank corrected his own miscued words, such as repetition, omission, or even mispronunciation, when he knew the

correct sounds. He also wrote down the words he pronounced incorrectly during the measurement of oral reading speed, based on the teacher's suggestion. This indicated that he was sufficiently aware to know that he pronounced some words incorrectly.

However, even though Hank was sufficiently aware to self-correct miscued words and approached others to learn the pronunciation of unknown words, it was inevitable that he occasionally mispronounced newly learned words and even taught his partner the wrong pronunciation during the RR session. Without feedback from his partner, he assumed that his oral reading was correct until the teacher listened to his reading and corrected him during the session.

Although Hank did not receive any feedback from his partner, he still felt that the peer-mediated RR program had improved his English.

Now I finally realize the benefits of the RR activity!

1. I can memorize vocabulary better by reading the article repeatedly. I read the text aloud and memorize words at the same time.
2. I can write down more grammatically correct translations when taking a test because I try to remember phrases, prepositions, and grammar by heart during RR practice. (Hank's journal, 10/04/2013)

When asked what he thought about the RR activity in the third interview, Hank told the researcher that the activity provided an opportunity to practice speaking English and also familiarized him with the articles, which were tested in monthly tests.

Hank developed several methods for assisting his partner to memorize the pronunciations of words and for improving Lucy's oral reading rate. The following section describes how Hank and Lucy worked together during the measurements of oral reading rate.

Measurements of oral reading speed (Correct Words Per Minute). While Hank read the text during the timed reading, Lucy listened to him, but was unable to

identify his mistakes (if any occurred). However, Hank wrote down his own miscued words in his learning journal and sometimes asked the teacher whether he had pronounced any words incorrectly. In general, Hank was capable of detecting his errors, and he spent most of the time listening to and teaching Lucy unfamiliar words. Lucy did not reveal much on being less capable than her partner in her journals. When asked in the third interview, Lucy said that her partner was great at oral reading and that she believed she could “never be half as good as Hank” (Third interview, November, 2013).

Lucy experienced great difficulty increasing her reading speed because too many words were unfamiliar to her. These unfamiliar words impeded the enhancement of her reading speed and also made her reluctant to read a text. Hank found that sometimes Lucy did not practice reading the text aloud like the other students. Aside from her absentmindedness, sometimes she was willing to read the text, but she was not sufficiently capable of doing so. However, Hank still tried to help Lucy read more words within a minute during the oral reading speed measurements. He used two strategies to prevent Lucy from stopping and remaining silent when working out how to say the words: skipping the reading of those unknown words and making her follow the speed of his pen moving under the words.

Hank claimed in the second interview that he pushed Lucy to skip reading the unfamiliar words because the reading was timed, and he hoped that Lucy could read more words within a minute. He was acutely aware of the lapse of time.

I found that Lucy would ask me how to pronounce a word during the measurement of reading speed. (“How do I pronounce this?” she asked. “You pronounce it by yourself first, and I will correct your mistakes later,” I said.) Actually, there is nothing wrong with that. However, it just caused a “waste of time.” Besides, what a shame that 1 to 2 seconds were wasted whenever she

encountered unknown words! For instance, when she read a sentence like this “we...have...a lot of ...snow in...Australia,” she wasted a lot of time. But when I told her that her reading speed could be increased a little bit, she replied, “I do not know how to read them!” I will find ways to help her improve this situation next time! (Hank’s journal, 12/10/2013)

After the session, he developed another strategy to enhance Lucy’s reading speed—pointing at the words she was going to read. He hypothesized that if she could match his speed, she would not stop for too long when encountering unfamiliar words. After testing the method in the next session, he wrote in his journal (12/13/2013), “Did Lucy make progress? Yes, it was very obvious. Her reading speed increased from 60 words read per minute to 70!!” However, Lucy’s reading speed did not concern her. Instead, she stated in her journal that pronouncing words correctly was more relevant to her. In fact, because Lucy could not match Hank’s word-pointing speed, this strategy only lasted two sessions. In the end, he realized that the optimal method of enhancing Lucy’s reading speed was for her to review the words she had learned in class. “If Lucy doesn’t study English at home, she cannot recognize the words I have taught her. In the next session, there will be still a bunch of words she doesn’t know how to pronounce in a text,” said Hank in the post-RR program interview.

Hank always corrected Lucy’s errors and conscientiously taught her words that were unfamiliar to her throughout the peer-mediated RR program. In addition to the methods described that he used to help her with oral reading, he also took the initiative in adopting other methods to help his partner remember how to pronounce the words and enhance her reading speed. Furthermore, without being asked, Hank wrote a reflection in Chinese on how to help Lucy with oral reading and analyzed the factors that affected her performance during the RR program. He handed this

reflection to the researcher after the post-program interview. The main points of Hank's reflection are presented in the following section.

Hank's Reflection After the Peer-Mediated RR Program

After adopting various methods of teaching Lucy, Hank stated in this reflection that it was essential to help English under-achievers become independent learners and active thinkers. To support his perspective, he mentioned that in the last few RR sessions, Lucy became capable of first reading the texts on her own after he briefly taught her some of the words that she found difficult. He claimed that, "If we simply teach them, it is impossible for us to know how many words they are able to read aloud by themselves" (Hank's reflection, 12/23/2013). Furthermore, he sometimes made Lucy determine the pronunciation of certain words by herself. He said that "if Lucy never thought about how to pronounce the words on her own, she would have failed to pronounce words every time she encountered an unknown one" (Hank's reflection, 12/23/2013). Reading words aloud for her to repeat would not benefit her in the long run.

He also listed three possible factors that may have led to Lucy's poor English performance during the RR program: "mood swings, negligent English learning, and absentmindedness in class." He also indicated that the vocabularies of the lower achievers determined the level of their English ability. If Lucy was unfamiliar with many words, sometimes she would not practice reading the text aloud during the RR session as her other classmates did. However, he concluded that "the amount or level of tasks being completed could not be controlled by Lucy all the time because that would result in a negative effect on her future working attitude" (Hank's reflection, 12/23/2013). Lucy should always practice reading the texts aloud, irrespective of the difficulty of the words. He felt that Lucy required "time and practice" to improve her

English ability. For instance, Lucy was unfamiliar with many words in the first few sessions; however, she suddenly made great progress when reading the articles in the textbook during the latter part of the RR program. Hank concluded that this showed that “it takes time to train her.” “She needed someone to learn English with her for a long time. It is not effective to merely recite the texts for a short time when it comes to improving your English ability” (Hank’s reflection, 12/23/2013).

In summary, Hank did not begin to develop methods of teaching Lucy until he struggled to make Lucy read a text on Thomas Edison aloud during the practice session. The event was critical to him because it prompted him to adjust his teaching approach and also made him aware of her English learning attitude. However, Lucy still did not review the vocabulary she had learned in class after school after the 12-week peer-mediated RR program, although her learning attitude became more active after the progress she had made during the critical event. Too many unfamiliar words drastically hampered her oral reading fluency despite how hard Hank had tried to teach her to remember the words and to enhance her oral reading rate in the RR activity.

The peer-mediated RR program provided students with more opportunities to practice oral reading and to obtain feedback from their partners. Although a certain procedure was supposed to be followed during the RR session, the three dyads described in this chapter developed different modes of interaction and experienced various learning processes. The learning processes of the three dyads are discussed further and analyzed in the following chapter. Based on the findings of this chapter, the affordances and challenges associated with using the peer-mediated RR program as a classroom activity are also presented in this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, the learning processes and the critical events that each dyad experienced in the peer-mediated repeated reading (RR) program are presented. This chapter is divided into two sections: In the first section, the result from a cross-case analysis is reported, which combines the findings obtained from the individuals and the focused dyads as discussed in the previous chapter. In this manner, the first research question, or the process that the three dyads experienced in the peer-mediated RR program, will be addressed. The second section addresses Research Question 2, or the affordances and challenges of this program based on the process with the three dyads.

The Cross-Case Analysis

This section presents a comparison of the learning processes of the three dyads. The learning processes can be analyzed in terms of the following five aspects: (a) the interaction between the members of each dyad; (b) oral reading accuracy or speed, focusing on peer-mediated RR activity; (c) the methods applied in peer tutoring; (d) the strategies used for learning; and (e) the progress attributed to the peer-mediated RR program.

(a) Interaction between the Members of Each Dyad

An English proficiency gap was evident between the members of each dyad, but the higher-proficiency learners in each dyad taught and worked with his or her

partner conscientiously during the peer-mediated RR program. Moreover, all three higher-proficiency learners encouraged their partners during the RR session. Despite these similarities, the interaction models (i.e., how the members treat, and respond to each other) varied among the three dyads. The optimal interaction mode which could help the dyad members learn most effectively is discussed after the following analysis.

Both members of Dyad A worked hard during the RR program, and Lola often wrote in her journal that Holly would encourage her by saying, “You’ve made progress! Cheer up!” (Lola’s journal, 10/24/2013). However, Lola still expressed several times in her journal that she was “useless,” and that her oral reading performance was “lousy” (Lola’s journal, 11/25/2013). Two possible reasons may have resulted in the repeated theme of self-criticism in Lola’s journal during the peer-mediated RR program. First, Lola had a tendency to think negatively regarding most events that had occurred in her life. Moreover, her partner was strict in demanding clear articulation. Holly explicitly indicated every word that Lola pronounced incorrectly, and corrected her repeatedly until Lola could pronounce the words precisely. Although Holly had reflected on her poor attitude during error correction (i.e., the snarling and champing with rages; Holly’s journal, 10/04/2013), and claimed that she had gradually learned to be more patient after the critical event, her patience would remain exhausted when Lola continued pronouncing the same word incorrectly after being corrected several times in the remaining sessions. For instance, Holly would say, “You pronounced it incorrectly again!” to Lola after correcting the same word three times (Lola’s journal, 10/11/ 2013). This demanding attitude partially contributed to Lola feeling slightly stressed and often worried that Holly may not want to be her partner. Moreover, because of Lola’s relatively sentimental personality, she was easily affected by other occurrences in her life,

which made her stay in a bad mood during the RR session. Holly once stated in her journal that she felt discouraged because of Lola's terse responses during error correction. In the post-program interviews, Holly and Lola asked the researcher in their respective interviews whether they could have a different partner should the peer-mediated RR activity continue. Holly wanted to be paired with someone who could provide her feedback on oral reading, and Lola wanted a partner with a softer personality.

Among the three dyads, the harmonious interaction model of Dyad B, Hannah and Lily, was most ideal. Despite the massive proficiency gap between the members, Lily never mentioned a sense of inferiority in her journals and interviews, as Lola did. Instead, Lily only stated she should work harder to catch up with her partner. Lola's and Lily's perceptions toward the partner with the higher proficiency are different, and whenever Lily mentioned her partner, she was always pleased to have someone teach her and help with oral reading fluency. As a relatively carefree girl, whose traits differ completely from Lola's sentimentality, Lily was more willingly to accept the corrective feedback from her partner. Furthermore, her partner, Hannah, also worked with Lily in a gentler and more considerate manner. When correcting Lily's errors, Hannah never raised her voice, and she would take the initiative to read words repeatedly, so that she could help Lily remember the intonations without being asked. Moreover, Hannah always praised Lily's inquisitive learning attitude, and tracked the progress Lily made in her journal, irrespective of how small the improvement was. In the post-program interview, both Hannah and Lily held each other in high esteem.

A comparison of the two differing reactions toward the higher-proficiency partner in Dyads A and B shows that the feedback acceptance of the lower-proficiency learner, the oral-correction manner of the higher-proficiency

learner, and the personalities of both dyad members are closely intertwined to form the interaction mode. The oral correction can serve as a scaffold and effectively enhance oral reading accuracy if the lower-proficiency learner can think more positively, instead of starting to self-criticize, and take the corrective feedback as peer assistance. As for the higher-proficiency partner who offers corrections, it is essential for them to be aware of their manner and attitude to create a friendlier and more supportive learning atmosphere. Furthermore, while assigning partners for the peer-mediated RR program, the teacher should take several factors into consideration beforehand to create the optimal interaction mode between the members, such as both dyad members' characteristics. In addition, it is also crucial to teach learners to develop good interpersonal skills, such as how to politely offer and receive the oral correction.

For instance, before pairing Hank up with Lucy, the teacher/researcher had pondered upon and deliberated about their potential interaction mode and the personalities of both members. Hank's stubbornness and insistence, which are traits of his emotional disorder, were extremely likely to cause a conflict within the dyad during the peer-mediated RR program. During the RR sessions, Hank stubbornly and persistently pushed Lucy to work harder. He was completely unaware of Lucy's slight irritation because of his inability to grasp the emotions of others, a trait of his emotional disorder. Although Lucy felt slightly irritated and unwilling to read out the article at first, as an easy going person, she still followed Hank's instructions in the end. Since precautions had been taken to prevent the occurrence of potential conflicts, no ill feelings emerged within the dyad, as Lucy stated in her interview. Moreover, because of Hank's persistence and assistance, Lucy did work harder and improve her oral reading during the program.

After analyzing the interactions between the members of each dyad, it can be

summarized that the lower-proficiency learner had better take the corrective feedback positively as peer assistance. On the other hand, the higher-proficiency partner needs to offer corrections in a more considerate and supportive manner or attitude. Furthermore, teaching learners how to develop good social skills and how to offer and receive corrective feedbacks are helpful to form the optimal interaction mode between the dyad members.

(b) Accuracy or Speed Focus in Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading

Oral reading fluency is defined by the two elements: the accuracy of word recognition and reading speed (Archer et al., 2003). By analyzing the learning processes of the six members of the three dyads, it can be concluded that certain participants concentrate more on either accuracy or the reading rate, and their prioritization also affected the feedback their partner offered in the peer-mediated RR program. The following is a discussion of what affected the priority over accuracy or speed, and how the chosen focus on either influenced the interactions between each dyad.

Participants who focused on accuracy when reading aloud an article were Holly from Dyad A; Hannah from Dyad B; and Hank and Lucy, both from Dyad C. Because of Holly's sensitivity to sounds and the influence from her English tutor, she regarded reading accuracy to be most essential. Moreover, because Holly had also learned the KK phonetic alphabet well, she could pronounce words accurately, differentiating the tense vowels from the lax counterparts. Likewise, Hannah attributed her clear articulation to the strict training from her former English teacher in cram school. Because of the teacher, Hannah had learned KK phonetic alphabet adequately. Both members of Dyad C, Hank and Lucy, focused on accuracy when they read aloud the texts repeatedly. The meticulous manner in which Hank's father

addressed matters had a substantial impact on Hank. In the beginning of the RR program, Hank once indignantly inquired in his journal whether students whose reading speed was over 200 words per minute articulated every word precisely. He considered the record claimed by such participants to be “pure baloney!”(Hank’s journal, 10/01/2013). Hank considered clear and precise articulation to be more critical. By contrast, his partner, Lucy, had great difficulty memorizing the pronunciation of most words in a text, because she did not study English after school or bring her English textbook home for review since the fourth grade. At the time, she had given up on learning English. For Lucy, being able to pronounce every word accurately sufficed.

By contrast, Lola from Dyad A and Lily from Dyad B focused more on the oral reading rate. Lily claimed that a decreasing reading speed during measurements of oral reading fluency frustrated her slightly. Furthermore, she confessed during her interview that she frequently forgot to pronounce the inflectional affix *-s* during timed reading, because she liked to read faster to attempt to beat her reading rate record. Lily’s habitual omission of inflectional *-s* affixes never troubled her or caught her attention until her partner, Hannah, consistently reminded her of the *-s* sound during the peer-mediated RR program. Lily once claimed in her interview that the error of the omitted affix *-s* is not a serious problem, because English native speakers could still understand her. Lola also shared this viewpoint. This conception may be due to their prior successful experiences of communication with English native speakers. Even with ungrammatical sentences, they could still express themselves, and be perfectly understood. Nonetheless, both of them gradually became increasingly aware of the crucial role of accuracy in speaking through their partners’ constant error corrections.

The cross-case analysis method showed that certain learners focused more on

either accuracy or the reading rate during the RR activity, and their prior English learning experiences or someone important to them substantially affected their choice. In addition, the interaction of Dyad A members shows that different focuses on accuracy or speed were highly likely to increase the chances of conflict between partners. During the measurement of the reading rate, Lola wanted to have a higher reading speed, and occasionally attempted to achieve a faster reading rate, which caused her to pronounce words unclearly and pay little attention to the differences between lax and tense vowels. The more mistakes Lola made prompted Holly to make more corrections. Moreover, compared with Holly, Lola could not detect the errors in her own oral reading. This type of inability occasionally made Holly grow increasingly impatient when she corrected Lola's same mistakes repeatedly. However, the partner's error correction in the peer-mediated RR program considerably improved the awareness in oral reading accuracy.

(c) Methods Applied for Peer Tutoring

Other than the stipulated method of error correction—repeating the correct pronunciation three times, Holly, Hannah, and Hank devised other methods to help their partners read more fluently after encountering difficulty in the critical events, although they had not been asked to do so. This phenomenon was especially evident in Dyads B and C, because Hannah and Hank gradually modified the approaches they used. These methods that were applied in peer tutoring in each dyad are reported as follows.

Regarding Dyad A, although Holly was not like the higher-proficiency learners in the other two dyads in changing the ways of error correction after the critical event, she adopted the following two additional ways to assist her partner in reading words correctly, other than the stipulated approach (i.e., repeating the correct

pronunciation). One is circling incorrectly pronounced words that Lola read before asking Lola to repeat after her directly. These circles enabled Lola to focus more on the mispronounced words. In addition, to help Lola remember the word pronunciations, Holly segmented the words into syllables. When the syllables were separated with slashes (e.g., *in/ven/tor*), the words were easier to pronounce after combining all the syllables.

Regarding the process of error correction in Dyad B, we observed that Hannah gradually adjusted the approaches she employed to raise her partner's awareness of her frequent omission of the affix *-s*. Three methods were applied during the program. At first, Hannah herself highlighted the affix *-s* that Lily forgot to pronounce. However, she adjusted her approach of reminding Lily into having Lily highlight the affixes on her own, because Hannah believed that this method would be more effective in raising Lily's awareness of the omitted affix *-s*. Furthermore, in the following sessions, Hannah also added a brief review activity, in which Lily pronounced the words she had mispronounced during the practice on her own, not repeating after the peer tutor. Hannah stated in her journals more than once that it was more important to help Lily become aware of her own mistakes, and be able to correct herself gradually through self-monitoring.

During the learning process with Dyad C, Hank adopted at least five methods in the program. Among the learners of the three dyads, Lucy's English proficiency was lowest, and she could recognize only a few English words. Thus, after the critical event that Hank experienced, Hank instructed Lucy to repeat after him, to read aloud the whole text during the first three rounds of oral reading, because it was almost impossible for her to read aloud an article entirely on her own. After a few sessions, he started making Lucy read first after he briefly taught her difficult words in the text. He claimed in the interview that, in this manner, Lucy would be more

aware of the words she did not know how to pronounce. The third method he used to help Lucy pronounce the words is in segmenting a word into syllables to reduce the difficulty of pronouncing it. Lucy also commented on the method in her journal, stating that “it is a good way to remember how to pronounce a word” (Lucy’s journal, 12/17/ 2013). Moreover, he stated in his reflections that he would occasionally have Lucy identify the pronunciation of certain words on her own, thus not only repeating after him. He attempted to help Lucy learn the sound-letter correspondence, and become a more independent learner. The last method he devised was increasing Lucy’s reading rate by asking her to follow his speed in reading aloud the words he indicated with a pen.

In conclusion, during the peer-mediate RR program, the member of a dyad with a higher English proficiency began devising various methods to improve his or her partner’s oral reading fluency, although he or she was not asked to do so. In addition, certain higher-proficiency learners even stated that raising self-awareness was essential to their ultimate goal of peer tutoring: enabling their partner to correct himself or herself. For instance, both Hannah and Hank attempted to guide their partners to gradually become independent learners who could monitor their own pronunciations.

(d) Strategies Used for Learning

After analyzing the learning strategies of the 6 participants, the methods they mainly used to enhance oral reading fluency were as follows: Mandarin phonetic symbols, peer assistance, and the learner’s own metacognitive ability.

Although Holly and Hank both taught their partners how to pronounce a word by segmenting it into syllables with slashes (e.g., *in/ven/tor*), Lola and Lucy still reminded themselves of the sound by writing down Mandarin phonetic symbols near

the word. Lola used this method to help herself pronounce an unknown word occasionally. However, Lucy almost completely relied on this method to read aloud words, and this resulted in her inability to remember the pronunciation of words or to pronounce the same words in another unpracticed text in the following session.

By contrast, Lily and Hank took advantage of the peer-mediated RR program to turn to their partner or other higher-proficiency English peers to learn the pronunciation of unknown words or the meaning of phrases. If they had any questions, they took the initiative to obtain the answers through the help of their peers. Their inquisitive learning attitude helped them secure immediate feedback from others.

Although higher achievers such as Holly and Hannah barely obtained any feedback from their partners, they used a metacognitive strategy to improve their oral reading fluency. After each RR session, they would reflect in their learning journals on their own learning processes, before listing words or potential reasons regarding what hindered them from reading fluently. For instance, both Holly and Hannah had the capacity to correct themselves whenever their pronunciation sounded strange to them. In addition to this acute self-awareness, they also had the metacognitive ability to monitor their own learning process, and to analyze or locate their difficulties of oral reading in a text. For instance, Hannah once wrote in her journal that pronouncing all the words that ended with the affix *-ed* clearly slowed her reading rate. Furthermore, they would either provide suggestions to themselves when their oral reading was unsatisfactory or congratulate themselves when reading fast and accurately. Hannah even circled the prepositions or other inflectional affixes, such as the past progressive tense affix *-ing*, to remind herself to be aware of these sounds.

In summary, learners resort to various methods to enhance their own oral

reading fluency, and the strategies mainly used were Mandarin Phonetic Symbols, their partners' assistance, and their own metacognitive ability. Moreover, because they were stimulated or pushed by their partner, these learners, who were easily distracted in class, became more diligent during the peer-mediated RR program, and reviewed the text after school. For instance, Lola and Lily liked reading faster and more accurately, as did their partners; therefore, they attempted to enhance their oral reading fluency by reviewing and practicing the readings at home.

(e) Progress Made because of the Peer-mediated Repeated Reading Program

Based on the findings of the comparisons of the 6 participants, learners with different levels of English proficiency benefited from the peer-mediated RR program in different ways and to varying degrees.

Lower achievers benefited the most from the peer-mediated RR program because they obtained one-on-one instruction on how to pronounce the words they did not know in a text. Although they still read slowly, they became more familiar with the vocabulary in the textbook after learning the correct pronunciation from their partners. For instance, Lily, who still struggled with word recognition, stated in her interview that the peer-mediated RR program helped her learn new words more easily. Whenever she encountered a word she did not know, she could turn to her partner immediately. Moreover, Lily also considered the activity to be helpful because she became more willing to review and study English articles from the textbook at home, because she had learned more words from her partner. However, the level of progress that learners can make depends on the amount of effort they exert when reviewing vocabulary at home. Hank stated that Lucy would never improve her English ability "if she did not see the importance of learning this subject," and review the words he had taught her (Hank's journal, 11/08/2013).

Hank knew that Lucy should change her learning attitude first, or his help would not suffice in helping her improve her oral reading ability.

For average achievers, apart from learning new words, they could also focus more on the phrases, grammar, and certain sentence structures when reading the text repeatedly. For example, Hank stated in his journal (10/04/ 2013) that RR activities facilitated his ability to memorize new words, and also improve on English translation tests because he attempted to memorize phrases, prepositions, and grammar when reading the articles repeatedly. Furthermore, average achievers are more capable in pursuing a faster reading speed during RR practice.

For higher achievers in our case study, Holly and Hannah had already known almost all of the words in the vocabulary list of a text. In addition, they dedicated most of their time to teaching their partners how to pronounce words correctly during RR practice. Although their reading speed increased over time as well, they benefited less from the peer-mediated RR program compared with their partners. Nevertheless, both Holly and Hannah perceived an increase in their oral reading rate, and attributed the improvement to the application of breaking sentences into chunks when reading. Instead of reading aloud a sentence by word, they broke the sentence into smaller units. Hannah claimed that repeated practice helped her become more familiar with the reading content as well as enhance her oral reading rate effectively. She learned from two of her classmates, who were able to read at a rate of over 200 correct words per minute, and with obvious intonations.

Summary of Cross-Case Analysis

During the peer-mediated RR program, the interaction mode of each dyad varies in accordance with the personalities of both dyad members. When assessing the oral reading rate, the learner may focus more on either the accuracy or the reading speed.

The learner's prior English learning experience or someone important in their lives may affect their choice in prioritization. When a learner attempts to achieve a higher reading speed, his or her oral reading accuracy may occasionally suffer, consequently requiring more error corrections from the partner. Furthermore, when a higher-proficiency English partner perceives the need to offer further assistance, aside from the repetition after the correct pronunciation, he or she may begin to devise various methods to enhance his or her partner's oral reading fluency, such as segmenting a word into syllables or highlighting mispronounced words, although the learner has not asked to do so. Moreover, certain higher-proficiency learners began to perceive that raising self-awareness in one's own pronunciation was essential. Conversely, learners also resorted to various methods to enhance their own oral reading fluency, and the strategies mainly used were Mandarin phonetic symbols, their partners' assistance, and the learner's own metacognitive ability. Because their partner stimulated or pushed them further, learners who were easily distracted in class became more diligent during the peer-mediated RR program, and reviewed the text after school. In summary, learners with different levels of English proficiency can all benefit from the peer-mediated RR program in different ways and to varying degrees. After the peer-mediated RR program, learners' oral reading fluency can be improved because of greater accuracy in word recognition, an increased familiarity with the phrases or sentence patterns used in a text, a faster oral reading speed, and an improved understanding of sentence clusters and intonation.

Based on the results of cross-case analysis, the affordances and challenges of peer-mediated RR can be concluded. The findings can help those who plan to apply peer-mediated RR as a regular activity to enhance oral reading fluency in junior high school English classrooms.

The following two sections provide a discussion on peer-mediated RR to answer the second research question:

Based on process with the three dyads, what can be concluded about the affordances and challenges of peer-mediated RR, particularly for the development of oral reading fluency?

Affordances of Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading

According to participant changes in oral reading fluency and the analysis of the three-dyad learning process, three affordances of peer-mediated RR were identified in the present study; this method increases oral reading rate, enhances oral reading accuracy, and arouses learning motivation. The three affordances are addressed and detailed sequentially as follows.

Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Increases Oral Reading Rate

After a 12-week peer-mediated RR program, the mean score of the 28 participants' correct words read per minute increased (Table 4.1, p. 32). The increased reading rate is consistent with the results of prior thesis studies on RR in Taiwan (Fang, 2012; Hung, 2012; Liao, 2011; Tsai, 2012; Wang, 2009). Most previous studies adopted the quantitative research method. What the learners' learning processes are like and how they improve their oral reading rate during the peer-mediated RR program can be better understood from the present study, which adopted the qualitative research method. Based on the results of the three-dyad learning process in the peer-mediated RR program, two possible factors that led to an increased reading rate were accumulated practice effect and sentence chunking.

Accumulated practice effect. RR, as a regular classroom activity, provided students with increased opportunities to practice reading articles aloud. The practice,

which is essential to achieve a state of automaticity, is a crucial function of RR (Samuels, 1979). Hannah mentioned in her post-program interview that her reading speed increased while reading the same article in a session several times. Because of repeated practice, she became increasingly familiar with the words, phrases, and sentence structures in the text. Learners reading the same paragraph repetitively is able to reduce the time spent decoding words and eventually read the word that has been read numerous times automatically. As the number of times or rounds Hannah practiced reading a text orally increased, the speed she exhibited in reading the text also increased. Hannah's improved oral reading rate in an RR session was closely related to the cumulative effort she made on oral reading practice, namely, the accumulated practice effect.

The accumulated practice effect also explained the increased reading rate between the pretest and posttest. The RR method enabled the participants to recognize words rapidly. The time they spent on decoding words was reduced as the amount of practice increased. The reading texts in the pre- and posttests were at the same grade level – Level 6 of the Fry Readability Formula. All the words were within the scale of the basic 2,000 words required of junior high school students, and all the reading materials used in the peer-mediated RR program were at the same level of difficulty. The reading texts at a similar difficulty level contained similar high-frequency words and demanded similar decoding skills. Numerous words overlapped in both sets, thus the retrieval of sounds was accelerated after practicing several times. The automaticity of decoding skills, which resulted in the accumulated practice effect, could be attributed to the improved reading rate (Dowhower, 1987).

The increased oral reading rate resulting from the implementation of the peer-mediated RR reading activity achieved automaticity because of the

accumulative practice effect (Logan, 1997). Certain students identified a connection between fluency and automaticity. When experiencing difficulty reading certain words or phrases aloud, they spent time reading them repeatedly in a row. They recognized the accumulated practice effect, and realized that after repeated practice reading the same words or phrases, they could recognize and read them aloud rapidly and effortlessly. These changes in the oral reading speed of the 28 participants in the present study are consistent with the progress participants made in reading rate at all student levels in previous studies (Faulkner & Levy, 1999; Hapstak & Tracey, 2007).

Providing more practice of sentence chunking. Both Holly and Hannah stated in their respective post-program interviews that they had improved their sentence chunking skills during the RR program. When dissecting sentences into clusters (i.e., chunks), readers read phrase-by-phrase instead of word-by-word. This method improves the oral reading rate because reading a group of words takes less time than that required for reading each word. When chunking words into clusters, readers are not required to emphasize each word, but only meaningful words (i.e., content words) in a chunk. Holly claimed that reading words aloud in clusters helped improve her oral reading rate in her post-program interview. She reported in her journals that in the first few RR sessions, she could read each word aloud quickly and precisely. However, when these words were combined, she experienced difficulty in reading series of words fluently. After following the teacher's demonstration of dissecting words in a long sentence into small "chunks," Holly read groups of words faster, instead of stressing each word. Holly's description of her improved oral reading fluency is consistent with the result of Rasinski (2000) that "one must be able to chunk words into meaningful phrases with smoothness and expression" to obtain enhanced oral reading fluency. Tsai (2010) commented, "as

the students learned to read words with accurate and automatic decoding, they also learned to chunk them in meaningful phrases and syntax as more and more practice was allowed.” Similarly, Holly and Hannah stated in their interviews that they obtained an enhanced understanding of sentence structures in a text after practicing reading the text repeatedly.

In addition to the teacher demonstration of sentence chunking, using the audio model of a text was beneficial to chunking meaningful phrases and syntax. An audio recording of a text was used to provide an audio model at the onset of each session, and assistance could be obtained by listening to the oral reading performed by the learner’s partner. These fluent renditions of a text aided them in chunking sentences at the correct place. After hearing the audio models multiple times, learners developed a sense of syntactic phrasing when engaged in assisted RR (Schreiber, 1980). A sentence is not comprehended word-by-word and people derive meaning phrase-by-phrase (Stafford & Webb, 2004, p. 165). The time required to comprehend a sentence or reading words aloud in a text is reduced after developing an improved sense of syntactic phrasing. The amount of time spent on decoding results decreases as oral reading rate increases.

In addition to an increased oral reading rate, an enhanced sense of syntactic phrasing enabled Hank to write grammatically correct sentences easily when taking a translation test. He mentioned in his journal that he memorized and understood the phrases or grammar in a text more effectively after practicing reading a text by using the RR method.

Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Enhances Oral Reading Accuracy

Based on the increased accuracy rate between the posttest and pretest, three possible factors leading to the result of the three-dyad learning process during peer-mediated RR reading are identified: obtaining oral correction, increasing

self-awareness regarding accuracy, and applying metacognitive abilities. The three factors are discussed and elaborated as follows.

Obtaining oral correction opportunities. During the peer-mediated RR program, learners take turns reading the text and playing the role of a reader or a tutor. This approach provides learners with a partner to listen to their oral reading. Peer-mediated RR provides each student with increased opportunities to practice oral speaking and obtain feedback from peers. Thanks to the paired partner, the peer-mediated working model significantly increases the opportunity of obtaining feedback. For example, Lola observed that she always pronounced the word “*have*” incorrectly because she learned the word in first grade. She did not know that the letter *e* was silent until her partner corrected her in the RR session. This example illustrates the importance of feedback from a partner because examining the pronunciation of every student in class is impossible for teachers. Because of large classes in junior high schools in Taiwan, correcting the oral errors of each student in class is relatively difficult for teachers. When RR is applied as an English classroom activity, students record their reading and accuracy rates by themselves for increased ease of use (Yurick et al., 2006). Another advantageous effect of error correction obtained from a peer is increased retention. Han and Chen (2010) indicated that corrective feedback improved retention because of the direct attention obtained.

After each reading, the peer identified words that the reader mispronounced and required the reader to repeat the correct pronunciation after him or her. The repetition continued until the reader could pronounce the word correctly. In the critical event experienced by Lucy, her correct pronunciation rate increased over each CWPM measurement, and the number of mispronounced words decreased from 6 to 0 because her partner offered her corrective feedback after each timed reading. She learned from her peer, and this improvement provided her with a great sense of achievement. The

results of this model-lead-test error-correction procedure are consistent with the improved oral accuracy rate of participants in previous studies (Carnine et al., 2010). Through structured interaction, the correct pronunciation model offered by the peer serves as a scaffold; thus, scaffolded learning occurs among peers (King et al., 1998).

Arousing self-awareness toward accuracy. In the present study, the paired partner calculated the reading rate and recorded the mispronounced words during the timed reading of his or her partner. Thus, learners focused on the correct articulation of each word. Increasing self-awareness toward oral reading accuracy is hardly achievable in the teaching setting of an entire class. Before implementing the peer-mediated RR activity, although the teacher/researcher allocated time for learners to practice reading aloud after the audio model, the learners seldom focused on the accuracy of their oral reading. They simply repeated after the audio model or the teacher, and hardly detected any errors in their oral reading. By contrast, during the peer-mediated RR reading program, participant self-awareness toward oral reading accuracy increased because of the increased feedback on errors. For those such as Lola and Lily, who did not consider speaking accurately a high priority, their partner's frequent error correction alerted them. In addition to the accurate pronunciation of a word, participants in this present study also increased awareness of the sound of inflectional affixes, such as the sounds of *-ed* and *-s*. Before implementing the RR activity, the sound of the grammatical affix *-s* may have been overlooked and omitted. However, during the RR program, each phoneme was carefully pronounced because of the corrective feedback from the partner. Hannah, Hank, and Holly all mentioned that they had spent time considering the sound of the form *-ed* before pronouncing it. Lily discovered the importance of pronouncing the affix *-s* through Hannah's frequent corrections.

In addition to increasing pronunciation awareness, certain higher-proficiency

learners recognized that arousing their partner's self-awareness of their own errors was essential during the peer tutoring process. For example, without being asked, Hannah developed several methods to enhance Lily's self-awareness of her own pronunciation. Hannah stated more than once in her journals that helping Lily become aware of her mistakes and correcting herself gradually through self-monitoring were critical. During the peer-mediated RR program, both Hannah and Hank attempted to guide their partners to gradually become independent learners who could monitor their own pronunciation.

Higher-achievers applied metacognitive abilities. In the present study, higher-proficiency learners worked most industriously during the peer-mediated RR program. Although they could not always obtain feedback from their partners, they could use metacognitive abilities to monitor their own readings and correct their own incorrectly pronounced words. Furthermore, they obtained the oral model of correct pronunciation or natural intonation through teachers or other higher-proficiency peers.

The high achievers, Holly, Hannah, and Hank, worked diligently in the peer-mediated RR session, giving feedback to their partners' oral reading of a text repeatedly to pursue enhanced oral reading fluency. High achievers in the present study differed from the corresponding participants in the Lin (2011) study. Lin observed that the RR approach lacked interest to the high achievers, who considered the overly emphasized repetition as a tedious task, and tried to complete it as fast as possible without carefully reading the passages. Consequently, their accuracy rate did not improve as significantly as their oral reading rate did. By contrast, in the present study, Holly, Hannah, and Hank monitored their own oral reading and used their metacognitive ability to reflect on their learning processes, or comment on their excellent performances or difficulties in their journals. In accordance with the results

of Fuchs and Fuchs (2010), when a member of a dyad monitors his or her partner's performance, the metacognitive and cognitive demands are associated with the tutoring role. Developing reflective or metacognitive skills through social and modeling interactions (Palinscar & Brown, 1984) is extremely crucial for learners.

Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading Arouses Learning Motivation

Over the past 20 years, a strategy that has become widely used is supplementing conventional teaching with collaborated, peer-mediated instruction, whereby children work together to support each other's reading development. The peer-mediated method increases learning motivation in two aspects: motivation comes from the partner, and motivation is aroused by a sense of self-esteem.

Motivation obtained from the partner. Motivation from the partner observed in the present study can be categorized into three types: encouragement, the push to practice harder, and the learning model set by the partner. Both Lola and Lily mentioned that their partners' encouragement positively affected their practice of oral reading fluency. The social skills observed in the current study were being tolerant, not attacking their partner, engaging in constructive disagreement, actively listening, and leaning forward. Lola stated in her journal that these encouragements gave her the "courage to practice again" (Lola's journal, 10/24/2013).

Furthermore, partners pushed learners to conduct oral practice. For example, Hank pushed Lucy to read the article. Lucy was constantly absent-minded in class and did not typically practice oral reading when the entire class performed an oral reading activity guided by the teacher. Before implementing the peer-mediated RR activity, students might not participate in speaking practice unless they are noticed because all the students read the text aloud together. However, during the peer-mediated RR session in the present study, learners were required to cooperate

with their partners, taking turns being a listener and a reader. Because of the interaction with partners, participants became more motivated to practice oral reading.

The learning model set by the partner motivates the learner to practice oral reading carefully and improve oral reading fluency. In Hannah's post-RR program interview, she stated that Lily's diligence stimulated her to spend an increased amount of time studying English after school. Partners can thus positively affect each other. Other participants also mentioned in their journals that they regarded their partners as a learning model of oral reading fluency or diligent learning attitude.

Motivation obtained from a sense of self-esteem. The definition of self-esteem refer to "the individual's feelings of self-worth and confident in their own abilities" (Miller & Moran, 2005, p. 28). This type of motivation can be further divided into two sources: self-esteem from the improved oral reading rate or from helping the peer. Both of them generate a virtuous circle of diligent practice and improved oral reading fluency during the peer-mediated RR program.

In each RR session, the first type of self-esteem was obtained from an increased reading rate. Learners took three assessments of their reading rate, (i.e., pre-, during, and post-RR practice) with their partner. A sense of achievement in English learning was obtained when the reading rate increased after each round of oral reading practice. The accumulated practice effect resulted in rapid and accurate word recognition. Because of the critical event Lucy experienced, her excitement and sense of self-confidence from her increased CWPM record led to her changed learning attitude in the following RR sessions. She became more active in learning and more motivated to read the articles aloud in class than she did previously. Implementing peer-mediated RR activities can create a virtuous circle to promote a

sense of achievement and provide learner confidence. Nuttall (1996) suggested that non-fluent readers are often trapped in a vicious cycle because of their slow reading rate and limited comprehension (p. 127). By contrast, RR increased the fluency of slow readers, such as Lucy, and provided a heightened sense of confidence, motivation, and willingness to undertake reading new material (Chomsky, 1978). Higher achievers, who can read rapidly and accurately, are also positively affected by a sense of self-esteem obtained from RR sessions. Similar to the suggestion of Kubina and Starlin (2003), certain high-proficiency learners purposefully practice reading by setting achievement goals exceeding 200 CWPM. Whereas learners practice diligently and strive for their goals, self-esteem stimulates them to pursue improved fluent oral reading during the RR program. The other source of self-esteem is derived from helping a peer. Similar to the positive effect of “shared satisfaction from attaining positive results in peer tutoring situations” (Wiegmann et al., 1992), all tutors in the present study mentioned a sense of achievement and joy when their partners exhibited progress. Holly, Hannah, and Hank worked diligently to help their partners pronounce unknown words, and even developed various methods to enhance their partners’ reading fluency. According to the role theory proposed by Allen (1976), when Holly, Hannah, and Hank played the role of a tutor to provide models, feedback, and oral corrections, they obtained a sense of self-worth in their capability to help others. This type of increased self-esteem may generate self-reinforcing systems (Miller & Moran, 2006). While Hannah and Hank devoted themselves to thinking of methods to help their partners overcome difficulties, Hannah was also motivated to spend more time studying English at home. Whereas, Hank became more aware of how to learn English better by analyzing Lucy’s learning attitude and methods. In this way, role reciprocity is created because “the enactment of a role produces changes in behavior, attitude, and

self-perceptions” (Allen, 1976).

Challenges of Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading

Through the aforementioned three main affordances of peer-mediated RR implemented as a regular activity in English class, certain challenges exist that learners may encounter, and further research may be required to solve them. The three challenges are repeated errors, careless oral reading, and over-reliance on partner’s feedback or Mandarin phonetic symbols. The causes of the three challenges and the possible solutions to each challenge are discussed as follows.

Repeated Errors

The most serious challenge encountered in the peer-mediated RR program is that mispronounced words can be read repeatedly when the partner fails to mention the reader’s mispronunciation. This finding is consistent with Lin’s (2011) assertion that students’ mispronounced words cannot be reduced when their peers do not mention errors. In the peer-mediated RR program, the members of a dyad took turns listening attentively to their partner’s reading and then informed them of the mispronounced words. However, in the present study, Lola, Lily, and Lucy hardly provided their partners with any corrective feedback. Although their partners’ high oral accuracy rate and self-correction ability reduced the need for error correction, offering corrective feedback was difficult for Lola, Lily, and Lucy because of their relatively low English proficiency. Furthermore, these low achievers experienced problems detecting errors their partners made. Under these circumstances, when those who played the role of tutors were unaware of their own mispronunciation, the mispronounced words were read repeatedly. In addition to repeated errors, mispronunciation was taught to the other member in a dyad when the reader was completely unaware of the error. For example, Hank read the word *climbing*

incorrectly and taught the incorrect pronunciation to his partner. When Hank was uncertain of the pronunciation of a word, he consulted other higher-proficiency peers to learn the correct pronunciation. When these incorrect words were assumed to be correct, he repeatedly read them incorrectly and taught his partner the incorrect pronunciation.

To achieve reciprocal learning, this study adapted the student-pairing method from the method of Yurick et al. (2006), which created reciprocal learning. However, the difficulty in achieving reciprocal learning between the dyad members remained a primary challenge in this peer-mediated RR study. Fuchs and Fuchs (2010) stated that “most peer tutoring occurs when stronger students act as tutors and weaker students act as tutees, although research has suggested the potential for reciprocal tutoring” (p.256). Although high achievers, who seldom encounter unknown words in the text, were able to monitor their own reading and correct themselves, their need to obtain feedback was occasionally obvious, particularly when their errors were repeated. The following two possible solutions are proposed to solve this challenge: (a) sufficient audio models; and (b) reciprocal tutoring (RT) pairing.

To prevent repeating errors several times without correction, the teacher was required to provide sufficient audio models prior to the dyad practice during the RR session. Thus, learners could develop an improved sense of the correct pronunciation of a word. To obtain additional audio models, in his journal, Hank suggested applying various methods of practice during the instruction part (i.e., the first 10 min of the RR session), such as repeating after the audio track, repeating after other classmates, and choral reading, before measuring reading speed. In addition, the teacher should listen to student reading when circulating around the classroom, particularly tutor reading, to discover whether they read every word correctly during RR practice. To assist these high achievers in improving learning,

the teacher could offer feedback and constant encouragement to them when listening to their reading.

However, the key to minimizing the dyad proficiency gap and achieving reciprocal learning might be another pairing method. The RT method could be adopted to achieve reciprocal learning. In the present study, the 28 participants were divided into two lists according to their CWPM scores in the timed reading and were paired in strict order. The first student in the stronger-half list was paired with the first student in the weaker-half list, and the researcher continued pairing the students in this manner. However, the English proficiency gap remained unless high achievers were paired with students at similar levels, who could read fluently and accurately. Using the pairing method, RT, students were paired based on the result of oral reading fluency, the first with the second, third with the fourth, etc., to minimize the English proficiency gap in each dyad (Gisbert & Font, 2008).

In conclusion, without corrective feedback, mispronounced words are read repeatedly during the peer-mediated RR program. Sufficient oral models and RT pairing can be applied to manage the problem of repeated errors. However, when applying another pairing method, whether these low-proficiency learners can obtain the same amount of feedback or sufficient assistance in learning as they did in the present study is unclear. Therefore, further research is required.

Careless Oral Reading

Tsai (2008) indicated that readers using the oral model adopted in assisted RR can easily produce grammatically correct sentences with acceptable intonation. However, inconsistent with Tsai's findings, learners in the present study read with flat intonation and poor articulation during the RR session, even when the oral models were used and the importance of varied intonation was emphasized. The

results obtained from the learning journals and interviews with participants indicated two possible factors leading to this phenomenon—the greater focus on achieving a high reading rate, or boredom caused by repetition. How the two factors affected reader articulation is described in the following subsections, and the various possible solutions for each situation are also discussed.

Greater focus on achieving a high reading rate. Based on the results of cross-case analysis, learners held distinct priorities, either oral reading rate or accuracy improvement, during the RR program. Readers who focused on oral reading rate exhibited poor oral reading accuracy. For example, Lily wrote in her journal that as her oral reading speed increased, the number of mistakes she made increased. In addition, Lola admitted that she read the unknown words aloud according to her first impression of their possible sounds to save time, rather than considering their sound-letter correspondence. However, reading a word aloud based on the first impression seriously reduced the rate of correct pronunciation. Furthermore, Holly mentioned that when she and Lola engaged in RR practice, their intonation was “so flat they sounded like monks reciting classics.”

Timed reading was applied in every session to compare the difference before and after the RR practice. RR was used to train the learner to obtain an increased reading speed. However, certain learners were highly concerned about oral reading rates and consequently read the text as fast as possible at the expense of natural intonation or clear articulation. Although the teacher had taught the participants sentence chunking and expression with various intonations, and emphasized correct pronunciation during previous instruction in the RR session, certain learners continued to read with flat intonation and careless articulation.

Simultaneously reading an article at a high speed and with clear intonation is possible. Hannah claimed that she had learned from two of her classmates who were

able to accomplish this. The teacher can ask fluent readers to demonstrate fluent oral reading and remind learners about varied intonation and clear articulation. To prevent monotone reading, the teacher can demonstrate the difference between the intonation of the learners' in their mother tongue and that in English. Furthermore, the teacher can emphasize proper English intonation and have students practice reading the textbook dialogue through a role-play activity. In addition to the greater focus on achieving rapid reading speed, the other possible cause of flat intonation and careless articulation is addressed as follows.

Boredom caused by the repetitive manner. Hank once intensely questioned whether the students who read over 200 CWPM clearly articulated each word, or if they read it carelessly. This situation was also observed by Hannah, and she mentioned in the interview unlike her and her partner, some other classmates did not work hard enough during the RR session. The teacher/ researcher found that some learners read with monotone or read words with unclear articulation. However, slightly differing from Lin (2011), some average achievers, not high achievers, were bored by RR and tried to complete it as fast as possible without carefully reading the passages. By contrast, high achievers in the present study understood the importance of clear articulation, and pushed themselves to read quickly and clearly. They often reflected on their own reading in their journals and hoped themselves to read more clearly in the following RR session. Low-proficiency learners experienced difficulty reading certain words, and could not rush their reading speed. The perspective of the average achievers in the study was in accordance with that of Lin's students, who considered the RR method as a tedious task. Several students mentioned that reading the same article several times was troublesome and uninteresting, and tended to be easily distracted after reading the text once or twice. Particularly after they had read the same articles four times, they became tired and thirsty. This situation is

consistent with that described in previous studies. Some participants in the study of O'Connor et al. (2007) were bored with repetition in oral reading, and these learners' motivation lowered in each round of reading. The boredom caused by repetition prevented them from taking advantage of the RR program to increase their oral reading fluency. The oral reading fluency of those who were often inattentive in class increased only slightly after the 12-week peer-mediated RR reading. Moreover, they read the articles carelessly, which did not enhance their oral reading accuracy. The degree of devotion to the RR program affected the amount of progress the participants made.

It is also worth noting that the boredom of repetitive reading caused certain learners to be easily distracted or to idle around in class after reading an article twice or three times. In the present study, the high achievers were those who worked the most diligently and engaged in purposeful practice. By striving toward the goal of achieving a high oral reading rate, several students independently set the goal of 200 CWPM. This phenomenon accorded with the suggestion proposed by Kubina and Starlin (2003), who provided an ambitious practice-reading criterion of 200 correct words per minute, with two or fewer errors. To stimulate learners to work diligently, setting a goal of a high reading speed that can be achieved through repeated practice could be an effective method (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2010).

It is suggested that, in addition to circulating around the classroom to maintain order and help learners concentrate, the teacher encourage learners to set goals and improve their oral reading rate through repeated practice. Rereading is rewarding and beneficial as long as a balance between the number of repetitions and readers' motivation is maintained (Taguchi et al., 2012). Furthermore, the reading rate in each assessment during the RR session can be recorded on a graph to enhance the motivation further by showing the progress the participants make. Black and

William (1998) maintained that the improvement of students' performance has a high correlation with ongoing feedback on progress. Accordingly, readers are suggested to maintain a graphic display of their performance when their partners provide the number of correct and incorrect words read per minute in the RR activity (Kostewicz, 2012).

Over-reliance on Partner's Feedback or Mandarin Phonetic Symbols

During the RR session, the partner offered corrective feedback on errors the reader made. In Dyad B, when Lily did not know certain words, she asked her partner about the pronunciation without thinking for herself. In the Dyad A and C cases, when Lola and Lucy learned the correct pronunciation from their partners, they wrote down the Mandarin phonetic symbols near the unknown words to remind themselves of their sounds. Observations of the three dyads revealed that the readers spent minimal time thinking about word pronunciation because they were able to quickly obtain answers from their more capable partners. This practice reduced the time and effort that readers devoted to acquiring and learning the connection between the letters and sounds. Moreover, the use of Mandarin phonetic symbols considerably reduced the opportunities that readers could have obtained to develop an understanding of letter-sound relationships. When Lola and Lucy simply read the symbols they marked near the unknown words aloud without reflection, they might have been able to achieve an increased reading speed, but they might experience difficulty pronouncing the same word by themselves in the future. This type of dependency on the tutor to provide the correct pronunciation is one of the disadvantages of peer tutoring (Gisbert & Font, 2008) and affects learner autonomy. Learners would be unable to pronounce new words by themselves because they are overly dependent on their partners for correct pronunciation during the peer-mediated RR session. The ability to pronounce

unknown L2 words accurately is a crucial aspect of being able to manage unfamiliar material (Woore, 2007). In line with Woore's assertion, Hank once claimed in his journal if Lucy had never thought by herself, she would never have learned how to read an unknown word in the future. He claimed that occasionally he would not tell Lucy the sound of words directly, but would ask her to first think of the pronunciation herself before he taught her the letter-sound relationships of the words and segmented words into several syllables to make them easier to pronounce.

The method that both Holly and Hank employed — segmenting words into syllables to illustrate the sound-letter correspondence — is essential for learning a word. “Knowing a word's pronunciation is an important aspect of knowing that word” (Woore, 2007). Furthermore, by pronouncing word segments, the learner can study the written form of a word carefully, instead of simply reading the Mandarin phonetic symbols aloud to pronounce a word. Readers who considered syllable segments were likely to become familiar with sound-letter relationships. Mandarin phonetic symbols cannot represent all English phonemes, and over-reliance on them for pronouncing a word is detrimental to developing oral reading accuracy. Teaching learners how to segment words into syllables, and frequently reminding them of the sound-letter correspondence is an ideal method for learners to pronounce an unknown word by themselves. Teaching learners phonics systematically is critical for the development of reading fluency. Knowledge of ‘sound – symbol relationships,’ or ‘grapheme – phoneme correspondences’ (GPCs), enables learners to convert English letters (graphemes) into the sounds they represent (phonemes) and to gradually become a better reader (Woore, 2007).

To reduce over-reliance on the partner's corrective feedback during the peer-mediated RR program, learning phonics can greatly facilitate the development of learner autonomy. Another method for reducing overdependence is developing

the self-monitoring ability of learners. When correcting the partner's errors during the peer-mediated RR program, both Hannah and Hank claimed that their ultimate goal of using various methods was to increase their partners' self-awareness to become an independent learner. Hannah and Hank believed that increasing learners' self-awareness of oral reading is a fundamental method for helping Lily and Lucy learn English by themselves and correct their own errors, even when no one is present to teach them. Because of the short term of the RR program, the effect of the methods that Hannah and Hank applied on the changes in Lily and Lucy's performance was not obvious by the end of the RR program. Hannah and Hank's viewpoint is consistent with Clay's (1991) claim that monitoring strategies play a critical role in learning to read. Furthermore, having the opportunity to discuss their errors with their teachers, students are able to analyze their mistakes and develop self-monitoring strategies. This strategy, proposed by Goodman (1996), is called "retrospective miscue analysis."

In summary, certain participants appreciated the RR method for improving reading fluency, but they also regarded repetition of the same text to be the main drawback of this method. Other than the boredom caused by the repetitive task, repeated errors, careless oral reading, and over reliance on partner's feedback would be the challenges that teachers may encounter when peer-mediated RR is implemented in class. Nevertheless, all the three focus dyads agreed that this method should continue to be used to provide them with an opportunity to improve their English-speaking ability. Furthermore, based on the affordances discussed above, it is suggested to apply peer-mediated RR as a regular classroom activity to enhance oral reading speed, accuracy and learning motivation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This case study evaluated the learning processes of each of the three focused dyads and the critical events experienced during the peer-mediated RR program. These findings helped to determine the affordances and challenges of the peer-mediated RR program and suggested that it can be implemented as a regular classroom activity in junior high schools to ensure the development of oral reading fluency. This chapter summarizes the findings of this study and its pedagogical implications. Finally, the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are presented in hope that further related research will be conducted to increase the understanding of peer-mediated RR.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to provide an initial insight into the affordances and challenges of peer-mediated RR, particularly for the development of oral reading fluency, when this method is applied in junior high school classrooms. To achieve this goal, the qualitative data collected from classroom observations, learning journals of the three dyads after every session, and four interviews with each student in three focus dyads helped to further elucidate the learning processes during a 12-week peer-mediated repeated reading program. Furthermore, the critical events the three dyads experienced were also presented.

The affordances and challenges of peer-mediated RR were summarized based on the results of the cross-case analysis of the learning processes for the three dyads.

The affordances of the method were that peer-mediated RR enhances oral reading rate, accuracy, and learning motivation. Oral reading fluency was determined based on the oral reading rate and the accuracy of word recognition. The accumulated practice effect and the sentence chunking technique led to improved oral reading rate. Moreover, corrective feedback, the development of a sense of accuracy, and enhanced metacognitive ability of the higher achievers enhanced the correct rate of oral reading accuracy. Last but not least, peer-mediated RR arouses learning motivation which was obtained from the partner or the enhanced self-esteem. First, when participants worked with a partner, the partner's encouragement and stimulation enhanced the learning motivation. Moreover, the evident improvement in CWPM in each RR session and the experience of teaching partners facilitated the development of self-esteem which could motivate learners to practice oral reading harder.

However, three challenges are yet to be overcome and require further research: repeated errors resulting from the lack of partner's corrective feedback, careless articulation because of boredom arising from repeated practice or the greater focus on achieving a higher oral reading rate, and the overreliance on feedback from the partners or on Mandarin phonetic symbols to learn the pronunciation of unknown words. Nevertheless, feedback from the journals of all 28 participants indicated that peer-mediated RR effectively improved their oral reading fluency and that it can be applied as a regular activity in junior high school English classrooms.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study present three pedagogical implications for peer-mediated RR for teachers who intend to use this method to improve the oral reading fluency of English learners.

First, for junior high school students, the learning and encouragement through support provided by their peers in the peer-mediated RR program are essential to enhancing their learning motivation. Although a lower-proficiency learner in a dyad might not be capable of providing corrective feedback regarding his or her partner's pronunciation, he or she can still offer positive or constructive feedback on the overall oral performance. The teacher can illustrate positive aspects of the partner's oral reading performance such as "You have read more words than last time." Moreover, a Likert scale can be used to provide feedback, as suggested by Cohen (2011). For instance, ranges from "Nice job" to "Needs work" on a scale can reflect the learner's oral reading performance in a session. Furthermore, the competence developed from helping a partner can stimulate a learner to devote more time to studying English. In addition to the enhanced motivation facilitated by the presence of a peer, the findings indicate that offering corrective feedback to the lower-proficiency learners can also motivate the higher achievers to improve their oral reading accuracy. Moreover, higher achievers even encouraged their partners to monitor their own reading. The fundamental method of improving reading accuracy requires teachers to develop various self-monitoring mechanisms that enable learners to supervise their own oral reading, such as retrospective miscue analysis suggested by Goodman (1996).

Second, based on the findings of this study, phonics are essential for learners to pronounce a word. Therefore, sound-symbol relationships should be addressed in junior high school English classrooms along with the currently employed system of KK phonetic alphabets. The knowledge of phonics not only facilitates rapid word recognition of written forms but also facilitates memorization of word spellings. Furthermore, the ability to pronounce a word affects learner autonomy because if a learner can pronounce a word according to its sound-letter relationship, he or she

does not have to depend on the teacher or peers to provide the correct sound (Woore, 2007).

Finally, teachers can implement peer-mediated RR in English classrooms as an activity to practice reading aloud from textbook articles or other supplementary reading materials to familiarize students with these texts and increase learners' oral reading fluency. Furthermore, teachers are advised to use passages in textbooks as reading materials for peer-mediated RR, particularly those who desire to provide more English-speaking opportunities under the time constraints of the classroom. In addition to the aforementioned benefits, this method is also practical and effective for students in practicing word pronunciation and memorizing the phrase or sentence patterns in articles from textbooks. Thus, teachers do not need to prepare other supplementary materials for speaking practice. Although peer-mediated RR was implemented in an English class twice per week in this study, teachers can arrange such activities as per their schedule.

These implications can be summarized with the help of the thoughts of a participant in the study: peer-mediated RR applied as a regular activity in the English class helped her to become such an English learner who can not only recognize the meaning of words but also read words aloud in the passage.

Limitation of the Study

This study had two limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, only three focused dyads were closely observed in the study. The learners' learning processes, affordances, and challenges concluded in this study indicated only limited circumstances that occur when peer-mediated RR is implemented as a regular classroom activity. Moreover, two out of three dyads had partners of the same gender. Future research could focus on close observation of the learning processes of

male students and the interaction between opposite-gender partners. Furthermore, because of the limited number of focused dyads, the present study did not include a dyad with reciprocal learning in the peer-mediated RR program; thus, further investigation is required to determine the English proficiency levels of such dyad members and their learning processes during peer-mediated RR to provide a broader understanding of the method.

Second, owing to the short study duration, the effect of peer-mediated RR on the learners' academic achievement remains unclear. The present study addressed the improvement in the participants' oral reading fluency after only a 12-week peer-mediated RR program, and a longer observation period might be required to determine whether this method would improve the monthly English achievement assessments of learners.

Suggestions for Future Research

In response to the limitations of the present study, two suggestions are made for further research. Future research can be conducted to gain further understanding of the learning processes of dyads comprising either opposite-gender members or two male members. In this study, because only one focused dyad comprised opposite-gender members, it is unknown whether the learning processes and interactions would differ when the student pairing varied. A longer peer-mediated RR program is desirable to observe the effects of this method on the learners' academic performance. Relationship between the improvement of oral reading fluency and academic achievement (i.e., grades) can be further determined. In future, larger-scale studies with longer observation periods are required to determine how peer-mediated RR can be optimally adopted in classroom settings to enhance learners' oral reading performance as well as to generate a virtuous circle of

improved oral reading fluency and development of competence obtained from the method.

Conclusion

Improvement of reading ability is a critical issue in junior high school English education, and reading fluency is closely associated with reading comprehension. Based on the findings of this present study, peer-mediated RR can be implemented as a regular classroom activity in junior high schools in Taiwan to obtain assistance from peers and to enhance learners' word recognition accuracy and reading rates.

The peer-mediated RR method can create an accumulated practice effect, which is essential to improve the oral reading rate. The progress made can increase self-confidence and thus create a virtuous circle for learners to more diligently practice reading. However, the two issues—how to employ this method to develop competence and how to increase the motivation obtained from the positive social interaction with peers—should be studied further in the future.

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Appendix A

Timeline of the study – 24 sessions

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Classroom Activities: Peer-Mediated Repeated Reading</i>	<i>Research Activities</i>
Stage 1 (1 week)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review letter-sound correspondence, stress, intonation, and chunking. 2. Practice what to do during the peer-mediated repeated reading (RR) sessions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pretest 2. Student pairing 3. Interview with the three dyads (1st interview)
Stage 2 (12 weeks)	<p>Peer-mediated RR sessions twice a week, 24 sessions in total.</p> <p><u>The reading materials:</u></p> <p>1st week (Session 1, 2) : Reading, Book 3 Lesson 2, Kang Hsuan edition & Read It! of the 7th topic in September in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>2nd week (Session 3, 4) : Reading, Book 3 Lesson 3, Kang Hsuan edition & Read It! of the 1st topic in October in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>3rd week (Session 5, 6) : Read It! of the 2nd & 3rd topics in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>4th week (Session 7, 8) :</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom observation (field notes and video-recording) 2. Students' learning journal collection 3. Oral reading rate tests every four weeks 4. Interviews with the three dyads every four weeks (2nd and 3rd interviews)

	<p>Read It! of the 5th&6th topics in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>5th week (Session 9, 10) : Lesson 4 Reading& Read It! of 7th topic in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>6th week (Session 11, 12) : Read It! of 8th topic in October & 1th topic in November in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>7th week (Session 13, 14) : Lesson 5 Reading& Read It! of the 2nd topic in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>8th week (Session 15, 16) : Read It! of the 3rd& 4th topics in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>9th week (Session 17, 18) : Lesson 6 Reading& Read It! of the 5th topic in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>10th week (Session 19, 20) : Read It! of the 6th&7th topics in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>11th week (Session 21, 22) : Lesson 7 Reading& Read It! of the 2nd topic in December in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p> <p>12th week (Session 23, 24) : Lesson 8 Reading& Read It! of the 3rd topic in <i>Let's Talk in English</i></p>	
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<p>Stage 3 (1 week)</p>	<p>The class ends</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post-test 2. Students' learning journal collection 3. Interviews with the three dyads (4th interview)
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Appendix B

Pre-test

Reading Material

When Mary woke up this morning, she looked at the clock.	11
And she couldn't believe her eyes! It was 8 o'clock, and she was	24
late! Because her parents were not home, no one would wake her	36
up. She put on her clothes quickly and ran all the way to school.	50
But ten minutes later, when she got there, the gate was closed. And	63
she didn't see any teachers or students. It was so strange that the	76
whole school was very quiet. Before she took out her cellphone to	89
call her classmate, she remembered. Today was Saturday! No	96
wonder there was nobody at school.	102

1st Reading

<i>Correct Words Per Minute:</i> _____ words /min Errors or miscued word(s): _____ _____
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2nd Reading

<i>Correct Words Per Minute:</i> _____ words /min Errors or miscued word(s): _____ _____
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3rd Reading

<i>Correct Words Per Minute:</i> _____ words /min Errors or miscued word(s): _____ _____
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Pre-test

Comprehension Questions

Write down T (True) or F (False)

- () 1. When Mary woke up this morning, she was surprise it was 8:00.
- () 2. Mary's parents were at home, but they didn't wake her up.
- () 3. Mary took a bus, so she could get to school in ten minutes.
- () 4. The school gate was closed, and the school was very quiet.
- () 5. Mary called her classmate, so she knew they didn't need to go to school.

