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The Effects of Written Corrective Feedback Using Wikis among ESL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Wikis are being used more and more frequently in language learning situations. Their ease of access and usability has made them a popular choice amongst language teachers; especially in the teaching of writing. However, the full potential of wikis outside collaborative writing has yet to be explored. This study aims to focus on the potentials of providing feedback to written work using the platform of wikis. In this study, 14 students were asked to provide feedback and comments on their peers' essays on a wiki platform using a correction checklist provided to them. These students were first asked to write an essay, upload it onto the wiki platform, and then finally comment on the written texts of their peers; for a total of nine times. At the end of the study, the students' pre and post-test scores were compared to see whether their written accuracy had improved. A paired-sample t-test was used to analyse the students' pre and post-test scores and the results showed a significant improvement in Jacob's (1981) ESL components of content, organization, language use and vocabulary; however, the study did not yield the same results for the students' punctuation use. In being provided comments by peers and their teacher through the platform of wikis, the students' enthusiasm increased when put through the feedback; therefore, their focus heightened on writing a more accurate version of their previous essay. This in turn, increased the overall quality of their final essay.

Keywords: Wikis; Language Components; Correction Checklist; Written accuracy; Written corrective feedback

INTRODUCTION

With writing being an important skill in any language and a difficult one to learn in a new language, students need a lot of help and support to improve and master it. Many studies (Miyazoe & Anderson 2010, Nazrah Abu Bakar et al. 2010, Shih 2011, Suthiwartnarueput & Wasanasomsithi 2012) have been carried out suggesting a myriad of ways in which teachers can help L2 learners improve their writing ability.

One such method is the integration of technology and the encouragement to utilize more technological tools in teaching contexts. Research has been conducted on the use of social networks and Web 2.0 technology to aid the teaching of writing (Brodahl et al. 2011, Chao & Lo 2011, Capdeferro et al. 2012, Bikowski & Vithanage 2016).

The teaching of languages is always accompanied with correction. Students come to class to learn and they think this is achieved when their teachers correct their mistakes. Therefore, in writing classes, providing corrective feedback is unavoidable. Both the endeavours of writing a composition and correcting errors are very time-consuming, difficult and require a lot of effort. As the number of hours in a language course dedicated to writing and providing feedback is not sufficient, extra time, outside the usual class hours, should be dedicated to learning the skill (by the students) and to correcting and providing feedback (by the teachers). By using Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) tools, not only

can more time be added to the usual class hours through social networks and Web 2.0 technology, but the indirect teaching of collaboration in an authentic situation can be exercised as well. This collaboration, when done authentically, allows for participants to see problems from different perspectives and to solve problems through a shared understanding (Abdul Hameed Abdul Majid & Siti Hamin Stapa 2017).

In recent years the focus of education and learning has moved from knowledge to skills that are necessary in real life, which means students are taught not only theoretical knowledge, but its practice, in hopes of aiding them to be successful (Fallows & Stevens, 2000). One of these such skills, which has proven to be highly valued by employers, is collaboration and the ability to have open discussions with peers to resolve an issue or problem (Johnson, Adams & Cummins 2012). The teaching of such a trait is a time-consuming one for students and teachers, who are usually limited by the constraints of time and location in classrooms. However, Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) tools have proven to offer useful solutions to these problems (Reinties et al. 2009).

The problems faced by L2 learners in writing accurate compositions can be helped by collaboration activities in online learning situations. In these online learning contexts, the process of knowledge building is shared by members working collaboratively and scaffolding each other. As a result, students can improve the quality of their writing.

WIKIS AND COLLABORATIVE WRITING

In a language classroom, wikis can be used for a variety of purposes as it is considered a valuable collaborative and teaching tool. Among the most common uses is their support in teaching writing. Wikis can be used to enhance student-centred constructivist learning (Alshumaimeri 2010) as a writing tool; it allows students to reflect, review and publish their work. Students can then be asked to work collaboratively in order to improve their writings. They will need to read the content closely, revise and possibly keep track of the changes made on their work and do the same for their peers. This indirectly encourages students to view writing as a process and not a product (Kuteeva 2011). With its simple nature, wikis allow its users to create and edit content and to work with others rather than individually. Therefore, it has become the source of encouragement and motivation in collaborative learning and especially collaborative writing classes (Judd, Kennedy & Cropper 2010).

Mak and Coniam (2008) explored the use of wikis with 11-year-old ESL students for authentic collaborative writing lasting six weeks in a secondary school in Hong Kong. The results showed that although the students wrote longer, more coherent texts and were more enthusiastic about the whole idea, in some cases, their accuracy worsened.

However, in her research, Kuteeva (2011) found different results. She came to the conclusion that writing using wikis encouraged students to pay closer attention to the language structure and the coherence of what they were producing.

A study conducted by Chang (2010) explored the advantages of wikis, i.e. student satisfaction, motivation and confidence in group work in EFL courses. It was concluded that working in a group helped the students to socially interact to produce higher quality work and to develop their language whilst completing the set task. Richardson (2006) mentions that by using wikis, students view writing as an ongoing social process rather than an individual final product. Additionally, Higdon found that using wikis in language learning contexts encouraged students to engage in the writing activity and write more than expected (2006).

Safynaz Hamid and Mansor (2012) conducted a collaborative writing study with teachers in Malaysia using wikis and concluded that wikis can create a productive and cooperative environment for learning and feedback outside the boundaries of school. Their results also showed that the students preferred collaborating on wikis for writing compositions and essays rather than using the conventional pen and paper face to face method. Xiao and Lucking's (2008) study was conducted to compare the effects of wiki-based peer-assessment with a control group and it revealed that the experimental group, i.e. the one using the wikis, posited a greater content and satisfaction.

Wikis is seen as a valuable language learning tool in the 21st century as it requires its participants to discuss, compromise and negotiate the process of writing (Larusson & Alterman 2009).

Arnold et al. (2012) claimed that in his study, a group of students only revised and rewrote their own part of the text. This supports the common dilemma faced by students about not wanting to correct other people's work because they do not think they have the knowledge to do it properly. The study also showed a group of students who took responsibility of the whole text and made sure to make the changes everywhere. However, his results also concluded that these students corrected both meaning and form errors when it came to their peers' work, but only took the meaning-focused revisions made on their written work into consideration, supporting the notion that they also did not see other their peers as adept enough to make corrections on form.

A cultural change must be made in the students' perceptions about modifying their peers' work, new etiquettes and norms should be taught and discussed with the students before they are asked to use wikis. Li (2013) conducted a study on a small group of students and concluded that they paid attention to both meaning and form and implemented revisions on both types of errors. The collaborative efforts in writing the essays in Li's study can be attributed to the fact that these students were friends and classmates who were working towards a common goal and wanted to be successful.

As mentioned in the above, a number of scholars (Supyan Hussin 2008, Nazrah Abu Bakar et al. 2010, Wan Fatimah Wan Ahmad & Subarna Sivapalan 2010, Scher-Bruenner 2013) have proposed many different methods with which teachers can help L2 learners improve their writing ability using CSCL tools. However, there has not been any studies carried out to investigate the effects of collaborative peer feedback using wikis as a platform on ESL learners' writing accuracy in International students in Malaysia. This study aims to explore and analyse the collaboration and interaction amongst students via wikis for the purpose of improving the quality of their writing.

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study were all non-Malaysian students who had enrolled in a language school in Kuala Lumpur, i.e. English Made Simple (EMS). They had registered to take part in the language centres preparatory IELTS classes. This is because these students needed to obtain an IELTS certificate to be able to further their studies in universities. As a requirement for enrolment, they had sat for a proficiency test and were all at a high pre-intermediate to intermediate level of English proficiency. One of the four IELTS preparatory classes was selected randomly for the purpose of this study. This class was comprised of 8 male and 10 female students; their ages ranging from 18-29 years. They came from varying

countries in Asia. Ten of the students were form Middle-Eastern countries; two from Iraq, one from Egypt, three from Syria and four from Saudi Arabia. The rest of the students were from other countries, also in Asia; two from Georgia, one from Armenia and five from Azerbaijan.

PROCEDURE

A quasi-experimental design was utilized in this study to observe the effectiveness of providing corrective feedback through the platform of wikis as opposed to the traditional paper. Pre and post-tests were administered to examine and analyse to what extent students had benefited from receiving feedback through the wiki-platform. The students' comments on their peers' essays were also looked at and analysed qualitatively. This was to examine how the comments made on each of the components helped the students improve their writing from their pre to their post-tests.

A pre-test was administered to all the participants with the intent of measuring each students' individual writing level before the experiment began and to make it possible for the researcher to compare the students' pre and post-test scores and observe the effectiveness of the wiki-based collaborative correction. For this pre-test, the students were asked to write an essay on a pre-selected IELTS topic.

These essays were then marked by two raters. It is worth mentioning that the inter-rater reliability of these raters had been calculated beforehand. These raters gave the different components in Jacobs' ESL Profile (1981), i.e. content, organisation, vocabulary, language use and mechanics, a separate score. They also gave an overall holistic score to the written essays. Once the raters scored the pre-tests, each students' writing proficiency was determined and recorded. The overall scores of the pre-test essays revealed the homogeneity of the class in the skill of writing as their scores were within two standard deviations above and below the mean score.

The next step in the experiment was to establish an online classroom on a website called wikispaces.com. This online classroom was where the treatment would be carried out, i.e. where the students would post their essays, read their peers' essays and provide feedback to them. Using this online wiki-platform had a number of advantages, such as; 1) the site allowed students to work collaboratively with their peers. As mentioned in the above, there have been a number of studies focusing on collaborative writing (Brodahl 2011, Chao & Lo 2011, Dobao 2012, Kessler et al. 2012, Hadjerrouit 2013, Li 2013) but not much work has been done on collaborative correction and feedback through Web 2.0 technology; 2) the online classroom allowed for anonymity. This means that the students were able to comment on their peers' work without knowing whose work it was or who was commenting on their work. This feature motivated the students to write without the feeling of being judged. 3) the platform, i.e. wikis, also made the written work available to the students at all times from any device. The idea of accessibility made it possible for the students to read their peers' essays, comment on them and write their feedback whenever it was more convenient for them as opposed to being limited by the physical constraints of their classroom.

The next step in this study was to give the students their first writing topic and ask them to write an essay on the topic during their class time. Once the essays had been written, they were uploaded, by the students themselves, onto the wiki-platform. The essays were always written on a Monday so that the students could have ample time to read and comment on their peers' essays during the week (until Sunday night). On the following Monday, the students had to re-write their essays according to the comments and feedback they had received. They did this during their Monday class time. Then, the same process as the previous week was carried out, i.e. the students uploaded the second version of their essays

onto the wiki-platform and had until the Sunday of the same week to read some of their peers' work and comment on them. On the third Monday, the students had the opportunity to re-write their essays for the third and final time based on the comments and feedback they had received from their peers.

For the purpose of commenting on their peers' essays, the students needed guidance. This was mainly due to the fact that correcting and commenting on a written piece of work is usually done by the teacher; therefore, when the responsibility was given to the students to help their peers improve, they needed to be guided through the process. Consequently, a correction checklist (Appendix A) was provided to the students and during the first two weeks of the experiment, i.e. between the pre-test and the administration of the first writing topic, the students were taught in detail, how to go through and answer the questions on the checklist. In addition to the correction checklist being a guide for the students to learn "how to comment systematically" on an essay, it was also to make sure students commented thoroughly on all the different components of the language from Jacobs' ESL Profile.

It is worth mentioning that to combat the problem of everyone having access to the essays uploaded on the wiki-platform and making alterations (Kear et al. 2010), the virtual classroom created was semi-private. This means that only the members of the class had access to the essays posted on it.

The experiment took 13 weeks in total. In the first 3 weeks, the students were introduced to wikis and the checklist and were given time to familiarize themselves with both. From weeks 4 to 12, the students were given IELTS writing topics to write an essay on and also to give feedback to their peers on their essays. The IELTS writing topics were given on weeks 4, 7 and 10. The students had to write the essays in class, and then had a complete week to read two other essays from the wiki-classroom and comment on it using the checklist. On weeks 5, 8 and 11, the students were asked to read the comments and feedback made on their own essays (by their peers) and re-write them. This new version was also written in class, to avoid any kind of cheating and to keep the variables the same for all students.

And, just like the weeks before, they had one complete week to read two other essays written by their peers and provide feedback on them. The same process was carried out on weeks, 6, 9 and 12, where the students wrote their final version, i.e. the product, in class.

On the 14th week, the students wrote one last essay which was marked and scored as the post-test. This was to be compared with their pre-tests to gauge out the participants' improvement. These post-test essays were marked by the same two raters who scored the students' pre-tests. The raters assigned a score to each of the components in Jacobs' ESL profile and a holistic overall score. Then, the mean scores of each component and the overall score given by the two raters was calculated and used for analysis purposes.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data analysis was carried out to see whether providing feedback through the wiki-platform had improved the students' writing scores in the different component as well as their overall accuracy.

In the sections below, the quantitative data analysis will be presented and analysed in tables for the overall scores first, and later for each component separately.

OVERALL SCORE

This section will look at the overall scores of the students in the pre and post-tests to determine if and to what extent the treatment helped in improving the students' writing.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare the effects of providing collaborative peer feedback through the platform of wikis on the students' overall scores in their compositions before and after the treatment was applied.

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of the overall scores in the students' pre and post-test.

TABLE 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for the Overall Score

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*P*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Overall	62.86	8.86	72.79	7.50	-7.30	.000**	-1.06	-0.58	-0.80

Note. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.
[a] Eta squared.
* $p < .001$, two-tailed. ** $p < .0001$, two-tailed

As Table 1 presents, with the significance level at .000 ($P = .000$), which is below .05 ($\alpha < .05$), it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference in the overall scores after the treatment was applied. The significant increase in the students' overall scores after they received corrective feedback through the platform of wikis shows that the treatment had a significant impact on the overall quality of the students' writings and was beneficial in making the students' essays more accurate.

By comparing the mean scores of the pre-test and post-tests, we can see that using the wiki-classroom as a tool for providing feedback to students has helped them in improving their overall grades considerably. The mean for the overall score of the students in the pre-test was 62.86. This number increased by 9.93 to 72.79, which is clearly an improvement, showing that the students benefitted from the feedback and comments provided to them by their peers through the platform.

CONTENT

The first component from Jacobs' ESL Profile which will be analysed here is content. Table 2, illustrates and compares the students' scores on the component of content in the pre and post-tests.

TABLE 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Content

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Content	17.79	1.89	20.43	2.62	-5.42	.000**	-3.70	-1.59	0.69

As Table 2 presents, with its significance level at .000 which is lower than .05, it can be concluded that there was a significant increase in the students' content scores after the treatment. This rejects the null hypothesis that stated there would be no difference between the pre and post-test scores regarding the component of content in the students' compositions.

Table 2 also shows that the mean score for the students' content has increased by 2.64 although this number is small compared to the students' overall scores, it is considered an improvement, nonetheless.

One of the reasons why there is a significant improvement in the students' content scores from their pre-test to post-test could be attributed to the fact that content is one of the components which requires little expertise on behalf of the students. Unlike language use, vocabulary and punctuation, which all need students to be proficient, to some extent, in order to correct their friends' work, the component of content does not ask for a high level of proficiency in English. Many students can give their feedback on what is written in the essay without needing a lot of English language knowledge. In other words, without needing to be

proficient in English, students can still express their ideas and opinions about the content of a text. They can use their general knowledge and background information on the topic at hand and form a view/statement on how the essay is written, i.e. whether the content is relevant, appropriate, to the point or whether it has redundant information.

Arnold et al.'s (2012) work demonstrated that students gave comments to meaning, content and form when asked to provide feedback. In this study, the students were also eager to give feedback on meaning and content, and they were also able to take into consideration feedback given to them, on this component, with more confidence.

ORGANIZATION

The next component which will be analysed is the students' organization, the arrangement of ideas or details in a perceptible order in writing.

With its significance at .003, it can be concluded that after the treatment was applied, the students' post-test scores for this component increased significantly as well.

TABLE 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Organisation

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*P*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Organisation	14.36	1.65	16.29	1.49	-3.72	.003*	-3.05	-0.81	0.52

According to the findings shown in Table 3, the null hypothesis was rejected with a 95% confidence level meaning that the component of organization improved from the pre-test to the post-test. The improvement is not as high as the component of content; however, it is still considered significant.

Comparing the mean scores of the students also shows that students' organisational skills became better (significantly) after the 14-week intervention of wiki-based corrective feedback. The 1.93 increase, between pre and post-test scores, demonstrates that by making the students focus on coherence, cohesion and arrangement while giving feedback on their peers' work, they had also become more conscience of their own organisational skills.

The reason for the minor increase in the mean scores of the students' organisation scores, might be due to the fact that there were only two questions focusing on organisation in the checklist. These questions may have only been able to promote a surface-view of the organisation; therefore, making the students skim through the text and not look into it with enough focus.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary was the next component which was looked at in this study. The students' pre and post-tests scores were compared using a two-way t-test and the results are shown in Table 4.

The 1.71 increase in the mean scores of the vocabulary shows the questions aimed at helping the students focus on vocabulary was significantly effective. Similar to the component of organization, although the improvement from the students' pre-test scores to post-test scores was only .003, it was still significant, and as a result, refuted the null hypothesis with a 95% confidence level.

TABLE 4. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Vocabulary

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Vocabulary	13.79	2.46	15.50	2.10	-3.71	.003*	-2.71	-.072	0.51

Vocabulary is one of the most difficult components of a language to correct. This is because it is a very broad and vast aspect of a language. There are many different factors that need to be considered when correcting vocabulary, for example, the use of a word in a particular context or setting, its collocation with surrounding words and even its appropriateness in the sentence. All these factors and more make the task of correcting vocabulary mistakes a challenging one even for the teacher, as there is always more than one right answer.

With regards to Jacobs' ESL profile which focuses on the sophistication of the range of vocabulary, the effectiveness of the word/idiom choice, the usage of word-form mastery and the appropriateness of the register, to correct vocabulary errors, you need to have a high proficiency in English and a wide range of vocabulary. Although it was such a difficult component to correct, there was not much guidance given to the students by the checklist, only one question was attributed to it. Nonetheless, a significant improvement was still seen in the students' post-test scores.

LANGUAGE USE

As opposed to vocabulary, grammar or language structure was straight-forward to correct. To make the provision of corrective feedback effective in this study, according to Jacobs' ESL Profile (1981), language use or grammar correction only meant the effective use of complex constructions, agreement in tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns and prepositions and this was made clear through the checklist. Many students learn these rules at the early stages of language learning. The participants in this study, being at a pre-intermediate/Intermediate level of English proficiency, were already quite familiar with these rules. This in turn allowed almost all students to make corrections and give feedback to their peers on language use; therefore, the amount of feedback for this component was high. Another reason why there was a lot of language use feedback could be due to the fact that many students see giving feedback as being grammar correction.

As Table 5 shows, the mean score of the students' pre-test was 14.07 and it increased by 3.22 to 17.29. With the significance level at .000 (P = .000), which is below .05, it is clear that the students' language use score showed a significant improvement in the post-test.

TABLE 5. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Language Use

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Language Use	14.07	3.00	17.29	2.95	-7.00	.000**	-4.21	-2.22	0.79

MECHANICS

The final component this study looked at was mechanics, i.e. the correct use of spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Mechanics was also the only component that did not yield a significant improvement.

After analysing the data, it can be seen that at p=.208, which is higher than .05 ($\alpha > .05$), there was no statistically significant difference in the pre and post-tests scores. The difference between the mean scores in the pre and post-tests show that there was only a 0.35 increase, which can almost go undetectable.

TABLE 6. Mean and Standard Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Mechanics

	Pre-test		Post-test				95% CI		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(13)	*p*	*LL*	*UL*	Effect Size [a]
Mechanics	2.86	0.77	3.21	0.80	-1.33	0.208	-0.94	0.23	0.12

Although there is a difference in the pre and post-test results regarding mechanics, this difference, as illustrated in Table 6, is not significant. There are several reasons this could be so.

Although capitalization, full-stops and question marks are easy to learn and use, there are other punctuation marks, such as; commas, semi colons, hyphen, etc. that many students find difficult to utilize correctly. As a result, very few participants were able to correct their friends' mistakes so not many received much feedback on their own work. There was a total of three comments on mechanics in all 9 essays throughout the experiment, these comments only indicated where the problem was but did not correct them.

In addition to its difficulty in use, correction software is imbedded in many programs like Microsoft Word, which the participants used throughout this study; therefore, they did not need to pay too much attention to this aspect as it was done for them.

An analysis of the qualitative data shows that it supports the quantitative data. The analysis of the students' post-test essays showed that these students made the biggest and most significant improvement in language use. This component received the highest number of comments and feedback. This could be due to the fact that although language use and grammar are no longer a primary focus in process writing for the teachers, they are still of high value to the students. ESL students still see accuracy in writing through making fewer language errors. As a result of this belief, they gave a lot of feedback to their peers on language use and in return focused more of their attention on writing correct sentences and using correct structures when it came to their own essays. The outcome of the high number of comments on the component of language use is visible in the students' significant improvement in their post-test scores.

On the other hand, the component which received the lowest number of comments and feedback was mechanics. One reason could be that the students' computer software already corrected or pointed out many of the mistakes they had made regarding spelling, capitalisation and punctuation; therefore, the essays they uploaded on the wiki-platform would not have had many mistakes regarding this component to begin with. As a result, not many comments were given by the participants to their peers. Therefore, the post-test essays of the students did not benefit from a significant improvement regarding the students' scores on mechanics.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative data analysis illustrated in the sections and tables above conclude that the wiki platform had a significant effect on all but one of the different components of language. This means that by uploading their essays on the wiki-platform, and having access to their classmate's essays, they were able to read, comment on and correct them from any device connected to the Internet whenever they wanted. This process of writing, uploading, providing and receiving feedback and re-writing the essays on a wiki platform, improved the students' content, organization, vocabulary and language use in writing significantly. And although the students' mechanic scores had improved after the 14-week intervention, the improvement was not considered significant.

The fact that students could provide their comments from anywhere at any time through the platform of wikis made the process of giving feedback and comments much more convenient for the participants. Students were not confined in time or space for this task. They had access to their peers' work throughout the week from any location. If they were able to access the Internet, they had the chance to log onto the wiki-classroom and read their friends' work and comment on it. For these reasons, it was possible for each and every

student to give feedback to their peers even after their class time. The students benefitted from this added time greatly.

Also, the wiki-classroom provided motivation to the students. The students in the study were all young and like many others in their generation, very dependent on their gadgets and pre-occupied with social media. This proved to be an advantage in the study as students could access their peers' essays on their gadgets just like they would have had access to their social media accounts.

In addition to the accessibility and motivation provided by the platform, the significant increase in the component scores found in the students' post-test essays could be contributed to the anonymity in place. As the participants were asked to come up with aliases, they became anonymous members of the wiki-classroom and therefore, were more comfortable commenting on and criticizing their peers' essays. This consequently made it easier for the students to accept their peers' comments as well. Not knowing who had commented on their essays meant that they did not read the comments made on their work with any presuppositions made on the commenters language proficiency.

This study supported Pope's (2010) study claiming that group work on wikis helped the students to socially interact to produce higher quality work and to develop their language whilst completing the set task. It also permitted students to look through, revise and publish their work on the web for a much larger audience rather than their usual one-person audience, the teacher. This enhanced encouragement had made students more aware and conscious about what and how they were writing. This in turn, encouraged the students to work collaboratively in order to make the best version of their written work available to others. To achieve this, they needed to read their own content closely, revise it, look into and adhere to the comments made by their peers and ultimately keep track of the changes they made on their work. This, as Kuteeva (2011) claims, encouraged students to view writing as a process rather than a product. These results also support Lund's (2008) study which observed shifts in the students' views and outlook with regards to the learning process, from a more traditional individualism to a more collaborative and cooperative activity. To come to a better product which was to be posted for a larger audience, they had to learn to work together and take advantage of each other's strengths.

The simple fact that there were not as many errors pointed out and corrections made by the students and their peers as there would have been if a teacher had provided comprehensive direct corrections is a positive aspect in this study. The theory put forward by Evans et al. (2012) and Van Beuningan (2010) claiming that in providing written corrective feedback (WCF), one must take the middle ground, choose a few errors to focus on as opposed to correcting every single error or only one type of error, is supported by the results of this study. In this study, the students were given a comment checklist which directed and focused their attention on a number of components. By going through the checklist, it was hoped that all the students provide some sort of comment on all the different components under investigation as opposed to only commenting on the ones they were more familiar with or had more knowledge on. Consequently, there was focus on more than one type of error; however, not every error in every component was corrected, hence a middle ground was still kept. Bitchener and Ferris's (2012) study results claimed that although direct written feedback, i.e. writing the correct form next to the errors helps students with a lower language proficiency, indirect feedback is more beneficial for the more proficient ones because they are often capable of correcting their careless mistakes themselves. Their study results were also implemented and supported by this study. The participants of this study were pre-intermediate to intermediate students preparing for their IELTS examination and therefore did not need direct corrective feedback. These students only needed to be pointed in the right direction which is what the comments aimed to do. In going through the checklist, the

students had only to point out where the errors were and did not actually need to supply the corrected forms.

In backing-up the theory of providing corrective feedback, the results were in accordance with the Noticing hypotheses as well as the Interaction hypotheses. The Noticing hypotheses claims that when students' errors are pointed out to them and they are made aware of them, they will use their knowledge or become aware of their lack of knowledge in a particular area. This in turn will help them actively learn from their mistakes. The check-list in this experiment helped students focus on and identify specific errors on their peers' work in addition to helping them become more aware and notice those same mistakes in their own work. Therefore, as the students redid their work and re-wrote their essays, they were more careful with what they wrote, making fewer mistakes. Schmidt (1900, 2001) and his followers believe that corrective feedback provides a stimulus for learners to identify the gap or mismatch between their inter-language and the target language. In this study, the stimulus was the comments given to the students and the gap was the fact that the errors had not been corrected so the authors of each essay either realised that they had been careless or learned that there was a gap between their interlanguage and their target language. This prompted the authors of the essays to try and fill in their gaps by filling in their language gaps or by just being a little more careful. Consequently, their essays improved as the weeks in the experiment went by and significant improvements were seen in all but one of the components at the end.

Collaborative writing has been used successfully as a method of teaching for a few years, and the Interactional hypotheses explains its success. Long's (1996) Interactional hypotheses supports the idea of collaborative peer correction which was made possible through wikis in this study. The results of the current study showed that by putting students into groups of three, i.e. small groups, to avoid "free-loaders" (Piezon & Donaldson 2005), the students benefitted from working together and negotiating for a joint outcome, allowing the more proficient language users in each group to connect input, internal learner capacity, particularly selective attention, and output in productive useful ways.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the students' written accuracy does improve when collaborative feedback is provided to them through a wiki-platform. The study showed that by having the students upload their work on a wiki-classroom and increasing the availability of their written work to more students, they gained more access to different compositions, viewpoints and perspectives in return. With the increased number of suggestions made on each essay, students had various insights into different perspectives and this in turn helped them view their own work from different angels.

In addition to this, by uploading their essays on a shared wiki-platform, students were able to collaborate, communicate and socially interact outside the boundaries of their classroom. This increased their contact time and, as a result, their learning time.

This extra time benefitted the teachers as well. Teachers did not have to bear the responsibility of corrections on their own and were able to now share it with their students. This added time allowed them to help students in different ways and other areas. Working collaboratively had an extra advantage as more proficient and capable students were able to scaffold their peers in different components and help them learn better. This meant that the teacher was no longer the only person who could help the students learn and the students could learn from each other.

With increased availability came an increase in time, collaboration and interaction outside the traditional classroom, and the results of this study present these effects positively. The results illustrate that the students' overall written accuracy improved at the end of the study.

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APPENDIX A

CORRECTION CHECKLIST

1. After you have read the composition, give a positive feedback, for example, what parts of the composition did you find particularly interesting?
2. Write down one or two examples of sentences or expressions that you consider unusually well written or that impress you in a particular way.
3. What did you feel/think when you finished reading this essay?
4. Is the information presented in a clear and logical way? Yes / No
5. If you can recognize the essay pattern of organization, name it.
6. Is the main idea clearly expressed in a thesis statement? Yes / No
7. Transcribe the thesis statement.
8. Which are the supporting ideas?
9. Has any irrelevant information been included (repetition of ideas, off-the point examples, etc.)? Include this information in square brackets [ ] in the original text.
10. Is there any information that needs to be expanded or added? Indicate what sort of information and where in the text using numbers (1, 2, 3) and footnotes.
11. Were there any parts that seemed unclear or confusing to you? Use the symbol? On the margin next to any part that does not sound very clear.
12. Can you find words or phrases that are used incorrectly or inadequately?
13. Underline the grammatically incorrect structures you can find.
14. Underline the spelling mistakes you spot.
15. Underline any punctuation mistakes you find.