Integrating peer feedback to improve EFL learners writing production within online environments

استخدام تعليقات الأقران لتحسين إنتاج التعبير الكتابي لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية عبر الخط

Mustapha GASMI

University of Laghouat (Algeria) , mu.gasmi@lagh-univ.dz

ABSTRACT:

Writing is a demanding task especially for second or foreign language learners. That is why most of EFL learners are struggling with this skill. Any support we would develop towards improving EFL learners' writing production should be related to collaborative learning. Besides, more electronic learner-centered and collaborative approaches have emerged to facilitate student-centered learning. Thus, in the present study, the researcher worked on peer feedback, as a form of collaborative remedial work of written composition using ICT to implement enhancement activities that are likely to bring about students' contribution to improve their writing performance. This paper has an experimental nature; it relied on a variety of research tools. According to the findings, there was a general agreement upon the usefulness of the experience. For students, working anonymously in an online group makes one discover many things and leads one to share knowledge with the others. The findings gave support to the efficacy of technology-supported peer feedback in improving the quality of students' revised and new essays, thus encouraging teachers to use this technique in their writing classrooms.

Keywords: EFL learners, Feedback, Online learning, Peer feedback, Writing skill

الملخص:

التعبير الكتابي مهمة شاقة خاصة لمتعلمي اللغة الثانية أو الأجنبية، ولهذا هو فإن معظم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية يعانون في اكتساب هذه المهارة. وبناء عليه فإن أي دعم نطوره لتحسين إنتاج كتابات متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية مرتبط بالتعلم التعاوني. ومما يساعد لبلوغ هذه الغاية، ظهور العديد من المناهج الإلكترونية التي تركز على المتعلم والتعلم التعاوني لتسهيل التعلم المتمحور حول الطالب. وهكذا فإنه في الدراسة الحالية، عمل الباحث على ملاحظات الأقران، كشكل من أشكال العمل العلاجي التعاوني للتكوين في مهارة التعبير الكتابي باستخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات لتنفيذ أنشطة التعزيز التي من شأنها أن تحقق مساهمة الطلاب في تحسين أدائهم الكتابي. هذه الورقة لها طبيعة تجريبية. اعتمدت على مجموعة متنوعة من أدوات البحث. وفقًا للنتائج، كان هناك اتفاق عام على فائدة التجربة. بالنسبة للطلاب، فإن العمل بهوية مجهولة في مجموعة عبر الإنترنت يجعل الطالب يكتشف أشياء كثيرة ويقوده إلى مشاركة المعرفة مع الآخرين. قدمت النتائج دعمًا لفعالية تعليقات الأقران عبر الخط في تحسين جودة مقالات الطلاب المنقحة والجديدة، وبالتالي تشجيع المعلمين على استخدام هذه التقنية في فصول التعبير الكتابي الخاصة بهم.

كلمات مفتاحية: متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية، التعلم عبر الخط، ملاحظات الأقران، مهارة التعبير الكتابي

1- Introduction:

The writing skill in second or foreign languages is considered as one way of measuring one's language proficiency, and writing instruction aims mainly at enabling the students to write well. Yet, we know from our classes, as well as from scholars' writing publications, that

EFL students do not write as well as we think they should (e.g., Al-Hazmi, 2006, P68). The reasons for students' inability to write well enough to meet teachers' expectations are many and varied.

Writing is a demanding task especially for second or foreign language learners. It has been found that most language learners at all levels believe that writing is one of the most difficult language skills to master (Bouyakoub, 2011, P14; Ginsburg, 2010, P121).

The impetus to the present research work comes from personal experience as an EFL teacher at the University of Laghouat. Throughout the years of work in the field, we have detected that EFL students have many deficiencies for writing. Faced with this situation, the researcher has considered a project to stimulate university students to improve their writing skills. The project starts with the basic idea that any support we would develop towards this end should be related to collaborative learning (CL). Collaborative learning takes place because the group members interact with each other. The interactions include agreed rules, explanations, corrections etc. Teachers are supposed to design well-specified collaborative scenarios. It is necessary therefore, to design the learning task and the learning environment.

A wide variety of collaborative work is frequently used to develop the different skills in the foreign language (FL) classroom. In FL writing, however, peer response (whether verbal or written) is the only form of collaborative work that has been widely adopted and studied since the 1990s (Hyland, 1998, P74). The scenario which is adopted for the present work is peer review within an online atmosphere since nowadays most teenagers and adults spend the bulk of their time in front of their PCs. Besides, latest developments in the world have made traditional notions of education outdated and have given way to new, more innovative trends in teaching. These trends have been designed to meet student expectations. Thus more learner-centered approaches were sought in teaching any subject, including languages. These electronic approaches have emerged to facilitate student-centered learning. This has in turn led to face-to-face classroom teaching to be supplemented by technologically driven educational environments, which are more learner-centered, more collaborative and more innovative. Thus, in the present study, the researcher will work on peer review, as a form of collaborative remedial work of written composition using ICT, in our case Moodle software, to implement enhancement activities that are likely to bring about students' contribution to improve their writing performance.

2- Research Questions and Aims of the Study:

Research in the field has proved that when teachers train their students on reviewing each other's draft within an e-environment, students' writing performance improves. Central to this present research work is the question: To what extent can peer-review instruction, if practiced within an online environment, help improving students' writing ability?

The purpose of this study is to identify the effects of ICT-supported peer review on EFL students' writing performance. In order to conduct an in-depth analysis and make inferences, varied questions were raised:

- How can teachers train EFL learners to review and evaluate their peers' written
- production effectively?
- To what extent is Moodle software an enhancement tool conducive to effective peer
- review?
- Does peer review have any positive effects on EFL learners' writing performance?
- Are there any differences on EFL learners' writing attainments between the effects of
- Moodle-based peer review and those of peer review led in traditional classrooms?

A set of hypotheses is laid in the attempts to provide answers to the questions above. Firstly, if students are trained on this specific cooperative study skill, they would be better reviewers in peer review and evaluation of their peers' drafts. Secondly, peer review will be preferred over teacher review which engages no audience and generates no social support. Thirdly, when a peer review approach is applied, EFL teaching will be more learner-centered and will positively impact learners' writing performance. Finally, if students were instructed within an online peer review framework, those learners' writing achievement in FL would be better.

The objective of this experimental study is to investigate the relationship between online peer review instruction and that of students' ability to write well, and its implication on their academic writing performance. That is, the researcher attempts to highlight the need for a future research on the effects of ICT-supported writing instruction on EFL students' writing ability. The research findings could serve teachers and course designers in conceiving an effective EFL writing course. It could be considered as a first step in the design of a course for EFL students that helps promote writing skills self-development through self-awareness raising and cooperative work.

3- Methodology:

This research has an experimental nature that comprises two independent variables (peer review and online learning environments) and one dependent variable (EFL learners' writing performance). It involves comparing two groups on one outcome measure to test the above-mentioned hypotheses regarding causation.

The researcher randomly divided the population of the study into two groups. One of the groups, the control group, received writing instruction within the traditional method (teacher as central element of the learning teaching operation, and review of students' production being done by the teacher). The second group, the experimental group received peer review instruction being done via computers (i.e., writing assignments exchanged on due time using Moodle platform, and then students were instructed to revise and evaluate their peers' drafts using checklists). After receiving the instructions, both groups were compared to see whether

students' writing performance in the experimental group improved better than among students in the control group.

Participants are sixty-nine third LMD year students at the English department. Their average age is twenty. All are native speakers of Arabic and are supposed to graduate by the end of the academic year 2021/2022. The peer review training took place during writing sessions and consisted of three phases: In-class modeling: during this phase, each participant of the experimental group had the opportunity to receive about 6 hours of in-class training on how to review and evaluate a peer's draft, using the checklists they were provided with. The modeling was demonstrated when students were about to perform paired peer review on their drafts of the essays.

Using peer review approach, students of the experimental group were given access to the Moodle platform with anonymous accounts. They were asked to anonymously write the assigned essays. The latter would be submitted to the group members through Moodle platform. Receivers would also anonymously review and evaluate the producers' writing works according to the checklists provided by their instructor. These reviewed drafts would anonymously be returned to their writers with the readers' comments. These comments were expected to be taken into account during the second draft. This period would end in a detailed writing post-test that aimed to see whether students' writing had improved.

4- Review of Literature:

Teachers have been given a chance by latest technologies to use a variety of tools to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process. This makes it important for teachers to be acknowledged about the advantages and possibilities of using technology in the classroom in order to help the struggling EFL learners (Zhang D, 2009, P81). Online learning environments serve as tool that allows students to continue learning outside the school environment where the teacher's role is still necessary to facilitate the planning and preparation processes. They are designed for helping educators create effective online learning communities, and they help educators to support traditional classroom pedagogies with numerous techniques (Guardado, Martin, & Shi, Ling. 2007, P137). They are acknowledged as self-directed, out of class practice which foster learner autonomy. As indicated by Lamb (2004, P64), learners generally welcome internet applications as they can learn at their own pace.

The computer-equipped classroom, where students and instructors meet face-to-face (F2F), is physically and psychologically different to the virtual classroom. A number of authors believe that these differences must be considered for successful CMC outcomes (Porter et al., 2003, P54). One area to consider is task type. An empirical study by Graham L. (2006, P33) found that F2F was best for joint decision-making, and concluded that successful task achievement depended on choosing the right medium for the right task. Similarly, it was found that F2F was better – and also preferred by students – for discussing and responding to ideas, whereas CMC was better for information-sharing. Others have found that CMC appears best for simple concrete tasks (Kehagia, 2005, P47).

Lee's (2008, P25) study further investigated students' writing process on online classrooms, and explored students and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of such tools. The results showed that the students perceived the technology-shaped writing environment is as beneficial in boosting writing motivation, increasing group interactions, and extending the audience for students' writing.

Collaborative writing activities can be described as activities that require learners to work in pairs or small groups and produce one jointly written text (Swain, 2002, P154). Learners work together throughout the entire writing process, sharing authorship and responsibility for the final work. The joint ownership of the final text is, according to Storch (2004, P171), the defining trait of collaborative writing. Swain (2000, P156) states that in the L2 classroom, collaborative writing activities may be helpful to learning because they: "…encourage students to reflect on language form while still being oriented to meaning making".

The shared writing activity, the need to agree not only on what to say but also on how to say it, pushes learners to talk about language, to discuss their language use, and to collaborate in the solution of their language-related problems. Collaborative writing activities thus give an opportunity for collaborative dialog. It is a dialog in which learners are involved in joint problem solving activity. It constitutes a form of languaging, described by Swain as: "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language". (Swain, 2000, P89)

Preceding research comparing collaborative and individual tasks also supports the use of collaborative writing activities in the L2 classroom. In a series of related studies carried out in English as a second language context, Storch compared the performance of the same writing tasks by learners working in pairs and individually. Learners working collaboratively accomplished the activities more competently, producing shorter but grammatically more accurate texts. In an English as a foreign language context, it was found that work with collaborative writing activities over a prolonged period of time may have a positive effect on learners' writing skills, although this effect may differ from one area to another (Storch, 2002, P56).

According to Felix (2004, P69), Peterson (2003, P26), and Hanson (2001, P54) within e-learning environments, students obtain more insight into their writing and revision processes, foster a sense of ownership of the text, generate more positive attitudes toward writing, enhance audience awareness, and facilitate their second/foreign language acquisition. New technologies in the classrooms are a way for teachers to change ways of instructing to meet the ever-changing needs of their students. Utilization of online platforms is a way to empower students to become self-autonomous, on the one hand.

In FL classrooms, peer review, an important instructional activity in process writing courses is highly recommended as a useful source of feedback on the other hand. Many scholars argue that the latter may encourage collaborative learning, foster learner autonomy and help overcome EFL learners' writing weaknesses. The difficulties encountered when composing

essays and reports in English indicate a need for a strategic methodology that will impact critical thinking and a better writing ability.

The teacher has to undergo enough training and adopt the new roles of a tutor or e-moderator. The latter has an opportunity to influence the course of a learning group event in deciding about group size, group membership, life-span and the physical conditions or virtual environment in which the group members interact. In virtual environments some technical help may be necessary (Light and Littleton, 1994, P211). Peer Assisted Learning (PAL, also known as Supplemental Instruction) has been increasingly favoured in recent years as an organized form of face-to-face peer tutoring. There are now online groups offering peer support in the context of peer tutoring. In this, a specific role is taken by trained students for online support, a group member who has received special training in such a role (Min, 2005, P36). The aims of student-led support groups are to help students develop their recognition of competent performance, improve their study skills, enhance their understanding of the subject content of their course and prepare better for assignments and exams.

According to Kepner (1991, P155), the term "feedback" in its broad context (as generally used in the ESL/EFL literature) could be defined as: "...any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong." However, since writing is viewed by Asiri (1997, P192) as a creative activity, it is not enough to confine the feedback merely to informing the writer that his or her responses are right or wrong. Thus, for the purpose of this research, Freedman's comprehensive definition will be adopted, which includes different aspects of feedback (i.e. teacher feedback, conferencing, and peer feedback). She notes that feedback on students' writing:

"...includes all reactions to writing, formal or informal, written or oral, from teacher or peer, to a draft or a final version. It can also occur in reaction to talking about intended pieces of writing, the talk being considered a writing act. It can be explicit or less explicit." (Freedman, 1987, P5)

Many researchers and experts have acknowledged and focused attention on the importance of feedback. They recognize its significant role in increasing learners' achievements, and its central role in writing development. Many studies such as Ferris and Hedgcock (2005, P24) and Ashwell (2000, P65) argue that feedback is beneficial for both beginners and expert writers, since it makes them evaluate their writing and observe possible points of weaknesses. These studies then contend that feedback helps students by creating the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comments create the motive for revising. Without comments from their teachers or their peers, student writers would revise in a piecemeal way, and without comments from readers, students assume that their writing has communicated the intended meaning, and thus see no need for revising the substance of their text. Feedback also makes students realize the level of their performance, and shows them how to improve it to a satisfactory level.

Peer feedback, which is also known in the literature as 'peer review' (Mangelsdorf, 1992, P85) can be defined as the:

"use of learners as sources of information and intercalants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing."

(Liu & Hansen, 2002, P1)

As concerns other experts such as Pol et al. (2008, P34), peer feedback can also be defined as an educational arrangement, in which students comment on their fellow students' work for formative or summative purposes. It is stated that peer feedback rests on a strong theoretical and pedagogical basis, which, in terms of the former, follows the model of social constructivist view of learning, and as far as pedagogy is concerned reinstates the concept of communicative approach to language learning Storch (2004, P45). It is also stated that despite the strong bases of peer feedback, the use of peer feedback in the classroom is quite limited (ibid). It is not only that the use of peer feedback is limited in classroom settings, because peer feedback research is especially limited in ESL/EFL settings.

Some of the most common formats of peer feedback are:

− to assign groups of two, three, or four students and ask them to exchange their first drafts and give comments on each other's drafts before making final versions,

− to make students read their own essays aloud, or get a colleague to read it instead, while the other students listen and provide feedback, either written or oral, on the work that they have just heard,

− it is not to restrict feedback to the time after students have written their essays, since it is possible for students to use this type of feedback in the pre-writing phase by asking other students to comment on each other's outlines, or to carry out a brainstorming session

(Hyland, 1998, P76).

The use of peer feedback in ESL writing classes has been suggested by many studies since it has valuable social, cognitive, affective and metalinguistic benefits (Rollinson, 2005, P69). Yarrow and Topping (2001, P51) for example state that peer interaction is of great value, and the method is recognized by many educational organizations, as evidenced by recommendations by the Scottish Office Education Department. Hyland (1999, P38) also adds that peer feedback enhances more student participation in the classroom, giving them more control and making them less passively teacher dependent.

Ferris and Hedgcock (2005, P71), Saito and Fujita (2004, P124) note that peer feedback helps learners become more self-aware, in the sense that they notice the gap between how they and others perceive their writing, therefore facilitating the development of analytical and critical reading and writing skills, enhancing self-reflection and self-expression, promoting a

sense of coownership, and thus encouraging students to contribute to decision-making, and finally, it fosters reflective thinking.

In relation to the collaborative component of peer feedback, Yarrow and Topping (2001, P62) confirm that peer feedback plays a significant role in: "increased engagement and time spent on-task, immediacy and individualization of help, goal specification, explaining, prevention of information processing overload, prompting, modelling and reinforcement."

The literature also recommends that peer feedback is more authentic and honest than a teacher's response, and it offers students the opportunity to realize that other students experience similar difficulties to their own, and it can also lead to less writing apprehension and more confidence. Peer feedback can also help develop learners' editing skills, and establish a social context for writing. More importantly, peer feedback internalizes the notion of 'audience' into the minds of student writers, because it gives students a more realistic and tangible audience than their teacher, which in turn helps them in producing 'reader-oriented' texts (Hinkel, 2004, P54). Some new studies also revealed that peer feedback can be as beneficial to students who provide it as to those who receive it, if not more (Tsui and Ng, 2000, P97).

Researchers have indicated how peer feedback in cyberspace retains the advantage of traditional written feedback as students put words together to write about writing. As Mark Mabrito (1991, P510) put it: "the situation demands not only writing but also the skillful verbalization of one's thoughts and ideas about writing and a peer's text". Synchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, instruction, and learning that occur at the same time, but not in the same place. The term is most commonly applied to various forms of televisual, digital, and online learning in which students learn from instructors, colleagues, or peers in real time, but not in person. For example, educational video conferences, interactive webinars, chat-based online discussions, and lectures that are broadcast at the same time they delivered would all be considered forms of synchronous learning.

When focusing on writing in online environments, students, in Barry M. Maid's words:

> "...are released from much of the responsibility that a face-to-face encounter sometimes forces on them. They are not affected, for instance, by students with bad breath, or by students who make them uncomfortable in some vague way, or by students who are angry with a teacher."   (Stevens et al., 1995, P212)

While released from these responsibilities in the traditional way, students take on new responsibilities in online feedback. For instance, in peer e-feedback tasks, learners must still be sensitive to the audience's needs and follow a clear, concise, and informative style without having the benefit of facial cues or body language that face-to-face interactions provide (Kirk and Zemliansky, 2005, P245). These constraints pose more challenges to students involved in peer efeedback but perhaps also in a way persuade them to be better writers. As stated by Lee's (2002, P58)

Written communication skill remains the single most critical attribute for success in higher education. For most university students, writing is made particularly difficult by the need

to adopt a different "style", suitable for their level and the discipline being studied. In recognition of this problem, universities frequently offer resources for students to aid them in adapting to their discipline and to engage with written work, including the provision of web-based instruction and support services.

All in all, the effectiveness of the learning teaching process could be ensured if designed and implemented in a technology-supported environment based on substantial language learning theories and sound pedagogical principles. As shown by the findings from previous studies on EFL learners' writing performance through the test scores, the writing skills of EFL learners at the tertiary level could be enhanced via the administering of the suitable technology-enriched learning environment. Language programs could therefore be designed and structured around features endorsed by learning theories and technology.

Previous researches and studies agreed that educational technology is a very useful tool for promoting writing skills among the ESL learners. Although some problems may occur and hinder teachers to use tools such as electronic platforms, some solutions have been set to abolish these weaknesses. Therefore, the ESL learners can be motivated to improve their writing skills through using technology.

5- Research Findings:

With regard to the research gap already established in the literature review, the purpose of this study is to identify the effects of online peer review on EFL students' writing performance. In order to collect the necessary data for the already-mentioned research questions, the researcher planned to use purpose-built, non-standardized, semi-structured questionnaires. As the second and third questions have a more practical nature, the researcher planned an experiment which involved entry and exit writing tests to assess students' performance before and after the treatment. The purpose was to discover if there would be any difference in the results of the experimental group and the control group. The researcher carried out fieldwork which extended for a whole semester and involved actual teaching in the university these EFL students were attending.

The results should give the researcher strong evidence to decide if the group trained to use online peer feedback performed differently from the control group. The hypothesis being questioned is that students in the experimental group would outperform their counterparts in the control group; the null hypothesis is that no significant difference in their performance would be recorded and the alternative hypothesis is that the experimental group would perform less well than the control group. Finally, the researcher used a task-based, semi-structured interview to supplement the data gathered from questionnaires and to give an in-depth insight into the subject matter (Issroff, 1994, P59; Hacker D. & Sommers N. 2010, P67).

The first section of the questionnaire addressed the essay writing difficulties as perceived by the research sample students. Thus, A semi-structured in-depth questionnaire was the research instrument used to answer this question. Figure (1) below clarifies the fact that our

participants do encounter different essay writing difficulties. These findings support the literature that suggests that students experience writing difficulties, and this can lead to less writing apprehension and less confidence (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). According to the findings of the current study, this category includes three sub-focuses: grammar, punctuation, spelling and style as shown in Figure (1).

Essay Writing Difficulty

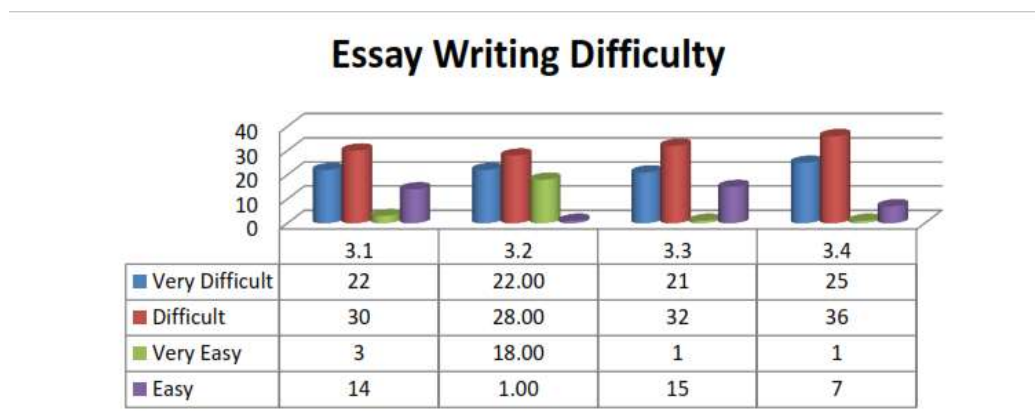|	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4
Very Difficult	22	22.00	21	25
Difficult	30	28.00	32	36
Very Easy	3	18.00	1	1
Easy	14	1.00	15	7

Fig. 1. Students' Essay Writing Difficulties

Analysis of the data revealed that all of grammar, punctuation, spelling and style were the focuses reported by the study participants. Analysis of this questionnaire item in Figure (1) shows that 21-25 of the students indicated that these aspects of language seem very difficult for them, and 28-36 students indicated that these same aspects are difficult.

The entry test results were as follows: The total number of participating texts was 69 distributed between the two groups, 36 for the treatment group and 33 for the control group. On average, texts were 91 word-long. In fact, papers ranged between 35 to 164 word-long as shown in the Table (1).

Table 1. Entry test results for control and experimental group

Experimental Group	Word length	Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	R O Sentences
Mean	90.44	9.53	7.42	6.17	7.42
Standard Deviation	26.02	3.19	2.93	2.48	2.80
Assymetry Coefficient	0.79	0.12	0.36	0.93	0.63

Control Group	Word length	Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	R O Sentences
Mean	92.27	9.85	8.39	7.00	2.52
Standard Deviation	24.09	3.59	2.98	2.91	1.47
Assymetry Coefficient	0.88	0.24	0.38	0.97	0.66

Students were actually expected to write around 150-word long texts but it is safe to say that all texts were below this limit. The word length did not count in the overall score and it served like a guideline rather than a requirement.

As far as local issues are concerned, the most commonly occurring type of errors was grammatical (including subject-verb agreement, tenses, plural –s, and word-choice. That equals

about 9.85 errors per text, though with a high standard deviation of 3.59 reflecting the fact that many students committed considerably more grammatical errors than others.
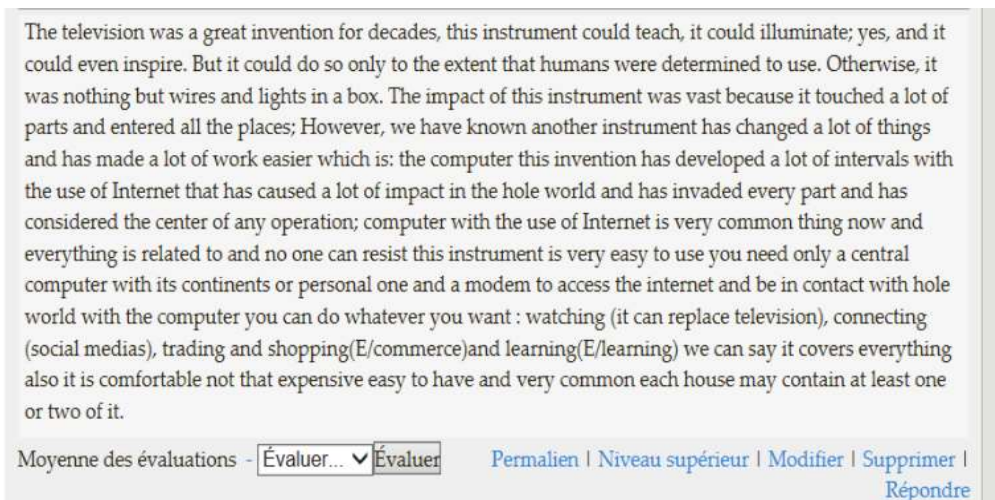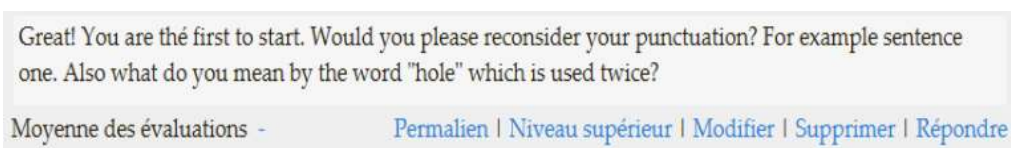

The television was a great invention for decades, this instrument could teach, it could illuminate; yes, and it could even inspire. But it could do so only to the extent that humans were determined to use. Otherwise, it was nothing but wires and lights in a box. The impact of this instrument was vast because it touched a lot of parts and entered all the places; However, we have known another instrument has changed a lot of things and has made a lot of work easier which is: the computer this invention has developed a lot of intervals with the use of Internet that has caused a lot of impact in the hole world and has invaded every part and has considered the center of any operation; computer with the use of Internet is very common thing now and everything is related to and no one can resist this instrument is very easy to use you need only a central computer with its continents or personal one and a modem to access the internet and be in contact with hole world with the computer you can do whatever you want : watching (it can replace television), connecting (social medias), trading and shopping(E/commerce)and learning(E/learning) we can say it covers everything also it is comfortable not that expensive easy to have and very common each house may contain at least one or two of it.

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Fig. 2. The First Online Participation
Fig. 3. Teacher's Feedback

Figure (2) presents the first participation by EFL 25 (a student's username); it is one block-paragraph. It is a 260-word paragraph, in which the student wrote about the internet. He started by describing it (using a variety of structures and tenses), then he tried to compare it to television, giving a series of reasons justifying his choice. As shown in Figure (3), the first one to edit and provide comments and feedback was the moderator (teacher). In fact, the teacher (researcher) chose to be the first to give comments because he noticed that most students kept passive, may be because it was their first online experience. For this reason, students needed someone to push and motivate them begin the adventure. Another reason was that the student writer of the first participation was eager to know whether his work was read, and expected for sure feedback from the part of his peers. This can be deduced from the daily access reports viewed and observed by the teacher. In fact, EFL 25 logged in many times, of course looking for feedback.

Great! You are thé first to start. Would you please reconsider your punctuation? For example sentence one. Also what do you mean by the word "hole" which is used twice?

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No doubt, the motivation to learn is a complex issue, and it can be reinforced by teacher's strategies. Peer-assisted learning aims to enable the doubts and problems of students to be expressed openly and to establish a safe environment of cooperative learning and mutual support (Charles, 1990).

The above figure (3) presents the first reaction to EFL 25's composition. It was as stated earlier the teacher's. In fact, the teacher used an encouraging expression "Great, you are the first to start!" The aim behind was to encourage and motivate not only the writer but also the other

participants either to respond to EFL 25's piece of writing or to upload their works for revision. Moreover, the teacher invited EFL 25 to reconsider the punctuation of the paragraph without spotting the errors, as an endeavor to encourage self-correction and peer review, saying "Would you please reconsider your punctuation?" The teacher also tried to push EFL 25 to revise his own production by asking the question "What do you mean by the word "hole"?" In fact the student wanted to say "whole", but it was a spelling mistake.

As made clear in the figure below (see figure 4), students took their time reading the first participation by EFL 25, then some of them reacted by providing their own comments. Student one (EFL 11), showed a high level of positive thinking and care for his peers by responding to the spelling issue raised by the teacher: "I think she/he meant whole not hole." For the researcher, the fact that EFL 11 used both pronouns "she/he" proved anonymity of the task and gave his peers more confidence in taking part in the task. Later, another student (EFL 02) added a comment in the same respect "I suppose so as well, whole not hole." (Figure 4).

Fig. 4. Peers' feedback on the first writing task

The post-test results show that the members of the Experimental group wrote 98 word long texts on average with a relatively high SD of 24.2 due to variations in individual texts. In other words, texts were considerably different in length ranging between 63 to 144 words per paper. Students were expected to write between 100 – 150-word long texts, so some texts might have fallen short in terms of length. This guideline should have been made a requirement in order to make students stick to it, possibly by making text length a contributor to the overall score if papers were to be graded.

Considering students' pieces of writing during the post-test that followed the experiment, the researcher analyzed the papers using the same criteria that were used while evaluating students' texts during the pre-test phase. Students were asked to write a paragraph about one of the given two topics. By applying T.test to the results obtained by the control group students, we came to conclude that there is a non-significant a standard deviation between both tests, the pre-and post-tests, in terms of word-length, grammar, spelling, punctuation and stylistic errors (see Table 2 & Table 3).

Table 2. Entry and Exit Test Results for the Control Group

		Word length	Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	R O Sentences
Pre test	*Moyen*	92.27	9.85	8.39	7.00	2.52
	Mediane	85.00	9.00	9.00	6.00	2.00
	Ecart Type	24.09	3.59	2.98	2.91	1.47
Post test	*Moyen*	93.91	9.18	7.70	5.67	2.23
	Mediane	90.00	9.00	8.00	5.00	2.00
	Ecart Type	24.12	2.26	2.21	2.26	1.53
T.Test pre test		0.03	0.41	0.27	0.03	0.03
T.Test post test		0.03	0.39	0.24	0.24	0.04

Table 3. Students' Grades during Entry and Exit Tests

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Err M	T.Test
Contr Grp Pre T	6	11	11	5	17.9	0.4636
Contr Grp Pos T	3	13	9	7	24.72	
Exp Grp Pre T	6	11	11	5	17.9	0.2541
Exp Grp Pos T	3	13	9	7	24.72	

As indicated in the methodology chapter, the tests and the questionnaire instruments were considered central to the design of the study. Interviews were conducted in order to obtain either supportive or supplementary information about the students' attitudes towards and perceptions of technology-supported peer review. The interview was directed only at students in the experimental group because of their experience of using the new experience for eight weeks. Based on their scores in the pre- and post-tests, sample students were chosen. All questions in the interviews were used to explore students' attitudes towards particular points related to peer editing and its use in a technology-shaped environment.

Most students declared that the process and rationale of editing were well-explained in class. They answered that it was the first time to practice editing their peers' writing production. Few of them have experienced it but never in an online environment. One student said 'It's not the first time I correct someone's work, but it is always a new experience. I feel as if I am correcting my work through the others' work." Besides, all interviewees responded positively and showed a very good understanding of the objectives set beforehand. Thus, the peer review training gave positive results. One student said:" We were commenting on our classmates' pieces of writing, and we have discussed some mistakes." Another interviewee said: "We have been reading and analyzing paragraphs written by our classmates. We also commented on mistakes." Another one added: "We worked as a group." There was a common answer to the third question; all liked and enjoyed the experience. It was fruitful according to them. One interviewee answered: "The first time I felt as a real teacher." "We reviewed the process of writing." Another one said. For some students, peer editing is a tool of future self-correction: "I think it is good because we will learn of their mistakes." It's like correcting one's

own paragraph according to one of the interviewees. Another one declared that they felt they were benefitting of sharing views and of the mistakes they found in their peers' works.

6- Conclusion:

All in all, there was a general agreement upon the usefulness of the experience. For students, working anonymously in an online group makes one discover many things and leads one to share knowledge with the others. To conclude, the findings give support to the efficacy of technology-supported peer editing in improving the quality of students' revised and new essays, thus encouraging teachers to use this technique in their writing classrooms.

The study also reveals that trained peer-editing is better for promoting writer awareness of good writing skills, which indicates the importance of collaborative interaction in bringing about learning development. However, it is recommended that future research replicate this study to find out if another researcher would achieve similar results that promote the generalization of its findings.

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