

E-Portfolios And Revision Logs: A Study Of Effects On Process Writing Approach In EFL

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of the process writing approach on EFL students' use of revision techniques. Even though writing instruction typically emphasizes the final product rather than the process, there is mounting evidence that encouraging students to write drafts, edit them, and reflect on their work is beneficial for learning. The study opted for a purposive sample of 24 advanced EFL students enrolled in an optional writing course since the use of feedback was as much a point of inquiry as the writing process, to participate in this quasi-experimental study. These were assigned in equal numbers to a control group (exposed to a single-draft product-based model) and an experimental group exposed to e-writing portfolios and revision logs that used the process of writing model—prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing—for six weeks. Revisions were evaluated according to Faigley and Witte's taxonomy and results compared for the two groups. In addition, the groups' perceptions of the efficacy of writing portfolios and revision logs in aiding the process approach to writing in English were gathered through focus groups which were later thematically analyzed. Results indicated a higher degree of satisfaction in the experimental group with the quality of their writing through the technology aided process approach to writing, other gains were stated as lowered anxiety, enhanced motivation, and very high frequency of revision at both micro and macro levels.

Keywords: EFL learners, e-writing portfolios, process approach, research work, revision logs

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary second and foreign language teaching-learning research is characterized by a wide variety approaches and methods that allows teachers to choose a pedagogy that most suits learner needs, teacher preference, and institutional limitations or ideology. New classroom practices and approaches are a sign of the dynamism of the fields and the commitment of its practitioners to innovate and invent new programs and materials that ensure effective attainment of learning objectives.

Graves, (1983) introduced the idea of writing through the process approach. His research from the 1970s, especially the seminal 1974 award-winning study, contributed to his very influential book, writing: Teachers and Children at Work, which paved the passage for this method of teaching writing in the United States and abroad and changed the perspective to writing. This approach has two highlights: One, it places learner choice at the center, and two, it emphasizes the development of the writer's voice, both evidenced as processes in the classroom. Yet, the product does not become irrelevant in this approach, only that the focus is shifted from that to the process since Graves's method asserts that writing is a process, a severe belief that it is a mere product. It gives attention to the stages that occur in writing, such as drafting, editing, and revising. In contrast to the linguistically oriented

product approach, the emphasis is then, not on vocabulary acquisition and grammatical proficiency, or how errors in diction and grammar are treated, rather in the process approach, it is on “Learning...as the means of becoming a more proficient learner in whatever one is engaged in” (Gattegno, 1972).

Historically, the shift in focus from product to process was a landmark in elementary education as it transformed the role of the teacher as the fountainhead of all learning to a facilitator who accompanies the learner through the writing journey by giving constant feedback. This was a change from the prior role of assigner of grade for the final ‘product’. In so doing, the teacher could guide the learners in strategies that are characteristic of good writing and writers.

Correctness and fluency have been reported to have benefitted when learners used writing portfolios. In a two-group study, Al-Ahdal and Hameed (2025) reported the process-oriented assessment method has features that are missing in the traditional models in terms of greater leverage for change, correction, and tracking of the progress. Moreover, they allow for self-correction of one’s writing based on reflection, thus leading to more accurate and cohesive content. When students reflect, they also spot shortcomings in their strategies, comprehending them better and continuously improvising for better output. Overall, the results indicate how portfolios in writing practice create better, fluent, autonomous writers, hence recommending process-oriented assessment in EFL which enhances students' writing abilities and cognitive awareness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Argumentative writing is often reported to be difficult by EFL learners in higher education. Negari (2011) examined these in an EFL context and the strategies used by the learners to tackle them. The main obstacles reported by the study include i. inability to develop the argument including problems with initiating the argument and thereafter, building it as an organized and well-formed one with a relevant thesis statement, ii. Being not informed about the counterarguments and claims, iii. not knowing how to integrate the research source including challenges in locating the right evidence, and iv. writing citations (Al-Ahdal, A. & Hussein, 2020).

The study examined how eight intermediate EFL learners used instructor electronic feedback on four expository tasks that were posted on their personal weblogs (Negari, 2011). The teacher-researcher focused participants' attention on elements that changed the meaning of each blog post by giving them text-based electronic feedback. Drafts at two points in time were compared to identify the type of revisions that the students made for which the revisions were coded using the Taxonomy of Revision Types by Faigley & Wittes. The sample size comprised eight intermediate EFL learners who had access to teacher’s e-feedback on tasks posted on their individual weblogs. Learner focus was drawn to content that affected the meaning to help develop their discernment. In addition to the electronic feedback, a questionnaire and transcripts obtained from the blog were collated. Results indicated that most edits were superficial though text modifications increased in task four manifold as compared to task 1, indicating that modifying the curriculum especially by adding writing instructions which gave more background information to learners on how to write, revise, and make appropriate edits (Al-Ahdal & Hussein, 2020; Alkodimi & Al-Ahdal, 2025).

The study examines the connection between academic writing performance and self-regulated writing strategies (SRWS) among Chinese undergraduate students studying English as a foreign language (EFL) (Xu et al., 2025). Its main goal is to identify the SRWS dimensions—cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and social—that most strongly

predict writing performance to improve pedagogy in an exam-oriented setting where learner autonomy is still underdeveloped. Writing results were significantly better for those with high SRWS (Cohen's $d = 2.04$). While low-performing peers displayed reactive behaviors and poor emotional regulation, high-performing students used intentional planning and strategic revision, according to qualitative findings from interviews and text analysis. SRWS involvement was highly impacted by demographic factors such as academic level, previous training, and frequency of usage of the Automatic Writing Evaluation (AWE) tool. The results demonstrate the predictive usefulness of SRWS and emphasize the necessity of integrating scaffolded feedback and strategy-based training into EFL writing curriculum. To promote independent and skilled academic writers, pedagogical implications include promoting metacognitive and affective regulation. To develop independent, strategic writers, future research should incorporate explicit, continuous SRWS education into EFL curriculum, enhanced by digital feedback and group projects. Pedagogical approaches in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing courses have changed due to the quick integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI), especially large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT (Arif & Naeem, 2025). Research repeatedly demonstrates that AI-mediated writing education improves writing performance through enhanced drafting techniques, iterative revision procedures, and instantaneous, context-sensitive feedback. The results demonstrate that generative AI can be a catalyst for better writing quality, increased autonomy, and the growth of critical thinking in EFL classrooms—but only if it is integrated into deliberate, introspective, and morally sound teaching strategies.

To improve self-regulated learning (SRL) for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, the study intends to create a writing assistance system that makes use of large-scale language modeling (LLM) methodologies (Wang et al, 2025). The authors created and put into use a support system that uses GPT-4 to produce structured, dual-layer feedback for SRL models that consider language features as well as stages of performance, self-reflection, and foresight. This integrated approach addresses gaps identified in traditional feedback methods by supporting immediate language improvement while promoting the development of self-regulation skills necessary for long-term writing proficiency.

One of the hardest skills for EFL students to master is writing. Reading the assignment, comprehending it, planning, putting ideas into words, assessing, and editing are all steps in the writing process. Students' learning tactics vary from one writing stage to the next, and each stage has a distinct function in the writing process (De Larios, 2008). Every stage in the writing process requires of the students to recognize and fulfil the specific linguistic and cognitive requirements. In EFL situations, learners need to not only become proficient in using the components of the language, but also, develop complex metacognitive skills and the ability to follow the writing process and make corrections (Ananda et al., 2024). For instance, Zimmerman's (2002) SRL model sheds light on three elements that facilitate writing viz., performance, self-reflection, and foresight (Zimmerman, 2002). Less than proficient SRL abilities cause students to plan their writing poorly (Quintero, 2012). and limit their revisions to surface-level problems (De Larios, et al., 2008) in turn leading to below expected standard of language output. On the other hand, robust feedback and assistance systems that are enriched by language and SRL help them polish their writing. Feedback also plays a role here. According to Ferris (2014), teacher criticism is often limited to surface-level issues and grammatical accuracy rather than targeting complex issues such as coherence, argument formation, and content organization that ensure coherence (Geng et al., 2025). The traditional focus on accuracy causes learners to miss out on seeing writing as a process in skill development. Improvements to SRL in EFL writing have been suggested by Teng and Zhang's (2020) and Wang et al. (2025).

According to the study's findings, Thai EFL students only moderately applied writing techniques or strategies (Teng & Zhang, 2020). Amongst these, the most popular was metacognitive and least was social. Moreover, the greatest frequency of their application was recorded in the drafting stage. Findings showed that writing proficiency was directly proportional to writing strategy application. Additionally, there existed a strong relationship between writing self-efficacy and metacognitive writing techniques.

Teacher feedback has been the subject matter of learners' writing efficiency and success in L2, Chhorn and Wang (2025) took this up and concluded that feedback was a constructive mechanism. Similarly, another study investigated the role of peer feedback in EFL university students' writing and revision practices. Data indicated that a minor concern was the authenticity of peer input, but most participants were positive of its efficacy in identifying writing errors (Yusoff & Daud, 2013).

Research questions

Given the theoretical background of these studies which make a strong case for the constructive role of technology in the process and product of writing in the EFL classroom, this study aims to answer the following questions in the Saudi context.

1. How does technology impact EFL learners' writing process experience in terms of writing quality?
2. What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the efficacy of writing portfolios and revision logs in aiding the process approach to writing in English?

METHOD

The study took a mixed-methods approach as it set out to answer one research question each on tangible gains (in terms of improved writing quality) and perceptions. Therefore, a randomized controlled trial model and focus groups were used to collect and collate data on the efficacy of the writing portfolios in a process approach to writing in EFL and their subsequent effects on the revision logs. Revisions in EG were evaluated according to Faigley and Witte's taxonomy (meaning level vs. surface changes). The taxonomy classifies revisions as i. Surface Changes, and ii. Meaning Changes. The sub-categories are noted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Faigley and Witte's taxonomy

SURFACE CHANGES		MEANING CHANGES	
Formal changes	Meaning preserving changes	Microstructure changes	Macrostructure changes
spelling	additions	additions	additions
tense, number, modality	deletions	deletions	deletions
abbreviations	substitutions	substitutions	substitutions
punctuation	permutations	permutations	permutations
format	distributions	distributions	distributions
	consolidations	consolidations	consolidations

For each of the six weeks of the study, one writing task was assigned to both the groups, CG participants were engaged in the prevalent method i.e., an amalgamation of process and product wherein the teacher briefly enunciated on the desirable stages of writing but emphasized the product more, and EG were briefly introduced to e-writing portfolios and encouraged to keep the stages of writing (brainstorming for ideas, drafting, revising, editing) at the center of the focus and not worry about the product too much. They were also explicitly reassured that the tech tool was a great aid as it would allow them to revisit

their work as frequently as they liked and assist them with feedback to help revisions. The writing tasks were exactly the same in both the groups though the researchers reviewed the revision logs every day to give appropriate guidance to the teacher in the EG so that learners made optimal use of the tool's features.

All outputs were assessed by the researchers for both the groups using a rubric based on Faigley and Witte's taxonomy for the EG and manual-subjective evaluation for the CG, needless to add, the CG participants had barely revised the texts all through the study period and all submissions were the first, unedited, unrevised versions. However, participants in both the groups were encouraged in the focus groups to share views on how each of the stages of the process writing were conducted in their classes and how these helped them revise their drafts. These are discussed in detail in the following sections.

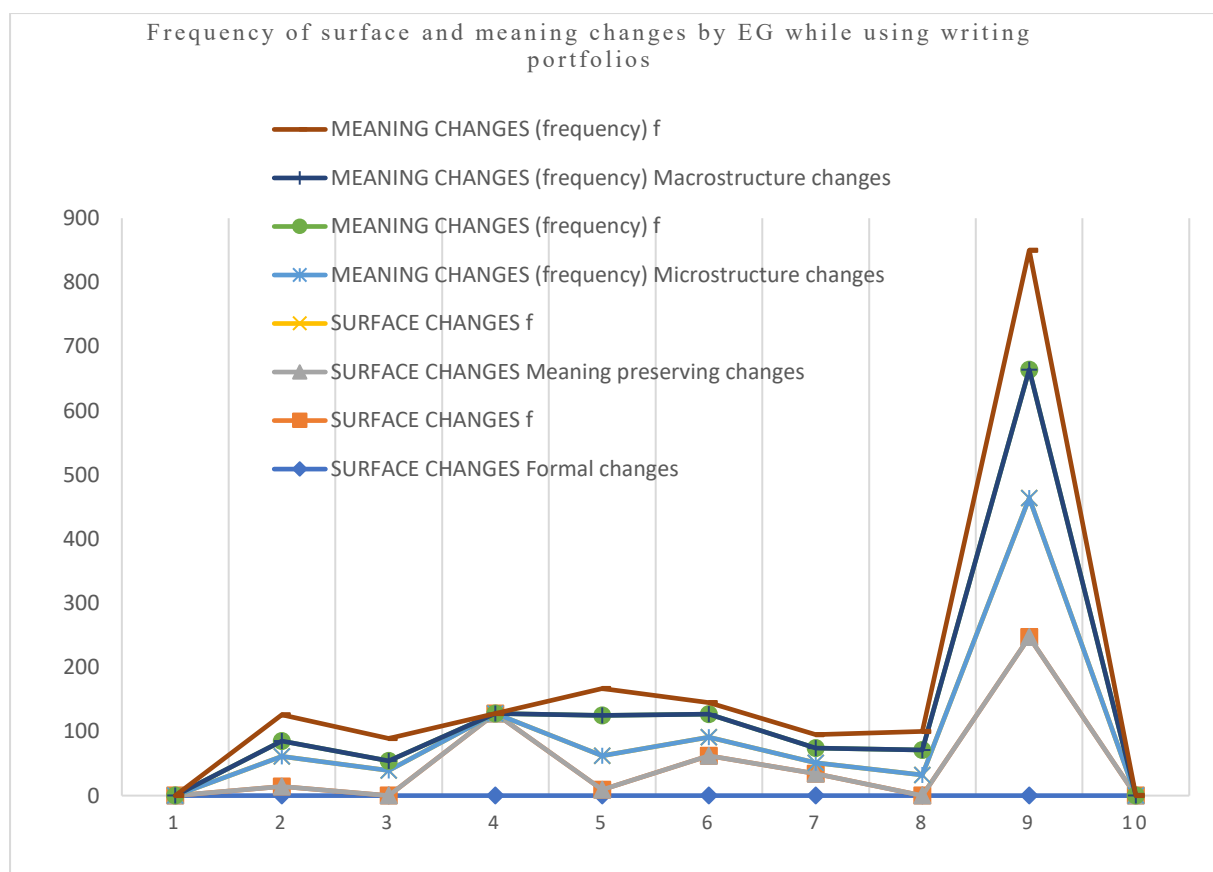
Data analysis and results

The first research question that the study aimed to answer was How does technology impact EFL learners' writing process experience in terms of writing quality.

The five stages of process approach to writing viz., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading, and publishing were individually analyzed for learners' engagement and output to extract how technology figured in the process writing approach and the effects thereof on revision in writing. Table 2 below summarizes the frequency of surface and meaning changes that were logged in the e-portfolio used by the EG.

Table 2: Frequency of surface and meaning changes by EG while using writing portfolios

SURFACE CHANGES				MEANING CHANGES (frequency)			
Formal changes	f	Meaning preserving changes	f	Microstructure changes	f	Macrostructure changes	f
spelling	14	additions	47	additions	24	additions	41
tense, number, modality	128	deletions	39	deletions	15	deletions	35
abbreviations	9	substitutions	53	substitutions	63	substitutions	42
punctuation	62	permutations	29	permutations	36	permutations	18
format	34	distributions	17	distributions	23	distributions	21
		consolidations	32	consolidations	39	consolidations	29
Total	247		217		200		186



From the data in table 2 and chart it is apparent that despite the heavily grammar-oriented EFL classrooms in KSA, grammar related form changes under Surface changes are the most frequent while learners used e-portfolios for writing. In addition, tense, number, modality changes at 128 are also high and when collated with output, it is evident that even advanced Saudi EFL learners are not adept at using the perfect and progressive tenses and typically show MT interference in their application. Unlike English which uses a great deal of modals to modify verbs, the verbs themselves are modified in Arabic which appears to cause mistakes. Omissions of auxiliaries is also frequent as are number agreement in content. Moreover, content presentation and mechanics appear to be learner targets as 62 punctuation and 34 formatting changes are recorded. However, low spelling and abbreviation corrections is suggestive of emphasis on vocabulary (spelling and literal meaning) which are known characteristic of Saudi EFL classrooms.

A high frequency of additions and substitutions in meaning preserving changes suggests lack of contextual knowledge amongst the participants though low distributions and permutations suggests that Saudi EFL learners prefer to stick to simple syntax perhaps for lack of confidence. Once again this is supported by data under the Microstructure component of the taxonomy, with 63 substitutions learners often refine or replace ideas at sentence level. On the one hand, this shows the need for improvement in syntax, on the other, it shows learner discernment in identifying better structures. The total Microstructure changes is rather high (200), which affect sentence-level meaning, are even more frequent, with consolidations (39) in addition to substitutions suggesting active rephrasing and restructuring to strengthen internal logic within sentences. This can be interpreted to mean that language sensitivity is present in their minds, but they are unable to engage adequately with the process of producing the desirable output.

Macrostructure revisions (186) further highlight learners' attention to global organization and message development. Overall content and structure improvement is evident in the 41 additions and 42 substitutions. In fact, consistently high substitutions (53, 63, 42) suggests active engagement with rewording and restructuring for language refinement.

Macrostructure revisions are also suggestive of learners' deep engagement with content organization, coherence, cohesion, and flow, all of which are aimed to be achieved in the process approach to writing.

Overall, the revisions trend shows that the use of e-portfolios led to gains in the revision processes in both form and meaning, enhanced writing quality at multiple levels while also ensuring deeper metacognitive. In other words, the data shows that e-portfolios afford immediate revision to the learners leading to better writing, on the other hand, even the researchers could not suggest as many revisions or changes in the manually assessed CG output, indeed it may not be feasible for a human agency to do so for more than one reasons.

The second research question in the study was What are the EFL learners' perceptions of the efficacy of writing portfolios and revision logs in aiding the process approach to writing in English.

The focus groups (three iterations with each group) were conducted in physical sessions at the end of the study period. The aim was to fathom the role of technology in writing and improving output in line with the process approach to writing. Discussions were, therefore, steered around learners' experiences for each of the writing stages.

1. Pre-writing stage

Idea generation in a foreign language can be quite a challenge as culture awareness (or the lack of it) can seriously hamper the process. EG opinions converged in the efficacy of digital brainstorming with technology expanding the scope of ideas both in terms of variety and information, helping EFL writers overcome the scariest part of writing: Writer's Block. Once the prompts offered a range of ideas, images, and sentences to begin, the EG writers found a level playing ground to initiate the writing process. Besides, continuous and immediate feedback on each word choice and sentence structuring enabled them to keep upgrading their writing while in the writing process. Learners remarked that it actually felt like a 'process' with the e-portfolios as it led them step by step through the writing task. CG participants were also exposed to brainstorming in the pre-writing stage, but they felt constrained in terms of exploring new ideas, felt handicapped by the limited words and structures at their disposal, and found it the toughest to initiate writing.

2. Drafting stage

Fluency, flexibility, word and sentence choice were reported to be greatly enhanced in the EG as the tool's advanced features such as instant deletion, suggesting better syntax, and offering insertions, greatly improved the writing experience and alleviated writing anxiety. In addition, learners felt less cognitively loaded as they felt reassured of instant feedback available to them which allayed the fear of being judged by the teacher or peers if they made mistakes or needed assistance in forming arguments. CG participants reported that the teacher constantly assisted them in jotting down a writing outline but many times, they were unable to actually pen the thought that they wanted as they struggled for the appropriate words and sentences and the teacher was equally sought by their classmates. In other words, in the drafting stage, the learners' need for individual attention could not be met in the traditional class structure, leading to compromise on the content and expression.

3. Revision stage

Content, coherence, and cohesion were highly supported in EG's revision stage by the e-portfolios since meaning negotiation, clarifications for ambiguities, and reordering of words and sentences were all immediately supported in the e-portfolio feedback. Moreover, with no fear of messing up their drafts, learners could engage in multiple changes, cutting here, pasting there, ensuring continuity and flow of their essays. CG were typically not keen

on revisions for lack of immediate feedback and the sheer distaste for rewriting the assignments. As noted earlier, these submissions rarely, if ever, had any revisions to them.

4. Editing and proofreading

Tasks that are left to the teacher were seamlessly and immediately accomplished by e-portfolios, allowing the EG participants to bring about error free writing as grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors were highlighted by the tools in real time, enabling instant corrections. CG participants on the other hand, experienced a time lapse as their writing was taken up for manual correction, and by the time it was reverted to them, they had already mentally moved ahead of the task.

5. Publishing stage

This was the stage that received the most appreciation in the tech-supported EG as, one, they were quite confident of having produced largely error free, reasonably good texts, and two, these could be shared with the peers in one go on the system, fetch feedback and allow them to revise yet again if they so desired. Most of all, the immediate feedback offered by the tool was unanimously voted as a big plus since it made revision or self-correction appear a natural component of writing. In addition, links to read up further on their content, images, and even flow charts could be added without much ado, learners reported this was a satisfying experience wherein they could truly focus on writing as a process that moves in stages and when seen this way, it does not appear threatening at all. Sadly, these sentiments were not duplicated in CG who were rather wary of sharing their writing with peers, worried about being asked to redo the assignments, and were still largely concerned with the end-product than the process.

DISCUSSION

The impact of the e-portfolio driven process writing approach is positive in EFL learners since it allows them to focus more on the process itself and not feel anxious about the product from the brainstorming stage to the revision stage. Self-evaluation allows learners to become autonomous in their learning journey, develop metacognitive skills and apply their previous knowledge more comprehensively in the task at hand. Immediate feedback and individual handholding is mostly impractical in teacher driven writing class, this could be one reason why teachers emphasize the product more than the process as it shifts the immediate actions that may be needed of them to an undefined future.

Apart from the efficacy of technology in assisting learners in the process approach to writing, this study was also concerned with the feedback and its play in the revision task. The study indicates that unlike the traditional product approach where feedback is teacher's onus and revision is usually not followed up, in a tech-driven approach learners obtain hands-on training in receiving and using feedback immediately and not as an afterthought when the memory of the process and task may have been lost or at least faded. The well-defined stages of the process approach: drafting, revising, and editing give them dedicated time to refine their ideas and mechanics.

Self-efficacy and confidence are enhanced in this approach with the technological tool assisting them through every stage, correcting the course, and suggesting better choices. Refinement of ideas and even ideation receive a boost as it is not easy for learners to think in the foreign language, this task is well performed by technology with their superior and vast datasets. Once the learners' confidence is boosted they also feel a greater sense of ownership of their writing, leading to the formation of a positive loop of perceptions towards the writing task.

A familiar, fun, writing environment paired with a non-threatening peer and teacher participation significantly lowered learners' writing anxiety, fear of making mistakes and

the additional task of revising their drafts. The sheer riddance of mechanics of writing, making corrections, and revising to produce clean and correct drafts added to the general engagement of the learners.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the overall impact of e-portfolio driven process approach to writing and feedback on revision indicate gains on many counts in the EFL classroom. One, learner motivation and engagement in an interactive, appealing digital environment carries much potential for authentic product, enhanced learning, and improved motivation to write. Working at one's own pace in one's own environment allows them to use the tech resource to the optimum, fostering a sense of self-regulated learning and autonomy. The teacher's role in this approach shifts from that of an inflexible and overloaded primary knowledge transmitter to a facilitator and guide, assisting students in navigating the writing process stages tools and making informed decisions about their writing.

Training in the process writing approach fundamentally shifts learners' revision strategies from superficial editing for surface-level errors to deep, substantive revision of content, organization, and ideas. Diverse studies have shown the positive role of feedback in helping learners improve their written output in EFL contexts. Nakanishi (2007) investigated how revision and feedback affect Japanese EFL students' writing using four different methods of feedback. As a result, all groups' scores increased following each kind of feedback, and there was no discernible variation based on the type of input. But according to the study, the peer and instructor feedback group most frequently stated that the criticism helped them improve their drafts. This is a very important reporting in the context of the current study. As far as feedback is concerned, the next paradigm shifts in the process approach to writing came with the integration of education technology into the foreign language classroom. AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot have transformed the writing experience and quality of writing of learners in L2 environments. One reason for this (apart from individual need fulfilment) is the immediate feedback that they generate which is usually not possible in teacher driven classes. Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) online technologies have been used in some writing classes to help students write more effectively (Yusoff & Daud, 2013). To give students feedback on their academic reports, the case study explores how one of the technologies, wiki, might be used in writing as a process (as opposed to writing as a product) activities. Results indicate that they improved their final draft by making several superficial changes in response to wiki input. The study's conclusions imply that wikis offer a venue for process writing exercises without requiring in-person communication. To guarantee a higher influence of the tool on process writing activities, however, a supportive teaching and learning environment is necessary. In yet another study, feedback was used constructively to revise drafts. The study investigates how EFL university students' writing and revision techniques are impacted by peer criticism (Al-Ahdal & Hameed, 2025). After receiving feedback from peers, student work significantly improved in terms of organization and linguistic accuracy. Following peer review sessions, students modified higher-order content development. The study demonstrated that while some students were concerned about the accuracy of peer input, most students considered it useful for identifying writing problems. To enhance performance and strategic revision, the study recommends employing structured peer feedback in EFL writing classes.

In the current study, learners were seen to improve their writing on both micro and macro levels, making global changes to achieve better structure and coherence in their writing rather than focusing only on sentence or morphological fixes, adding detail to their writing, and reorganizing the content for better cohesion. Revision logs indicate high frequency of revisions, additions, and substitutions at word and sentence level. Critical evaluation of one's writing, identifying weaknesses, and choosing from system generated options, all

indicate learners' progression towards autonomy and better tuned metacognition. Reaction to peer and teacher feedback in the study shows their understanding of feedback as an essential element in revision, and one that creates a constructive, supportive learning environment.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to evaluate the role of e-portfolios in promoting a process approach to writing in EFL, and the efficacy of feedback in revising writing. Results indicate that across all stages of writing, the tools were highly effective in amplifying the process approach from rich ideation in the pre writing stage to reducing cognitive overload as the tool assisted them through the process. Frequency of revisions was high when learner interacted with technology in the process approach at both micro and macro levels, and feedback was effectively used to improve the product. Linguistically, they felt more equipped in making word choices, altering syntax, paragraphing, reorganizing through self-directed editing. In the final stage i.e. publishing, they were confident to share the output with peers and use the feedback for further enhancement of content if they so desired.

The study concludes that in the EFL context technology does not replace the pedagogical foundations of process writing but fortifies them by offering use of features that make each stage more interactive, efficient, and cognitively accessible to learners. For advanced learners, the synergy between technology and process writing supports both linguistic development and higher-order academic writing skills.

Recommendations

In the background of the positive gains visible in this study, the following are recommended:

1. Technology integration in classrooms with respect to all language skills should be experimented with, taking leverage of earlier studies.
2. Teachers should think out of the box to bring the latest tech tools into their classrooms as learners are digitally equipped, rather, they prefer this as a learning modality.
3. Education Technology should be continually updated to keep pace with the latest that it can offer to make language classroom environments non-threatening, nurturing places for learners.

Limitations

Though the study was unique in its findings, it lacked the teachers' voice which is important to be considered since they are the agents of change. Large and diverse participant groups were missing here as much as an evaluation of gender as a factor.

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