

The Effect of Using Wiki Techniques as a collaborative learning on improving EFL learners' Writing performance

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Abstract

Wiki is software that handles complex problems with simple solutions. It is basically a database for creating, browsing and searching through information. In this paper, the researcher will discuss the effect of using Wiki Techniques on improving EFL Learners' Writing Performance.

Index Terms: Wikis Writing Activities Collaborative learning

أثر استخدام المحررات الجماعية الحرة كتعليم جماعي في تطوير أداء الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الانكليزية

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المخلص

برنامج المحررات الجماعية هو برنامج يتعامل مع مشكلات معقدة مع حلول بسيطة. إنها في الأساس قاعدة بيانات لإنشاء والتصفح والبحث من خلال المعلومات. في هذه الورقة، سيناقش الباحث أثر استخدام المحررات الجماعية الحرة في تطوير أداء الكتابة لدى طلاب اللغة الانكليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المحررات الجماعية الحرة ، أداء الكتابة ، التعلم التعاوني.

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Introduction

The community of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is involving with a new stage of interactive learning by means of new technologies. The world has witnessed a revolution of technology in the last decades. Experiences proved that putting students with technology environments make them engage , share or exchange information, news, or ideas .and use a foreign language in a real situation, . Nancy (2006) confirmed that the web might provide students with a lot of help in writing, particularly when prescript from academics is added. Using computer networks to practice writing can be workable more than regular handwriting application. Liu, Moore, Graham, & Lee (2003) observed that Internet appliance is an effective method to help pupils with language studies.

A wiki Web site runs on a standard of cooperative reliance. The easiest wiki techniques authorize users to construct and correct content. In addition, wikis have an administration combination that permits a specified person to agree or refuse changes. A wiki (usually spelled "Wiki") is a server platform that permits students to work together in composing the content of a Web site. The expression derives from the word "wiki" which means "fast or quick" in the Hawaiian language. The earliest wikis came out in the mid-1990. The first scholar to establish and use wiki was Ward Cunningham , in 1995, as a composition procedure that permitted cooperation and argumentation among its users. At the beginning , wiki was used in computer sciences and then moved to social sciences (Gabrilovich & Markovitch, 2006).

In this regard, Wang, Lu, Yang, Hu, Chiou, Chiang et al. (2005) investigated the effect of using wikis for freshman level English as (ESL) course and said that wikis are useful for learning. Scientists and engineers used them to produce effective learning principles. Wiki content shared in “on the fly” by subject-matter experts could

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be directly showed or remarked on. Adapted as an instructive technique in the last years, wikis have been used for an enormous set of collaborative actions. Moreover, administration in educational institutions use wikis as storages for meeting notes to collect data. The capability to send items to Microsoft Word facilitates reporting , make it simple and compiles versatility to the meeting wiki. A lot of academies examine with wikis as e-portfolios. Artifacts within a wiki-folio are easily engaged when the wiki is used as a presentation instrument.

Wikis may also support teachers supply an independent circumferences for the students (Kessler, 2009). Sometimes students do not own time to deal with other's writing in classrooms but, with collaborative online circumferences, they have the chance (Hewitt & Scardamalia, 1998). The teacher and group's members can observe the notes and modifications each member does through the feature of 'playback' which facilitate fully evaluation of all group students (Elgort, Smith & Toland, 2008).

Wikis might be the easiest and most effective Web-based collaboration tool in any instructional portfolio. As stated by Packalén, Patokorpi, and Tétard (2008) wikis have motivated peer-to-peer collaboration world-wide. Their deep-rooted clarity supplies students with immediate access to a site's content, which is very important in group editing , correction and other collaborative study actions.

Curbi,Marija(2007) said "Wiki" is an expansion of a criterion web-site which authorize a member to write and edit existing content. Wikipedia” is the most familiar example of the wiki application , the common on-line encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.com). Any mischievous or incidental updates are protected against by an inherit version control operation. Since their display in mid 90s (“WikiWikiWeb” developed by Ward Cunningham) wikis have been used as an instrument to support businesses (Leuf&Cunningham, 2001) as well as e-learning environments in educational institutions (Leuf&Cunningham, 2001;

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Bruns & Humphreys, 2005; Richardson 2006), by supplying new and plain methods for a web-based collaboration and authoring.

Wikis are designed to simplify and support collaborative learning by means of technology to increase education and research (Augar, Raitman, & Zhou, 2004).

Moreover, learners use wikis as e-portfolios, explaining their usefulness as an instrument for combination and contrasting. Not only students can use wiki but also educational institutions use it in collaboration projects such as edit a textbook, prepare a journal article, assemble a syllabus and read a list. Wikis also confirm to be perfect tool to obtain continuing input for projects, studies and experimentations where community input can support, report and direct research. The possibilities to use wikis as the program for collaborative studies are restricted only by person's conception and time.

Moreover Wikis might be used as cooperative writing techniques and have the possibility to ease "collaborative knowledge building amongst learners" (Bryant, 2007, p. 9).

Literature Review

Many researches have been conducted to investigate the effects of the technology and their importance in English classes and in order for schools to improve the writing skills of all students, different pedagogical strategies need to be used. A Wiki technique in the classroom is one way to develop by improving writing.

This study presents a review of related studies which shed light on the effect of using Wiki on developing students' performance in writing skills..

Kevin R. Parker and Joseph T. Chao (2007) investigated wiki application, determined its contribution to different learning techniques, and advised extra processes in teaching software engineering.

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Packalén, Patokorpi, and Tétard (2008) explained that wikis have stimulated cooperation world-wide.

David L. Neumann and Michelle Hood (2009) investigated using wiki as an aspect of learning process to encourage collaborative learning among freshmen college. First group analyzed a data set and exchanged the outcomes by writing a practice report using a wiki. Another group analyzed similar data but exchanged the outcomes in a practice report using regular writing. The same material were given to the groups . The report wasn't used for evaluation but it was used for application as a method to help student learning. Both methods improved report writing knowledge. The wiki method resulted in higher connection among students, cognitive engagement, and class attendance than the individual method. Qualitative reaction indicated some obstacles to using a wiki.

Moreover, Kuteeva (2011) investigated using wikis for instructional and professional studies in a course on efficient communication in English to teach writing. The researcher also explored the link between writer-reader . The texts were published by 14 ESL students who took the efficient communication in English course at a university and used the wiki were tested for reader- oriented features and interactional meta-discourse resources. Kuteeva pointed out that students recognized right grammar , sentence structure , correct vocabulary and text organization through using wikis.

In addition, Loanna Lykourantzou & others (2011) explored that "Corporate wikis are increasingly being adopted by enterprises as a solution to various organizational processes. Subsequently a significant number of research works have started focusing on providing results on both successful and unsuccessful corporate wiki implementations.

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Yousif Alshumaimeri(2011) investigated the use of wikis in improving writing skills among 42 male students at the Preparatory Year (PY) in King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. Research questions investigated writing accuracy and quality. Performance results on pre- and post-tests revealed that both groups improved significantly overtime in both accuracy and quality. However, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in both accuracy and quality of writing in the post-test. The implications of the results are that wikis can benefit teachers and students by improving their writing skills in accuracy and quality in a collaborative environment.

This study adds to previous investigations on the effects of wikis on students' writing performance.

Operational Definitions of Terms

The following terms had the designated meanings whenever they were used in the study:

- **EFL students:** the students who learn English as a foreign language.
- **Wiki:** is an application, typically a web application, which allows collaborative modification, extension, or deletion of its content and structure
- **Collaborative learning:** (also termed cooperative learning by some authors) comprises a number of different situations in which learners are required to work together on a set of tasks. The scenario is usually quite precise and specifies how the work should be organized, distributed and planned over time⁸. Collaborative scenarios prompt students to engage in discussion, express what they have understood and gain from others' perspectives.
- **Regular Instruction:** The non-computerized method that is usually used by the teacher for teaching writing. It is stated in the textbook English For Iraq 4th Preparatory, Teacher's Book which is approved by the Ministry of Education in Iraq.

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• **Writing:** is a medium of communication represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. In most languages, writing is a complement to speech or spoken language. Writing is not a language but a form of technology.

• **Writing Activities:** A number of writing activities from textbook English for Iraq, 4th Preparatory.

Study Procedures

This study was conducted during the second semester of the scholastic year 2016/2017. The following procedures were followed to conduct the study.

1. The study was conducted at AL –Aula Preparatory School for Girls. It was chosen intentionally for logistic purposes.
2. The 4th Preparatory was selected as a sample of the study.
3. The participants were divided randomly into two experimental groups and one control group.
4. A pre-test was administered to the 4th Preparatory students to make sure that there were no significant differences in the performance test between the experimental and control groups.
5. The researcher explained to the students the nature of the study and its purposes.
6. The control group was taught using regular instruction.
7. The experimental and the control groups were taught by the same teacher.
8. The experimental group was taught by using the website wiki method.
9. The achievement post-test was administered to the experimental group and the control group, directly after the experiment had finished.
10. The test was scored by two teachers who referee the test.
11. The material was taught two periods weekly for each group for a period of 10 weeks.
12. Each learner logged into the site, which was password protected to allow only the learners in the experimental group to use the site at allocated times.

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13. Statistical analyses were used to answer and accomplish the questions and the objectives of the study.

Findings of the Study

To answer the first question

- Can writing performance be improved through wiki techniques?

It is obvious from the results that the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test were higher than those of the control group. The differences in this finding may be attributed to the method of teaching.

Table 1 shows that there was no statistical significant difference at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ for students' writing performance for pre- assessment due to the group. The findings revealed that students' scores for both groups in writing performance were almost equivalent in the pre-test before applying the experiment.

Table (1): Means and Standard Deviation of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pre-test.

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	DF	T	Sig.
Pre-Test	Control	30	42.972	2.834	30	-0.93	.096
	Experimental	30	43.693	3.964			

Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the performances of the two groups on the post-test. This difference indicated that using Wiki techniques in teaching writing to EFL learners had a positive effect on their writing performance, where the mean scores for the experimental group is 67.153 while it is 50.694 for the control group.

Table 2 shows the amount of progress each group had achieved. The experimental group got increase of 23.46 in their mean scores on the post-test compared to their mean score on the pre-test. On the other hand, the control group got an increase of 7,722 in their mean scores on the post-test. In addition, the results indicated that there is a positive impact of using wiki techniques on the EFL

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students' writing performance, in which the experimental group got higher scores than the control group.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Post-Test.

Test	Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	DF	T	Sig.
Post-test	Control	30	50.694	3.54	30	-4.35	.000
	Experimental	30	67.153	9.25			

The second question of the study was "What are students' attitudes towards using wiki techniques as a collaborative learning?"

To answer this question, a questionnaire consisted of 20 items were applied for pre/post assessment. After interpreting and analyzing the results of the pre/post questionnaire, the experimental group students were found to have positive attitudes towards using wiki techniques as collaborative learning. According to their comments and answers of the questionnaire, the experimental group subjects' comments show that the English course has become interesting, and comfortable using wiki techniques.

Table 3 shows that the all experimental group students are motivated by using wiki techniques because they found using wiki techniques very interesting and enjoyable.

Table 3

No	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I enjoyed studying outside and inside the classroom using wikis.	4.70	0.60
2.	I liked working in groups using wikis	4.75	0.43
3.	wikis help me to develop my writing skills	4.72	0.54
4.	The uses of wikis develop my comprehension of classmates' communication style.	4.67	0.72

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5.	I enjoy the challenge of writing new material in my courses via using wikis	4.16	1.02
6.	The interaction with my classmates is increased through using wikis	3.92	1.15
7.	Wiki helps me to merge my new thoughts with previous learning	4.70	0.60
8.	I am enthusiastic to display what is new on wikis.	4.75	0.43
9.	Wikis are an effective tool for Expressing opinion	4.75	0.43
10.	Wikis helps me to save my learning time.	4.70	0.60
11.	Learning writing materials from my classmates is interesting along with the use of wikis	3.92	1.15
14.	.Wikis can develop confidence in writing	4.75	0.43
15.	Through wikis students can share and get information	4.70	0.60
16.	Wikis are an effective tool for collaborative learning.	4.40	0.95
17.	Collaborative learning through wiki helps me to gain knowledge that I couldn't acquire alone.	4.75	0.43
18.	I improved my vocabulary by using wikis.	4.24	1.16
19.	Using wikis in classrooms improved my social relations and self-confidence.	4.75	0.43
20.	Using wikis improve using grammatical structure and difficult lexicons.	3.68	1.02

Conclusion

The results proved that wikis can be useful in teaching and learning process by improving writing performance in a collaborative classes.

This study ensured that the wikis can provide an environment where learning is not restricted to the regular English classes. The wikis supplies an area where teachers and students can work to upgrade writing performance and other skills. A regular English class wikis opens the way for students to discuss subjects outside of the classroom. It gives the chances to the participants to share experiments , thoughts and share postings. Wikis helps the participants with the time to be responsive and reflective.

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The results showed considerable differences between the experimental and control groups. The experimental groups which used Wiki techniques got higher scores. Therefore, Wiki techniques can be considered an effective instrument in simplifying the procedure of learning regarding to students' writing performance.

The results confirm that students who use Wiki techniques significantly higher than those who use regular method.

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