

María Guerrero Tirapu

Integrating process and product: the use of translation in high school EFL writing

Abstract

L2 writing revision techniques based on corrective feedback from teachers are common in EFL courses, but their efficacy for low-level students is becoming increasingly questioned. The present study tests the effectiveness of a traditional revision technique - signaling with symbols all errors in a composition - by comparing it to a new one that involves L2-L1 translation and peer revision. The study was carried out with two intact groups of EFL learners in Secondary Education. All learners were asked to write two compositions and to correct them following both revision techniques. Results indicated that the new technique helped students notice and correct errors that hinder communication between writer and reader, but it was not more effective than traditional techniques in the identification of isolated grammar errors. Therefore, this new technique seems appropriate to be used in combination with other techniques that focus on the correction of isolated grammar errors.

Introduction

Productive skills, speaking and writing, are essential in the development of language proficiency. They are a source of output, which is as necessary for language acquisition as the input students receive through reading and listening. Therefore, their practice should be encouraged in the L2 classroom. Since the late 1980s, the dominant methodology in the field of ESL/EFL writing has been the *process approach* (Zamel, 1982), which favors the actual process of writing and developing students' ideas over the grammatical accuracy of the written product. As a result, process-based pedagogies, such as revision, peer editing, prewriting, etc. have been popular techniques in L2 writing contexts for the last two decades (Kim, 2011). However, an increasing number of educators and researchers are questioning the

efficacy of such pedagogies for low-level students, since their writing does not appear to benefit from the process approach (Kim, 2011; Susser, 1994).

The lack of effectiveness of process-based methodologies becomes even more evident in Secondary Education, where students' English proficiency level is even lower. As a recent study conducted in Andalusia shows, by the end of compulsory Secondary Education (4th of ESO), the majority of EFL high school students write shorter texts than the recommended average for that level (50 words instead of 100); their compositions show deficiencies at the content and formal level, and the students themselves appear to also have "deficient abilities to edit and correct errors" (Corpas & Madrid, 2007, 185). These findings should be extrapolated from Andalusia to other regions in Spain with caution. Nonetheless, high school teachers in Navarre report that a significant number of students in the last two years of ESO have also major difficulties writing short paragraphs in English; some of them do not even try and turn blank papers in. Furthermore, when teachers receive revised drafts from their students, they notice that almost no changes have been made to the errors indicated in the original texts.

The majority of studies that cast doubt over process-based pedagogies – just as most of the research carried out about L2 writing - have been conducted in university courses designed to develop students' L2 writing skills. Few research studies address adolescent L2 writing and the secondary school context, which are distinct from college-age student writers and settings (Ortmeier & Enright, 2011). In the specific case of the Spanish Secondary Education system, the most important differences from university contexts are: the writing of compositions is integrated into regular English courses, and, therefore, the amount of time devoted to the process of writing in the classroom is more limited; the proficiency level of most EFL students in high school is also lower than that of college students; and finally, studying a foreign language is compulsory for high school students until age 16, which has an important effect on their motivation to learn a second language.

In this context, the present study aims to test the effectiveness of an alternative revision technique of EFL compositions that takes into account the characteristics of EFL courses and learners at the high school level in Navarre. This technique is based on collaborative tasks that involve the combination of L2-L1 translation and peer-revision as a way to increase motivation, promote attention to form, and thus enhance language learning. To a certain extent, this study replicates the one carried out by Kim (2011), who integrated translation activities in her process-based writing pedagogy with positive results. In order to empirically test the validity of using translation for revision purposes in high school EFL courses, the present study compares the effectiveness of this correction strategy with another one frequently used in Secondary Education: providing indirect corrective feedback on learners' written texts.

Literature Review

Written output and SLA

There is general agreement among researchers that comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) is a requirement for SLA, but not the only one. According to the *noticing hypothesis* theory (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Schmidt, 1990), attention to form is needed for language proficiency since “intake is that part of the input that the learner notices” (Schmidt 1990, p. 139). Among the pedagogical approaches used to draw the learner's attention to form, Swain's *output hypothesis* (1995), has received significant attention in recent SLA research (Izumi 2002, p. 543).

In addition to enhancing fluency, Swain claims that output has also other functions related to accuracy. One of them is the noticing/triggering function, or output's “consciousness-raising role” (1995, p. 128). She further argues that “the activity of producing the target language may prompt second language learners to consciously recognize some of their linguistic problems” (p. 125). Moreover,

providing students with corrective feedback (CF) facilitates their “noticing the gap” between their production and the target language forms. In research on writing, collaborative written tasks that lead learners to reflect on their own language production as they attempt to create meaning have proved particularly useful for learning (p. 141). Swain also emphasized the role of collaborative work in output based on the Vygotskyan idea - now widely accepted - that learning is “a social process which occurs in interaction with others and with oneself” (Tocalli-Beller & Swain 2005, p. 5). From this sociocultural perspective, it has been argued that certain CF strategies involve students in problem-solving tasks that provoke cognitive conflict and thus have the potential of enhancing learning (Lázaro, 2012; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005).

Types of Corrective Feedback

Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999) started a long literature debate among SLA researchers over the effectiveness of providing students with CF on their L2 compositions. While Truscott argued that error correction is ineffective and potentially harmful for the development of writing fluency, Ferris defended the opposite view. Despite extensive research carried out around this issue, the existing data remain insufficient to resolve the question of whether error correction can lead to higher accuracy in L2 writing (Chandler 2003, p. 268). In any case, Ferris’s position appears to prevail among EFL teachers, in general, for they still provide different types of CF in response to students’ grammatical and lexical errors.

Bitchener (2008) has identified two major kinds of CF: focused vs. unfocused feedback, and direct vs. indirect feedback. Focused feedback only targets specific error categories, such as the English article system, while unfocused feedback targets all (or almost all) errors. Most of the published research about unfocused CF identifies 15 or more error categories, which is a very broad range. As Bitchener

argues, if categories are too broad, it becomes difficult to determine exactly the nature of the error, and thus this may put into question the effectiveness of such approach (p. 108). Furthermore, different domains of linguistic knowledge are acquired in different ways, which makes it even more necessary to define narrow or restricted error categories. Considering that EFL learners experience difficulty in trying to cope with information overload, focusing on one or only a few error categories seems more reasonable (p. 108).

Regarding direct vs. indirect CF, Bitchener defines the former as “the provision of the correct linguistic form or structure above or near the linguistic error. It may include the crossing out of an unnecessary word/phrase/morpheme, the insertion of a missing word/phrase/morpheme, or the provision of the correct form or structure” (p. 105). Additional forms of direct feedback may include written and/or oral meta-linguistic explanations about the errors found in the text. On the other hand, indirect CF encourages learners to correct their own writing through different strategies: teachers can underline or circle errors, record the number of errors on a given line, or use a code to show the location or type of error (p. 105).

As Bitchener further explains, indirect CF provokes cognitive conflict and thus has the potential to foster long-term acquisition. However, learners must first “notice” that an error has been made, as it was pointed out above. Once the error has been noticed, indirect CF may push students to engage in hypothesis testing, which, in turn, may lead to deeper internal processing and promote the internalization of correct forms and structures (p. 105). Nonetheless, cognitive conflict has some limitations. Indirect CF might only help to gain control of certain linguistic forms that have already been partially internalised. Therefore, students must have adequate reasoning abilities and/or previous knowledge to effectively resolve cognitive conflicts (Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2005). Also, students may not

understand or remember the meaning of the error codes used by teachers in indirect CF, especially in the case of lower proficiency learners.

Translation and L1 use in the L2 classroom

Recent research on EFL writing confirms Tocalli-Beller & Swain's reservations about cognitive conflict in low-level learners. For instance, Kim (2011), who followed process-based pedagogies in her writing course, reported that her students' revised drafts showed no significant improvement at the formal or content level. After three semesters without positive results, Kim reached the conclusion that her students had "insufficient self-monitoring skills" to detect errors in their writing (Kim, 2011, p. 156). They also appeared to lack audience awareness, which figures as one of the main components of successful process-based writing (Zamel, 1982, p. 195). For those reasons, Kim decided to try an approach that involved L1 use in the classroom: translation.

The role of the mother tongue in L2 contexts, as well as the use of translation as a language learning/teaching resource, has probably been the subject of as much controversy in SLA research literature as the Truscott-Ferris debate on CF mentioned above. With the advent of the communicative approach in the late seventies, the use of the learner's mother tongue in L2 classrooms has been more or less openly criticized, and it has also given rise to a sense of guilt on the part of teachers who use it in their practice (Ferrer, 2005; Rodríguez & Oxbrow, 2008). Nonetheless, there appears to be a growing amount of studies that show the positive effects of L1 use in collaborative and accuracy-oriented tasks, since they appear to promote noticing, foster guided reflection, and develop cognitive learning strategies by means of cross-linguistic comparison (Antón & DiCamilla, 1999; Atkinson, 1993; Deller & Rinvoluceri, 2002; Ferrer, 2005; Rodríguez & Oxbrow, 2008; Schweers, 1999). Such position on L1 use is mostly based on teachers' views and experiences, but also on low-level learners' favorable response to translation activities and other restricted uses of the L1 in the communicative classroom.

For example, Ferrer (2005) carried out a comparative study of students', teachers', and teacher educators' perceptions to find out whether there is a role for the mother tongue in the monolingual classroom in certain situations, including grammar work (cross-linguistic comparisons) (p. 2). According to the study's results, students - from beginner to advanced levels - thought it was helpful that the teacher requested a translation of a grammatical structure (e.g. 'How do you say *I've lived here for a year* in Spanish/ Catalan?') (p. 2). Cross-linguistic comparisons in grammar teaching/learning did not receive so much support from students, but still, even advanced-level learners admitted that they understood grammar *better* that way (p. 3). Both teachers' and teachers' educators positively regarded the use of contrastive analysis in grammar work, especially with low-proficiency learners (p. 3). As a teachers' educator argued, "students are going to make these comparisons mentally, or between one another anyway constantly. It's better, I think, to make it explicit" (p. 4). Ferrer, who has worked as a teacher and teachers' educator himself, argues that "if students are trained to contrast L1 and L2 grammars, and differences as well as similarities are made explicit, chances are such explicit knowledge will enable learners to notice the 'gap' between their inner grammars and the target language" (p. 6). Thus, the principal role of cross-linguistic comparisons would be consciousness raising (Ferrer 2005).

The words "judicious", "prudent" and "caution" frequently appear in some of these studies to qualify the use of L1 in the classroom (Kim, 2011; Rodríguez & Oxbrow, 2008; Ferrer, 2005; Schweers, 1999) because the results they present are not always based on a systematic quantitative/qualitative data analysis. Their authors also acknowledge research findings on the negative influence of translation and L1 use on students' writing fluency, especially at higher proficiency levels (Aykel, 1994; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Prodromou, 2002). In any case, this research does not invalidate studies on the positive effects of L1 use and translation. Theories should be modified depending on specific classroom

situations, and researchers should also give credit to practitioners' observations because "wisdom of practice is as important as theory" (Raimes, 1991, quoted in Kim, 2011, p. 159).

Methodology

Context

This study was carried out with two intact groups of EFL learners in a public secondary school in Pamplona. The majority of students who attend this school come from working and middle-class families, a large portion of which have immigrated to Spain from South America, Africa, Asia and other parts of Europe. Thus, some groups present significant heterogeneity, as far as their students' proficiency level in English is concerned. Some learners are bilingual, with Spanish as their second language. Others have been exposed to English fewer hours than average high school students in Spain, and yet others have been to English-speaking countries for an extended period of time.

Participants

The participants were 12 students in their 3rd year of ESO, and 15 students in their 4th year. According to internal school tests and following the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (2001), the average English level in both groups ranged from A1 to A2. Hence, from now on the 3rd-year group will be referred to as G1 and the 4th-year group as G2.

Instruments

Participants were asked to fill out a background form to determine their attitude toward the English language and writing before they did their compositions. Two compositions were corrected in each group. The first composition topic - a thank-you letter - was selected from a book called *Writing games*, by Hadfield & Hadfield (1990), who share Zamel's ideas on how to make the writing process more interesting to students. These specialists emphasize that learners should be given engaging and fun

topics for writing, as well as readers for their texts (Zamel, 1982, p. 204; Hadfield & Hadfield, p. vi). Games can provide both elements, as classmates are often the audience of students' writings in this type of activities, the process of feedback is made more immediate, which is also important for learning. Besides, students who are having fun are usually motivated, so writing games may help them find the writing process more enjoyable (Hadfield, 1990, p. vi). The second composition topic was selected from the students' textbooks. A questionnaire was also used to establish students' perceptions about the new translation technique.

Procedure

The whole experiment was carried out in five school sessions over a period of 5 weeks. Each session lasted 50 minutes. Both the learners in G1 and G2 experienced both techniques. The five sessions were distributed as follows:

Background form (session 1)

9 students in G1 and 15 in G2 filled out a form providing background information about themselves, as well as about their attitude toward the English language and EFL writing activities.

Composition 1 - Writing and translating (sessions 2 and 3)

9 students in G1 and 13 students in G2 wrote the first composition. Students were handed out specific directions in English to write the thank-you letter, as described in the *Writing games* book (see annex 3). To ensure comprehension, the activity was divided in two steps. Directions of the first step were read aloud by volunteer students in each group and translated into Spanish as needed. According to the handout, students were to write a thank-you letter to her/his old aunt for a present she had sent, but they did not like or could not use. Each student picked a piece of paper at random from an envelope that contained drawings of disparate objects, such as a night cap, an English-Rumanian dictionary, a brush and a dust pan, etc. (see annexes 1 and 2). Students were then encouraged to give as much information

as possible about the present without mentioning the object itself, since a classmate would later read that letter, translate it into Spanish, and try to guess the object described in it. Students had several bilingual dictionaries at their disposal, and the instructor intervened to guide students throughout the process. They were also given the opportunity to pick a different present from the envelope if they found the first choice too difficult to describe.

Students in G1 finished their letters quickly, so directions for the second step were read aloud and translated into Spanish as well. As it shows in the handout, learners were instructed to translate literally, without correcting errors in the original text. Thus, the letters were distributed among students at random, but also taking into account their proficiency levels to make sure every one of them received a text they could understand and translate. Once they were finished translating, students were paired with the authors of the texts they had translated to find out if they had guessed correctly, and to correct any comprehension or grammar mistakes identified in the translation.

Finally, learners were asked to answer some questions on the back of the handout about their experience translating their classmates' writings and correcting errors in pairs. G1 completed the entire activity in one session. G2 needed the first half of the following session to do the peer revision and fill out the questionnaire.

Composition 2 – Writing and self-correcting (sessions 4 and 5)

12 students in G1 and 10 students in G2 wrote the second composition. This time, the writing activity was integrated as part of their regular English lessons, but each group followed a different procedure.

G1 had previously read in class a text that presented three short narratives from adolescents who described their ambitions and plans for the future. Hence, students were asked to write about their own plans, and to use additional vocabulary from the unit about personal qualities needed for different

professions, like the adjectives “creative, practical, easy-going”, etc. Learners were allowed to use their textbooks during the writing process, and some guiding questions were also included in the handout (see annex 4). On the following day, students received their compositions back with indirect corrective feedback in the form of symbols (see annex 5). They were instructed to self-correct the indicated errors on their own, and to ask for help from their classmates or the instructor only if they did not know how to correct the errors marked.

The G2 group had also read in class a reading from their workbook that presented three short letters from adolescents to the “the relationship doctor” explaining a problem and asking for advice. The text included short responses to each letter from the doctor. Thus, for the second composition, students were first asked to write a similar letter to “the relationship doctor.” When they were finished, they exchanged letters and wrote a reply to a classmate’s letter, as if they were “the relationship doctor”. Students were allowed to use their textbook and workbook during the writing process, and some guiding questions were included in the handout to help them with the letter’s structure and content (see annex 6).

A week later, students received their compositions back with the same indirect corrective feedback used for G1 students’ compositions. No error correction was done in the classroom that day; instead, the same topic was included in the writing section of the exam they had four days later, but this time, students were to write only a letter to “the relationship doctor.”

Results and discussion

Background form

G1: All 9 students claimed liking English and considered that writing well was “important” or “very important”. However, 5 learners viewed writing activities in English as “boring” or “tiring”. One of them wrote that she was “lazy” and that was the reason why she did not like writing. This student’s

proficiency level in English was rather low, and this may have contributed to her negative perception of writing. Still, the other 4 learners who claimed not liking writing had the highest level of English in the group.

G2: 10 students declared liking English, while 5 claimed the opposite. 3 of the 5 who disliked English explained they were learning the language only because they were “forced” to do it, and they found it “very difficult”. Indeed, these 3 learners had the lowest level of English in the group and, therefore, they had trouble writing and correcting the compositions in this study. Regarding the group’s attitude toward writing, 14 learners considered that writing well is important, but only 9 liked it; the other 5 learners found writing activities “boring”. From the 5 students who declared not liking writing, 2 had good writing skills. Besides, one of them had spent two years in the United States, which made him the most proficient learner in the group. He argued that writing on paper was “boring” and that he preferred typing in his computer.

The background information provided by students in both groups showed that there is not a clear relationship between learners’ attitude toward English and EFL writing. 80% of students liked English, and 96% viewed writing as an important skill to have. Nonetheless, the adjective “boring” was associated to L2 writing by 41% of learners with different English proficiency levels. This fact may indicate, among other things, that it would be advisable to rethink EFL writing activities for students in Secondary Education.

G1

Table 1 shows the results of the first writing activity, which was a thank you-letter to an old aunt, and involved translation and peer revision. As it may be observed in columns 5 - 7 the number of grammar errors that students noticed in the Spanish translation (NT) is very low (16.6%), but the number of noticed chunks is higher (43.4%). The term “chunk” refers to errors that involve more than

one word and can be one or more sentences long. For example: “he it bark” (it barks); “I think one present that you paid much money” (I think that you paid much money for the present). Therefore, one or more grammar errors may be included in a particular chunk.

Most students in this group made very few or no corrections at all in the English text, and only some corrections in the Spanish translation. As column 8 shows, the number of corrections made in both languages was very low (16%), and the total number of errors noticed by the group as a whole was not remarkable either (32%).

Table 1. Noticed and corrected errors in composition 1 (G1)

G1	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	NT vocab	NT gram	NT chunk	Corrected	Total NT error
Total	9	18	23	3 (33.3%)	3 (16.6%)	10 (43.4%)	8/50 (16%)	16/50 (32%)

Such low amount of noticed errors may be due to the following reasons: 4 out of 9 learners in this group had poor writing and monitoring skills, and thus had difficulty doing the writing task. They asked their instructor for help to write down a few sentences. The rest of the students did not write long paragraphs either, and consequently, they made very few mistakes. Thus, the majority of compositions in English were simple and easy to understand, which may explain why students only noticed 16.6% of grammar errors. As Kim (2011) argued in her study, translating an English composition into the learners’ native language helped them notice errors that hinder communication between writer and reader, and G1 made very few of these errors. Students paid attention to meaning over grammar in their translations, since the first writing activity focused on the transmission of a specific message. As a result, they overlooked most of the errors that did not hinder communication and automatically filled in grammatical gaps when translating their classmates’ writings, like Kim’s own learners. The most common examples of grammar errors in the first composition, which account for half the total number

of unnoticed grammar errors (18) in the group, were:

- 1) *Because is lovely* (copula *be*)
- 2) *I'm writting* (spelling)
- 3) *He play with my brothers* (third person –s)
- 4) *To thank you(r) for (you) present* (confusion between possessive and personal pronouns)

Regarding the effect of peer revision and translation in the correction of composition 1, table 2 shows that there was certain heterogeneity among pairs that tended to be related to learners' proficiency level in English. Thus, students who translated in pairs 6, 7 and 8 were able to notice few or no errors due to their poor command of the L2, while those in pairs 5 and 9 noticed a significant number of errors for the opposite reason.

Table 2. Noticed and corrected errors by pairs in composition 1 (G1)

Pairs	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	NT vocab	NT gram	NT chunk	Corrected	Total NT error
1	0	2	3	0	0	2		2/5
2	1	1	1	1	0	1		2/3
3	0	1	2	0	0	0		0/3
4	0	1	0	0	0	0		0/1
5	2	2	5	0	0	4	2 chunks	4/9
6	0	6	3	0	1	0	1 gram	1/9
7	2	2	2	0	0	1		1/6
8	1	0	1	0	0	0		0/2
9	3	3	6	2	2	2	2 vocab 2 gram 1 chunk	6/12
Total	9	18	23	3 (33.3%)	3 (16.6%)	10 (43.4%)	8/50 (16%)	16/50 (32%)

Students' answers in the post-writing questionnaire provide a better insight into the validity of this type of writing task for the EFL classroom. 5 out of 9 were able to guess the present described in the composition after translating it into Spanish, and 6 out of 9 claimed having little or no difficulty doing the translation itself. Only 2 students had trouble translating, due to their classmates' handwriting. When asked if they had learned more correcting their compositions on their own, or with a classmate's

translation (*¿Crees que aprendes más corrigiendo tu composición solo/a, o con la traducción de un compañero/a? ¿Por qué?*), 2 students chose the first option, 3 preferred the second one, and the other 4 seemed to have misunderstood the question. The 3 students who favored correcting with translations were among the most proficient in the group. One of them explained that translating allowed them to “share knowledge” (*“compartimos conocimientos”*). Another one wrote that her classmate’s translation helped her “take into account” her own errors (*“así tengo en cuenta mis fallos”*) so as not to repeat them, because she claimed she did not like being corrected directly.

Interestingly, one of the learners who preferred correcting compositions on her own had low monitoring skills, but she argued that she could “concentrate better” (*“me concentro más”*) that way. The other one was very proficient in English and pointed out a potential problem with this translation technique that no other student mentioned, the possibility that students would not agree with their classmates’ translation of certain words (*“con un compañero, lo más probable es que no coincidas en algunas palabras”*). While this may very well happen, it requires a command of the L2 that most students at this level do not have, and they can always ask their teacher if they find themselves in this situation.

Table 3. Errors and corrections in Composition 2 (G1)

	Marked errors			CCwithIH			CCwithoutIH			Total NT+CC error
G1	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	
Total	23	30	13	12 (52.1%)	7 (23.3%)	8 (61.5%)	7 (30.4%)	12 (40%)	2 (15.3%)	48/66 (72.7%)

Table 3 presents the results for the second composition, in which students wrote about their plans and ambitions for the future. As it may be observed, the number of corrected errors in this composition is much higher (72.7%) than in the first composition (32%), but the conditions in which this second text

was written and corrected were very different. First of all, 3 students who had been in France for a week joined the initial group of 9, and the three of them had a good level of English. Also, the topic of the composition and the vocabulary related to it was familiar to students, since it had been worked at in class beforehand. More importantly, learners corrected in class their errors, which had been previously marked by their instructor. They were allowed to work with their partners in their corrections, as well as to ask their instructor for assistance. Some students received significant help from classmates, and others asked a lot of questions to their instructor. Students inquired about the errors marked in their drafts, either to check whether their hypotheses to correct them were accurate, or just to find out the right answer. Thus, students were able to correct almost all the errors marked by their instructor in the first draft of the second composition. It is worth noting that learners were able to correct a higher amount of grammar errors without their instructor's help (CCwithoutIH - 40%) than with her help (CCwithIH - 23%). However, the percentage of unnoticed and/or uncorrected grammar errors (36.6%) in this composition remained higher than that of vocabulary (17.3%) and chunks (23%), as in the first composition.

The breakdown of errors by student featured in Table 4 confirms that most learners corrected the majority of their own errors, except for student 1. Nonetheless, these figures hide the fact that those learners who had difficulty translating and/or correcting the first composition, especially 5 and 9, experienced the same problems correcting the second composition, and they required assistance from classmates or from their instructor to figure out their own errors. Student 12 was one of the three learners who had just joined the group and he wrote the longest essay in the class. Although he made the largest amount of errors, he was able to correct most of them by himself.

Table 4. Errors and corrections by student in composition 2 (G1)

Student	Marked errors			CCwithTH			CCwithoutTH			Total NT+CC error
	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	
1	2	6	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2/9
2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2/2
3	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3/3
4	3	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	4/4
5	4	3	1	3	1	1	0	2 (1 IC)	0	6/8
6	1	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4/5
7	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3/4
8	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2/2
9	4	3	1	1	1	0	3 (2 IC)	2	1 (IC)	5/8
10	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	2	0	6/6
11	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3/5
12	2	0	8	0	0	5	2 (1 IC)	0	3 (1 IC)	8/10
Total	23	30	13	12 (52.1%)	7 (23.3%)	8 (61.5%)	7 (30.4%)	12 (40%)	2 (15.3%)	48/66 (72.7%)

G2

As it may be observed in Table 5, G2 made many more corrections (42.5%) in the English text of the composition that involved translation and peer revision than G1 (16%). This was especially true regarding long chunks of words or sentences that hindered communication between the author of the composition and her/his translator (65.7%). In 40% of the cases, miscommunication problems were solved and correctly corrected (CC), and in 20% of the cases, they were considerably reduced and partially corrected (PC), as in the following examples:

Correctly corrected

- 1) *I writing to thank you for the present are very like because I am like there:* I'm writing to thank you for the present. This present is very interesting.

Partially corrected

- 1) *And but in reality is more in o for girls than boys, because I don't very well:* And because it's utiler for girls than boys, I am not very well.
- 2) *It's one present have many lovely:* it's one present which is lovely.

Table 5. Noticed and corrected errors in composition 1 (G2)

G2	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	NT + CC vocab	NT + CC gram	NT + CC chunk	NT+ PC / IC chunk	Total NT chunk	Total NT+C error
Total	17	42	35	5 (29.4%)	12 (28.5%)	14 (40%)	7 PC (20%) 2 IC (5.7%)	23 (65.7%)	40/94 (42.5%)

The results in this group also confirm Kim's (2011) main hypothesis about the beneficial role of translation to solve miscommunication problems in writing. Like students in G1, the ones in G2 filled in grammatical gaps when translating their classmates' writings because they understood what was written. In fact, the most frequent unnoticed grammar errors in G1 were also the most frequent in G2, and they accounted for half the total number of unnoticed grammar errors (30) in the group as well:

- 5) *Because is beautiful* (copula *be*)
- 6) *I'm writting* (spelling)
- 7) *My friend like it* (third person -s)
- 8) *To thank you(r) for (you) present* (confusion between possessive and personal pronouns)

As far as the effect of peer revision on correction is concerned, table 6 provides a distribution of errors by pairs in the first composition. The amount of noticed errors in G2 was related to the learners' proficiency level in English, as in G1, but heterogeneity among pairs in G2 was more pronounced than in G1. Thus, students who translated in pairs 5, 7, 8, 11, and 12 were able to notice few or no errors due to their poor monitoring skills in the L2. It is also worth mentioning that there were students in this group who had a good level of English, but did not like writing, and it showed in their inability or unwillingness to notice and correct errors in their classmates' compositions. This was particularly the case of the student who translated in pair 3.

Table 6. Noticed and corrected errors by pairs in composition 1 (G2)

Pairs	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	NT + CC vocab	NT + CC gram	NT + CC chunk	NT+ PC / IC chunk	Total NT chunk	Total NT+C error
1	5	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	5/7

2	0	2	5	0	1	4	0	4	5/7
3	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0/5
4	2	2	3	1	0	2	0	2	3/7
5	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0/5
6	1	5	8	0	3	4	4 PC	8	11/14
7	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	1	1/6
8	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1/7
9	2	10	4	1	4	1	2 PC	3	8/16
10	0	4	2	0	1	1	1 IC	2	3/6
11	1	4	1	0	1	0	1 PC	1	2/6
12	1	2	5	0	0	0	1 IC	1	1/8
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	42	35	5 (29.4%)	12 (28.5%)	14 (40%)	7 PC (20%) 2 IC (5.7%)	23 (65.7 %)	40/94 (42.5%)

In spite of differences among pairs in correction effectiveness, students' answers in the post-activity questionnaire show that most of them found it useful to work with a partner on the translation and correction of their compositions. 7 out of 13 were able to guess the present described in the composition after translating it into Spanish, and 8 out of 13 claimed having no difficulty doing the translation itself. Most of the problems students encountered when translating the English originals were vocabulary-related, which is understandable considering the peculiarity of some of the presents they had to describe. In any case, when asked if they had learned more correcting their compositions on their own, or with a classmate's translation (*¿Crees que aprendes más corrigiendo tu composición solo/a, o con la traducción de un compañero/a? ¿Por qué?*), 10 out of 13 students chose the second option. One particular learner justified her answer saying that her classmate's translation helped her distance herself from her own writing and realize that she was not communicating what she had in mind (*"con la [traducción] de mi compañero, porque yo sé lo que puse"*). Another one stated that he learned quite a lot from the "error exchange" that took place during the activity, while the majority of learners declared that it was just easier for them to correct their writing with their classmates' help. From the three students who did not express a positive opinion of the activity, one had lived in the US for two years,

and he indicated that he did not learn more working with others; another shared his classmate's view and argued that he did not learn from other students' mistakes, and the third one claimed that she learned more working with a partner, provided she/he was more proficient in English than her.

Table 7 presents the results for the second composition, in which students wrote a letter to the "relationship doctor" asking for advice. As it may be observed, the number of corrected errors in this composition is much lower (12.8%) than in the first composition (42.5%), but the conditions in which this second text was written and corrected were also very different, as in G1. The topic of the second composition and the vocabulary related to it was familiar to students in G2 as well, since it had been worked at in class beforehand. However, students wrote the second draft of this second composition in class four days after getting back their first draft with indirect corrective feedback from their instructor. Also, the number of students who wrote the second composition in G2 decreased from 13 to 10, and only 7 of them received feedback on their first draft before they wrote the second draft. From those 7 students who received corrective feedback, only 1 asked her instructor about the errors marked in her first draft. As a result, only 11 out of the total 86 errors marked in students' first drafts were noticed and corrected in the second draft, 53 were omitted, and 12 reappeared uncorrected in the second draft.

Table 7. Errors and corrections in composition 2 (G2)

G2	Marked errors			Noticed + Corrected			Repeated + Uncorrected			Total NT+C error
	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	
Total	20	49	17	2 (10%)	5 (10.2%)	4 (23.5%)	1 (5%)	6 (12%)	5 (29.4%)	11/86 (12.8%)

As shown in table 8, the students who made the largest amount of errors in the first draft, namely 1, 2 and 7, corrected few or no errors at all in the second draft. Students 1 and 2 were among those with the lowest level of English in G2, and student 7 showed as little interest in doing this writing activity as

he had done in doing the first one; this student was the same one who noticed and corrected no errors in his classmate's first composition (pair 3), even though he had a good level of English.

As for the students who corrected the highest amount of errors in their second drafts - numbers 5 and 6 - student 5 was the one who asked her instructor for help to correct the errors marked in her first draft. She later confessed to her instructor that she had memorized the correct version of her first draft, in order to literally repeat it in the second draft. There was only one error from her first draft that she omitted in the second one. Student 6 was the one who had spent some time in the United States, so he made very few errors in both drafts. It is worth mentioning that this particular student repeated in his second draft an error that appeared in all his 3 writings, and which her instructor tried in vain to draw his attention to with additional oral feedback.

Table 8. Errors and corrections by student in composition 2 (G2)

Student	Marked errors			Noticed + Corrected			Repeated + Uncorrected			Total NT+C error
	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	Vocab	Gram	Chunk	
1	9	18	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0/29
2	3	12	6	1	1	0	0	2	0	2/21
3	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0/6
4	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	0/9
5	1	2	4	0	2	4	0	0	0	6/7
6	0	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	2/4
7	3	6	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1/10
Total	20	49	17	2 (10%)	5 (10.2%)	4 (23.5%)	1 (5%)	6 (12%)	5 (29.4%)	11/86 (12.8%)

To sum up, the results of the present study concur with those presented by Kim (2011), who found that “using students’ L1 and peers for translation helped them look at their own writing more objectively” (p. 158). Learners in both groups were able to notice most of the errors that hindered communication between writer and reader through translation and peer revision, especially when the

errors noticed involved two or more words. However, the number of errors corrected in both groups was below 50% of the total for two main reasons. First, students paid attention to content over grammar in their translations and automatically filled in grammatical gaps when translating their classmates' writings. Second, these students, like most EFL learners at the high school level, have "deficient abilities to edit and correct errors" (Corpas & Madrid, 2007). Therefore, the revision technique tested here seems to be a good tool to improve the overall comprehensibility of a text written in English, but not to identify and correct isolated grammar errors.

Still, compared to traditional revision techniques used in high school contexts, which usually do not include corrections in class, this new technique appeared to be more effective in promoting attention to form, and also more motivating for students, since it was based on communicative and collaborative tasks carried out in the classroom. Results for the second composition in this study, which students in both groups corrected based on indirect corrective feedback provided by their instructor, confirm this idea. G2 corrected a much lower number of errors in the second composition than in the first one. G1 corrected more errors in the second composition than G2, but this was due to the fact that the correction process took place in the classroom, something unusual in EFL courses.

The present study has certain limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results presented above. It would be necessary to carry out a delayed post-test to analyze the effectiveness of this revision technique in the long term. Also, a topic that is related to the materials already covered in class should be considered in order to better test students' ability to notice and correct errors. While preliminary, this study's results indicate that the combination of L2-L1 translation and peer revision has the potential to promote attention to form and enhance language learning. Therefore, this technique could be further explored in different high school contexts to confirm its viability and effectiveness for the EFL classroom.

Final Conclusions

This study was motivated by an interest in alternative approaches to process-based methodologies in EFL writing, which are common in high school contexts, but do not seem to be effective for low-level learners. As the process approach is becoming increasingly questioned, a growing number of studies have shown the beneficial role of L2-L1 translation to enhance language learning, and specifically, to promote grammatical accuracy. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of an alternative revision technique that integrated L2-L1 translation within the process approach, following a similar study carried out in the Korean context (Kim, 2011).

Our study's results show that the integration of L2-L1 translation and peer revision tasks in the process approach to EFL writing helped students notice and correct errors that hindered communication between writer and reader. These results concur with Kim's (2011) findings and suggest that the introduction of this new revision technique in EFL classrooms at the high school level could benefit a majority of learners, especially those with the lowest proficiency level in English. As it was mentioned above, the present study does not propose the substitution of traditional revision techniques for this new one. Time limitations in the classroom would make it difficult for English teachers to use this approach on a regular basis. Since this alternative revision technique appears to be most effective in the detection of errors that hinder communication, EFL teachers could combine its use with other techniques that focus on the correction of isolated grammar errors.

In conclusion, the results of the present study point to the pedagogical value of this new revision technique for EFL courses in secondary education. It is an approach to writing that promotes audience awareness, collaborative work, and thus has the potential to enhance students' writing skills. In this study, the majority of students in both groups showed a positive attitude toward this new revision technique. They found it more useful for their learning to work in the correction of their English texts

with a classmate, rather than by themselves, and some pairs had a good time reading their own translations into Spanish because they truly sounded funny.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the director of this project for her invaluable help and support. I would also like to thank the students who participated in this study, their English teacher, along with the other faculty and staff at their school for their cooperation and assistance during my stay there.

References

- Antón, M. and DiCamilla, F. 1999. Socio-cognitive functions of L1 collaborative interaction in the L2 classroom. *The Modern Language Journal* 83, 233-47.
- Atkinson, D. 1993. *Teaching Monolingual Classes*. Harlow: Longman.
- Akyel, A. 1994. First language use in EFL writing: planning in Turkish vs. planning in English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4, 169–96.
- Bitchener, J. 2008. Evidence in support of written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17, 102-118.
- Corpas, M. D. and Madrid, D. 2007. Desarrollo de la producción escrita en inglés al término de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria española. *Porta Linguarum* 8, 169-91.
- Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deller, S. and Rinvoluceri, M. 2002. *Using the Mother Tongue: Making the Most of the Learner's Language*. London: Delta Publishing.
- Ferrer, V. 2005. The mother tongue in the classroom: cross-linguistic comparisons, noticing and explicit knowledge. (Online: <http://www.teachenglishworldwide.com/Articles.htm>.)
- Ferris, D. 1999. The case for grammar correction in L2 writing classes. A response to Truscott (1996). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 8, 1-11.
- Ferris, D. 2004. The Grammar Correction debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime. . .?). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 49-62.
- Hadfield, C. and Hadfield, J. 1990. *Writing games*. Edinburgh: Nelson.
- Izumi, S. 2002. Output, input enhancement, and the noticing hypothesis: An experimental study

of ESL relativization. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 24, 541-577.

Kim, E. 2011. Using translation exercises in the communicative EFL writing classroom. *ELT Journal* 65, 154-60.

Kobayashi, H. and Rinnert, C. 1992. Effects of first language on second language writing: translation versus direct composition. *Language Learning* 42, 183–215.

Krashen, S. 1985. *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. London: Longman.

Lázaro, A. 2012. Reformulation and self-correction: Insights into correction strategies for EFL writing in a school context. Submitted.

Ortmeier, C. and Enright, K. 2011. Mapping new territory: Toward and understanding of adolescent L2 writers and writing in US contexts. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 20, 167-181.

Prodromou, L. 2002. The role of the mother tongue in the classroom. *IATEFL ISSUES* April-May, 6-8.

Raimes, A. 1991. Out of the woods: emerging traditions in the teaching of writing. *TESOL Quarterly* 25, 407–30.

Rodríguez, C. and Oxbrow, G. 2008. L1 in the EFL classroom: more a help than a hindrance? *Porta Linguarum* 9, 93-109.

Schmidt, R. and Frota, S. 1986. Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: A case study of an adult learner of Portuguese. In R. Day (Ed.), *Talking to learn: Conversation in second language acquisition* (pp. 237–326). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Schmidt, R. 1990. The role of consciousness in second language learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 11, 206–226.

Schweers, C. 1999. Using L1 in the L2 Classroom. *English Teaching Forum* 37, 2 (Online <http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum/archives/1999.html>)

Susser, B. 1994. Process approaches in ESL/EFL writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 3, 31-47.

Swain, M. 1995. Three functions of output in second language learning. In G. Cook & B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principles and practice in applied linguistics: Studies in honour of H. G. Widdowson* (pp. 125–144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tocalli-Beller, A., and M. Swain. 2005. “Reformulation: The cognitive conflict and L2 learning it generates”. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15, 5-28.

Truscott, J. 1996. The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46, 327-369.

Truscott, J. 2004. Dialogue: Evidence and conjecture on the effects of correction: A response to Chandler. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 337-343.

Wetz, B. And D. Pye. 2006. *English Alive! 3* Oxford: Oxford.





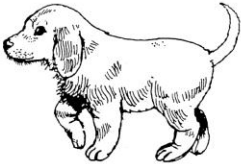


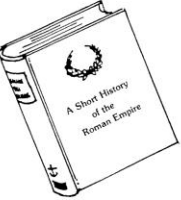

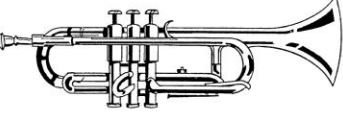
Wetz, B. And D. Pye. 2006. *English Alive! 4* Oxford: Oxford.

Zamel, V. 1982. Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning. *TESOL Quarterly* 16, 195-209.

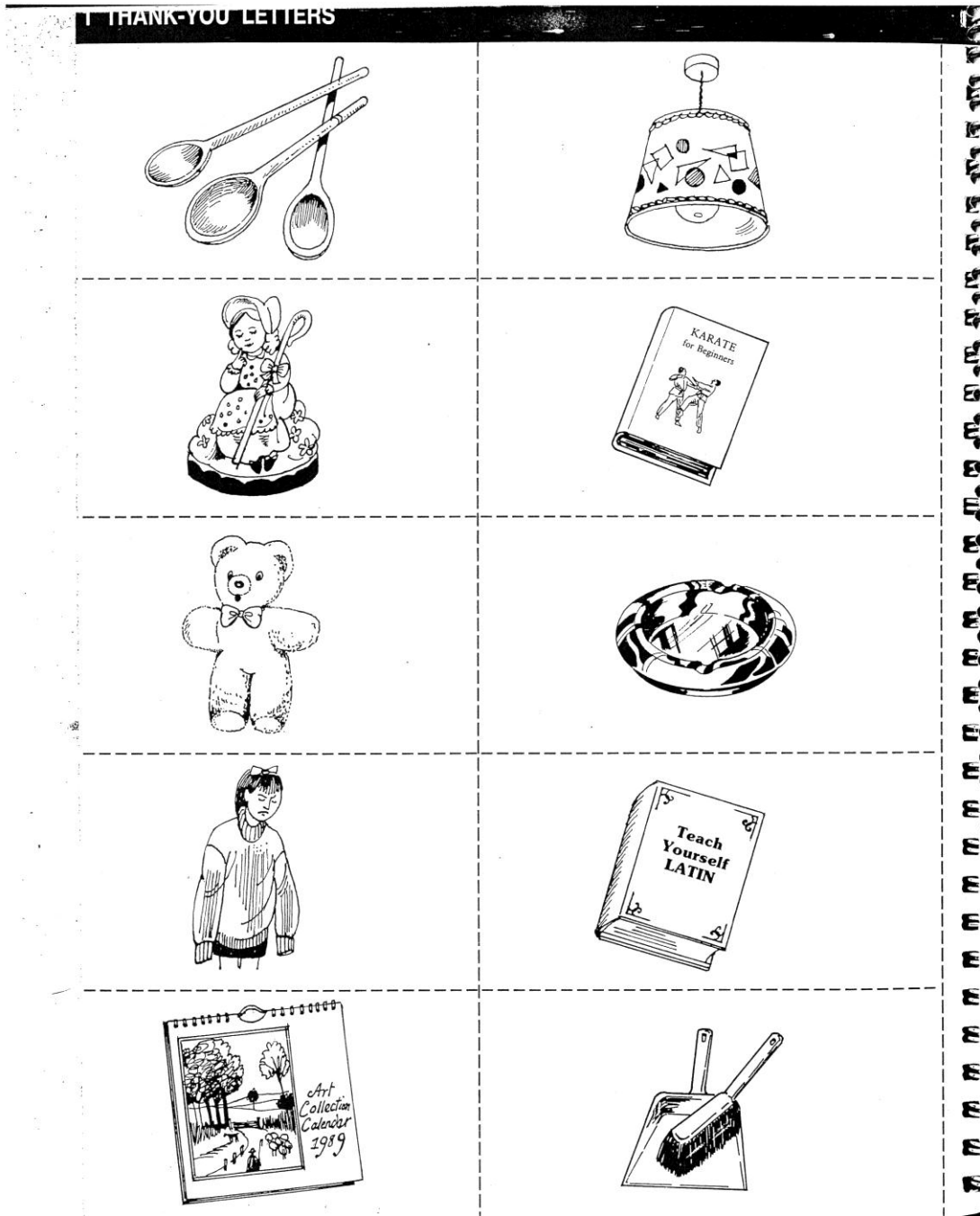
Annexes

Annex 1

1 THANK-YOU LETTERS

Annex 2



Annex 3

Name _____

Group _____

OH, NO...



... SHE DIDN'T!

STEP 1 – WRITING (INDIVIDUALLY)

- Have you ever received a present you didn't know what to do with? Well, yesterday was your birthday and you received one of those presents from an old aunt. You have to write her a thank-you letter (100-120 words) for the present, saying as politely as possible how lovely/useful/interesting it is, but **without mentioning the present itself**. Why? Because when you are finished writing, your letter will be given to another student in the class. He/she will read it and translate it into Spanish to guess what your present was. So give her/him as many clues as possible! Describe your present, say what you will do with it, when, and with whom, etc.
- Here are some useful expressions:
 - I'm writing to thank you for...
 - Thank you so much for...
 - It will be very useful...
 - It's beautiful/lovely/gorgeous, etc.

STEP 2 – TRANSLATING (INDIVIDUALLY)

- Now you will translate your partner's letter into Spanish. Do not add any words to complete meaning.
- If you find grammar mistakes, **do not correct them**. Underline the error in your translation or leave a blank space. Examples:

Original: Yesterday I **receive** your present // He **like** chocolate.

Translation: Ayer **recibo** tu regalo // A él le _____ el chocolate.

- When you are finished translating, read the whole text again. Can you guess now what present your partner received? Sit with your partner to ask her/him.

STEP 3 – PAIR WORK

- Together, correct the mistakes in **both letters** with the help of your translations.
- Si has terminado, responde a estas preguntas:
 1. ¿Después de traducir tu carta, tu compañero/a ha podido adivinar qué regalo recibiste?
 2. ¿Él/Ella ha traducido tu carta correctamente?
 3. ¿Ha sido difícil para ti traducir la carta de tu compañero/a? ¿Por qué?
 4. ¿Qué es lo que más te ha gustado de la carta de tu compañero y qué consejo le darías para que pueda mejorar su escritura?
 5. ¿Crees que aprendes más corrigiendo tu composición solo/a, o con la traducción de un compañero/a? ¿Por qué?

Annex 4

Name _____

Group _____

I'd like to be...**WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS?**

- Write a short paragraph about your ambitions for the future. You can use some of these questions to help you:
 1. What profession would you like to have? Or what are you interested in? Why?
 2. What qualities do you need for that job? Do you have to be creative, sociable...?
 3. Where will you study for that profession?
 4. Do you have to get good grades in high school?
 5. What will you do if you can't study for that profession?
 6. Are your parents happy about your ambitions?
- Useful expressions to start writing:
 - My ambition is to be...*
 - In the future I would like to...*
 - I am interested in...*

Annex 5

Name _____

Group _____

Relationship



problems

STEP 1 – EXPLAINING THE PROBLEM

- Two of your friends are going out. The girl/boy is really in love, but you know that the boy/girl isn't really interested in the relationship and he/she flirts with other people. Write a letter to "***the relationship doctor***" asking for advice.
- Remember to...
 1. Describe the situation and your friends: Do they get on well? When did they start going out? Is she a liar, a romantic...? Is he jealous, a loner...?
 2. Say how you feel about this problem and why: Are they your best friends? Since when do you know them? Are they in your class?
 3. Mention what you would do about the problem.

STEP 2 – REPLYING TO THE LETTER

- Imagine you are the relationship doctor. Carefully read the letter you have received and write a reply giving some advice.
- Useful expressions:
 - If I were you...*
 - Maybe if you...*
 - In your situation, I would...*
 - You should/could...*

Annex 6

WRITING CORRECTION CODE

Code	Use	Example
WW	Wrong word	<i>As our plane flew on the mountains we saw snow.</i>
WT	Wrong time	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains we see snow.</i>
WF	Wrong form	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains we was seeing snow.</i>
WO	Wrong order	<i>As our plane over the mountain flew we saw snow.</i>
SP	Spelling	<i>As our plane flue over the mountains we saw snow.</i>
P	Punctuation	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains; we saw snow.</i>
X	Extra word	<i>As our plane flew over to the mountains we saw snow.</i>
M	Missing word	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains saw snow.</i>
R	Register	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains we observed snow.</i>
?	Not clear	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains we saw snow.</i>
!	Silly mistake!	<i>As our plane flew over the mountains we seed snow.</i>
RW	Try re-writing	<i>Our vehicle flies, we snow find, over mountains you saw it.</i>