UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

COMPARING ESL UNDERGRADUATES’ COLLABORATIVE WRITING ON WIKI AND IN A FACE-TO-FACE ENVIRONMENT

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By

SHOKOFEH ANSARIMOGHADDAM

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, **Amir and Shadieh**, for their love, endless support, and encouragement.
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January 2014

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Most ESL tertiary students find creating a coherent and extended piece of writing difficult and challenging. In assisting students to improve their writing, collaboration was found to be an effective strategy. The strength of collaboration is exemplified by wikinomics (coined from wiki and economics) that emphasizes the benefits that can be drawn from collaboration in all aspects of human activities, including education, through collective wisdom. Wiki was initially created for developing webpages collaboratively. The efficiency of wiki as a collaboration device has made it a synonym for collaboration that simplifies collaborative writing through its interactive features. Considering the strengths of wiki for collaborative writing, the present study investigates collaborative writing on wiki and face-to-face through comparing the participants’ perceptions and preferences of collaborative writing on wiki and face-to-face, their interaction patterns on the two modes of collaborative writing, and the quality of their individual and collaborative essays after going through a collaborative writing process on wiki and face-to-face.

The study employs a mixed-method research design to integrate qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Participants were an intact class of ESL tertiary students in a Bachelor of Arts English language programme. The quantitative data were collected from a quasi-experiment based on a counter-balanced design where participants were randomly assigned to two experimental groups. Each experimental group was given two treatments of collaborative writing on wiki and face-to-face with different sequences of the two treatments. Data were collected from one pre-experiment and two post-experiment essays, two collaborative essays, and two questionnaires. Participants also wrote down their reflections on the collaboration on paper, and they were interviewed at the end of the experiments. The face-to-face groups were audio- and video- taped for investigation of their interaction patterns, and the wiki discussion records were analyzed for salient points. Participants’ interactions were analyzed through a descriptive analysis model adapted from Kumpulainen and Mutanen (1999).
Participants mostly preferred collaborative writing on wiki, but some preferred using both modes in a blended learning environment. Wiki and face-to-face collaborative writing engaged participants in the learning process. The results showed the significant effect of collaborative writing on wiki and face-to-face based on the quality of participants’ individual and collaborative essays. However comparing individual essays written after the collaborative writing on wiki and in face-to-face classroom, wiki resulted in significantly higher quality essays.

The study highlights the positive evidence of applying wiki for collaborative writing in students’ writing processes. The study also suggests that students and instructors should pay attention to the potentials of wiki as a collaborative platform to foster collaborative writing without time, location and space constraints.

Kajian ini menggunakan rekabentuk penyelidikan yang menggunakan kaedah campuran dalam menggabungkan pengumpulan dan analisis data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Peserta kajian ialah pelajar-pelajar tertiari ESL dalam program kursus Bahasa Inggeris Sarjana Sastera. Data kuantitatif telah dikumpul dari eksperimen kuasi berdasarkan rekabentuk imbang di mana peserta diletakkan secara rawak dalam dua kumpulan eksperimen. Setiap kumpulan eksperimen diberi dua kaedah penulisan kolaboratif iaitu wiki dan bersemuka dengan turutan yang berbeza. Data dikumpulkan dari satu esei pra-eksperimen dan dua pasca-eksperimen, dua esei

Peserta lebih menggemari penulisan kolaboratif menggunakan wiki, tetapi ada yang lebih menggemari kedua-dua mod dalam persekitaran pembelajaran campuran. Penulisan kolaboratif menggunakan wiki dan bersemuka juga melibatkan peserta dalam proses pembelajaran tersebut. Tambahan lagi, keputusan-keputusan menunjukkan kesan signifikan penulisan kolaboratif menggunakan wiki dan bersemuka berdasarkan kualiti esei setiap individu dan esei kolaboratif mereka. Namun demikian, dalam membuat perbandingan di antara penulisan esei selepas penulisan esei secara kolaboratif melalui wiki dan cara bersemuka dalam bilik darjah, peserta telah menghasilkan esei yang lebih berkualiti.

Kajian ini mengutarkan bukti positif pengaplikasian wiki untuk penulisan kolaboratif dalam proses penulisan pelajar. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar dan para pengajar perlu memberi perhatian kepada potensi wiki sebagai satu landasan kolaboratif dalam memupuk penulisan kolaboratif tanpa kekangan masa, lokasi dan ruang.
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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 27 January 2014 to conduct the final examination of Shokouteh Ansarimoghadam on her thesis entitled "Comparing ESI Undergraduates' Collaborative Writing on Wiki and in a Face-to-Face Environment" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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