Abstract

This present study investigated modeling online peer revision (PR) among English as foreign language (EFL) learners in an online learning community. Specifically, the study focused on how EFL learners were responsive to the instruction and training in modeling PR and how they reflected upon their learning experiences in online PR. The participants were 15 EFL learners who represented a heterogeneous group of learners coming from different Arab countries and different levels of English at university. Using a mixed-method approach, the researcher analyzed learners’ feedback exchanges, their written drafts and their written reflective responses. The results showed that the EFL learners engaged in a constant recursive process of evaluating or reflecting on each draft and revising it. Based on this, the learners made multiple full drafts (N=181) and fragmented drafts (N=197). Further identification of the levels of text revisions in these drafts revealed that there were (N=1296) text revisions at sentence, clause, phrase, word and below-word levels. In terms of the focus areas of these text revisions, 8.56 % of these text revisions focused on enhancing the content of written texts, and 15.90% of them focused on improving the unity and organization of texts. Moreover, 18.60% of the text revisions focused on meaning, while 44.29 % of them focused on grammar and sentence structure, and finally, 12.65% of them focused on mechanics. Based on the qualitative analysis of learners’ reflective responses to the post-PR questions, the learners showed collective understanding of their shared practice, a sense of autonomy over their learning, relationship-building, engaged diversity and a sense of connection. All these identified themes serve as indicators of a responsive community of learners. The findings have useful implications for pedagogy in EFL writing using technology and future research.

1 Introduction

The shift from the traditional approach to the process approach in English as Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) writing courses has paved the way for researchers to investigate how learners go through these stages of the writing process: pre-writing, writing and revision/review to produce written texts (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). As one stage of the writing process, peer revision (PR) or peer review, where learners revise their texts based on corrective feedback, has received considerable attention by researchers (e.g. Liu & Sadler, 2003; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Razak & Saeed). Although a few researchers describe PR as a stage of the writing process that is equivalent to error corrections or text revisions (Ferris, 2003; Yang & Meng, 2013), many other researchers consider it a dynamic problem-oriented process that involves learners in evaluating and