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# USING PEER EDITING THROUGH WIKISPACES IN CORRECTING L2 STUDENTS' WRITING



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**AMREET KAUR A/P JAGEER SINGH**

**UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION (TESL)**

**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS**

**2012**



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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this dissertation is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

20 March 2012

.....  
AMREET KAUR A/P JAGEER SINGH  
M20091000683



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## ABSTRACT

This study seeks to find out whether the use of peer editing through Wikispaces could help to correct errors in students' writing. Five types of common errors are focused in students' writing: grammar, spelling, word choice, punctuation and sentence structure. The participants were 25 Form Four students of a Smart School in the district of Kinta, Perak. Students wrote two descriptive essays and a two-week peer editing sessions were carried out. Students' participation and progress were both monitored via Wikispaces. This study adopts a case study research design. Online-writing records (students' essays), observation form, questionnaire, semi-structured interview, feedback form and a reflective research diary are used for data collection. Data obtained from field notes, students' essays, interview transcripts and reflection research diary reveal that there are several features on Wikispaces that supports the students to perform better in the peer editing and error correction. Besides, the field notes also illustrated that the use of peer editing through Wikispaces facilitates communication, collaboration, knowledge sharing and revision. Majority of the students showed great interest in editing others' essays on Wikispaces because of its features that resembles word processor. The students also felt more positive towards the usefulness of peer editing through Wikispaces in correcting L2 students' writing. Responses from the interviews showed that students expressed mixed feelings upon receiving feedback from their peers on their writing. However, they admitted that they benefit a lot from the peer editing sessions. Apart from that, the frequency analysis of the students' essays showed that students edited grammar and word choice more frequently as compared to spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. In addition, the analysis also revealed that while most of the students were able to identify and correct errors based on the peer editing checklist, some were wrongly corrected and some of the errors were not identified by the students. These results suggest that the use of peer editing through Wikispaces can enhance students' editing ability in writing.



## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji sama ada penggunaan penyuntingan melalui *Wikispaces* dapat membantu membetulkan kesalahan bahasa dalam penulisan esei pelajar. Lima jenis kesalahan umum diberi fokus dalam penulisan pelajar iaitu tatabahasa, ejaan, kosa kata, tanda baca, dan struktur ayat. Seramai 25 pelajar Tingkatan Empat dari salah sebuah Sekolah Bestari di daerah Kinta, Perak dipilih menjadi sampel kajian. Pelajar-pelajar tersebut telah menulis dua buah esei jenis deskriptif (penggambaran) dan sesi penyuntingan diadakan selama dua minggu bagi setiap pusingan. Penglibatan serta progress para pelajar dipantau melalui *Wikispaces*. Kajian ini adalah berbentuk kajian kes. Rekod penulisan pelajar, borang pemerhatian, soal selidik, temuduga separa berstruktur, borang maklum balas dan diari refleksi penyelidikan digunakan sebagai instrumen kajian untuk mengumpul data. Data yang diperolehi daripada nota lapangan, penulisan esei pelajar, transkrip temu bual dan refleksi penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat beberapa ciri *Wikispaces* yang menyokong para pelajar untuk melakukan penyuntingan serta pembetulan kesalahan bahasa dengan lebih berkesan. Selain itu, nota lapangan juga menggambarkan bahawa penggunaan penyuntingan melalui *Wikispaces* membantu dalam proses komunikasi, kolaborasi, pengongsian ilmu serta penyuntingan. Majoriti pelajar menunjukkan minat dalam menyunting esei-esei pelajar yang lain melalui *Wikispaces*. Hal ini kerana ciri-ciri yang terdapat pada *Wikispaces* adalah sama seperti pemprosesan perkataan. Para pelajar juga berfikir positif terhadap penggunaan penyuntingan melalui *Wikispaces* bagi membuat pembetulan terhadap kesalahan bahasa dalam esei. Respon yang diperolehi melalui temuduga menunjukkan bahawa pelajar meluahkan perasaan yang bercampur aduk apabila mendapat maklum balas berkaitan dengan esei dari rakan sebaya. Mereka memperoleh banyak manfaat dari sesi penyuntingan tersebut. Disamping itu, analisa frekuensi bagi penulisan pelajar menunjukkan bahawa para pelajar lebih kerap menyunting aspek tatabahasa dan kosa kata berbanding dengan aspek ejaan, tanda baca dan struktur ayat. Selanjutnya analisa tersebut juga memperlihatkan bahawa kebanyakan pelajar dapat mengenalpasti dan membetulkan kesalahan bahasa berpandukan senarai semak, ada juga sesetengah pelajar yang tersilap membetulkan kesalahan dan ada juga kesalahan yang tidak dapat dikenalpasti oleh pelajar. Oleh yang demikian, keputusan kajian ini jelas membuktikan bahawa penggunaan penyuntingan melalui *Wikispaces* dapat membantu mempertingkatkan kebolehan pelajar dalam menyunting penulisan mereka.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the Study	3
1.1.1	The Emergence of Web 2.0	3
1.1.2	Teaching and Learning with Web 2.0 Technologies	6
1.1.3	Web 2.0 Technologies in Malaysian Context	10
1.2	Statement of the Problem	13
1.3	Rationale of the Study	15
1.4	Aims of the Study	18
1.5	Research Objectives	18
1.6	Research Questions	18
1.7	Significance of the Study	19
1.8	Definition of Terms	20
1.8.1	Peer Editing	20

1.8.2	Wikispaces	21
1.8.3	Students' Writing	21
1.8.4	Feedback	21
1.8.5	Errors	22
1.9	Summary	22

## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0	Introduction	23
2.1	Theoretical Framework	24
2.1.1	Constructivism	27
2.1.2	Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL)	29
2.2	Error Correction Techniques in Writing	31
2.3	Peer Editing in Writing	33
2.4	Effective Learning through Wikis	35
2.5	Feedback in Second Language Writing	37
2.6	Summary	38

## CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	39
3.1	Research Design	39
3.2	Participants of the Study	40
3.3	Research Instruments	41
3.3.1	Students' Essays	41
3.3.2	Observation Form	42
3.3.3	Interview	43
3.3.4	Questionnaire	44



3.3.5	Feedback Form	44
3.3.6	Reflective Research Diary	45
3.4	Research Procedure	46
3.5	Pilot Study	50
3.5.1	Feasibility of the Instruments	51
3.5.2	Strengths and Weaknesses of the Instruments	53
3.5.3	Improvements Made to the Instruments	54
3.6	Data Analysis	56
3.7	Trustworthiness, Credibility, Conformability	57
3.8	Research Ethics	60
3.8.1	Informed Consent	60
3.8.2	Responsibility to the Participants	60
3.9	Limitations of the Study	62
3.10	Summary	63

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0	Introduction	64
4.1	Research Question 1: What are the features of Wikispaces that help students in the peer editing process?	65
4.2	Research Question 2: How does the use of peer editing through Wikispaces help in correcting L2 students' writing?	77
4.2.1	Enhancing Communication among Students	77
4.2.2	Encouraging Small Group and Whole Class Collaboration throughout the Peer Editing Sessions	84
4.2.3	Reinforcing Knowledge Sharing through a Peer-to-Peer Learning	88
4.2.4	Augmenting Revision among Students	91

4.3	Research Question 3: How do L2 students respond to the feedback provided by their peers through Wikispaces?	99
4.3.1	Students' Reactions when Receiving and Giving Comments on Wikispaces	100
4.3.2	Usefulness of Comments	103
4.3.3	Benefits from Peer Editing and Giving Comments to Others	105
4.4	Research Question 4: What are the errors that L2 students frequently edit in essay writing via Wikispaces?	108
4.4.1	Descriptive Essay 1 (DE1)	108
4.4.2	Descriptive Essay 2 (DE2)	122
4.4.3	Descriptive Essay 1 and 2 (DE1 + DE2)	130
4.4.4	Unidentified Errors	133
4.5	Summary	138

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0	Introduction	140
5.1	Conclusions	140
5.2	Implications of the Study	145
5.2.1	Pedagogical Implications	145
5.2.1.1	Students	145
5.2.1.2	Teachers	146
5.2.2	Social Implications	147
5.2.3	Technological Implications	148
5.3	Recommendations	148
5.3.1	Recommendations for Practice	148
5.3.2	Recommendations for Future Research	150

## REFERENCES 151

## APPENDICES 170

Appendix A	: Letters for the School	171
Appendix B	: Workshops PowerPoint Slides	175
Appendix C	: Observation Form	194
Appendix D	: Interview Questions	196
Appendix E	: Questionnaire	197
Appendix F	: Feedback Form	199
Appendix G	: Reflective Research Diary	201
Appendix H	: Peer Editing Checklist	206
Appendix I	: Two Independent Expert Reviews	208
Appendix J	: Informed Consent Form	212
Appendix K	: Students' Perception on the Peer Editing Activity through Wikispaces	214
Appendix L	: Responses to Characteristics of Wikispaces	215
Appendix M	: Responses to Peer Editing and Revision Sessions	216
Appendix N	: Other Reasons of Students gave over their Feelings of Receiving Comments from their Peers	217
Appendix O	: Other Reasons given by the Students on the Usefulness of the Comments	218
Appendix P	: Samples of Students' Essays	219
Appendix Q	: Samples of Field Notes	224
Appendix R	: Samples of Interview Transcripts	226
Appendix S	: Samples of Questionnaire	235
Appendix T	: Samples of Feedback Form	237

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Summary of Techniques Used in Correcting Errors	32
3.1 SPM English 1119 Past Year's Essay Questions Continuous Writing (Paper 1-Section B)	42
3.2 Whole Research Procedure	49
3.3 Framework of Analysis	58
4.1 Combination Use of Functions Provided by the Text-Editor Toolbar	67
4.2 Total Frequency Analysis of Students' Descriptive Essay 1 and 2	89
4.3 Knowledge Sharing during Peer Editing Sessions via Wikispaces	90
4.4 Before vs. After Peer Editing Sessions via Wikispaces	97
4.5a Frequency Analysis and Percentages of Students' Descriptive Essay 1 by Groups	109
4.5b Frequencies of Correctly and Wrongly Edited Errors in Descriptive Essay	110
4.5c Correctly Edited Grammar Errors	111
4.5d Wrongly Edited Grammar Errors	112
4.5e Correct and Incorrect Versions of Word Choice Errors	115
4.5f Wrongly Edited Word Choice Errors	116
4.5g Correctly Edited Spelling Errors	117
4.5h Wrongly Edited Spelling Errors	118
4.5i Correctly Edited Punctuation Errors	119
4.5j Wrongly Edited Punctuation Errors	120
4.5k Correctly Edited Sentence Structure Errors	120
4.6a Frequency Analysis and Percentages of Students' Descriptive Essay 2 by Groups	122

4.6b	Frequencies of Correctly and Wrongly Edited Errors in Descriptive Essay 2	123
4.6c	Correctly Edited Word Choice Errors	124
4.6d	Wrongly Edited Word Choice Errors	124
4.6e	Correctly Edited Grammar Errors	125
4.6f	Wrongly Edited Grammar Errors	126
4.6g	Correctly Edited Spelling Errors	127
4.6h	Correctly Edited Punctuation Errors	128
4.6i	Correctly Edited Sentence Structure Errors	129
4.6j	Wrongly Edited Sentence Structure Errors	130
4.7	Total Frequency Analysis of Students' Descriptive Essay 1 and 2 by Error Type	131
4.8a	Unidentified Grammar Errors	134
4.8b	Unidentified Spelling Errors	135
4.8c	Unidentified Punctuation Errors	136
4.8d	Unidentified Sentence Structure Errors	136
4.8e	Unidentified Word Choice Errors	137



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0	4
2.1 Peer Editing through Wikispaces Framework	27
4.1a Text-Editor Toolbar	66
4.1b Colour and Style	66
4.2 Blank Page vs. Edited Page	70
4.3 Autosave	71
4.4a History Logs	71
4.4b Visual Page Histories	72
4.5 Comment Space	73
4.6 Discussion Forum	73
4.7 Navigation Sidebar	75
4.8a Discussion Forum 1	81
4.8b Discussion Forum 2	82
4.9 How Students Worked Collaboratively in Correcting Errors in Each Other's Essays	86
4.10 Example of Group Ownership	87
4.11 Students' Sentence Errors and the Teacher's Feedback on Wrongly Edited Errors	91
4.12 Wh-Questions on Peer Editing Process through the History Logs	93
4.13 Reversion Sign on the History Logs	94
4.14 Overview of a History Log	94
4.15a Newer Version (Deleted Some of the Error Corrections)	94
4.15b Older Version	95



4.16a	Email Notifications	95
4.16b	Example of Email Notification Received from Wikispaces	96

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBS	Bulletin Board System
CF	Corrective Feedback
CSCL	Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning
DE1	Descriptive Essay 1
DE2	Descriptive Essay 2
EA	Error Analysis
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTL	Information and Communication Technology Literacy
KBSM	Integrated Secondary School Curriculum
KPLI	Kursus Perguruan Lepas Ijazah
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LMS	Learning Management Systems
MOE	Ministry of Education
RSS	Really Simple Syndicated
SLW	Second Language Writing
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SSMS	Smart School Management System
SVA	Subject-Verb Agreement
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
WWW	World Wide Web





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



The World Wide Web (known as "WWW", "Web" or "W3") has changed the way people interact, communicate, share information and acquire knowledge with each other (Goh Say Leng, Jonathan Likoh, Minah Japang, Ryan Macdonell Andrias & Tamrin Amboala, 2010). Since its inception in the early 1990s, the World Wide Web has evolved from a collection of static pages to a platform for interactive web applications such as web searching, browsing, chatting, and collaborating (Borodin, Bigham, Stent & Ramakrishnan, 2008; Hornby & Kurtoglu, 2009; Qasem Saeed, 2010). Web 2.0 is a name given to these many new uses of the World Wide Web that have emerged since the beginning of its second decade (Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011).





Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second generation of Web development and design that aims to facilitate communication, secure information sharing, interoperability, and collaboration on the World Wide Web (Enonbun, 2010). Web 2.0 concepts have led to the development and evolution of Web-based communities, hosted services, and applications such as social networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, twittering, mashups and folksonomies (Selwyn, 2008; Bruch, Bodden, Monperrus & Mezini, 2010). Web 2.0 websites allow users not only to retrieve information but also to encourage them to participate in contributing, organising and creating their content (Gartner, 2009).

Formally, the term “Web 2.0” was first coined by Tim O’Reilly and Dale Dougherty of O’Reilly Media in 2004 (O’Reilly, 2005) and now it is commonly used to describe the current state of the web. Although the term suggests a new version of the World Wide Web, it does not refer to an update to any technical specifications, but rather to changes in the ways software developers and end-users utilize the Web (Kalita, 2010). In 2005, several related discussions and blogspots took place leading O’Reilly (2006) to finally publish the following “compact” definition on a webpage:

“Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the internet as platform, and an attempt to understand the rules for success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them” (para. 2).





In short, the key foundations of Web 2.0 lay on active participation and collaboration among its users (Cram, Kuswara & Richards, 2008). Most importantly, at the core of Web 2.0, three distinct technologies developed have empowered individuals to collaborate on a scale that have never before been achieved, namely, the use of blogs, wikis and RSS (Manoj Singh, Vijai Kumar, Ajith Balan, Rajiv Gupta, Sanjay Kumar Singh, & Leena A Kanal, 2009). In relation to that, this study shed some lights on the integration of one of the Web 2.0 technologies, Wikispaces, in supporting online collaborative learning by allowing students to create, change and publish dynamic content at anytime (Judd, Kennedy & Cropper, 2010).

## **1.1 Background of the Study**



### **1.1.1 The Emergence of Web 2.0**

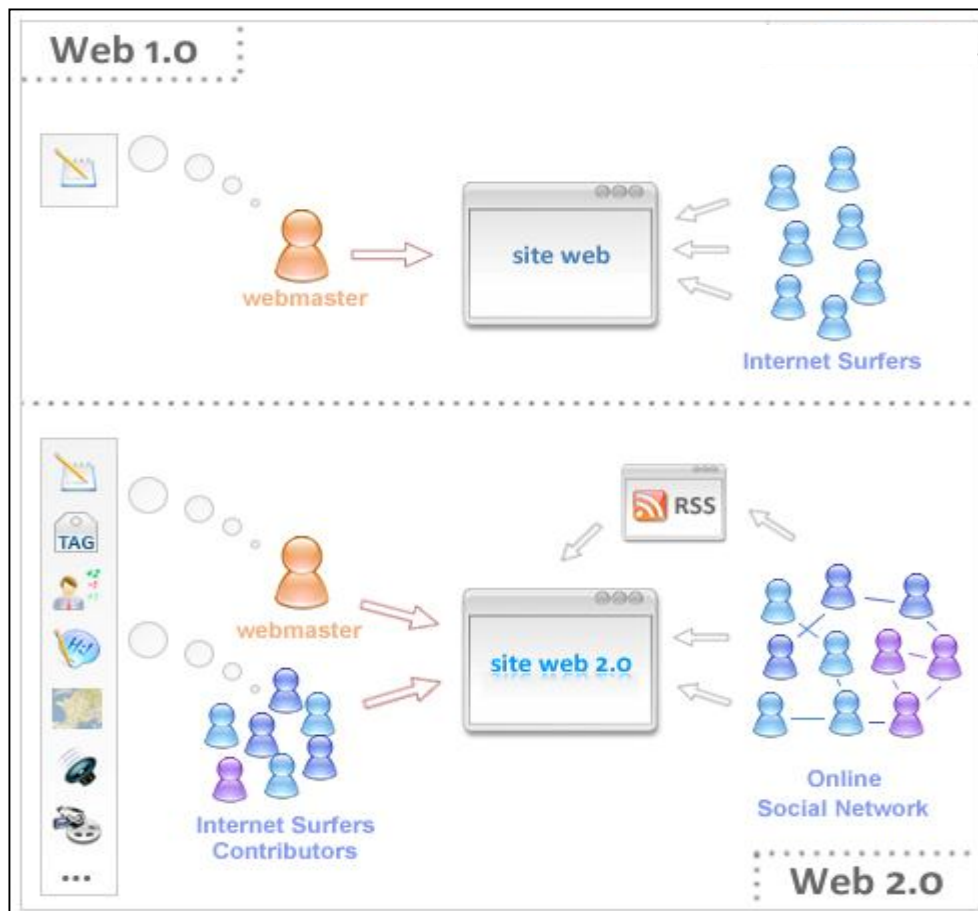
Web 2.0 is the term associated with the transition of the World Wide Web from a collection of individual websites to a full-fledged computing platform serving web applications to end users (Ozkan & McKenzie, 2008). This emergence is due largely to active user participation and collaboration that developed throughout the transition of Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (Thompson, 2007; Berger, 2010).

The state of Web 1.0 was considered as the traditional “read-only” or “first generation Web” because it was used mainly as a medium for one-way information sharing (Jazayeri, 2007; Naik & Shivalingaiah, 2008; Grossenbacher, 2009). Consisting of mainly static webpages, it offers little room for interactivity (Pegrum,



2009). A single person (webmaster) who is in charge of the content is allowed to control the Web 1.0 website (Hildreth, 2008) (refer to Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1  
Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0 (Cozic, 2007)



In the year 2003, there has been a shift in the way of how people were using the Web and how services as well as software applications were designed for delivery over the Web (Kreitzberg, 2008). This trend known as the “Web 2.0,”-“second phase” or a new, “improved” web has been categorised by Tim O’Reilly as “Web as platform” and Web 2.0 application that runs on the platform as services that provide



users control over their own content and facilitate collaboration between individuals and groups (O'Reilly, 2007; Sendall, Ceccucci, & Peslak, 2008).

In contrast to the surfing-based environment of Web 1.0, a typical Web 2.0 website is controlled not only by the webmaster, but also by visitors who themselves can contribute content to the websites that they visit (Hughes, 2007). Other visitors are empowered to participate actively with the websites through socializing and Really Simple Syndicated (RSS) feeds. As Solomon and Schrum (2007, p. 8) state, "The Web is no longer a one-way street where someone controls the content. Anyone can control content in a Web 2.0 world." In other words, the transition towards collaboration enriches and enhances the websites from the Web 1.0. The characteristics of socialization and user contribution website primarily become the main popularity of Web 2.0 (Hildreth, 2008).

Besides that, Web 2.0 also allows Internet users to communicate with each other on forums, discussion boards, and general social networks such as MySpace and Facebook. People can easily create information by sharing their thoughts, experiences and expertise on blogs (online journals on which others can comment), wikis (easy-to-edit Web sites that users can modify or add to) and podcasts (radio shows broadcast on the Internet). In such a case, Web 2.0 is sometimes called the read-write or participatory Web due to the ability to create and organise information instead of just passively receiving it. Increasingly, many of these activities can be carried out on a mobile phone, releasing Internet users from their desks.





In brief, Web 2.0 is all about connecting people and making technology efficient for people (Keen et al., 2009). Thus, these underpinned the fundamental change in the way millions of people work with online technologies (Hyder & Associates Management Report, 2010). As such, Web 2.0 technologies including Internet forums, blogs, wikis, podcasts, RSS, and social networks are gradually becoming more popular in education and support constructive approaches to learning. These new set of Web technologies and services have great potential to support much flexibility in the learning process, allow easy publication, sharing of ideas, and links to relevant resources in information environments that are managed by the teachers and learners themselves (Majhi, 2010). Web 2.0 is well suited to active and meaningful learning and collaborative knowledge building (Virkus, 2008). Most importantly, all these tools of technology have a greater scope of the application into the mainstream education areas such as teaching and learning, scholarly research, academic publishing and libraries (Anderson, 2007).

### **1.1.2 Teaching and Learning with Web 2.0 Technologies**

According to McLoughlin & Lee (2008), teacher-centered or traditional approaches to teaching and learning are typically based on pre-packaged learning materials, fixed deadlines, assessment tasks and criteria defined by teachers. Until now, such characteristics are still considered necessary to be included in a course design even though when the instructors integrate the use of online technologies such as learning management systems (LMS). In fact, what really matters here is the integration of technologies into learning process. The new generation of tech-savvy students demand greater control over their own learning and the inclusion of technologies in ways that





meet their needs and preferences (Prensky, 2001). With the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web, these students are no longer seen as passive recipients but active participants in the co-construction of knowledge (Franco, 2008). Students, as members of open culture of Web 2.0, are finding new ways to contribute, communicate and collaborate using a variety of tools that empower them to develop and share ideas (Lee & McLoughlin, 2008).

The Pew Internet & American Life Project reports that large numbers of American teenagers (ages 12 to 17) go online not to just receive content such as downloading music or getting information but also to create their own online content through blogs, personal web pages, remixing and sharing files (Lenhart, Madden, Smith & Macgill, 2007). Likewise, the EDUCAUSE Centre of Applied Research (ECAR) accounts that more than three-quarters of 36,950 respondents use technology mainly for social networking, instant messaging, emailing, accessing Internet for information and learning management system (Smith & Caruso, 2010). Even though, the above mentioned surveys are conducted in United States, various web 2.0 technologies including blogs and wikis that serve as the platforms for students to create online content are making notable gains (Warschauer & Liaw, 2010). Most importantly, social network sites like Facebook and MySpace are still significantly popular and fastest growing Web sites on the Internet (Turner-Lee, 2010).

The proliferation of these technological tools provokes educators, researchers, and designers to consider how new approaches of community-based collaboration and content creation can be applied into more formal learning spaces, such as schools, colleges and universities (Berg, Berquam & Cristoph, 2007). In addition, the potential





of Web 2.0 technologies in teaching and learning environments also demands greater attention of educational institutions all around the world (Fahser-Herro & Steinkuehler, 2009). Thus, realizing the impact and importance of integrating Web 2.0 technologies into teaching and learning, educators begin to show their fervent interest in virtual worlds (Selwyn, 2008).

Several studies have been conducted on integrating wikis into teaching and learning of literature, reading, communication and writing. Gadanidis, Hoogland and Hughes (2008) have conducted a case study of using wiki in a poetry-mentoring project that has brought pre-service teachers in Canada together with elementary students in Tanzania. In fact, the online mentoring project has promoted trust and understanding through meaningful discussions between students and teacher candidates. Similarly, Dymoke and Hughes (2009) have also developed an online wiki community to build collaborative knowledge about poetry among a group of pre-service English teachers.

In reading classrooms, Alexander and Levine (2008) and Banister (2008) have explored the use of Web 2.0 tools (specifically blogs and podcasts) in content areas such as digital storytelling, digital yearbooks, electronic storybooks, oral reading and publishing. Girgin (2011), on the other hand, has suggested flash content (an online classroom activity) as an effective way of attracting students towards vocabulary learning. According to this study, an environment with flash content can lessen students' anxiety level and upgrade the ratios of success among the students.







As for English communication courses, Kufi and Ozgur (2009) have employed a survey method to examine the perceptions of first year Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) students concerning the use of interactive web environment in learning English. The participants were student teachers who created an interactive web environment for their classes using either one of the two recent web 2.0 software applications: wiki or moodle. In such a learning environment, students are active in their learning process and are involved in acquiring and navigating through the content in the learning as everything is in their own control (Neo, Neo & Yap, 2008). If they want to learn, they may choose an activity they prefer and get the taste of learning with and from their peers.

Furthermore, in terms of integrating Web 2.0 technologies into teaching and learning of writing, Godwin-Jones (2008) has utilised browser-based text editors and electronic portfolios to improve students' writing. Students accessed various tools and services directly through a Web browser rather than residing on the use of desktop. Nevertheless, there are also other studies associated to integration of Web 2.0 technologies including using open educational resources (Geith, 2008), video conferencing (Lim, 2010) and digital games (Groff & Haas, 2008) for teaching and learning.

In brief, Web 2.0 is still fast developing and remains to substantial changes as the tools and applications will merge and evolve into Web 3.0 and beyond. As for now, the new affordances of Web 2.0 are making learner-centered education a reality, with tools like weblogs (blogs), wikis, media sharing applications, and social networking sites that support multiple communities of learning (Lee & McLoughlin,





2008). These tools encourage informal conversation, content collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

### 1.1.3 Web 2.0 Technologies in Malaysian Context

In recent years, both researchers and practitioners have shown great interest in uncovering the use of Web 2.0 technologies by students from various countries. Web 2.0 and emerging online learning technologies such as blogs, wikis and social networks are increasingly being implemented in mainstream education (Diaz, 2010). Obviously, such changes may have a major effect on the existing teaching and learning practice. Numerous studies have been carried out in order to understand the use of Web 2.0 in education and how the integration of technology can improve the quality of teaching and learning in educational institutions. So far, much focus has been placed in developed countries such as the USA, the UK and Australia, however, little research has been done in countries of South-East Asia region such as Malaysia (Mohd Hafiz Zakaria, Watson & Edwards, 2010).

In Malaysia, the new technology has infiltrated significantly throughout the country. Yet, the term 'Web 2.0' has deemed to be problematic and not commonly understood by undergraduates (Kumar, 2009). Thus, in order to address this issue of unfamiliarity, Kumar (2009) further has stated that the undergraduates have then suggested the use of 'new technologies' and specific names of applications, for instance, Facebook instead of 'social networking'.





In terms of research studies conducted in Malaysia, the use of Web 2.0 applications as a pedagogical tool in higher education has become a current trend of those studies. To illustrate this point, Kumar (2009) has surveyed undergraduate perceptions on the usefulness of Web 2.0 in higher education. In the following year, Homa Edalati Fard, Zainatun Tasir, Azidah Abu Ziden and Norizan Esa (2010) have conducted a case study on blog's effects as a learning activity in higher education environment. Kamaluddeen Usman Danyaro, Jafreezal Jaafar, De Lara and Downe (2010) have also evaluated the use of Web 2.0 (specifically social networking sites, blogs, wikis and eLearning systems) among tertiary level students in Malaysia. These three studies have revealed that Web 2.0 applications like online discussions, blogs, wikis, podcasts, social bookmarking and collaborative document sharing (Google Documents) have facilitated the process of teaching and learning. They can be accessible at anytime and anywhere and motivate students to expand their educational purposes especially in higher education context. In addition, the studies also reveal that students have an inherent desire of expressing ideas and opinion online openly and independently. This sense of freedom makes the students feel more competent, confident and independent. They participate more and find learning to be less tedious.

Furthermore, with the development of ICT in the country, the style of teaching and learning in schools has gone through many reforms in its pedagogy approach. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate ICT into their lessons and use it either as the main or as the supplementary tool for teaching in the classrooms (Chan, 2002). A wide range of ICT equipments such as laptop, LCD projectors, trolley with speaker and UBS system as well as software like power point, flash and interactive courseware have been used to support teaching and learning process throughout schools in





Malaysia (Bee Theng Lau & Chia Hua Sim, 2008). However, not all schools in Malaysia have the same facilities that provide sufficient number of computers, interactive multimedia-rich learning environment, reasonable network and Internet connection with some wireless coverage for the students. Due to these limitations, Smart School is chosen as the setting of this study in which teachers are equipped with computers, multimedia courseware and LCD, and e-mail or groupware for collaborative work (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1997). The computer laboratories for teaching are readily accessible with multimedia and audiovisual equipment (Mahani Wahab & Kiran Kaur, 2006). All these facilities are networked with Internet access through the SchoolNet program (Mahani Wahab, 2006).

The learning processes in Smart Schools focus on a holistic development of the students and provide them with the opportunities to enhance their individual strengths and abilities (Ghavifekr & Hussin, 2010). With the aid of multimedia technology, Smart School students are required to self-direct, self-access, and self-pace in learning (Ng Lee Yen, Kamariah Abu Bakar, Samsilah Roslan, Wong Su Luan & Petri Zabariah Abd Rahman, 2005).

In relation to the above, Azizah Ya'acob and Nor Fariza (2005) have investigated the teaching and learning practices of 17 teachers in four selected Smart Schools in Selangor. The findings revealed that the computer is used as one of the tools in teaching and learning of English. In addition, students are allowed to access the Web for the purpose of seeking information for their project or folio work. In general, the teachers and students have better facilities and abilities to cope with the technologies.





However, selecting the appropriate technology for daily lessons can be crucial for the teachers. They have to take into consideration the functionality and suitability of the technology in order to match with the purpose of teaching and learning process. Multiple studies have focused on the use of Web 2.0 technologies for certain purposes and disciplines. Ellison and Wu (2008), Farmer, Yue and Brooks (2008), Xie, Ke and Sharma (2008), Nadzrah Abu Bakar and Kemboja Ismail (2009), Yang (2009) and Zawilinski (2009) reported that blogs are used to encourage students to read and provide peer feedback, and also to enhance reflection and higher-order learning skills. Podcasting has been used successfully to share information in varied forms (audio, video, mix music and talk) in specific disciplines like language learning and history (Aguilar, 2007; Cruz & Carvalho, 2007; Lee, McLoughlin & Chan, 2008). Wikis have been found to not only improve students writing skills but to engage students and to facilitate collaborative learning in various disciplines (Luce-Kapler, 2007; Parker & Chao, 2007; Slotter, 2010; Woo, Chu, Ho & Li, 2011). Specifically, the feature of publishing the content in wikis encourages students to write freely in their own words, to represent their thoughts. It is believed that the nature of language learning depends on the amount of writing done. Thus, Wikispaces is a suitable platform that allows the students to write their descriptive essays and peer edit other's work collaboratively.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are several pertinent problems related to Second Language Writing (SLW). Firstly, according to Nor Hashimah, Norsimah and Kesumawati (2008), teaching English language is a big challenge in this country (Malaysia). Among the four skills





in English, writing is the most complex, problematic and challenging aspect but still it is a crucial skill for most second language (L2) learners to learn (Peacock, 1993; Devereux, Macken, Trimingham, & Wilson, 2007; Yah Awg Nik, Badariah Sani, Muhmad Noor, Kamaruzaman Jusoff & Hasif Rafidee, 2010). Despite spending between 11-13 years in learning English as a second language, the Malaysian learners are still not proficient in the English language due to interlingual (mother tongue) influence (Haja Mohideen, 2002; Marlyna Maros, Tan Kim Hua, & Khazriyati Salehuddin, 2007; Wee, Sim, & Jusoff, 2009).

Secondly, the majority of Malaysian L2 students have still not mastered the grammatical rules and mechanical aspects of the English Language writing (Wee, 2009). They have been exposed to a communicative syllabus, which focuses more on communicative competence rather than grammatical competence (Wee et al., 2009). Indeed, these are the problems faced by the general students' population in Malaysia. Nevertheless, similar problems can also be found in other school context such as those students in Smart school. Due to the lack of focus on technical aspects of language, Smart school students have the same tendency of committing grammar, spelling and vocabulary errors while doing computer-based English language activities (Nadzrah Abu Bakar, 2007). In order to raise the students' awareness towards the errors, the teachers seem to play a significant role in giving feedback to the students either via online communication or via face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, a related study conducted in the past has demonstrated students' committing errors in different types of writing, namely, narrative, descriptive and expository essays (Wee, 2009).





Thirdly, no proper solutions were found to reduce errors in students' writing (Sahirah Marzuki & Zaidah Zainal, 2004). Students have the tendency to rely more on their teacher's feedback to get their errors corrected (Hong, 2004). Several studies done by Enginarlar (1993), Hedy & Jeff (2007), and Shamshad Begham Othman & Faizah Mohamad (2009) found that teacher's feedback is time consuming and a painstaking task. This is because teachers find that little improvement has been made when students submit their revisions. Moreover, Tiow Sing Pei (2006) claims that ESL teachers in Malaysia often face difficulties in giving feedback and responding to every student's writing tasks as most classes in Malaysian schools consist of at least 30-40 students per class. Alternatively, an effective technique such as peer editing is needed to increase the students' awareness of the errors they make in writing. Students should be taught to learn independently. Thus, the necessity and relevance of using peer editing in the classroom become more apparent as students should be trained towards autonomous learning instead of depending just on their teachers.

### 1.3 Rationale of the Study

Based on the problems discussed above, there is a need to research on a new learning writing approach as lack of studies have been conducted on the use of peer editing through Wikispaces (Wang, 2009; Chong, 2010). Wikispaces is one of the Web 2.0 tools, namely, wikis. It is a form of social technology designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content using a simplified markup language (Lu & Serrat, 2009). The use of Wikispaces is only possible if the school has facilities such





as computer laboratories, sufficient number of computers, wireless internet connection and local area network.

In the Wikispaces, peer editing can be one of the features used as the pedagogical approach. According to Hill (2011), peer editing means working with someone (in pairs or groups) to help review, revise and edit each other's writing. Students play the role of editors for each other's writing. Students benefit both from their peer's feedback and suggestions and from the process of having to critically evaluate another student's work. The latter helps them to become more critical of their own work. According to Rollinson (2005) as cited in Kondo and Gardner (2007), collaborative learning structure offers numerous advantages: students play active roles in their own learning; able to re-conceptualize their ideas; perform in a less threatening environment; get feedback from authentic readers; and build critical thinking skills. In order for the students to perform the above mentioned roles, they need to have sufficient knowledge on ICT skills as well as average language proficiency.

Peer editing can aid effective learning and teaching of English (Koh Teck Siew, 2005). It is a technique often used in composition and other intensive writing courses (Henry & Ledbetter, 2011). Students engaged in peer editing trade drafts of material they have written and provide each other with suggestions for improvement. Kondo and Gardner (2007) have found that Bulletin Board System (BBS) online peer editing activity in the writing classroom has encouraged students to be more active and work online comfortably. For instance, the 21 students in the Education Faculty at a major public Japanese university have indicated that the online peer editing activity







as a tool has motivated them to write. Peer editing is also believed to enhance students' learning through larger amounts of feedback given and shorter periods of time waiting for feedback given by their teachers (Gibbs, 1999, cited in Liu & Carless, 2006).

Furthermore, the invention of the computer and the introduction of the Internet have made the world borderless. Communicating, sharing of ideas and information from around the world lies at the tip of our fingers. Now with the recent introduction of Web 2.0 with its wikis and social network sites, the world has definitely become smaller. It is not impossible to adopt technology in the classroom as today's technologically savvy Malaysian teenagers are exposed to social platforms that they commonly use such as Facebook, Friendster, Twitter and MySpace (Zarina Samsudin,



2009).

According to Readance, Bean, and Baldwin (2004), integrating technology into classroom learning could be rewarding as most present day students are computer literate and they might find linking language learning and technology as something which would motivate them to learn the language more. Thus, Wikispaces has been chosen to be the platform of peer editing activities that form the focus of this study.





## 1.4 Aims of the Study

The general aim of this study is to find out whether the use of peer editing through Wikispaces helps to correct errors made in essay writing by Form Four students of a Smart School in Kinta district, Perak.

## 1.5 Research Objectives

Specifically, the study is conducted to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To discover the features of Wikispaces that help students in the peer editing process.
2. To explore on how the use of peer editing through Wikispaces helps in correcting L2 students' writing.
3. To find out how L2 students respond to the feedback provided by their peers through Wikispaces.
4. To identify the errors which L2 students frequently edit in essay writing via Wikispaces.

## 1.6 Research Questions

The study sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the features of Wikispaces that help students in the peer editing process?





2. How does the use of peer editing through Wikispaces help in correcting L2 students' writing?
3. How do L2 students respond to the feedback provided by their peers through Wikispaces?
4. What are the errors that L2 students frequently edit in essay writing via Wikispaces?

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is to find out whether the use of peer editing through Wikispaces helps in correcting errors in L2 students' writing in one of the Smart Schools in Perak. Therefore, this study may provide a useful launching pad for further research in this area of interest. The findings of this study can provide insights for future research in this area. In addition, more effective implementation can be carried out prospectively not only for L2 students in Smart Schools, but also for the teachers those who advocate self-directed, individually paced and reflective learning in their teaching and learning process.

Students are the ones who benefit the most from the study as they are experiencing the learning process themselves. The use of peer editing through Wikispaces in writing encourages students to explore language use in a different medium other than teacher feedback. They write online and they are being connected to their peers in just a matter of a click away. Apart from learning something new and more technology oriented, the interesting features available on the Wikispaces help in making learning more enjoyable and fun.



In addition, teachers too will gain some insights on varying their pedagogical strategies in teaching and learning English. Using Wikispaces as a platform for peer editing is one of the ways to apply ICT in the instructional process as being encouraged by the Ministry of Education. It is also one way of exposing the Malaysian present generation with the current development of the Internet technology whereby the teachers' diversity takes place from the conventional teacher-centered chalk-and-talk teaching to a more student-centered style of learning.

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

The following are the terms used in this study and they are frequently referred to in the following chapters.

### **1.8.1 Peer Editing**

According to Dennen (2003), peer editing is a more intense form of peer feedback, requiring that the peer try to improve someone else's work rather than just comment on it. Similarly, as for this study, the term peer editing is also referred to as a learning strategy in which students will evaluate and provide feedback on others writing. Students correct the errors on language aspects such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice and sentence structure on Wikispaces by using the specified colour codings as in the peer editing checklist.



### **1.8.2 Wikispaces**

Wikispaces is a service that lets anyone to create a wiki for collaborative working (Pascu, 2009). It is a webpage with an edit button. It is easy to use and perfect for collaborative learning (Norherani Moning & Grace Chang, 2009). In this study, Wikispaces is a chosen platform for carrying out the peer editing activities in which it allows students to create, edit, and publish descriptive essays at their own pace.

### **1.8.3 Students' Writing**

Students' writing refers to writing an essay or a composition on a given topic. For the purpose of this research, the focus is only on descriptive essay writing. A descriptive essay is a type of essay that evokes students to describe an object, person, place, experience, emotion, and situation (Nadell, Langan & Comodromos, 2005). It is usually written in vivid detail that the readers can easily form a precise mental picture of what is being written. The students may accomplish this by using imaginative language, interesting comparisons, and images that appeal to the senses. The length of the descriptive essay is limited to about 350 words.

### **1.8.4 Feedback**

Feedback is a response or reaction providing useful information or guidelines for further action and development (Mangal & Mangal, 2009). In this study, feedback is given at two stages. First, during the peer editing activity, students give feedback to others in the form of colour codings. They are expected to show the correct and





incorrect versions of the errors. At the second stage, students refer to their own mistakes and share their thoughts as to whether they agree or disagree with the peer error correction.

### 1.8.5 Errors

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:138) have defined the term errors as follows: “Errors are flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm or mature language performance”. However, the term ‘errors’ as used in this study, refers to five types of language aspects in L2 students’ writing: grammar, spelling, word choice, punctuation, and sentence structure.



## 1.9 Summary

This chapter introduces various aspects of the study which include: background information to the study, statement of the problem, the rationale of the study, the aim and objectives and finally the significance of the study. Previous researches and findings related to the study are discussed in the next chapter.

