Kobe University Repository : Kernel

PDF issue: 2026-11-25

Students' use of online reference tools for English composition and revision

Quinn, Cynthia

(Citation)
国際文化学研究 : 神戸大学大学院国際文化学研究科紀要,39:19-42

(Issue Date)
2013-01

(Resource Type)
departmental bulletin paper

(Version)
Version of Record

(JaLCDOI)
https://doi.org/10.24546/81005050

(URL)
https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/81005050

KOBE UNIVERSITY

Students' use of online reference tools for English composition and revision

Cynthia Quinn

Introduction

Writers approach the writing process in unique ways, not only in how they initially compose their texts, but also in how they revise their work, as they adapt and reconceptualize a text to clarify their ideas and expressions. Some may write coherent, nearly finished texts the first time around; while in contrast, others may approach writing as a learning process and produce multiple drafts in order to explore ideas and discover what they want to say.

Regardless of what kind of writer a person might be, many will admit that revision is hard work. Peter Elbow, the well-known composition theorist, describes revision as a task that "requires wisdom, judgment and maturity," three qualities that can only be accomplished through practice and experience. (Elbow, 1981, p.121). Revision can be a messy, complicated endeavor that involves repeated reorganizing, rewriting and refining of one's ideas and language. Inexperienced writers, then, must learn to develop a "critical consciousness" about their work and be able to look at their writing objectively in order recognize which parts might have the potential to be developed into something better (*ibid*).

One major source of guidance for learners in this regard is teacher feedback (Ferris, 2003). Through essay response, teachers can tailor their comments specifically for each student, addressing meaning, form, and pragmatic concerns, and advise learners how to proceed through the revision process. This type of dialogue is critical for all authors – experienced or not, as any writer benefits from having a second reader provide them with a fresh perspective on their work.

Yet students need to learn how to revise their writing to a certain

degree on their own, without depending on teachers to identify weak points or errors. While there are many layers of a text that need to be evaluated when revising, local text concerns, such as errors in language use and grammar, can be a good starting point for students to practice learner-initiated draft improvement. For second language writers in particular, expressing their ideas accurately in English is a major hurdle that can often obscure an otherwise solid argument or explanation.

Challenging students to self-correct their errors benefits learners in a number of ways. Error analysis can function as a discovery process that helps students recognize individual error patterns, prioritize the seriousness of particular errors, and practice problem-solving strategies for correction (Bates et. al., 1993). Researchers do not always agree whether students experience long-term gains in accuracy (Truscott, 2007), but Ferris (2006) notes that indirect error feedback (i.e. teachers identifying an error but not correcting it for the student) has intuitive appeal since it involves students in reflective learning processes. Processes such as these drive language acquisition, by promoting meaningful learning and raising learners' self-confidence as they accomplish tasks that result in successful outcomes (Brown, 2001).

To become effective revisers, students need to become familiar with a range of revision techniques and resources and be shown how to incorporate corrections into their writing. To work towards achieving this goal, this paper reports on the first stage of a larger study investigating learner self-correction through corpus use and other online writing tools with the aim of helping students become more independent, resourceful writers. Specifically, the study investigates students' ability to self-correct lexicogrammatical features of their own texts using online writing tools, looking both at how effective student correction is in response to teacher indirect feedback and how learners perceive the usefulness of these online resources. The impetus for the research is the revision challenges described above, which the author has experienced through teaching English composition courses.

Aims of the survey

In this article, I report on a background questionnaire, which was administered to explore students' computer usage and experience with online English writing resources. The results of this survey inform the pre-questionnaire and class instruction modules (on using online tools) of the main study mentioned above. Aside from a pre-questionnaire and class instruction, the overall study also includes information gathered from post-questionnaires, student online logs, and text analyses of essay drafts from students' course portfolios.

The purpose of this survey was to gather information on which resources students rely on to solve vocabulary and grammar questions that arise when writing in English. The questionnaire elicited information on three general topic areas: frequency of students' computer usage, language resources typically referenced during the writing process, and learners' general attitudes towards writing in English. "Language resources" here refers to reference tools such as English-English learner dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar reference books, corpora, Internet search engines, translation sites, and software spelling/grammar check. Most questions were Likert scale items accompanied by open-ended questions to gather examples of commonly used reference tools.

With this background information on students' computer literacy and writing reference habits, I prepared classroom instruction units on online reference tools that expanded on their reported referencing experiences. For example, drawing from the results of this survey, in class we first discussed the concept of *lexicogrammatical* knowledge, or how vocabulary and grammar work together to create genre-specific discourse patterns (Coxhead & Byrd, 2007), and the advantages of exploring *language-in-use* (Biber, et. al., 1998) through readily available computer reference tools, especially language corpora. Through this discussion, I emphasized the importance of moving beyond bilingual, translation-based resources and introduced the benefits of using monolingual resources that provided more complete information related to lexical collocation, contemporary grammatical usage, and pragmatic aspects of language. The overall instructional emphasis was on introducing new reference tools to students that

they could use to complement (not substitute) resources they were already using.

Method

The survey was conducted in five writing courses at Kobe University's Intercultural Studies and Literature departments. Aside from two Chinese students, all respondents were Japanese and included 22 second-year, 66 third-year, and 12 fourth-year undergraduates. Several questionnaires were eliminated at the outset because they were incomplete, and 8 surveys written by graduate students were removed based on the assumption that their writing backgrounds were likely different from the undergraduate group. This left the remaining 100 questionnaires that make up this study.

Of these 100 participants, ages ranged from 19-22, aside from one 25 year-old, and included 74 females and 26 males. Several respondents did not write their majors, but of those who did, the majority of students were in the Department of Intercultural Studies (n=68), as well as 5 students from the Literature department and 5 from Human Development. The questionnaire was translated into Japanese and administered in class near the beginning of the course. It took students about 15 minutes to complete.

Discussion of findings

The complete survey comprised 38 questions on the three topic areas mentioned above: computer usage, experience with online reference tools, and learner attitudes toward writing.

Computer usage

On average, students use computers more for personal (Mean=4.46, S.D. = 0.73) than academic use (Mean = 3.54, S.D. = 0.99). A look at item frequency in Figure 1 shows that for university assignments, students use computers every week (32% about once a week; 33% three to four times per week), whereas for personal use, most students are on the computer almost every day (59%) and 29% use it regularly, about 3-4 times a week.

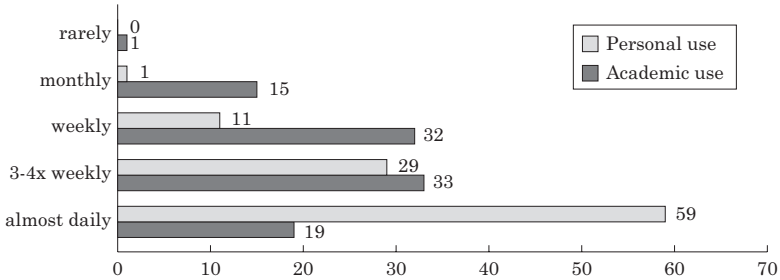

Figure 1: Academic and personal computer usage (*N=100*)

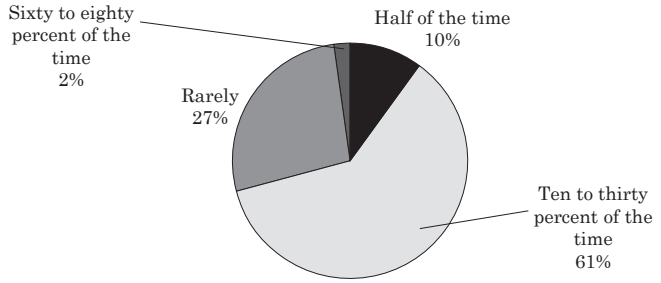

Figure 2: Percentage of computer use in English

Not surprisingly, most computer use is done in Japanese, as most students (61%) reported using English only 10%-30% of the time and the second largest group (27%) reported using the computer in English almost never (see Figure 2).

Otherwise, the majority of respondents reported that they enjoy working with computers (63%), with 34% expressing that they "somewhat" enjoyed computer work. Except for one participant, all have their own personal Internet access.

Writing reference tools usage

This section reports on which online tools students use when writing in English either for academic assignments or for personal purposes (such as personal emails, social media, etc.). The following reference sources are reported below: search engines, dictionaries, grammar resources, translation sites, spelling/grammar check, thesauruses, and corpora.

Search engines

Table 1: Search engine usage

	1 never	2 rarely	3 occasionally	4 sometimes	5 frequently	6 usually
Search engine usage (N = 100)	5	20	12	38	20	5
	Mean=3.63	**S.D.=1.28**				

Language (N=89)	**N**	**%**
In English	6	6.7%
In Japanese	36	40.4%
In both languages	47	52.8%

Table 1 addresses how often students use search engines to solve their writing problems and in which language they usually search. Twenty-five percent use search engines to answer language questions frequently ("usually" and "often"), 25% infrequently ("rarely" and "never"), and the remaining 50% are occasional to sometimes users.

Regarding which language students use when researching English language problems, 52.8% report searching in both Japanese and English, 40.4% search only in Japanese, and 6% search only in English.

Dictionaries

Not surprisingly, dictionaries are a major reference resource. With a high mean of 5.09 (S.D. = 0.84), students regularly turn to a dictionary to answer language questions as they write. Table 2 below shows more detail

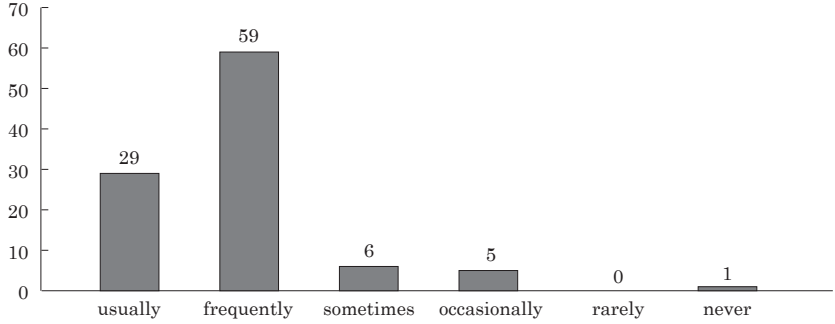

Figure 3: Dictionary usage (N=100)

Table 2: Dictionary type used

(Students could choose more than one response.)

Dictionary type	Frequency	Language	Frequency
Electronic	93	Bilingual	58
Online	51	Monolingual	37
Paper	9		

regarding what kind of dictionary students most often use.

The majority use electronic dictionaries (93) followed by online dictionary sources (51). Only a few students reference on paper (9). As to whether they are using bilingual or monolingual resources, most rely on bilingual Japanese-English/English-Japanese sources (58), and some (37) responded that they use monolingual English-English dictionaries.

Given that most electronic dictionaries include both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, results suggest that learners could be encouraged to use monolingual resources more often. For students at the intermediate-level and beyond, monolingual dictionaries can offer a useful complement to bilingual ones. As one example, Harvey and Yuill (1997) investigated how students used monolingual dictionaries with writing tasks and found that overall, the students' success with dictionary referencing was high, and in particular, students used the dictionary's example sentences to help them understand a word's meaning, grammar and register. Compared to bilingual dictionaries, monolingual resources tend to provide more information about each word — particularly information on usage — and can supplement a learner's translated understanding of a word derived from a bilingual reference (Nation, 2001). As a starting point, monolingual learner dictionaries (such as Macmillan's online learner's dictionary at *www.macmillandictionary.com*) provide definitions and explanations in a controlled vocabulary, making them more accessible to intermediate learners.

Grammar reference books

A little over half of the students report consulting grammar resources (58%) to support writing in English. Regarding which resources, students cited using a variety of tools and means to address their questions about

proper grammatical expression (see Table 3).

Table 3: Student-cited examples of grammar resources used
(Students could choose more than one response.)

Resource/reference approach reported	Frequency
Grammar books Unspecified (18) High school grammar books (6)	24
Example sentence analysis (online searches or in electronic dictionaries)	11
Dictionary searches for phrases and expressions Paper (2) Electronic (7) Online (1)	10
Google phrase searches	10
Translation sites/cross-translating	5
Native speaker help	1
Software grammar check function	1

When confronted with a grammar problem, the most common resource cited by respondents was to use a grammar reference. However, the next three response categories (Example sentence analysis; Dictionary searches for phrases and expressions; Google phrase searches) show students searching for multi-word combinations in context. If we consider these three categories as representing a similar language-in-context approach to grammar referencing, then we could say that sentence or context analysis is the most frequent choice (31), surpassing traditional grammar resources. From these brief examples, it is difficult to see exactly how students are researching these expressions, but it is possible that this tendency is similar to the Harvey and Yuill study mentioned above that found example sentence analysis to be a common means for students to explore word patterns.

Other reference resources

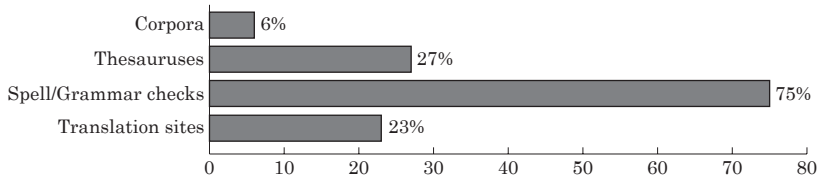

Figure 4: Use of other writing reference tools (percentage)

As shown in Figure 4, many students regularly use their word processing software's spelling and grammar checks (75%). As for thesaurus referencing, 27% reported having used them, suggesting that most students are either not familiar with this resource or do not see them as particularly useful. Thesauruses can be a helpful tool for vocabulary expansion, but learners need to have adequate researching skills and language proficiency to accurately verify meaning and usage for the new words they find. Almost one-fourth use translation sites (23%) to complete English written assignments and reported using the following: Excite (cited 8 times), Weblio (3), ALC's 英辞郎 (5), Google translation (3), and Yahoo translation (once).

Only 6% reported that they had used a corpus to help them write, and only 20% were familiar with the term "corpus." Recently in L2 writing literature, many studies have introduced ways to include corpus referencing in the writing curriculum, such as promoting "data-driven learning" based on authentic language contexts and encouraging students to use concordance output to solve language problems (Yoon, 2011). With the large quantity of natural linguistic data that corpora can provide, teaching students how to use this tool can be a powerful resource for addressing aspects of language use that are not typically addressed in traditional reference materials.

Students' referencing habits

Items 9 and 10 on the questionnaire present two hypothetical situa-

tions in which referencing might be necessary: the first case (Item 9) relates to searching for the correct preposition in a gapped sample sentence, while the next question (Item 10) is about deciding which adjective is appropriate for the sample sentence (e.g. the high yen, the strong yen, the tall yen). Please see original questionnaire in the Appendix for the complete questions.

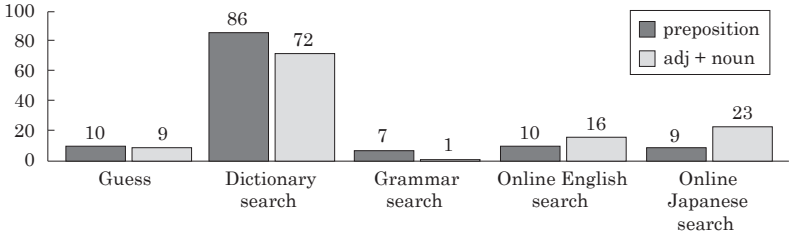

Figure 5: Hypothetical referencing examples: Item 9 (preposition) and Item 10 (adj+noun)
(Students could choose more than one response)

As reported in Figure 5, for the preposition example (Item 9), most students said they would use their dictionaries (86), with the next frequent choice being either guessing, online searching in English or online searching in Japanese, all of which had about the same number of low responses (9-10). Despite preposition use being traditionally viewed as a grammatical issue, referring to a grammar text was the least likely option for respondents.

For the second example (Item 10), adjective choice, most students would again consult their dictionaries (76), followed by searching online in Japanese (23) or in English (16). In both of these tasks, sixteen students reported that they would use multiple reference tools to find the answer.

Considering these results, it's possible that students viewed the first question as more of a grammar problem, given that more students (7) opted to consult a grammar reference for the preposition task than the adjective task (1). However, the overwhelming first choice for both exercises was to consult a dictionary, perhaps indicating that this is the re-

source students are most familiar with and prefer using. Additionally, it's possible that both tasks are being treated as lexical problems by students, which highlights the interrelatedness between grammar and vocabulary and the importance of addressing lexical patterning in writing. For either of these tasks, using a corpus would be a useful tool to supplement a dictionary reference by providing more data regarding usage.

Guessing versus referencing

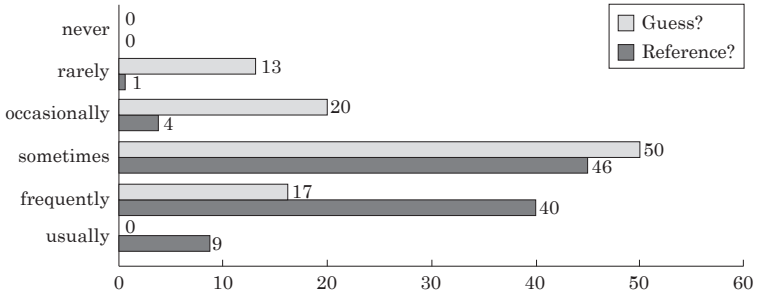

Figure 6: Students' guessing and referencing habits (N=100)

Overall, students report referencing more often (Mean = 4.52, S.D. = 0.76) than guessing (Mean = 3.71, S.D. 0.90), as shown in Figure 6. Frequency counts reveal that a high number of students take time to reference their language doubts — 86 across both the "sometimes" and "frequently" response categories — with 9 responses in the "usually" reference category. This leaves only 5 responses in the minimal referencing categories.

As for guessing, half of the students report guessing "sometimes" (50), followed by guessing "occasionally" (20) and "frequently" (17). The remaining 13 say that they rarely guess. A correlation analysis shows a statistically significant ($p<.05$, one-tailed) inverse relationship (-.205) between referencing and guessing. This suggests that students who spend more time referencing, may guess less often; and conversely, students who tend to guess more, may consult reference materials less.

Taken as a whole, the results to these two questions suggest that referencing is done more often than guessing, which could be interpreted

as a reflection of the students' efforts to write accurate, good quality essays. At the same time, it's important to recognize the role that guessing plays in overall language acquisition: speculating about language choices and taking risks to express oneself despite doubts in accuracy is a recognized quality of the "good" language learner and is certainly a survival skill. The responses related to guessing could suggest that many students find guessing acceptable and a realistic necessity when writing in English, based on the fact that 67% of respondents reported guessing "sometimes" and "frequently".

On the other hand, a less optimistic perspective might be that some students are not taking the opportunity to address their gaps in knowledge through reference and research as they write. Whichever interpretation is taken, however, we can likely assume that to some degree, learners' individual preferences come into play: some learners may like to reference, while others, when uncertain, prefer to trust their instincts and guess.

Referencing and the writing process

Figure 7 shows at what point in the writing process students stop and take time to address language concerns. Most learners report referencing repeatedly throughout the writing process (55%), although 34% prefer to write their ideas down first and then go back and look up expressions they are uncertain about after completing a draft. The remaining students (11%) consult reference texts soon after they begin writing, or at least

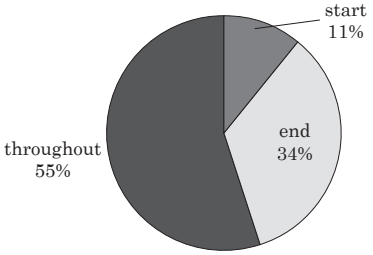

Figure 7: Reference check points during the writing process

earlier in the writing process than the other two groups. Finally, in Item 14, students report that they typically re-read their written work in English before considering it finished (95%), a good habit for any writer.

Learner attitudes

The final section of the survey investigates students' feelings and preferences towards writing in English. This section contained a total of 14 Likert-scale items, ranging from 1 to 6 with a score of 1 indicating "strongly disagree" to a score of 6 "strongly agree." These 14 items are separated into three general thematic categories below to facilitate discussion.

Learner attitudes towards English overall

Table 4: English learning attitudes

	Mean	S.D.	Mode
Item 1: *I enjoy learning English.*	4.60	0.99	5
Item 4: *I prefer speaking English than writing in English.*	4.30	1.22	4
Item 8: *I'd like more opportunities to use English in the future.*	5.37	0.88	6

Overall, students reported very positive views towards English language learning. For the first item, 90 of the 100 respondents agreed that they enjoyed learning English (strongly agree N=16; agree N=43; somewhat agree N=31). For most students, though, this enjoyment seems to come more from speaking English rather than writing in English: 76% reported that they prefer English conversation to composition (strongly agree N=20; agree N=23; somewhat agree N=33). Concerning their desire to continue using English in the future, a combined 86% responded with strongly agree (N=56) and agree (N=30).

When considering these positive results, it's important to remember that this survey was conducted in elective writing courses; many of the students who choose to take these courses are likely to have a good interest in English language learning to start with and tend to be motivated learners.

Learner attitudes towards English writing

In this section, questionnaire items relate to learners' views about composing English texts and about their general writing skills.

Table 5: Attitudes towards writing

	Mean	S.D.	Mode
Item 2: *I like writing in English.*	4.08	1.13	4
Item 3: *I don't like writing, but it's useful for my language learning.*	4.27	1.20	5
Item 9: *Writing is one of my favorite English classes.*	3.87	0.88	4
Item 12: *If I could avoid taking an English writing course, I would.*	2.13	1.02	2

For Item 2, most students (72%) agreed that they enjoyed writing in English (strongly agree N=9; agree N=28; somewhat agree N=35), leaving 28% of the respondents on the "disagree" end of the scale. However, when asked almost the same question in the negative (Item 3), an even higher number of students (76%) agreed that they *didn't* like writing, but it helped their overall language learning (strongly agree N=12; agree N=39; somewhat agree N=25). These contradictory results could suggest that writing is not necessarily an "enjoyable" activity in itself, but that students can accept the task of writing in English for the sake of improving their foreign language ability. Overall, students likely recognize the value of writing as a productive skill to drive language acquisition.

Items 9 and 12 inquire about students' attitudes towards writing in terms of whether they enjoy English writing class. Results show that 65% generally agreed that writing was one of the English classes they enjoyed most. However, when asked if they had the choice, would they prefer *not* to take an English writing course, the vast majority of students (91%) disagreed with this statement (strongly disagree N=26; disagree N=49; somewhat disagree N=16), indicating that while many students might not go as far as saying writing was a favorite course, they realized the value of learning how to express themselves better in English through writing.

Table 6: Writing skills

	Mean	S.D.	Mode
Item 7: *I want to improve my English writing skills.*	5.67	0.77	6
Item 5: *I find writing in English very difficult.*	4.57	0.98	5
Item 10: *It takes me a long time to write something in English.*	4.90	1.19	6
Item 11: *I often feel frustrated when I try to write in English.*	3.04	1.28	3

With a high mean and relatively little variation in student response for Item 7, it seems clear that learners feel strongly about improving their writing ability. For this item, no students disagreed: 100% of the respondents were on the "agree" side of the scale (strongly agree N=75; agree N=21; somewhat agree N=4).

In Item 5, 89% of students report that they think it is difficult to write in English, and in Item 10, basically the same number (88%) agree that they spend a lot of time composing English texts. Between these two challenges, however, students agreed more strongly with Item 10 (strongly agree N=42; agree N=24; somewhat agree N=22) than they did with Item 5 (strongly agree N=15; agree N=42; somewhat agree N=32). In other words, beliefs about writing difficulty and composing time differ in terms of degree: Certainly, it's a challenge to write in a foreign language, but writing in English is more time-consuming than it is difficult, the results seem to suggest.

As for Item 11, the majority of students (66%) disagree that they feel frustration during the writing process, but the responses are relatively dispersed across all scoring categories (strongly agree N=3; agree N=12; somewhat agree N=19; somewhat disagree N=28; disagree N=28; strongly disagree N=10).

Overall, considering the responses to all Items in the above Table 6, one conclusion might be that while students admit writing in English is difficult and at times trying, they nonetheless feel motivated to overcome these challenges and hope to improve their written proficiency.

Learners' experience writing in English

Table 7 reports on three Items (6, 13, and 14) that show to what degree students write in English for personal purposes, outside of academic assignments. Given that the standard deviations for these items are fairly high, frequency of response data is also presented in the table.

Table 7: Non-academic writing in English

	Mean		**S.D.**		**Mode**	
Item 6: ***I never write in English outside of school.***	2.64		1.74		1	
Scale (6 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Number	8	15	8	8	24	37
Item 13: ***I use English for emailing, chatting, etc. online.***	3.04		1.63		2	
Scale (6 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Number	12	9	15	18	27	19
Item 14: ***I use English on social networking sites (e.g. Mixi, Facebook).***	2.98		1.72		1	
Scale (6 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree)	**6**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Number	12	10	16	16	18	28

The majority of students (69%) disagreed with Item 6, indicating that they do sometimes write in English for personal, non-academic communication. This leaves about one-third of respondents who stated that they do not write in English outside of class assignments.

Responses to both Item 13 and Item 14 are similar in that around two-thirds of respondents said that they do not write in English online to communicate by email or through social networking sites. Thus, despite the fact that most students reported in Item 6 that they do write in English outside of school, when and in what situations they are writing could not be elicited through this questionnaire. Responses to Item 6 may have been better clarified through open-ended, follow-up questions.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, results suggest that students most often turn to dictionaries for help when faced with how to express their ideas in writing, and in most cases, it will be a bilingual, electronic dictionary. Nonetheless, there are many instances where students choose to reference online sources and show that they have experience searching for English expressions with Internet search engines and online dictionaries, in both Japanese and English. Aside from using their dictionaries, many students also use the spelling/grammar check function, which can be useful for identifying errors, although not so effective for providing error explanations.

Analyzing example sentences and searching for lexical combinations in context was cited as a fairly common practice for learners who want to explore more than the basic meaning of a word or phrase. For this purpose, students referred to dictionaries and searched online. This outcome suggests a good opportunity for students to become more familiar with corpora, given that analyzing concordance output is essentially an exercise in sentence analysis. Besides using corpora, there are many other online tools to investigate lexical patterns that might also appeal to students.

An interest in sentence analysis also shows that students recognize the value of exploring language in its original context (English). Although most students use bilingual dictionaries and almost a quarter use translation sites, it seems that students could benefit from instruction on using more monolingual resources, especially as a way to supplement the information they are getting from their bilingual sources. There are so many reference materials online for English (and *in* English) that for students, it must be difficult to locate resources that are both helpful and user-friendly. Most likely, students could benefit from teacher guidance in this area by spending time in class learning how to navigate certain English-based tools and doing practice research exercises.

Since the aim of this questionnaire is to explore students' current reference tendencies and to provide background information for another study, these survey results only give us a very general picture of what resources students tend to use and how they use them. However, the information provides a basic understanding of which tools students prefer

and to what degree they use English when writing in English. For developing student writers, learning to answer language questions that arise throughout the writing process requires good researching skills — an essential ingredient for learning to write clearly and accurately in a foreign language.

References

Bates, L., Lane, J., & Lange, E. (1993). *Writing clearly: Responding to ESL compositions.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Biber, D., Conrad, S., & Reppen, R. (1998). *Corpus linguistics: Investigating language structure and use.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles, 2nd edition.* White Plains, NY: Addison-Wesley Longman.

Coxhead, A. & Byrd, P. (2007). Preparing writing teachers to teach the vocabulary and grammar of academic prose. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* 16, 129-147.

Elbow, P. (1981). *Writing with power: techniques for mastering the writing process.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferris, D. (2003). *Response to student writing: Implications for second language students.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.

Ferris, D. (2006). Does error feedback help student writers? New evidence on the short- and long-term effects of written error correction, in Hyland, K. & Hyland, F. (eds.) *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harvey, K. & Yuill, D. (1997). A study of the use of a monolingual pedagogical dictionary by learners of English engaged in writing. *Applied Linguistics,* 18, 253-278.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Truscott, J.(2007). The effect of error correction on learners' ability to write accurately. Journal of Second Language Writing, 16, 255-272.

Yoon, C. (2011). Concordancing in L2 writing class: An overview of research and issues. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes,* 10, 130-139.

Appendix

Questionnaire

英語ライティングと参照ツールに関するアンケート調査

本日はアンケート調査にご協力いただき、ありがとうございます。この調査は、みなさんが英語でライティングを行う際、どのように言語に関する問題点を解決するのかについて調査することを目的としたものです。みなさんがどのような英語リソースを利用しているのか、そしてそれらをどのように使用するのかについてお聞かせ下さい。

【パーソナルデータ】

年　齢：_____才

性　別：1）男性　　2）女性

母　語：

学　年：1）学部１年　　2）学部２年　　3）学部３年

4）学部４年　　5） 大学院

専　攻：

Eメール：

【コンピューターの利用】

1．全般的に、コンピューターを使うのは好きですか。

はい　／　まあまあ　／　いいえ

2．自宅でインターネットを繋いでいますか。

はい　／　いいえ

3．どれくらいの頻度で、学校の勉強（レポート作成、宿題等）のためにコンピューターを利用しますか。

ほぼ毎日　／　週に３～４回　／　週に１回　／　月に１回　／

ほとんど利用しない

4．どれくらいの頻度で、個人的な目的（メール等）のためにコンピューターを利用しますか。

ほぼ毎日　／　週に３～４回　／　週に１回　／　月に１回　／　ほとんど利用しない

5．あなたのコンピューターの利用を100とした時、英語での利用はどれくらいの割合になりますか。

ほとんどなし　／　10～30%　／　約50%　／　60～80%　／　80%以上

【ライティングと参照ツール】

あなたが英語で何か書く時のことを想像して下さい。レポート作成、TOEFLのライティングの練習、メール作成等、何でも構いません。あなたの考えを表現するのに適切な語彙や文法に自信がない場合、あなたならどうしますか。

1．語彙や文法に自信がない場合、どれくらいの頻度でインターネットのサーチエンジン（Google、Yahoo等）を利用しますか。

□ 全く利用しない　□ ほとんど利用しない　□ ごくたまに利用する
□ 時々利用する　□ かなり頻繁に利用する　□ いつも利用する

1.1．利用する方は、これらのサーチエンジンを何語で利用しますか。

□ 英語　□ 日本語　□ 両方

2．英語でライティングを行う際、オンラインの翻訳サイト（エキサイト翻訳、ALC等）を利用しますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

2.1．利用する方は、どのサイトを利用しますか？

＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

3．英語でライティングを行う際、辞書を利用しますか。

□ 全く利用しない　□ ほとんど利用しない　□ ごくたまに利用する

□ 時々利用する　□ かなり頻繁に利用する　□ いつも利用する

3.1．利用する方は、どのタイプの辞書を利用しますか。当てはまるもの全てにチェックを入れて下さい。

□ ２言語辞書（和英／英和）　□ １言語辞書（英英）

□ 電子辞書　□ オンライン辞書　□ 紙媒体の辞書

4．Microsoft Wordの自動スペル／文法チェック機能を使って、英文を修正しますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

5．英語の語彙力を補うために、類義語辞典（シソーラス）を利用しますか。（オンライン又は紙媒体）

□ はい　□ いいえ

6．文法に自信がない場合、文法書、もしくはオンラインを利用して文法を調べますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

6.1．調べる方は、どのような方法で調べますか。

7．語彙や文法をチェックするのに、英語コーパスを利用したことがありますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

7.1．コーパスについて聞いたことがありますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

8．英語でライティングを行うのに、上記以外でどのようなリソースを利用したことがありますか。

9. “I disagree___this idea”（私はこの考えに反対です）という英文で、“disagree about”と書くべきか、“disagree with”なのか、それとも前置詞は必要ないのか分からない場合、あなたはどうしますか。

□ 推測する　□ 辞書で調べる　□ 文法書で調べる
□ 英語オンラインで調べる　□ 日本語オンラインで調べる

10. あなたが「円高」を英語に訳して、“Because of the___, I can buy a lot of things on my trip to America”（円高のおかげで、アメリカに旅行に行くとたくさん買い物ができる）という英文の中で使用したいとします。しかし、“the high yen”と書くべきか、“the tall yen”なのか、それとも“the strong yen”なのか分からない場合、あなたはどうしますか。

□ 推測する　□ 辞書で調べる　□ 文法書で調べる
□ 英語オンラインで調べる　□ 日本語オンラインで調べる

11. 英語でライティングを行っている時、どれくらいの頻度で単語や文法を調べますか。

□ 全く調べない　□ ほとんど調べない　□ ごくたまに調べる
□ 時々調べる　□ かなり頻繁に調べる　□ いつも調べる

12. 英語に関して自信のない点がある時、どれくらいの頻度で、辞書などで確認せずに推測しますか。

□ 全く推測しない　□ ほとんど推測しない　□ ごくたまに推測する
□ 時々推測する　□ かなり頻繁に推測する　□ いつも推測する

13. 英語でライティングを行っている時、どの時点で、もっともよく書くのを止めて、語彙や文法についてチェックしますか。

□ 書き始めた直後　□ ほとんど書き終えた時　□ 書いている間ずっと

14. あなたは通常、ライティングを終えた後に、自分で書いたものを読み直しますか。

□ はい　□ いいえ

【ライティングに対する姿勢】

あなたは、英語を学ぶこと、そして英語ライティングの練習をすることについてどのように考えていますか。次の項目を読んで、「全くそう思わない(1)」から「非常にそう思う(6)」のうち、最も当てはまると思う数字に○をつけて下さい。

	全くそう思わない	そう思わない	どちらかと言えばそう思わない	どちらかと言えばそう思う	そう思う	非常にそう思う
1．英語を楽しく学んでいる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
2．英語で何か書くことが好きだ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
3．ライティングは好きではないが、外国語学習には有効だ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
4．英語は書くよりも話す方が好きだ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
5．英語で書くのはとても難しい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
6．学校以外で、英語で何かを書いたことがない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
7．英語のライティング力をもっと伸ばしたい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
8．将来、もっと英語を使う機会を持ちたい。	1	2	3	4	5	6
9．ライティングは、私の好きな英語の授業だ。	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. 英語でレポートを書くのにとても時間がかかる。	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. 英語で何か書こうとする時はいつもいらいらしてしまう。	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. 英語ライティングの授業を受けなくていいなら、受けない。	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Eメールやオンラインのチャットで英語を使っている。	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. SNS（mixi, Facebook 等）で英語を使っている。	1	2	3	4	5	6

ご協力いただきありがとうございました

Students' use of online reference tools for English composition and revision

Cynthia Quinn

This article reports on a background questionnaire for a larger study that investigates self-initiated learner revision of English essays, specifically self-correction of written texts through corpus use and other online writing tools. The purpose of the survey was to gather information on which resources students rely on to solve vocabulary and grammar questions that arise when writing in English. Five English writing courses at the Department of Intercultural Studies were surveyed and results are reported on frequency of students' computer usage, language resources typically referenced during the writing process (e.g. dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar reference books, corpora, Internet search engines, translation sites, spelling/grammar check, etc.) and learner attitudes towards writing. Students report using a variety of resources to solve language problems as they write, though the most common tools are dictionaries, software spelling/grammar checks and Internet search engines. Beyond these three tools, however, survey results point to instructional opportunities in using monolingual resources to supplement translation-based tools and in building on student interest in example sentence analysis to introduce corpus-based referencing and other contextualized language tools that enrich learners' understanding of lexico-grammatical patterning in writing.

Keywords : second language writing, revision, error, reference tools, self-correction

キーワード：第二外国語ライティング、改訂、エラー、参照ツール、自己訂正