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**WRITING CONFERENCES VIA SYNCHRONOUS COMPUTER-MEDIATED
COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF AN ESL LEARNER**

By

Seung Won Jun

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ABSTRACT

WRITING CONFERENCES VIA SYNCHRONOUS COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF AN ESL LEARNER

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This study examined how synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) affected the development of second language (L2) writing skills. The participant in this study was given writing prompts chosen from the Test of Written English (TWE), and was asked to write short essays. He wrote an initial draft and a final essay for each topic, and there was a one-on-one online conference after each draft. The essays were compared to the chat logs for any changes the participant made. Four native speakers of English ranked the essays and two of them made detailed comments on them. The participant was interviewed three times during the observation period of three months. The findings of this study show that SCMC has positive effects on the development of writing skills with respect to short- and possibly long-term revision. The participant made revisions on most of the places that were brought up in the conferences and made more changes by himself in the later essays. The comments from the two writing teachers also show that these changes helped the essays. In addition, the participant felt more and more comfortable with writing and the conferences as the study progressed and showed a positive attitude toward using SCMC as a tool for developing writing skills. Finally, the findings suggest that SCMC has both advantages and disadvantages in its application to writing conferences. Further discussion and the limitations of the study are also presented.

To my wife Mee Ra Ryu, who made everything possible.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Technology seems to be inevitably linked to all aspects of human life. Computers, in particular, have dramatically influenced the way we live, and as a natural consequence, have also had an impact on pedagogical applications. Most of the schools and institutions in which learning takes place now have access to computers and the Internet. Students do their assignments using a word processor and think of the Internet as a resource for obtaining information. Teachers also depend on computers when developing materials and implementing their lessons. Many countries around the world provide distance learning in which all the instruction is delivered via computers. In fact, computers have become such a common everyday necessity that it is hard to think of a world today without computers. Hyland (2003) notes that it is becoming more and more difficult for teachers to resist the pressure to take up technology and therefore important to have a critical appreciation of what computers can offer (p.143). Moreover, as communication technologies are increasingly at the center of the students' world, teachers should bring computers into their own pedagogical practice (Pennington, 2003).

A new form of communication, namely computer-mediated communication (CMC), has emerged together with the development of technology and has become part of the entire repertoire of language modes available to language learners (Murray, 2000). CMC can be either synchronous or asynchronous depending on whether the communication is in real time or not. Online Chatting, MUDs (multi-user domains), and MOOs (multi-user domain, object oriented), which are some examples of Synchronous CMC (SCMC), require the interlocutors to be online simultaneously whereas emails and web-based bulletin boards, which comprise Asynchronous CMC (ACMC), do not. Many studies report that CMC has characteristics of both written and oral modalities (e.g., Chun,

1994; Murray, 2000; Smith, 2003; Yuan, 2003). Although the written medium is used as a vehicle for communicating, the use of simplified registers, optional openings and closings in discourse, and overlapping turn takings can be found in SCMC (Murray, 2000; Smith, 2003). Communication is in real time and a clear informality is found in CMC (Smith, 2003). Also, much of the prosodic and paralinguistic features missing in CMC are compensated for by the use of media-specific conventions, such as the use of facial expressions and capitalization, underlining, exclamation marks, and other symbols to represent the tone of voice (Kern, 1995). CMC users employ strategies that reduce the time required to type messages, such as the use of abbreviations, simplified syntax, the acceptance of surface errors, the use of symbols to express emotional meaning, and the use of formulaic phrases (Murray, 2000). In addition, CMC differs from oral modality with respect to immediate audience, medium of interaction, and time (Abrams, 2003). Warschauer (1997) points out that the dichotomy between speech and writing has, for the first time in history, been overcome with the interactional and reflective aspects of language that CMC provides. These characteristics of CMC illustrate that a second language (L2) is itself transformed by the introduction of new technologies (Warschauer, 1998), and in the world of information and communications technology (ICT), synchronous and asynchronous CMC will become critical skills for learners of English (Warschauer, 2000). As Warschauer (2002) notes, the active mastery of ICT at all levels of language education, from individual to institutional, is essential for confronting the demands of the current information society.

Despite the wide influence of technology on pedagogy and the increasing usage of CMC as another mode of communication, technology itself has little value with regard to language learning. On the contrary, the rationale for applying CMC in language learning

is based on the potential of technology to improve teaching and learning skills (Johnson, 2002). The most important challenge is to identify the pedagogical objectives that technology-based teaching is intended to fulfill (Salaberry, 2000; Salaberry, 2001). Similarly, Warschauer (2002) emphasized that the computer is just an optional tool to assist language learning and that technology does not transform what is to be learned (p.455). Therefore, it is of primary importance to get a clear insight into how CMC can serve as pedagogical tools for language learning.

This study attempts to gain more in-depth insight into how SCMC can be used pedagogically to develop L2 writing skills through a case study of an ESL learner. As the society becomes more sophisticated and the preferences of each individual learner more diversified in the ICT world, language teachers should have some insight into computer-mediated communication to benefit the learners who prefer such a medium for language learning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)¹

2.1.1 The Characteristics of CMC

Since the early 1990s, researchers have delved into many aspects of CMC to get a better understanding of the characteristics of CMC and how it may be beneficial to language learners. The areas of interest that have been studied to the present date run the whole gamut from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory to classroom application.

With respect to SLA theory², many studies report that SCMC allows the learners to interact with one another, notice their errors in their interlanguages, and produce more language output. Blake (2000) and Smith (2003), for example, examined how negotiation of meaning takes place in SCMC. Smith claims that negotiation of meaning occurs in SCMC similar to that found in face-to-face (F2F) communication and that task types may influence the amount of negotiation. Abrams (2003) has looked at how language skills obtained from either SCMC or APMC could transfer to oral performance and found that students in the SCMC group showed an increase in the quantity of language production, although the quality of language did not improve in both groups.

With respect to classroom application, several studies investigated the use of CMC for distance learning: Nunan (1999) explored a web-based Master of Science program in TESOL; Johnson (2002) and Son (2002) examined the use of online discussion in a distance learning course for language teacher education. Other studies examined how CMC may be used in writing classrooms: Hertz-Lazarowitz and Bar-Natan (2002) compared the writing development of Arab and Jewish students in three different learning

¹ Many different terms that could be considered as CMC are used in the literature, such as LAN, CACD, CALL, etc. I will use the term SCMC, APMC, or just CMC to refer to both.

² This will be dealt with in the next section. I have only cited three studies here.

environments and found that the students in the combination of cooperative learning and CMC environment outscored the other groups on all measures; Braine (1997, 2001) and Sullivan and Pratt (1996) compared the quality of writing in the local area network (LAN) based and traditional classroom contexts; Honeycutt (2001) compared online peer response via email and synchronous conferencing; and New (1999) examined the process of revision in computer-aided foreign language (FL) writing. Still, others report on FL learning through MOOs (von der Emde, Schneider & Kotter, 2001) and using CMC in an introductory German literature course (Fraser, 1999).

The preponderance of these and other studies report on the positive benefits of CMC compared to those of F2F oral communication. Although CMC and F2F communication has a lot in common, many other distinct characteristics of CMC can be found. Most of these characteristics pertain to SCMC, a few overlapping with ACMC.

First, CMC results in more interactive discourse (Braine, 1997; Braine, 2001; Honeycutt, 2001; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Nunan, 1999; Warschauer, 1997). In traditional classrooms, teachers usually dominate most of the talk while learners listen. As a result, they become passive participants in the learning process. In CMC, however, learners are active and interact much more with other learners and teachers. In her study of students' participation in a World Wide Web-based bulletin board discussion, Kamhi-Stein found that the discussions primarily consisted of student-student interactions that show a high level of peer support and collaboration. Braine (2001) has also shown the large quantity of writing and the high degree of interaction as distinguishing features of SCMC in writing classes.

Second, learners take more ownership of the communication and participate more in CMC (Braine, 2001; Kelm, 1992; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996). This is

another characteristic of CMC that can lead to a more dynamic classroom. Kelm (1992), one of the earlier studies on CMC, reported that one of the greatest advantages of CMC from a pedagogical perspective is the increased participation from all members of a class. Warschauer compared equality of student participation in F2F discussion and SCMC discussion, and found that the participation of most students increased and that students used more formal and complex language in SCMC. Sullivan and Pratt also reported that the teacher's role was minimized in their study and that all the students were participating and controlling the discourse of their classroom.

Third, CMC provides more equitable roles among the learners (Beauvois, 1992; Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Ortega, 1997; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer, 1997). Beauvois pointed out that no one person dominates the discussion in SCMC. Similarly, Kelm mentioned that in SCMC, there is a leveling effect in which the teacher becomes just like other participants in a discussion. Ortega summarized the effect of equalizing power in SCMC: the role of the teacher becomes a mere participant; as a result, the responsibility of the discussion in SCMC is on the students; and all the students share the floor more equally. Also, Warschauer (1997) gave three reasons for the cause of greater equality: CMC reduces social context clues related to race, gender, handicap, accent and status; reduces nonverbal cues, such as frowning and hesitating, which can intimidate people; and allows individuals to contribute at their own time and pace.

Fourth, CMC can be beneficial for learners who are uncomfortable with expressing their opinions since it takes place in a less stressful and non-threatening environment (Kelm, 1992; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; von der Emde, Schneider & Kotter, 2001; Warschauer, 1997). Kelm mentioned that CMC provides a protective barrier that

allows the students to express themselves. Von der Emde, Schneider and Kotter pointed out that the more mediated form of communication that SCMC provides creates a less-pressured atmosphere by allowing students to consider their messages before pressing the “enter” key.

Other studies report that the quantity and quality of both teacher and peer feedback is higher in CMC (Braine, 1997; Kamhi-Stein, 2000) and that learners remain focused on tasks provided in the CMC context (Sullivan & Pratt, 1996). A more logistically advantageous aspect of CMC is that it is not bounded by time or space (Bloch, 2002; Suh, 2002; Warschauer, 1997). Warschauer, in particular, has claimed that the time and place independent nature of CMC can extend learner collaboration in that CMC allows for more in-depth analysis and critical reflection, and that it allows students to initiate communication with the teacher or other students outside the classroom. This convenience alone has changed the ways learners interact with other learners and with teachers. The use of emails, web-based bulletin boards, and online chatting inside and outside of classrooms are just some examples of the pedagogical applications of CMC.

Along with the advantages of CMC, some negative effects of using CMC have been reported. There is always a problem of flaming (Kelm, 1992; Warschauer, 1997) and the overwhelming quantity of writing generated by a CMC discussion results in a confusing, disjointed discourse (e.g., Braine, 2001; Honeycutt, 2001; Kern, 1995; Nunan, 1999; Warschauer, 1997). Since one’s real identity in a CMC context can be veiled by different means (e.g., user ID), there is no risk in what one interlocutor says to other interlocutors. Lam (2000) pointed out that in CMC, an individual may adopt many voices due to the absence of the physical self, and social norms and categories tend to be subverted. Also, it is difficult to follow what one is saying when there are many

interlocutors involved. Tolmie and Boyle (2000) reported on several factors that influence the success of CMC in higher education settings and claimed that small group size and knowledge of other participants can have a positive influence on CMC.

Recently, Smith and Gorsuch (2004) raised a more methodologically related issue that questions the interpretation of chat logs. They argue that chat logs are one-dimensional and do not allow one to capture the gestures, facial expression, unseen utterances, etc. that learners produce during SCMC interactions. This information, which may provide richer insight into learner interaction and how learners use communicative strategies, is not available from chat logs alone. They propose the use of a usability lab (UL), which can video and audiotape learners as they interact in the SCMC context.

2.1.2 CMC and SLA

Including some of the characteristics already mentioned above, CMC has benefits that are well documented in the SLA discipline. CMC allows more time for processing input and output (Abrams, 2003; Blake & Zyzik, 2003; Kern, 1995; Ortega, 1997; Smith, 2003; Sullivan & Pratt, 1996; Warschauer, 1997; Yuan, 2003). Since the communication is text-based, the message or dialogue is always available on the screen for the learners to cope with. Unlike in F2F communication, learners may also make changes to their output during the production in CMC. Abrams argued that SCMC may assist learners and be effective as a preliminary step toward F2F communication, owing to the extended processing time that SCMC allows. Blake and Zyzik also mentioned the extended processing time as a powerful feature of SCMC, and that the output processing time can also benefit the learners in that they have an opportunity to pre-plan, perceive visually, and edit their initial utterances. Kern noted that this feature will lead to greater precision

and sophistication of expression, and Ortega pointed out that monitoring is possible in SCMC because the learners are able to revise and edit messages before sending them to other interlocutors. Furthermore, Sullivan and Pratt reported that the students using SCMC in their study had time to read and reflect before having to respond and that this “slowing down” of the process seemed to be beneficial for EFL writers (p. 500). Yuan has also reported that the use of CMC allows learners to engage in self-repair, providing them a unique opportunity to put their grammatical knowledge to practice.

Another advantage of CMC, which is necessary for SLA, is that it offers learners more opportunity for pushed output. Swain (1995) argued that pushed output stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production (p.128). Since CMC does not provide learners with other non-linguistic clues (e.g., gesture, back-channeling, contextual clues, etc.), learners must depend exclusively on language to convey their meaning to other interlocutors. This forces the learners to attend to the formal aspects of language more intensively than they would usually do in F2F communication. Blake (2000) supports this point in claiming that CMC provides learners with pushed output since they must type out or produce the structures in question. Also, Ortega (1997) points out that a networked classroom environment can be optimal for devising CALL activities that promote comprehensible output. Furthermore, many studies reported that learners produce higher amount of learner output in CMC (Abrams, 2003; Kern, 1995; von der Emde, Schneider & Kotter, 2001; Yuan, 2003). Abrams looked at the transferability of language skills from SCMC to oral performance and found that the learners that prepared for F2F communication with SCMC had a significant increase in the amount of language output during F2F interaction. Kern also mentioned that the

students in his study produced two to four times more sentences when they used SCMC. Von der Emde, Schneider and Kotter also pointed out that SCMC can lead learners to produce more language than is possible in a traditional classroom.

Several studies show that learners use a greater variety of language (Chun, 1994; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995) and more complex language (Ortega, 1997; Warschauer, 1996) in CMC. Chun argued that SCMC provides learners with the opportunity to acquire and practice more varied communicative proficiency. Kelm noted that since SCMC emphasizes the sharing of ideas, the learners may attempt to use many language structures they might otherwise avoid. Also, Kern found in his study that the learners who used SCMC used a much greater variety of discourse functions. Many studies also report on the values of synchronous chat logs as a window for investigating interlanguage or for later learning (Beauvois, 1992; Blake, 2000; Blake & Zyzik, 2003; Kelm, 1992; Nunan, 1999; Smith, 2003; Yuan, 2003). More recently, there have been studies that have further examined SCMC with an Interactionist perspective (e.g., Blake, 2000; Smith, 2003; Smith, 2004). It has already been mentioned that the learners are more interactive in SCMC. These studies further emphasize that SCMC promotes interaction when learners are engaged in negotiating for meaning and therefore will be beneficial for SLA. Smith (2003) notes:

Indeed, synchronous CMC may provide an ideal medium for students to benefit from interaction primarily because the written nature of computer-based discussions allows a greater opportunity to attend to and reflect upon the form and content of the message, while retaining the conversational feel and flow as well as the interactional nature of verbal discussions.....From an interactionist perspective on SLA, this is considered one of the most beneficial aspects of synchronous CMC (p. 39).

2.1.3 CMC and the Development of Writing Skills

There are a few studies that look at the development of writing skills in the CMC context. Ghaleb (1993) is one of the early studies that compared writing in a network-based and a traditional grammar-based context. She compared the quantity of writing, the percentage of grammatical errors, and the quality of ESL students' papers in both settings and found that the network-based context promoted more quantity of writing and fewer grammatical errors in the students' drafts. Although the traditional class showed more improvement for the quality of writing, Ghaleb attributes this fact to the students' first drafts in the network-based class being closer to their maximal performance.

Sullivan and Pratt (1996) also compared ESL students in two writing environments: a networked-based and a traditional oral-based classroom. They looked at the differences in attitudes toward writing with computers, writing apprehension, and growth in writing in the two environments. Although statistical analyses of these measurements did not show strong evidence of one environment over the other, writing quality did improve (significant at the 0.08 level) in the network-based classroom. In addition, they found that the discourse patterns in the network-based classroom showed more student participation and attention to the task at hand than in the oral classroom. Sullivan and Pratt argue that the "slowing down" of input and output processing seemed to be beneficial for ESL student writers and that using the written medium as their vehicle for discussion increased their writing skills.

Braine (2001) looked at EFL undergraduates writing in LAN-based and in traditional writing classes and compared the holistic scores of first and final drafts of these students. The first drafts in LAN classes were qualitatively better than in traditional classes, but the opposite was true for the final versions of the drafts. Braine gives the

staggering quantity of writing generated by LAN discussion as a reason for the result. This study included 87 students during a three semester time span, and three to four students comprised one subconference group. A study with fewer students interacting with one another might have given different results. Braine claims that LANs are conducive to writing enhancement in that LANs promote better discussions among the students and allow them more time to verbalize their thoughts. His earlier study (Braine, 1997) also found networked setting to promote better writing, whereas the traditional setting led to more improvement in writing. Similar to Ghaleb, Braine concludes that this is due to the first drafts in the networked classes being closer to students' maximal performance.

2.2 Conferencing

In a writing conference session, a teacher (or a tutor) and a learner meet to discuss some problems the learner may have experienced while writing a draft. Although there are no absolute guidelines or procedures for carrying out a writing conference session, a typical one involves a highly normative set of discourse transactions where the tutor and the learner identify a problem and negotiate to arrive at a resolution (Cumming & So, 1996).

Whether or not writing conferences lead to a better and successful revision is contradictory. Goldstein and Conrad (1990) examined how negotiation of meaning that arises in writing conferences affects whether and how students make revisions in their subsequent drafts. They had writing conferences with three students from different cultural backgrounds and found that revision seemed to occur when they had been negotiated in the conferences. However, they caution that although there is a positive

relationship between negotiation and successful revision, conferences do not ensure that negotiation will take place. They argue that each student brings into a conference a unique personality that may affect the way that student behaves in the conference and therefore, claim that conferences may have different effects on how learners interact with the teacher. Moreover, they point out that when revision does occur after a conference, it may not always be successful. Williams (2004) also claimed that revision ensuing from tutoring does not always result in better papers. On the contrary, Haneda (2004) argued that conferencing can provide learners with intense one-on-one interaction and may be used as an effective tool for assisting them to write. Cumming and So (1996) also mentioned that conferencing may embody the most powerful aspects of instruction for learning complex behaviors like writing.

Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) claimed that one-on-one conferencing may not have the same effect for strong and weak writers. In their study, the weak writers usually followed the teacher recommendations very closely, even word for word. This kind of revision is called “transfer”, in which the teacher tells the students what to do and the students do it. The stronger writers, on the other hand, applied a revision process called “transformation”. Although the strong writers also showed teacher influence to a considerable degree, they substantially reworked ideas which had come up during the conference but their materials did not indicate directly back to what the teacher had recommended. In addition, the strong writers showed more even distribution of talk with the teachers and were more assertive in expressing their opinions and eliciting teacher feedback than the weak writers. Furthermore, teachers were less directive with the strong writers. Cumming and So (1996) also pointed out that tutors and students primarily focus on local levels of compositions, and New (1999) found that surface-level changes far

outnumbered the changes of content in her study of computer-aided writing in a foreign language context.

Also, the writing conferences may be quite different for non-native learners as opposed to those of the native speakers. Decisions are mainly guided and the speech usually initiated by the tutors (Cumming & So, 1996; Haneda, 2004; Thonus, 2004; Williams, 2004). Thonus (2004) points out that in writing conferences with non-native speakers, the tutors take a more communicatively dominant and authoritative role and show more variable behavior than they usually do in conferences with native speakers.

Despite some controversies related to writing conferences mentioned above, they do have the potential to provide the learners with interaction they need for SLA and are widely used in elementary and higher education. Moreover, conferencing via SCMC can minimize some of the disadvantages nonnative learners face during F2F conferencing. In a non-threatening environment, nonnative learners can take more authoritative roles and express their opinions more comfortably. The greater amount of time allowed for processing input and output will also help learners become more active in the conferences. Also, active participation by learners, which is an essential step in successful revision (Williams, 2004), can be enhanced in the SCMC context. Sullivan and Pratt (1996) argued that CMC can be more beneficial for ESL learners than native speakers since it can provide the less proficient speakers (writers) with more time for processing output and therefore reduce anxiety and probability of error. In addition, the nature of SCMC being text-based will provide learners with more opportunity for pushed output.

2.3 Purpose of Study

The studies done in CMC are quantitative and cross-sectional, mostly seeking pedagogical benefits that can be obtained by using CMC among many students (e.g., in a network classroom). A few studies that were conducted over a period of a semester or more do not expose the participants to CMC enough to fully account for the proposed benefits of using CMC. Surprisingly, despite the fact that the written modality is used as a vehicle for communicating in CMC, only a few studies report on the effect of using CMC to develop writing skills itself.

Moreover, it is difficult to capture the true nature of CMC with short-term studies. Interpretive qualitative studies may be a more appropriate means of investigating the relationship of technology to second language writing (Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland & Warschauer, 2003). The present study attempts to find how SCMC, via one-on-one writing conferences, can affect the development of L2 writing skills through a qualitative case study of an ESL learner. As already mentioned, Ghaleb (1993), Braine (1997, 2001), and Sullivan and Pratt (1996) have proposed that writing ability can be enhanced by SCMC, using the written modality as a vehicle for discussion.

The rationale for designing a qualitative study is to observe the real world learning situations as they occur and try to understand the complex situation as a whole, which is not possible to do with quantitative studies. Communicating via the use of computer-mediated language is a very common phenomenon that calls for a closer examination within the usual setting in which it occurs, without manipulating any variables whatsoever. This study takes one step further by examining not only SCMC, but how the application of text-based communication, which SCMC provides, in one-on-one writing conferencing will affect how an L2 learner writes and how that writing develops

over time. This study is more concerned with the process of learning that the participant goes through rather than the outcome of learning that SCMC can provide. Understanding the individual participant is crucial in this study and the results will have no meaning without considering the participant *in situ*.

2.4 Research Questions

The research questions (RQs) for this study are:

1. How will one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC affect the development of writing skills in terms of short- and long-term revision?
2. What is the participant's attitude toward using SCMC as a tool for writing development?
3. What are some of the observed advantages and disadvantages that can be found in one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC?

Since this is a qualitative case study, there were no definite research questions when the study started. The research questions provided above for this study are the results of modifications, deletions, and additions as the study progressed. Close analyses of the essays and the chat logs with regard to revision, comments from two native speaker writing teachers, and the rankings of essays by four native speakers provided the answer to RQ1. The research log that I had kept throughout the study was also analyzed to check for any effect of SCMC on long-term revision. RQ2 was answered by conducting three interviews with the participant. The answer to RQ3 is the synthesis of all the analyses and the observations made in the study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participant

Kim (Male, 14) is a Korean high school student who had recently moved to the United States when the present study began. His mother was accepted to study in a graduate program in the Midwest and as a result, the whole family moved to the US. He is currently in the ninth grade and attends a US public high school. This is the first time he has ever lived outside of Korea, and he started learning English in the fifth grade at a public elementary school in Korea according to the national curriculum. He also went to an English conversation cram school, where native speakers taught English, from fifth to early eighth grade. Interestingly, his English classes in middle school were quite different from what most Korean students' classes are like. The teachers used English as the medium of instruction for these classes. Although the in-service teachers who taught English in his school were nonnative speakers of English, a native speaker taught the class once a week to further provide exposure to the target language. Kim's mother, who was an English teacher at the same school, had started teaching her classes in English. Ever since then, the school has been known as the only school in the city to teach English in the target language.

Kim had four hours of English each week during middle school. The classes covered the contents of the English texts as required by the national curriculum, but no intensive grammar teaching was done separately. Also, Kim has never studied English grammar on his own. This is surprising because both his parents were English teachers in Korea, his mother serving in middle school and his father in high school. Many teachers that serve in the secondary schools in Korea prepare students for the college entrance examination as early as possible. Since this examination mainly focuses on the reading

comprehension ability of students, teachers are also likely to focus on the structure of English in class.

At home, Kim's parents emphasized the importance of using English communicatively. Since he could not get language input elsewhere, he would listen to English tapes as much as possible. The family had even employed what he calls an "English Only Policy" at home. This was not easy for Kim, but he had more opportunity to practice using English at home. Kim also says that he was able to access English easier and learn the language faster owing to his parents. There were many English books in his house and he would sometimes stop to have a look at them. His parents frequently went abroad during the summer and winter breaks and told him about American culture. More importantly, his parents were always there to help him with any trouble he faced while learning the language. In this sense, learning English may have been a less difficult experience for Kim than other Korean students. His parents, however, did not teach him English. They gave him their support; he did the studying.

The exposure to the target language seemed to have benefited him a lot since he feels confident about his receptive skills (i.e., listening and reading) in English. On the contrary, he had never taken any English composition classes in Korea, so he did not feel too confident about writing in English at the beginning of this study. The most difficult class for him in the US now is English and his classes usually require him to write one or two short essays each week. These writing assignments have been the most difficult for him, and he usually has his mother or father look at the essays before he turns them in. Nevertheless, he is a very motivated student, and his grades indicate that he is doing very well in all of his classes and has no problem reading the texts or following up with the assignments.

Kim seemed to be a very good candidate for this study. He showed interest in participating in the study from the beginning. I was also interested in how his writing would change not only from the conferences, but also from having to communicate through a written medium. Both his parents gave me their consent for him to participate, and the study soon began. At the beginning of the study, he did express some concerns about having to use English in a SCMC context. He had used the computer mostly for browsing the web, doing homework, and also chatting online with his peers occasionally, but never in English. Nevertheless, he showed a positive attitude toward conducting the writing conferences online.

3.2 Materials

3.2.1 MSN Messenger

The *MSN Messenger* (www.msn.com) was used for this study to carry out the one-on-one writing conference sessions. There was no particular reason for choosing this software, besides the fact that it is widely used among many people across the world and is easily accessible by any language learner; another kind of software could have been used. The *MSN Messenger* is similar to any other chat software available. The basic user interface has two sections in which one part is used to type in messages and the other to show the dialogue as it takes place in real time. One of the interesting features of this software is that it indicates that someone is typing a message. The message, however, does not appear on the screen unless the person presses the “enter” key. There are many other features this software provides, such as video and voice chatting, sending files and mails, just to name a few. Only the basic features of typing and sending messages were used in this study.

3.2.2 Writing Topics from the Test of Written English (TWE)

Six writing prompts were chosen randomly from the pool of writing topics for TWE. I chose the topics from TWE because this test is designed to assess learners' academic writing skills, which the participant needed to develop. The six topics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Six Topics Chosen from TWE

Topic 1	Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages of these two different ways of learning about life. Which do you think is preferable? Use specific examples to support your preference.
Topic 2	How do movies or television influence people's behavior? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.
Topic 3	In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.
Topic 4	If you could study a subject that you have never had the opportunity to study, what would you choose? Explain your choice, using specific reasons and details.
Topic 5	People have different ways of escaping the stress and difficulties of modern life. Some read; some exercise; others work in their gardens. What do you think are the best ways of reducing stress? Use specific details and examples in your answer.
Topic 6	Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is nothing that young people can teach older people. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

3.3 Procedures

3.3.1 Interviews

There were three interviews throughout the study: pre-study, within-study, and post-study interview. The interviews were planned to get the participant's background information and more importantly to understand his perspective on SCMC and writing. Since the participant feels more comfortable speaking his native language, all the interviews were done in Korean and were audio-recorded. The questions used in the interviews were prepared beforehand (See Table 2).

Before the study began, I interviewed the participant to explore his attitude toward ESL/EFL writing in general, how he felt about having one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC, what he expected to learn from this study, and to explain the purpose and the general outline of the study. This interview was conducted to obtain background information about the participant. Halfway through the study, I had another interview with the participant to examine any changes he had experienced to that point. Finally, at the end of the study, I had one more interview with the participant to examine how his attitudes toward the study and writing had changed, how the study had affected his development of writing skills, etc. The interview questions are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview Questions³

<p>Pre-study interview</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where and how long did you study English before arriving in the US?2. What was learning English like for you?3. Have you ever taken any classes related to English writing?4. How often do you write in English?5. What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses in writing?6. How often do you use messenger software or chat with someone online?7. How do you feel about using messenger software to communicate or have discussions?8. What would you like to learn from this study?
<p>Within-study interview</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Are you experiencing any problems so far?2. Do you think your writing is getting any better (or worse)?3. How do you feel about communicating through a text-based environment?4. How are the conferences affecting your writing?5. Do you have any suggestions for ways in which I can help you better?
<p>Post-study interview</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How did you revise your essays?2. How was chatting different from F2F communication?3. How has communicating through a text-based environment affected your writing?4. How have the conferences affected your writing?5. How do you feel about using messenger software to communicate or have discussions?6. How do you feel about writing in English now?7. What have you learned from this study?

³ These are the general questions I asked and not all of them are verbatim. There were a few other specific questions I asked that related to these questions.

3.3.2 Essay Writing

The participant was asked to write short essays based on the six writing topics chosen from TWE. He wrote two versions (initial draft and final essay) for each topic using a word processor. I gave each topic to the participant via email and asked him to write a short essay based on the topic. Although there was no time limit set for writing the essays, the participant completed writing each essay in two or three days and sent it back to me via email.

3.3.3 One-on-One Conferencing via SCMC

After the participant finished writing each essay, we had one-on-one writing conferences, via *MSN Messenger*, to discuss problems that he had while writing the essays and ways to improve them. So, there were two conferences for each of the TWE topics he wrote on and each conference lasted 45-60 minutes. The procedure for each topic was identical: the participant wrote a initial draft. After the initial draft, there was a conference on the same day or a few days later. The participant wrote a final essay based on the previous conference. Finally, there was a second conference about the final essay.

I read the essays before each conference and made notes on places that needed revision. There were no strict guidelines for deciding which aspects of language to focus on, but I chose words, phrases, and sentences that were unclear in meaning and could hamper communication. Also, I gave comments on the content and the organization of the essays. Nunan (1999) notes the time required to type in messages as a constraint of the CMC medium. Due to the slowness of the interaction in SCMC, compared to that of the F2F communication, I chose a few places to work on in each conference rather than go over every grammar error and problematic place.

During the conferences, I explained any terminology (e.g., “thesis statement”, “topic sentence”, etc.) as it came up, and carried out the conferences in a similar manner, even though they were not strictly structured. Newkirk (1995) has argued that terminology can play an ambiguous role in the performance of teachers and students. Furthermore, Goldstein (2004) states that students do not share the philosophies underlying the way teachers comment with them. Therefore, it was important to familiarize the participant with the terminology and the conferences.

Each conference was started by asking the participant some general questions (e.g., “Did you have any trouble writing the essay for this topic?”) and moved on to more specific questions (e.g., “How would you revise this sentence to make the meaning clearer?”). Both of us also prepared a copy of the essay that was to be talked about in each conference. Honeycutt (2001) has pointed out that document referencing can be a great problem in the CMC context since nobody is physically co-present, but only linguistically so. I asked the participant to number all the lines in his essays to make the document referencing easier. But after a few conferences, this was not necessary and we had no problem referring to a specific place on the essays. I read his essays before each conference and chose a few places to discuss. During the conferences, I progressed linearly from the first to the last paragraph to minimize any confusion that could occur.

Also, since this study examined the development of L2 writing skills, all the conferences were done in the L2, which is English. Cumming and So (1996) provides a strong rationale for conducting writing conferences in the target language:

Utilizing the mother tongue appears to offer both tutors and learners a precise, meaningful way of guiding text revisions that is not available when tutors do not know learners' mother tongues. However, tutoring exclusively in the medium of the mother tongue conversely reduces (or even eliminates) the potential for learners to negotiate their problem solving through focused talk in the medium of the second language, which may in itself be a primary means of learning the second language or literate skill (p.220-221).

Although the participant did express concern about communicating in English at the beginning of the study, he had no problem doing so and even took a very active role in chatting as the study progressed.

The observation period lasted approximately three months (from mid-October of the year 2004 to early January, 2005) and resulted in a data set of 12 essays, 12 chat logs of the writing conferences based on the 6 writing topics, and three interviews with the participant. I also kept a research log and wrote his comments after receiving each draft and after having each writing conference. After the data collection, I had two native writing teachers comment on the essays and four native speakers rank the essays.

3.4 Data Coding

The data set for the final coding consists of the 12 essays based on the 6 writing topics from TWE, the chat logs of the 12 one-on-one writing conferences held via *MSN Messenger*, comments on the essays from two native writing teachers, essay rankings from four native speakers (including the two writing teachers), three interviews that were conducted throughout the study, and the research log. Although it is impossible to pursue complete objectivity in a qualitative study, the reliability of the study will be sought by triangulating the data as below.

3.4.1 Essays

Polio (2001) reports on many features of L2 writers' texts that have been examined by researchers. Of these, the overall quality, accuracy, complexity, and fluency measures have been the most popular. I did not use any quantitative measures for this study, however. The information concerning the overall quality of the essays and the accuracy / complexity of language use in the essays are included in the comments of the two writing teachers, and therefore are descriptive.

3.4.1.1 Revision

I marked all the changes that were made in the final essays. They were compared to the chat logs to see whether the participant made any revisions on the places that were discussed in the conferences and whether he made any changes by himself.

3.4.1.2 Teacher Comments

The essays were randomly mixed within each topic and across topics, and were given to two highly experienced writing teachers who are both native speakers of English. They were asked to compare the two essays of each topic and make brief comments on them (e.g., why one essay is better than the other). The comments included remarks on the overall organization and content of the essays, clarity of meaning, the use of language, etc (refer to Appendix A for the commenting instructions). These comments were audio-recorded by themselves and transcribed later by me. The comments were used to better assess the overall quality of the essays and look at the essays from a native teacher's perspective.

3.4.1.3 Essay Rankings

Also, four native speakers who have experience teaching writing (including the two writing teachers above) ranked the essays from the best to the worst written in terms of overall quality. They ranked the essays within each topic (i.e., the initial drafts and final essays of each topic) and across topics (i.e., the six sets of essays).

3.4.2 Chat logs

I also saved all the chat logs after each conference. The chat logs were used to get insight into how the participant and I interacted in the SCMC context and also compared to the actual essays for revision.

3.4.3 Interviews

The three interviews were translated into English and transcribed by me. These were used to obtain background information about the participant and more importantly to better understand his changing attitude toward L2 writing, SCMC, and the nature of having writing conferences via a text-based communication.

3.4.4 Research Log

The research log contained brief comments made by me after I received each essay from the participant and after having each writing conference. These comments provided my reflection on the essays and the changing attitude of the participant.

4. ANALYSES and RESULTS

The three research questions of this study are:

1. How will one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC affect the development of writing skills in terms of short- and long-term revision?
2. What is the participant's attitude toward using SCMC as a tool for writing development?
3. What are some of the observed advantages and disadvantages that can be found in one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC?

Most sections of this chapter are devoted to answering RQ1. The essays, chat logs, and the teachers' comments will be analyzed. Also, the results of the essay rankings from the four native speakers and my reflection on the essay drafts will be presented. The interviews will be analyzed in the following section to answer RQ2. The answer to RQ3 will be presented in the next chapter as a synthesis of the analyses and the observations that were made throughout the study.

4.1 Topic1

For each topic, I have sequenced the analyses in the following order: Conference, Revision, and Teacher Comment. I will talk about what happened in each conference, how the participant made revisions after each conference, and finally what the teachers commented on in the initial drafts and final essays. Refer to Figure 1 for the initial and final essays of Topic1.

Figure 1. Initial and Final Essays for Topic1

Topic1: Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages of these two different ways of learning about life. Which do you think is preferable? Use specific examples to support your preference.

Initial Draft:

While people had lived, people say that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Some people say that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. I think that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Because personal experience helps to make our lives more quantitative and helps to learn more something.

First, personal experience helps to make our lives more quantitative. For an example, there are two people in the world. One had wide experience such as to travel other countries, the other had not. When we had lived the former lives better than the latter because when you travel other countries it makes us to understand other countries culture. When you come face to face with a problem you may make use of your experience. So we said, "to see is to believe"

Second, personal experience helps to learn something such as if I were failed in an examination or whatever important things I would be frustrated. But a great man would not. On the contrary they will make efforts to get the success because the failure would be a good experience to them. There is one proverb "failure is but a stepping stone to success". It means that you're development going to improve by experience.

In conclusion, if someone asks me what is the best way of learning about life, I would answer the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. I am in favor of the opinion the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. If, while people gain experience, they can make their lives more quantitative and learn more something by experience. I'd like to tell you "the older I grow, the more I learn".

Final Essay:

People say that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends or some people say that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. I think that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Because it helps to make our lives more quantitative and helps to learn more something.

First of all, personal experience helps to make our lives more quantitative. For an example, there are two people in the world. One had wide experiences such as to travel other countries, the other did not. When we had lived, the former person lives even better than the latter person. Because when you travel other countries it makes us to understand other countries' culture. When you come face to face with a problem, you may make use of your experience. So we call this "to see is to believe".

Secondly, personal experience helps to learn something. I recalled my memory. Two years ago, I failed in an examination. I was about to be frustrated. But my parents said that " a great man would not be frustrated on the contrary, they will make efforts to get the success". Because the failure would be a precious experience to them. There is one proverb "failure is but a stepping stone to success". It means that your development going to improve by experience.

In conclusion, if someone asks me what is the best way of learning about life, I will answer it "the best way of learning about life is through personal experience". I am in favor of the opinion. If, while people gain experience, they can make their lives more quantitative and learn more something by experience. I'd like to tell you "the older I grow, the more I learn".

4.1.1 Conference⁴

In the conference, the participant and I talked about a few places that had grammatical errors and wrong word usages, paraphrasing repeated phrases, and the organization of the essay. In the first sentence of the initial draft, I tried to explain that the dependent clause “While people had lived” was unnecessary and that he could just start the sentence with “People say”. Kim said that he tried to use the present perfect tense here, but ended up instead using the past perfect. He seemed to have translated this clause from his L1 because it would be grammatical to add this kind of phrase in Korean. He made the same mistake later in the sentence that begins “When we had lived the former” and in the sentence in the final paragraph that begins “If, while people gain experience”. I addressed this point later in the conference:

R⁵: Kim, you seem to have some trouble with Time clauses starting with "when".⁶

R: or "while"

S: Oh! really?

S: Sometimes I have trouble like that...

R: It's not when people have many experience that makes their lives better, it's the experiences.

S: ...

R: So it's better to just say "The experiences enables people to live better lives

R: get the point?"

S: yes you do..

⁴ The conferences mentioned in this section are the ones done after the initial drafts of each topic.

⁵ “R” is the researcher and “S” is the student.

⁶ The excerpts provided are the exact copies from the actual chat logs. Everything here is the same as what appeared in the chat screen.

He uses the same phrase “the best way of learning about life is” in the first three sentences. He asked me whether repeating sentences were bad and I told him that he might want to consider paraphrasing or combining the sentences. He also gave me a definition of paraphrasing as “changing another word or sentences”, which shows that he did know about the term. The first two sentences of the writing prompt uses this phrase and he seemed to have tried to start the essay using the prompt. This seems like a very common pattern that can be found in many novice writers.

The word “quantitative” is used inappropriately in the sentence “Because personal experience helps to make our lives more quantitative and helps to learn more something”. I told him that the meaning of this word is unclear and he actually tried to fix the problem here. What he is trying to say is clear and he gives “improve” as a substitution, which is much better. He does not, however, realize that the collocation of “experience” and “improve our lives” is the problem:

S: How about this?..improve our lives better..

R: Well, does personal experiences improve our lives?

S:yes

R: or do they give us a broader perspective of the world?⁷

R: broader view..

S: ...

R: You gave an example of travelling to support your claim

S: Let me think...If you and some people lived different way,,you traveled many countries, the other does not. do you think their lives is same?

R: Of course their lives will be different. Maybe you can say something more about how travelling can actually change one's life or how it can ENRICH one's life?

S: Oh! yes....It can be better than mine..that's good...

⁷ I was trying to make him realize the unclear collocation of the words “experience” and “improve”.

This is one of the places in which the participant tries to initiate his correction. Although he does not use this correction in the revision, many of the corrections that he initiates are kept in the final essays.

The sentence later on that begins “personal experience helps to learn something such as if I were faild in an examination or whatever important things I would be frustrated” is too long and unclear in meaning. He tries to correct this by breaking down the sentence:

S: how about this?

S: personal experience helps to learn something. For example, as if I were faild in....

R: that's better...but "something" is too vague

R: unclear in meaning

S: Oh...

S: So..Let me think..

S: personal experience helps to learn our lives,...is it better?⁸

Finally, I told him that including his own personal experience could strengthen the essay, and also that he should include a paragraph about learning by listening to the advice of family and friends and then explain why learning through personal experience is better.

4.1.2 Revision

Kim revised most places that were brought up in the conference and also revised some places by himself. He took care of the adverbial time clause in the first sentence and started it with “People”. He did not revise the other two adverbial time clauses,

⁸ The chat logs show only the outcome of the conversation. There was actually a long pause before he answered.

however. He also left the repeating phrase “the best way of learning about life is” untouched, but instead coordinated the first two sentences using “or”. It is surprising that he did not try to correct the wrong word usage of “quantitative” even though we had talked about it in the conference. He changed the transition words “First” and “Second” to “First of all” and “Secondly” and inserted commas in a few places to separate the dependent clause from the independent clause. He also had minor changes at the word level (e.g., changing “had” to “did” and “would” to “will”, inserting “even”, etc.)

He also makes a big change by himself in one place that starts with the sentence “Secondly, personal experience helps to learn something”. In the conference, we only talked about the original version of this sentence being too long and unclear in meaning. In the final essay, he gives a much clearer example:

Initial draft: Second, personal experience helps to learn something such as if I were failed in an examination or whatever important things I would be frustrated. But a great man would not. On the contrary they will make efforts to get the success because the failure would be a good experience to them.

Final essay: Secondly, personal experience helps to learn something. I recalled my memory. Two years ago, I failed in an examination. I was about to be frustrated. But my parents said that “a great man would not be frustrated on the contrary, they will make efforts to get the success”. Because the failure would be a precious experience to them.

He also changes the word “good” to “precious”, which is more appropriate. We had talked about using personal experiences as supporting examples to strengthen the essay and he seemed to have elaborated on this example. On the contrary, he did not provide an example of learning by listening to the advice of family and friends.

4.1.3 Teacher Comments

Teacher1⁹ comments on the revisions the participant made or did not make according to the conference and the ones he made by himself. She notices that the participant took care of the adverbial time clause at the beginning of the essay: “The opening sentence in 1-1¹⁰ ‘While people had lived, people say that the best way of learning about life’...and that’s...that’s not a good sentence. And I see that’s actually taken care of in 1-2”. She also points out the two other sentences in which he did not take care of the adverbial time clauses as being confusing. The word “quantitative”, which was talked about in the conference but not corrected by the participant, was another source of trouble: “I was having a problem with the use of the word ‘quantitative’...I’m not exactly sure what he means by that...I don’t think it’s a very good word to use in either one of those”.

While the revisions that came from the conference¹¹ could have helped the essay, the ones that came from the participant¹² did not necessarily lead to a better version. As mentioned earlier, the participant coordinated the first two sentences with “or” and changed some of the transition words. These changes seemed unnecessary:

“In 1-2, he’s combined what were two sentences in 1-1, which is not necessarily...It doesn’t necessarily make it better. It’s kind of a long sentence and I think it was actually...it was actually Ok in 1-1.”

“In fact from 1-2 he’s gone ‘First of all’, ‘Secondly’ and in 1-1 he’s gone ‘First’, ‘Second’. My opinion the ‘First’, ‘Second’ is better...than ‘First of

⁹ Teacher1 is a professor in the MA TESOL Program and has also taught ESL writing for many years.

¹⁰ The teachers received the copies of the essays that were randomly mixed. I have changed the essay numbers according to the original topic numbers to help the readers. “1-1” is the initial draft of Topic 1 while “1-2” is the final essay.

¹¹ These are the word-for-word “transfers” from the conference.

¹² These are the revisions that the participant made by himself.

all' and 'Secondly'... So that's interesting that he did that. Maybe he thinks that 'First of all' and 'Secondly' is somehow more sophisticated, I don't know"

On the contrary, the elaborated personal experience that came from the participant seemed to be very effective:

"In the paragraph beginning 'Secondly', he...it's more effective. He talks about himself. He says 'Two years, I failed in an examination. I was about to be frustrated. My parents said' and so on. In 1-1, it's kind of very hypothetical...And so it's so much more vivid and clear in 1-2."

Teacher2¹³ comments mostly on the overall content and organization of the essay drafts. The comments are general in nature, but she does mention some of the places that were revised. She has trouble with the word "quantitative" and talks about the personal experience that the participant gives:

"I don't understand though what the student means when he talks about 'personal experience helps to make our lives more quantitative'. And I think because that was a major focus of his essay, it made it hard for me to understand exactly where he was going with this. I also felt like 'living better', which is...it seems like sort of the...part of the focus of his essay...it's different from learning, which is what the question asks. So for me I wasn't sure that he addressed the question entirely-----¹⁴I like his example of his personal experience and it does have a component of learning from others. But he doesn't talk about that. He talks about how it has to do with living better."

¹³ Teacher2 is a graduate student in the same program and has tutored native speakers at the Writing Center for a few years.

¹⁴ This quotation is used whenever there is an omission between the two sentences that are before and after this quotation.

Figure 2. Initial and Final Essays for Topic2

Topic2: How do movies or television influence people's behavior? Use reasons and specific examples to support your answer.

Initial Draft:

When people watch TV or movies, it will appear two sides of opinion. One is positive side and the other is negative side.

While people watching TV or movie, it would make people fun. But I think most of them would influence people's behavior getting worse and worse. So people supposed that call it "dumb box". I recalled my memory. When I was seven years old, the action movie was very popular at that time. People usually tried to imitate the action of the actor like fighting scene, smoking scene, and drinking scene. Although people know the scenes are bad, they try to act like that. Because they think that it looks tough and splendid. Thus now a days, many teenagers' smoking rates are got increased even elementary school students did smoke. What awful reality! Think the elementary school students who are so cute and innocence. Is it make sense to kids are smoking? We have to realize that the TV or movie will have to renovate to educational for children. I would like to recommend, when you kids are watching the TV, parents will also watch.

As you see, the TV and movie is not good for you. I'd like to say that TV or movies would influence people's behavior getting worse. So you need to control the time to watch the TV, then it will be better.

Final Essay:

When people watch TVs or movies, it will bring us two sides of opinion. One is positive side and the other is negative side.

While people watching TV or movie, such as entertainment program, it would make people fun. But I think most of them would influence people by providing them with bad scenes. So people supposed that call it “dumb box”. I recalled my memory. When I was seven years old, the action movie was very popular at that time. People usually tried to imitate the action of the actor like fighting scene, smoking scene, and drinking scene. Although people know the scenes are bad, they try to act like that. Because they think that it looks tough and splendid. Smoking rates of teenagers have increased and even elementary school students are smoking these days. What awful reality! Think the elementary school students who are so cute and innocence. Is it make sense to kids are smoking? People need to realize that they need to change the TV programs and the movie contents to make them educational for children. I would like to recommend, when you kids are watching the TV, parents will also watch.

As you see, the TV and movie is not good for you. I’d like to say that TVs or movies would make people behave badly. So you need to control the time to watch TV, then it will be better.

4.2 Topic2

Figure 2 shows the initial and final essays for Topic2.

4.2.1 Conference

The participant and I talked about mostly grammatical errors and wrong word usages. I also started giving him my corrections in full sentence forms since this would allow him to notice the gap between his language and my language, and also help him realize the errors in the sentential and discourse level context. After having finished Topic1, I hoped that this would help him correct more of his errors.

In the first sentence “it will appear two sides of opinion”, Kim uses the word “appear” inappropriately. I tried to explain to him that the word “appear” is used when something comes into existence, and that he cannot use this word with “opinion” because “opinion” is something that one creates in his or her mind. He first changes the sentence to “it will bring two sides of opinion” and then later to “it will bring to us two sides of opinion”. Also, the pronoun “it” in these two sentences does not have an antecedent. He uses “it” to refer back to the adverbial time clause “When people watch TV or movies”. I explained to him that a pronoun cannot take an adverbial as its antecedent, but needs a noun phrase.

The verb phrase “influence people’s behavior getting worse and worse” in the sentence starting “But I think most of them would influence” is not grammatical. He uses the same phrase again later in the sentence “I’d like to say that TV or movies would influence people’s behavior getting worse”. He suggests “influence people’s behavior to be bad” as a correction, which is also incorrect:

R: "influence people's behavior" is good...but the next part "getting worse and worse" shouldn't be connected.

S: let me think..

S: how about this one?¹⁵

S: influence people's behavior to be bad

R: You could say "influences people in a way that their behaviors become worse and worse"

R: or "influences people by providing them with bad scenes..."

Also, the sentence "Thus now a days, many teenagers' smoking rates are got increased even elementary school students did smoke" is ungrammatical. He realizes that the passive form is wrong and that this sentence is too long:

R: smoking rates "have increased" or "are got increased"?

S: have increased

R: why?

S: Because..i said that TV and Movie make them

R: right...so something just "increases" not "get increased".

S: Right..

R: and since you are describing two events you should separate them with "and"

S: yeah...

S: my sentences are too long.

Eventually, I gave him the sentence "Smoking rates of teenagers have increased and even elementary school students are smoking these days" as a correction.

¹⁵ There was also a pause before this turn.

Later on he uses the word “renovate”. He gives a definition for this word as “to repair something old to new one”, but does not realize that it is used in the wrong context. I explained to him that one can renovate a building or a house but not TV programs or movies and suggested that he use the word “change” instead.

4.2.2 Revision

Most of the revisions were word to word “transfer” from the correction I had given the participant. He changed the verb phrase “influence people’s behavior getting worse and worse” to “influence people by providing them with bad scenes” and also changed the same phrase near the end of the essay to “make people behave badly”. Furthermore, he changed the sentences “Thus now a days, many teenagers’ smoking rates are got increased even elementary school students did smoke” and “We have to realize that the TV or movie will have to renovate to educational for children” to “Smoking rates of teenagers have increased and even elementary school students are smoking these days” and “People need to realize that they need to change the TV programs and the movie contents to make them educational for children”, respectively.

He did not, however, use all the corrections I had given him. For example, he used the word “appear” inappropriately in the first sentence. Kim had originally given me “it will bring two sides of opinion” and “it will bring to us two sides of opinion” as a correction, but ended up using “it will bring us two sides of opinion”. Since the word “appear” was causing so much trouble, I had given him a different sentence as a correction: “While watching TVs and movies would provide entertainment for people, for the most part, it will have negative influences on them”. He uses his own correction by using the right argument structure of the verb “bring”, albeit the phrase following the

verb is unclear. Instead, he adds a phrase “such as entertainment program” shortly afterwards and uses both “TV” and “TVs” inconsistently throughout the essay.

4.2.3 Teacher Comments

Most of Teacher1’s comments on this topic are focused on language use. She notices the “transfers” that were made throughout the essay:

“In 2-1 he says ‘But I think most of them would influence people’s behavior getting worse and worse’, which is a pretty bad sentence. But then if we look at 2-2, he says ‘I think most of them would influence people by providing them with bad scenes’. Still not great, but better I think.”

“He’s also got a really severe grammatical problem in 2-1...‘Many teenagers’ smoking rates are got increased’...whereas in 2-2, he says ‘Smoking rates of teenagers have increased.’”

These changes seemed to help the essay while the revisions that came directly from the participant did not necessarily. She comments on the inconsistent use of ‘TVs’ and ‘TV’:
“And he uses this word ‘TVs’ throughout 2-2-----I think he realizes there might be something wrong with ‘TV’...because...he seems...there seems to be some inconsistencies here”. Also, she notices that he added a phrase: “He’s kind of added that thing about ‘entertainment program. But again, it doesn’t necessarily help it.” Beside these, she does comment on the overall content and organization of the essay:

“In terms of content and organization, neither I think is very good. In fact, he starts out talking about negative and positive sides, but really then goes on to focus on the negative...in fact...the only thing he says positively is that it’s fun-----Both essays are, I think, a bit superficial and don’t really go into the

positive effects of TV-----I guess he does give some examples that helped the essay, talking about teenager smoking because they had seen it on TV. When he does...and with kind of a good conclusion that parents need to find out what their children are watching and watch with them.”

Teacher2 does not mention anything about the revisions but talks about organizing paragraphs according to different ideas and thoughts. She also points out that the participant did not think well enough in advance before writing the drafts:

“I wanted the student to take some of his reasons and separate them in different paragraphs. It felt like he had a lot of ideas that were sort of running together rather than...rather than...exploring some other reasons that had to do with these specific examples-----It might have helped if he had gone back and reframed his first paragraph. It seemed like he figured out what he wanted to say as he was writing-----But I think as a...as a US reader, I was expecting to know from the beginning...what side he was going to take, whereas here it became more clear for me as the essay went on.”

4.3 Topic3

Figure 3 shows the initial and final essays for Topic3.

Figure 3. Initial and Final Essays for Topic3

Topic3: In general, people are living longer now. Discuss the causes of this phenomenon. Use specific reasons and details to develop your essay.

Initial Draft:

Recently, people are living longer. This phenomenon occurs by some of reasons. Many researchers study about that. They said that the most reason is development of modern medical science. I thought that what else reasons are made that phenomenon.

First of all, the most reason is development of modern medical science. I sympathize it. I saw that our ancestor was die, because of there were not any hospital at that time. So to speak, there were not enough medicines and not enough injectors. But nowadays, many people can cure disease, even a person get cancer. Secondly, we can forecast weather using by satellite dish. It means that we can reduce disasters. Such as a flood, a fire, and a typhoon. Probably over 60 years ago, we could not expect the weather, so people could not avoid the disaster. They died once time. The Last one is food. It made energy in our body. It helps us to breathe, move, exercise ...etc.

Sometimes my parents told me about their poor days in childhood. " When we were living poor days, we could not eat rice easily, so someone got dystrophy. Finally, they died". But today, we ingest good nutrients. We will not die.

As you see, these reasons are make us live longer: the development of modern medical science, to be able to expect the weather...etc. These are made me be surprised. I realized that our civilization of science goes up high level.

Final Essay:

Recently, people are living longer. This phenomenon occurs by some of reasons. Many researchers study about that. They said that the most reason is development of modern medical science. I thought that what reasons are able to make that phenomenon.

First of all, the most reason is development of modern medical science. I agree with it. I saw that our ancestor was die, because of there were not any hospital at that time. So to speak, there were not enough medicines and not enough injectors. But nowadays, many people can cure disease, even a person get cancer. Secondly, we can forecast weather using by satellite dish. It means that we can reduce disasters. Such as a flood, a fire, and a typhoon. Probably over 60 years ago, we could not expect the weather, so people could not avoid the disaster. They died once time. The Last one is food. It made energy in our body. It helps us to breathe, move, exercise ...etc.

Sometimes my parents told me about their poor days in childhood. “ When we were living poor days, we could not eat rice easily, so someone got malnutrition. Finally, they died”. But today, we ingest good nutrients. We will not die.

To sum it up, these reasons are make us live longer: the development of modern medical science, to be able to expect the weather, to be able to eat good food...etc. I realized that our civilization of science goes up high level. So those reasons made me be surprised.

4.3.1 Conference

At the beginning of the conference, Kim said that he had trouble writing the introductory and conclusion paragraphs. Therefore, I used this conference to talk about what a thesis statement is, what he could have included in the introductory paragraph, what transition words are, and when they can be used. He did not know what a thesis statement was so I explained to him that “it is a sentence that shows the whole essay in one picture”. In the essay, he talked about three reasons that have made people live longer, but only addresses one of them in the introductory paragraph. I pointed out that he should mention all three reasons in his thesis statement and gave him the sentence “Among many other reasons, medical development, technological advances that enabled weather forecasting, and proper dieting has led people these days to live longer lives” as an example of one.

Kim starts the conclusion paragraph with “As you see”. I gave him other transition words that could be used in the conclusion paragraph, such as “In sum”, “In conclusion”, and “To sum it up”. He replied that “In conclusion” is too common and that he liked “To sum it up” better. He knew what transitions were and said they were words that “connect sentences much softly”. I elaborated on his definition and explained to him that “transition” means “a change from one state to another” and that he should use transition words whenever there is a change in thought.

Although this conference did not deal much with correcting problematic places, we did discuss two wrong word usages and one ungrammatical sentence. He uses the word “sympathize” in the sentence “I sympathize it”. He tried to use this word to show a stronger meaning than “agree”, but used it in the wrong context:

R: what do you mean by "sympathize"
S: It means that like "AGREE"?
R: Ok...then use "agree" not "sympathize"
S: But..
S: It's not..
S: It means little bit different
R: like?
S: em
S: to show that you understand and feel
S: HOWEVER agree means they have the same opinion
R: I was confused because you don't sympathize a reason.
R: You can feel sympathy for someone not for a reason.
S: yeah..I did not show it

Also, in the next paragraph, he uses the word "dystrophy" in the sentence "When we were living poor days....so someone got dystrophy". This word is a fairly sophisticated word and it does not quite fit in this context. I was surprised that he even knew this word.

I suggested "malnutrition" instead:

R: and what do you mean by "dystrophy"?
S: em it means that
S: Kinds of disease which happen when you did not eat food.

R: How about just "people in our days could not eat well"

R: "..and people were very thin due to the malnutrition"
S: yes.
S: malnutrition that's right

Finally, he has the sentence “These are made me be surprised” in the last paragraph. He gave me “These made me be surprised” as correction, which is still incorrect. I explained to him that something can make someone “surprised” but not “be surprised” and suggested that he could combine that sentence with the last sentence “I realized that our civilization of science goes up high level”. The correction I gave him was “Thinking of the many reasons that have made people live longer has made me realize the great progress our civilization has made”.

4.3.2 Revision

There is not much change in the final essay. This may be due to the fact that we only discussed a few errors and talked about how to organize the essay instead. He did change the wrong word usages. He decided to use “agree with” for “sympathize” and “malnutrition” for “dystrophy”. Although I had given him a new sentence as an example for the word “malnutrition”, he just replaced the word and did not change the other part of the sentence. He also used the transition word “To sum it up” in the conclusion paragraph, added the phrase “to be able to eat good food” as another reason for people living longer, and kind of switched the order of the last two sentences around. He did not make use of the example sentence I had given him for combining the last two sentences.

It is surprising that he rarely made any changes in the introductory paragraph. We had talked about it for some time in the conference. He did not rewrite his thesis statement, even though I had explained to him what a thesis statement is and had given him an example. He also did not state the three reasons for people living longer these days in the introductory paragraph. The only change he made in this paragraph is that he deleted the word “else” and changed “made” to “make”.

4.3.3 Teacher Comments

Teacher1 had a difficult time deciding which essay was the better version for this topic. She notes that there is not much change between the two essays: “There’s a virtually no difference in terms of content and organization”. She does see a little difference in vocabulary and mentions the two changed words:

“Not a huge difference...it’s really difficult...the biggest difference kind of seem is vocabulary-----He says ‘I sympathize it’ in 3-1, which is really a not...appropriate use of the word ‘sympathize’. He says ‘I agree with it’ in 3-2, which is better-----then he’s got this word ‘malnutrition’ versus ‘dystrophy’-----In 3-2, the word ‘malnutrition’ is better.”

Also, she points out the change in the transition words in the final paragraph: “The transition ‘As you see’ versus ‘To sum it up’...probably...yeah they’re both OK. ‘To sum it up’ is probably better, which is in 3-2”.

The change in vocabulary and transition words seemed to have helped the essay a little. And if Kim had revised the introductory paragraph, there could also have been a noticeable change in the organization of the essay. The revision that came from the participant in the last two sentences of the essay was unnecessary: “He changes the last two sentences around in the last paragraph-----Sounds a little bit better in 3-2. To me I don’t see necessarily that one sentence has to come before the other”.

Teacher2 gives her general thought on the overall quality of the essays: “The organization here seemed a lot better than in some of his other essays, but the language seemed worse than some of the others”. She notices the change of vocabulary in the final draft: “I think the language is a little bit more clear here in terms of he replaced some vocabulary...so he changed “dystrophy” to “malnutrition”, which I think is a good

change”. She also liked that Kim added the phrase “to be able to eat good food” in the conclusion: “I do like that he added the food to the conclusion since he starts out talking about here these different things that can happen”. Finally, the introductory paragraph seemed to be unclear to her while the conclusion paragraph was good:

“The introduction was particularly unclear for me. I think partly because it’s more abstract. But he does go into specific examples then. The examples are such that while they’re specific they’re not detailed-----I liked that he made the conclusion fit all the different...all the different rationales that he gave. I still am not sure what he means at the end “so these reasons made me be surprised”.

4.4 Topic4

Figure 4 shows the initial and final essays for Topic4.

Figure 4. Initial and Final Essays for Topic4

Topic4: If you could study a subject that you have never had the opportunity to study, what would you choose? Explain your choice, using specific reasons and details.

Initial Draft:

In the future, I'd like to study subjects that I have never had the opportunity to study. I don't know what I am going to study subjects. Because there are a great many subjects that I want to learn. Especially, one of them is business administration and the other is law.

First of all, business administration is the subject that I want to learn. In another word is business management. As you see the word of management that means conduct something or somebody. It is usually use to use at a CEO (chief executive officer). The CEO is an occupation that I want to be when I grow up. Because I'd like to lead other people and the company with people. I was impressed with a book about autobiography of JACK. He is the best businessman ever I seen. And it gives a motive. That's why I want to learn business administration.

Secondly, law is also the subject that I want to learn. What is the law? The law is the measurement of judge. It is importance to our life. Because it will classify someone did wrong thing or did not. I felt heartily with a book of "To Kill a Mockingbird".

It described that one lawyer, whose name is Atticus, protect one negro. The negro didn't sin. But a judge gives a guilty. Because it strongly occurred racism at that time. It said to me importance of judge.

I'd like to stand for a weak person and give judgments more accurately. I know that it's going to be hard. But you know what? The great power becomes great responsibility. I always keep in mind that. Thus I want to study law.

To sum it up, I'd like to learn about that. Sometimes one of my friends asked me. "Why are you studying enthusiastically?" because study gives me please. I always think. When I am studying, it will bring to me great choices when I choose my job. So that's why I'd like to study.

Final Essay:

In the future, I'd like to study subjects that I have never had the opportunity to study. I don't know what I am going to study subjects. Because, there are a great many subjects that I want to learn. Especially, one of them is business administration and the other is law.

First of all, business administration, or business management, is the subject I want to learn. As you see the word of management that means conduct something or lead somebody. Many people that study business manage look forward to becoming a CEO(chief executive officer). I want to be a CEO when I grow up. I'd like to lead other people and the company with people. I was impressed with a book about autobiography of "JACK". He is the best businessman ever I have seen. Because, when the company had crucial moment, he overcame using his great leadership. This scene gives a motive to me. That's why I want to learn business administration.

Secondly, law is also the subject that I want to learn. What is the law? The law is the measurement of judge. It is importance to our life. Because it will classify someone did wrong thing or did not. I felt heartily with a book of "To Kill a Mockingbird".

It described that one lawyer, whose name is Atticus, protect one black, whose name is Tom Robinson. One black did not do the sin. But a judge gives a guilty. The judge's acting was unfair. There was racism, especially in Alabama, at that time. The book made me realized the importance of being a judge.

I'd like to stand for a weak person and give judgments more accurately. I know that it is going to be hard. But you know what? "The great power becomes great responsibility". I always keep in that my mind. Thus I want to study law.

To sum it up, I'd like to learn about that. Sometimes one of my friends asked me. "Why are you studying enthusiastically?" I told them that studying gives me pleasure. I always think. When I am studying, it will bring to me great choices when I choose my job. So that's why I'd like to study.

4.4.1 Conference

In the conference, Kim and I talked about a couple of sentence structures that he had used incorrectly, a redundant sentence that could be coordinated, and a politically incorrect word that he had used in his example.

In the second paragraph, he has the sentence “In another word is business management”. Not only is this sentence ungrammatical, but also redundant and can be coordinated with the previous sentence using “or”. The correction I gave him was “First of all, business administration, or business management, is the subject I want to learn”. Then he has this sentence “It is usually use to use at a CEO”. He gave me “It usually use to CEO” and “It use to CEO” as a correction, which are still incorrect. I could not quite understand what he was trying to say here and gave him my interpretation as “Many people that study business management look forward to becoming a CEO”.

In the next sentence, he says “The CEO is an occupation that I want to be when I grow up”. He gives me the correct form “I wanna be a CEO” first, but then thinks the relative clause is the problem and gives me an incorrect form. It seems here that Kim did not realize that he had the correct form the first time:

R: Do you "want to be an occupation when you grow up"?

S: kkk¹⁶..no...NOt an occupation..I wanna be a CEOI

R: right.

S: oh..i found it...

R: So...how would you revise the sentence?

S: the relativepronoun is problem

S: The occupation of CEO That i want to be when i grow up..

R: How about just "I would like to be a CEO when I grow up"?

S: yeah..more clear..good..

¹⁶ This is an onomatopoeia for laughing in Korean.

At the end of the next paragraph, he has the sentence “Because it strongly occurred racism at that time”. This clause is ungrammatical and is a sentence fragment. I tried to explain to him that “There was racism” and that “Racism didn’t *occur*”. In the following sentence, he uses the pronoun “it” without a clear antecedent. He said that “it” refers to the whole previous sentence. He had used the pronoun “it” earlier to refer to an adverbial time clause starting with “when” and I had explained to him that a pronoun needs a noun phrase as its antecedent. Here he makes the same mistake. I gave him my correction as “The book made me realize the importance of being a judge”.

He also uses the politically incorrect word “negro”. He is fully aware of the improper usage, however. He even questions the use of the more politically correct word “black”:

R: and...is the black person in the novel referred to as a "negro" in the book?

S: No..His name is "TOM ROBINSON"

R: never use this word....

S: YEAH..I THOUGHT THAT WORD GIVES OHER FEELS WORSE! MY BED!¹⁷

R: even if the person is referred to as a "negro" in the book, you should be very careful using this word.

R: today, they are called "African Americans"

R: or if they are not Americans, you can just say Blacks.

S: OK..THAT"S I AM WORRIED ABOT IT

S: I Think black is also..not good..just i revised to name

R: Ok...but you should also mention that he is of black orgin..because that's very important in the book.

¹⁷ Probably “my bad” to mean “my mistake”. He used this phrase a couple of times in the conferences.

In the final paragraph, he has another sentence fragment “because study gives me please” after the sentence “Why are you studying enthusiastically?”. He notices his mistake and gives me the form “I answered it~” to start the sentence. The full sentence I gave him was “I told them that studying gives me pleasure”.

4.4.2 Revision

Again, Kim revised most of the places that were discussed in the conference. There were some word-for-word “transfers” from the conference and some revisions that came from the participant. He even changed what was already grammatical.

In the second paragraph, he coordinates the redundant sentence with its preceding sentence using “or” and writes “First of all, business administration, or business management, is the subject I want to learn”. This is a direct “transfer” from the conference. The two sentences shortly after that begin “Many people that study business manage” and “I want to be a CEO” are also taken verbatim from the sentences I had given him. Here he uses “manage” instead of “management”. In the next paragraph, he says “There was racism, especially in Alabama, at that time. The book made me realized the importance of being a judge”. They are also the sentences that I had given him, except that he adds the phrase “especially in Alabama” and uses “realized” instead of “realize”. In the final paragraph, the sentence “I told them that studying gives me pleasure” is also a “transfer” from the conference.

Despite the fact that Kim uses some of the sentences that I had offered, there is a lot of revision that comes directly from him. For instance, he changes the sentence “He is the best businessman ever I seen. And it gives a motive” to:

He is the best businessman ever I have seen. Because, when the company had crucial moment, he overcame using his great leadership. This scene gives a motive to me.

The revised version is much clearer. He tries to use the present perfect “have” and add the indirect object “to me”, although they are not used grammatically. Also, he changes the sentences “It described that one lawyer, whose name is Atticus, protect one negro. The negro didn’t sin. But a judge gives a guilty” to:

It described that one lawyer, whose name is Atticus, protect on black, whose name is Tom Robinson. One black did not do the sin. But a judge gives a guilty. The judge’s acting was unfair.

The word “negro” was talked about in the conference and he changes it into a more politically correct word “black”. But he also changes “didn’t sin” to “did not do the sin” and changes what is already grammatical, whereas he adds the phrase “whose name is Tom Robinson” and the sentence “The judge’s acting was unfair.” to give more clarity to meaning.

4.4.3 Teacher Comments

Teacher1 talks mostly about the revisions that came from the conference. She notices that Kim coordinated the redundant sentence in the second paragraph: “In 4-1, he says ‘In another word is business management’ whereas in 4-2, he says ‘First of all, business administration, or business management’. So that actually sounds better”. She also mentions that he changed “negro” to “black”: “I notice he changes from the word

'negro' to 'black' and 'black' is a much more politically correct term than 'negro' certainly". Furthermore, she points out the revision at the end of the third paragraph:

"In 4-1, he says 'The negro didn't sin. But a judge give a guilty. Because it strongly occurred racism at that time.', whereas if you look at 4-2, he says 'One black did not do the sin. But a judge gives a guilty', which is not still very good. 'The judge's acting was unfair. There was racism, especially in Alabama, at that time.' So you can see kind of at least that one sentence improves it"

She does not mention anything about the change he had made to the already grammatical sentence though. Also, she does not talk about the revision in the three sentences that begin "Many people that study", "I want to be a CEO", and "I told them that studying".

She mentions one place where the participant made the revision by himself: "He says... 'And it gives a motive' in 4-1 and then in 4-2, he says 'The scene gives a motive to me', which is still not very good but I guess it's an improvement from 4-1". The revision that came from the participant here seemed to help the essay a little. She also talks about the problem in the introductory paragraph of both drafts, which we had not discussed at all in the conference:

"In both of them he takes a sentence from the prompt to start the essay in kind of exactly the same way. So that doesn't seem...it's not a great way to start the essay but it's not terrible either. He also uses the word 'especially' at the beginning of a sentence, which is a fairly common ESL error".

Teacher2 gives comments on the overall content and organization of the essays and mentions that the essays could have been more coherent if Kim had only focused on the “law” example:

“I also felt like this business administration and law together ended up being a little bit awkward. So it might have been more coherent if he would have actually picked one especially, because it seemed like he had maybe stronger arguments for the...the law arguments. So maybe it would have helped if he had just focused on the one”.

She does mention some of the word changes he made: “The second page...he’s changed...he had the word ‘negro’ here first and he changed that to “black” and added the detail about ‘Tom Robinson’ on the first one...‘please’ became ‘pleasure’”.

4.5 Topic5

Figure 5 shows the initial and final essays for Topic5.

Figure 5. Initial and Final Essays for Topic5

Topic5: People have different ways of escaping the stress and difficulties of modern life. Some read; some exercise; others work in their gardens. What do you think are the best ways of reducing stress? Use specific details and examples in your answer.

Initial Draft:

These days, a great many people have stress, which comes from different causes. Such as, not enough sleep, assessment, and competition with peer...that was called trigger or stressor. It may bring us an illness. So most of people want to escape the stress using different ways. I think that the best ways of reducing stress are exercising, sleeping, traveling and listening to music.

Since I have been to America, July 26th, I've got stress from school life. The first thing comes from English. Although I want to speak in English, I do not know how to express my feeling in English. It makes me angry even frustrated. The other things come from different education system. That is to say, the way of study is different from Korean study style. At first, those things made me grief. I wanted to escape from that. So I usually listened to the music. The other way is playing basketball. The sport is the best way of reducing the stress. Because when I played it, I sweated a lot and then took a shower. Do you know how this feeling is at moment? It is gorgeous. Every stress has gone. As cool as screaming like "Ah~."

In a word, exercising is the best way of reducing the stress. Because it brings us two good things. One is the reducing stress and the other one is making our body healthier. We called that killing two birds with one stone.

Final Essay:

These days, everybody has stress due to a lack of sleep, tests, and competitions with peers, etc. most people have different ways of relieving stress. I think that the best ways of reducing stress are exercising, sleeping, and listening to music.

Since I have been to America, July 26th, I've got stress from school life. The difficulty of expressing myself in English has given me a lot of stress. Although I want to speak in English, I do not know how to express my feeling in English. It makes me angry even frustrated. Also, the difference in the education systems has given me a lot of stress. At first, those things made me grief. I wanted to escape from that. So I usually listened to the music. The other way is playing basketball. The sport is the best way of reducing the stress. Because when I played it, I sweated a lot and then took a shower. Do you know how this feeling is at moment? It is gorgeous. Every stress has gone. As cool as screaming like "Ah~."

Secondly, music made my mind relaxation. I usually listened to classical music, neither hip-hops nor rock music. When I keep listening the music, it brought me calm.

Lastly, sleep is good for reducing stress. A part of stress comes from lack of sleep. The sleep is the importance to our life. The sleep made our body earn the source of energy, which helped to can we live.

In a word, exercising is the best way of reducing the stress. Also, listening to music and sleeping It brings us two good things. One is the reducing stress and the other one is making our body healthier. We called that killing two birds with one stone.

4.5.1 Conference

Right from the beginning of the conference, Kim expressed concerns that he did not talk about the ways of reducing stress in more detail, although he had wanted to. He mentioned a few in the first paragraph but did not address all of them. I also suggested that one or two more examples would have been better and he replied that he would include them when he revised.

In the first sentence, he says “a great many people have stress”. The phrase “a great many people” can be simplified and he gives “people have stress” as a correction. Also, the second sentence is a fragment and can be combined with the first sentence. I gave him the sentence “These days, everybody has stress due to a lack of sleep, tests, competing with peers, etc.” as a correction and told him that he did not need the clause “that was called trigger or stressor” at the end. “Trigger” is a fairly sophisticated word and I was not quite sure that he had used it properly.

Then he has the sentence “So most of people want to escape stress using different ways”. The word “escape” does not seem appropriate in the context and he suggests “avoid”:

R: there is a better word that you can uses instead of "escape"

S: oh...

S: how about...avoid..from the stress

R: well...it has a close meaning to "reduce"...

R: it's a word that is often used with stress

R: "relieve"¹⁸

¹⁸ Again, there is a long pause before I answered “relieve”.

I also asked him to revise the sentence and he replied “Most people try to relieve~”, which is not much different from the original sentence. The correction I gave him was “Most people have different ways of relieving stress”.

In the second paragraph, he has the sentences “The first thing comes from English” and “The other things come from different education system”. I tried to explain to him that “people have stress” or “something gives people stress” and not that “stress comes from something”. I gave him example sentences using the verb “give”: “The difficulty of expressing myself have given me a lot of stress” and “Also, the difference in the education systems has given me a lot of stress” for the two sentences, respectively. Also, I told him that the next sentence starting “That is to say” was redundant.

4.5.2 Revision

The final essay shows a lot of word-for-word “transfer” from the conference. At least, Kim made changes to all the places that we had talked about in the conference. The first two sentences in the first paragraph and the two sentences in the second paragraph that begin “The difficulty of expressing myself” and “Also, the difference in the education systems” are the example sentences that I had given him in the conference. It’s interesting that he used these sentences verbatim without revising any other places.

However, he seems to have used the additional attentional resource to add and elaborate on other examples of reducing stress. In the conference, he had mentioned that he did not give as many examples of reducing stress as he had intended to. In the final essay, he adds a whole new paragraph that talks about two other ways of reducing stress:

Secondly, music made my mind relaxation. I usually listened to classical music, neither hip-hops nor rock music. When I keep listening the music, it brought me calm.

Lastly, sleep is good for reducing stress. A part of stress comes from lack of sleep. The sleep is the importance to our life. The sleep made our body earn the source of energy, which helped to can we live.

This is actually the greatest change he makes by himself out of all the essay sets. In the initial draft, he had given exercising, sleeping, traveling, and listening to music in the introductory paragraph as examples of reducing stress, but addressed only exercising in the body paragraph. In the final essay, he deletes traveling in the introductory paragraph, but addresses all the different ways of relieving stress by adding a paragraph that talks about music and sleeping. This change adds much more coherence to the overall organization of the essay.

Finally, in the conclusion paragraph, he changes the sentence “Because it brings us two good things” to “Also, listing to music and sleeping It brings us two good things”. This change seems unnecessary.

4.5.3 Teacher Comments

Teacher1 talks about revisions both from the conference and the participant. With regard to the revisions from the conference, she talks about most of the word-for-word “transfers” that were made in the final essay. She notices the change in the first sentence:

“In 5-1, he says ‘Such as, not enough sleep, assessment, competition with peer...that was called trigger or stressor’-----If we look at 5-2, he says ‘Everybody has stress due to a lack of sleep, tests, and competitions with peers, etc.’-----In 5-1, it wasn’t...it wasn’t a good sentence. It didn’t flow very well. So maybe he had some sense of that and revised that in 5-2”.

She also talks about the words “assessment” and “tests” in this sentence: “In 5-1, he uses the word ‘assessment’, 5-2 ‘test’. Probably ‘test’ is actually the better word to use”. These two words were not discussed in the conference. I had changed the word “assessment” to “test” when I gave Kim the sentence as a correction. Furthermore, she mentions the change in the sentence in the second paragraph: “He says in 5-2 ‘Also, the difference in the education systems has given me a lot of stress’. In 5-1, he says ‘That is to say, the way of study is different from Korean study style’, Slightly better said in 5-2”. These revisions that came from the conference seemed to have helped the essay.

With respect to the revisions that came directly from the participant, she talks in length about the paragraph that Kim added:

“This is one where there actually is a difference in terms of organization and content. And you can see that in 5-2, he’s got this idea down of here’s my thesis statement or things that I’m going to talk about, ‘the best way of reducing stress are exercising, sleeping, and listening to music’, and then he goes on to talk about exercising, playing basketball, and listening to music. In 5-1, he doesn’t have that organization. It’s very different. He talks about...he says that ‘the best ways of reducing stress are exercising, sleeping, traveling, and listing to music’ and he never talks about traveling, nor listening to music in 5-1-----I would definitely say 5-2 is a better essay. It’s more...follows a clear organization and really talks about three different ways to reduce stress, kind of very specifically three different ways to reduce stress”

This paragraph also seemed to have helped the essay a lot. On the contrary, the change he made to the last paragraph was not helpful: “At the end of 5-1, he says ‘Because it bring us two good things’. In 5-2, he says ‘Also, listening’...well he says ‘listing to music and sleeping It brings us two good things’. It’s interesting neither one is correct”.

Teacher2 does not talk about the specific revisions Kim made, but gives a general comment on the overall organization and content of the essays:

“Right away from the intro it’s clear that he’s going to be addressing the topic and I like that. His organization and having the reasons that he talks about throughout the essay match what he suggests he’s going talk about in the intro. He does have the...a good specific method for dealing with it.”.

She also talks about the paragraph that Kim added, but thinks that it was not necessarily helpful:

“Also the organization was a little bit hard...in that he goes from music to basketball then back to music and then to stress. And so maybe...I think this is the kind of thing that happens when you’re trying to do something in a short period of time”.

Along with these comments, she talks about the use of transition words being bothersome and the essay as following the traditional five paragraph essay format.

4.6 Topic6

Figure 6 shows the initial and final essays for Topic6.

Figure 6. Initial and Final Essays for Topic6

Topic6: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is nothing that young people can teach older people. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

Initial Draft:

During study time, it is not an important who teaches whom. I agree that young people can teach older people.

Recently, I could figure out that what is the importance of study. It might be a teacher, or be a student. Even if these are the important, there is one thing, which is the most important thing. That is an effort. I figured out that between my dad and my sister.

Thought my dad speaks English very well, he got some troubles with pronunciations when he talks some or says something in English. I think that it is not only my dad's trouble...most of international people has same thing like pronunciations between "F" and "P" or "R" and "L". He already recognized it. However, it is too hard to correct the pronunciation It became a part of his habits. So, my sister, at the age of 9 speaks in English very well, as native speaker. She is so amazing. Everybody was surprised when she speaks English, even I was. She teaches dad to make his pronunciations for the better. I mean that she corrects his problem when they are talking each other it is ausom! Then he realized that what I am going to say still incorrectly. He always thanks her. And his English is getting better.

As you see, the teaching is not an important with an age. I do not understand that why some people say, "Young people can not teach older people". Does it make sense? No.., thus, I agree that young people can teach older people.

Final Essay:

Teaching does not always have to be unidirectional, that is, from a teacher to a student or from an older person to a younger one.

Recently, I could figure out that what the importance of study is. Studying is both important to the teachers and students alike. There is one thing, which is the most important. That is an effort. I figured it out through my dad and my sister.

My dad speaks English very well but he got some troubles with pronunciations when he speaks or says something in English. I think that it is not only my dad's trouble. Most of Korean people have trouble distinguishing the sounds between "F" and "P" or "R" and "L". He already recognized about that. However, it is too difficult to correct the pronunciation. It became a part of his habits. My sister, at the age of 9, speaks in English very well, as native speaker. She is so amazing. Everybody is surprised when she speaks English, even I am. She teaches dad to make his pronunciations for the better. It means that she corrects his problem directly when they are talking each other. It is so cool, isn't it? When she is teaching him, he can recognize his problem. Then he realized that his pronunciation is still wrong. He always thanks her. And his English is getting better.

As you see, teaching is not a big deal with an age. I do not understand that why some people say like, "Young people can merely teach older people". Does it make sense? No. Thus, I agree that young people can teach older people.

4.6.1 Conference

Kim and I talked about writing the introductory paragraph again. He wrote a very short introductory paragraph which consisted of only two sentences and said that he had had a problem writing it. We had talked about writing an introductory paragraph and a thesis statement in an earlier conference, and he seemed to have some trouble starting out the essay. I tried to show him an example of an introductory paragraph of this topic:

Teaching does not always have to be unidirectional, that is, from a teacher to a student or from an older person to a younger one. On the other hand, I believe there are many ways in which young people can teach the older generation.

I also told him that there are many other ways to start the essay. He wrote a better conclusion paragraph, so I explained to him that an introductory paragraph can be similar to a conclusion paragraph in that a conclusion paragraph summarizes what has already been said and an introductory paragraph introduces what is going to be said in the essay.

In the second paragraph, he has the sentence "It might be a teacher, or be a student".

I could not understand what he meant by this and asked for his interpretation:

R: What do you mean by "It might be a teacher or be a student?"

S: i tried to say....

S: wait...

R: ok

S: the importance of study can be a teacher or a student...¹⁹

R: well...

R: studying is both important to the teachers and students alike, but the importance of study itself can't be a teacher or a student.

¹⁹ There is a pause before this turn.

S: really?

S: i meant the reason for importance of studying will be a teacher...

R: so...does the teachers cause importance in studying?

S: i think so...but the most importance thing is an effort.

R: OK...then you should emphasize "effort"

After a few turns, he gives the meaning of this sentence as “the reason for importance of studying will be a teacher”. This is much clearer and at the end he emphasizes “effort” as being the most important factor in learning. He shows this in the next two sentences.

In the next paragraph, he talks about most international students having problem distinguishing the sounds between “f” and “p” or “l” and “r”. In fact, these are the two distinctions that Koreans have the most trouble with. Furthermore, he gives an example of his father and his sister, who are both Koreans. Therefore, I suggested that he be more specific and he realizes his mistake: “kkk.yeah....that's my bad²⁰..i have to mention more detail....like..Korean, Chinesess”. Also, near the end of the same paragraph, he says “Then he realized that what I am going to say still incorrectly”. I did not understand what he meant and he immediately clarifies it: “when she was teaching him..he can recognize his problem”.

Finally in the last paragraph, he has the sentence “As you see, the teaching is not an important with an age”. I explained to him that an adjective like “important” cannot stand alone with an article but that a noun must follow it. Then he gave me his correction as “the teaching is not an importance with an age”. He changed the adjective form of “important” to its noun form “importance”, but this sentence is still incorrect. Later he

²⁰ He uses this phrase again to mean “my mistake”. He seems to have picked this up from his friends.

gave me another correction as “the teaching is not a big importance with an age”. The correction I gave him was “Age is not an important factor in teaching”.

4.6.2 Revision

In the final essay, he uses some of the sentences that I gave him and also makes changes by himself. The first sentence that begins “Teaching does not always have to be” is a word-for-word “transfer” from the example I gave him. We had talked about writing the introductory paragraph for this topic and I had also given him an example. Interestingly, he only uses the first sentence that I gave him and leaves the rest out (“On the other hand, I believe there are many ways in which young people can teach the older generation”).

He changes the sentence “It might be a teacher, or be a student” to “Studying is both important to the teachers and students alike”. Here, he does not use the correction he gave me (“the reason for importance of studying will be a teacher”) but uses one of the sentences I had used. Also, he changes the sentence “Even if these are the important, there is one thing, which is the most important thing” to a shorter sentence “There is one thing, which is the most important”. In the next sentence, he changes the word “between” to “through”. These two changes that were made by Kim are much clearer.

In the next paragraph, he changes the first sentence “Thought my dad speaks English very well, he got some troubles with pronunciations when he talks some or says something in English” to “My dad speaks English very well but he got some troubles with pronunciations when he speaks or says something in English”. The two sentences are similar, but the revision seems a little bit better. The sentence that begins “Most of Korean people have trouble” shortly after is the sentence that I gave him. In the next

sentence, he changes “recognized it” to “recognized about that”. A couple of sentences later, he changes the past tense to the present tense in the sentence that begins “Everybody is surprised”. The present tense sounds better here since he has been using it in the previous sentences. He also changes the next few sentences:

Initial draft: I mean that she corrects his problem when they are talking each other it is ausom! The he realized that what I am going to say still incorrectly.

Final essay: It means that she corrects his problem directly when they are talking each other. It is so cool, isn't it? When she is teaching him, he can recognize his problem. Then he realized that his pronunciation is still wrong.

He breaks down the first sentence into two sentences, changes “I” to “It”, inserts “directly”, and makes “it is ausom” to a tag question “It is so cool, isn't it?”. The revised sentence starting “When she is teaching him” is the corrected sentence that he gave me in the conference. The revisions in this paragraph are mostly made by the participant himself. There is only one change that is a “transfer” from the conference.

Finally, in the conclusion paragraph, he changes the sentence “the teaching is not an important with an age” to “teaching is not a big deal with an age”. In the conference, he gave me “the teaching is not a big importace with an age”. He changed the word “importace” to “deal” here and did not use the sentence I had given him (“Age is not an important factor in teaching”).

4.6.3 Teacher Comments

Teacher1 talks about most of the changes Kim made. She notices that the first sentence has changed: “In 6-2, he says ‘Teaching does not have to be

unidirectional'...that's a pretty sophisticated word and I think it fits here quite well". She does not mention the change in the sentence that begins "Studying is both important", but points out that it was good to restrict the international students to just Korean students: "He also talks about international people versus Korean people. And it's true that in 6-2...Korean people makes more sense because obviously not all international people have problems with 'f' and 'p'".

She also talks about the changes Kim made by himself. She notices the change in the verb tense in the third paragraph: "He's changed the verb tense 'Everybody was surprised when she speaks English' in 6-1 to 'Everybody is surprised'. It does make more sense to use the present tense so that's improved in 6-2". Furthermore, she comments on the changes that were made in the next few sentences:

"In 6-1, he uses the word 'ausom', 'I mean that she corrects his problem when they are talking each other it is ausom'. I mean first of all, this is not a very good sentence and the word 'ausom' is spelled wrong and it's fairly inappropriate. In what appears to me as the revised version, he says 'It means that she corrects his problem directly when they are talking each other'. So again, it sounds better in 6-2 even though he is missing the preposition there. And he says...but then he says 'It is so cool, isn't it?'. Well 'cool' is not really a whole lot better than 'ausom'. They're very common in colloquial speech, 'ausom' 'cool' depending on your age. So...he...for some reason, even though he realized 'ausom' was wrong, he ends up replacing with a word that has a similar problem".

Although the change in the words from "ausom" to "cool" was not necessary, both the changes that came from the conference and from Kim himself seemed to have helped the essay.

Teacher2 also talks about some of the changes Kim made. She mentions the change in the first sentence: “On the second page, the introduction is a lot stronger I felt like, although it’s still very short”. She also notices the changes from “ausom” to “cool and from “important” to “big deal”: “He changed ‘ausom’ to ‘so cool’. He changed ‘important’ to ‘big deal’. And so for that reason I felt like it’s still...I mean the language is still not especially academic”. Teacher2 liked this essay set the best and gives general comments on the overall organization and content of the drafts:

“I like that he does use specific examples. I felt like the specific example he picked was maybe not what I wanted him to focus on-----But still he has a very specific example and he gives good details to explain how that example relates to the topic-----He does vary his sentence structure. I felt like the organization made sense in terms of there is an introduction there clear...there is clear support for that. Then there is some sort of conclusion that makes sense”.

4.7 Summary of the Essays

So far, I have analyzed the conferences, revisions, and the teachers’ comments with respect to the six given topics. The analyses show that the participant revised most of the places that were brought up in the conferences, applying word-for-word “transfer” in some places and using his own correction in others. Some revisions have no direct link to the conferences but are from the participant himself. There were also places that he did not revise, even though they had been talked about in the conferences. The teachers noticed the changes in the participant’s essays and mostly commented on those places. However, some of their comments, especially Teacher2’s, are on the overall organization and the content of the essays.

The participant has a lot of “transfer” in his earlier essays and the changes that come from him are at the word or phrasal level. Also, the “transfers” seemed to have helped while the revisions he made by himself did not necessarily. In his later essays, he still has some word-for-word “transfers” from the conferences. However, more and more changes come directly from the participant and great changes at the sentential and discourse level take place. In Topic5, he even adds a whole new paragraph. These changes, along with the “transfers” seemed to have helped the essays.

Furthermore, his first three essays and the last three essays are quite different in terms of the examples he brings in. In the earlier essays, he does not bring in examples from his own life but talks about how traveling in general can widen one’s view of the world, the bad influences that TV can have on teenagers, and some developments in the modern society that have led people to live longer. He also says in the within-study interview that he browsed the Internet to come up with some of these ideas when he could not think of any. His later three essays are different, however, and Kim brings in specific examples from his own life. He talks about the specific books that he had read, specific causes of stress for him and what he does to relieve the stress, and his personal experience from watching his sister and his father talk to each other in English.

Table 3 shows the results of the essay rankings²¹ from four native speakers (NS) of English. NS1 and NS2 are Teacher1 and Teacher2, respectively. NS3 and NS4 are also graduate students in the MA TESOL program who have experience in teaching ESL writing. These rankings were given to the essay sets with respect to overall quality.

²¹ Although there is a holistic scoring guideline for rating TWE essays, I did not have any of the essays rated for holistic scores. The teachers’ comments provide much more information about the quality of essays.

Table 3. Essay Rankings from Four Native Speakers of English

Essay Rankings (from the best to worst written) ²²	
NS1	Topic4 – Topic1 – Topic5 – Topic2 – Topic6 – Topic3
NS2	Topic6 – Topic3 – Topic1 – Topic2 – Topic5 – Topic4
NS3	Topic6 – Topic5 – Topic3 – Topic2 – Topic1 – Topic4
NS4	Topic1 – Topic4 – Topic6 – Topic3 – Topic5 – Topic2

The rankings are quite inconsistent among the four native speakers. According to the rankings, it is difficult to tell which essay set is better. This may reflect the different perspectives of native speakers with regard to what is good writing. NS1 says that she tried to focus on language when ranking the essays, although she did see changes in content and organization. NS2 and NS4 say that they mostly looked at the overall content and organization of the essays. NS3 says that she specifically looked at how the ideas used in the essays support the main argument. The rankings can therefore change according to how the raters focus on the different aspects of writing. Furthermore, these are just rankings and the actual differences in quality may have not been reflected.

It is interesting, though, that all four native speakers rated the final essays better than the initial drafts in the six essay sets. One teacher had difficulty in deciding which

²² Topic1: the best way of learning about life; Topic2: how movies and television influence people; Topic3: why people are living longer; Topic4: subject that you want to study; Topic5: different ways of escaping stress; Topic6: whether or not young people can teach older people.

essay was better for Topic3. The conference for this topic was focused on how to organize essays in general rather than on specific problematic places that needed correction. So, there was not much difference in the two essays for this topic besides a few changes in vocabulary.

Finally, the comments from the research log may provide additional information on the effect of SCMC on revision. I have extracted only the comments that refer to the essay drafts. These comments show how the participant made the revisions over time:

11/09/04 (after receiving the final essay for Topic1): There is not much change. The first and the last paragraphs are almost the same. He did change some part of the second paragraph, but the essay seems quite untouched. He added one of his experiences as an example-----but I don't know why he didn't revise the unclear sentences in the first and the last paragraphs. We had talked about them for a while in the last conference.

11/18/04 (after receiving the final essay for Topic2): He didn't revise much, but interestingly revised the places we had discussed in the last conference. He didn't do that the last time. But the revisions are the examples I gave him.

11/24/04 (after receiving the initial draft for Topic3): His essay has gotten much better. There are still some minor grammatical errors, but he is giving many more convincing examples and the overall organization looks more stable. He used to give only one or two examples, but this time he gave three.

11/28/04 (after receiving the final essay for Topic3): Revised most of the places that we had talked about in the last conference but did not revise any other places. There is not much change in the revised essay.

12/04/04 (after receiving the initial draft for Topic4): His essay has really gotten better. He gave two examples about studying business management and law. His grammar also seems to have gotten better.

12/06/04 (after receiving the final essay for Topic4): He revised all the places that we had talked about last time. But interestingly for the first time, he added and revised some places that I didn't even mention last time. He is taking a much more active role in his writing process.

12/12/04 (after receiving the initial draft for Topic5): He wrote a good introduction, which is longer than usual. Mainly focuses on exercising as a way of reducing stress-----He said he had trouble writing the body part of the essay. He didn't give other examples of relieving stress. He said he would for the next draft.

12/13/04 (after receiving the final essay for Topic5): He revised all the places that we had talked about last time and also added two more examples of relieving stress

12/17/04 (after receiving the initial draft for Topic6): The essay is short compared to the previous ones and he only gives one example. But the example is very strong. His conclusion seems to have gotten better.

Although these comments are my personal reflections on the essays, they show that the participant made more and more revisions and took a much more active role in his writing process as the study progressed. He was also becoming more active in the writing conferences, bringing up the problems he had as he was writing and trying to initiate his own corrections. Kim tried to improve the content and the organization of his essays by giving specific examples from his life, and got better at doing this. Overall, his essays seemed to have gotten better gradually.

The results reflect what Goldstein and Conrad (1990) found in their study. The areas that were negotiated in the conference mostly ended up as revisions. The conference did not, however, guarantee revision; Kim did not make revisions to all the places that were brought up in the conferences and some of the sentence structures might

have been beyond his interlanguage and therefore caused trouble for him. Also, when revision occurred after a conference, it was not necessarily successful; some of the correction he made by himself were still incorrect. Furthermore, there were places in which the participant used his own correction rather the one I had given him, and they were the places where he had initiated the correction. Goldstein and Conrad argue that negotiation of meaning does have its role in subsequent revision. Since SCMC provides an interactive environment for learners in which negotiation of meaning takes place, it has great potential as a tool for implementing writing conferences.

4.8 Interviews

The three interviews were invaluable in obtaining background information about the participant and his changing attitude toward both writing and SCMC. Much of the information obtained from the pre-study interview is presented under the Participant section of the Research Methodology chapter. The summary of within- and post-study interviews is provided below.

4.8.1 Within-study Interview

In the pre-study interview, Kim showed much anxiety about having online conferences in English because he had never had any English online chatting experiences before. Although he did have some trouble, he was getting much more comfortable halfway through the study. To my question that asked whether or not chatting was helping him at all, he replied “I think the chatting is helping me more²³. At first, I had worried that doing the conferences through chatting would be difficult”. He also felt much more

²³ He means “more than F2F communication”, although he did not have any F2F tutoring experience.

comfortable about writing: “Writing has become more comfortable because I get to write more and practice a lot”.

The difficulties that he encountered while writing were grammar, choosing appropriate words, and expressing himself in English. He also faced difficulty during the conferences when he did not know how to revise the problematic places under discussion. Having the opportunity to write regularly and discuss how to organize essays (e.g., writing an introductory and conclusion paragraph, thesis statement, transition words, etc.) has helped him mostly. He says, “I was able to think about the topics easily. I didn’t know how to write an introductory, a body, and a conclusion paragraph, but I think I know now”. He also replied that chatting was a new experience for him and that it was easier for him to communicate through chatting.

4.8.2 Post-study Interview

At first, Kim did not know about saving the chat logs. He says that he tried to remember what we discussed in the conferences and also used dictionaries to revise his essays. Once he knew about it, he saved all the chat logs and used them for revising. He says that he focused primarily on the chat logs, but also looked for other problematic places by reading the essays over a few times.

Kim frequently mentions the longer processing time possible in SCMC as being very beneficial. He says that using SCMC allowed him to think for a longer time than what would have been possible in F2F communication and that this helped him a lot. Although relying solely on language without any gesture and other contextual clues gave him some difficulty, he mentions that the longer processing time allowed him more comprehensibility in the conversations. The conferences itself were also helpful to him.

He says that he did not know anything about writing at the beginning of the study, but learning about organizing essays and revising together through conferences have helped him greatly with his writing. Furthermore, the chat logs were available for later use and he actually tried to use some of the sentences in real speech.

Kim strongly asserts that using SCMC instead of F2F communication was the best choice for improving his writing. Also, he says that the extra processing time helped him to adapt faster to the conferences and interact more. He also points out that talking F2F in English would have been uncomfortable and that although using Korean in SCMC would have lessened the burden of communicating, it would not have brought about much change in his writing. He now has less anxiety about writing in English and even feels confident about the writing assignments given at school. Below are some excerpts of his responses from the post-study interview:

“When I’m chatting I can think for a longer time. I think this is helping me because I can think for a second time-----Talking is easier than chatting-----but it’s easier to understand when you’re chatting. I had no problem understanding you when we were chatting-----I had a hard time deciding how to write the essay for the first topic, for example, organizing paragraphs. But I learned as I kept writing and we talked about thesis statements and so on. We also revised places together-----It’s good that we did this through chatting. You can use the sentences again since they can be saved. I try to use some of the sentences when I talk-----I think it was the best choice. When you’re learning English, you have to think right away, but I was able to get along faster because I could think for a longer time. Also, you only get to say what you want in emails. But with MSN, you can talk with each other-----It would have been easier if we had chatted in Korean, but I don’t think the change would have been this great”.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Revisiting the Research Questions

The RQs for this study are:

1. How will one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC affect the development of writing skills in terms of short- and long-term revision?
2. What is the participant's attitude toward using SCMC as a tool for writing development?
3. What are some of the observed advantages and disadvantages that can be found in one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC?

RQ1: How will one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC affect the development of writing skills in terms of short- and long-term revision? This question was answered by analyzing the conferences, the revisions made in the essays, the two teachers' comments, the rankings from the four native speakers, and the research log. The analyses show that using SCMC in one-on-one writing conferences can have positive effects on short- and long- term revision. The participant revised most of the places that were talked about in the conferences and used the chat logs as a primary resource for revising. Although there were a lot of word-for- word "transfers" in his earlier essays, the teachers' comments show that these did help the essays. The revisions that the participant made by himself in his later essays also helped the essays. Furthermore, all the native speakers rate the final essays as the better version for all six topics. These clearly show that the conferences had positive effects on short-term revision. The conferences also seemed to have had positive effects on long-term revision. It is difficult to tell which set

of essay is better by just looking at the essay rankings from the four native speakers. However, the participant makes more and more revisions by himself in the later essays, these revisions starting out as word level changes and ending up as sentential and discourse level changes. The teachers' comments show that these later changes also helped the essays. In addition, the examples used in the later three essays are much better, and the research log also shows the positive effects of the conferences on long-term revision.

RQ2: What is the participant's attitude toward using SCMC as a tool for writing development? This question was answered by analyzing the three interviews with the participant. At the beginning of the study, the participant showed anxiety about having the conferences using SCMC. Also, he did not know much about organizing essays and did not feel confident about writing. Halfway through the study, he felt much more comfortable with both using SCMC and writing, and also thought that chatting was actually helping him to write. He also mentioned that it was easier for him to communicate through chatting and that the conferences helped him to organize his essays. At the end of the study, the participant strongly stated that using SCMC in the conferences was the best choice for him. He said that the extended processing time that SCMC provides allowed him to adapt faster to the conferences, helped him write better, and facilitated the comprehension of the dialogue exchanges that we had made. He also mentioned that the discussion about organizing essays in the conferences helped him greatly. Finally, he now feels confident about writing and expresses doubt as to whether having the conferences F2F would have brought about similar changes in his writing. All of these show the positive attitude of the participant toward using SCMC as a tool for writing development.

RQ3: What are some of the observed advantages and disadvantages that can be found in one-on-one writing conferences using SCMC? The answers to RQ3 are my final evaluation of the present study and may be somewhat subjective. They are based on all the analyses and observations that were made in the study. Since I have not addressed this RQ yet, I will use the rest of this section to answer it. The study shows that there are both advantages and disadvantages in using SCMC in one-on-one writing conferences. One needs to realize, however, that comparing the advantages and disadvantages of using SCMC to those of F2F communication is less important. On the contrary, identifying the learners' needs and focusing on the different aspects of SCMC that can produce the desired outcome is paramount.

The first advantage of using SCMC in writing conferences is that SCMC provides extended input and output processing time that can benefit learners in many ways. The participant frequently mentioned in the interviews how this benefited him. The normal turn-taking patterns are not observed in SCMC and there is no pressure on the interlocutors to reply instantly. Therefore, using SCMC in writing conferences can help learners better understand the dialogue exchanges and give them time to construct their utterances before actually replying.

Second, using SCMC in writing conferences can provide learners with the chat logs, which they can use later for revising. Much of the revision that the participant made in this study actually had come from the chat logs. Not having to remember all the discussions that took place in a conference, learners may use the additional attentional resources to focus more on other broader issues. In his later essays, Kim revised most of the places according to the chat logs, but also used the additional resource to make greater changes at the discourse level. Also, learners can look back at the chat logs to

have a thorough view of how they use their language for communicative purposes, which may allow them to notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language.

Third, having writing conferences using SCMC with learners who are less active can provide them with a comfortable environment that can encourage them to become active participants in the learning process. During the conferences, both the participant and I soon became very comfortable with each other. In many cases, he was very active and immediately corrected the problematic places that we were discussing. He even initiated some of the negotiations. It seems that the absence of physical appearance in SCMC allows the interlocutors to save face, and therefore creates a non-threatening environment. This can solve the uneven authoritative roles given to tutors and tutees in traditional F2F writing conferences.

Fourth, SCMC can ease the burden for the learners in the writing process. The beauty of SCMC is that learners actually write (type) down what they are saying. This has more pedagogical benefits for the learners than may initially be apparent. The foremost difficulty all learners face in writing is that they just cannot write down their thoughts on paper. Hence, freewriting techniques are used more and more by teachers to facilitate this process. By using SCMC, learners will have a much easier time writing their drafts. The participant mentions in one of the interviews that chatting has actually helped him to write better. Furthermore, there are many places in his final essays in which he uses the corrections that he made in the conferences.

Finally, using SCMC in writing conferences will free learners from the constraint of time and space. In fact, most of our conferences were done late at night, and the participant and I actually met F2F only three times during the study to do the three interviews. Furthermore, SCMC will offer even more benefits for EFL learners who do

not get enough of the interactions they need. Millions of people connect to the Internet everyday to communicate with other people. The challenge lies in designing a pedagogically appropriate cyber space in which learners can communicate with one another freely. This will greatly benefit EFL learners who rely mostly on school work for exposure to the target language.

Along with the advantages, there are also disadvantages in using SCMC in writing conferences. First, communication in SCMC seems to slow down due to the time required to type the messages. For this reason, Beauvois (1992) has described SCMC as “conversation in slow motion”. Fettered by this nature of SCMC, I was able to choose only a few elements to discuss in each conference. This led to many unrepaired problems in the essays. Also, I had planned to allow the participant to become aware of his problems and fix them, but gave him the correct forms frequently and told him to think about them later. Due to the slowness of conversation, this was the result of my attempting to cover as many errors as possible in one conference session. Therefore, using SCMC in writing conferences to correct every grammatical error may not be appropriate or feasible. The relative convenience of document referencing and the faster speed of communication in F2F conferencing will be more helpful for this goal. On the other hand, using SCMC to focus on the broader sentential and discourse level issues may be appropriate.

Second, in SCMC, only the full utterances are shown on the screen. The interlocutors cannot see each other’s message until one presses the “enter” key. The *MSN Messenger* also follows this mechanism, but indicates who is typing at the moment. In this study, there were many instances in which the participant was typing his message for some time, but decided not to press the “enter” key and deleted the whole message.

Something interesting could have happened during the pause, which possibly could show insights into how language works for learners. Since the final messages are only visible on the screen, there is no way to figure out how each interlocutor is interacting with others. Also, there were times in which Kim had given me a correction or asked me a question while I was typing out my message. In such cases, I was not able to notice what he was saying. After receiving my message, he would reply to that message, leading me not to answer the question he had asked.

Third, learners have only language resources to rely on in SCMC. Other contextual clues that can help the comprehension of communication are absent in SCMC. Relying solely on language to communicate can be burdensome to many learners when the focus of communication is on meaning. In fact, all learners use gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal based communication strategies to help them communicate better, and this competence is included in the communicative competence that Canale and Swain (1980) talks about. During the conferences, there were many instances in which there was confusion due to the lack of these contextual clues. The participant also mentioned that relying solely on language to communicate was difficult.

Finally, the chat logs themselves have limitations that ensue from the nature of how communication takes place in a SCMC context. They just show the outcome of the interaction. They do not show the pauses, the intervals between each turn, overlapping, etc., which may be crucial for understanding how communication takes place between the interlocutors. By looking at the chat logs alone, it is difficult to picture how the actual interaction took place. Using a usability lab with online videos may solve this problem.

5.2 Discussion

There are a few things that I would like to bring up here. First of all, a lot of places that the participant revised were actually word for word from what was negotiated during the conferences. A few places in the later essays included “transformations”. He mentioned in the post-study interview that he had relied primarily on the chat logs for revision. This may be a natural outcome for learners at the beginning or intermediate level like Kim. The learners have the chat logs at their disposal and will be much likely to use them to the fullest extent. In some cases, attempting to make other changes that were not negotiated in the conferences may even lead to additional errors. This was what had happened in the participant’s earlier drafts. However, the changes he made by himself in the later essays did improve the essays. Having this in mind, teachers need to make sure that they do not just give corrections in the conferences, but interact with students enough and encourage them to make corrections on their own.

Second, the two teachers clearly comment on different aspects of writing. Teacher1 comments on language use as well as the organization and content of the essays. She points to specific words, phrases, and sentences in the essays, and much of her comments include specific examples of language usage. On the other hand, Teacher2 focuses mostly on the overall organization and content of the essays, and looks at whether or not the participant answers the question provided in the writing prompts. When commenting on the use of language, she gives her general impression of it. After commenting, she gives a caveat on the way she comments:

“I think because I’ve been teaching primarily native speakers, my focus has often been on content and organization to the exclusion of language and I’m realizing that as a teacher of ESL students that’s not appropriate. But I’m

trying to figure out where that balance is. And so it might be that my comments are going to be much more focused on whether the student is answering the question and the way that I feel like the organization works for me as opposed to on the specific language.”

Third, Kim seems to be having constant problems with sentence fragments and the use of nonreferential pronouns. Many native writers also make mistakes with the use of nonreferential pronouns, whereas sentence fragments seem to be idiosyncratic in his writing and typical of nonnative writers. Not surprisingly, Kim seems to be bringing in a lot of knowledge from his native language. Korean has a complex case system that allows flexible word order and even sentence fragments to be grammatical and common. This could be one of the many causes for his usage of sentence fragments in the essays. But it is interesting that he is also making native English-like errors. Both teachers point out that some places are not academically well written. Since Kim is attending an American public high school now, he may be picking up informal speech from his peers and use them in his writing.

Finally, it needs to be mentioned that only the first conferences on each topic were analyzed. The second conferences on each topic were used to wrap up the discussion on each topic and talk about some of the remaining problems in the final essays. The participant did not write another revision essay that followed the second conferences. The second conferences had no direct connection to the previous final essays the participant had written and therefore, were not analyzed. Originally, I had not planned to analyze the revisions in the essays, but rather have native speakers of English rate the essays in terms of overall quality and accuracy. My focus during the conferences was to provide the participant with as much opportunity as possible to discuss some of the problems that

occurred in the essay via a text-based modality. That is why I had the second conferences for each topic. Having the participant write another revision essay after the second conferences and having the second conferences analyzed with regard to these essays surely would have provided a better insight into how SCMC affected the short- and long-term revision.

5.3 Limitations of Study and Implications for Further Research

There are some limitations of this study that also need to be mentioned. First of all, although this study opts for a longitudinal qualitative case study design, the observational period of the participant is too short to draw any conclusions about the effects of SCMC on the development of L2 writing skills. This study reports on the results based on the observational period of three months. These results do not necessarily show the direct effects of SCMC on writing, but describe the potential of SCMC for learners. Nevertheless, based on my observation, I strongly believe that the consistent use of SCMC for a longer period of time will have substantial positive effects on the development of L2 writing skills.

Second, this study implemented the one-on-one writing conferences via SCMC. Therefore, it is difficult to say how much of the SCMC and the conferences actually contributed to the essays. The analyses of the conferences, revisions, and the comments from the two teachers tell us about how SCMC affects revision and do not necessarily tell us how SCMC actually affects the development of writing skills. It is certain, though, that the participant learned a lot about organizing essays through the conferences and revised most of the places that were brought up in the conferences. He also mentions that doing the conferences via SCMC was the best choice for him.

Third, the way that the conferences were held could have affected the results of the essays. Although I have studied L2 writing and SCMC, I do not have any experience in tutoring native or non-native learners to write. There were no set-up procedures for the conferences, but I tried to carry out the conferences in a similar manner. An experienced person may have structured the conferences differently and have had different results. Furthermore, as I am a nonnative speaker of English myself, the participant did not always receive the correct forms from me. While I was analyzing the chat logs, I realized that I made a few grammatical errors in the conferences. Some of these errors, which would not be salient to the learners in F2F (e.g., subject-verb agreement), might be so in SCMC since all the utterances are shown on the screen. This might also have affected the results. More studies should be done in the future to provide clear implications for utilizing SCMC in writing conferences.

Fourth, some of the topics could have been more difficult for the participant than others. I chose the topics randomly from TWE and did not consider the ordering of them. Some of the essay sets might not have shown improvement from the previous sets due to this factor, and this factor could also have been the cause for the inconsistency in the native speakers' rankings. He did mention that Topic3 was "academic" and had a difficult time writing it. He also said that he had difficulty writing the introductory paragraph for Topic6. Therefore, the topics may have affected the results

Finally, the limited amount of time that could be spent in each conference restricted the number of places that could be discussed in the conferences. I did not go over all the errors in every essay but chose a few places that I thought were relevant for discussion. The two writing teachers also mentioned that there were many other places in the essays that needed to be fixed. The focus of this study was more on SCMC than on the writing

conferences. Therefore, I chose places that I could talk about with the participant and did not necessarily try to correct all the errors. Although writing conferences can help learners revise, it is the text-based medium of communication which SCMC provides that was thought to have positive effects on developing writing skills.

It has been just over a decade that scholars and researchers have started to explore the characteristics of SCMC and its implication for pedagogy. Much more study needs to be done in this field of inquiry to confirm any advantages/disadvantages of SCMC already mentioned and to find out its further potential. An extension of this study can be done to further assess how SCMC can foster writing skills and how to better utilize SCMC in writing conferences. More studies need to be done to further explore how the extended processing time that SCMC allows can benefit the learners and in which ways SCMC provides pushed output. Studies on usability labs can give us more insights into how learners interact via SCMC. Most of all, future studies in SCMC need to identify specific ways in which SCMC can fulfill the needs of the learners and the pedagogic objectives that ensue.

One final comment: The purpose of designing a qualitative case study was to better understand what one participant goes through in his writing process. The focus of the study was the learner, and not the teacher or the technology used to implement the one-on-one online conferences. Language teachers and researchers should always put the learners at the center stage when designing lessons or doing research. Whether or not SCMC provides a better environment than the normal F2F communication is not important. A significant difference at the 0.5 level does not necessary show us that one method is better than the other for all learners. The difference is statistically significant and we conclude that this difference is due to the treatment, all other things being equal.

But there is one variable that all language teachers and researchers must also consider: the learner variable. Although a large sample size gives more reliability to the results, an optimal language teaching and learning environment is better achieved with a lower teacher-student ratio. Future research must focus on understanding the learners better than just seeking benefits of different kinds of pedagogic methods.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Instructions for Commenting

There are 6 sets of essays based on 6 topics chosen from the Test of Written English (TWE). Each set consists of an initial draft and a final essay, which are mixed randomly within each topic. The order of the topics is also random.

1. Read the essays, topic by topic, and tape-record your comments on them.

You may make comments on the following:

- (a) Overall quality (Why is one essay better than the other?)
- (b) Overall organization (Is the essay well organized and developed?)
- (c) Clarity of meaning (Is the writer clear about his intended meaning?)
- (d) Use of detailed examples (Does the writer give clear examples to support his ideas?)
- (e) Use of language (in terms of vocabulary use, sentence variety, and errors the writer makes)
- (f) Any other comments that highlight the writer's strength and weakness in writing.

2. In doing so, take time to think about the essays first (or take notes as you read) and then record your comments later.

3. Focus on the essays within each topic and compare them.

4. After you have finished recording the comments, give rankings to the 6 sets of topics from 1(best) to 6(worst), according to the overall quality of the essays.

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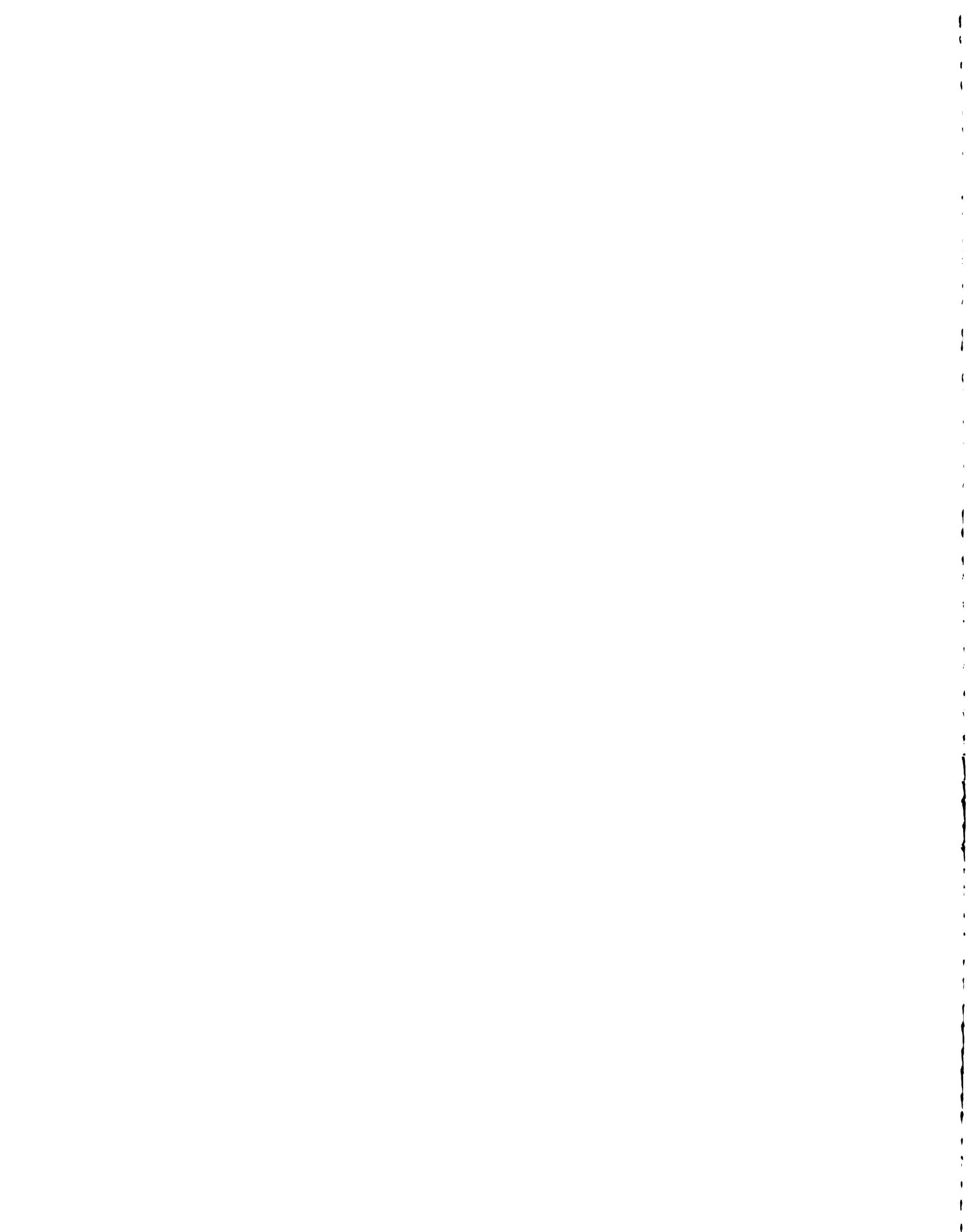
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