THE EFFECTS OF THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ON COLLABORATIVE L2 SUMMARY WRITING

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THE EFFECTS OF THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ON COLLABORATIVE L2 SUMMARY WRITING
ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationships between the number of participants in summary writing and the quality of their final summary writing. A total of 52 participants aged 16, participated in this four week, mixed-method study. The summaries were scored using Brown and Bailey's (1984) scoring scale which has five components. The components are organization, logical development of idea, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics and finally style and quality of expression. The participants' overall scores and analytic scores were analysed with paired t-test (individual and collaborative group) and independent t-test (pair and groups of four). The paired t-test was utilized to compare the quality of summary writing by individual and collaborative groups. The results for the overall scores revealed that the collaborative writing improves students' final summary writing and the analytic scoring revealed that the participants in the collaborative groups had improved in terms of organization, content, and grammar, whereas there was no improvements in terms of their punctuation, spelling, mechanics and style and quality of expressions components. On the other hand, the independent t-test was utilized to compare the performance of pairs and groups of four. The results for the overall score did not reveal any significant improvement, however there were improvements shown by groups of four in the mean score value. In contrast, the analytic scoring results revealed that the participants in groups of four had improved in all five components. This shows that working in groups of four helps participants' to improve their summary writing compared to working in pairs as they can pool their knowledge and ideas better. The study also elicits participants' feedback on collaborative summary writing. A questionnaire (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2012) was utilized to get their feedback. Majority reacted positively and agreed that collaborative task had improved their vocabulary knowledge compared to grammar and content. Thus, it reveals that

collaborative writing helps the participants in improving their final writing through discussion as they get to learn from their partners. In future research, the sample size of the study should be expanded as the current study had only 52 participants. In addition, verbal interviews and Language Related Episodes (LREs) could be incorporated to obtain richer results. Finally, the participants could be selected based on the same proficiency level and the treatment phase could be extended.

Keywords: collaborative writing, summary writing, learners' perceptions, quality of writing, socio cultural theory

THE EFFECTS OF THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ON COLLABORATIVE
L2 SUMMARY WRITING
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti hubungan antara jumlah peserta dalam penulisan ringkasan secara kolaboratif dan kualiti penulisan ringkasan akhir mereka. Seramai 52 peserta yang berusia 16 tahun, mengambil bahagian selama empat minggu kajian ini dijalankan. Kajian ini telah menggunakan kaedah campuran. Ringkasan ini telah disemak dengan menggunakan skala pemarkahan Brown dan Bailey (1984). Skala tersebut mempunyai lima komponen utama seperti organisasi, perkembangan idea logik, tatabahasa, penanda wacana, ejaan dan mekanik serta gaya dan kualiti ekspresi. Markah keseluruhan dan skor analitik peserta pula dianalisis dengan ujian T berpasangan (kumpulan individu dan kolaboratif) dan ujian T bebas (pasangan dan kumpulan empat). Ujian T berpasangan digunakan untuk membandingkan kualiti penulisan ringkasan yang dihasilkan oleh kumpulan individu dan kolaboratif. Keputusan untuk skor secara keseluruhan menunjukkan bahawa penulisan kolaboratif meningkatkan kualiti penulisan ringkasan akhir pelajar dan penilaian analitik pula menunjukkan bahawa peserta dalam kumpulan kolaboratif telah meningkat dari segi organisasi, isi penulisan dan tatabahasa, namun, tiada penambahbaikan dari segi penanda wacana, ejaan, mekanik serta gaya dan kualiti ekspresi. Sebaliknya, ujian T bebas pula digunakan untuk membandingkan prestasi pasangan dan kumpulan berempat. Keputusan untuk skor keseluruhan tidak menunjukkan peningkatan yang ketara, namun terdapat peningkatan yang ditunjukkan oleh kumpulan empat dalam nilai skor min. Hasil penilaian analitik pula menunjukkan peningkatan peserta dalam kumpulan berempat dalam kesemua lima komponen. Ini menunjukkan bahawa kolaboratif dalam kumpulan berempat membantu para peserta meningkatkan penulisan ringkasan mereka berbanding kolaboratif secara berpasangan kerana lebih ramai peserta dapat menggabungkan pengetahuan dan idea mereka dengan lebih baik. Kajian ini juga

mengumpul maklum balas peserta mengenai penulisan ringkasan kolaboratif. Satu soal selidik (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2012) telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklum balas mereka. Majoriti mereka bersetuju bahawa pengalaman kerja kolaboratif telah meningkatkan pengetahuan mereka dalam komponen perbendaharaan kata berbanding dengan tatabahasa dan isi penulisan. Oleh itu, penulisan secara kolaboratif mampu membantu peserta untuk meningkatkan penulisan akhir mereka melalui perbincangan kerana mereka dapat belajar daripada rakan-rakan mereka. Untuk kajian masa depan, sampel kajian ini perlu diperluaskan kerana kajian semasa hanya mempunyai 52 peserta. Di samping itu, wawancara secara lisan dan *Language Related Episode (LREs)* boleh digabungkan untuk mendapatkan keputusan yang lebih tepat. Akhir sekali, para peserta boleh dipilih berdasarkan tahap bahasa yang sama dan fasa kajian boleh dipanjangkan.

Kata kunci: penulisan secara kolaboratif, penulisan ringkasan, maklum balas peserta, kualiti penulisan, teori sosio-budaya

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The ability to write in English Language is a vital skill in today's world of education and international affairs. Biria and Jafari (2013) mentioned that writing is a "complicated process through which ideas are created and expressed". Besides that, inevitably writing a precise and fluent essay is not an easy task. In fact, writing has been deemed as the most difficult task as compared to listening, speaking and reading in language learning.

Although writing has always been seen as an individual task, more and more researchers are encouraging the process of viewing writing as a joint activity in order to promote interaction among the learners while they are writing together. Thus, the interaction will enable the leaners to learn from each other. Collaborative writing has been defined as "the joint production of a text or the co-authoring of a text by two or more writers" (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Researchers have also been viewing writing as a form of "social-context phenomenon" that has set forth Vygotsky's social interaction theory as the theoretical framework for mediated learning in writing (Biria & Jafari, 2013).

Sociocultural theory proposes that joint writing tasks enable learners to reproduce their linguistic knowledge and merge it to resolve linguistic based difficulties (Swain, 2000; 2001). Participants involve in language-mediated cognitive activities are assumed to assist the reconstruction of linguistic resource and a higher level of performance by accomplishing task through collaborative writing (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Furthermore, conversations held among the participants when they pool their language knowledge together in order to resolve the language complications, facilitates second language learning

(e.g., Kim, 2008; Lapkin, Swain, & Smith, 2002; Storch, 2002; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2002).

1.2 Summary writing

Summary writing has been recognized as a highly important and essential skill not only in language learning, but also in most areas of a student's academic career. It is because summary writing is highly useful in both writing and reading in academia (Johns, 1985). It enhances the skill of dialectic thinking which induces students to articulate ideas which are not their own (Bean, 1986).

Writing in Malaysia received negative perceptions among ESL learners who view it as a skill they like the least (Chan & Ain, 2004). It seems to be one of the difficult skills to be mastered (Nambiar, 2007). Many researchers found that most of the students had failed to use the summarization rules effectively and concluded that the students were weak at summary writing. Chen and Su (2011), claimed that students tend to copy text which is considered as an act of plagiarism when they were asked to summarize a long academic text. Similarly, in another context, Norisma et al (1997), stated that her participants used copy-delete strategy, which means they lifted the sentence directly from the passage instead of paraphrasing it. Besides, they also used inappropriate conjunctions and failed to produce cohesive sentences. Norma Othman (2009), on the other hand claimed that participants were not able to differentiate the main and supporting ideas, thus failed to summarize the given passage.

1.3 Self- reflection on collaborative writing

Researchers had combined self- reflection with collaborative writing to elicit participants' opinion and issue faced during the task (Shehadah 2011; Fernandez Dobao & Blum 2013; Storch, 2005; Lin & Maarof, 2013). From the self-reflective reports, it was found that a majority showed positive response towards collaborative task. Shehadah (2011) claimed that participants enjoyed the task in pairs and felt it helped their learning. In another study by Fernandez Dobao and Blum (2013), it was revealed that a few of the participants claimed that working in pairs and groups help them to produce better vocabulary and grammar in their text.

Lin and Maarof (2013) claimed that most of the participants were positive towards collaborative writing and a few felt reluctant because of language barrier. Storch (2005) discovered most of the participants had a positive experience in collaborative task except for two groups which preferred to be familiarized with collaborative task from the beginning of the class. Elola and Oskoz (2010) revealed that most of the participants agreed that collaborative writing helped them to produce better quality of writing, however, some stated their reservation as they wanted to do it based on their own style and time. Based on these inconclusive results, the current research has been carried out to examine the phenomenon of collaborative writing in summary writing in a Malaysian secondary school context.

1.4 Secondary Chinese Independent School (SUWA)

Chinese Independent School is a private high school set up by Chinese community and it runs on a non- profit basis (Jia, 2015). There are 60 Chinese Independent Schools in Malaysia. Hence, one of the schools in Kuala Lumpur is employed as the research site for the current study.

This school has six different levels ranged from Junior 1 (Form 1) to Senior 3 (Lower 6). The school divides the levels into Junior Middle (Junior 1 to Junior 3) and Senior Middle (Senior 1 to Senior 3). A maximum number of students in a class are 60. Students are streamed into Science, Arts or Commerce in Senior Middle level. The school uses Mandarin as a medium of instruction. It offers Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 (government syllabus), Junior Unified Examination Certificate (JUEC), Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (government syllabus) and Senior Unified Examination Certificate (SUEC). The students are required to reach the stipulated passing rate of the school in order to get promoted to the next level in the following year. Retaining for two consecutive years requires the dismissal of the students.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study has aimed to identify the effects of collaboration on L2 summary writing. It has also set out to examine if the number of participants has an effect on the quality of their summaries and the participants perceptions on such collaboration.

Data were collected through the participants' summary writing and questionnaire (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013) to answer all the listed research questions below.

1.6 Research questions

The study will answer these questions:

1. To what extent does collaborative writing has an effect on the quality of students' summary writing?

2. Does the number of participants in collaborative writing task have an effect on the quality of students' summary writing?

3. What are the perceptions of the learners on collaborative writing?

1.7 Operational Definition

The word 'quality' in research questions one and two refers to five major components of writing reflected in the marking rubric. These components were used to assess the participants' improvement in their post summary writing after being engaged in a prolonged collaborative writing task. Those components are, organization, logical developments of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression.

1.8 Significance of the study

An important contribution of this study is the effect of collaboration on L2 summary writing as very few studies have examined collaborative summary writing. Collaboration in any writing process will help educators to manage large classes more effectively. Positive findings on collaborative L2 summary writing may also help educators to create a student-centred classroom during the writing task instead of having a conservative learning process.

Besides, by getting the participants' perceptions on collaborative writing, educators would be able to understand the learners' concerns and be able to help them to manage better while going through the process of collaboration.

1.9 Scope of limitations

This study focuses on summary collaborative writing with 52 participants from a Chinese Independent school. The number of participants is too small as only one class is approved for the research purpose. Hence, there was a mixed proficiency level of participants (intermediate to advance) in the study and this can have an impact on the reliability of the results. Besides, there were only two inter-raters (including the researcher) who marked the summaries. The research had been conducted after the school examination, so the assistance of the other teachers was not forthcoming because they were all too preoccupied with marking.

Initially collaborative dialogues to gather the Language Related Episodes (LREs) were planned for this study. However, consent was not given by the research site as according to the principal, it might violate the participants' privacy.

The number of interventions in the treatment phase was rather short as well as it was conducted for only 2 weeks. This was because the school's syllabus needed to be covered before the examination. Therefore, the research was conducted in September and October immediately after the syllabus had been completed.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Collaborative writing

Collaborative writing is not exactly a new concept in university settings as compared to the school setting. Collaborative writing in universities is used to train the graduates to collaborate, as workforces usually require them to have teamwork. On the contrary, in normal school setting, students are being evaluated as individuals so that their performances can be gauged separately (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). Writing has also been regarded as a communication procedure where the social abilities of the learners are being emphasized as compared to writing individually. In order to establish interactions among the learners in EFL classroom, collaborative activities such as collaborative essay writings have been suggested as the best method to promote interactions (Biria & Jafari, 2013).

Researches in second language learning have focused more on collaborative oral productions and the influence of native and first language in second language learning. As compared to investigating the effectiveness of collaborative work for oral production or spoken discourse, researches are now focusing more on examining the benefits of collaborative work in terms of writing (Meihami, Meihami & Varmaghani, 2013). Storch (2005) has stated that "although pair and group work are commonly used in language classrooms, very few studies have investigated the nature of such collaboration when students produce a jointly written text." Storch was basically trying to point out that past researches all focused on the results of the participants' attitudes and motivation towards spoken activities and role plays rather than written activities.

The aim of the Wigglesworth and Storch (2009)'s study was not only to compare language performances in collaborative writing, but also the types of processes that were involved during the writing activities. The respondents were foreign students in an Australian university. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative method. Fluency, accuracy and complexity were measured by using statistical analysis and the scores obtained were used to gauge the effects. The time for planning, composing and revising was also included and it was found that participants spend more time on composing, with planning taking up the second place and finally revising. Besides, the comparison of collaborative task revealed that pair work contributes positively on accuracy, compared to fluency and complexity.

Nevertheless, Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) did mention that the collaborative writing's impact on the accuracy level is more positive as compared to fluency and complexity. Fernandez Dobao (2012) conducted a research comparing individual, pair and group of four. The results also showed a high increase in the level of accuracy. This can be due to the fact that discussions among pairs and groups can lead to corrections being done by both sides, as two heads always work better than one.

Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) further supported this finding when they also mentioned that collaborative writing encourages the pair to maximize their linguistic resources when solving problems. These studies were done in a large scale. It had been divided into two different studies. The first (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2007) compared 24 dyads and 24 individuals. The participants were asked to compose an argumentative essay and a report. The second (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) study examined 24 pairs and 48 individuals. They were asked to compose an argumentative essay as well. The individual participants were given less time to accomplish the task than the dyads. Both studies (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2007; 2009) revealed that the pair tasks were

more accurate than the individual essay however, there was no significant differences compared to the individual learners in terms of fluency and complexity. Pooling linguistic knowledge among the participants is the reason for the pairs producing more accurate written text than individuals (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009).

Khatib and Meihami (2015) conducted a research with 35 low intermediate Iranian EFL learners. The experimental group (pairs) and control group (individual) were required to write a descriptive essay and the data were collected in pre- test and post- test. Post- test was carried out in the 12th session of the course. Their scores from pre-test and post-test were then compared. The study revealed that the participants improved significantly in their final writing. The research also revealed that the participants' proficiency level had improved from low-intermediate to intermediate. The final results also stated that they have improved in the other writing components (organization, content, grammar, punctuation and mechanics).

2.2 Collaborative summary writing

To date, there are studies on collaborative writing which involve essays and graphic prompts compared to summary writing. Sajedi (2014) conducted a research on summary collaborative writing and found that pairs performed well in terms of content, organization and vocabulary but not in terms of grammar and mechanics. This finding seems to contradict with the ones found in Wigglesworth and Storch (2009).

2.2.1 Learners' perceptions toward collaborative writing

A number of studies have been conducted on learners' perceptions toward collaborative writing.

In a study by Lin and Maarof (2013) in West Malaysia, 30 students were required to state their perceptions and problems faced during collaborative summary writing. They were asked to answer a questionnaire and a semi structured interview was conducted. Their perceptions were divided into five constructs (motivation, collaboration process, co-construction of knowledge, academic effects and problems). A majority were positive toward collaborative summary writing as it enhanced their summary writing techniques, improved self- confidence and promoted collaborative effort. However, when asked about the problems faced during the task, a substantial number of participants stated their preference toward working individually. They offered various reasons for this preference: their reluctance to offer views that might seem disagreeable; the delays and not being able to complete the task within the stipulated time and lastly, both members having limited English proficiency.

In another setting, Fernandez Dobao and Blum (2013) examined 55 intermediate Spanish learners. The participants were asked to complete the task in pairs and groups of four. Majority of the participants reacted positively toward the experience. Pair preferred the task most due to active participation and groups also stated positive preference as they were able to produce more ideas and share knowledge with their members. However, four out of 55 learners had reservation toward the condition because they preferred writing at their own pace and developing their own ideas instead of sharing or discussing with others.

Likewise, Shehadah (2011), carried out a research with 38 students. One class were required to perform the task individually (n=20) and another in pairs (n=18). 16 out of 18 participants stated their preference to engage in collaborative task in future as the task enhanced their self- confidence, writing and speaking skills even though it is a new condition for them. In addition, the participants also preferred the condition as it

promoted collaborative effort. Nevertheless, only 2 stated their preference to work individually with no specific reason stated.

Equally, Elola and Oskoz (2010) examined advanced Spanish participants using web based social tools (wikis and chats). The study revealed that majority reacted positively as it enhanced their final task. They claimed that the condition had improved their content and the structure of their writing. However, the participants also stated reservations toward collaborative task. They preferred to work individually when working outside of the classroom as it enabled them to develop their own personal style and work according to their time schedule.

In the same way, Storch (2005) conducted a research with 23 participants. Five participants worked individually and 18 completed the task in pairs. Majority (n=16) reacted positively toward collaborative writing even though it was a new task for them. They stated that the condition enabled them to pool knowledge and improve significantly in their grammar and vocabulary scores. Five participants who reacted positively to the condition however, preferred to work individually, reasons given were lack of confidence in their language proficiency and the tendency to criticise other learners. However, two participants dislike the condition and stated that collaborative task works best for oral instead of writing skills.

In sum, majority of the participants in the previous studies stated their positive preference toward the condition. In most of the studies, the number of participants was mainly two (pairs). Besides, there were a few other studies which examined the respondents' perceptions in pair and small groups but did not focus exclusively on writing (Brown, 2009; Garret and Shortall, 2002; McDonough, 2004; Riley, 2009). Hence, the third objective of this present study is to examine the perceptions of the participants in collaborative writing when they work in pairs and groups of four.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The role of communication and teamwork in second language development is prioritized in the sociocultural theory. Learning is seen as a socially situated activity from the sociocultural perspective. According to Vygotsky (1978), higher order thinking skills exist first on the social which is known as inter-mental plane, and only later on it develops into a psychological or known as intra-mental plane. Generally, learners or novices build knowledge from the experts such as the teacher, parent or peers. Peer collaboration enables them to scaffold each other by putting together different knowledge which they had mastered and gained beyond their individual competence level (Ohta, 2001). Thus, collaborative work is similarly beneficial to learning.

According to the sociocultural theory, communication assists learning when there is collaboration among the learners. This means the learners collaborate, to share ideas and their linguistics knowledge to solve any language related problem. Swain (2000) had analyzed the dyadic interaction and revealed that collaboration takes place when the learners tend to pool their linguistics resources to resolve the language difficulties faced by the participants when accomplishing the given task. Interaction processes among language learners have long been viewed as an important "input" for the outcome of second language learning. Thus, by having Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in mind, who is a pioneer in sociocultural perspectives in second language learning, it has been said that social based interaction in learning is a type of mediated learning. The mental activities of students rely heavily on how they regulate and mediate their relationships with the people around them by using certain symbolic tools, in this case referring specifically to language. These symbolic tools or language that second language learners use while learning are created and influenced by the socio culture and the environment (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).

Therefore, in Vygotsky's point of view, it is crucial to understand second language learners' social environment and the relationships they share within the social environment that help shape students' abilities. In general, the authors used the term "sociocultural beliefs" as the medium for mediation in language learning (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). Based on the above explanations on sociocultural theory, Vygotsky has also stated that social interactions between second languages learners can help create better cognitive abilities. Hence, he has brought in the idea that joint mental activities between the learners can forge new and creative ideas (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).

In this study Vygotsky's idea of joint mental activities provides a basic foundation to explore if pooling knowledge together in writing tasks helps the learners to improve their writing skills especially in summary writing. As mentioned earlier, the interaction between two or more participants during the task would be able to promote better cognitive abilities and enable the learners to enhance their summary writing at the end. This theory has also claimed that communication assists the leaners to learn during the collaborative task. Hence, when the participants communicate with each other about the task and share linguistic knowledge it will definitely enhance their learning, or more specifically, their summary writing skills. The term 'scaffold' used in this theory also takes place when the expert peers help the weak peers in the group through the communication or discussion during the task, thus it enhances their writing skills.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

This is a mixed method within subject research design and the study employed a quantitative and qualitative approach.

3.2 Participants

The participants for this study were selected based on convenience sampling. There were 52 Form Four students from a private Chinese Independent School in Kuala Lumpur. Participants were in the range of intermediate to advanced level of proficiency. Their level of proficiency was determined based on their English subject results in PT3 which was within the grade of A to C. Participants could not be streamed according to their proficiency level as the research site did not allow the researcher to use more than one classroom for the research purpose. Besides, following Storch's theory (2005) the participants were also given freedom to choose their own groupings (pair or groups of four) during the task as they might feel reluctant to work in group or pair that they are not familiar with. Thus, there were 35 female and 17 male participants.

These 52 individuals formed 26 pairs as well as the 13 groups. Pair refers to two participants whereas groups consist of four participants. The reason for having four participants in a group is to distinguish the differences between pairs and groups following Fernandez Dobao's, 2012 study. Furthermore, another reason to keep the number of participants in the groups (four) small is to provide opportunity to all the participants to take part equally in the conversation.

3.3 Instruments

The data were derived from, first, summary writing produced by individuals and second, summary writing produced by pairs and groups of four. A survey questionnaire was used to gather students' feedback on collaborative summary writing.

The first data source is to reveal if collaborative task has improved participants' performance in summary writing after a prolonged writing activity. This data source is to answer the first research question which is 'To what extent does the collaborative writing task have an effect on the quality of students' summary writing?

The second data source is to identify if the number of participants plays an important role to produce good summary writing by comparing the scores between the pairs and groups. This data is to answer the second research question which is, 'Does the number of participants in a collaborative writing task have any effect on the quality of students' summary writing?

To answer the analytical part of summary writing, the scripts were marked using Brown and Bailey's (1984) marking scheme (see Appendix F). The reason for using this analytical marking scheme instead of accuracy, complexity and fluency is to identify the participants' improvement or development in their final summary writing based on the five criteria (organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression) in the marking scheme. Each component has been explained below.

The organization component is used to evaluate the use of linkers in the summary writing while the logical development of ideas component is used to evaluate the content produced by the participants. The grammar component on the other hand is used to evaluate the use of accurate tenses, modals, articles, preposition and sentence structures. Punctuation, spelling and mechanics is used to evaluate participants' ability to punctuate accurately, spell the words accurately, use proper indentation (only one

paragraph in summary writing), all needed words be capitalized (especially 'I') and finally the spelling and quality of expression component is used to evaluate the participants' vocabulary use in the summary writing. These criteria provide specific and adequate information on the writing elements for this study.

Brown and Bailey's (1984) marking scheme had been employed in the current study as it provides a mark allocation (a max of 20 points) as well as a description for each category. This can be easily adopted for the purpose of this study. On the other hand, the marking rubrics designed by Hedgecock and Lefkowits (1992), an analytical marking score cited in Brown (2001), was not suitable as the mark allocation is not distributed equally for each category. These rubrics are designed mostly to mark compositions or even a paragraph. Also, the school's marking scheme is too simplified as the breakdown is 10 marks for content and 5 marks for language. This limits the ability to identify the learners' specific weakness in their summary writing and to improve them. Therefore, Brown and Bailey (1984) marking scheme has been chosen for the current study.

It has to be noted that the logical development of ideas component (second component) in the current marking rubric is adjusted to suit summary writing as this marking rubric is also designed for essays/compositions where this component is more accurate to assess a participant's way of developing ideas in the essay writing.

In this summary marking, the importance on the content is not emphasized as the other four components were incorporated equally to determine the participants' improvements in the quality of their final summary writing. Unlike in the school's marking system, participants will be awarded with 10 marks if they are able to locate 10 points from the passage.

The third data source, the questionnaire, is to answer the third research question which is 'What are the issues or problems which arise during the summary

collaborative writing task?' The questionnaire is adapted from the previous study (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013), (see Appendix E). This is to elicit the participants' feedback on collaborative writing. There were ten questions in the questionnaire. Participants were given a combination of rating scale and open-ended questions. They were asked to justify their answers after choosing their responses.

For questions one and two of the questionnaire, participants were asked to state their general opinions on working in pairs and in groups of four. For question number four, options and rating scale were not given as participants were asked to describe the collaborative task that they had engaged in using their own words. Meanwhile, for question number five, they were asked to state their preferred mode during summary writing and the options were individually, pair or group of four. For questions six, seven and eight they were asked to state their perceptions on the impact of the collaboration task on their written summary. In questions nine and ten, they were asked if they have improved their writings in terms of lexical development and grammar after being engaged in the collaborative task.

Response to question number three was not taken into consideration as all the participants responded in the same way, since all of them performed it in pair and group in the previous week. The question was not removed from the original questionnaire as the whole questionnaire was adopted from a previous study, (Fernandez Dobao and Blum, 2013). All the questions were explained thoroughly before the participants were asked to answer.

It has to be noted that, in the survey questionnaire, one of the questions (question 6) required the participants to state their preference (worse, better or more or less the same) on the content of the summary writing if they had written it individually. This question is designed to elicit the respondents' perceptions on their

task performance, henceforth, it has to be noted again, content is not the only component being assessed in this study.

3.4 Ethical procedure

Permission was sought from the research site in written form and it was approved with a few changes from the requested version. Initially, an interview was planned to enrich the given findings. However, it was not permissible by the principal of the research site. Hence, a survey questionnaire remained the only instrument to elicit the participants' perception on the collaborative task. It is also worthwhile to note that initially, spoken data was to be incorporated into the study. However, the research site did not provide consent to record the students' conversation as it was deemed to violate their privacy. Hence, this additional research question and data source were regrettably removed from the study.

3.5 Task

Participants were required to produce a one paragraph summary of about 130-135 words. Summary writing required them to summarize a passage according to the given question. This summary writing is part of the writing component for Form Four students in the school. All the participants were given the same task to complete. The participants were familiar with the task. This is because, participants' awareness and pre-requisite linguistics knowledge is essential before they participate in any output activities (Swain & Lapkin, 2007).

Four different passages were used in the different data collection stage (see Appendix A, B, C and D). The passages had different number of words. They were ranging from 521 to 671 words. The summary writing task required participants to

summarize the passages based on the given question/s and also from the given lines. For example, the first passage required the participants to summarize from lines 5- 35, the second passage required them to summarize from lines 5 –50, the third required them to summarize from lines 7-36 and the fourth from paragraph 2-8.

The first and second summary passages had been taken from '138 Model Compositions & Summaries SPM' by Anita Lim and 'Write Better Compositions & Summaries for SPM 1119 English' by Magdalene Chew and Florence Jones respectively. The third summary passage had been taken from '160 Model Essays SPM by Christine Tan and Yong Fui Yin and the final summary text had been taken from "Effective Writing SPM English 1119' by Audrey Lim.

3.6 Inter-rater

Two raters (including the researcher) had marked the summaries. The second rater is a Master graduate from HELP University specialising in Teaching English as Second Language (TESL). The rater has been teaching English Language in a Chinese Independent school for 6 years. The inter-rater reliability was established at .856 for the pre-test. The data were analysed using Cohen's kappa value. The results can be seen in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Inter- rater

Rater1 * Rater2 Crosstabulation

Count

Rater1 \ Rater2	51.00	52.00	54.00	56.00	57.00	58.00	59.00	60.00	61.00	62.00	63.00	64.00	65.00	67.00	68.00	70.00	71.00	72.00	76.00	Total
51.00	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
52.00	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
54.00	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
56.00	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
57.00	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
58.00	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
59.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
60.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
61.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
62.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
63.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
64.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
65.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
67.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
68.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
69.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
71.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
72.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
76.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	1	2	2	2	4	2	3	7	5	3	5	3	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	52

Rater 1

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.856	.051	23.348	.000
N of Valid Cases		52			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Table 3.1 shows the results of inter-rater reliability. The results indicated that the kappa value between raters 1 and 2 is satisfactory (kappa=.856). The researcher therefore decides to use rater 2 in marking the following summary writing scripts (pairs, groups of four and post-test).

3.7 Pilot study

A pilot study had been conducted with 16 similar set of participants. Same instructions and summary passages were given. The participants understood the instructions and were able to engage in the study accordingly. However, the results were not significant.

3.8 Data collecting procedure

Stages of data collection are shown in **Table 3.2.**

Table 3.2: Data Collection Procedure

Stage	Week	Data collection	
Stage 1- Pre-test	1	52 participants (were assigned to write a summary individually)	
Stage 2	2	The 52 participants were randomly assigned to pairs and groups	
		Pairs 24 participants wrote in pairs. There were a total of 12 pairs **(Pair 1 to pair 12)**	**Group of four** 28 participants wrote in groups of four. There were a total of 7 groups **(Group 1 to group 7)**
Stage 3	3	Those who have written in groups of four were assigned to write the summary in pairs. There were 14 pairs **(Pair 13 to pair 26)**	Those who have written in pairs were assigned to write the summary in groups of four. There were 6 groups **(Group 8 to group 13)**
Stage 4- Post-test	4	52 participants (were assigned to write a summary individually)	
Stage 5	4	Survey questionnaire	

The teacher had exposed the participants to writing summaries individually, pair and group during normal summary writing lessons. This familiarized the students with the environment and the collaborative work/activity in pairs and groups as familiarizing is important for the students to understand the format (Swain & Lapkin, 2007).

Data were then collected during school hours, in the participants' classroom. On the data collection day, the teacher recalled the lesson on summary writing. All the participants were given a passage and they were required to summarize according to the question.

In a study conducted by Fernandez Dobao (2012), she allocated 30 minutes for all the participants as the same procedure is followed in teaching. Following the previous study, all the participants were given 35 minutes to complete their task. The extra five minutes was given based on the average amount of time employed by the participants to complete their collaborative summary task during the normal class activity. Participants were able to complete the task successfully within the allocated time.

Data were collected for four consecutive weeks. It was collected from 08 September till 29 September 2016. Different summary passages were given in each week. Participants were required to write one summary individually in the first and the fourth week. In week two, the 52 participants were divided into two groups and they were randomly asked to form pairs and groups of four. They were given the freedom to choose their partners throughout the summary writing task.

The participants have been coded. Pair 1 to pair 12 in week 2 performed the task in group 8 to group 13 in week 3, whereas, group 1 to group 7 in week 2 performed the task in pair 13 to pair 26 in week 3.

Finally, a survey questionnaire adopted from Fernandez Dobao and Blum (2013), was given to the participants on 30th September 2016. It was to elicit their perceptions on collaborative writing. The questionnaire was collected on 1st October 2016.

The survey questionnaire had been given one day after the post-test; this helped the participants to express their perceptions toward the tasks after going through the experience. Additionally, the participants were allowed to bring home the questionnaire so that they could spend as much time as necessary in completing it. This decision was based on a previous study (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013) and the questionnaire was collected on the following day.

This study utilises a mixed-method within subject design, which means the same participants were asked to perform the summary writing individually, in pairs and in a group of four to eliminate individual differences. Participating in all the tasks is able to eliminate individual differences, which might also reduce biasness in evaluating participants' final performance. Besides, to maximize internal validity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) this mixed method has been employed. Hence, higher level of internal validity will allow the researcher to draw accurate conclusion within the data.

The study has been triangulated by analysing the performance of summary writing and the feedback from the survey questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Normality distributions for the data set of pre-test and post-test

Prior to data analysis, normality distributions for the pre-test and post-test were examined. The normality distributions analysis results are as shown in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Normality distributions for the data set of pre-test and post-test

Descriptives

			Statistic	Std. Error
Pretest	Mean		61.5769	.73243
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	60.1065	
		Upper Bound	63.0473	
	5% Trimmed Mean		61.4786	
	Median		61.0000	
	Variance		27.896	
	Std. Deviation		5.28166	
	Minimum		51.00	
	Maximum		76.00	
	Range		25.00	
	Interquartile Range		6.00	
	Skewness		.379	.330
	Kurtosis		.251	.650
Posttest	Mean		64.3846	.42822
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	63.5249	
		Upper Bound	65.2443	
	5% Trimmed Mean		64.3846	
	Median		65.0000	
	Variance		9.535	
	Std. Deviation		3.08795	
	Minimum		58.00	
	Maximum		71.00	
	Range		13.00	
	Interquartile Range		4.75	
	Skewness		-.090	.330
	Kurtosis		-.598	.650

Table 4.1 shows the normality distributions for the data set of the pre-test and post-test. The result indicated that the skew and kurtosis of all data were laid between ± 2 for skewness and ±7 from kurtosis respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data set of pre-test and post-test were well-modelled by a normal distribution.

4.2 Overall score of summary writing (individual and collaborative group)

Research question one has been divided into two different parts. In the first part, participants' performance as overall was discussed whereas, in the second part, participants' performance as individual on five different components of the summary writing (organization, logical developments of idea, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression) was discussed.

As mentioned before, research question one was designed to answer if participants' engagement in collaborative task improves their performance in summary writing task. The pre- test and the post-test scores were analysed by using paired samples t- test. The results are as shown in **Table 4.2**.

Table 4.2: Paired t-test

T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	61.5769	52	5.28166	.73243
	Post-test	64.3846	52	3.08795	.42822

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Pre-test & Post-test	52	.094	.506

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair	Pre-test – Post-test	-2.80769	5.86127	.81281	-4.43948	-1.17591	-3.454	51	.001

Table 4.2 shows the results of pre- test and post-test of collaborative summary writing. The mean score value of post-test is higher than pre-test (showed in the 'paired samples statistics' table above; pre-test= 61.5769, post-test= 64.3846). It revealed that the research results is significant (t=-3.454, df=51, p<0.05). Based on the 95% confidence interval of the difference (-4.43948, -1.17591), zero is not inclusive, so the research result is significant. This shows that there is a significant improvement in participants' performance by engaging themselves in the collaborative task. This finding is in line with the previous studies conducted by Fernandez Dobao (2012) and Sajedi (2014).

4.2.1 Performance of individuals on the quality of the summary writing

As mentioned earlier, in this section, participants' performance as individuals on five different components of the summary writing (organization, logical developments of idea, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression) was discussed.

To identify if collaborative writing has an effect on the quality of students' summary writing, all the participants' mean scores of all five components from the pre-test and post-test were compared. The total value will reveal if the participants have improved in the final summary writing. Positive value in the total column indicates improvements and negative value indicates that the participants did not improve in that particular component after being engaged in the prolonged task. (**see Table 4.3**)

Table 4.3: Individual performance on the analytic scoring

Components	Scores for each component	Pre-test	Post-test	Total	Improvements
Organization	20	14	15	+1	performed well
Logical development of ideas	20	13	14	+1	performed well
Grammar	20	11	12	+1	performed well
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	12	12	0	no improvements
Style and quality of expression	20	11	11	0	no improvements

Table 4.3 shows the individual performance in the final summary writing after engaging in prolonged collaborative task. The results revealed greater improvements in terms of their organization, content and grammar but not punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression components. Other studies, for example Storch's (2005) and Chao and Lo's (2011), discovered that one of the benefits of

collaboration task is students perceived greater grammatical accuracy. Hence, the results are in line with their finding. However, this finding contradicted with the previous study conducted by Sajedi (2014) and Shehadah (2011). Their research revealed that there were improvements in terms of content, organization and vocabulary but not for grammar and mechanics.

In sum, the overall score of the individual and collaborative groups showed that the participants had improved in their final task after engaging in the prolonged collaborative activity. The participants seldom get the chance to engage themselves in collaborative task during any actual writing class due to the number of students in a class (60 maximum). However, during their speaking lessons, they engage in collaborative work during activities such as role-play, discussion, debate, forum or any other group work. So, it was a novel approach for them. Working in pairs or groups of four gives participants a great chance to share, discuss and exchange their ideas on writing. This collaboration enabled them to learn from the peers and finally they were able to produce their final writing. Moreover, participants are able to give and receive feedback immediately during the collaborative task when there are language related problems (Fernandez Dobao, 2012).

From the improvement in the overall score, it could be concluded that after two weeks of the treatment phase, collaborative summary writing has helped the participants to improve their summary writing skills by learning it from their peers (preferably expert peers). The results of the summary writing components, on the other hand, revealed that participants had improved well in their organization, logical development of ideas and grammar. As mentioned above, the results contradicted those from the previous studies by Sajedi (2014) and Shehadah (2011).

The difference could be due to the context, that is, the different culture imposed on the Chinese independent school. The importance of learning grammar has been

emphasized in the school since the time the learners were in Form 1. Besides, the participants are aware that these components- logical development of ideas (content) and grammar - are important in summary writing in order to get good marks, thus, the participants could emphasize more on those components during the collaborative task and eventually it might lead to the improvements. However, the results were also unexpected as there was improvement in the organization component. As mentioned earlier, organization evaluates participants' ability in using linkers to provide cohesive summary writing. Participants might have learnt to use appropriate linkers in their summary in order to create cohesive summary writing. This might be the reason for the participants' improvements in the organization component.

As for the 'punctuation, spelling and mechanics' component, it can be learnt easily as it is very straightforward. As mentioned earlier in the methodology section, the 'punctuation, spelling and mechanics' component requires the participants to spell the words and punctuate sentences accurately, indent the summary appropriately and also emphasize on the neatness of the summary. However, showing no improvements in the style and quality of the expression is also unexpected. The participants might have learnt new vocabularies from their peers during the discussion as a few participants were jotting down new words in a note book during the data collection days (week 2 and week 3) but they might not use those words in their summary writing. Alternatively, it might be that those words were unable to fit the context of that particular summary writing.

Hence, the conclusions are only suggestive. A larger scale study with extended treatment phase should be conducted in the near future.

4.3 Normality distributions for the data set of pairs and groups of four

Prior to data analysis, normality distributions for the data set of the pairs and groups of four were examined. The normality distributions analysis results are as shown in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: Normality distributions for the data set of pairs and groups of four

Descriptives

	Group			Statistic	Std. Error
Score	PAIRED	Mean		56.3462	1.40433
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	53.4539	
			Upper Bound	59.2384	
		5% Trimmed Mean		56.0256	
		Median		54.5000	
		Variance		51.275	
		Std. Deviation		7.16068	
		Minimum		46.00	
		Maximum		72.00	
		Range		26.00	
		Interquartile Range		6.50	
		Skewness		1.055	.456
		Kurtosis		.369	.887
	GROUP	Mean		60.2308	2.07906
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	55.7009	
			Upper Bound	64.7606	
		5% Trimmed Mean		60.2009	
		Median		60.0000	
		Variance		56.192	
		Std. Deviation		7.49615	
		Minimum		47.00	
		Maximum		74.00	
		Range		27.00	
		Interquartile Range		12.50	
		Skewness		.109	.616
		Kurtosis		-.227	1.191

Table 4.4 shows the normality distributions for the data set of the pairs and groups of four. The results indicated that the skew and kurtosis of all data were laid between ± 2 for skewness and ±7 from kurtosis respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data set of the pairs and groups of four were well-modelled by a normal distribution.

4.3.1 Overall score of summary writing (pairs and groups of four)

Research question two was designed to answer if the number of participants in a collaborative task affects their performance in summary writing (overall and L2 development). To answer the question, the scores for the pairs and groups in both weeks 2 and 3 were analysed by using independent samples t- test. The results are presented in **Table 4.5**. Then, the quality of their summary writing (organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics and style and quality of expression) were discussed in the following section.

Table 4.5: Independent t-test

Group Statistics

WEEK	GROUP	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WEEK 2 SCORE	PAIRED	12	53.7500	3.69582	1.06689
	GROUP	7	57.2857	7.76132	2.93350
WEEK 3 SCORE	PAIRED	14	58.5714	8.68876	2.32217
	GROUP	6	63.6667	6.02218	2.45855

Independent Samples Test

WEEK		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WEEK 2 SCORE	Equal variances assumed	6.752	.019	-1.355	17	.193	-3.53571	2.60922	-9.04070	1.96927
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.133	7.620	.292	-3.53571	3.12149	-10.79693	3.72550
WEEK 3 SCORE	Equal variances assumed	2.043	.170	-1.299	18	.210	-5.09524	3.92179	-13.33462	3.14414
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.507	13.705	.155	-5.09524	3.38185	-12.36324	2.17276

Table 4.5 shows the results of pairs and groups performing collaborative summary writing. The t-test results for weeks 2 and 3 are statistically not significant (t=-1.355, df=17, p>.05), (t=-1.299, df=18, p>.05). Based on the 95% confidence interval of the difference for both weeks (-9.0470, 1.96927), (-13.33462, 3.14414) zero is inclusive, so the research result is not significant. However, there were some improvements as revealed in the mean score value. The mean difference value of 3.53577, 5.0953 between pair and group in both weeks shows improvement when participants performed in groups of four. Almost 44% (0.441107) performed better when they were in groups of four in week 3. The mean value for both groups can be seen in the 'Group Statistic" table.

This results could be due to the sample size (n=52). The sample size of the participants, which is (n=52), decreased to (n=39) when they were grouped into pairs and groups of four. It should be noted that the effect size in week 2 (0.6) and week 3 (0.7) shows acceptable level of improvements of the participants as well. Hence, the intervention does not affect the above mentioned results as it works well with pre-test and post-test. Based on the above explanations, it is revealed that the number of participants does not affect the participants' performance in summary writing in the current study.

4.3.2 Performances of pairs and groups of four on the quality of the summary writing

To identify if the number of participants has an effect on the quality of the final summary writing, the scores for the analytic components of the summary writing (the five components) were examined. Similar to research question 1(second part), the mean scores for each component produced by pairs and groups were compared to answer the question.

As explained in the methodology section, participants have been coded. To obtain a within-subject comparison, the mean scores of the same participant in both conditions were compared i.e. the scores of the summary components produced by participants in the paired condition, pair 1 to pair 12 in week 2, have been compared with the scores of the summary components produced by the same participants in the group condition as group 8 to group 13 in week 3. Likewise, the mean scores of each component produced by group 1 to group 7 in week 2 have been compared with pair 13 to pair 26 in week 3.

The mean scores obtained by group 8 to group 13 in week 3 have been compared with the mean scores obtained by pair 1 to pair 12 in week 2. **(see Table 4.6)** The total value reveals if the participants have improved in the final summary writing. Positive value in the total column indicates an increase in performance and negative value indicates that the participants did not improve in their performance.

Table 4.6: Mean scores obtained by pair 1 to pair 12 and group 8 to group 13

Components	Scores for each component	Mean scores of pair 1 to pair 12 in week 2	Mean scores of group 8 to group 13 in week 3	Total	Improvements
Organization	20	11	12	+1	performed well
Logical development of ideas	20	11	15	+4	performed well
Grammar	20	10	12	+2	performed well
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	12	13	+1	performed well
Style and quality of expression	20	10	12	+2	performed well

Table 4.6 shows the comparison on the mean scores between pair 1 to pair 12 in week 2 and group 8 to group 13 in week 3. The results revealed that participants had performed well in all five components when they perform the task in groups of four in week 3. Greatest improvement is shown in the logical development of ideas component.

Table 4.7: Mean scores obtained by group 1 to group 7 and pair 13 to pair 26

Components	Scores for each component	Mean scores of group 1 to group 7 in week 2	Mean scores of pair 13 to pair 26 in week 3	Total	Improvements
Organization	20	12	11	-1	did not perform well
Logical development of ideas	20	12	14	+2	performed well
Grammar	20	12	11	-1	did not perform well
Punctuation, spelling and mechanics	20	11	11	0	no improvements
Style and quality of expression	20	11	11	0	no improvements

Table 4.7 shows the comparison on the mean scores between group 1 to group 7 in week 2 and pair 13 to pair 26 in week 3. The results revealed that participants had performed well in only the 'logical development of idea' component when they performed the task in pairs. They did not show any improvements in 'punctuation, spelling and mechanics' and 'style and quality of expression' components. As for the organization and grammar components, they performed better when they were in the 'group' condition.

Based on the overall scores (part 1), it can be concluded that there was no statistical significance for the performances in pairs and groups of four, but the mean score value revealed greater improvements for the performances in groups of four.

As for the analytic components (part 2), groups performed well in all the components. Pairs only outperformed groups in the 'logical development of ideas' component. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Fernandez Dobao (2012). Her study revealed that collaborative group (groups of four) produced more accurate text than pairs.

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Group work might help them to relocate points accurately, use the right choice of words and grammar, punctuate, spell the words accurately and also assisted the partners in producing cohesive summary writing. This can also be supported with the evidence given by the participants in research question three. Majority of the participants' preferred group work as they could learn from their partners and apply it when they perform the task in pairs.

It can be concluded that, working in groups had improved participants' in all five components. This seems to indicate that groups are able to discuss, share and pool their knowledge in order to complete the task, whereas in pair there are only two participants and if either party is not contributing towards the task, it could lead to incompletion of the task. Discussing and sharing ideas with each other could also lead them to relocate accurate points and use the right choice of words in the writing.

This finding contradicts with two of the previous studies, Sajedi's (2014) and Shehadah (2012). Both studies (Sajedi, 2014; Shehadah, 2012), revealed that pairs benefited the most compared to individual and triads, particularly in three out of the five L2 components (content, organization and vocabulary but not grammar and mechanics).

Based on the results shown above, more research with better controlled designs are still needed to answer the question on the number of participants affecting writing performance.

4.4 Questionnaire

The third research question of the study concerned with problems or issues arising after completing the task individually, in pairs and in groups of four.

Participants' responses to the rating scale were quantified while the reasons for their responses were thematised into categories. These themes were retrieved from the three variations of helpful preference (helpful, very helpful and extremely helpful) in each question. Responses for question number four, an open- ended question with no rating scale, were divided into three parts as the question demands a lengthy response.

1. How helpful do you think it is to work in pairs in class? Why?

Table 4.8: Students' question 1

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
Working in pairs in class is	not helpful	3	6%
	helpful	20	38%
	very helpful	25	48%
	extremely helpful	4	8%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

Table 4.8 summarizes learners' perception on working in pairs in class. 48% (n=25) of the respondents have stated that working in pairs in class is very helpful followed by 38% (n=20) who claimed it to be helpful and 8 % (n=4) stated it to be extremely helpful. Only, a small number of participants 6% (n=3) felt that pair work in classroom is not helpful.

Based on the reasons provided, responses that came under all the helpful preferences can be thematised into, *interesting, collaborative effort, and task efficiency*.

First of all, participants felt the collaborative task is helpful as it creates an interesting atmosphere to complete the task. It has to be noted that participants were given the opportunity to choose their own partners. Hence, it could be one of the reasons they claimed collaborative task to be interesting. One of the participants stated that, 'Because it is fun and interesting'.

Next, in line with its literature, which is from Vygotsky's theory, participants also prefer to work in pair as it promotes collaborative effort to complete the task accurately. It enables them to pool ideas, guide each other and contribute evenly. This is evidenced when one of the participants stated that 'because my friend help[ed] me [to] find the points and correct[ed] my mistakes'. Another participant stated that 'my partner gave a lot of advice on changing the vocabulary'. In a Chinese independent school, the normal number of students in a class is sixty (maximum number of students), hence they seldom get the chance to discuss or learn from the capable peers, so collaborative task gives them the opportunity to discuss and improve their vocabulary knowledge and proficiency skills from their capable peers.

Pair work is also considered effective as they were able to complete the task efficiently with the cooperation of the partner. One of the participants explained that 'because we can complete in a faster way instead of working it individually'. They also agreed that the number of people enables them to complete the task effectively and equally. The participant commented that, 'more people [enable us] to discuss better answer'. Another one stated that, 'we get to contribute in a balanced way'. Thus, working in pairs enables the participants to produce good quality summary writing by contributing equally and completing the task within the specified time compared to doing it individually.

On the contrary, 6% (n=3) of the participants claimed the pair work was not helpful. Firstly, pair work in class was claimed to be not helpful as it was time

consuming. The participant wrote, 'did not have time to discuss'. Interestingly, this same participant claimed the task to be very helpful in the second question (working in groups of four) when he/she noted that working in group is 'helpful with discussion'. This could be due to the number of people as in pair there were only two whereas, in group there were four participants for the discussion.

Likewise, another student did not find pair work to be helpful and used the expression 'introvert partner' for both the reasons for questions one and two. Personality difference may arise as an issue for collaborative work.

2. How helpful do you think it is to work in small groups (groups of four students) in class? Why?

Table 4.9: Students' question 2

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
Working in groups (groups of four) in class is	not helpful	5	10%
	helpful	21	40%
	very helpful	16	31%
	extremely helpful	10	19%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

With regard to participants' preference working in groups of four in the class, 10% (n=5) rated it to be not helpful. 40% (n=21) of the respondents claimed it to be helpful, followed by 31% (n=16) who claimed it to be very helpful and 19% (n=10) to be extremely helpful (see **Table 4.9**). For this question, the themes identified for the helpful preference are *collaborative effort, task efficiency and language benefits.*

Participants claimed group work promotes collaboration among them. They stated that it enabled them to share, discuss and exchange their ideas about the task and

able to produce a complete final task. One of the participants claimed that, 'because we can share points and discuss with each other'. Again, this task promotes knowledge sharing among the participants.

Group work is also known as effective mode of working as each participant had divided their task equally. They relocated the points first and then merged all of them. The participant explained that, 'because each of us just have to find several points, it's very effective'. Besides, another respondent claimed they were able to complete the task in a quick manner compared to the pair work due to the number of respondents. The respondent explained 'because we have more members to discuss with compared to working in pair'. This again refers to the above mentioned statement which claimed collaborative writing as a joint production of a text or the co-authoring of a text by two or more writers (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009).

As for language benefits, group work was claimed to improve participants' summarizing skills, vocabulary knowledge and proficiency level. Again, it refers to Vygotsky's theory where collaborative task enables learners to improve their knowledge from their expert peers. One respondent stated that, group work '[allows] me to learn different way to write a summary'. Another participant stated that, 'there are more ideas to construct the sentences'. Paraphrasing sentences without changing the meaning of the sentences is very important for learners. Learners failed to get full marks for their language as they lift sentences or words directly from the given passage in their normal class summary. Hence, this collaborative task has enabled the participants to feel that group work helps to improve their summarizing skills.

On the other hand, 10% (n=5) participants claimed that group work is not helpful in the class. Two themes emerged: *number of respondents and personality differences.* Since small group consists of four members, some participants claimed that group work is not helpful as it prevents them from contributing their ideas and at

the same time it slows the process. One participant explained, 'not so helpful because too many people make a job slower to complete'. Another participant stated, that 'too many students in a group makes it harder to [divide] the task for every person'. This might not be a problem in pair as respondents' participation is crucial. In other words, pair work pushes responsibilities on each pair and they are forced to put forward their ideas. In contrast to the comments for pair work, three out of five participants who stated group work is not helpful agreed that working in pair is helpful and extremely helpful as it enables them to work smoothly and discuss well. This finding seems to provide support that participants' opinions are influenced by their previous engagement with the task, Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013).

Participant's personality also plays a vital role in collaborative task as it will determine if the participants are contributing their ideas well during the task. One participant stated, group work as not helpful as they talked a lot during the task. The participant explained 'we talked too much'. The same participant stated pair work is also not helpful in question one and no reason stated for that preference. In addition, the same participant stated preference of writing the summary individually in question five with the same reason, 'they talk[ed] too much'.

This might be due to differences in learning style or possibly personality. Seven different learning styles had been identified for different personality of learners. This participant might have introvert personality who prefers a more solitary learning style. Besides, as from the observation by the researcher, several other participants among the participants can also be categorised into another verbal learning style, one of the learning styles that is this category of learners prefer using words both in speech and writing. This might lead to the situation which is talking too much.

However, it has to be justified again participants were given the opportunity to choose their peers. Since they know each other well, they might have the tendency to be too comfortable and hence, talk too much during the task.

3. **How did you complete the summary writing task last week?**

This question required the participants to answer pair or group of four. Responses for this question were not taken as half the participants answered pair and another half answered group. This is because participants engaged in the pair and group work in the previous week. However, the question was not removed from the questionnaire as it was adopted from a previous study. (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013)

4. **How would you describe the group or pair in which you worked? Did it work well? How collaborative was it? Did you all get to contribute in a balanced way?**

i. **How would you describe the group or pair in which you worked?**

Majority of the participants agreed that collaborative task went well. They used positive adjectives such as, 'fun', 'efficient', 'wonderful', 'fantastic', 'great', 'pleasant', 'teamwork', 'communicative' and 'happy' to describe their groups or pairs.

ii. **Did it work well? How collaborative was it?**

They stated that their task went well. This could be due to the fact that the members of the groups and pairs are self-selected among their friends. Only one participant expressed that, 'we had [small] argu[ment] but ended up we work well'.

They also stated that the task was very collaborative as they could discuss, exchange their ideas and divide their task evenly during the summary writing task. A

few participants explained that they were able to contribute in different aspects during the discussions. However, these aspects were not elaborated. One of the views was, 'we could finish the summary in [a] short time and we could contribute in different aspects [[and] realize] the mistakes in progress'. Another participant expressed that, 'did it very well, divided task according to the command level [so] everything went well'.

Another group stated that they had divided their task before writing them out. The participant explained, 'relocate[d] the points separately then discussed, went quite well, partners answers were [wrong] so ended up writing my own answer.' This statement shows that their partners were able to correct their mistakes and produce a quality summary writing collaboratively. Again, this statement is in accordance to Vygotsky's theory where leaners could learn from their expert peers through collaboration.

iii. **Did you all get to contribute in a balanced way?**

According to the participants, working in pair enables them to *contribute* and *balance* their work evenly compared to working in groups.

Working in pairs provides more opportunities for the learners to pool their ideas and put them forward in their writing. With only two members, they needed to actively take part and take responsibility for the final product. Meanwhile in groups of four the participants can either dominate or remain silent during the task. The following quote summarizes the above idea, 'worked very well in pairs, distributed the work and it was collaborative but did not get to contribute in a balance way during the group work.'

On the other hand, the remaining number of participants stated their preference in working in groups of four. They preferred groups of four as they could *contribute* well and it is *effective*.

Participants claimed that they were not able to contribute well when they were in pairs as the members did not perform their parts well. One of the participants explained, 'group cooperated well [but] in pair not really worked [collaboratively]'. Another recurrent view among these participants was, 'the group worked very well as everyone contributed, but [in] the pair same [person worked]'.

5. This writing task can be done in groups of four, in pairs, or individually. Which of these three options would you have preferred? Why?

Table 4.10: Students' question 5

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
I would have preferred to write	individual	7	14%
	Pairs	21	40%
	group of four	24	46%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

Table 4.10 summarizes participants' preference for grouping when performing summary writing during the research. 46% (n=24) explained that they prefer to write in a group of four, followed by 40% (n=21) of participants who prefer to write in pairs and 14% (n=7) prefer to write individually.

Again, it has to be noted that, participants were allowed to choose their partner so most of the pairs and groups were composed of their friends. Working with friends 'enable[s] me to work with my best friend [whom] we both have a lot in common.', and 'can work with my friends, enjoy than writing alone'. So, this might be a reason to have higher number of preferences of working in pairs and groups of four. It was found that, 46% (n=24) expressed their concern on working in group of four.

The themes that emerged can be categorised into *collaborative effort, time and atmosphere*s. Respondents explained that writing summary in a group of four is better as it promotes collaborative effort. This is because they were able to pool their ideas or knowledge on summary writing and accommodate each other. Thus, they were able to learn new vocabularies, improve grammar skills and also summarizing skills. Since the participants were from Form Three, they did not have much exposure to the new summary writing format in Form four. Most of the participants tended to lift the words from the passage during the normal summary writing task. Hence, working in a group enables them to learn from their more knowledgeable partners who were able to paraphrase the sentences and vocabularies from the passage. One participant mentioned that, she/he was 'able to exchange different opinions during the discussion'. Another participant said, 'because my friends [were able to] correct my mistakes and suggest ways to improve my summary writing [skills]'. This again refers to Vygotsky's theory on collaborative writing where learners get to share their ideas and together produce quality work.

Participants also explained that they prefer group work as they were able to complete the task within the stipulated time of 35 minutes. So, discussing and sharing ideas enable them to complete the task efficiently. One of the participants explained that, 'I [was] able to [complete] it in quick manner'.

Furthermore, one participant stated that doing task in a group of four was fun compared with doing it individually. The explanation was, 'doing task together with people is more fun rather than doing it alone'. This will definitely create a conducive atmosphere for the learners to learn in the classroom in future. As mentioned earlier, the large number of students which is maximum 60 in a class, always unable the teachers to engage the learners in collaborative task. Since it is a new method for the participants, they felt it fun. This finding is also in line with the research carried out

by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013). One of the participants from the research also stated their preference to write in group of four as it was fun due to various opinions from the group members.

The second preference would be pair work. 40% (n=21) stated that they prefer to write in pairs rather than groups. This is due to the number of participants which is only two. Since pair work has only two members it provides them opportunity to share their opinions and able to complete the task in a quick manner. They also see pair work as an opportunity to contribute ideas and learn more during the discussion. The respondent said, 'more chances to contribute opinions and if it is in group of four discussing with four people takes longer time'. However, the same participant stated pair and group work to be helpful in both questions one and two. The following quotes illustrate the ideas, 'exchange opinions' and '[able to complete] the summary [in quick manner] and improve the relationship between the team members'. The participant might try to explain the benefits of pair and group works generally in the classroom setting when answering question one and two. This is because as the learners seldom get chances to engage themselves in collaborative task due to the large number of learners in a class. However, when it comes to the respondents' participations, he/she might prefer pair work as it gives more opportunity for him/her to contribute ideas with only one partner and complete them in a quick manner.

Based on the above explanations from the group and pair work, it is revealed that in group work participants were able to complete their task within the stipulated time, however participants in pairs claimed group work slows down the task. This could be due to active participation in the discussion during the group work, whereas those who preferred pair work, might prefer to work with only one partner as there might be too many contradicted opinions in the group work which slows down the decision-making process on the points discussed, thus, slowing down task completion. Hence, it should

be noted that, the preference depends on the nature of the learners. This finding is in line with the statement that not everyone can collaborate in pair or group task (Storch, 2001, 2002; Watanabe and Swain, 2007).

One participant who has chosen a preference to work in pair also stated that group work slowdown the writing process as the members were talking. The participant explained that, 'group will slow down the efficiency as the member [talk] something else sometimes'. Another participant also stated that pair work is preferred as group work made the class noisy. The explanation was, 'because four people are too noisy during the discussion'. This could be due to the nature of the task which requires the participants to discuss so, when they discuss in group they were not able to whisper as what a few pairs did on the data collection day, so it turned out to be very noisy at times as the researcher had to control them a few times during the task.

On the other hand, 14% (n=7) participants preferred to work individually. A research conducted by Elola and Oskoz (2010) on participants' perception in collaborative writing using wikis and chats, revealed that a few participants preferred to work individually. They feel they could develop their own personal style and adjust their own time schedule. Another research conducted by Fernandez Dobao and Blum (2013) also revealed the same result as participants preferred to work individually so that they were able to complete the task in a quick manner. Hence, this research has revealed the same result as well. Participants opting for working individually explained that working individually enabled them to allocate their time and ideas better. One of the participants stated that, 'it is easy to sort out time and ideas'. These participants prefer to work individually as they could divide their time and develop ideas based on their own pace and style. They might dislike working in pair and group as it requires them to rely on their other group members.

Besides, participants also preferred to work individually because they claimed that somehow, they are going to do it alone during the exam. This shows that they wanted to prepare themselves for the examination. The participant explained that, 'need to do it alone in exam'.

The following three questions (questions 6, 7 and 8) were meant to elicit participants' perception on the various components of task performance: content, vocabulary and grammar.

6. If you had written the text individually instead of in a group or pair, how do you think its content would have been? Why?

Table 4.11: Students' question 6

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
If I had written the summary individually, its content would have been	better	8	15%
	more or less the same	20	39%
	worse	24	46%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

The respondents were asked to state their opinion on content if they had written the summary individually. Table 4.11 shows that, 46% (n=24) would be worse followed by 39% (n=20) stated it would be more or less the same and only 15% (n=8) admitted it to be better. It shows clearly that the participants prefer to work collaboratively in order to produce better summary.

Content plays a major role in summary writing. 10 marks is awarded for content in SPM examination. Since these students are preparing themselves for SPM examination (in the current year, 2017), they had to train themselves to derive 10

points from the passage and summarize it within the stipulated number of words (130-135 words). Majority failed to derive 10 points and results in losing marks in the content part. Thus, based on these findings, it is proven that the participants had benefited from the collaborative task rather than doing it individually.

Their responses for worse preference had been thematised as: *inadequate summarizing skills* and *collaborative task.*

Summarizing skills is very essential in summary writing. It requires the learners to relocate the points, paraphrase the sentences and use appropriate linkers to produce cohesive text. However, participants explained that they are lacking in the summarizing skills. Hence, learners stated that content for their summary writing would be worse if they had written it individually. The following two quotes illustrate the ideas, 'I [tend] to miss out points' and 'not good at developing ideas'. A third one stated that, 'I [failed] to [relocate] points from the summary'. Another recurrent comment from the participant was, 'I [do not] have [summarizing skills]'. Thus, this finding clearly shows that collaborative task enables them to work better on their content while writing summary.

Participants also explained that they need someone to guide them with their content writing. This again refers to collaborative task illustrated by Vygotsky where expert peers assist the weak ones. This method promotes learning better than teacher-centered approach. If this method is applied, it would provide more benefits for the learners to improve on every aspect. One respondent stated that, '[when working alone, I do not] have people to ask when I have some questions on writing'. Another one explained that, 'facing difficulties in writing summary so it would be a great help if there are more people to assist'. Thus, collaborative summary improves participants writing tremendously.

39% (n=20) explained that their work would have been more or less the same if they had written the summary individually. Their responses were concluded into one category which is, *similarity in abilities.*

Respondents explained that their work would be more or less the same with what they have produced with their partners because they have the same method of relocating points or ideas. One of the participants explained that, 'I am able to [relocate] the same points as my partner'. They also claimed that they had same ideas or points which once again proved that the work might be more or less the same if they had completed it individually. The respondent stated, 'it is because my ideas were almost the same with my friends'. Another participant stated that they both had same writing skills which will enable their content to be more or less the same. The participant said, 'because my writing [skills are] more or less the same with my group members'. Hence, the level of proficiency and ability of each group member must be taken into consideration in collaborative task as it might wear out the energy of one member if the others are not able to contribute to the task.

On the other hand, 15% (n=8) expressed that their content would be better if they had written it individually. This could be due to their *personality* or *ability.*

Participants explained that they have their own ideas to write the summary and do not like to compromise with others' ideas. The participant explained that, 'prefer individual than groups because I have my own idea, dislike tolerance'. This finding is similar to the previous research conducted by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013). They stated that one of their participants preferred to complete the task individually as the participant has his own idea to complete the task. Likewise, to the previous explanation, participants' attitudes and personalities play a major role in creating conducive environment during the collaborative task. Besides, it is stated that, they could find points easily. The respondent stated, 'can relocate more content in quick

manner'. This might be due to the number of people, as too many people take time to make up decision and cause delay in completing the task. So, this participant stated that the content would be better by doing it individually. This revealed that participants' personality and perhaps ability play an important role in collaborative task to keep them engaged throughout the task to produce better work.

7. If you had written the text individually instead of in a group or a pair, how do you think its vocabulary would have been? Why?

Table 4.12: Students' question 7

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
If I had written the summary individually, its vocabulary would have been	better	7	13%
	more or less the same	15	29%
	worse	30	58%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

This question relates with the use of vocabularies in summary writing tasks. 5 marks is allocated for language for summary writing in SPM examination. It includes choices of words, grammar, and coherence of the summary. 58% (n=30) explained that their vocabulary would have been worse if they had done the work individually, followed by 29% (n=15) stated it will be more or less the same and 13% (n=7) claimed it to be better (see **Table 4.12**).

Substantial number of participants, 58% (n=30) stated that their vocabularies would have been worse if they have done the work individually**.** Almost all the given explanations reflect to the collaborative task. Participants explained that when they did the work in group, their group members were able to suggest synonyms in order to paraphrase the summary as direct lifting will pull down their language marks. They

also stated that they could not think of particular words to paraphrase until being told by the group members. The participants explained that, 'group thought of words to change in the summary which I [could] not think of'. Another participant stated that, 'I [am not aware] if my [vocabularies] are used correctly'. Hence, working individually will worsen the use of vocabularies since the participants need someone to guide them throughout the task as they have poor vocabulary knowledge.

29% (n=15) stated that they would not face any changes if the summary had been written individually instead of group of four or pair. These responses were similar to responses in question six as they stated that they have the same proficiency level, thus it did not enable them to learn from each other. One respondent explained that, 'because we have the same vocabulary level'. Another one stated, 'because the writing skills of [my teammates] and mine are more or less the same caused our vocabulary [knowledge] remained same and we did not learn much'.

In another case this pair divided their task among the members without any discussion. It led the pair not learning any new vocabulary from each other. The participant stated, 'because my friend is the one who helps and thinks of the content that should be written in the summary. I write it, and I use suitable words for passage'. Thus, it needs to be emphasized that, participants' level of proficiency plays a vital role in enabling them to learn from each other. This finding is also significant in the past research conducted by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, 2013.

13% (n=7) stated their preferences to write individually but had misinterpreted the question and did not answer it accordingly. Only 2 % (n=1) gave a reason. The participant stated, 'I like to work individually'. The same participant has stated his/her preference in working individually even in the previous question. This might be due to his/her personality which prefers to complete tasks individually instead of discussing or relying on others.

8. If you had written the text individually instead of in a group or a pair, how do you think its grammar would have been? Why?

Table 4.13: Students' question 8

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
If I had written the summary individually, its grammar would have been	better	5	10%
	more or less the same	21	40%
	worse	26	50%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

The findings revealed in Table 4.13 shows that 50% (n=26) explained that writing summary individually would have worsen their grammar. 21% (n=40%) stated that their grammar would be the same if they had written it individually. However, only 10% (n=5) claimed that their grammar would be better if they had written it individually.

Grammar is also an essential component for summary in SPM examination as it comes under language. As mentioned earlier, language carries five marks in summary writing for SPM. Majority of the learner made mistakes in tenses as tense is inconsistent most of the time. Besides, they also translate their sentences directly with the help of the electronic dictionary which affects their marks in language part again. Thus, this result has revealed their perception on grammar if they had written the summary individually.

50% (n=26) stated that their grammar in the summary writing would have been worse if they had written it individually. These participants claimed that their grammar level is poor so they need someone to guide or correct their mistakes. One of the participants explained, 'because my grammar is not really good'. Another participant stated that, 'it is because we could correct each other's grammar during the summary

writing processes.' A third one stated that, 'because my group members will teach me and try to discuss with each other. Hence, they particularly relied on their peers to complete the task and had improved their grammar skills over the time. Again this finding reflects the previous study done by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013). Their results revealed that the participants rely on their members as well to identify certain errors and offer suggestions. This also promotes collaborative learning among learners instead of having teacher-centred class. Having a big number of learners will not be a hinder to promote collaborative task in the classroom anymore.

Secondly, 40% (n=21) stated that if they had written summary individually their grammar would have been more or less the same with the one they produced via collaborative task. Majority of the participants claimed that they have the same level of proficiency with their group members. This finding is similar to questions six and seven where participants feel that their group members have the same level of proficiency. One participant claimed that, 'because our grammar level is the same', thus, they were unable to learn from each other. On the contrary, a few participants stated that, they did not correct their errors. This could be due to a few reasons such as, taking things for granted as the summary writing is not a gradable assignment so the members did not correct the errors or they might feel uncomfortable to do so. One participant stated that, 'we seldom correct any grammar errors.' Likewise, in the past research conducted by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013) the participants claimed not to correct their errors as they did not feel comfortable doing it. Another similar research conducted by Elola and Oskoz, (2010) also reveals that a few of the participants did not correct their peers' errors in the grammar part as it is considered inappropriate for them but at the same time another group of the participants liked to work with peers who would be able to correct and edit their errors.

However, 10% (n=5) stated that their grammar would have been better if they write it individually. This is because they would like to develop their own style as being mentioned in the previous question. One of the participants wrote, 'although my friends' grammar [skills is] better than mine at least I can learn if I write it [on my own].' The same participant has stated preference to work individually in question five as it will be convenient to work with. This is again similar to the previous research, Elola and Oskoz, (2010), which found their participants prefer to work alone to develop own style when they work outside of the classroom. As mentioned earlier, personalities of a learner affect the effectiveness of collaborative task. If the leaner does not prefer to work collaboratively, there will not be much contribution pertaining to the subject during the task. Hence, both parties will not benefit from it.

Next, the following two questions (questions 9 and 10) were designed to elicit participants' opinion on the L2 development which are on vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

9. How helpful do you think this collaborative writing task was for improving your vocabulary knowledge? Why?

Table 4.14: Students' question 9

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
For improving my vocabulary knowledge, this collaborative writing task was	not helpful	4	7%
	helpful	28	54%
	very helpful	16	31%
	extremely helpful	4	8%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

It was found that 54% (n=28) stated that collaborative task has improved their vocabulary knowledge, 31% (n=16) claimed it to be very helpful and 7% (n= 4) explained it to be extremely helpful. However, 8% (n= 4) showed reservation to the question (see **Table 4.14**). As mentioned earlier, all the responses for helpful preferences have been combined and the responses have been thematised as *collaboration.*

Students in this context mostly preferred to translate the meaning of the words directly with the help of electronic dictionary to avoid lifting words from the passage. Translating words from electronic dictionary will affect their marks as those words usually do not fit in the context. Hence, collaboration in completing a task enabled them to learn new vocabulary from their peers. Participants explained that they were able to improve their vocabulary knowledge after being engaged in the prolonged collaborative writing task. One participant explained that, 'I learnt a lot of new vocabularies'. They also learnt to change the words (paraphrase) by widening their knowledge on synonyms through the discussions. One of the participants stated, 'I [learnt] new words from them although the meaning is the same'. In another situation,

a participant who was unable to experience linguistic accuracy in question number seven agreed that collaborative task had actually helped to improve his/her vocabulary knowledge. The participant stated that, 'teammates have different ideas which get to improve my vocabularies'. Collaborative task also enabled the participants to improve their vocabulary knowledge as the weak participants had been guided by the expert peers. The following quote, illustrates the above idea, 'my friends reminded me of the words that I seldom use or they taught me new words'.

On the contrary, 7% (n=4) stated that collaborative task was not able to improve their vocabulary knowledge due the *lack of collaboration and participants' personality*. Participants explained that most of them did not use unfamiliar words during the summary writing. The participant explained that, 'we did not really use too many [complicated] words'. This shows that they did not discuss the choices of words during the summary writing task. Thus, they did not get the chance to improve their vocabulary knowledge. However, this same participant agreed that collaborative task is helpful in improving grammar knowledge in question ten. The participant explained that, 'more people more eyes so we would be able to identify grammar errors more effectively'.

Another participant explained that there were no or little collaboration during the task. The explanation was, 'we did it on our own way, one write the summary and another three [participants] [relocated] the points from the passage, so it is not that much helpful'. Hence, it can be concluded that, if there is no collaboration among the group members they would not benefit from the collaborative task.

In another situation, these participants explained that collaboration in completing a task does not make any difference in terms of their vocabulary as the words can be just lifted out from the passage. The following quotes summarize their views on the above ideas, 'because the words in the summary can [be lifted] from the paragraph' and 'does

not make [any] difference'. This could be due to the timing of the task as it was after schools' exam. Since, the work is not being graded and assessed these participants might not engage in it in a serious manner. It was noticeable among a few groups during the data collection day. Again, participants' personality plays a vital role in a collaborative task to determine if they could benefit from it.

10. How helpful do you think this collaborative writing task was for improving your grammar knowledge? Why?

Table 4.15: Students' question 10

Category	Preference	Sample (n=52)	Percentage
For improving my grammar knowledge, this collaborative writing task was	not helpful	9	17%
	Helpful	27	52%
	very helpful	12	23%
	extremely helpful	4	8%
	Total	**52**	**100%**

Table 4.15 shows participants' preference on collaborative task in improving their grammar knowledge. 52% (n=27) stated it to be helpful, 23% (n=12) claimed it to be very helpful and 8% (n=4) explained it to be extremely helpful. However, 17% (n=9) stated that collaborative task is not helpful in improving their grammar knowledge.

Since, all the responses for helpful preferences have been combined, thus, 83% (n=43) explained that collaborative task has improved their grammar knowledge by *pooling ideas with their peers and through the guidance from their group members*.

Majority of the participants explained that they were able to improve their grammar skills after being corrected and discussed with their group members. The

participants saw the task as an opportunity to learn from their peers for future use. The participant wrote, 'because we corrected each other's grammar mistakes so that we would not do it again in the future'. Another one explained that, 'I learnt the correct usage of grammar'. This participant might refer to the grammar rules that he/she learnt from an expert partner. A third one explained that, 'my friends corrected my mistakes thus helping me'. Hence, it can be concluded that, collaborative task has helped the participants to improve their grammar knowledge as they get an opportunity to learn from their expert peers and apply it accurately in their future task. Participants in this context learnt by memorizing notes and rules but when they engaged in collaborative task, they were able to experience it and learnt from their peers.

In contrast, 17% (n=9) saw collaborative task as not being helpful to improve their grammar knowledge. Their responses were majority on *the level of proficiency of a group member, collaborative task and the difficulties of the task.* The level of proficiency of a group member plays an important role to enable learners to benefit from the collaborative task. Having the same or lower level of proficiency with the group members will not push the participants to improve their grammar knowledge. It is because there will not be many things to be discussed as they might have the same or low grammar knowledge. Besides, they also tended to rely on each other too much in order to complete the task in resulting in them not improving their knowledge on grammar. So, having the same level of proficiency would not be helpful in grammar development. The following two quotes illustrate the above ideas, 'I have same grammar [level] with my teammates, so I am actually not improving much' and 'no offense, my friend only knows basic grammar, so I did not really learn anything new throughout the whole process.' Another participant wrote, 'we may rely on each other too much'. This finding reflects the previous finding by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013). They stated that a few of their participants expressed that collaborative task

could not help them to improve their grammatical knowledge as they had 'similar level'.

Despite this, one participant had pointed out that the group members did not contribute equally during the task. When a proper discussion is not being carried out it will affect the partners as they would not be able to gain any benefits from the task. The participant mentioned that, he/she 'wrote their own way, not much helpful'. The same participant stated the same opinion when asked if collaborative task helped him/her in improving vocabulary knowledge in question nine. So, it can be concluded here that participants will not receive any benefits if they failed to pool or exchange ideas about the task. Another one stated that, 'I cannot learn grammar from just watching other people writing', however the same participant has stated that collaborative task is very helpful in improving vocabulary knowledge as they were able to discuss with their group members. So, this finding reveals the participants' involvement with a task is crucial for developing in summary writing.

The level of difficulty of a task in collaborative work also plays an important role in improving participants' knowledge; it should always suit their needs and proficiency level. However, when it does not suit them, it hinders gaining benefits from the collaborative task. Since the participants composed of upper intermediate level of learners, some of them expressed that the task is too easy. The following quote summarizes the view, 'most of the grammar is just basic'.

Thus, for the third research question, analysis of questions one and two showed that, a majority of the participants stated that pair work is helpful (94%) compared to group work (90%). The most prominent reasons were, they were able to complete the given work within the stipulated time and collaborated well with their partners compared to being in groups of four. This could be due to the number of participants where there were only two participants in pair and they were able to solve language-

related problems in a faster manner compared to groups of four. However, as mentioned earlier, participants will only benefit from collaborative task, if they engage themselves in the discussion actively in order to solve the language problems (Fernandez Dobao, 2012). On the other hand, when these participants were asked about their preference for collaborating (pairs or groups of four) in question 5, a majority agreed to groups of four (46%) compared to pairs (40%). As discussed earlier in the above section, this might be due to the participants' learning environment. Since collaborative writing is a novel strategy for the participants, they might state generally that pair work or group work is helpful but when they were asked about their preference personally, a majority might choose groups of four based on their experience.

On the other hand, 7 out of 52 participants stated their dislike for collaborative writing. The main reason for this was that these students preferred to have their own style and liked to work according to their own pace and at their own time. It should be noted again that not all learners can collaborate well in pair or group as there are individual differences. This result reflects the previous research conducted by Watanabe and Swain, 2007 and Fernandez Dobao, 2012.

Next, it can be concluded that the number of participants who saw a positive influence of collaboration in questions six, seven and eight, perceived vocabulary (58%) as slightly higher than content (46%) and grammar (50%). These participants were able to improve their vocabulary and also learnt the choice of words to be used in summary writing from their members. This finding also reflects the previous study conducted by Fernandez Dobao and Blum, (2013) where their participants, 31 out of 55, showed greater positive influence in the vocabulary element.

The analysis of the questionnaire for questions nine and ten on the other hand, showed that the participants had improved in their lexical knowledge (92%) compared

to their grammatical knowledge (83%). Hence it can be concluded that, participants stated that they had improved well in vocabulary knowledge in both parts of the questionnaire (part 1 consisted of questions 6, 7 and 8 whereas part 2 consisted of questions 9 and 10).

This could be due to the participants' attitude. Most of the participants usually write down any new vocabularies that they had learnt with the meaning and memorize them. Later on, they use those words in their writing. So, this attitude might lead the participants to learn new words from their partners hence be one of the reasons of the participants' preference over vocabulary component compared to the other two components. However, sometimes their choices of words do not fit the writing context.

In sum, a majority of the participants explained that they were able to improve their vocabulary and grammar knowledge mostly through collaborative task as they got an opportunity to share, exchange or discuss their ideas with their partners and being taught or guided by their expert members during the task. Thus, it improved their knowledge both lexically and grammatically. This finding also supports the results of one of the questions in research question one, the study on the summary writing components. It revealed that the participants had improved significantly (60%) in their grammar and style and quality of the expression (vocabulary) compared to the other three components: logical development of ideas (56%), organization (29%) and punctuation, spelling and mechanics (37%) after being engaged in the collaborative activity.

A few participants expressed dislike toward collaborative writing as they would like to write the summary according to their own pace and improve or prepare themselves for the examinations however, these participants chose helpful or positive preference when they were asked if collaborative writing had improved their task performance or developed their L2 summary writing during or after engaging in the

activity. Therefore, more awareness should be raised among the participants before the activity to explain about what they were going to be engaged in (Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013). Hence, it should be noted that, mainly only active participants were able to benefit from the task. As stated by Watanabe and Swain, 2007 and Fernandez Dobao, 2012, not all participants are able to collaborate and solve the language related problems due to various factors such as, personalities and preferences.

It would be more enriching if a face-to-face interview could be conducted in a future study to elicit participants' perceptions on collaborative writing as verbal interview enables the interviewer to probe more from the participants.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examines the relationships between collaborative summary writing, number of participants and the quality of final summary writing produced by the participants in the post-test. Besides, it also elicits participants' perceptions on collaborative writing. It requires the participants to state their opinions on their task performance and L2 development after engaging in a prolonged activity.

The analysis of the research questions revealed positive results from a majority of the participants. It revealed that the participants were able to improve their summary writing after engaging themselves in the treatment phase (two weeks); the improvement was not only in overall scores (pre-test and post-test) but great improvements were seen in terms of the quality of the final summary writing through three out of five major L2 summary writing components which are (a) organization, (b) logical development of ideas (content) , and (c) grammar. The findings are in line with the previous study stating that collaborative writing enhances participants' writing skills, (Fernandez Dobao, 2012). However, in the survey questionnaire, participants stated that they have perceived greater knowledge in linguistic compared to content and grammar but the result in this section revealed that participants did not improve in that component.

On the other hand, the analysis of research question two revealed that groups had performed better than pairs, not significantly in the overall scores but in the mean score value (40% improvement). It can be evidenced in research question three as well when majority of the participants expressed that the number of participants in groups enabled them to discuss and relocate the points accurately. This might be the reason for all the groups of four perform well in both weeks. The results on the components of the summary writing (second part) again revealed groups performed better than pairs in all

five major components. The most prominent component is the logical development of ideas.

Participants also reacted positively towards the collaborative condition even though it was a novel approach for them. Participants also described collaborative writing as a fun activity. They perceived it in a positive way and saw greater chance to improve their summarizing skills. A majority agreed that collaboration is helpful in their summary writing especially in improving their vocabulary knowledge compared to the other components.

The positive perception could be due to the number of participants as they were able to discuss with each other and also due to the nature of the collaborative writing which requires them to collaborate together to produce a final product. Hence, the current study reflects the ideas of previous study, stating that pair or group work helped participants to improve in the quality of their final writing. (Fernandez Dobao, 2012; Shehadah, 2011; Storch, 2005; Fernandez Dobao & Blum, 2013; Lin & Maarof, 2013)

Those who preferred pair work claimed that the number of participants in group work had hindered them from completing the task and having a proper discussion but participants in groups of four claimed that the number of participants helped them to complete the task systematically as they could relocate points together, discuss and exchange their ideas before writing out the final summary.

Thus, it can be concluded that, collaborative writing especially groups of four had improved the quality of participants' summary writing. Majority of the participants expressed that collaborative writing had improved their vocabulary knowledge compared to grammar knowledge when they were asked to state their perceptions. However, from the results of the analytic components of their performances, it was revealed that they performed better in the 'logical development of ideas' compared to

'style and quality of expression' component. Participants were very receptive towards the condition as it was a novel approach applied in the summary writing classroom.

5.2 Implications

Collaborative writing works well in improving summary writing. This method can be applied in the normal classroom setting to teach summary writing even with larger number of students. Emphasis has been given more to essay writing than to summary writing among L2 learners. Due to this, learners are not able to master summarizing skills and instead they opt to use copy-delete strategy (Norisma et al, 2007) when they were asked to summarize a text. Summarizing skills are not only important for English but for other fields as well. For example, someone who studies or works in the medical field needs summarizing skills to write a report about a patient. Hence, learners should be given more exposure to summary writing during a normal classroom. Collaborative writing enables learners to improve their summarizing skills through discussion, sharing or pooling their knowledge with their expert partners.

Future research will need to be conducted with a larger number of participants from the same proficiency level with an extended treatment phase. Finally, the scope of the present study can also be extended by incorporating a verbal interview and Language Related Episode's (LREs) could be incorporated into the study as well to get richer and triangulated results about the experience and process.

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