

# The influence of self-editing on micro skills development in academic writing in English as a second language

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Self-editing skills are extremely important in foreign language learning; without these students do not tend to write appropriately in academic context. These skills are, however, often less developed in school graduates and thus it is essential to understand challenges faced by students. The study was conducted to answer the research question: whether self-editing as a final component of written production can boost writing micro skills of learners. It analyses essays of 50 second year students of the Faculty of Economics at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, written in English as the second language and reports on the most frequent errors they usually commit in their formal writing. The aim of this study is to focus on the stage of self-editing and identify the role of self-editing in micro skills development. Findings reveal that students are most often weak at producing coherent and cohesive paragraphs; they also lack appropriate argumentation and are often inaccurate in using grammatical structures and lexis. They also, however, suggest that L2 writing students can improve their own writing by transferring micro skills they learn when editing texts. The present study may contribute to teachers' views on developing micro skills of student writers.

*Keywords:* self-editing, writing micro skills, typical errors, essays

## Introduction

Academic writing has started to be seen as a desired aspect of students' academic and professional training across the disciplines in the majority of universities. Student programs are increasingly using academic writing in English as a second language as a graded component of students' coursework. The expectation is that, at this educational level, graduate students need to master a variety of written genres. Writing tasks vary from writing short answers in exams, doing some written assignments like reports, seminar research papers, or term papers to writing dissertations and theses in ESL. A number of universities employ all of these sets of genres as they are considered an integral part of not

only their graduate students' educational training but also their professionalization and professional identity formation. However, entering universities students are not often skillful in the written language and face some difficulties of different kinds despite the fact that secondary education also implies teaching writing skills. Schools often focus more on boosting grammatical and spelling rules than on the content of writing. Although it concerns mainly the native language of students, this has its impact also on acquiring writing skills in a second language, particularly English. "Writing production is multifaceted and includes a number of skills that must work together", particularly organizing essays coherently with appropriate sentence structure and vocabulary, "spelling, handwriting, prior knowledge of the topic, and familiarity with models of academic literacies or genres", where high quality writing depends on this large constellation of skills and abilities (TEAL Center, 2010, p. 1). T. Baranovskaya et al (2011, p. 52–56), A. Gillet (1996) and other researchers see writing as the most problematic use of English in tertiary education. It is a complex and rather difficult to acquire process re-

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quiring from a learner a number of academic skills (micro and macro) and comprising several stages, namely, prewriting, drafting, and revising. According to the Common European Reference Framework for languages (CEFR), an advanced learner can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples (Council of Europe, 2011). It is worth pointing out that the invariant kernel of writing skills correspond to “can do” statements used in the CEFR to describe what learners can do at various levels of skill in speaking, writing, listening and reading. H. D. Brown, who was the first to categorize skills into micro and macro, classifies micro skills of written production in the following way. Having acquired each of these micro skills, students are supposed to produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English; produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose; produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns; use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g., tense, pluralization), patterns, and rules; express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms; use cohesive devices in written discourse (Brown, 2004, p. 221).

All the steps in the writing process – planning, organizing, presenting, re-writing, and proofreading – have long been the subject of investigation and proved to equally contribute to the effectiveness and quality of written production. The aim of this study is to focus on the stage of self-editing and identify the role of self-editing in micro skills development. Teachers need to be aware of their students’ needs and, in order to determine these, it is necessary to analyze the errors made by the students in written production. Thus, this study also intends to report on typical errors made by learners and examines if students edit for errors during revision effectively and if additional editing instruction helps reduce errors in revised essays written in ESL.

### Literature Review

Over the last decade, the research literature has focused much on the written genres, since they provide a wide scope for research, including the most problematic areas in the field and ways of tackling them. A. Levinzon (2014, p. 29–32) analyzes the reasons for relatively poor writing skills of Russian schoolchildren suggesting some ideas how to deal with them. She claims that these could be due to 1) less importance of speech development in school curriculum than that of grammar, spelling or punctuation areas which leads to the underdevelopment of critical writing; 2) inappropriacy of the topics of essays in a number of Russian textbooks provided to students since they are not aimed at adolescents’ emotional experience, discussing disputable is-

ues and expressing the voice of the writer. Y. Ahapkina (2013, p. 88–90) also touches upon some long-term and contextual reasons for deviations from the speech standard in written language of native speakers who create an academic text such as students’ extreme inattentiveness to information given for contemplation, disinterest to acquiring the skill of perceiving flows of information, and also surprising indiscriminateness to their own writing and that of their peers. She also depicts the most frequent errors students commit in their essays in the native language, among which are concord, word formation, the usage of linking words and phrases, and intensifiers.

It is necessary to notice that Brown distinguishes between mistakes and errors which he considers to be technically different phenomena (Brown, 2007, p. 257–258). Mistakes are intrinsic in both native and second language and seen as slips or performance errors which can be easily self-corrected while errors manifest the language competence of the learner. Error analysis should be an inevitable part in the language acquisition process during which learners benefit from various forms of feedback on the errors they commit. Investigations into the nature and effects of error correction were attempted by a number of researchers. Much debate arose when J. Truscott (1996) published his review essay “The Case against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes” considering error correction as unnecessary and even harmful. Most of researchers, however, agree that there should be the initiation of the correcting activity in various forms. Particularly, D. Ferris and B. Roberts (2001, p. 161) and also J. Bitchener (2008, p. 102) claim that, despite controversial opinions on the efficacy of error feedback, most studies on error correction in L2 writing classes have provided evidence that students who receive error feedback from teachers improve in accuracy overall quality over time. This error feedback from teachers could be provided in different forms such as direct or indirect corrective feedback. The former is considered as “the provision of the correct linguistic form or structure above or near the linguistic error” (Bitchener, 2008, p. 105). This direct correction can be done in different forms from crossing out the wrong word or phrase and writing the correct one above or in the margin to oral meta-linguistic explanation with the rules and examples being presented, practiced, and discussed. Indirect corrective feedback provides less explicit correction through underlining the error and using a code to indicate what type of error has occurred so that students could improve their piece of writing by themselves (Bitchener, 2008, p. 105; Diab, 2010, p. 91; Ferris et al, 2013, p. 328).

Some research is also devoted to the usefulness of peer-checking in the writing process. Reichelt (1999, p. 195) proves that peer-editing can improve students’ language ability by reducing the frequency of their er-

rors. Harris and Brown (2013, p. 110) consider peer-assessment along with self-assessment, using for these the term PASA, coming to the conclusion that “although PASA accuracy is important it seems unlikely that students will feel confident in their own evaluations without guidance and support from their teacher” at least at the secondary school level. Diab (2010, p. 92) expresses the similar opinion in favor of peer-assessment having found that student writers being engaged in peer-editing reduced their rule-based language errors in revised drafts more than those who self-edited their essays”. R. Santagata (2005, p. 504) also claims that handing over the mistake management activity to students does not assure a high level reasoning process on their part. Nor does it assure significant elaboration of the mistake. Mistakes tend to be elaborated more when the correction is given by the teacher.

However, it is important to notice that self-editing seems to be undervalued. Particularly, Ferris and Roberts (2001, p. 166) studied the differences in student editing success ratios across five major categories of error – verbs, noun endings, articles, word choice, and sentence structure. They concluded that less explicit feedback seemed to help students to self-edit just as well as corrections coded by error type. Further Ferris (2004, p. 58) categorized errors into lexical, morphological, and syntactic while Bitchener (2008, p. 102) targeted only article-based mistakes. In this study the analysis of different error categories has been implemented to identify the most problematic areas in academic writing for students and what role self-editing has to play in developing micro-skills in writing.

## Methodology

The study was conducted to answer the research question: whether self-editing as a final component of written production can boost writing micro skills of learners. It is based on a corpus of essays of 50 full-time students, randomly chosen at the beginning and at the end of their second year of study at the Faculty of Economics of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow. This means that they were non-native speakers of English. At the time of data collection, all the participants were taking EAP classes preparing for taking a mock exam designed according to the standard of IELTS. The compulsory course of EAP is generally taught over two academic years. During the first year paragraph writing is addressed, while the second one is devoted to more comprehensive writing, particularly essays. In addition, the syllabus suggests a simultaneous course of English for specific purposes (ESP). Although most students have passed the Unified State Examination in the English language, their level of English still varies. Ideally,

their level of English should correspond to level B2 of CEFR, which is identical to an IELTS score of 5-6.

The following criteria were applied to the written assignments. The task was set pretty openly in the course syllabi. The students were expected to provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem stated in the topic of their assignment and present a solution to the problem, express their own opinion and provide well-balanced argumentation. The word limit in the written assignments was originally set by the standard of the IELTS at minimum 250, and time provided for the task fulfillment is limited to 40 minutes. There was no special selection of essays of students with higher or lower level of the English language which varied from Pre-Intermediate to Upper Intermediate level.

Criteria for the essay assessment were those of IELTS writing band descriptors: Task 2 (public version) and included such components as:

1. task response – Task 2 requires the candidates to formulate and develop a position in relation to a given prompt in the form of a question or statement. Ideas should be supported by evidence, and examples may be drawn from the candidates’ own experience;
2. coherence and cohesion – this criterion concerns the overall clarity and fluency of the message: how the response organizes and links information, ideas and language. Coherence refers to the linking of ideas through logical sequencing. Cohesion refers to the varied and appropriate use of cohesive devices (for example, logical connectors, pronouns and conjunctions) to assist in making the conceptual and referential relationships between and within sentences clear;
3. lexical resource – this criterion refers to the range of vocabulary the candidate has used and the accuracy and appropriacy of that use in terms of the specific task;
4. grammatical range and accuracy – this criterion refers to the range and accurate use of the candidate’s grammatical resource as manifested in the candidate’s writing at the sentence level.

Essay topics being of general interest to the public (about music, education, crime and punishment) were as follows:

- Music is played in every society and culture in the world today. Some people think that music brings only benefits to individuals and society. However, others think that music can have a negative effect on both. Discuss both points of view and express your own opinion.
- Some people believe that exams are an inappropriate way of measuring students’ perfor-

mance and should be replaced by continuous assessment. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this view?

- Some people argue that universities should provide students with more practical training for their future career. Should university education be more vocational or academic?
- Some people believe that there should be fixed punishments for each type of crime. Others, however, argue that the circumstances of an individual crime, and the motivation for committing it, should always be taken into account when deciding on the punishment. Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.

At the beginning of the second year, after students had been introduced to the basic concepts of essay writing, types of essays and criteria used for assessment, they were asked to write a diagnostic in-class IELTS-type essay for 40 minutes.

At the next stage of the experiment the essays were analyzed and each occurrence of any kind of error was carefully examined in the wider context in which it was used and was classified in terms of a specific area. Particularly, errors concerned formal aspects (that is the layout of the paper and its structure) as well as linguistic-stylistic aspects (grammar and spelling, choice of lexis, stylistics, and punctuation). Then the frequency of each type of error in the essays was calculated in percentage terms (See Table 1). During the course learners were consistently involved into revision of features of academic writing, along with grammatical and lexical aspects, with the focus on error correction exercises. The choice of revised features was based on the most frequent errors made by students. Meanwhile the students were also asked to make a list of their own typical errors they tend to commit in their written assignments and, considering these errors, spend 10 minutes on editing each of their consecutive essays written during the course. At the end of the semester a final diagnostic timed essay was implemented, with errors being analyzed afterwards in percentage terms (See Table 2).

## Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that L2 writing students can improve their own writing by transferring micro skills they learn when editing texts. The results of the essay analysis are in line with those obtained by Ferris et al (2001, p. 172; Ferris 2004, p. 53; Bitchener, 2008, p. 102). Table 1 shows the types of error committed by learners and their frequency divided according to the criteria used in written assignments assessment.

As can be seen from Table 1, students' weakest point concerning the formal aspect seems to be the structure of paragraph which usually consists of the

thesis statement, some supporting ideas and examples. Very often it is difficult for students to distinguish between the topic sentence and supporting ideas since they fail to generalize ideas. Thus, students do not provide well-balanced argumentation (27% of essays), which often leads to insufficient volume (in 7% of essays), mainly due to lack of ideas and also time provided for the written task. In addition, the introduction does not state the topic of the essay clearly (in 13% of them). The conclusion, where there should be expressed a writer's opinion, also suffers not being persuasive enough (9%).

However, the most frequent basic errors of students concern the linguistic-stylistic aspect and can be referred to articles, prepositions, and concord in subject and predicate. Undoubtedly, articles are the most problematic elements for Russian students due to lack of such a grammatical phenomenon in their native language. The use of articles with determiners (*another/other/the other, etc*) also presents some difficulties for students. On the whole, amazing 82% of the essays analyzed contain this error. Incorrectly used prepositions can be encountered in just over half of the essays (56%). The most evident examples (*related with, can influence on, dependent from, invest to, reasons of, rise on 30%, listen something*) again show the interference of the Russian language when students rely on word-to-word translation from their native language. On the other hand, there can be errors of another nature (*by radio, by/in the other hand, at morning, despite of, etc*) showing some gaps in students' knowledge in this area. Very often students use prepositions such as *and/but* in the initial position while Biber et al. (1999, p. 84) claim that "the prescription against initial coordinators seems most influential in academic prose." Concord in subject and predicate is the area where some mistakes, typical of almost half the essays, are manifested. These, however, can be considered as slips due to inattentiveness of students (*music improve, method don't, there is songs, people enjoys, etc*) and can be easily removed by proofreading. However, others could be due to insufficient knowledge in the corresponding areas of English grammar (*the majority of universities provides, etc*). On the whole, both grammatical and spelling mistakes can be removed by allowing time to proofread the written work, or using the Spellchecker or peer-checking.

In the stylistic area students usually have difficulties with the following aspects: register and appropriacy (14%) and incorrect choice of a word or a phrase (46%). As concerns register and appropriacy, it is often typical of students not to be aware of using certain words in the appropriate register, namely, in academic language, including abbreviations. Incorrect choice of a word or a phrase (wrong collocations) can be due to polysemy in English when students find it difficult to

Table 1  
*Typical errors in students' essays (%) at the beginning of the course*

| Task Response                     |                | Cohesion/Coherence             |                | Lexical Resource  |                | Grammatical Range and Accuracy |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Type of error                     | Occurrence (%) | Type of error                  | Occurrence (%) | Type of error     | Occurrence (%) | Type of error                  | Occurrence (%) |
| wrong layout                      | 6              | linking words                  | 5              | wrong word        | 44             | articles                       | 82             |
| no problem stated in introduction | 13             | illogical ideas                | 11             | wrong collocation | 46             | noun/verb concord              | 49             |
| not persuasive conclusion         | 9              | no central idea in paragraphs  | 22             | lexical register  | 3              | prepositions                   | 56             |
| register                          | 14             | weakly developed argumentation | 27             | spelling          | 44             | word order                     | 5              |
| irrelevant information            | 3              | repetition                     | 8              | word form         | 12             | passive voice                  | 15             |
| underlength                       | 7              |                                |                |                   |                | countable/uncountable nouns    | 16             |
|                                   |                |                                |                |                   |                | punctuation                    | 21             |

Table 2  
*Typical errors in students' essays (%) at the end of the course*

| Task Response                     |                | Cohesion/Coherence             |                | Lexical Resource  |                | Grammatical Range and Accuracy |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Type of error                     | Occurrence (%) | Type of error                  | Occurrence (%) | Type of error     | Occurrence (%) | Type of error                  | Occurrence (%) |
| wrong layout                      | 3              | linking words                  | 4              | wrong word        | 31             | articles                       | 53             |
| no problem stated in introduction | 4              | illogical ideas                | 10             | wrong collocation | 32             | noun/verb concord              | 29             |
| not persuasive conclusion         | 5              | no central idea in paragraphs  | 18             | lexical register  | 2              | prepositions                   | 41             |
| register                          | 9              | weakly developed argumentation | 25             | spelling          | 28             | word order                     | 4              |
| irrelevant information            | 3              | repetition                     | 6              | word form         | 9              | passive voice                  | 10             |
| underlength                       | 5              |                                |                |                   |                | countable/uncountable nouns    | 5              |
|                                   |                |                                |                |                   |                | punctuation                    | 11             |

choose the correct meaning of a word according to the particular context. Examples including such misusage are as follows: *make the job, do crimes, make crime, make homework, do order, do mistakes, make research; increase mood, heal people's emotions, broadcast culture, measure education/ performance/students, perform knowledge, hard crimes, attend sport, visit university; found business, bring up program, economical crisis, low-quantity job, development countries*. This aspect is also closely connected with the interference of the native language. This means that very often students use the words which exist in English but with a different meaning, so called 'false friends', for example, *expertise, complexion*, etc. Among mechanical errors the most common ones concern punctuation, namely commas: after a subordinate sentence which precedes the main clause, or after a front of a word or a group of words which add something to the main part of the sentence, usually adverbials, e.g. *however, for instance, for example, finally, in my opinion*. On the other hand, commas are wrongly used before the pronoun *that*, or in defining relative clauses, which in English is considered as a very bad mistake, but in the Russian language it is a must, for example, *I think/believe/know, that... Nowadays the science is highly developed in different spheres, especially in those, which are connected with education*.

Another common mistake is lack of tentativeness – hedging – in students' written works where they express themselves very straightforwardly, for example, *This is a ridiculous idea*. In these terms Biber et al. (1999, p. 980) state that "it is not at all uncommon to find personal attitudes and estimates of likelihood expressed in academic writing through impersonal stance devices such as modal verbs, adverbials, and extra posed complement clauses".

As can be seen from Table 2, which depicts the results of the essay analysis implemented at the end of the course with types of error being categorized according to the same criteria, the outcome proved to be better than in the first diagnostic test. In terms of task response learners improved the quality of their essays by approximately 50% in layout, particularly introduction and conclusion, and also register, with no changes in the relevancy of information applied. Cohesion and coherence, however, occurred to be much more challenging aspect to acquire, with a very slight improvement of 1-4 errors per category. Lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy, areas in which the vast majority of errors are committed, progressed by nearly 30%.

Appendix A, where a statistical analysis of learners' errors is made separately according to assessment criteria, provides evidence with the probability of 95% that in all cases there has been a significant shift in the level of knowledge, and at the end of the course students showed more proficiency than at the begin-

ning. After sufficient instruction of the teacher and self-editing, the students improved their skills significantly in dealing with the formal aspects of the essays (that is the layout of the paper and its structure) as well as some types of error of linguistic-stylistic aspects (grammatical accuracy and spelling, stylistics, and punctuation). Cohesion and coherence, however, improved only slightly, which prompts that these are the most challenging areas for students.

### Conclusion and teaching implications

Results from this study indicate that those students who are involved in self-correction during written production improved in specific areas of writing. After this study sought to explore some of the most typical errors which non-native students of the English language make in writing essays, it examined the influence of self-editing on improving students' micro skills in writing. At the end of the semester the results of the written assignments occurred to be significantly better than those obtained for the beginning of the academic year. It can be said that micro skills of learners, such as linguistic accuracy, in terms of using correct grammatical structures, appropriate word forms and collocations, spelling and punctuation, could be in some extent improved after self-editing instruction and feedback. It is essential to notice that much depends on the amount of time provided for editing. After instruction sessions, when students were allowed more time to self-edit essays, the occurrence of mistakes decreased noticeably. However, since students are limited in time and often do not have sufficient time for editing while writing essays, the results are not so impressive. This refers mainly to rule-based errors which can be rather easily removed after appropriate instruction and sufficient practice. The same cannot be said about non rule-based errors, such as word collocations, correct choice of words, coherence or developing argumentation, which demand more time and practice and might be removed over time. Thus, different types of errors are likely to require varying treatments (Ferris, 2004, p. 60).

That is why a more practical approach to developing micro skills in academic writing and more focus are necessary. This study can help teachers to reflect on their students' writing and teach some of the above-mentioned challenging aspects with more accuracy in order to improve students' formal written speech and, consequently, their oral competence. There is a need for teachers to prepare themselves to treat errors competently; they must plan for this carefully in designing their courses, and they must execute it faithfully and consistently assisting learners in vocabulary learning and expanding the list of grammatical constructions that are taught through analysis of

written texts. Only by developing understanding of difficulties encountered by students and reasons for them can teachers help students gain control over their writing and meet the challenges of academic writing during the process of the second language acquisition. “L2 student writers want, expect, and value teacher feedback on their written errors” in different forms (Ferris et al, 2001, p. 166).

It can be suggested that teachers need to focus on those parts of language that are significant in the writing process and present some difficulties for students. Errors provide certain feedback for teachers because they manifest effectiveness of teaching materials and teaching techniques, what parts of the syllabus have been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention (Keshavarz, 1992, p. 23–24). The challenge for teachers is to extrapolate from earlier essays of students and apply these findings in personalized instructional design for them. This can be used as a basis for planning revising lessons and exercises.

As Brown (2007, p. 259) states, errors arise from different sources: “interlingual errors of interference from the native language; intralingual errors within the target language; the sociolinguistic context of communication; psycholinguistic or cognitive strategies, and numerous affective variables.” Bearing this in mind, it is essential for teachers to make sure that students have access to additional courses such as Academic writing, Critical thinking, including on-line courses, etc; students need to be encouraged to find ways of using the language that they feel are expressive of their own needs and desires, to read more, to write, speak and listen in the foreign language making efforts to think critically about what was perceived and produced. Students should be taught how to notice their linguistic written output and slowly convert systematic errors into appropriate forms. It is through error analysis that learners can come to improving micro skills in writing such as producing appropriate sentence structures with acceptable choice of words, grammatical systems, spelling, punctuation, and using cohesive devices, at an efficient rate of speed. After being aware of both common and their own typical errors learners are involved in improving these particular weak fields until appearing on the verge of hesitation in the appropriacy of the output produced and making the necessary differentiation between the correct and incorrect application of existing rules. It is a way for students to become more independent, self-regulated learners. “Self-regulated learning refers to the processes by which students attempt to monitor and control their own learning” (Baranovskaya, 2015, p. 38). Particularly, active engagement in self-editing may contribute to learners’ motivation and confidence. It also seems reasonable to agree with Santagata who claims that “students may need some

consciousness-raising ... about why linguistic accuracy and editing skills are important. ... And they need practice, accountability, and the opportunity to engage cognitively in editing as a problem-solving process” (Santagata, 2005, p. 59). Thus, the challenging task of the teacher is seen as facilitating students in developing viable strategies for getting started, drafting, re-writing and editing for a good written output free of errors to be produced.

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### Appendix A

Since observations are rather limited being undertaken only at the beginning and at the end of the course, it cannot be said that they are made from exponential population with known probability distribution. In this case it was appropriate to apply the analysis of nonparametric criteria, such as a rank-based Wilcoxon test. In this test data are constructed as follows. For two samples  $x_1$  and  $x_2$  of the same size  $n$ , the number of differences  $x_2 - x_1$  is calculated, which is then ranked in the ascending order. In the ordered series of values of  $x_2 - x_1$  the sum of ranks ( $T$ ) of positive differences can be seen (Kobzar A. I., 2006). A "typical" shift is significantly predominant in intensity, if  $T_{emp}$  is below or equal to  $T' 0.05$ , and even more significantly predominant if  $T_{emp}$  is less than or equal to  $T' 0.01$ . In our case  $x_1$  corresponds to typical errors in students' essays (%) at the beginning of the course,  $x_2$  means typical errors in students' essays (%) at the end of the course.

Table 3 shows the critical value of the  $T$  criterion by Wilcoxon et al. for the levels of statistical significance  $p \leq 0.05$  and  $p \leq 0,01$  (Wilcoxon et al., 1963).

*Table 1*  
Levels of statistical significance ( $p$ )

| n | Levels of statistical significance ( $p$ ) |      |
|---|--|------|
|   | 0,05                                       | 0,01 |
| 5 | 0  | -    |
| 6 | 2  | -    |
| 7 | 3  | 0    |

*Table 2*  
Task response

| Type of error                     | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_2 - x_1$ |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| wrong layout                      | 6     | 3     | -3          |
| no problem stated in introduction | 13    | 4     | -9          |
| not persuasive conclusion         | 9     | 5     | -4          |
| register                          | 14    | 9     | -5          |
| irrelevant information            | 3     | 3     | 0           |
| under length                      | 7     | 5     | -2          |

In Table 2,  $T$  equals 0 (the sum of ranks of positive differences), which is below the critical value of  $T' 0.05=2$ .

*Table 3*  
Cohesion/coherence

| Type of error                  | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_2 - x_1$ |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| wrong layout                   | 6     | 3     | -3          |
| linking words                  | 5     | 4     | -1          |
| illogical ideas                | 11    | 10    | -1          |
| no central idea in paragraphs  | 22    | 18    | -4          |
| weakly developed argumentation | 27    | 25    | -2          |
| repetition                     | 8     | 6     | -2          |

In Table 3,  $T = 0$  (the sum of ranks of positive differences), which is equal to the critical value of  $T' 0.05=0$ .

*Table 4*  
Lexical resource

| Type of error     | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_2 - x_1$ |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| wrong word        | 44    | 31    | -13         |
| wrong collocation | 46    | 32    | -14         |
| lexical register  | 3     | 2     | -1          |
| spelling          | 44    | 28    | -16         |
| word form         | 12    | 9     | -3          |

In Table 4,  $T=0$  (the sum of ranks of positive differences), which is equal to the critical value of  $T' 0.05=0$ .

*Table 5*  
Grammatical range and accuracy

| Type of error               | $x_1$ | $x_2$ | $x_2 - x_1$ |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| articles                    | 82    | 53    | -29         |
| noun/verb concord           | 49    | 29    | -20         |
| prepositions                | 56    | 41    | -15         |
| word order                  | 5     | 4     | -1          |
| passive voice               | 15    | 10    | -5          |
| countable/uncountable nouns | 16    | 5     | -11         |
| punctuation                 | 21    | 11    | -10         |

In Table 5,  $T=0$  (the sum of ranks of positive differences), which is below the critical value of  $T' 0.05=3$ .