Abstract: This study examines feedback provided by an English teacher to Chilean secondary student texts, in the context of writing short stories collaboratively in an English as a foreign language class. The study aimed to analyze students’ decisions about the teacher’s types of feedback on their short stories. For this investigation, and under the context of qualitative research, there were analyzed 6 consecutive drafts of the students’ short stories, of a public high school in Chile. This is a qualitative research with an action research design. The data collected was analyzed using Straub and Lunsford (1995) categories to describe the impact of the teacher’s written feedback on students’ decisions. In terms of students’ decisions, participant students adopted most of the teacher’s comments. The student’s texts evidenced progress, but still, regardless the feedback provided, they presented some grammatical and organizational issues.

Keywords: collaborative group learning - English as a foreign language - feedback - students’ decisions - writing process
1. Introduction

Writing in a foreign language, at secondary level in Chile, does not only involve a wide variety of vocabulary and complex grammatical structures, it also requires the abilities to organize the ideas into a coherent and cohesive text. This task of organizing a text makes writers or students revise and edit their pieces of writing constantly. These revisions carried out by peers and/or teachers may encourage the students to improve their texts. Research has proved that, if the feedback provided is explicit and includes a possible solution on how to improve the text, students tend to adopt it (Bitchener, Basturkmen, East, & Meyer, 2011; Guasch, Espasa & Kirschner, 2013). On the contrary, if the feedback given is vague or the students feel an excessive control from the teacher, they tend to ignore it. Thus, students make some decisions regarding the kind of feedback they receive and the changes or improvements they decide to consider.

In the context of this investigation, in the public educational Chilean system, the writing skill is promoted through written tasks of a communicative nature, which is part of Planes y Programas of the Ministry of Education in Chile (2005). The nature of the written tasks aims at being communicative, that is to pay more attention to the dialogic process of writing rather than producing something to obtain a result. Concerning the work and development of writing, the tasks that students have to do are not generally oriented to real audiences. According to Hyland (2010) “many pedagogical tasks aim to promote discrete skills” (p. 113), like improving punctuation or grammatical forms. Instead Hyland proposes that learners should acquire skills in the following aspects of writing knowledge: content, system (appropriate language), process of writing, genre and context (audience awareness). Out of the teacher researcher experience, it can be stated that some teachers of public high schools might not be aware of the importance of delivering students communicative and practical, written tasks. The reasons can be classes, not enough time to prepare classes or to assess students’ drafts. Therefore, the process approach for writing appears as impractical and time-consuming.