

# Computer supported collaborative writing and commentary.

The case of a written English and student mobility  
preparation course.

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Collaborative writing and commentary in digital environments: an e-learning perspective  
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# Computer-Supported Collaborative Writing

- Web 2.0 tools and content creation
- "Writable web" (Kàrpàti, 2009)
- Open-editing and review structures
- " Collaboration requires a mutual task in which the partners work together to produce something that neither could have produced alone"

(Forman & Cazden, 1985)

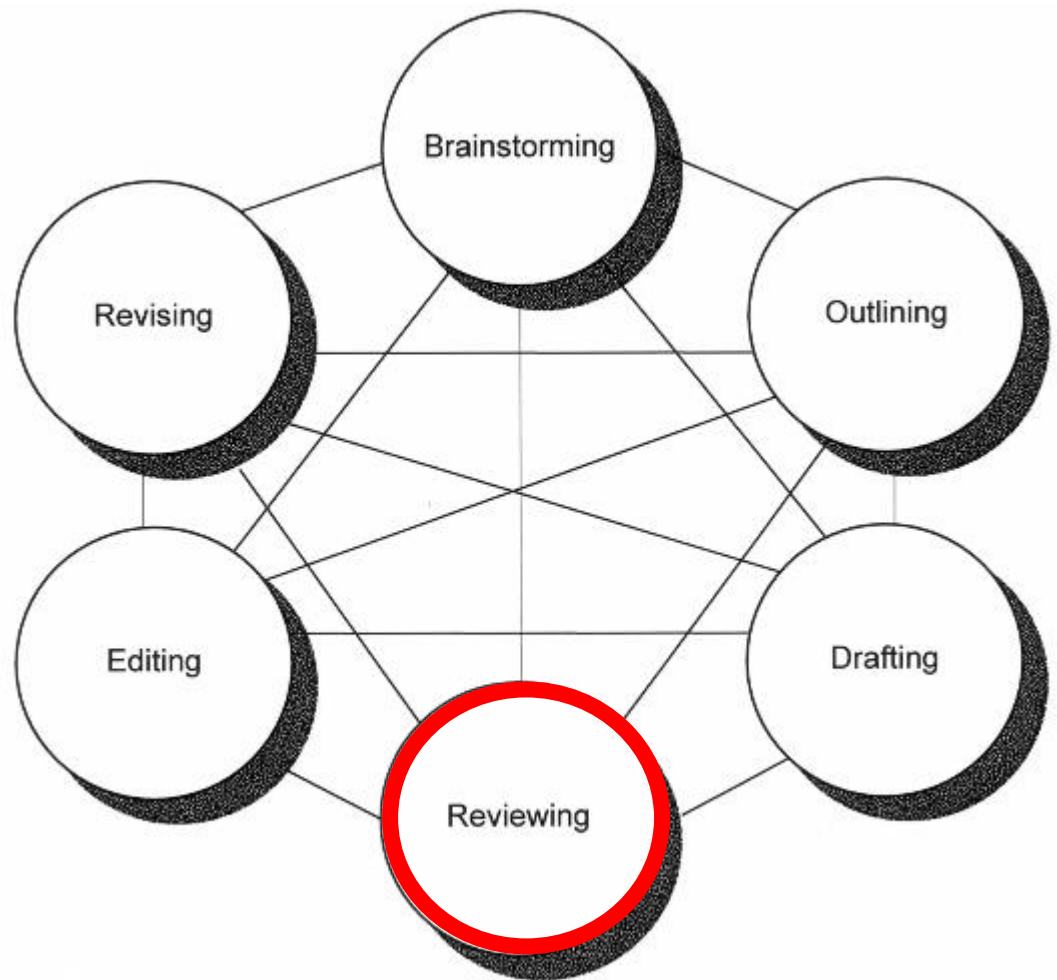
# CSCW and L2 learning

- Socioconstructivist perspective
  - Learning: individual and collective process
  - Interaction with others
  - Expert-novice
- Second Language Acquisition
  - Pushed output / comprehensible output
  - Confront solutions and explanations
  - Suggest changes and revisions
  - Interact and negotiate meaning
  - Notice a gap L2 linguistic knowledge and target language, test new hypotheses, receive feedback on these hypotheses (Gass & Selinker, 2001)

# Focus

Did different groups collaborate in different ways?

In what ways is the 'comments' feature used to advance the group writing project?



Lowry, Curtis & Lowry, 2004:83)

# Context

- Applied foreign languages degree programme
  - English
  - LVB
  - Application disciplines (business, economics, marketing)
- Semester abroad (S6)
- Third-year undergraduate Written English course (S5)
  - EAP: rhetorical & logical strategies, paraphrasing, citing, referencing, data commentaries, proofreading
  - Professional: business report writing genre, plain English
  - Socio-cultural: importance of study-abroad
- ‘Quinquennal’

# Task-based approach



- In groups, prepare a short report that he could forward to the University Administration: relevant aspects of study-abroad period, justifications and your recommendations.
- Semester-long project. 1500 words. Adhere to business report writing principles.
- Google docs – peer and teacher feedback.

# Learning design

## Course structure and outline

Date	Class topic	Online homework activities
13/9	Course introduction Task introduction	Group -written statement of purpose of report (100 words).
20/9	Structure of a report	Individually - Read group text, take notes on key information.
<i>No class on Tuesday 27th September</i>		
4/10	Summarising	Group summary of your text (200 words). Prepare to present text to small group in class on 11/10.
11/10	Oral summaries in small groups and note-taking	Individually write a summary of one of the other texts (200 words/text). Peer editing using comments tool.
18/10	Commenting upon sources	Individually add comments to your summaries (50 words/text summary). Peer editing using comments tool.
25/10	Commenting on data/visuals	Individual description of visual (150 words) [NB. Continuous assessment 1] Peer editing using comments tool.
8/11	Referencing sources using APA norms	Group - create your report bibliography.
15/11	Conclusions and recommendations	Group – write conclusion and list of recommendations (400 words).
22/11	Report presentation	Group – add presentation elements.
29/11	Plain English	Edit your final report according to plain English principles. Link sections and paragraphs.
<i>Final report due 12/12 4pm (see instructions below). [Continuous assessment 2]</i>		



# Sample production

The image shows a screenshot of a Microsoft Word document and a comment thread. The Word document is titled 'Sample production' and contains the following text:

This situation echoes the one we are currently facing at *UBP*. If the semester abroad is removed, it would become more difficult and even impossible for some students to have an experience abroad. According to our survey (references), 34 respondents under 38 consider that removing the semester abroad will be a mistake.

**II. How does the experience abroad impact students' future ?**

**a) By bringing professional and academic skills**

Firstly, we will present the professional and academic skills obtained thanks to an experience abroad.

We can mention the survey conducted by the Institute for International Education of Students, between 1950 and 1999. It shows the influence of studies abroad on a sample of 3,400 students.

According to it, doing an internship abroad increases students' chances to follow a worldwide career. Indeed, 83 percent of them stated that it gave them a range of competencies which impacted their future. They developed a professional network and got job opportunities all over the world.

The account below makes clear that going abroad was a launching pad for the student's career. Joydeep Sengupta (IES Madrid 1998), who worked for an international advocacy organisation said that all the capabilities and formations he learnt abroad led him up to a wide field of career opportunities.

Thus, it suggests that encouraging and supporting LEA students is really important: it's the key of success in workplace.

**b) By developing cultural and personal abilities**

Secondly, other records show that the experience abroad have positive effects on students' culture and personality. For example, Carolyn Valton, (IES Adelaide 1992) said:

The comment thread on the right shows a discussion about the impact of the semester abroad. The first comment is from 'Anonyme' (marked as closed) dated 7 nov. 2016. The second comment is from 'Anonyme' dated 7 nov. 2016, with the text: 'The impact on the number and the diversity of Moi aussi j'en parle dans ma partie ... exactement pareil. On fait comment ?'. The third comment is from 'Anonyme' dated 7 nov. 2016, with the text: 'On devrait peut être revoir le plan du coup ? En fait je pensais qu'on devait faire une partie par argument pour (ou contre) le semestre à la base ...'.



# Research protocol

- Informed consent
- Production data (Google docs)
  - saved versions
  - comments
- Post-course questionnaire (Google forms)
- Final assignment & annotated version
- Anonymised

# Analysis methodology

- Chrome plug-in Draftback
  - Descriptive statistics: connections, modifications,
- Database of comments
  - Coding, XML export for structuring data into a corpus

## Comments Database - Reviewing stage

Comment	Group	Date	Language (Global / Local)	Revision-oriented / Non-revision-oriented	Object of comment	Comment type	Comment text	Participant	Reply	Participant2	Reply2	Participant3
CO0003	3.4 A	09/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	lexis	help request	"Commission for:" I didn't find any other way to say that, any ideas?	34A005				
CO0006	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	help request	"acquire" Can we use "help" without "to"?	34A006				
CO0007	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"experience" "such an experience" ?	34A006	Yes!	34A005		
CO0008	3.4 A	09/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	bibliographic references	request to verify	"para12" The references handout (point 10) indicates "para. n" for the paragraph (as it is	34A005				
CO0009	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	text organisation	explanation of drafting	"Therefore, Blaise Pascal University should" In order of importance Give information about	34A006	I tried to org	34A005	That seems	34A006
CO0011	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	layout	suggestion	<b>TITLE OF THE REPORT</b> Bold or capital letter Brief but descriptive	34A006				
CO0012	3.4 A	27/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	text organisation	suggestion	- Implications ==> new information?	34A006				
CO0013	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"on" Can we say "consequences on sthg"? Isn't it "consequences for"? But it sounds a bit	34A006	Look at the	34A005	Indeed! I say	34A006
CO0014	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"in" from ?	34A005	Yes!	34A006		
CO0015	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"o" "from" ?	34A006	Yes!	34A005		
CO0016	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"students" "students" - ?	34A006	Indeed!	34A005		
CO0017	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"testified" Wouldn't "testify" be better?	34A006	Yes!	34A005		
CO0018	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"to" "requested that the Secretary of State preserves this scheme"	34A006	Both options	34A005		
CO0019	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	sentence structure	suggestion	"spending" I would delete the verb...	34A006	The verb is	34A005		
CO0020	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	lexis	request to verify	"certifies" Are you sure we can say that?	34A006	Maybe it's a	34A005		
CO0021	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"would" (same question)	34A006	Once again	34A005		
CO0022	3.4 A	10/12/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	suggestion	"would" "will" ?	34A006	Yes!	34A005		
CO0024	3.4 A	27/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	lexis	suggestion	"begged" I think that beg is to strong, maybe we could say "requested"	34A005				
CO0025	3.4 A	27/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	lexis	suggestion	"Therefore," As in the following paragraph we also wrote therefore, we could use "Thus"	34A005				
CO0026	3.4 A	26/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	sentence structure	suggestion	"It may be seen by Blaise Pascal University" Blaise Pascal University may see that (...) ?	34A006	Yes, it's a lit	34A005		
CO0027	3.4 A	26/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	help request	"is currently questioned" I don't know how to change it into active form because it's a very g	34A006				
CO0029	3.4 A	07/11/2016	local	revision-oriented	sentence structure	request to verify	"It" What does it refer to?	Tutor				
CO0031	3.4 A	18/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	sentence structure	direct correction	"s" to make friends from all over,	Tutor				
CO0032	3.4 A	18/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	direct correction	"the" no article needed	Tutor				
CO0033	3.4 A	18/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	lexis	direct correction	"A survey made" to conduct a survey	Tutor				
CO0034	3.4 A	18/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	direct correction	"the" delete: speaking generally so no definite article needed	Tutor				
CO0036	3.4 A	18/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	grammar	invitation to correct	"It enables" to enable SOMEBODY to do sth -> where is your somebody?	Tutor				
CO0038	3.4 A	09/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	punctuation	suggestion	"student's" It should be: students'	34A005				
CO0039	3.4 A	09/10/2016	local	revision-oriented	sentence structure	suggestion	"and are ready" I would write "and who are ready"	34A005				

# Coding methodology

Area	Object of comment	Type of comment
Global	Meaning	Positive feedback
Local	Grammar	Direct correction
	Lexis	Request to verify
	Sentence structure	Help request
	Spelling	Invitation to correct
	Style	Explanation of drafting
	Punctuation	Justification
	Layout	Suggestion
	Text organisation	Auto-appreciation
	Bibliographic references	
	Undetermined	

Canham, 2017;  
Liu & Sadler, 2003

# Participants

- 4 classes (127 students)
- 4 groups (12 students) – 2 classes

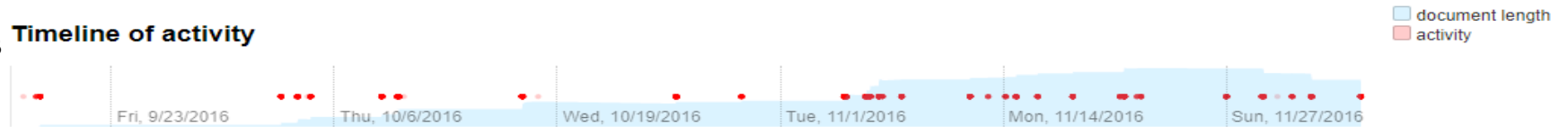
# Overview

Group	3.3 B	3.3 C	3.4 A	3.4 E
Time spend in doc	2h46m	3,36m	15h45m	12h35m
No. modifications	21, 338	3,939	10, 519	11,196
Writing sessions (10m)	85	34	200	217

# Document length & activity

Total time: 02:46:26s

## 3.3 B Timeline of activity



Total time: 03:36:58s

## 3.3 C Timeline of activity



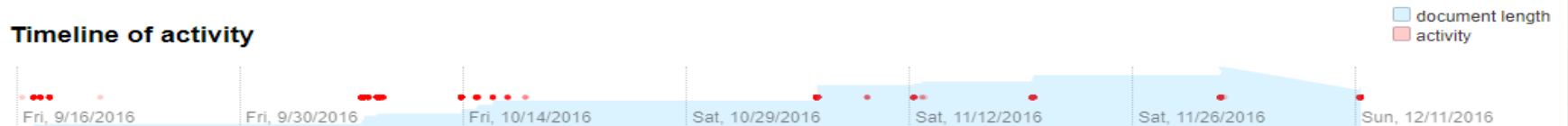
Total time: 15:45:46s

## 3.4 A Timeline of activity



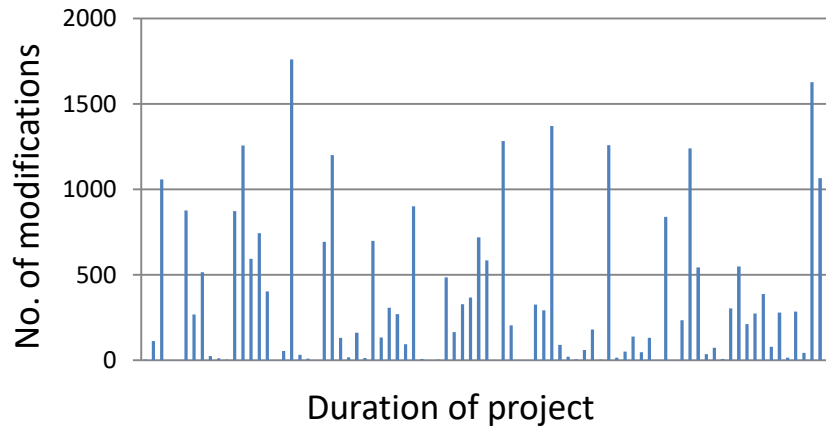
Total time: 12:35:29s

## 3.4 E Timeline of activity

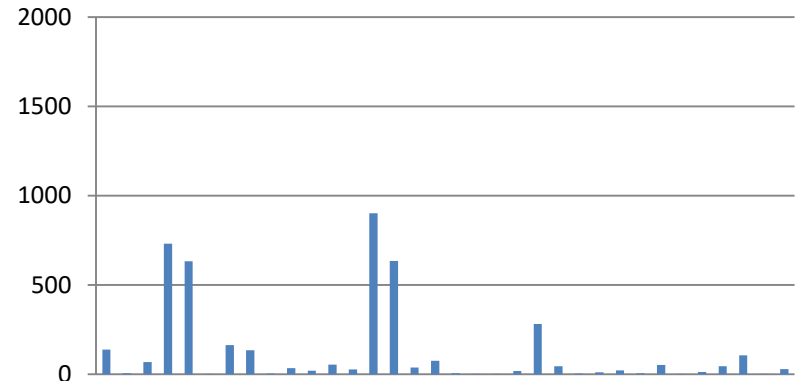


# Rhythm of modifications

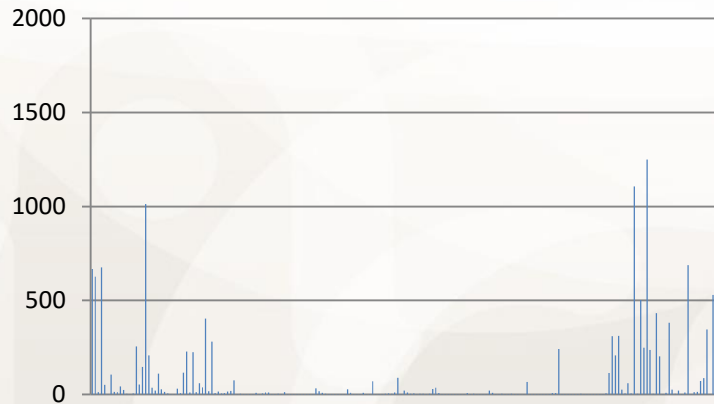
**3.3 B**



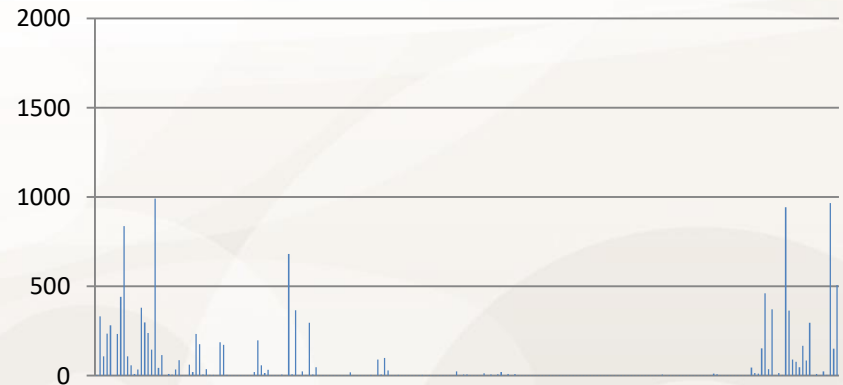
**3.3 C**



**3.4 A**



**3.4 E**





# Area

## Global

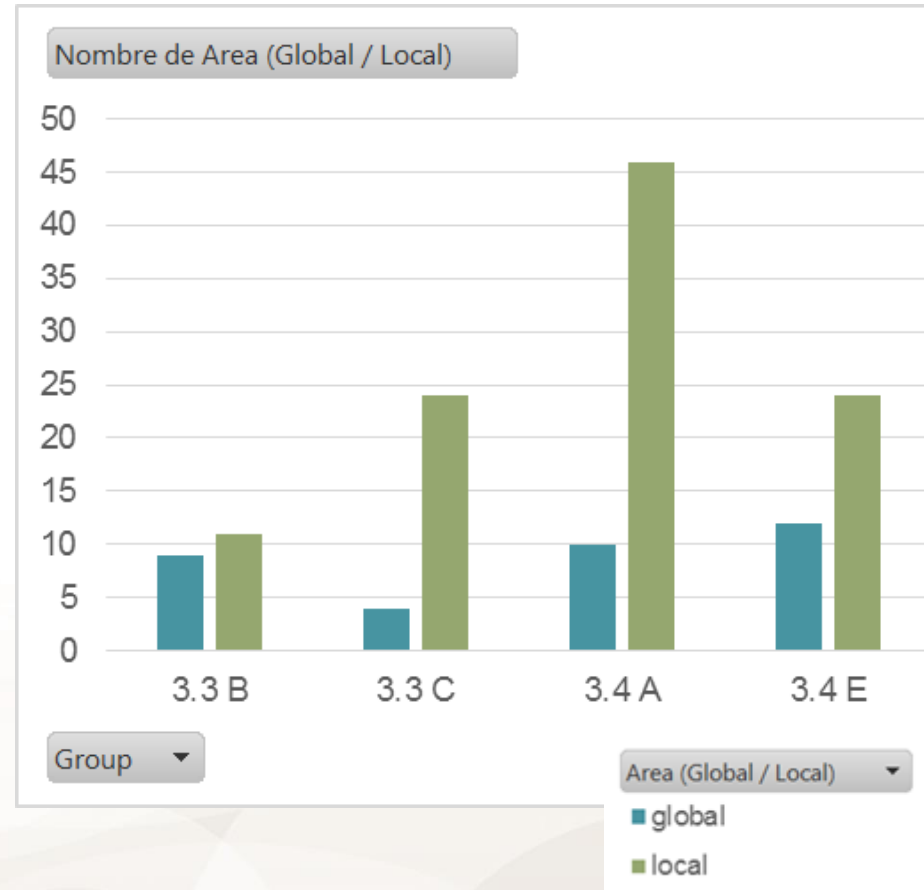
"Career choice" Should we bring some of the paragraphs together?

"Today students wonder which orientation will " I have just started to write the intro (but it's a rough version)

## Local

"experience" "such an experience" ?

"certifies" Are you sure we can say that?



# Nature

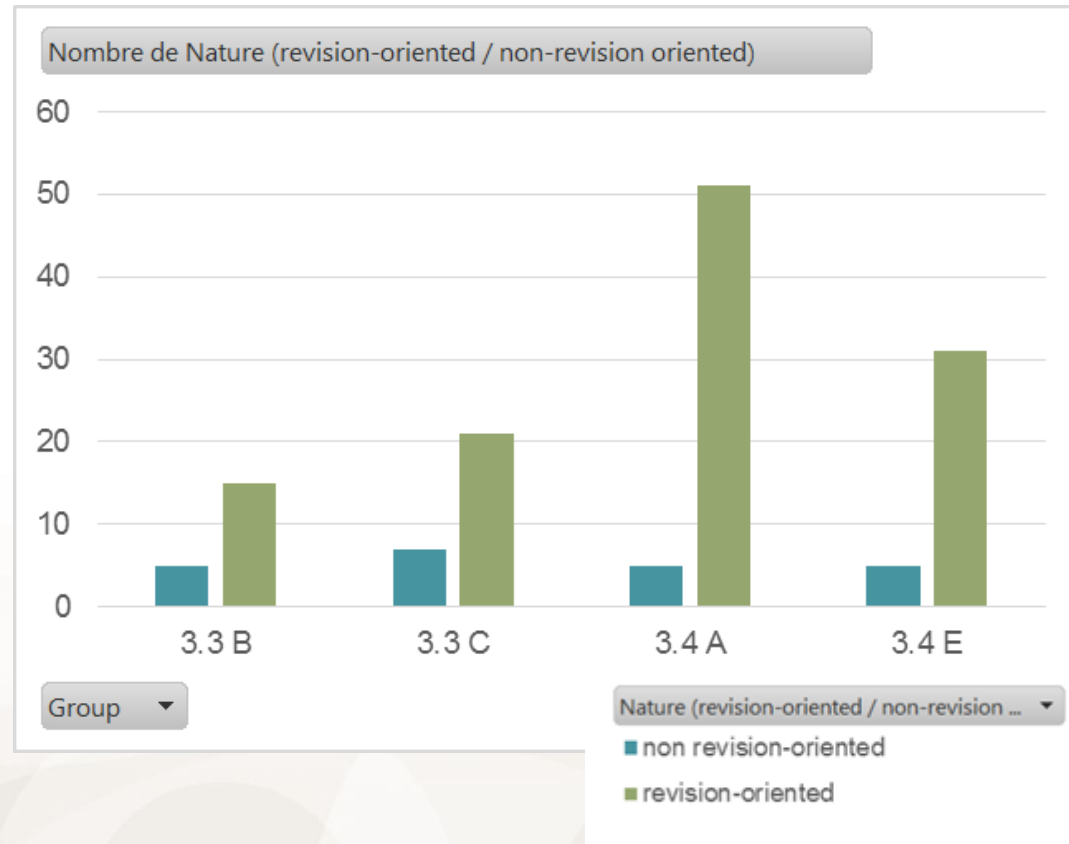
## Non revision-oriented

"benefits" Yes, these sections look good and you make sure to refer back to LEA which is necessary.

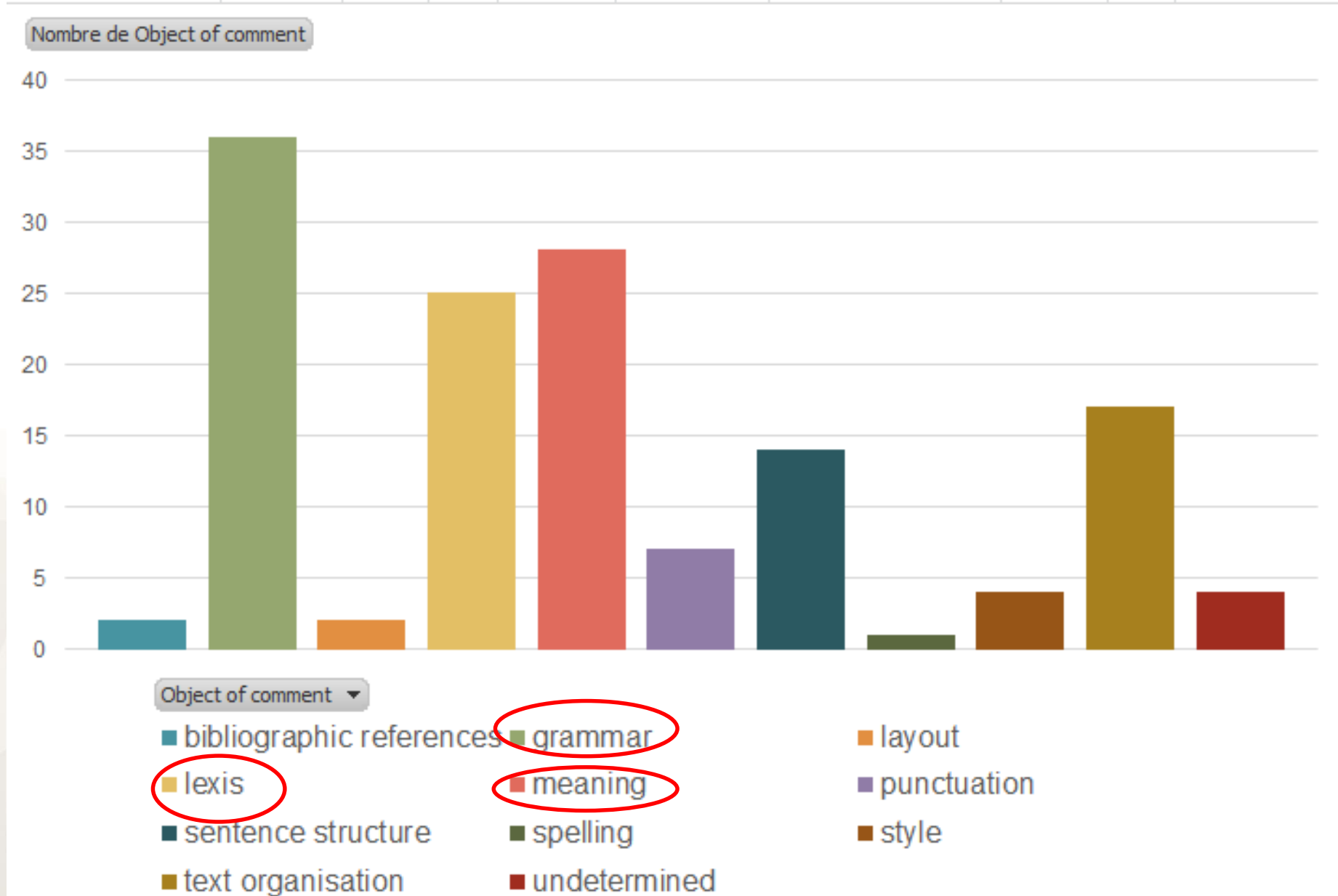
## Revision-oriented

"in" from ?

"begged" I think that beg is too strong, maybe we could say "requested"?



# Object of comment



# Object of comment

## Grammar

- "helped them taking" to help sb to do sth
- have" past simple tense
- "they still kept" still = now = present tense (keep)

## Meaning

- "However, studying in a foreign country might " I tried to write the summary of the paragraph "employment-related disadvantages of studying abroad" (Di Pietro, G. Text) I used vocab to make weaker the arguments against the semester abroad, and I tried to process as we did for "commenting source"

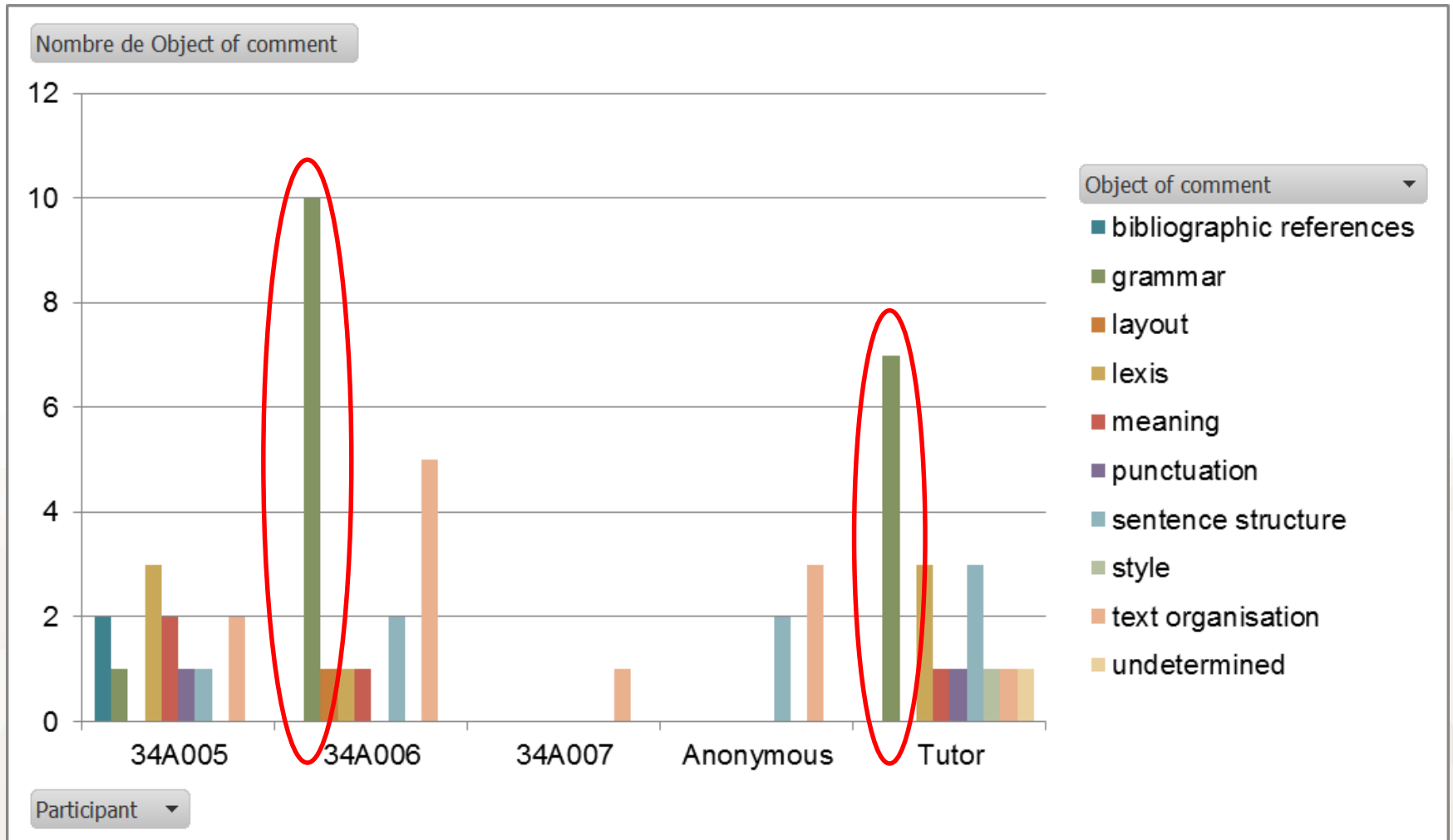
## Lexis

- "they opted in" they chose?
- "graduation" = ceremony when you receive your university diploma

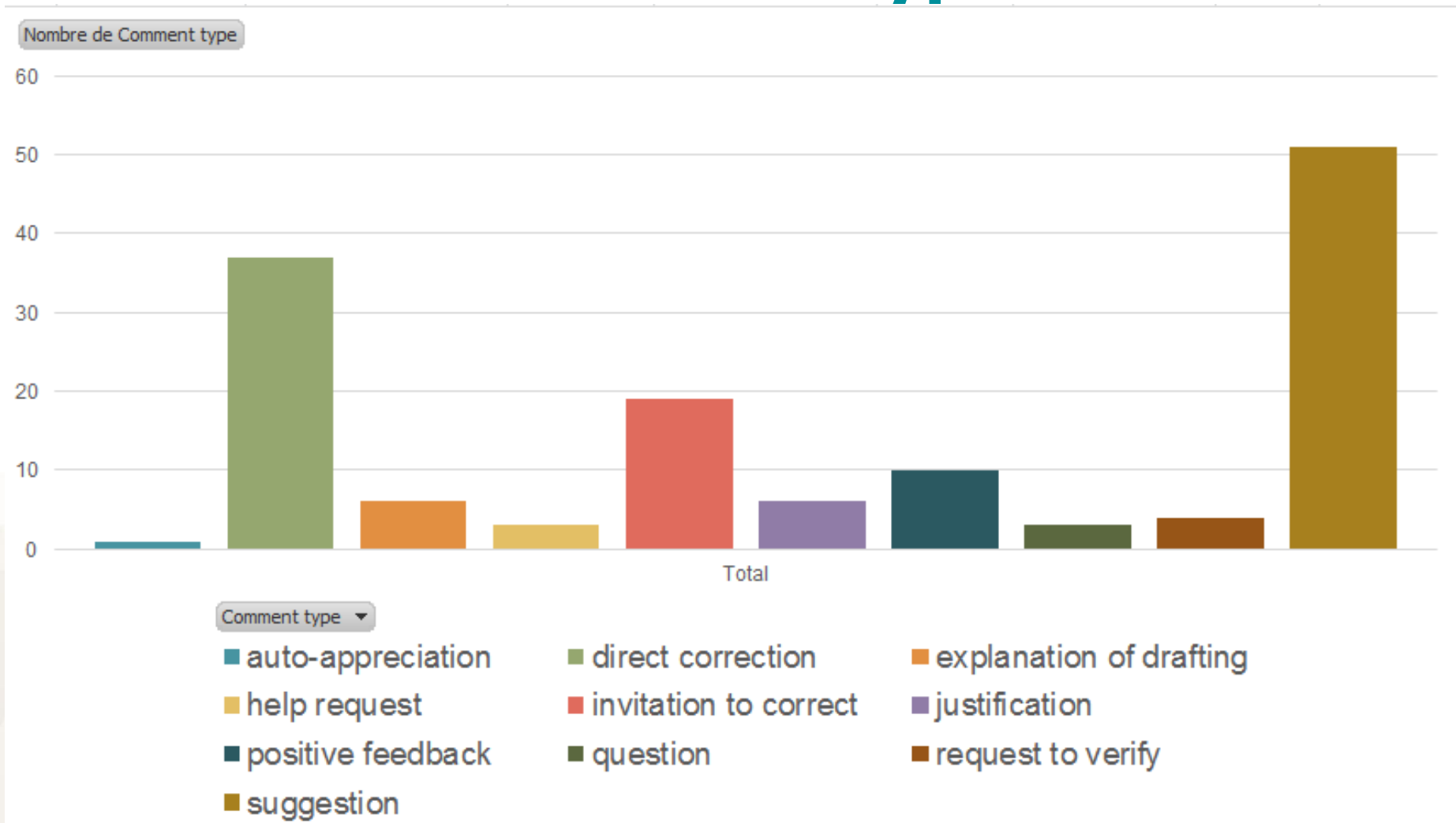
I didn't have the time to finish, sorry, I'll do it this evening. Sarah through Thibault's mobile

# Peers/ Tutor

- Group : 3.4 A



# Comment type



# Object of comment

## Direct correction

- "name" The title of the article is "X."
- "taking part in an internship abroad" to do an internship"

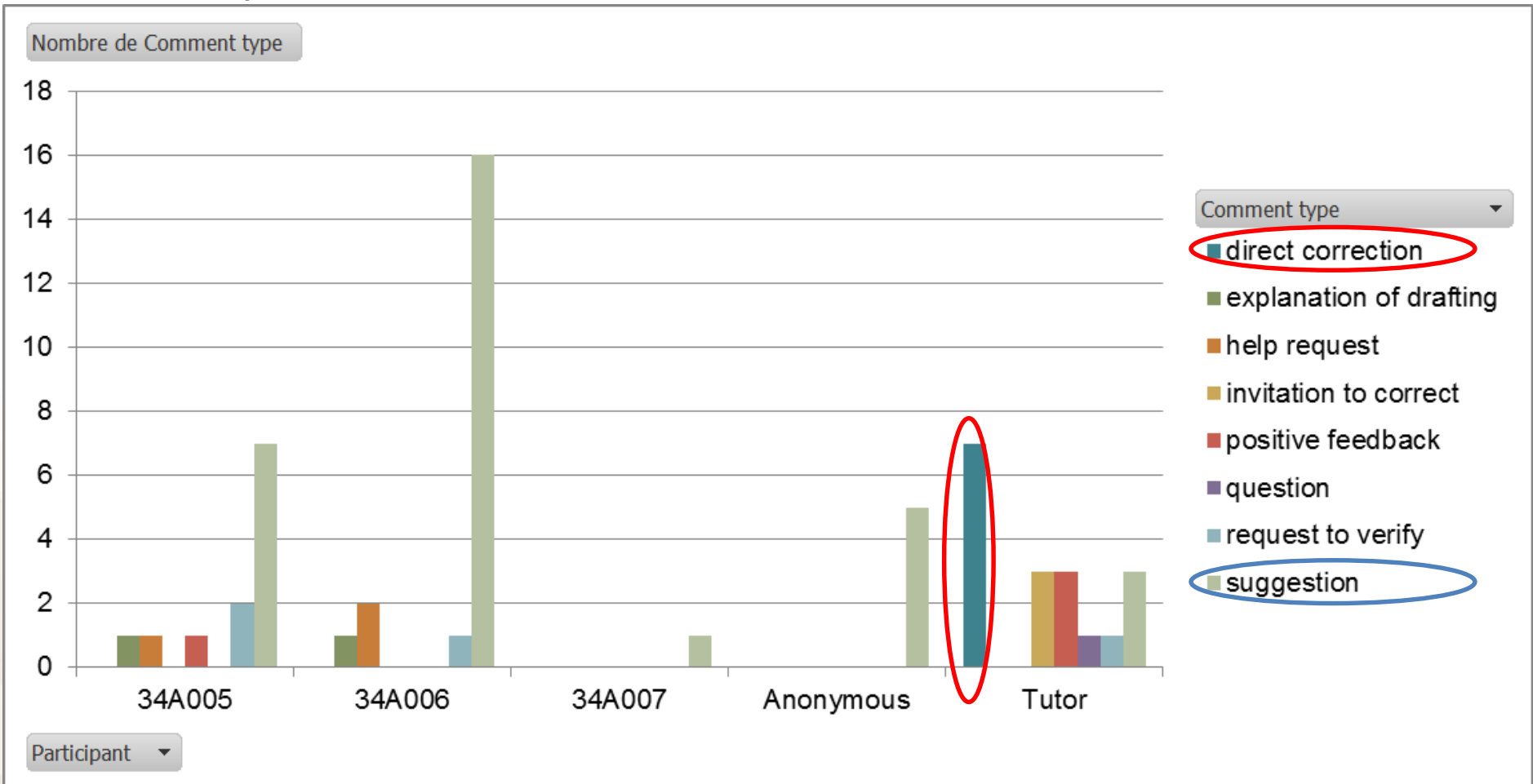
## Suggestion

- "the Dean" Instead of repeating "the Dean", we could just say "him"
- "Finally, the report concludes that the effects of " I made a modification again for the article. What's more, for the suggestions to tighten the summary and improve the English, i personally think that if there are some data in the article, we need to use them and make a combination for them. For some conclusive sentences we can use our own sentences to express again with replace some of words. The conjunction is necessary to methodize a summary.



# Peers / Tutor

- Group : 3.4 A



# Conclusion & Perspectives

- Comments – local, revision-oriented, very few in L1
- Grammar, meaning, lexis
- Direct corrections, suggestions
- *Dive deeper (Draftback) and examine process*
  - Certain comment type/quality incite more revisions?
  - Revisions -> comments -> revisions
- *Methodology*
  - Chronologically structured corpus (TEI)
- *Pedagogical*
  - Focus on comments in class