



Peer-Assessment of Students' Online Forums to Improve Expository Writing

Paragraph

María Carolina Vallejo Carrillo

Guide: Prof. María Rossana Ramírez Ávila, MSc.

Presented as Partial Fulfillment for Degree of Magíster en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros con Mención en la Enseñanza de Inglés. CES: RPC-SE-01-N°. 014-2020. Cohort 2020 - 2022 Author's email: maria.vallejoc@casagrande.edu.ec, Guayaquil, July 21st, 2022

Peer-Assessment of Students' Online Forums to Improve Expository Writing

Paragraph

Learning English is the passport to better education, professional development and employment opportunities (Crystal, 2003). In the current times, English is considered the lingua franca (Northrup, 2013); therefore, each of its skills is important to develop communication worldwide. To do this, a right management of the language abilities is necessary which is useful to express ideas effectively helping to be successful in learning a second language (Parupalli, 2019).

Learning English has become an important strategic issue in Latin America (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). Countries have developed national strategies, created programs and made significant investments to expand access to opportunities to learn English (UNESCO, 2021). According to Education First (2021), Latin America is the region with the lowest English proficiency where Ecuador obtained 444.11 in the English proficiency Index which means a very low level. In the province of Chimborazo, the level of English does not differ because it was 440 points out of 1000 (Education First, 2021). This means that English language skills need improvement for the students to be competent in the current globalized times.

As it was observed in class, the students in the first year of the baccalaureate show feeble writing skills because they depend on the translators to produce even a simple sentence. Writing is one of the four fundamental language skills in learning a foreign language (Harmer, 2004). However, writing errors are one of the most frequent causes that affect communication in the English language, since writing well is a complex, difficult and time-consuming process (Devia, Abdul, & Diah, 2018). Despite the fact that students and teachers agree with this statement, little interest has been observed in teaching writing in

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

English classes, since there is still dogmatism in the interpretation and use of techniques and procedures of the communicative approach (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017).

Moreover, researchers in the area of foreign language learning have identified that vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation and study strategies are the most relevant problems in the development of learning (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). For this reason, the students have a low-level of writing skills (Beltran, 2017; Madarina et al., 2020; Parupalli, 2019). In consequence, the problem must be addressed, so this proposal seeks to improve the expository writing of the paragraph in online forums.

Regarding the learning process, there is an aspect to take into consideration namely assessment. For the purpose of this research, peer assessment must be addressed deeply. It is a formative assessment technique to identify students' strengths and weaknesses which can be valuable to help students in their self-realization (Topping, 2018). Besides, it is important to note that peer assessment practices highlight students' feedback and increase their participation in the assessment activity using related instruments such as rubrics, scripts, and prompts (Duque-Aguilar, 2021).

On the other hand, the forum is a substantial component in the learning process where peer-assessment is put into practice to promote interaction, engagement, critical thinking, meaningful problem solving, and knowledge construction among students (Azarnoosh, 2013). Additionally, discussion forum content is a key to evaluate students' strengths and weaknesses in order to achieve goals and provide educators with valid tools to improve the learning process (Aliasin & Amanlu, 2017; Marra et al., 2004).

There are different studies which demonstrate that peer assessment improves students' writing skills (Azarnoosh, 2013; Cruz, 2022; Fathi & Shirazizadeh, 2019). The advantages of peer assessment focus on better results when students used peer-feedback and peer-reviewing

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

to better in paragraph writing. Furthermore, collaborative skills among students are strengthened because self-confidence and motivation for communication are built while they write about familiar topics (Cruz, 2022; Gamboa, 2020; Gallegos, 2018; Recalde, 2020; Rojas, 2021, Vega, 2019; Vélez, 2021).

The aim of this study is to analyze students' problems related to writing skills and, pretend to understand challenges that students have in this process and make improvement in learning writing skill through peer assessment. Furthermore, with this proposal the researcher wants to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions towards peer-assessment in writing skills?
2. Do students improve their expository writing through the peer-assessment?

Literature Review

This section provides the main topics of this proposal, this literature review includes different authors for this study. It portrays the writing skill, expository paragraph, peer assessment, and backward design.

Previous research

To have a wide idea and the basis where take information and previous experiences, it is necessary to review previous research. Regarding to the topic of this study, there are several studies that partially coincide.

First, there is some research that focused on the use of peer assessment to improve writing skills (Cruz, 2022; Recalde, 2020; Remache et al., 2019; Remache et al., 2022; Yáñez, 2019). They have developed studies which focused on the improvement of writing skills. They developed quasi-experimental research design with pre and post-tests. There was a period of classroom intervention focused on communicative approach and peer interaction to promote

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

reviewing and editing of written productions. Furthermore, the data collection instrument was a rubric which also served as a guide for students to improve their writing. After the treatment, they concluded the students improved their writing skill. They also recommended the use of forums to promote students' interaction and mutual feedback.

Besides, peer feedback for students writing improvement was carried out through action research (Intriago, 2021). The researcher promoted a mixed research approach with the implementation of a pedagogical innovation which included the use of rubrics to guide the students' performance. The data collection was done through a pre and a post-test. In addition, a survey was conducted to look for information related to the students' perceptions about the treatment phase where peer feedback sessions were accomplished. As the main finding, the researcher concluded that the implementation of peer feedback is beneficial for the students' writing skills improvement. Similarly, Akmal (2018) analyzed the effectiveness of peer feedback assisted by computers (forums) to implement writing accuracy. It was also concluded that direct-focused feedback through online discussions represent a significant help to overcome writing errors. This kind of research constituted an excellent way to support students via the asynchronous discussion forum to write reflections and provide feedback as a kind of formative assessment (Mwalongo, 2013).

On the other hand, Farheen and Fareeha (2021) developed research about the application of backward design in the students' writing skills. This was a quasi-experimental study which worked with a population formed by 175 subjects. Those students experienced a good level of improvement in their writing skills. Furthermore, Hosseini et al. (2019) carried out a study with two groups the first was taught with the conventional forward design and the experimental group used the backward design where the core objective was to improve the writing ability. However, the authors concluded that there were similar statistical results

between the control and the experimental group. In other words, the backward designed was not more effective than the forward design.

Writing Skill

Writing is one of the language skills which is focused on the production of written texts (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001). Spratt et al. (2005) agreed that it is a productive skill which is helpful to create words and ideas to be better and more eloquent in original texts. Besides, it is an important communication tool used to express thoughts, share feelings, and explore ideas. It is also, the system of printed words, and represents sounds and syllables of language. In accordance with Huwari (2020), to obtain an effective writing skill, students must acquire the ability to use capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and word form.

Furthermore, in the educational field, writing is the product of different isolated activities that would be enormously challenging if they had to be learned simultaneously. These consist of taking notes, identifying the central idea, making summaries, drafts and corrections (Celce-Murcia, 1979). It is hard to start doing a report, for example, without a central idea or supporting notes. Often, the more detailed a summary is, the easier it will be to write. In fact, students can finish faster if they write a draft first and then proofread and revise it (Harmer, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Beltrán (2017) argued that good writing carries a meaningful message and uses English correctly, but the message is much more important than its correct presentation. In essence, if it is possible to understand the message or part of the message, it can be said that it has been successfully communicated on paper (Madarina et al., 2020). Moreover, written production in class is a way for students to practice their language skills because it forces the student to notice the grammar, vocabulary, and structures of the language (Wilcox, 2003).

Writing Process

To be successful in the writing, it is necessary to follow some steps, Flood et al. (1986); Harmer (2004; 2007); Morgan et al. (2007) agreed on the fact that the process of writing includes some steps namely prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing stages; although, others like Seow (2002) compiled editing and publishing in just one which is known as editing. The latter steps would be used for the purposes of this research.

Planning (Pre-writing)

The stage that precedes the writing is called prewriting. This is the initial phase of a writing process. It is often said that it is the instance in which the writer passes from thought to the written word. In this period, the author writes down single words and ideas and can create outlines and maps that will later help him in writing (Abas & Noor, 2018; Martínez et al., 2020). Until a text is published, the writer carries out several steps and has the assistance of his or her teacher. Prewriting is the starting point for organizing thoughts; then comes the actual writing and later on, the revision. Although there is no single way to develop prewriting, it usually involves defining the topic, organizing the information, and doing the first writing tests. There are some activities like brainstorming, clustering, and rapid free writing (Abas & Noor, 2018). In addition, ideas for writing can be elicited from multimedia sources (e.g., printed material, videos, films), as well as from direct interviews, talks, surveys, forums, and questionnaires (Seow, 2002).

Drafting

This stage focuses the attention of the writer who turns outlined ideas into the first draft of a paragraph, story or essay. Drafting focuses on fluency over writing considering the audience, and the genre of writing. It could be narrative, expository, or argumentative and it is considered that the effectiveness of revision depends on the form of the initial draft to which it is applied (Galbraith & Torrance, 2004).

Revising

Comparing reading and writing skills is important to quote that drafting is for the writer and revision is for the reader. During this step, it is necessary to consider all the writing from the audience's point of view. In fact, to revise means literally to re-see or re-look the paper or essay. Students revise their texts to review what was written and if it makes sense, is coherent and transmits a clear message. Revising is done to improve global content and organization of ideas in order to explain a point of view, but revision is the least researched, least examined and least understood of the writing skills (Bridwell, 1980).

Editing

At this stage, students prepare their texts for the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. In this stage, it is necessary to consider grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence, and structure. Another important point is the accuracy of supportive textual material like quotations and examples, which can be evaluated using a simple checklist to avoid common errors (Abas & Noor, 2018).

Most of the cases, students are hardly able to correct their writing errors. The main reason is students' lack of editing techniques; it is due to the limited opportunity for application of this skill in a real-life context. Moreover, error correction is a neglected stage in the writing process by both the teachers and the students due to its time-consuming nature or simply because it is considered as a waste of time (Sangeetha, 2020).

Writing rubric

The assessment process has great importance since through it, advance, delay, or achievement in the teaching-learning process can be determined (Andrade, 2000). It also allows knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the students. Through this analysis, the teacher focuses his or her teaching on their needs. In this way, it is known, how to help them so that the academic results are valid (Casco & Calderón, 2021). In other words, the

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

evaluation should help students increase their knowledge both academically and in their personal growth in order to develop their skills. Besides, the teaching-learning process bases its objectives on the results obtained through evaluation and assessment; hence the importance of using an effective instrument. In the case of this research, the rubric has been chosen to achieve goals.

Rubrics are scales that highlight the student's performance-focused on qualitative aspects, although it is possible to establish numerical scores (Casco & Calderón, 2021). The rubrics, as evaluation and assessment instruments, are very adaptable insofar as they constitute a tool that can be adjusted with practice until finding the fair value of the evaluation goals that students are expected to reach (Aliasin & Amanlu, 2017). It can also be said that a rubric is a description of the criteria used to assess or make a judgment about the performance of a student in some work or project. According to Morris (2015), a rubric is a matrix that can be explained as a set of specific and fundamental criteria that allow assessing the learning, knowledge, or skills achieved by the students in their learning process.

A rubric is a guide that seeks to assess a students' performance based on the sum of a full range of criteria rather than a single numerical score. Devia, et al. (2018) argued that it is an assessment tool used to measure students' work. It is also a working guide for both students and teachers, which is normally given to students before starting a certain work to help them think about the criteria by which their work will be judged. In this case, rubrics favor the teaching-learning process as well as the students' performance (Minnich et al., 2018).

Regarding the writing skill, the rubric is widely used in students' assessment. Students use the rubric in different ways, since they could use it to do a self-assessment of their work before submitting it to their teacher. This evaluation instrument has the characteristic of

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

offering a description of what is expected in each of the scales for each criteria. This allows students to compare their written production with what is described. In addition, the rubric guides him or her to write written production, that is, compare it with what her teacher expects from her work and with what she wrote. This situation makes the students have more autonomy in their learning process and acquisition of written production competence (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001).

Besides, it is necessary for the students to understand the different descriptors and the criteria in the best way possible. They can truly use them to self-assess their work, thus guiding them towards their learning self-regulation, since in this way they can make modifications, corrections and improvements before uploading their final draft. In other words, students can use the provided rubric to follow the writing steps (Alviana, 2019). In addition, this leads the learner to commit and be more responsible, since they are more aware of what is evaluated and what is expected of their written production (Devia et al., 2018).

Expository Paragraph

Paragraph, which has its origin in the Latin term *paragraphus*, is a concept used to name the different fragments that make up a text. Paragraphs begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop (Elder, 2008). It is composed of a set of main and secondary sentences, related in a logical and coherent way to each other in order to develop a certain topic. The sentences of a paragraph are distinguished by being separated by points and followed by another complete sentence (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). In the same text, there can be different types of paragraphs, among which there is the expository paragraph.

Expository, is an adjective that refers to an exhibition about something; that is, that expresses it (Crystal, 2008). Expository paragraphs, therefore, are responsible for providing

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

actual information about various events without including subjective comments. Its purpose is the disclosure of events, and not convincing the reader.

This type of writing can include forums, essays, newspaper and magazine articles, instruction manuals, textbooks, encyclopedia articles, and other forms of writing. A good expository writer first introduces the main idea and develops it with facts and supporting details, gives factual information, summarizes research from a variety of sources, uses transition words to connect ideas, and draws a conclusion based on the facts and information presented. Consequently, it is important that the writers' have in mind the reader, especially to know the audience they are addressing (Mongillo & Wilder, 2012).

An outstanding aspect to consider is the technical and content components. The technical component contemplates spelling and grammar, and accuracy. This means that the author must write to be easily understood, with properly and well-structured sentences. The content component includes writing that captures the reader's attention (Abas & Noor, 2018).

Forums for Discussion

The Forum is a discussion center about a particular topic which concentrates the people's opinions from different places, in asynchronous way. The latter means that communication between people occurs without the need for them to be using the platform simultaneously. Each person who connects, regardless of the moment, will have access to the messages that are registered on the subject matter of the discussion (Gupta et al., 2019).

Participation in a forum for discussion allows sharing reflections, searches and findings, as well as solving problems by answering questions that generates discussion (Rowntree, 1995). According to Marra et al. (2004), some of the main benefits of using the discussion forums are: learning reinforcement, promotion of social interaction, and improvement in written communication skills.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

Therefore, the teacher can take advantage of the forum for discussion, incorporating it as an activity of teaching and learning in the class to assess written texts. In this case, there are some aims that the teacher follows such as to develop debates about controversial issues related to the subject; comment, analyze and criticize written texts; for example, expository paragraphs (Vytasek et al., 2017).

Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation from a cognitive perspective focuses on understanding the cognitive functioning of the student before the tasks that are proposed. Therefore, it is about understanding why a student does not understand a concept or does not know how to perform a certain task. That is, there is a greater interest in the procedures and not in the result itself. In this vision, the feedback that the teacher gives the student becomes essential because the tasks are returned with enriching comments. It also influences the teaching-learning process success (Aliasin & Amanlu, 2017).

Regarding this, learning a language such as English involves mastering language and especially the productive ones namely speaking and writing. In evaluating, the scoring may be analytical or based on a global interpretation of the effectiveness. The criteria for the evaluation of the students' written productions should be known by the student. Besides, these must contemplate interpretation of the task, sense of audience, relevance, development and organization of ideas, format or layout, grammar, structure, punctuation, range and appropriateness of vocabulary, and clarity of communication (Andrade, 2000).

Peer assessment

Peer assessment is used to exchange ideas, knowledge, and performance between students in order to help each other to develop English skills (Gupta et al., 2021). Previous studies on peer assessment found out this kind of assessment had a positive impact on student's English level of performance (Fathi & Shirazizadeh, 2019). Students are able to

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

offer useful feedback through a variety of evaluation criteria. Consequently, the authors pointed out that students can think of peer assessment as beneficial because it enhances their writing skills and improves their learning achievement (Gaynor, 2020). In the same way, peer assessment in the classroom can help to develop skills such as critical thinking, writing skills, reflection practices and collaborative experiences (Azarnoosh, 2013).

Peer assessment was created in 2011 as a model. It has been important in first and second language writing because it helps students receive feedback which is necessary in the writing process (Azarnoosh, 2013; Cheng & Warren, 2005; Race, 2001). The main objective in peer assessment is to promote actual interaction and communication among students, share ideas and understand the assessment criteria to cause improvement (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Peer assessment is a complex model and one limitation to develop this process is the responsibility. It comes with evaluation between students and the distrust in that moment basically, it happens when students do not have prior knowledge of how to evaluate in pairs (Planas et al., 2014).

Communicative Learning Teaching (CLT)

Savignon (1997) suggested that a classroom model of communicative class must include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. The Communicative Method (Communicative Language Teaching) is an approach in which emphasis is placed on helping students to use the language in a wide variety of contexts and gives importance to learning the functions of language (CEFR, 2001).

Its main objective is to help students create meaningful sentences (rather than to help them build perfectly correct grammatical structures or achieve perfect pronunciation). This means that the learning of the foreign language is evaluated taking into account how the student develops his or her communicative competence. It could be defined as the students'

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

ability to use their knowledge and thus communicate appropriately (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Moreover, communicative language teaching emphasizes communication in the foreign language through interaction; here the forums for discussion are valuable. Besides, the teacher introduces real texts in the learning situation, for that reason expository paragraphs are suitable. Furthermore, it gives importance to the personal experiences of students as elements that contribute to classroom learning. It tries to relate the language learned in the classroom with activities carried out outside it, in real social contexts (Beltran, 2017).

Backward Design

Backward design is a curriculum approach or way of planning a class that starts with the learning outcomes or goals. This model is the basis for developing instructional processes (Richards, 2013). Taking into consideration this fact, one of the components in any education process is planning. It implies making a plan of activities, and determining the goals. Ecuadorian education system has a Curriculum that determines goals, objectives, topics and skills that will be developed during the year. This can be understood that Ecuadorian teachers must plan their activities according to backward design.

Regarding to this, Wiggins and McTighe (2005) mentioned three steps of backward design instruction. The first step is the identification of desired results. The second is the determination of evidence which could be accepted as admissible. The last is planning learning experiences and instruction.

Innovation

The innovation aims to improve students' writing skills using peer assessment approach facilitated by forums. It consists of 12 hours; four weeks and based on an

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

innovative instructional backward design (See Appendix 1). Students will learn how to prepare an expository paragraph which will be assessed through peer-assessment. The topics of writing will be chosen according to the students' interests such as technology, social media and digital devices.

During the classes the students will post their paragraphs to be assessed by their peers. They will provide feedback to help in the improvement of the expository paragraphs. On the other hand, the teacher will review both the paragraphs and the peer-assessment and will supply her feedback for each pair of students.

The students will use a rubric to assess their peers' expository paragraphs written in the online forum (See Appendix 3). This innovation will be put into practice in two phases. In phase number one, students will have a workshop four hours before running the experiment. In the workshop, they will learn how to use and access Google Class Forums. Besides, the teacher will explain how to write an expository paragraph using some examples. Students will also understand how the rubric works. Through comments in a forum and using a rubric, students will peer-assess based on criteria such as content, organization, grammar and punctuation, and vocabulary. Students will notice the differences among rubric bands namely excellent, good, and needs improvement. The first band indicates that there are no mistakes in the expository paragraph; the second one means that there are a few mistakes; however, the last band means that the student needs a lot of support to learn English. Then, students will practice writing the paragraph and providing peer-assessment.

In the phase number two, the classes will be developed in detail. Every class will start with a warm-up to familiarize students with the topic. Then, the teacher will explain and model examples. During each class, the students will write an expository paragraph in the online forum and their peers will read and assess. Besides, at the end of each week, as

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

homework, students will write and post a second paragraph and their peers will use the rubric for peer-assessment considering the aspects already mentioned such as content, organization, grammar and punctuation and vocabulary.

Students will share their drafts to their peers in class, and the final draft will be posted in the Google classroom forum to be commented by peer again. The students will have the assessment rubric printed and will also have in the Google classroom. The school has internet connection and computing laboratories which will be used for the English classes during the intervention phase. Furthermore, the students will write a new paragraph at home and upload it to the online forum. In this case, the students will have to provide feedback at home.

Methodology

This study will develop action research because the author will be involved in the study participating in training to support needed changes (Calhoun, 2002). According to Johnson (2019), action research helps teachers understand some of the strategies they need to implement as educators in the classroom to gain empirical knowledge. The research includes quantitative data and ethical issues of the innovation.

Participants

This action research will be performed by the researcher with a sample of 16 students, 6 girls and 10 boys. They were agree to participate in this activity. They study at a public school in the city of Riobamba. The age of participants is between 14 to 16 years old. They are my students in first year of bachelor. The school schedule is in the morning from 7:00 a.m. to 13:00 p.m.; however, the intervention phase will be addressed in the afternoon. The socio-economic background of the educational population is medium class to poor level because their parents do not have a secondary study and are informal workers. According to the diagnostic test taken at the beginning of the year, the students have an English level

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

between A1 - 60% and A2 - 40 %, which was based on the Common European Framework (CEFR, 2001). To participate in the intervention phase, the students will provide the teacher an informed consent from the students' parents who agree their children to be part of this project. Furthermore, those students will accomplish some including criteria like to be legally registered in the school for the current academic year; and, to be the age stipulated.

According to the test results, the students' weaknesses are in writing skills, and this is the reason why expository paragraphs will be used in this proposal. Additionally, students are good with technology nevertheless they do not like to write on forums.

Instruments and Data Collection

For the purpose of the study, the independent variable is peer assessment using online forums as a tool. In addition, the dependent variable is expository writing paragraphs, specifically the component of writing considering content, organization, grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

The instrument of data collection is the survey with four closed questions which has a questionnaire composed of multiple-choice questions with the Liker scale and two open-ended questions. This instrument will be used to gather information after the implementation of the innovation (See Appendix 2).

Pre and posttest.

To answer the second question: *Do students improve their expository writing through the peer-assessment?* There will be seven online forums: number one will be the pretest and the last one will be the posttest. The first forum will take place on week number one. The lessons will be about technology and topics related to social media and digital devices. The final forum will be about the advantages and disadvantages of social media.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

The expository paragraphs posted on the forums will be graded on a range from 1 to 3 points and the rubric integrates the following elements: content, organization, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. Content takes into consideration the fact that the information in the paragraph could be highly connected to the assigned topic. Organization in which students must write a well-organized paragraph with its main idea or topic sentence, supporting details and conclusion. The third criterion refers to the use of the simple present tense and the correct punctuation. Vocabulary deals with the correct selection of words.

Survey.

To answer the first question: *What are the students' perceptions towards peer-assessment in writing skills?* There will be a survey (Appendix 2) with six questions. The researcher will apply an interview to the whole population (15 students). It has four close questions: the first one asks about the aspect of the writing skills, and the second one is a statement that uses a Liker scale to check if the students have improved their writing skills or not through peer-assessment. The third one is related to students' feelings at the moment to write an online forum and if it was valuable and beneficial or not. The fourth inquires if peer-feedback and teacher feedback contributed or not to writing a well-structured expository paragraph. The fifth question is an open question, which intends to ask the students about what they would change in the classes. The last one, is another open question to ask about students' suggestions for the teaching planning. This survey will be applied in week four. It would allow the researcher to get a clearer idea of the learner's perspectives.

Reliability and Data Analysis

The results of the instruments will be tabulated in an Excel file and reported in statistical tables. The results from the survey will be shown in tables with frequencies and percentages of each option. On the other hand, the teacher will grade the students' pre and

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

posttests according to the criteria from the rubric. Then the means will be compared through the SPSS statistical software to answer the second research question.

Ethical Considerations

According to Armiger (1977), "ethical consideration means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent" (p. 10). It means that informed consent is the most important ethical issue in conducting research. For instance, voluntary participation, personal information and consent must be confidential. It is necessary to explain to the students why they are in a sampling group (Govil, 2013). One of ethical principles is confidentiality of the information (Surmiak, 2018). Outcomes of this study will be given to the institution and participants. Taking into consideration the students' age (under 18), it will be compulsory to collect an informed consent from their parents, to take part of the study. Online forums and student's opinions will be used only for research purposes, and relevant information will be further exhibit after the study is complete.

Limitations

In research studies there are some limitations. Being principally internet connection and students' limited knowledge of English. The first limitation focuses on the internet connection because not all students have internet all the time. The second limitation is students' use of Spanish in English classes because they use to talk in Spanish to learn and understand English. The third limitation is how to work the writing skill especially with those students that do not express their opinion in a forum.

References

- Abas, I., & Noor, H. (2018). Model of the writing process and strategies of EFL proficient student writers: a case study of Indonesian learners. *Social Sciences & Humanities* (26)3, 1815-1842.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327972100_Model_of_the_Writing_Process_and_Strategies_of_EFL_Proficient_Student_Writers_A_Case_Study_of_Indonesian_Learners
- Akmal, A. (2018). *Improving Writing Accuracy: Online Discussion Forum and Corrective Feedback*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324475714_Improving_Writing_Accuracy_Online_Discussion_Forum_and_Corrective_Feedback
- Aliasin, S., & Amanlu, M. (2017). The Effect of alternative assessment techniques on efl learners' reading comprehension ability and self-efficacy in reading: the case of Iranian junior high school students. *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 5(3), 160-168.
<https://doi.org/10.13189/lis.2017.050302>
- Alviana, V. (2019). The effect of recipe demonstration technique on students' writing competence in procedural text. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 7(2), 128-131. <https://e-journal.undikma.ac.id/index.php/jollt/article/view/1960/1399>.
- Andrade, H. (2000). Using rubrics to promote thinking and learning. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5), 13-18.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285750862_Using_rubrics_to_promote_thinking_and_learning

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

- Angelo, T., & Cross, K. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: a handbook for college teachers*. Washington. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Armiger, S. (1977). Ethics of nursing research: profile, principle, perspective. *Health Science Journal*, 26(5), 330-336. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-197709000-00003>.
- Azarnoosh, M. (2013). Peer assessment in an EFL context: attitudes and friendship bias. *Language Testing in Asia*, 3(11), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2229-0443-3-11>.
- Beltran, M. (2017). El aprendizaje del idioma inglés como lengua extranjera [English as a foreign language learning]. *Revista Boletín Redipe* 6(4), 91-98. <https://doi.org/10.36260/rbr.v6i4.227>
- Calhoun, E. F. (2002). *Action research for school improvement. Educational leadership*. ASCD: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/action-research-for-school-improvement>
- Casco, G., & Calderón, A. (2021). Rubric, a path to objectively assess learning in the virtual classroom. *Revista Multi-ensayos*. 6(11), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.5377/multiensayos.v6i11.9282>
- Celce-Murcia, M. (1979). *Teaching English as a second language or foreign language*. United Kingdom: Newbury House Publishers.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. <https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1bf>
- Cronquist, K., & Fiszbein, A. (2017). *English Language Learning in Latin America*. Bogotá: The Dialog.
- Cruz, K. (2022). *Peer feedback using evernote to improve writing short stories*. <http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/3343>

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Devia, N., Abdul, A., & Diah, K. (2018). The application of authentic assessment for students writing skill. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 7(2), 49-53.
<https://doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v7n2a5>.
- Duque-Aguilar, J. (2021). Teachers' assessment approaches regarding efl students' speaking skill. *profile: issues in teachers' professional development*, 23(1), 161-177.
<https://doi.org/10.15446/profile.v23n1.85964>
- Education First. (2021). *EF English Proficiency*. <https://www.ef.com/ec/epi/regions/latin-america/ecuador/>
- Elder, J. (2008). *Exercise your college Reading Skills*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Farheen, S., & Fareeha, J. (2021). The Role of Backward Design in Improving Writing skills of Pakistani Undergraduate Students. *Global Regional Review*, 1(1), 78 – 85.
[https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2021\(vi-i\).09](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2021(vi-i).09).
- Fathi, J., & Shirazizadeh, M. (2019). Fostering self-regulated learning of Iranian EFL students: An investigation of the effect of self and peer assessment in L2 writing. *Foreign Language Research Journal*, 9(1), 123-146.
<https://doi.org/10.22059/JFLR.2019.249081.446>.
- Flood, J., Lapp, D., & Farnan, N. (1986). A reading-writing procedure that teaches expository paragraph structure. *The Reading Teacher*, 39(6), 556–562.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20199155>.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

Galbraith, D., & Torrance, M. (2004). Revision in the context of different drafting strategies.

In Allal, L. & Chanquoy, P. Largy, *revision cognitive and instructional processes. studies in writing* 13, 63-85. Dordrecht: Springer.

Gallegos, K. (2018). *Online forums and the writing skill development in students of third year of BGU at " Augusto N. Martínez" high school from ambato city, tungurahua province.* <https://repositorio.uta.edu.ec/handle/123456789/27367>

Gamboa, J. (2020). *Outlining and the writing skill.*

<https://repositorio.uta.edu.ec/handle/123456789/31650>

Gaynor, J. (2020). Peer review in the classroom: student perceptions, peer feedback quality and the role of assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in higher education*, 45(5), 758-775. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1697424.gupta>

Govil, P. (2013). Ethical considerations in educational research . *International journal of advancement in education and social sciences*, 1(2), 17-22.

<https://doi.org/10.1.1.889.7927>

Gupta, S., Abdullah, F., & Xueshuang, Y. (2019). Peer Assessment in Writing: A Critical Review of Previous Studies. *Journal of Advances in linguistics*, 10(1), 1478-1487. <https://doi.org/10.24297/jal.v10i0.7992>

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing*. New York: Pearson Educational Limited. .

Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of Language Teaching*. United Kingdom: Longman Publishers.

Hosseini, H., Chalak, A., & Biria, R. (2019). Impact of Backward Design on Improving Iranian Advanced Learners' Writing Ability: Teachers' Practices and Beliefs. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12 (2), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.1223a>.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

- Huwari, I. (2020). Error analysis of written English paragraph: A case study on Zarqa University. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, 17(5), 1-12.
<https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/665/661>.
- Intriago, F. (2021). *Peer - feedback for Improving English Writing in Higher Education* .
<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/bitstream/ucasagrande/3170/1/Tesis3239INTp.pdf>
- Johnson, A. (2019). Action research for teacher professional development: being and becoming. In C. Mertler Edition, *The handbook of action research*, 1-22. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Madarina, A., Rahman, A., Nazri, M., & Azmi, L. (2020). Improvement of English Writing Skills through Blended Learning among university students in Malaysia. *Universal journal of educational research* 8(12), 7694-7701.
<https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.082556>
- Marra, R., Moore, J., & Klimczak, A. (2004). Content analysis of online discussion forums: A comparative analysis of protocols. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 52(2), 23-40. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF02504837>.
- Martínez, J., López, A., & Pérez, E. (2020). Using process writing in the teaching of english as a foreign language. *Revista caribeña de Investigación Educativa*, 4(1), 49-61.
<https://doi.org/10.32541/recie.2020.v4i1.pp49-61>
- Minnich, M., Kirkpatrick, A., Goodman, J., Whittaker, A., Stanton Chapple, H., Schoening, A., & Khanna, M. (2018). Writing across the curriculum: reliability testing of a standardized rubric. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 57(6), 366-370.
<https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20180522-08>.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

- Mongillo, G., & Wilder, H. (2012). An examination of at-risk college freshmen's expository literacy skills using interactive online writing activities. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 42(2), 27-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10790195.2012.10850353>.
- Morris, J. (2015). Formative assessment in practice learning: is it “always about testing” or a more collaborative approach between learner and educator? *Physiotherapy*, 101(1) 10-39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physio.2015.03.1914>
- Mwalongo, A. (2013). Peer Feedback: Its Quality and Students' Perceptions as a Peer Learning Tool in Asynchronous Discussion Forums. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 2(2), 69-77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v2i2.1821>.
- Northrup, D. (2013). *How English became a Global Language*. New York: Routledge Press.
- Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2007). *Introduction to Academic Writing*. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Parupalli, R. (2019). Teaching effective writing skills to the English language learners: a study in ELT. *Alford Council of Interantional English & Literature Journal*, 2(2), 75-89. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335919786_TEACHING_EFFECTIVE_WRITING_SKILLS_TO_THE_ENGLISH_LANGUAGE_LEARNERS_ELLs_A_STUDY_IN_ELT.
- Planas LLadó, A., Soley, F., Fraguell, R., Pulolras, G., Planella, J., Roura, N., Montoro, L. (2014). Student perceptions of peer assessment: an interdisciplinary study. *Assessment & Evaluation in higher education*, 39(5), 592-610. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2013.860077>.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

Race, P. (2001). *A briefing on self, peer and group assessment, generic assessment series, No. 9*. Ney York: LTSN Generic Centre.

Recalde, F. (2020). *Formative peer feedback during the pre-writing stage*.

<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/2618>

Remache, N., Porras, S., Fierro, D., & Campaña, D. (2022). Moodle platform forums in the English language writing skills improvement. *AlfaPublicaciones*, 4(2.2).

<https://doi.org/10.33262/ap.v4i2.2.214>.

Remache, N., Yáñez, V., & Pilco, M. (2019). Storytelling strategy to improve coherence in writing skills development. *Explorador Digital*, 9(3). 123-14.

<https://doi.org/10.33262/exploradordigital.v3i3.1.873>.

Richards, J. (2013). Curriculum approaches in language teaching: forward, central, and backward design. *RELC Journal*, 44(1), 5-33.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688212473293>.

Richards, J., & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rojas, R. (2021). *Assessment of writing strategies to improve English language development in children of 8th grade. A case of a public school in Otavalo-Ecuador*.

<http://repositorio.utn.edu.ec/bitstream/123456789/11434/2/PG%20858%20TRABAJO%20GRADO.pdf>

Rowntree, D. (1995). Teaching and learning online: A correspondence education for the 21st Century? *British journal of Educational technology*, 26(3), 205– 215.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.1995.tb00342>.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

- Sangeetha, V. (2020). Inculcating self-editing skills for enhancing writing skills of the EFL students . *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(1), 509-522.
<https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13133a>.
- Savignon, S. J. (1997). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice (2nd ed.)*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: McGraw-Hill.
- Seow, A. (2002). The writing process and process writing. In J. Richards, & W. Renandya, *Methodology in Language Teaching* (pp. 315-320). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2005). *The teaching knowledge test Course*. New York: Cambridge University Press. .
- Surmiak, A. (2018). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: researchers' perspectives. *Forum qualitative sozialforschung / forum: qualitative social research*, 19(3). Art. 12, 1-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-19.3.3099>.
- Topping, K. (2018). *Using peer assessment to inspire reflection and learning (1st ed.)*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351256889>.
- TumaUNESCO. (2021). *Las lenguas en la educación [The tongues in Education]*.
<https://es.unesco.org/themes/ecm/lenguas>
- Vega, R. (2019). *Improving writing with peer-feedback and blogger: an action research study*. <http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/1821>
- Vélez, A. (2021). *Implementing peer feedback to improve writing process facilitated by google. docs: An action research study*.
<http://dspace.casagrande.edu.ec:8080/handle/ucasagrande/3277>

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

Vytasek, J., Wise, A., & Woloshen, S. (2017). Topic models to support instructors in MOOC forums. *Proceedings of the seventh international learning analytics & knowledge conference*, 610-611. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3027385.3029486>.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design: Expanded Second Edition*. New York: Pearson.

Wilcox, P. (2003). *Writing Skills Practice Book for EFL*. Washington: Office of English Language Programs.

Yáñez, V. (2019). *Storytelling strategy to improve coherence in writing skills development*. <https://repositorio.uta.edu.ec/simple-search?query=Yanez+Viviana>

WRITING IMPROVEMENT BY PEER-ASSESSMENT

Appendix 1

Lesson Plan

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Instrument: Survey for student's perspectives.

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Rubric: Writing Rubric for Students' peer-assessment.

Available upon request.