



**Improving Students' Ability to Write Opinions Using Picture Prompts and
Peer Feedback: An Action Research Study**

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve students' ability to write opinions using picture prompts and peer feedback. The research was developed with 37 university students in the B1 English module in semester II - 2021 to 2022. They did different activities to increase their writing skills during 16 online hours of class. An action research was conducted using quantitative and qualitative instruments to get the data; including a pre and post-test, a questionnaire, and rubrics. The results indicated that the participants improved their scores on content, style, and grammar criteria; therefore, the findings showed a positive development due to the intervention. The criteria of "Content" in the final draft had an increase in the mean of 1.92 points compared to the first draft of the opinion paragraphs. The "Style" criteria also increased in the mean; the difference is 1.75. Similarly, the "Grammar" criteria increased by 1.11. The questionnaire reassured the pedagogical innovation strategy, picture prompts and peer feedback, were helpful for writing opinion paragraphs according to the student's opinions. The implications of this study serve as a reference for educators involved in the field of EFL education who wish to improve their teaching practices and engage students in writing activities.

Keywords: peer feedback, picture prompt, opinion paragraph, writing.

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo mejorar la habilidad de los estudiantes para escribir opiniones utilizando indicaciones con imágenes y retroalimentación de los compañeros. La investigación se desarrolló con 37 estudiantes universitarios del módulo de inglés B1 del semestre II - 2021 a 2022. Ellos realizaron diferentes actividades para aumentar sus habilidades de escritura durante 16 horas de clases virtuales. Se realizó una investigación de campo utilizando instrumentos cuantitativos y cualitativos para obtener los datos; incluyendo un pre y post-test, un cuestionario y rúbricas. Los resultados indicaron que los participantes mejoraron sus puntuaciones en los criterios de contenido, estilo y gramática; por lo tanto, los resultados mostraron un desarrollo positivo debido a la intervención. El criterio de "Contenido" en el borrador final tuvo un aumento en la media de 1,92 puntos en comparación con el primer borrador de los párrafos de opinión. El criterio "Estilo" también aumentó en la media; la diferencia es de 1,75. Del mismo modo, el criterio "Gramática" aumentó en 1,11 puntos. El cuestionario reafirmó que la estrategia de innovación pedagógica, las indicaciones con imágenes y la retroalimentación de los compañeros, fueron útiles para escribir párrafos de opinión de acuerdo con las opiniones de los estudiantes. Las implicaciones de este estudio sirven de referencia para los educadores involucrados en el campo de la educación EFL que deseen mejorar sus prácticas de enseñanza e implicar a los estudiantes en actividades de escritura.

Palabras clave: retroalimentación de los compañeros, indicaciones con imágenes, párrafo de opinión, escritura.

Improving Students' Ability to Write Opinions Using Picture Prompts and Peer Feedback: An Action Research Study

Afdal (2021) explored students' ability and problems in writing, highlighting the agreed assumption that students who are at the University level must develop excellent writing skills, mainly those who are taking an English Education major. In most cases, students have brilliant ideas to communicate, yet they have some constraints along the writing process. In his research study, the author also observed and determined several reasons that may be causing students to have problems with writing, among them mechanics like punctuation, grammar, capitalization, use of connectors; and vocabulary like the choice of words, mistranslation of some terminologies, and the flow of writing (Afdal, 2021).

Tangpermpoon (2008) supports the perception that for adequate writing ability, students need some degree of English background knowledge to convey what they aim to communicate to their readers. Moreover, the author agreed with Afdal in the conception that writing represents a difficulty for students compared to other skills such as reading, speaking, and listening. They both believed that in order to produce good writing, it is required to develop appropriate syntactic and lexical knowledge along with language principles of organization (Afdal, 2021; Tangpermpoon, 2008). According to Koura and Zahran (2017), "for students to succeed in EFL writing skills, they need to deal with writing habitually, to think in English and express their thinking through writing" (p. 184). Good writing skills are essential to awaken students' need to express ideas, facts, and opinions with comprehensible language to foster communication and academic purposes.

In the context of Ecuador, Tamayo and Cajas (2020) explored the difficulties in teaching writing to Ecuadorian EFL students. Among their findings, they listed:

a) Students' English language competency, b) Spanish language interference, c) students' lack of motivation to write in English, and d) teaching practices. These were identified as the challenges that educators deal with when teaching writing to university students. (p. 6)

To deal with writing difficulties, Khoirul (2015) developed a research using picture prompts as a strategy to improve students' writing. Beyond improving learners' descriptive writing, she concluded that when students got stuck in writing, picture prompts helped them gain motivation. They explore their ideas based on the pictures, engage in the topic, and provide some vocabulary and clues. On the other hand, Kitchakarn (2013) conducted research that also focused on improving student's writing abilities, in this case, using peer feedback through blogs. She emphasized the emergence of networking and fostered the integration of educational technology into a writing classroom. Blogs connect students with potential collaborative and cooperative learning through the interaction of peers. The author claimed that peer feedback "facilitates further writing development" and that, "in general, peer feedback is used in the form of written commentary and verbal interaction between readers and writers in the preliminary and final stage of drafts" (p. 152); consequently, helping students develop their writing and upgrade this skill.

There is extensive research on improving students' writing ability (Afdal, 2021; Koura & Zahran, 2017; Tangpermpoon, 2008). Some have applied visual stimulation known as picture prompts (Khoirul, 2015). Others have used peer feedback to improve students' writing performance (Kitchakarn, 2013). Whether they have focused on these

two strategies separately, they reported significant results in improving students' writing. However, these studies have not been combined (picture prompts and peer feedback) and implemented simultaneously on University students whose proficiency level is B1. Also, these studies have been implemented internationally and not to local students at Guayaquil-Ecuador.

Taking into consideration that within the discipline of writing, EFL students tend to have less experience in written expression and that from the four basic macro skills in language, writing remains neglected in most cases. This research proposes the implementation of writing activities based on picture prompts and peer feedback to improve students' opinion writing. Having identified that students' writing skill is lower than expected, the students' need to develop good opinion writing skills, the need to introduce topics of interest to motivate students along the writing process, and the advantages of peer feedback; this study explored the following research questions:

1. What difficulties did students face while developing opinion writing?
2. How do picture prompt writing activities help students improve their writing skills?
3. To what extent does peer feedback help students improve their writing skills?

Literature Review

This section covers the main topics related to this proposal. In addition, the descriptions include relevant literature on terms such as writing skill, writing process, opinion writing, picture prompts, and peer feedback. All these aspects contributed to the research and were applied in the innovation.

Writing Skill

It has been argued how learners acquire writing skills. In the early 1960s, it was believed that writing could not be taught to students. The resources for writing were focused on testing rather than learning purposes. For instance, writing tasks included essay formats, and educators believed that checking and/or grading those essays made the ‘teaching’ (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012). In the late 1960s, the ‘teaching of writing’ revolution occurred. Specialized writing books began to be produced based on a learner-centered approach encouraging writing education. This involved students in discovery, idea-generation activities, and pre-writing tasks (Hariston, 1982 as cited in Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012). The shifting writing instruction trends positively impacted learners’ development of the skill. This also enhanced the intellectual process because students go step by step to obtain a good product.

Some authors defined writing as “a complex skill that requires knowledge of many components of language related to contextual factors such as genre, topic, audience, and purpose” (Polio & Kessler, 2019, p. 21). Utami et al. (2012) observed that this skill involves specific abilities to aid writers in expressing their thoughts in words; and that developing writing as a skill guides learners to earn fluency, creativity, independence, and comprehension in writing. Students are expected to manage different variables in parallel; including “control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation” (Nunan, 1989, p. 36).

Writing Process

Professional writers develop the skill by following stages like planning, drafting, revising, and consulting with an editor before publishing. Some authors, who have focused on a process-based approach, believe that those stages are the best way to

develop the ability (Sánchez & López, 2019). For example, Harmer (2007) explained that teaching writing could be conducted by “either the focus on the product or on the process itself” (p. 325). However, he acknowledged that “when concentrating on the product, we are only interested in the aim of a task and in the end product” (p. 325). Nevertheless, in the process, “we pay attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through” (p. 326).

According to Harmer (2007), “by spending time with learners on pre-writing phases, editing, re-drafting and finally producing a finished version of their work” (p. 326), students are encouraged to focus on the procedure of building a good piece of work. The author (2004) presented ‘The Process Wheel’ approach that includes four stages:

Planning, drafting, editing, and final version. He presented these aspects operating as a wheel to show the many directions writers can take. Either traveling backward and forward around the rim or going up and down the wheel’s spokes. Only when the final version really is the final version, has the process reached its culmination. (p. 6)

Figure 1

The Process Wheel



“The Process Wheel”. By J. Harmer, 2004, image, How to teach writing.

a) Planning.

This first stage is conducted to think before starting to write. Three main issues need to be considered. First, the purpose of writing, including the type of text, language, and information to be included. Second, the audience meaning the readers; because the audience will shape the tone. Third, is the content structure that is, how best to order facts, ideas, or arguments. (Harmer, 2004)

b) Drafting.

This second stage refers to the first version of a piece of writing aimed to be modified and improved later. “As the writing process proceeds into editing, a number of drafts may be produced on the way to the final version” (p. 5).

c) Editing.

The third stage consists of reflecting and revising. It mainly focuses on improving the draft by checking text coherence, avoiding vague ideas, and concentrating on details like grammatical accuracy (Harmer, 2004). The author stressed that “reflecting and revising are often helped by other readers or editors who comment and make suggestions to make appropriate revisions” (p. 5).

d) Final version.

After all the stages have been completed, writers develop the final version. Once the drafting processes and editions have been reached, the result of the writing is ready to be sent to the intended audience. (Harmer, 2004)

Opinion Writing

Professor Philippakos (2017) agreed with the assumption that:

Opinion writing, or persuasion in general, is one genre that defies young or developing writers as it requires both social and cognitive processes. Further, she claimed that persuasive writing addresses the questions of an invisible audience and reader and for that reason, pragmatic social considerations are essential because persuasion involves attempts to convince a reader, who is not present at the moment of the argument. (p. 2)

From experience, the teacher researcher considers that within an academic context, opinion writing must be understood as the style of writing in which the author gives opinions about a subject telling how the writer feels or thinks about a topic. Similar to the concept of opinion essays, in opinion writing paragraphs, the statements must be supported by facts and correct writing structure. For instance, it must include sentences with opinion phrases like ‘In my opinion’, ‘I think that’, ‘It seems to me that’, ‘It appears to me that’, among others. Once the writer has expressed his/her personal opinion on the subject, authors need to provide the audience with the reasons that support their thinking.

More specifically, an opinion paragraph is the product of the writer’s opinion, claims, and arguments that support their perspective on a given matter. It is more about expressing thoughts and beliefs, rather than trying to persuade the reader (Afdal, 2021).

Picture Prompts

Picture prompts can be defined as “photographs, line drawing, or other graphics that illustrate the steps within a task sequence” (Moffit, 2008 as cited in Probo, 2013, p.

10). Picture prompt tasks provide students with an image used as a prompt to evoke writing. It also stimulates imagination and interpretation allowing students to make their connections, construct meaning, express coherent ideas, and encourage all types of writing (Probo, 2013).

Schweizer (1999) highlighted the evolution from traditional objective writing into performance-based practices. She mentioned that:

Picture prompt is a performance-based practice that elicits writing samples, adding levels of complexity. It arouses the need in the learners to interpret the picture, create meaning from the picture, and then transfer the visual information into a verbal mode of expression. (p. 2)

Rahayu (2020) pointed out that picture prompts can promote students' imagination. Nevertheless, in certain situations, picture prompts may not have clear images thus become challenging for students to understand becoming not productive for some writing activities.

Peer Feedback

Several researchers define peer feedback as “a pedagogical cooperative learning technique commonly associated with the teaching of writing using the process strategy, in which students provide feedback on their friends’ written drafts, receiving the comments to improve their own writing in return” (Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Paulus, 1999 authors cited in Kitchkarn, 2012, p. 71). Peer feedback also responds to the terms peer review, peer revision, peer response, peer evaluation, or student feedback. This technique is very much used and assigned for the composition of written texts for its potential benefits with regard to students’ writing development, identification of

problems such as inappropriate language use, wrong mechanics, not understandable text, and illogical organization (Kitchakarn, 2013).

Involving students in this process of sharing ideas and receiving constructive feedback enables learners to develop their performance and improve their writing skills. The main advantage of promoting and employing the technique is that it encourages students to develop their critical thinking skills and expand their competence. In addition, on a pedagogical matter, peer feedback has been determined as a helpful tool to boost writing skills (Kuyyogsuy, 2019).

Some researchers take the opposite view about peer feedback efficiency concluding that it does not always emerge the desired results. It is believed that unconstructive feedback takes place when peers give superficial comments that confuse and do not lead to improving the writing (Race, 2001).

Lam (2010) presented a peer review training workshop. The objective was to coach a group of students to give and respond meaningfully to peer feedback. The participants were non-English students from Hong Kong University who enrolled in a writing course. His training aimed to “raise students’ consciousness through analyzing the effectiveness of their peer feedback and evaluating the extent to which peers’ comments are incorporated into their subsequent revisions” (p. 114). The results indicated that:

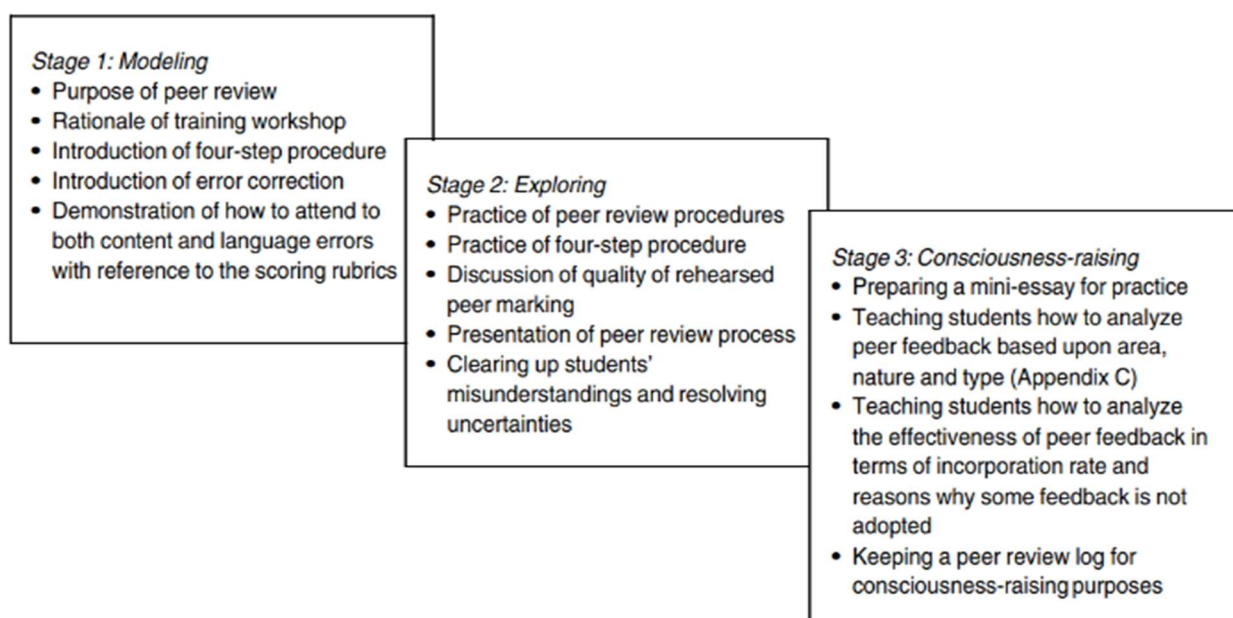
Participants were generally positive about the use of peer review activities in the writing course and the training. They also evaluated how to successfully incorporate peer feedback into subsequent revisions. Students who were critical about their peer’s work, became more critical of their writing, internalizing and developing the acquired skills during the training workshop. Moreover, he

emphasized that students found the peer review log as a useful tool to reflect on the revision process and to examine the effectiveness of revisions. (Lam, 2010, p. 120)

The workshop consisted of *modeling, exploring, and consciousness-raising* stages. Overall, some remarkable steps in the three stages were: explaining to students the purpose and benefits of peer review for writing and preparing students for a peer review session in the *modeling* stage. Practicing and assessing from authentic exemplars in the *exploring* stage. And, engaging students in autonomous peer review activities in the *consciousness-raising* final stage (Lam, 2010). A detailed insight into the three-level model is shown in the following image.

Figure 2

Peer review training workshop



“Three-tier peer review training workshop”. By R. Lam, 2010, image. Peer review training workshop:

Coaching Students to Give and Evaluate Peer Feedback.

Innovation

The students were instructed on expressing clear opinions about a given topic, grammar related to relative clauses, phrases to give opinions, and strategies for writing a good opinion paragraph. The researcher provided rubrics and trained students to perform peer revision, serving as a guide during their learning process and performance activities. The lesson plan was designed for four weeks (16 online hours of class). The specific activities are detailed on the abbreviated performance task table in Appendix 1.

Research Methodology

Action research was conducted for this study, including quantitative and qualitative data. Corey (2014) defined action research in education as:

A system that attempts to solve a practical problem by using the methods of science. It consists of identifying a problem, setting a hypothesis, testing promising procedures to ameliorate or eliminate difficulties, analyzing evidence, and arriving at conclusions that will contribute to the solutions of future problems or difficulties in the practice. (p. 375)

This action research included qualitative and quantitative instruments to address the research questions. Data were collected at the beginning, during, and at the end of the implemented innovation. These approaches were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What difficulties did students face while developing opinion writing?
2. How do picture prompt writing activities help students improve their writing skills?

3. To what extent does peer feedback help students improve their writing skills?

Participants

Participants in the study were B1 volunteer learners from a Public University in Guayaquil, Guayas Province, Ecuador. The sample included 37 students, and the ages ranged from 19 to 25. They were taking the B1 level English module in semester II - 2021 to 2022. The 37 participants of the study were selected to apply the pedagogical innovation proposal. In addition, the group participated in a questionnaire at the end of the innovation.

Even though students are supposed to have a B1 level at university education according to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, they took an online test on <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/online-english-level-test> to determine their English proficiency. The results evidence that the majority of the learners were B1 (84%) in contrast with a small group whose scores corresponded to A2 (16%).

Instruments

Pre and Post-test.

Students chose between selected picture prompts from the New York Times web page's learning network. They wrote a short opinion paragraph, which is considered the pre-test. When the pedagogical innovation finished, the students were instructed to choose again from different picture prompts in the same newspaper site. They developed an opinion paragraph that was posted on the network, this time implementing a rubric, peer feedback, and 'The process wheel' stages. The final version of this opinion paragraph is considered the post-test.

Questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of six open-ended questions that were asked at the end of the innovation. The questions were:

1. What common difficulties do you encounter in writing?
2. What are the challenges you face when writing an opinion paragraph? Why?
3. How do you think picture prompts have helped you improve your writing skill for developing opinion paragraphs?
4. What don't you like about picture prompts while developing opinion paragraphs?
5. How do you think peer feedback has helped you improve your writing skill for developing opinion paragraphs?
6. What don't you like about peer feedback while developing opinion paragraphs?

Rubrics.

There were two rubrics. The first, was for learners to develop peer review between their drafts in order to improve the final paragraph version (Appendix 3). The second, was for students to know the evaluation criteria for their final opinion paragraph. The latter was assessed by peer reviewers and supervised by the teacher researcher (Appendix 4).

Data Analysis

Data from the tests, questionnaire, and rubrics were used for the analysis. The quantitative data was collected and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to display statistical information. The qualitative data was collected, interpreted, and analyzed from the answers of the questionnaire. Using a qualitative technique, the information went through the following steps:

- a. During the open coding step, six themes emerged (*Challenges, Difficulties, Picture prompts advantages, Picture prompts disadvantages, Peer feedback advantages, and Peer feedback disadvantages*) grouping by categories relevant quotes from the participants.
- b. Next, an axial coding step was conducted. During this step, each theme was reviewed and defined by the researcher. This resulted in the combination of the *Difficulties* and the *Challenges* themes into the *Writing* theme because they both pertained to students writing production. The third theme *Picture prompt* and fourth theme *Peer Feedback* described both positive and negative aspects regarding the innovation strategies.
- c. These themes were then organized into two broader categories (*Writing and Innovation strategies*) during the selective coding step. The researcher then reviewed the categories and how well each theme fit into its corresponding category. These categories and themes along with relevant quotes from the transcriptions are summarized in Appendix 5.

Ethical Considerations

The participants were informed of the innovation and agreed to participate. The names and personal information of the students will not be mentioned to keep confidentiality. This research is based on the principles of data protection and rights to privacy (European Data Protection Supervisor, 2019).

Results

To answer research question one, ‘What difficulties did students face while developing opinion writing?’, the researcher conducted a questionnaire to thirty-seven students to better understand their difficulties while developing opinion writing. The qualitative results showed that four variables emerged as the common difficulties encountered while writing. The theme *Difficulties* referred to the students’ struggles with such as how to link sentences, engage the audience, avoiding to express ambiguous ideas, and misspellings. This is reflected in the following reflections:

“I think I need to learn much more vocabulary and connectors to be able to form opinion paragraphs” (Participant # 2)

“Write the ideas in order so as not to lose the interest of the reader.” (Participant #4)

“Write repeated sentences, have no opinion paragraph structure. Not give explanations or examples of our opinion.” (Participant #5)

Likewise, the theme *Challenges* referred to the fact that students reported some concerns prior to developing opinion writing. The common variables described

grammar concerns, the use of adequate vocabulary, and the use of phrases to give opinions. The following extracts contemplate this perspective:

“Challenges such as grammar errors, ordering ideas and using vocabulary properly. Because it is difficult to keep in mind the number of things that are needed to have a good writing.” (Participant #1)

“I think that the most complicated thing when giving an opinion is to be as specific as possible because it is something that is very clear in our heads but it is difficult to express it.” (Participant #3)

Regarding research question two, ‘How do picture prompt writing activities help students improve their writing skills?’ The data from the third theme, *Pictures Prompt*, included advantages and disadvantages. The positive aspects mentioned creativity for writing, guidance to develop ideas, and visual aid to express ideas and interpret writing prompts.

“It helped us because when we had something visual to write, it became easier to express our opinion and ideas that we have.” (Participant #13)

“I think that it helped me a lot to be able to improve my capacity for analysis and interpretation, when writing a paragraph about an image or topic in question.” (Participant #15)

On the other hand, the negative aspects referred to confusing or simple images. Consequently, limiting ideas for writing.

“That it is often a little incomprehensible to interpret the image the first time.”
(Participant #11)

“I don't like it when it is a very simple image where we don't have how to get many ideas for our paragraph.” (Participant #12)

To answer the third research question, ‘To what extent does peer feedback help students improve their writing skills?’, the quantitative data analysis showed the following results:

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test total marks

	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
PRE-TEST	37	6.00	10.00	7.0395	.96129
POST-TEST	37	6.00	10.00	8.9605	1.13532

Note: N= Sample MIN= Minimum MAX= Maximum M= Mean SD= Standard Deviation

Table 1 presents the contrast between the pre-test and post-test results. The minimum and maximum total marks remained the same in both tests. However, after the implementation of the proposal, the participants improved their scores. Therefore, the innovation proposal had a significant impact on the participants’ improvement in their writing ability for opinion paragraphs.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of each criterion

	Pre-test					Post-test			
Criteria	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD	MIN	MAX	M	SD

Content	37	1	3	1.70	0.70	3	4	3.62	0.49
Style	37	1	3	1.68	0.75	3	4	3.43	0.50
Grammar	37	1	3	2.30	0.66	3	4	3.41	0.50

Note: N= Sample MIN= Minimum MAX= Maximum M= Mean SD= Standard Deviation

A paired sample *t*-test showed a significant difference between the pre (M=5.67, SD=1.74) and the post-test (M=10, SD=1.01) scores when examining all samples together; $t(36) = -16.3, p = .000$.

In table 2, the pre and post-test were compared. It shows the values of each criterion included in the rubric to develop peer feedback on both writing processes. The criterion “Content” in the post-test had an increase in the mean of 1.92 compared to the pre-test. There was also a remarkable improvement in the criterion “Style” and “Grammar” total marks; increasing by 1.75 and 1.11 points respectively. The significant progress from the pre and post-test rubric criteria is due to the strengthening of supporting opinions with facts, including a variety of opinion phrases, and appropriate use of English grammar respectively.

In addition, to complement research question three, some qualitative data was obtained from the questionnaire. The theme *Peer Feedback* included advantages and disadvantages. Pros were that this technique gave suggestions to improve their writing and it was useful to correct grammar/spelling mistakes. Also, it gave a different perspective of their writing along with peer guidance throughout the writing process. Whereas the Cons reported delayed feedback from peers and too much time invested in

giving feedback. Some considered the reviewers delivered poor peer feedback and others mentioned the lack of peer communication.

Within the advantages, participants shared these opinions:

“The fact that someone else told me the things I had wrong and I had to correct helped me to see it and to understand it, because at the beginning I saw it perfectly but then my partner came and told me that there was something wrong and so I was understanding and learning.” (Participant #24)

“I think it has helped me for the better, I'm really improving thanks to their opinions too, and so every time I write a new paragraph I realize that it becomes easier, taking into account all the feedback.” (Participant #16)

Conversely, the negative aspects included the following claims:

“I don't like that they tend to delay sending their feedback.” (Participant #31)

“What I did not like about my colleague's correction was that he did not specify an alternative to correct my error with an example.” (Participant #25)

“The only problem that arises is time or lack of communication on both sides”
(Participant #16)

Discussion

The analysis of the data collected from this action research project convey in a significant improvement on the students' ability to write opinion paragraphs. Picture prompts boosted learners' confidence and motivation to engage with the topic and build various ideas to develop their writing. Peer feedback enhanced students' writing

production. Cooperative learning and interaction of peers facilitated the final product. Both learner-centered approaches encourage writing through discovery, idea generation and pre-writing tasks. This denotes similarities with the research studies conducted by Khoirul (2015); Kitchakarn (2013); Hariston (1982) as cited in Mukundan & Nimehchisalem (2012).

Concerning the first research question: What difficulties did students face while developing opinion writing? The questionnaire findings summarize the difficulties and challenges more likely to encounter when writing an opinion paragraph. According to the participants, the major problems are engaging the audience, organizing and expressing clear ideas, avoiding misspellings, lack of vocabulary, and unawareness of opinion expressions. Similarly, Polio and Kessler (2019); Utami et al. (2012); and Nunan (1989) recognized that writing as a skill demands knowledge of several language components requiring writers to express thoughts meaningfully and effectively. The authors also conceded that learners are expected to manage content, spelling, sentence structure, format, and vocabulary in order to earn fluency, creativity, and comprehension in writing. Moreover, Philippakos (2017) assured that opinion writing attempts to convince an audience and address the questions of the readers emphasizing the importance of correct opinion expression at the moment of the argument.

In reference to the second research question: How do Picture prompt writing activities help students improve their writing skills? Participants stated that picture prompts served as a visual aid to develop and express ideas, broadening their creativity to build their opinion. Likewise, Probo (2013) mentioned that indeed picture prompts stimulate imagination and interpretation, allowing students to construct coherent ideas and express themselves. This is also observed in the study conducted by Schweizer (1999), she highlighted picture prompts as performance-based tasks that evoke creating

meaning from the picture and produce verbal expressions. In addition, participants also noted an opposite view regarding this topic. They argued that, when images are confusing or simple, their interpretation is limited and simple too. Rahayu (2020) pointed out this issue about picture prompts, being more of a challenge rather than an aid, leading to unproductive writing.

Regarding to what extent does peer feedback help students improve their writing skills? The contrast between the final marks between the pre and post-test indicated that the implementation of this strategy improved students' writing skills overall. The participants were instructed according to Harmer's (2007) 'process wheel' approach to develop the final product. Also, Lam's (2010) peer reviewer training workshop and coaching model, guided them on peer evaluation. This, enabled participants to obtain a good opinion paragraph after completing the writing process. In concordance with Kitchkarn (2012), Nelson and Murphy (1993), and Paulus (1999) this technique is helpful to enable writing using the process strategy, providing feedback on their partners' drafts, and exchanging comments to improve their own writing.

Following the same analysis, Kuyyogsuy (2019) concluded that sharing ideas and receiving constructive feedback fosters learners' performance, encouraging them to expand their writing competence. As a matter of fact, participants commented they felt confident and committed to improving their paragraphs thanks to peer reviews. It gave them ideas and different perspectives to construct the final version of their opinion paragraph, according to the rubric.

However, a minority of participants also mentioned some issues amid peer feedback. Some of them believed their partner did not invest too much effort in providing constructive comments. Others considered that peers did not enable good

communication to discuss their drafts and mentioned delays in receiving the reviews according to the due dates. For that matter, Race (2001) questioned the effectiveness of the technique when the desired results are not always obtained. Consequently, peers are likely to give superficial comments that confuse and do not help to improve drafts.

Conclusions

In this action research study, it was expected to address whether picture prompts and peer feedback would enhance students' ability to write opinions. The findings after the implementation claim a significant improvement in participants writing skills. Better organizing ideas to state opinions, creativity to build their opinion from the picture prompts, and peer interaction to develop feedback. Teacher researcher and peers guided each other's writing performance along the planning, drafting, editing, and final version of their opinion paragraphs. The feedback rubrics contributed to the optimization of learners' skills, leading them to a greater awareness of their writing performance.

RQ N° 1: Participants reported poor knowledge of expressions to give opinions and the correct paragraph structure, how to use adequate vocabulary, trouble in how to word their thoughts to catch readers' attention, and how to use correct grammar/spelling. These facts were addressed throughout the training and implementation process. Learners were taught an introduction to opinion paragraphs. The teacher researcher explained and gave examples of the correct structure. Students were instructed on the importance of using phrases to give opinions in order to avoid ambiguity, learned how to support their claims reaching the audience interest, trained in grammar structures, and practiced expressing opinions.

RQ N° 2: Participants carried out picture prompt tasks to attend their need for creativity to express their opinions. The technique also guided them on how to link their

ideas with adequate vocabulary. This, explore their imagination and strengthen their confidence to express themselves freely. They were able to expand their critical thinking and interpretation to compose opinion paragraphs.

RQ N° 3: Peer feedback training and application revealed a positive impact on their writing performance. The majority compromise on delivering constructive comments and recommendations to their peer's drafts, which enable them to reform and sharpen the final version of their opinion paragraphs. Because of this, students amended their grammar and spelling errors, proofread their ideas, notice and understand constructive criticism.

Taking everything into account, it can be concluded that the advantages of applying picture prompts and peer feedback to facilitate and improve opinion writing, met students' needs and attend the initial difficulties due to lack of expertise in effectively expressing their opinions.

Limitations

Despite the positive results of the implementation in this study, some limitations should be contemplated when applying this innovation to future studies.

Participants did not have background knowledge about picture prompts and peer feedback although coursing University English standard program modules. Nonetheless, they were trained and coached on both techniques. This led to another limitation which was the need for more training for a small group of students. Due to limited scheduled hours, students had to develop autonomous further training.

On another note, even when 84% of the total participants obtained a B1 of English proficiency according to the diagnostic test, they still showed different levels of

writing performance. This resulted in some mistranslations when wording their thoughts because they build their ideas in L1 and did not develop L2 critical thinking.

Additionally, for others, it was noticeable the aid of electronic translators in their paragraphs because of some incoherent sentence structure and word choice.

Finally, as a result of the participants' several occupations, the 16 hours (four weeks) of the implementation were developed on online sessions emerging in some technological limitations. In some instances, students struggle with bad internet connection. Therefore, affecting their concentration and participation on the sessions. Also a few kept their cameras off, questioning if they really were focused on the class.

Recommendations

First, it is recommended to extend the lesson plan hours. Planning the application of the innovation for a longer period of time would reduce autonomous practices on key aspects. Further monitoring and exercising more peer feedback activities could ensure the transfer of knowledge to develop writing drafts and peer review not just for this study, but for future writing tasks.

Second, include extra sessions for personalized follow-up and monitoring students' academic interaction. Even though some issues were addressed via chat and during the regular class schedule, it would be better to meet with the students who need extra coaching. Working with emphasis on their understanding of opinion writing accuracy is also recommended for follow-up sessions.

Third, virtual classes do present some boundaries in terms of connectivity and group performance. It would be recommended to adapt the lesson plan to regular classes and compare if the results are even greater than the marks obtained in this

implementation. Also, some activities could be simplified or maximized to explore the impact of face-to-face training and practice on improving students' ability to develop opinion writing.

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Appendix 1

Lesson Plan - Instructional design of units for transfer of learning to real life contexts

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Model writing opinion post

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Peer feedback rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 4

Summative assessment rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 5

Module 5 - Sample: 37

OPEN CODING

Available upon request.