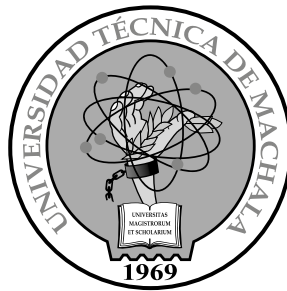# Understanding EFL students' learning through classroom research: Experiences of teacher-researchers

Sandy T. Soto
Compiler

Understanding EFL students' learning through classroom research: Experiences of teacher-researchers

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COMPILER

Dedication

To those EFL teachers who, day by day, give the best of their own for helping their students construct their knowledge and learn English in meaningful and effective ways.

Sandy T. Soto

Content

Introduction

What should foreign language teachers do to help their students improve their linguistic skills? Many are the ways how teachers can support their students´ learning process. There are a variety of methods, strategies, techniques, as well as materials and resources we can rely on in order for our students to succeed in the development of their skills.

Teachers can get ideas on what to do from published research, presentations at academic events, informal conversations with colleagues, online resources, and their own language learning experience. It is just a matter trying these ideas out and evaluate the extent to which they favor the enhancement of students´ linguistic competences in the target language.

In line with these ideas, this book is intended to inform pre-service and in-service EFL teachers about the result of investigations conducted by English as foreign language teachers. The book is composed of five chapters which demonstrate how these teachers have taken a step further by taking the role of teacher-researchers to understand and boost their students´ performance.

The first chapter of this book reports on a study conducted at the university level where students majoring in Hospitality and Tourism participated as principal users of videos to develop vocabulary of their field. The study aimed to find out the opinions of students about the use of English subtitled videos or movies to develop tourism vocabulary and to explore the benefits of using English subtitled videos in a context where there is no practice of the target language outside the classroom.

The second chapter of this book focuses on the development of listening skills through the use of podcasts as a strategy and resource in EFL classes. The aim of the study was to discuss the importance of podcasts for teaching English as a foreign language and to analyze the results of using them to improve listening comprehension in university students.

The third chapter digs into the writing skill. It is based on an interuniversity investigation in which the authors identified the most common errors made by EFL beginning level college students in their written discourse. The identification of these errors can guide EFL teachers to make methodological decisions to improve their students´ writing performance.

The fourth chapter also addresses writing. In this case, this chapter discusses how a group of college students developed their writing skills through the writing of paragraphs and peer correction. Students wrote e-mails, blogs, reviews and posts and used rubrics to evaluate their performance with the help of their peers.

Finally, chapter seven examines the use of cell phone games within English classes. The chapter seeks introduce these games as a valuable resource to encourage the practice of English through mobile phones in and out of the classroom. Concepts of mobile games and the reason to use them in EFL classes are addressed. The chapter also provides some suggestions of game applications developed to support the learning of EFL.

Chapter 4

Writing performance in EFL at a college level using peer editing

Writing performance in EFL at a college level using peer editing

Silva Elizabeth Cárdenas Sánchez
Ximena Elizabeth Naranjo Lozada

Authors

Writing performance in EFL at a college level using peer editing

Silvia Elizabeth Cárdenas Sánchez

Is an EFL teacher at ESPOCH Morona Santiago Campus. She is a self-motivated and enthusiastic professional with more than 14 years of experience in diverse populations of students from the Amazon Region of Ecuador. She graduated from Chimborazo National University in Riobamba. She got a bachelor´s degree in the College of Education as an English teacher in 2006. She studied a Master´s program sponsored by the Government of Ecuador graduating as a Master in Curriculum and Instruction in ESL in Kansas State University in USA in 2014. Since then, she has been developing and applying knowledge acquired during her study program combined with her extensive and diverse teaching experience. She is aware of the big challenges of education in Ecuador and she strongly believes that changes start in class when teachers apply strategies and techniques correctly.

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Is an EFL instructor from Ambato, Ecuador. She earned a Bachelor's degree as an English as a Foreign Language Teacher from the Technical University of Ambato in 1999. She's a highly motivated and enthusiastic educator who has been part of several well recognized public high schools from Ambato. In the 2004, she participated in a teacher´s Exchange program serving for two years at a prestigious high school in Virginia – USA. She got a Master´s degree in Intelligence Development from the Private Technical University of Loja UPL in 2009. She obtained a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis in EFL from Kansas State University in 2014. Currently, she is teaching at the Technical University of Ambato.

Biography

Abstract

Today, people are learning more and more languages for different reasons. To learn a language includes the development of all the skills in order to comprehend oral and written material. English, which is a universal language, is one of those languages, and it is used in different fields to promote communication. Thus, this paper focuses on one of the most important skills, which is writing. In a setting where English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL), it is essential to learn how to write correctly following the language standards. With this in mind, the following research is framed in a context where college students developed the writing skill through paragraphs and peer correction. Students were instructed in different writing topics and peer correction. During 4 weeks, in intensive writing classes, students wrote texts guided by rubrics covering the topics about e-mails, blogs, reviews, and posts. After writing the paragraphs, students worked with a peer to review and correct the text using a rubric elaborated and provided by the instructor. The number of participants were 35 who regularly attend the pre-intermediate or level II English class. During the development of peer review, the teacher researcher provided the necessary guidance to check and correct student's work through the use of rubrics and direct instruction. Then the students' autonomous work was observed through the use of an anecdotal record and interviews were applied at the end of the study. The effects of peer assessment through edition and correctness are described in this study.

Keywords: peer editing, cooperative learning

Introduction

Now, learning English has become a necessity as most information is in this language. To get access to data, which are in English, people need to decode those pieces of information; so they can learn, understand and interpret. In addition, many people are aware of the significance of this language and they attempt to learn through different resources and tools where they can develop and practice the language skills.

The need of learning English not only is on people who are living in an English speaking country; but it is in other countries, which the mother tongue is other than English. This fact, therefore, is increasing the requirement to learn and master the English language. For instance, according to Heredia (2017), Ecuadorian people over the age of 30 are those who look for more opportunities to study English for different reasons. Among those reasons are the requirements in universities of an English level B2 mostly to study a master program or get a better job.

It is noticeable the necessity of learning English since in different fields require people with a good command of English and they try to look for opportunities to learn that language (Brinton, Snow, & Celce-Murcia, 2014). There are different ways that people can learn a language. Going through language learning strategies is the first step to acquire it. Each individual has to understand and discover which learning strategies work better according to his or her own learning style, time, and available resources. Bialystok (1978) states that language learning strategies are "optional methods for exploiting available information to increase the proficiency of second language learning." (p. 76). These strategies will be different based on the learners' needs and the available resources.

In Ecuador, the importance of teaching and learning English in the universities has acquired more relevance in order to achieve international standards in education. According to the article 124 from the University Organic Law, with the acronym in Spanish LOES, it is the university responsibility to provide students "the mastery of a language other than their mother tongue" (LOES, 2019, p. 52). In other words, English language learning is mandatory in Ecuadorian universities curriculum. For this reason, the university system encourages to learn English since it is the most important language in these days. Therefore, university students must keep developing and improving their language skills until they achieve the level required in each venue.

In addition, there is another important reason to master the English language since the educational system requires students mostly with an English level B2 to get a master degree in all the fields and many people are seeking out master programs in order to improve their lifestyle, knowledge, and get better jobs or positions. For these reasons, English has become part of the most significant subjects in Ecuadorian education, especially at a university level and it is crucial to understand how this language can be taught and conduct research in a deepest way in this area.

English as a foreign language (EFL) means to learn English as an additional language in a setting or place where the official language is other than English (EFL, 2019). Learning English in a place where the first language (L1) is another than English does not differ significantly from a situation where English is being learned as a second language (ESL). The methodology and strategies that students, who are pretending to take over in the language skills and their daily effort to learn the foreign language, depend on their practice and exposure. Exposure in the target language is another important issue to consider while learning a language. Learners need to be surrounded by the language they need to learn.

According to Freeman and Freeman (2014), acquiring a language depends on the amount of exposure. Besides, there are more considerations to keep in mind while learning a new language. Krashen (1982) mentions among the five hypothesis language acquisition the affective filter hypothesis where he explains how important is to reduce anxiety while learning a language. The affective filter must

be low in order to learn English and teachers can do this when they provide comprehensible input considering that students should not anxious. Furthermore, the input hypothesis refers to comprehensibility where language instructor has to use all the available resources to help learners to understand language according to their level and this includes the language teacher uses during instruction.

In addition, students need to improve their English language knowledge through the development of the four basic skills. Listening, reading, speaking and writing are the skills that students have to dominate in order to use English in different situations, which can be to communicate something through writing or speaking, or understand information by means of reading or listening. The integration of these skills is necessary in a second language acquisition. Oxford (2001) states that the skills can be integrated through content or task based instruction. Additionally, the author mentions that incorporating all the skills of the language help students to use authentic situations and the use of language is more natural.

Taking into account all the above, language learners need to develop all the skills; however, the present work focuses on the need of developing writing skills that occurs within the English language learning. This proposal aims to know the implications of peer correction in writing skills in the English language learning with adult students. Correspondingly, it will be discussed the process that involves the writing activities focusing on the step of correction. Students were trained and applied peer correction during writing classes to reach conclusions and understand the implications of this strategy in writing development with adult students who are learning English as a foreign language.

Writing skill

Writing is considered as a skill that has acquired more importance in the 21st century (Brinton, Snow, & Celce-Murcia, 2014). Writing is a cognitive ability (language knowledge and skills) and a sociocultural fact (purpose). Writing skills acquisition can be seen from two different points. As a learning point of view, writing is acquired through direct teaching. On the other hand, from the acquisition theory, writing is developed by practice in real situations. In other words, teachers can carry out different input activities such as read and write, teach strategies, group or pair activities to get a text production (Freeman & Freeman, 2014). Therefore, the importance of seeing writing as an acquisition process will be reflected to go through the next features in the development of writing skills.

At the time of writing in English, students may encounter difficulties that may prevent them from keeping writing and they could get frustrated and avoid them to keep improving their language acquisition. As stated by Krashen (1982), acquiring a language implies a motivated learner and negative factors that can affect learning such as nervousness, anxiety, or the use of difficult language must be reduced. These aspects can lead to a desertion or lack of motivation to learn a language. Thus,

English teachers, using strategies, which either help students to improve and achieve the expected results personally or academically, will be beneficial in the process of learning the English language.

To develop writing skills, the instructor can apply writing process or product. To understand better these two terms, it is important to define and differentiate them. Klimova (2014) states that the product approach requires a text that serves as a model and students have to write something similar. In addition, Tangpermpoon (2008) argues that the product based approach focuses more on grammar and syntaxes. On the other hand, process approach is characterized by the use of creativity since students have to develop their language knowledge through brainstorming, collaborating with partners, and focusing on the audience. Brinton et al. (2014) conclude that the dominant parading has been process approach since the writer can compose and receive feedback followed by a facilitator's support.

After describing that a writing activity can be lead as a process or as a product, to conduct this study, the writing process was chosen since some researchers mention that the process-based approach has the advantage of providing some time to go through the steps of writing with an instructor as a guide (Tangpermpoon, 2008); writing process is known as the most dominant system in these days (Muncie, 2002). Smith (2017) says that a process is necessary to follow while writing. In other words, students need instructional time and follow a process with strategies to achieve the goals in a writing class.

Also, the process writing pedagogy defined by Susser (1994) is more suitable to develop academic and personal writing. However, there is an important consideration to keep in mind since practice is the key point in this approach. Furthermore, a writing instructor must be prepared and trained to teach writing though this process and consider its principles of awareness and intervention. Klimova (2014), in a study conducted in a setting where 14 students at a low intermediate level attended writing sessions to conclude if process or product approach are most suitable to develop writing skills, mentions that "writing is seen as a social act in which writers have to be aware of the context in which they are writing." (p. 151).

Writing skill, which is imperative to practice and develop in a language learning setting, helps to communicate the ideas. Learning to write in another language implies the use of different strategies and methods that will help to achieve the goals. Tangpermpoon (2008) argues that writing is hard because a good knowledge in "rhetorical organizations, appropriate language use or specific lexicon" (p. 1) in the target language must be well-known by the learner to start communicating ideas through the L2. Nevertheless, the writing instructor needs to understand deeply the writing process to help students achieve their purposes. Smith (2017), in his "principled approach," states that teachers need to reflect in the teaching practices so the students can scaffold in their learning process until they reach their goals.

Tompkins (2006) mentions that the writing process involves "prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing" (p. 57). However, this process is not linear

since the writer can begin with prewriting but the other steps can be done according to the development of the task during the writing activity. In other words, a writer can edit and go back to revise the piece of writing before publishing since errors can be found during the process of editing. As well as, Brinton et al. (2014) present the phases of the writing process listed as: pre-writing, writing, response, revising, editing, post-writing and evaluating (p. 226). Also, the writing activities must be student-centered so they can have enough time to practice and follow a pattern to complete the writing task successfully. Through the writing process, there is an interaction among partners and teachers to provide feedback and check understanding.

In addition, Susser (1994) argues that "students who are aware of writing process can then choose the process that suits their writing style and the particular writing task they face" (p. 35). During this process, the correct feedback must be provided in order to accomplish the goals in any kind of writing activities. Dell'Olio and Donk (2007) mention that formative assessment helps to provide feedback; so, learners can confirm or modify their learning during instructions. Furthermore, this type of evaluation allows students to self-assess and internalize their learning during a process.

Writing Assessment

Assessing writing is done through the process until they get the product. To gather information about students' progress in the writing tasks requires the use of different techniques and tools. In formative assessment, the teacher can use quizzes, rubrics, checklists, homework or anecdotal records known as formal tools. On the other hand, informal methods can be questioning or observations. However, both formal and informal techniques are useful to evaluate students' growth (Dell'Olio & Donk, 2007). Teachers have to look for the best teaching practice and tools to use inside and outside classes. Tompkins (2006) says that the use of rubrics helps teachers to evaluate the compositions in a holistic form. That is to say, rubrics check the performance level in the use of vocabulary, mechanics, organization and coherence.

Badger and White (2000) argue that "writing in process approaches is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting" (p. 154). Thus, the revision, correction and edition can be done through the teacher's guide or a partner can also help to correct the works. This type of revision is considered as formative assessment because it is carried out during the development of the writing tasks. According to Wingate (2010), formative assessment tries to provide students with some information about their existing situation, and to encourage them to keep working until they achieve their goals. A study conducted by Graham, Hebert and Harris (2015) in a setting where students were assessed during

the writing process demonstrated that formative writing assessment was meaningful to improve students' writing performance.

In addition, Lee (2011) mentions that applying formative assessment in an EFL setting requires teachers' engagement, system support and to believe of changing to improve teaching practices. These conclusions were gathered through a study conducted with EFL students in writing classes. Topping, Smith, Swanson, and Elliot (2000) notice that formative assessment is much better when there is the need of "maximize success" (p. 150). Moreover, this type of assessment helps students to receive feedback focused on their assets and weakness. Frey and Fisher (2013) state that writing formative assessment not only provide feedback for teachers but for students as well. With this in mind, it is possible to use peer correction in a writing class. Classmates can correct another partner's paragraphs and provide feedback to their own partner.

Topping et al. (2000) conducted a research about formative peer assessment and concluded that peer assessment is more supportive since students improved further writing tasks. Nevertheless, the participants mentioned that peer review required a lot of time, understanding, and they did not feel comfortable with the observations provided by their peers. Additionally, Khonbi and Sadeghi (2013) studied the effect of self-assessment versus peer assessment on Iranian university EFL students and determined that participants who worked with peer-assessment performed better than those who only self-evaluated probably by the authentic assessment they provided over their peers' works. However, Mojica (2010) states that peer or self- assessment require a lot of training and in her study concluded that during a writing process, students also develop metacognitive skills.

Cooperative learning

With respect to the interaction, Smith (2017) mentions that during a writing task, peer and student conferences are required elements to help them to concrete their objectives and see their progress. Therefore, collaboration plays an important role in the writing process in English as a foreign language (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

Learning is a social process and students must work individually and with other peers to accomplish the tasks. Vygotsky (1986) argues that a foreign language learning is a conscious process since the learner has to begin analyzing the parts of speech to continue with the process and acquire the other abilities. Moreover, the author mentions that the skills adopted in the first language are transferred to the second langue learning since "the native language serves as an already established system of meaning." (Vygotsky, 1986. p. 197). Moreover, another important point to mention is the fact that "a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language." (p. 196). In other words, the theory of Zone of Proximal

Development (ZPD) demonstrated by Vygotsky is essential in when developing writing skills since the students' knowledge on his or her first language will influence in the target language.

Peer correction

Topping et al. (2000) define peer assessment as "an arrangement for peers to consider the level, value, worth, quality or successfulness of the products or outcomes of learning of others of similar status" (p. 150). When a partner helps to check and observe about the piece of writing, the writer can notice errors that probably was not able to identify while writing. Then the suggestions can be used in order to improve their final compositions. Studies demonstrates that peer correction is relevant and necessary to elevate students' motivations (Venables & Summit, 2003), improve grammar and vocabulary knowledge (Villamil & Guerrero1998), organize ideas and progress in more advance writing pieces (Matsuno, 2009), it is student-centered activity (Keh, 1990). Mendonca and Johnson (1994), in a study conducted with advanced ESL learners, concluded that peer review is beneficial for students.

In addition, Baker (2016) conducted a study with 91 participants and concluded that peer reviewing is highly recommend since it promotes formative feedback. Hu (2005) developed research on academic writing with Chinese EFL students and mentions that peer review benefits students because they think it is useful; however, the researcher states that students did not accept their peers' suggestions and sometimes the teachers' advice was necessary. Furthermore, peer review influence on students' writing; but teacher corrections were more significant since students prioritized them in their final versions. (Paulus,1999; & Hillocks, 1982). Positive teacher's comment also influences the development of writing tasks (Ferris, 1997). Likewise, Chaudron (1984) conducted a study with a small group of participants (n= 14) and demonstrated that peer or teacher feedback promoted improvement but none of the two types of feedback were superior. On the other hand, peer review impacts students writing performance. McGroarty and Zhu (1997) argue that students benefit from their partners' revision and improve their writing significantly. Correspondingly, they mention that peer review training is important to achieve the goals when a teacher applies this strategy, which is becoming more and more relevant in today's education. Interaction during peer feedback must be carefully considered as an elemental part because it encourages students to be engaged in the task and provide feedback correctly (DiPardo & Freedman, 1988).

One important tool to work on writing tasks are the rubrics. They support teachers to carry out the evaluation process. Schirmer and Bailey (2000) provide wide information about the use of rubrics during writing instruction. They mention that a rubric helps to assess students in different dimensions because it has to contain a scale with detailed characteristics about the features of the final product. In other

words, teachers can create their own rubrics according to the students' needs and the goals of the activity. Jonsson and Svingby (2007) concluded that rubrics are a reliable way to get scores and support the feedback process and self-evaluation.

Unquestionably, to develop writing tasks entail to look carefully all the strategies, methods and tools to end with a quality final product. Accordingly, peer review implications will be reviewed in this study to reach conclusions that can help to improve writing skills during instruction in a foreign language setting with college students.

General Objective

To apply peer editing in order to understand if college students improve their writing skills in an intermediate English class.

Specific Objectives

- To diagnose the effect of peer editing in writing tasks.
- To apply the writing approach process in order to gather information about the students' writing competence.
- To evaluate the students' errors in writing tasks to grade the level of performance.
- To analyze the implication of peer editing in order to provide meaningful information for future applications in different settings.

Methodology

This quasi experimental study was conducted in Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH) – campus Morona Santiago. Undergraduate students from English level II were chosen to apply this research. There was a pre-test, which consisted in a written paragraph describing students' profiles. A rubric was provided to develop their paragraphs. According to Schirmer and Bailey (2000) rubrics "have a potential value as an instructional tool" (p. 53). However, Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) reached to the conclusions that reliability or validity of assessment is not valid only with the use of rubrics; however, students training receive on how to use rubrics and grade pieces of writing is so important. For this reason, to complete this study was also necessary to train students in the use of rubrics; so, they can check and correct their peer's paragraphs.

Students worked during 6 writing sessions which took place in the English classes during a period of 60 minutes that included writing development, peer correction, editing and final product.

A pre-test and a post-test were used to understand and examine the effects of peer review in writing tasks. In addition, during the study anecdotal records were completed to gather information through observation. At the end, a final survey was applied in order to reach conclusions about students' perceptions on this type of strategy.

Thirty-nine undergraduate students participated in this study during the academic period March – July 2019. The participants were between 18 and 20 years old. There were 15 male and 20 female students. The teacher, who participated as an active researcher, gathered information during the development of each writing activity class. This role was important since students tend to use the electronic dictionary in order to translate their ideas and this could avoid get true information about the implications of writing improvement. Therefore, the teacher encouraged students to work following the rubric guide which was also elaborated by the researchers (see Table 1). This rubric was designed according to students' needs and it was previously used since students have already developed writing tasks in level I and this format was socialized among all the five teachers who currently work in the university.

According to Dell'Olio and Donk (2007) a rubric can be developed by a teacher based on the needs of the class and it can contain elements to measure the levels of performance.

Table 1: Rubric to evaluate paragraphs in writing tasks

Traits / Scale	0 Does not meet standards	1 Below standards	2 Partially meet standards	3 Meet standards	4 Exceed standards
Grammar					
Mechanics					
Vocabulary					
Organization					
Content					

At the end of the study, students completed a survey to understand their insights about the activities they developed during the writing classes. This survey was designed to gather information about the problems students encountered during the revisions of their pieces of writing and students' suggestions for further writing class instruction.

Materials and methods

Students from level II who take English classes as a foreign language use different materials in order to develop their language skills. They use American Jetstream books in English classes. Also, students have access to the platform activities whenever they decide to practice their target language (Revell & Tomalin, 2016). To complete this study, it was necessary to select and focus on the writing activities contained in the book. The writing activities where related with each unit topic and there were six selected topics which were: two personal e-mails, traveling and achievements blogs, and posts expressing opinions and contrasting ideas. During 4 weeks students wrote about the six topics in writing classes in a period of one hour. The length of time students wrote individually was 30 minutes approximately. After completing the writing task, students got in pairs selected randomly to read and correct the piece of writing. According to Hu (2005), students can change partners to work cooperatively when students feel more comfortable with the task. Also, the teacher supported students when necessary since during the discussion about word choice, grammar points or spelling issues there were misunderstandings that students were not able to solve by themselves.

In this study, the use of a rubric was important; so, students were able to write and peer review with the guide of this tool. With a 0-4 rating scale, the rubric was used to get and compare information before and after the application of the strategy. Moreover, the survey helped to understand how students perceived the process and it was code in three categories (see Table 2).

Table 2: Students' opinions about peer revision tasks

| Category		
Problems during peer reviewing	Advantages	Recommendations based on students' experience
• Lack of vocabulary knowledge • Grammar misunderstanding • Partners' expertise • Time • Organization and coherence • Others	• Notice and correct mistakes • Learning of new words • Cooperative learning and communication improvement • Use of tenses • Others	• Spelling and handwriting improvement • Review and learn more vocabulary • Organization and coherence practice • More relevant topics

Note: This information was codified and categorized according to students' survey response.

After revising the writing tasks (the first writing) and the post test (the last writing piece after using peer editing) there were results to analyze. The two researchers completed this activity. The first researcher was the teacher who carried out the study and the other researcher who participated in the edition and results analysis of this paper. The writing tasks were graded independently and then the researchers decided which scale should be given to each parameter.

Results and Discussion

The total number of participant (n= 35) wrote a paragraph describing themselves as a pretest and the post test was an e-mail about their experience as students. Both tests were graded out of 20 since the five elements stated in the rubric goes from 0 as the lowest score and 4 the highest score. Gathering all the participants' averages, the mean was obtained. With the use of a rubric, the mean of the pretest was 10.29 and the posttest mean was 13.17. Students' improvement in writing skills was increased in 2.88 points (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Students' average pretest and post test.
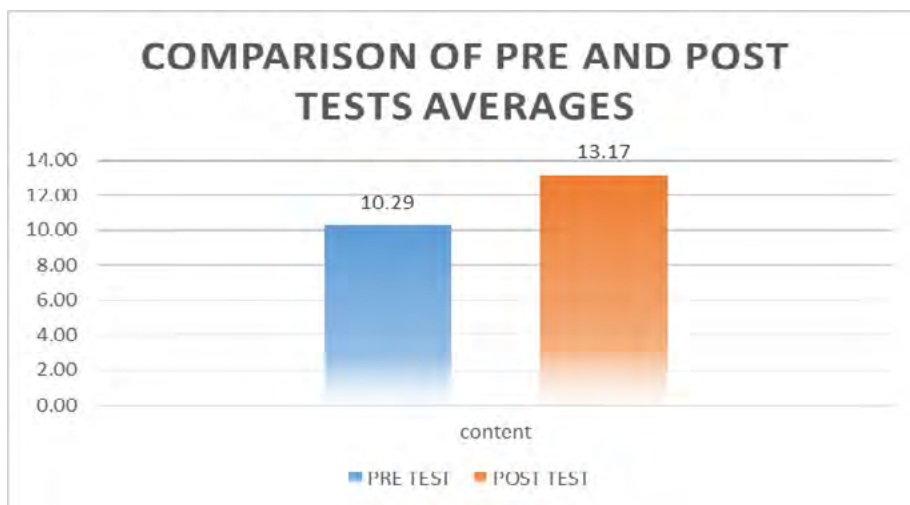
Note: This figure shows how students have improved their total scores in writing tasks after using peer reviewing technique.

It is also important to notice how each graded element was affected. Mechanic was mostly positive affected because students improved 1.1 according to the results from the pre and posttest (see Figure 2). Mechanics considers with punctuation, capitalization, spelling and the correct use of words. Vocabulary is another element, which improved since the pretest mean is 2.2 and the posttest mean is 2.7. The development of vocabulary is another important issue to mention when someone

needs to learn or acquire a new language. McCarthy (1984) argues that vocabulary must be taught in a practical way where a student understand the importance of words in context while writing or in speech. For instance, students can understand grammar, but the main objective is communication and without a wide range of coherent words, the students can not diffuse their ideas or thoughts. Paragraph organization was improved in 0.7 points with a mean of 2.7 in the posttest. In content, the pretest average was 2.0 and the posttest was 2.6 with a growth of 0.6 points. Overall, there is some increment in the scale in all the elements. However, grammar is the least affected since the pretest general average was 2.3 and the posttest total is 2.5. The rubric rating score was 0 (the lowest or does not meet standards) and 4 (the highest or exceeds standards).

Figure 2: Rubric elements comparison
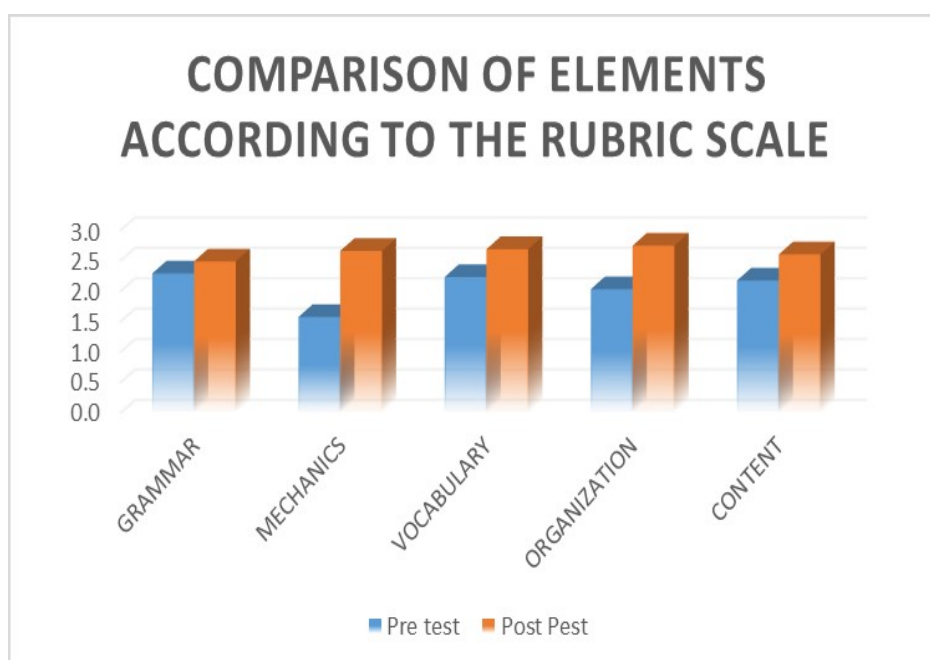
Note: 0-4 rating scale elaborated by the authors

Peer review difficulties, advantages and students recommendations

Students provided their insights through a survey applied at the end of the study and the collected data was coded and summarized (see Table 3). The findings indicate that students' major problems was the lack of vocabulary knowledge. 32% of the answers from a total of 53 were related with their need to know more vocabulary since it was one of the biggest problems they found out during the writing tasks. On the other hand, 30% of students mentioned that grammar problems such as the use of the correct verb and word choice were relevant since they realized that it is useful to know grammar structures to write in a better way. Partner's ex-

pertise and time were also mentioned as drawbacks and it is represented by a 9% of the answers accordingly. Others which represents 13% relates with the need of development of metacognitive skills, organization, mechanics and coherence.

Table 3: Students' difficulties during peer reviewing

	f	%
Lack of vocabulary knowledge	17	32
Grammar misunderstanding	16	30
Partners' expertise	5	9
Time	5	9
Organization and coherence	3	6
Others	7	13

Note: this information was summarized based on students' responses on the survey with a total of 53 items

In addition, students also noticed the advantages of this technique and they specified that cooperative learning was the most meaningful part. Thirty-six percent of students said that the peer activity helped them to know their partners better and they found that helping other partners contributed to increase motivation and friendship. They considered that they learned more and it was an advantage at the moment of receiving feedback. Students felt they learned more words because 25% percent mentioned it while 20% of students stated that noticing and correcting mistakes were also important in this activity.

Table 4: Students' reflections on advantages of peer revision

	f	%
Notice and correct mistakes	11	20
Acquisition of new words	14	25
Cooperative learning and communication improvement	20	36
Use of tenses	4	7
others	7	13

Note: this information was summarized based on students' responses on the survey with a total of 56 items

Students' suggestions

Students' recommendations are also important. Through the survey report, students provided for this study with some important insights in order to apply in further classes. Also, this suggestions will help to correct errors during writing

instructions. Students mentioned that it is essential to review and learn more vocabulary to work on this technique since students need to use words, correct tenses and vocabulary in general to write their ideas and thoughts (see Table 5). Thirty-three% of the answer from a total of 24 said that the knowledge of more vocabulary probably could help to improve this task. Moreover, they mentioned that practicing and teaching how to write organized texts with consistency is necessary to reach the aims in a writing task.

Table 5: Students' further recommendations

	f	%
Spelling and handwriting improvement	6	25
Review and learn more vocabulary	8	33
Organization and coherence practice	7	29
More relevant topics	3	13

Note: this information was summarized based on students' responses on the survey with a total of 24 replies

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, peer reviewing is indispensable to improve the students' writing abilities. Students boosted their compositions by applying language conventions. In the first writing class, students needed a lot of help to identify errors during correction regarding to the use of punctuation marks, grammatical structures, word choice and order, capitalization, and verb agreement. Nevertheless, during the process of writing and revising about different topics, students confirmed their effort towards the mastering of writing skills.

Whereas participant improvement was visible in grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, organization and content; undeniable was their improvement in organization, capitalization and punctuation pointed out in this study. At the beginning of this research, students singled out a few sentences, but after checking their errors with their partner´s help, their writings had different characteristics.

Another important point to mention is that the students' perception about collaborative work changed. In students' survey emerged how the fellowship improved, and the assistance and support their peers provided encouraged them to keep practicing and feeling motivated during writing classes. Not only cooperative learning was noticeable by students; but also, acquisition of new vocabulary was important for students since they realized how they learned new words when corrections narrowed down the possibilities of lexis. Peers' suggestions on their partners' pieces of writing increased vocabulary knowledge to work better in writing tasks. This students' recommendation should be considered to understand other implications

of peer reviewing for further studies. Finally, it is important to mention that this strategy gives students control of their own learning process as it is required in to-day's education. Teachers and classmates' assistance and support enables students´ individual growth.

It is also essential to mention the limitations that may arise during the use of this strategy. The students' lack of interest can be a limitation at the time of com-municating their ideas in a written form. Additionally, the use of an electronic dic-tionary, which leads to translation, is also a negative point at the time of applying peer editing. Consequently, it is important to take into account students individual language level differences and motivation that eventually could affect the result and further research in this field.

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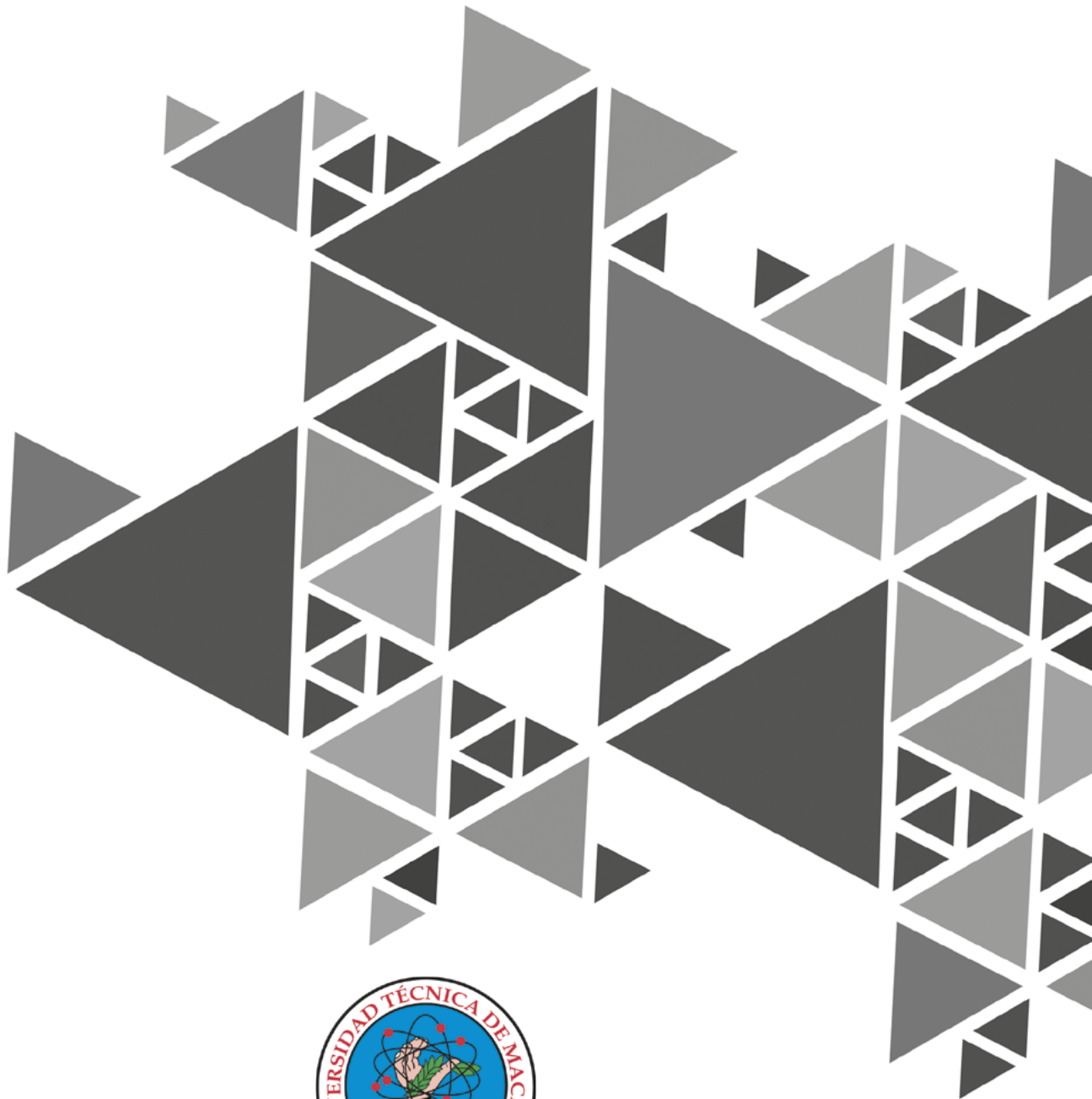
Teaching needs an ecosystem that supports
evidence-based practice.
It will need better systems to disseminate the
results of research more widely, but also a better
understanding of research, so that teachers can be
critical consumers of evidence.

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