RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

Improving Students' Writing Skills through Peer Correction Strategy

Ria Marie V. Robles
*(Department of Education, Jorge M. Padilla National High School, Division of Nueva Ecija, Philippines
Email: riamarie.robles@deped.gov.ph

----------**********----------

Abstract:

Writing skill plays an important role in educational success since course materials in academic careers are mostly examined in one main area which is in the form of essay test. The study explored the effectiveness of peer correction strategy in improving the writing skills in English of senior high students. The study utilized a descriptive experimental research design wherein probability sampling was used in selecting participants of the study which is composed of 48 Grade 11 senior high students. In data gathering, the students' argumentative essays during the pre-test and post-test were graded by the researchers and two inter-raters following Heaton's (1988) scoring guide which focuses on contents (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), grammar (25), and mechanics (5). The findings found that both control and experimental groups' pre-test performance on the different aspects of writing test fell within the very poor category. It also presents the post-test obtained mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the five aspects of writing. In terms of Contents, there are more from the experimental (20.83%) who received "very good" and "good" ratings (54.17%) than control groups (4.17 %) whose scores received "very good" and (50%) "good" verbal descriptions. In terms of Organization, the results show that there are more from the experimental group (29.17%) whose scores received "very good" and (33.33%) "good' ratings, than control groups (4.17%) who received "very good" and (41.67%) "good" ratings. This was consistent in the other aspects of writing: vocabulary (25%), grammar (20.83%) and mechanics (20.83%) in which there are more from experimental groups who got higher ratings than those from the control group. Moreover, the study found that the peer-correction strategy, the scores in all aspects of writing of the participants from the experimental group have significantly improved.

Keywords — **Content, Grammar, Peer-Correction Strategy, Pre-test, Post-test, Mechanics, Organization, Students, Vocabulary, Writing Skills.**

----------**********----------

I. INTRODUCTION

In the language teaching and learning process, writing is considered the most complex skill as compared to listening, speaking, and reading skills. It is a productive skill that requires different mechanisms as capitalization, spelling and punctuation, and correct application of word form and function. The writing process integrates visual, motor, and conceptual abilities, making it more challenging for learners.

The difficulties encountered in classroom environments highlight the significance of providing good writing education. For example, Rizqi (2018) pointed out that inadequate teacher feedback is a major problem in writing classes, which is important for students' growth. Furthermore, research like the one by Pablo and Lasaten (2018) showed that senior high school Filipino students' academic writings were often evaluated between poor and fair, highlighting the need for better teaching tactics.

Peer correction, also known as peer-editing, peer feedback or peer review, has proven to be an effective means of aiding writing development since it actively involves learners in the learning and teaching process. It consists of learners providing

and receiving feedback from their peers, who are also their classmates. This collaboration results in greater involvement in the learning process, in addition to helping students improve their writing skills.

Following the mixed-method research design, Robles and Torres (2020) explored the attitudes, practices, and challenges of 55 English teachers from 21 senior high schools in Nueva Ecija. They found ESL teachers had a positive attitude towards the peer correction strategy, frequently used the strategy, and encountered several challenges when implementing it in their respective classes.

Numerous studies in foreign countries have proven its efficacy, yet there is a scanty of action research that explored on the use of peer correction to improve students' English writing competencies done in the Philippine setting, despite the strategy's established advantages in the educational settings. Writing skill plays an important role in educational success since course materials in academic careers are mostly examined in one main area which is in the form of essay test. Hence, this study explored the effectiveness of peer correction strategy in improving the writing skills in English of senior high students.

Writing is generally regarded as the most difficult skill in language learning and education, with demands that are higher than those of speaking, listening, and reading. It is a useful ability that incorporates many different techniques, such as punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and the appropriate use of word functions and forms. Writing is an essential ability for language production, especially in English, which is used as a global medium for knowledge transmission. Writing incorporates visual, motor, and mental talents.

Mahboob (2014) and Marlina and Giri (2014) have identified writing as a crucial language production skill. Writing in English, which is widely utilized for the global mediation of knowledge, contributes greatly to its significance. Rizqi (2018) noted that one of the problems observed in writing class is that the teacher did not provide adequate feedback related to the students' writing.

Peer correction is an instructional technique that has been shown to be effective in improving writing abilities. It involves students giving and receiving criticism on each other's writing. By actively including students in the learning process, this approach promotes critical thinking, collaboration, and writing skills in addition to writing proficiency. Peer correction helps students learn from both the process of reviewing others' work and the changes they get, as previous study has shown. Research indicates that implementing this method can boost students' drive, improve their ability to read and think critically, and establish a positive learning atmosphere. A number of scholars (e.g., Galvis, 2010; Harutyunyan & Poveda, 2018; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011; Moussaoui, 2012; Sultana, 2009; Pishgdam & Kermanshi, 2011; Yang, 2010) have shown that learners' writing abilities can be improved in a variety of ways through peer correction. Galvis (2010) pointed out, for example, that peer correction helps students learn how to revise other people's work as well as the modifications that are offered to them. According to a recent study by Harutyunyan and Poveda (2018), peer correction is thought to be a helpful tactic for enhancing students' critical and collaborative thinking abilities. When employing this technique, students also experience an increase in motivation because they realize how beneficial the comments, they gave on their peers' work was. Peer correction is a useful method for raising students' awareness of significant organizational and syntactical features in their writing that they would not see on their own, according to Mulligan and Garofalo's (2011) research.

For Moussaoui (2021), through this strategy, learners may benefit both as readers and writers. As readers, learners may enhance their critical reading skills and as writers, they foster their critical thinking skills when revising their writing outputs on the basis of peer's feedback. For Sultana (2009), the strategy enhances learners' autonomy, dynamism, and engagement. While for Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2011), the strategy poses a more supportive environment since the feedback received from classmates is less threatening than the ones provided by their teachers.

This study determined the effects of peer correction strategy on students' writing performance. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the pre-test writing scores of the students in the control and experimental groups be described in terms of the following aspects:
1.1contents;
1.2 organization;
1.3 vocabulary;
1.4 grammar; and
1.5 mechanics?
2. How may the post-test writing scores of the students in the control and experimental groups be described in terms of the following aspects after the implementation of peer-correction strategy:
1.1contents;
1.2 organization;
1.3 vocabulary;
1.4 grammar; and
1.5 mechanics?
3. Is there a significant difference in the post-test writing scores of the students in the control and experimental groups?

II. METHODS

To underscore the essence of language action research as the continuous quest for improving practice, this study was anchored on Nunan's (1992 as cited in Cabigao, 2021) language action research principle which constitutes a cycle with seven stages: teacher's conceptualization phase; initial investigation; building of hypotheses; preparation and implementation of the appropriate strategies or interventions; assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention; documentation of the program results; and looking for possible alternative programs though the implemented one is effective.

The first stage was the researcher's conceptualization phase being the key observer of the classroom-based problem. In the current study, the problem identified has to do with students' writing skills in English class. The second stage was the conduct of an initial investigation through data gathering and classroom observation as regards respondents' performance. To gather data on respondents' writing skills, a pre-test was done in which they were asked to write an argumentative essay based on a given prompt. Their scores were determined based on Heaton's (1988) writing scoring guide. The third stage involved the hypothesis building. In the study, it was hypothesized that peer correction strategy will have significant effect on the improvement of respondents' writing skills specifically on argumentative essay. The fourth stage was the implementation of the intervention plan, which is the peer correction strategy. In this stage, the respondents were divided to control and experimental groups. The experimental group was exposed to peer correction strategy for a period of three weeks. After three weeks, both respondents from the control and experimental group were given post-intervention writing task that served as the basis of their post-test writing scores. This comprised the fifth stage of the cycle. The sixth stage focused on determining if there is significant difference on the pre-test and post-test writing performance of the respondents. The final stage endeavored on looking for other possible intervention programs to complement the previously implemented intervention program.

A. Sampling Method

Due to the nature of the current study, the researcher adopted the non-probability sampling, which is a sampling method that uses non-random criteria like the availability, geographical proximity, or expert knowledge of the individuals they want to research in order to realize the research objectives. In particular, the study adopted the purposive sampling method, which is a blanket term for several sampling techniques that deliberately select participants based on the qualities they possess. Since it relies on the researcher's judgment to select the individuals to be studied, this sampling method is also referred to as judgmental sampling. The use of the non-probability purposive sampling method seemed to be appropriate in the current study given that the proposed study required specific inclusion and exclusion criteria particularly in pairing the students in the experimental group. The basis for pairing the participants in the experimental group was their pre-test writing scores. The researcher ranked the scores of the students in the experimental group (GAS 2). The Top 12 students in the pre-test writing task were paired with students whose scores did not make it to the Top 12. Hence the composition for each pair in the experimental group would be one advanced and one striving learner.

After the pre-test, participants from the experimental group underwent four weeks of review (Phase I to Phase IV) followed by writing activities for three weeks incorporating the peer correction strategy. The participants in the control group were also given one writing task each week for a period of three weeks. The participants from the experimental group (n=24) were paired by the researcher based on their scores in the pre-test. A total of 12 pairs were formed. Participants from the experimental group were exposed to peer correction strategy. Each member of the pairs were asked to give their feedbacks on the written outputs of their partners. A total of two hours per week of giving feedback on the weekly outputs of their partners were allotted. After three weeks, participants from the experimental and control group were asked to write an argumentative essay that served as basis of their post-test scores.

The students' argumentative essays during the pre-test and post-test were graded by the researcher and two inter-raters following Heaton's (1988) scoring guide which focuses on contents (30 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), grammar (25), and mechanics (5). To determine if there is significant difference in the pre-test and post writing scores of the students in the control and experimental groups, inferential statistics was used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part shows the findings, analysis and interpretations of the study related to the impact of peer-corrections strategies to students' writing skills.

In the study, students' writing performance was measured on the following aspects: contents, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Forty-eight students (equal representation in control and experimental groups) participated in the study. Participants from the experimental group received the intervention using peer correction strategy. This part presents the students' overall scores in the writing test as well as their performance on the different aspects of the writing test.

B. Pre-test Writing Scores of Controls and Experimental Groups

TABLE I
PRE-TEST WRITING SCORES OF CONTROLS AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

SCORES	Verbal Description	Control Group N=24		Experimental Group N=24	
		frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
95 – 100	Very Good	-	-	-	-
89 – 94	Good	-	-	-	-
83 – 88	Fair	1	4.17	1	4.17
77 – 82	Poor	6	25.00	8	33.33
Below 76	Very Poor	17	70.83	15	62.50

As shown in Table 1, a majority of the participants both from the control (17 or 70.83%) and experimental (15 or 62.50%) groups scored below 76, while one-fourth from the control group and more than one-fourth (8 or 33.33%) from the experimental group obtained scores ranging from 77-82, which is described "poor". Only one (4.17%) from each group obtained "fair" score in the test.

C. Pre-test Performance on the Different Aspects of Writing Test

TABLE III
PRE-TEST PERFORMANCE ON THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF WRITING TEST

Verbal Description	Contents *Control* (x̄ = 15.97; SD = 6.13) *Experimental* (x̄ = 15.45; SD = 5.73)		Organization *Control* (x̄ = 12.81 SD = 3.07) *Experimental* (x̄ = 12.52; SD = 2.7)		Vocabulary *Control* (x̄ = 12.67 SD = 3.06) *Experimental* (x̄ = 12.46; SD = 2.78)		Grammar *Control* (x̄ = 15.60; SD = 4.94) *Experimental* (x̄ = 15.62; SD = 4.33)		Mechanics *Control* (x̄ = 2.92; SD = 0.93) *Experimental* (x̄ = 2.89; SD = 2.89)	
	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)
Very Good	-	8.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.17
	Range *(27 -30)*		Range *(18-20)*		Range *(18-20)*		Range *(23-25)*		Score *(5)*	
Good	50	37.50	37.50	29.17	33.33	29.17	25.00	20.83	41.67	29.17
	Range *(15-26)*		Range *(15-17)*		Range *(15-17)*		Range *(20-22)*		Score *(4)*	
Fair	8.33	25	20.83	29.17	20.83	29.17	29.17	33.33	12.50	25.00
	Range *(12-14)*		Range *(12-14)*		Range *(12-14)*		Range *(16-19)*		Score *(3)*	
Poor	37.5	25	37.50	37.50	41.67	37.50	41.67	41.67	41.67	37.50
	Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-15)*		Score *(2)*	
Very Poor	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17	4.17
	Range *(5-8)*		Range *(5-8)*		Range *(5-18)*		Range *(5-8)*		Score *(1)*	

Presented in Table II is the summary of students' pre-test performance on the different aspects of writing test. It also presents the obtained mean scores of the control and experimental groups in the five aspects of writing. In terms of Contents, there are more from the control (50%) and experimental (37.50%) groups whose scores received "good" verbal description. Meanwhile, half and nearly-half from the experimental and control (45.83%) obtained pre-test writing scores that fall between the "fair" and "poor" verbal descriptions. It could also be observed that only participants from the experimental group got scores that fall into "very

good" verbal description. A closer look at the respondents' outputs in terms of contents reveal that their writing outputs tend to be limited, less translucent, and unclear. Inter-raters also noted that there are even participants whose writing contents did not hit the mark and did not match the contents.
In terms of organization, more than three-fourth (37.50%) from both groups obtained scores described as "poor". Meanwhile, more than half from both groups got scores that can be categorized from fair (control, 20.83%; experimental, 29.17%) to good (control, 37.50%, 29.17%). Findings further reveal that participants' outputs in terms of organization is still less logical and cohesion is not high enough. As regards vocabulary, there are more participants from the two groups (control, 41.67%; experimental, 37.50%) whose scores received "poor" rating.

Findings show that the words participants used in their outputs tend to be limited and repetitive. It was also observed that they do not master word formation as well as the word-choice or the diction in writing. Similar trend was observed as regards grammar (control, 41.67%; experimental, 41.67%) in which most respondents lack grammar skills and many of them find it difficult when constructing simple sentences. As regards mechanics in writing, results reveal that there are more from the control group (41.67%) than the experimental group (29.17%) who got "good" rating. Similarly, there are more from the control group (41.67%) whose got "poor" rating in terms of mechanics. Meanwhile, there are more in the experimental (25%) who got scores that fall in "fair" verbal description.

D. Post-test Writing Scores of Controls and Experimental Groups

TABLE IIIII
POST-TEST WRITING SCORES OF CONTROLS AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS

SCORES	Verbal Description	Control Group N=24		Experimental Group N=24	
		frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage
95 – 100	Very Good	-	-	-	-
89 – 94	Good	-	-	5	20.83
83 – 88	Fair	3	12.50	5	20.83
77 – 82	Poor	5	20.83	1	4.17
Below 76	Very Poor	16	66.67	13	54.17

Summarized in Table III are the overall post-test writing scores of controls and experimental groups. Similar to the pre-test scores presented in Table 9, data in Table 11 show that there are still more than majority of participants from both groups (16 or 66.67% for control group; 13 or 54.17% for experimental group) who scored below 76. However, it can be noted that there are more participants from the experimental group (41.66%) whose score fall within higher score ranges (83-88, Fair; 89-94, Good) than participants from the control group (12.50%).

E. Post-test Performance of Different Aspects of Writing Skills

TABLE IVV
POST-TEST PERFORMANCE ON THE DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF WRITING TEST

Verbal Description	Contents *Control* (x̄ = 17.93; SD = 5.67) *Experimental* (x̄ = 20.29; SD = 5.88)		Organization *Control* (x̄ = 14.01; SD = 2.49) *Experimental* (x̄ = 15.37; SD = 2.24)		Vocabulary *Control* (x̄ = 13.86; SD = 2.50) *Experimental* (x̄ = 15.07; SD = 2.58)		Grammar *Control* (x̄ = 16.75; SD = 3.94) *Experimental* (x̄ = 19.41; SD = 3.16)		Mechanics *Control* (x̄ = 3.13; SD = 0.84) *Experimental* (x̄ = 3.75; SD = 0.76)	
	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)	C (%)	E (%)
Very Good	4.17	20.83	4.17	29.17	4.17	25.00	-	20.83	-	20.83
	Range *(27-30)*		Range *(18-20)*		Range *(18-20)*		Range *(23-25)*		Score *(5)*	
Good	50.00	54.17	41.67	33.33	41.67	33.33	41.67	33.33	41.67	45.83
	Range *(15-26)*		Range *(15-17)*		Range *(15-17)*		Range *(20-22)*		Score *(4)*	
Fair	29.17	25.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	37.50	16.67	29.17	29.17	25.00
	Range *(12-14)*		Range *(12-14)*		Range *(12-14)*		Range *(16-19)*		Score *(3)*	
Poor	16.67	-	20.83	4.17	20.83	4.17	41.67	16.67	29.17	8.33
	Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-11)*		Range *(9-15)*		Score *(2)*	
Very Poor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Range *(5-8)*		Range *(5-8)*		Range *(5-18)*		Range *(5-8)*		Score *(1)*	

Table IV summarizes post-test performance of both groups in the different aspects of the writing task. As regards contents, results show that there are more from the experimental group who received "very good" (20.83%) and "good' ratings (54.17%). This was consistent in the other aspects of writing: organization (29.17%), vocabulary (25%), grammar (20.83%) and mechanics (20.83%) in which there are more from experimental groups who got higher ratings than those from the control group.

F. Difference on the Post-test Performance between Groups

TABLE V
DIFFERENCE ON THE POST-TEST PERFORMANCE BETWEEN GROUPS

	std err	*t-stat*	*df*	*p-value*	*t-crit*	*lower*	*upper*	*sig*	*effect r*
one -tail	14.262	4.982	48	0.001	1.859			yes	0.831
two -tail	14.262	4.982	48	0.002	2.306	50	92	yes	0.831

Difference on the post-test performance between groups is presented in Table v Data shows (p-value = 0.001) a significant difference on the writing post-test writing scores of the participants from control and experimental group. Hence, the null-hypothesis is rejected. Results in Table III, which show that there are more participants from the experimental group who scored higher in the post-test compared those from the control group, support the data in Table V.

The result shows that after having been exposed in the peer-correction strategy, the scores in all aspects of writing of the participants from the experimental group have significantly improved.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The majority of pretest results for both the control and experimental groups fell within the very poor category, highlighting a significant need for an intervention program to enhance students' writing skills that can be translated into their written outputs.

2. Although the majority of post-test scores for both groups remained below 76, participants in the experimental group demonstrated notable improvement in their scores after being exposed to the peer correction strategy which underscore that the intervention used has been effective in helping students improve their writing skills.

3. A significant difference was observed between the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. A greater number of participants in the experimental group achieved higher scores in the post-test after engaging in the peer correction strategy. This strategy effectively improved the content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of their written outputs.

4. These findings support the efficacy of the peer-correction strategy in enhancing students' writing performance. Consequently, the results may be beneficial for classroom teachers considering the implementation of peer-correction strategies in their writing classes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to extend my profoundest gratitude to the following people who made this action research a success:

Above all, to Dr. Evelyn Reyes, PhD, our school principal, thank you for your support and guidance. I am also very grateful to my co-teachers in the Senior High School Department.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Division Office of Nueva Ecija, especially Dr. Raquel Moana Abolencia, for the necessary support. I also acknowledge my inter-raters, Cristian V. Dones and Regina Grace De Guzman, who have been very open with their time and expertise in assessing the students' outputs.

Lastly, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their love, patience, and encouragement.

REFERENCES

[1] Cabigao, J.R. (2021). Improving the basic writing skills of Grade 7 learners in Filipino. An action research in Filipino language. *International Journal Education*, *9*(3), 67-71.
[2] Castro, C.D. (2004). The role of Tagalog in ESL writing: Clues from students' think-
[3] Chen, J. (2021). Research on the effect of feedback training in English writing teaching – A case study of students in business English major. *English Language Teaching*, *14*(6), 12-24.
[4] Harutyunyan, L., & Poveda, M.F. (2018). Students' perception of peer review in an EFL classroom. *English Language Teaching*, *11*(4), 138-151.
[5] Insai, S. & Poonlarp, T. (2017). More heads are better than one: Peer editing in a translation classroom of efl learners. *PASAA*, *54*(1), 82-107.
[6] Moussaoui, S. (2012). An investigation of the effects of peer evaluation in enhancing Algerian students' writing autonomy and positive effect. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *69*, 1775-1784.
[7] Muthmainnah, N. (2019). Optimizing critical thinking skill through peer editing technique in teaching writing. *ELTIN Journal*, *7*(1), 1-7.
[8] Nugroho, S.A., Sumardi, & Suparno (2021). Improving the students' writing skills through peer-editing technique. Indonesian Journal of Educational Research Review, 6(3), 298-305.
[9] Rizqi, F. (2018). Improving students' ability in using peer correction. *Pancaran Pendidikan*, *7*(2), 94-99.
[10] Ravago, J.C., Reyes, M.M., & Torres, J.M. (2022). The composing process of melancholic and sanguine junior high school students in the

Philippines. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, *4*(2), 334-346.

[11] Robles, R.M., & Torres, J.M. (2020). Filipino ESL teachers' attitudes, practices, and challenges in using peer-correction strategy in teaching writing. *Ciencia (HEALS)*, *1*(1), 1-26.

[12] Roxas, M.D. (2020). Exploring senior high school students' academic writing difficulties: Towards an academic writing model. IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 2(1), 10-19.

[13] Torres, J.M., & Flores, E.R. (2017). Exploring the role of L2 in L1 writing: Clues from English teachers' Think-Aloud Protocols. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, *48*, 30-50.

