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Implementing Google Docs to Provide Feedback and Enhance Students' Written Tasks

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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DEDICATION

To my dear family and friends for the support and constant encouragement: my mother, Amelia Vera, my father, Vicente Espinoza, my brothers, and sister; and everybody that in one way or another was associated to the fulfillment of this work.

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Verónica Espinoza

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to see the impact of Google Docs in students' written compositions. It was applied to thirty-one students in different classes and schedules of the Adults program. They were registered at an English language school located in Manta City, in the province of Manabí - Ecuador. The research design included analysis of qualitative and quantitative data taken from a survey, screen shots, and writing logs. Results indicate that students do not favor writing as the most important skill, neither technology to enhance learning. Attention should be given to the process of writing, which has not been observed, at least in this sample. However, important information was found from students' comments in the Google Docs that can be useful to design better activities using this application to enhance collaborative learning.

Key words:

Technology, Google Docs, writing, feedback.

Resumen

Este estudio se implementó para conocer el impacto del uso de Google Docs en las composiciones escritas de los estudiantes. Treinta y un estudiantes en diferentes clases y horarios del programa de adultos participaron en este estudio. Ellos eran alumnos de una academia de inglés ubicada en la ciudad de Manta, en la provincia de Manabí - Ecuador. El diseño de la investigación incluyó el análisis de información cualitativa y cuantitativa tomada de encuestas, capturas de pantalla y composiciones escritas. Los resultados indican que los alumnos no consideran a la destreza de escritura como la más importante, tampoco consideran que el uso de la tecnología mejore el aprendizaje. Se debe prestar atención al proceso de escritura, que en esta muestra no se observa. Sin embargo, se encontró información importante tomada de los comentarios realizados por los alumnos en las composiciones en los documentos compartidos en Google. Esta información puede ser útil para diseñar actividades auténticas a través de la aplicación de esta tecnología para mejorar el aprendizaje colaborativo.

Palabras claves:

Tecnología, Google Docs, escritura, retroalimentación.

INTRODUCTION

Harmer (2007) confirms that students lack of confidence, which makes them to say that they cannot or are not motivated to write. Thus, teaching writing might be challenging for teachers and difficult for students. Especially, when students and teachers have to complete the writing process, which begins with planning, drafting, reviewing and editing, it might turn up being a time-consuming process. However, Harmer (2007) confirms that this is the process in real life. Therefore, all steps are necessary.

Harmer (2007) remarks that it is very demotivating for students when they receive their papers full of annotations in red ink. This indicates visually that the writing is terrible. This has been a practice that has existed, at least in the Ecuadorian context for a long time in the history of education. It has been difficult for teachers to change their mentality and stop correcting students' work in a way that demotivates them. This might be a cause for students not feeling confident and refraining from even starting a composition. On the other hand, this author also considers that teachers may complain of an activity that consumes a lot of time and it may turn out to be frustrating since it is many times difficult to detect what the mistake is.

In normal classes, there are about 30 students assigned to one teacher. Most of the time, the same teacher has three or four classes with a total of at least 100 students. This indicates that it is unbearable to provide individual feedback. There is no time for at least effective comments that help students improve their written performance. In this study, the number of students is fewer than 15 in each class, which is a manageable number to provide feedback on a one-to-one basis. Yet, the problem is time. The Language school has specific time for teachers to grade/check assignments. Therefore, there is no time to provide feedback just to register that students turned in their assignments.

Being one of the problems, time to provide feedback to students; and another to enhance students' written tasks; this innovation involves the application of Google Docs so the teacher and the learners will be able to provide feedback when appropriate. Both writers and readers will share the same document. Students will be enthusiastic since studies report that students are engaged when they use technology. The population for this study will be adults in levels 5 and 6 of an English language school where the research-teacher is currently working.

Implementing Google Docs might be a venue to get feedback from learners. Scrivener (2005) argues that the more teachers understand their students, the better results are obtained from lessons. On the other hand, students might not participate because they do not feel comfortable at making mistakes in front of the teacher and others. Therefore, having technology-mediated lessons could motivate students to write in real time and speak out their thoughts. A study conducted by Seyyedrezaie, Shahriari, and Fatemi (2016) reported that Iranian EFL students' writing performance is the same as the finding of Bagheri, Yamini, and Behjat's (2013) study. They conclude that blended environment considerably enhances EFL students' writing performance. Furthermore, this finding is especially in line with Garrison and Vaughan's (2008) study showing the effectiveness of blended writing instruction in improving students' learning outcomes.

Another study conducted by Zhou, Simpson, and Domizi (2012) suggests that it is important for instructors to educate both themselves and their students on the latest features. Perhaps most importantly, instructors should carefully examine their course learning goals to determine whether any new technologies would better prepare students to meet their specific learning outcomes.

This innovation will take place in a language school located in Manta. There are about 300 students. They are divided into levels according to their proficiency and age. According

to the age, they can be placed into children (7-9), pre-teens (10-12), teens (13-15) and adults (16 +). There is a total of 10 levels. Once students finish the 10th level there are two last optional levels called Listening and Speaking. Students practice listening, speaking, and reading within classes with their teachers. Writing is mostly left for homework. Thus, it is one of the least exploited on a face-to-face basis. Teachers are asked to check homework during the first 20 minutes of classes, which is not enough to provide feedback to every single student, or read thoroughly the writing of each student. Even though, the English language academy has included journals for every level at any age to reinforce structure, topics, and vocabulary practiced in class; some ideas to encourage students to write will be taken from Scrivener (2005).

JUSTIFICATION

Even though the language school included writing tasks as weekly homework and students have to write compositions from beginning levels. Teachers do not have time to provide feedback to students in order to enhance their writings. First, they have only 20 minutes to check all assignments from every single student in the class. Sometimes, homework can be made up of up to six or seven activities; one of them is a composition activity. Secondly, there are between 10 to 15 students in each class. That means teachers have one minute, in the best situation, to check each one's homework. Finally, teachers have to complete administrative tasks within those 20 minutes: write agenda on the board, register if students have done their assignments or not, take attendance and read a memo (communication from authorities to students).

Moreover, students turn in their compositions to fulfill a required homework, not because they are learning from doing so or because they are motivated to write. Since students are graded just for turning in their compositions. They know that their work is not paid attention to and that their grade will be the same if the composition is correct or not. These are

some reasons why students might not be completing this task as they should. Additionally, students might not be following the writing process because they are not being guided or asked to. Previous compositions reveal that students' writings are one-paragraph long.

Bagheri, Yamini, and Behjat (2013) confirm that technology has a strong impact in the delivering of teaching. Information Communications Technology (ICT) has promoted changes in the learning-teaching process especially in EFL. They added that technology is useful to improve oral and written presentations in terms of searching for information, elaborating assignments, and assessing linguistic competences. The technology that will be implemented in this study is Google docs. In this regard, Jeong (2016) indicates that it is "a web-based free word processor and can be utilized as a tool of creating a web-based platform for submitting students' English essay writings and peer-editing." (p. 2). She added that it can also be implemented to "find out students' perceptions and attitudes about technology-enhanced English writing instruction and online-based peer editing activities." (p. 1). For the purpose of this innovation, Google docs will not be used in class activities but as part of one of the assignments that students need to complete. This author reported that Google docs "helped to enhance active communication, autonomous class participation, mutual collaboration as well as dynamic classroom interaction". (p. 1).

Thus, this study is justified because writing is one of the main skills of the language. More importantly, writing is a productive skill, which might reveal students' proficiency. There are studies that reported the effectiveness of digital resources in students' writing activities, collaboration and feedback as well as in their motivations in their work.

OBJECTIVES

In order to know if the use of Google Docs will enhance student's written tasks by receiving feedback of the teacher and peers, this research study addressed the implementation of the use of technology, in this case, Google Docs, and a productive skill which is writing.

The Google Docs allow to share the document with different people. Students shared their work with their peers and the teacher to receive feedback and improve their work. Specific objectives were to determine the effects of the implementation of Google Docs to provide peer feedback and enhance students' written tasks; and to determine if students will write longer and better compositions after using Google Docs.

Chapter I: Literature Review

Yaghoubi and Rasouli (2015) mention that "learning as an enterprise is affected by the perspectives of learners." In the same current of thinking, Weiner (as cited in Yaghoubi and Rasouli, 2015) indicates that learners attribute their successes and failures in learning to their perspectives. Thus, their perspectives constitute an important aspect in any performance. Harmer (2007) expresses that if adults are exposed to the right contact of the language they can acquire it, that is not by conciously studying it. This contact might be developed with peers, as prescribed in the Communicative Language Teaching approach. Wang (2009) considers that this approach's main focus is on the interaction of participants with two main objectives interaction among venues and the main one which is learning a second or foreign language. This author also indicates that it is referred as a communicative approach in the teaching of other languages or simply a communicative one.

EFL Writing

I would like to start this section by quoting Harmer (2007) who listed the reasons for teaching writing: reinforcement, language development, learning style, and as a skill. Since teachers need to have a reason to assign written tasks, it is important to know this information. Likewise, students need a reason to complete their assignments. This author indicates that facilitators should consider students' ages, interests and level in order to choose topics to write.

More technically, Brown (2001) states "A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graph representation of spoken language…" (p. 335). However, for many learners it is difficult to put into words what they are thinking, and that task turns most difficult when your thoughts need to be exposed in a language other than yours. On the other hand, Jalaludin (2011) states that writing is a system used to handle interpersonal communication and that it includes various styles of language. It is a system that

includes codes and functions. There are several parts of speech that students need to domain to form correct sentences and later paragraphs. Not only that, students also need to know the correct register or how to address to a certain audience in different contexts, being business, social, technical, and others.

Hamed (2012) mentions that writing is important for personal and professional issues. In a globalized world, students communicate with one another using all kinds of social media networks. They are communicating all day long with different circle of friends and acquaints. In an academy or in more formal settings, for example, it has become a fundamental tool to measure success at higher levels. Nowadays, there are standards that not only teachers but also students need to achieve. Thus, he added that students are in search of gaining more control of their writings and communicating their ideas through this venue by improving it.

Harmer (2007) claims that students lack confidence which makes them end up saying that they cannot or are not motivated to write. Thus, teaching writing might be challenging for teachers and difficult for students. Especially, when students and teachers have to complete the writing process, which begins with planning, drafting, reviewing and editing, it might turn up being a time-consuming process. Harmer (2007) confirms that this is the process in real life. Therefore, all steps are necessary. One last issue to consider is students' motivation to complete writing activities, which might be also the topic they have to write about.

Nevertheless, EFL writing happens to be one of the most critical when acquiring the language. It has also been investigated by a lot of specialists worldwide. (Amin, Seifoori, & Biglar, 2013). Its importance has also been stressed in the acquisition not only of a foreign language but also of the mother tongue. Many times, writing has been considered as time-consuming. The process itself involves several steps in an ongoing improvement along students and teachers' scholar and professional lives. Moreover, reports indicate that even

well-known writers have been found in still learning about syntax and lexis in a process that might take them their whole life.

There are issues like self-correction as well as peer-correction that cannot and should not be ignored or applied to all EFL/ESL writing context (Amin, Seifoori, & Biglar, 2013). Understanding and comprehending the main features of writing will lead to coherent lessons. Some components can be topic sentence, thesis statement, first draft, main idea, supporting sentence, conclusions and clinchers. They all and every single one need a great deal of work and time for second language learners and even for students in their native language. This hard work needs to be done in order to be fully learnt and acquired the different skills. Several cognitive in addition to linguistic skills should be developed in students, especially in their writing lessons. For the past 40 years, worldwide in the context of EFL/ESL writing has experienced permanent changes in the implementation of updated methods, skills, and strategies for teaching-learning writing and its process.

Chuenchaichon (2015) conducted a review of studies related to L2 writing in Thailand. He mentioned that 2012 was the year of studies that included technology. His revision included studies related to writing and social networks, blogs, and pocket electronic dictionaries as electronic tools. He added that two studies involved interaction between teachers and students. They collaborated in writing activities. This study highlights the important role of teachers when guiding students.

Feedback

Harmer (2007) confirms that it is very demotivating for students when they receive their papers full of annotations in red ink. This indicates visually that the writing is terrible. This has been a practice that has existed, at least in the Ecuadorian context for a long time in the history of education. It has been difficult for teachers to change their mentality and stop correcting students' work in a way that demotivates them. This might be a cause for students

not feeling confident and refraining from even starting a composition. On the other hand, this author also considers that teachers may complain of an activity that consumes a lot of time and it may turn out to be frustrating since it is many times difficult to detect what the mistake is.

Walker (2009) remarks that feedback should be a valuable source for enhancing students performance. This means that it should be valuable and resourceful for learners. Zhao (2010) highlights that feedback has been sustainedly used during the past two decades in English as a Foreign Language and English as a Second Language settings in different forms and from several sources. It is important to receive feedback but most importantly is the content and the source. Thus, it is fundamental to help peers to provide feedback that will enhance other's work. Students might feel not prepared to do this task. That is why it is important to empower them so there is collaboration in the classroom. This will help to build identity among the students in the class.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) contribute with the concept of feedback, indicating that there are two main components: an agent who provides the information and aspects of others' task performance. Moreover, Bijami, Kashef, and Nejad (2013) consider feedback as an important component in language learning; since, it can promote learning at a minimal or deep scale. Thus, there is an effect on learning even if it is a very slight one. Narciss (as cited in Bijami, et al., 2013) sustaines that it is any information given after an assignment has been done to give the learner information regarding his/her performance.

Mory (2003) included four perspectives of feedback that enhance the learning process. They are:

- It is regarded as a motivation for increasing percentages of response and/or improving accuracy. Given that students might focus on grammar, tenses, correct order of words

in sentences, coherence, punctuation, vocabulary, or other mechanics to help peers improve accurately their writings.

- It connects answers to prior stimuli which are focused on right answers. Thus, it makes it a reinforcement of learning. Students will feel empower with the new knowledge. Through repetition, they might also consolidate the learning of the different components of their compositions.

- It can become information that students might apply to validate or enhance their compositions; in this case, they focus the answers to correct mistakes.

- It is the tool that helps students build or construct their learning, in other words, it can be the scaffolding tool, to enhance learning supported in initial internal reasoning or schemata and it helps analyze students' process of learning through reflection of what they did wrong and what they should do next time to keep improving their assignment.

According to Nelson and Schunn (2009) there are two types of feedback: cognitive and affective. In the first one, there is more attention to content in terms of summaries, specifications, and explanatory aspects of the assignment being checked. On the second one, it is concentrated on the quality of the composition and applies affective style of language to bestow positive comments and criticism. It may also include non-verbal expressions, like facial gestures and/or tones that denote emotions of the person providing feedback.

Lastly, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) classified effective feedback practice into seven principles:

1. Makes clear for the learner what good performance includes (purpose, objectives, criteria, goals, expected standards). Students will notice and realize their weaknesses to switch them into strengthens in later activities. Not only that, but also peers will learn and reinforce their practices when providing feedback.

2. Facilitates reflection in performance. It will depend on the time students give to read their peer comments. This will also depend on the quality of feedback that the class provides. In this case, the teacher will have to read all of them and indicate whether there have been good comments or classmates need to reinforce their comments in later tasks.

3. High quality feedback provides information that let students know about their progress. This is an ongoing activity where everyone should be in an attitude of constant improvement. The teacher should focus on the next step to be covered and help students progress either in topics, content, or level of difficulty of structures applied in their documents.

4. Motivates dialogue among teachers and peers. Both parties will get to see online the comments that each is giving to one another. Thus, this might become an enriching task for everyone.

5. Triggers positive beliefs and enhance self-esteem. Students will feel secure of their coming assignments being sure of not committing the same mistakes of previous homework.

6. Gives opportunities to narrow the gap between current and expected performance. Teachers will set higher standards, once some areas have been worked on and consolidated teachers can continue with next content and level. This can also be a diagnostic tool to see the gap teachers need to narrow.

7. Helps teachers with important information to enhance teaching methods regarding different areas. Facilitators need to analyze the pieces of writing that the class is developing and categorize mistakes under grammar, punctuation, parts of speech, content, coherence, and cohesion. It might be overwhelming but teachers as well as

students can benefit from these practices in order to advance in strategies, skills, and competences to become better writers.

Furthermore, Sadler (1989) confirms that effective feedback indicates model pedagogy for teachers or peers. Teachers will improve in the strategies to help students work collaboratively and cooperatively. Likewise, students will get experience at giving feedback to help others improve their work and most importantly, they might use the same information to enhance their own work.

Musa, Mansor, Mufti, Aida, and Kasim (2012) mention that the effect of feedback depends on the way it is given. This is similar to the two types of feedback provided by Nelson and Schunn (2009): cognitive and affective. Yet, peer feedback is better welcome than the one provided by the teacher. The facilitator work should be of organizer and helper to build a collaborative community among their learners.

Scrivener (2005) mentions that the more teachers understand their students the better results are obtained from lessons. Students might not feel comfortable at making mistakes in front of the teacher and others. Writings might be a source of rich and extensive content that will help teachers know and understand their students in a different context and in other duties.

Peterson (2010) considers two types of teachers' feedback: criterion-based and reader-based. The first regard "how well the writing meets the criteria on scoring guides or rubrics". It focuses on accuracy, clarity of communication, use of conventions, effective language, and appropriateness of the content. She suggested that this is convenient when students know the criteria beforehand. On the other hand, reader-based feedback involves the experience of the evaluator when reading in terms of feelings created as result of the words, messages, and purposes of the writings. Her conclusions indicated that students learn from peers and teachers when they provide reader-based feedback.

Ellis and Yuan (as cited in Salimi and Fatollahnejad, 2012) confirm that students gained greater fluency and syntactic variety through pre-task planning. However, their most important finding was that students' unpressured engagement in virtual planned activities increase accuracy.

Orsmond, Maw, Park, Gomez, and Crook (2013) confirm that if feedback is sound, it will help students to understand the content they are writing about and will provide the clear guidance required to improve their compositions. Other studies like the one conducted by Kitchakarn (2013) and Puengpipattrakul (2013) also reported positive results in students' writing when they receive on-time feedback.

Puengpipattrakul (2013) made an innovation on writing in two areas assessment and feedback. This innovation measured teacher integrated feedback either direct or indirect; and its incidence in students' motivations to write. Results were positive for both kinds of feedback on students' not only improvement in their compositions but also on their perceptions and positiveness to write in the target language. Nevertheless, the same study reports other factors that might have influenced students' motivation. They were socio-psychological and educational ones.

Peer feedback

Bijami, Kashef, and Nejad (2013) highlight that traditionally feedback was a task that was only done by the teacher. As time passed, methodology changes and peer feedback have gained field in the learning process for several reasons. Among them, these authors listed social, cognitive, and affective benefits.

There is an extensive literature regarding "peer feedback" which is also regarded as peer evaluation, peer response, peer editing, and/or peer review. Liu and Hansen (2002) define peer feedback as

The use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing. (p. 1).

This concept might have well been taken from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which states that the mind develops through learner's interactions with others and the world. (Vygotsky, 1978). He added that learning does not occur on an individual basis, but it is a cognitive task product of the interaction between the learner and the social context. Thus, the importance of peer feedback or peer interaction to the contribution of the improvement of one another's learning.

Reports included in Bijami, et al. (2013) indicate that there are positive results in improving students' written tasks when they receive feedback from their peers as the one that compared the effects of two kinds of feedback, peer directed and teacher feedback on first year college students' writing proficiency.

Kitchakarn (2013) wanted to improve students' writing by measuring feedback provided by peers. He made use of a technology tool: blog. He did not only find that students became active learners by using technology in their compositions, but there was also an increase in other skills, such as: critical thinking, and autonomous learning. That means students not only improve their written compositions but started to build their own learning strategies.

Considering current methodologies and strategies applied in EFL/ESL writing classes, the implementation of technology or web tools for teaching writing is a key recent component that might seem to be lost in the age of the Internet and different communication tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Google Docs, Padlet, and Wikis, to name some. Therefore, innovations in teaching writing, and different technologies in classes have been mentioned in

a number of research studies (Amin, Seifoori, & Biglar, 2013). In the era of globalization, to know several methodologies, strategies, and techniques for the teaching-learning process of writing needs to be acquired, experimented, developed, and introduced, by effective writing teachers, in EFL/ESL classes. Therefore, an updated teacher should make sure of having the required current knowledge of technology as well as about the historical orientations and trends of EFL/ESL writing. Professionals in the field should consider or create a needs analysis to make and take decisions regarding the proper methodology, strategies, technology, and techniques to be implemented in the EFL/ESL classroom.

Google Docs

Teachers have realized that there are differences among learners, teaching methodologies, and contexts. (Wang, 2009). Education can be given in a classroom or virtually using several technologies at hand to address the great variety of learners. In Ecuador, the previous government devoted great amount of financial resources to better the educational system.

Bagheri, Yamini, and Behjat (2013) confirms that technology has a strong impact in the delivering of teaching. Information Communications Technology (ICT) has promoted changes in the learning-teaching process especially in EFL. They added that technology is useful to improve oral and written presentations in terms of searching for information, elaborating assignments, and assessing linguistic competences.

Liu, Kalk, Kinney, and Orr (2012) confirms that students are predominantly living nowadays in a virtual world, spending a lot of time in front of a computer either reading or writing. These authors mentioned that it is widely agreed among several researchers that technology makes learning possible and facilitates EFL teaching-learning process. Besides, there are authors, like Calvo, Vella-Brodrick, Desmet, & Ryan (2016) who contrast the claims

of authors regarding the positive impact of technology in the teaching-learning process developed either in the classroom or out of it.

There are recent studies conducted that involve writing and technology. One of those was developed by Iyer (2013) that report students' positive perceptions and their motivations when they are working and using technology at the same time. Another study that included technology in form of blogs and that had positive results was the one conducted by Kitchakarn (2013). In both studies, there was interaction in form or peer-feedback. Results indicated that students not only improve their compositions but developed important skills like: communication, creativity, critical thinking, voice, comments, and contributions enhanced.

Jeong (2016) refers to Google Docs as word processor based on a web that can be implemented as a learning tool to develop and organize students' essay writing on a platform. This platform is available to students on a daily basis for peer-editing too. She added that it can also be implemented to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of learners regarding their performance in writing through the use of technology-based and enhanced instruction. Part of this instruction involves peer editing tasks to be developed online.

A study conducted by Jeong (2016) regarding the use of Google Docs as a Collaborative Platform for teaching writing indicated that this resource "helped to enhance active communication, autonomous class participation, mutual collaboration as well as dynamic classroom interaction".

Chu, Kennedy, and Mak (as cited in Seyyedrezaie, Ghonsooly, Shahriari, and Fatemi, 2016) define Google Docs as a virtual collaborative tool used for writing that allows students to work on their compositions, edit them synchronously and with others in collaboration. A study conducted by Hardison (2012) reports Google Drive as a beneficial resource to help not only teachers but EFL students because online writing motivated learners to express their

thoughts in a free way. They also had the opportunity to comment on their peers to help them improve their final product. They included another study with promising results on cooperation among students, since they have the opportunity to see one another's work. This action resulted in better individual's work. Lastly, they mentioned a study which wanted to explore the attitude of students towards using this tool in their writing. Results indicated that students demonstrated a positive attitude when working online in collaboration with others rather than doing the task by themselves either in class or at home.

A study carried out at a college in Taiwan reports that the implementation of Google Docs built positive attitudes of students towards it, that students were "satisfied with their meaningful interactions with peer e-tutors". Lin and Yang (2013) indicated that this activity enhanced students' writing skills as well as the desire of participating in similar activities in the future.

Having technology-mediated lessons could motivate students to write in real time and speak out their thoughts. A study conducted by Seyyedrezaie, Ghonsooly, Shahriari, and Fatemi (2016) reported that Iranian EFL students' writing performance is as positive as the finding of Bagheri, Yamini, and Behjat's (2013) study. They concluded that blended environment considerably enhanced EFL students' writing performance. Moreover, this finding is especially in line with Garrison and Vaughan's (2008) study showing the effectiveness of blended writing instruction in improving students' learning outcomes.

Another study conducted by Zhou, Simpson, and Domizi (2012) suggests that it is important for instructors to educate both themselves and their students on the latest features. Perhaps most importantly, instructors should carefully examine their course learning goals to determine whether any new technologies would better prepare students to meet their specific learning outcomes.

There was a study conducted by Hedin (2012) in order to receive and provide feedback among peers. This differs from my innovation because it was applied in an "Academic" setting and with university students. Hedin's results indicated that the method was highly appreciated, students read digital documents rather than printing them.

All in all, most studies indicate that there are positive results when applying technology in the production of students' compositions. In this innovation, the technology implemented is Google docs so students collaborate in improving the performance of their peers.

Chapter II: Method

Setting and participants

This study was developed at a language school. It is a branch in Manta, of a main language school, which main office is located in Guayaquil. It is made up of 300 students. They are placed into 10 different levels by ages Children, Pre-teens, Teens, and Adults. For the purpose of this research study, participants that belonged to levels 5 and 6 of the adult program were chosen because those levels were assigned to teachers willing to help during the time of the study. Additionally, these students were in the middle of the program, their English level is intermediate and good enough to give feedback each other. They are 31 students in total (seventeen women and fourteen men).

Their ages range from 14 – 34 years. Thirteen are high school students, two are housewives, and the remaining are currently working. There is a variety of schedules students can choose from. They have classes twice a week. They can attend classes on Monday and Wednesday from 18h20 to 20h30, Tuesday and Thursday from 18h30 to 20h40, Saturday from 8h30 to 13h00, or Saturday from 13h30 to 18h00. They mostly started their studies in this language school from level 1 and have advanced together in the program. Currently, their schedule is: Adults 5 receive classes on Tuesday and Thursday from 18h30 to 20h40, and level 6 attend classes on Saturday from 08h30 to 13h00.

Research Design

This is a qualitative and quantitative research because it includes the analysis of qualitative and quantitative information. Data will be collected from checklists, a survey, and students' writings. Results will be compared and contrasted. In terms of analysis, percentages will be applied to see frequency.

Procedures

Survey

A survey was given to students prior to the implementation of the research before the class started. It was made up of eighteen questions. Sixteen of them had a Likert scale, and two were open-ended questions. They were applied to the thirty-one students, population of this study.

This survey was applied to get some background knowledge of students' perceptions about writing and technology. The answers were counted and converted into percentages. Qualitative information was provided in open-ended questions. Students' answers were categorized into main groups and the frequency was also tallied and converted into percentages.

Workshop

After applying the survey, it was found that 22 students had already knowledge and experience with Google docs. The remaining 9 students, that had not used Google docs prior to the innovation, were trained about its usage. This workshop was conducted during a class where students normally attended. Students were asked to create a Gmail account if they had not one already. The mechanics of the drive were introduced. Some examples were given during the lesson as well as students had the opportunity to practice with some peers.

Students were told that during that cycle and next, they had to share the writing logs with the class and the teacher in order to receive and provide feedback from at least two classmates. Once they received recommendations from peers and the teacher, they had to improve their documents to turn in their final journal.

The teacher provided students with a checklist to help them provide a good feedback. Students completed this form at the end of the intervention. Questions were as follows:

- o Did I read my classmates questions?

- Did I write positive comments?

- Did I suggest ideas regarding content, and/or mechanics (grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, or word order)?

- Did I make follow-up questions to make compositions longer?

Writing Logs

In this language school, students are assigned weekly homework. Assignments are an important part of the program, because students only attend once or twice a week. One of those tasks is writing logs. Students are given topics according to the themes of the main course book.

There were ten writing topics in each level. Since this study was developed in two levels, only two will be considered as a pre and post document to compare and contrast the results of the intervention. They were analyzed in terms of length, as evidence of the writing process, and as evidence of feedback given by peers as well as the teacher.

The survey to measure students' motivation with this innovation was applied at the beginning to know background information of students' feelings towards writing. This survey has been adapted from the one developed by Elliot in his study Motivating students to write.

Chapter III: Results and Discussion

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The purpose of this innovation was to see the impact of Google Docs in students' written compositions. To this end, two specific questions were proposed. The first question was to determine the effects of the implementation of Google Docs to provide peer feedback and enhance students' written tasks; the second question was to determine if students will write longer and better compositions after using Google docs. To answer these questions, the first instrument applied was a survey.

Survey

Graph 1. Importance of skills.
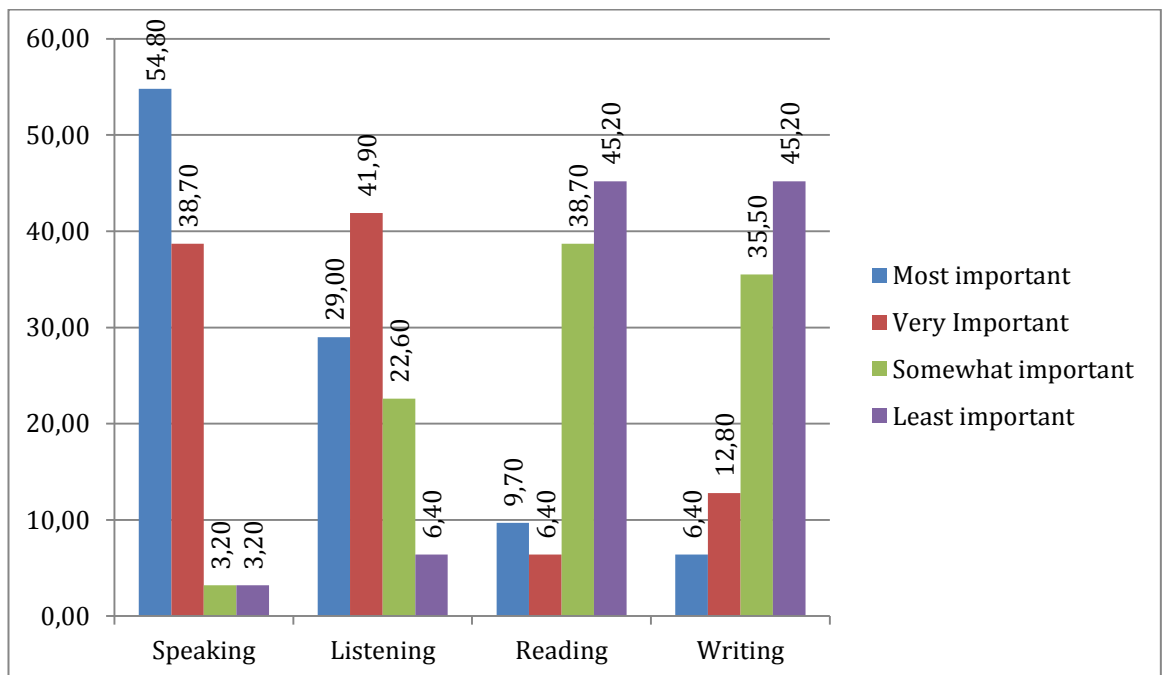
The first question in the survey requested students to indicate which of the four skills of the language was the most important. Results indicate that students in this language school do not consider writing important. Only 6.4% of students think writing is one of the most important skills, followed by a 12.8% that consider it very important. Most of them agree that

speaking is the most important. Listening has also a high percentage (29%) followed by reading and writing. These results confirm what Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow (2014) reported when they reflect about the question people want to know the language that others domain. They highlight that the question is "how many languages do you speak?" Thus they concluded that "Speaking" might be seen as the fundamental skill in any language. It is also implied as the main skill through which a language is acquired.

Moreover, Harmer (2007) supports the reluctance of students towards writing as a consequence of students' lack of confidence, and that this reason prevents students to be motivated to write. This negative reason can cause students to consider that writing is not important. Celce-Murcia, et al (2014) explain the complexity of the language since it "is much less transparent and has complicated rules for linking graphemes and phonemes" (p. 209). Graph 1 summarizes students' answers.

The fact that students consider reading and writing least important might be due to the correspondence of skills. Authors like Harmer (2007) and Thornbury (2006) highlight that the more students listen the better they speak and the more students read the better they write. According to this question of the survey, students place speaking and listening in the first places, consequently reading and writing received the lowest score in the criteria most important but the highest score in least important one. This might also mean that students do not read as much as they need or are required.

Graph 2. Importance of writing
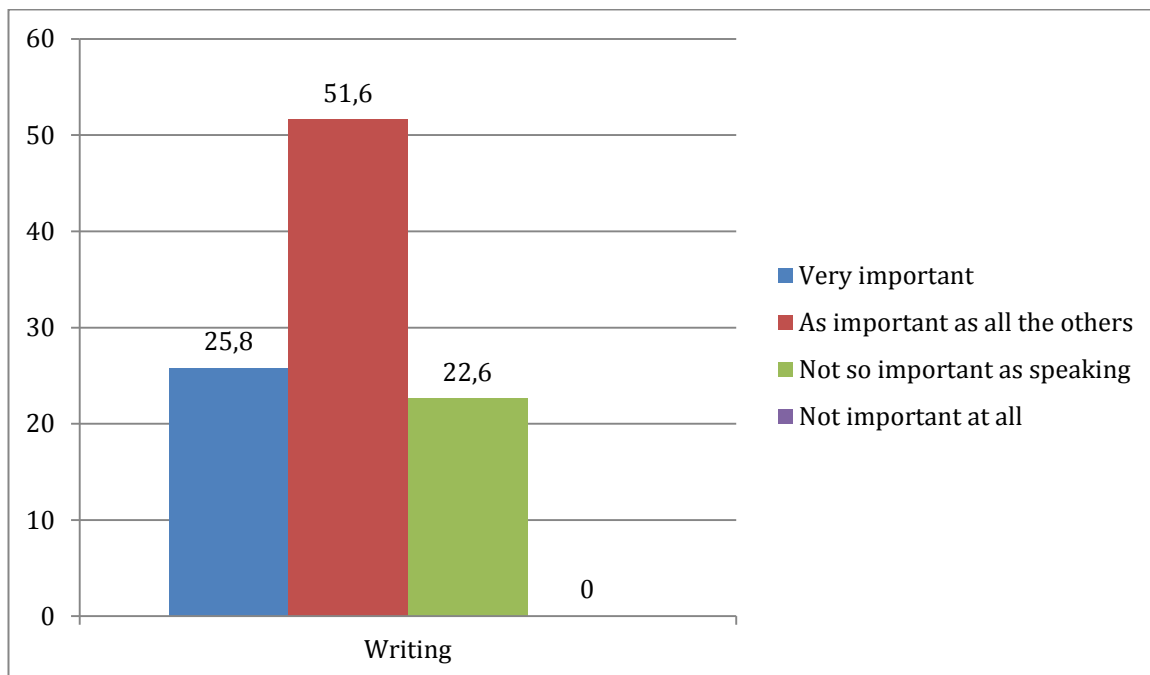
However, in the second question (as shown in Graph 2) which only focused on Writing and compared it with the other skills, 51.6% of the sample indicated that it was *as important as all the others*. If the percentages of the criteria of *very important* and *as important as all the other skills* are added a 77,4% of this population think that this skill is important. These students might be the ones that considered writing somewhat important in the previous question. This different opinion can be the result of students' purpose for writing; for example, in Graph 5, 45.2% of students consider writing as a mean to practice English, but what they value the most of writing tasks is the grammar and spelling they can apply and that should be corrected by the teacher in terms of feedback. Harmer (2007) mentions some purposes for writing which include reinforcement, and language development.

Graph 3. Assessment
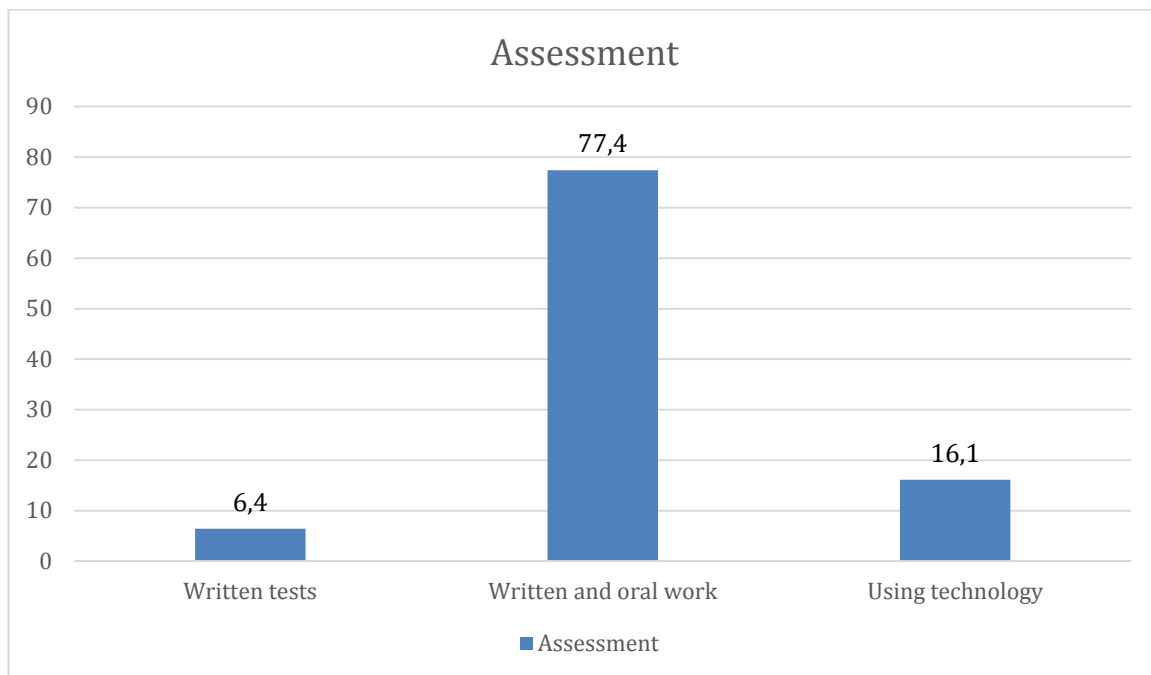
Regarding assessment, 77.4% of students deem that *equal importance should be given to written and oral work*, which are productive skills. Two of the participants indicated that assessment should be based on written activities. There was a 16.1% of them that consider that progress should be measured over the course using technology. For this sample, the inclusion of technology is not as important as the teaching-learning process of the skills in order to learn the language.

Graph 4. Feelings towards written tasks
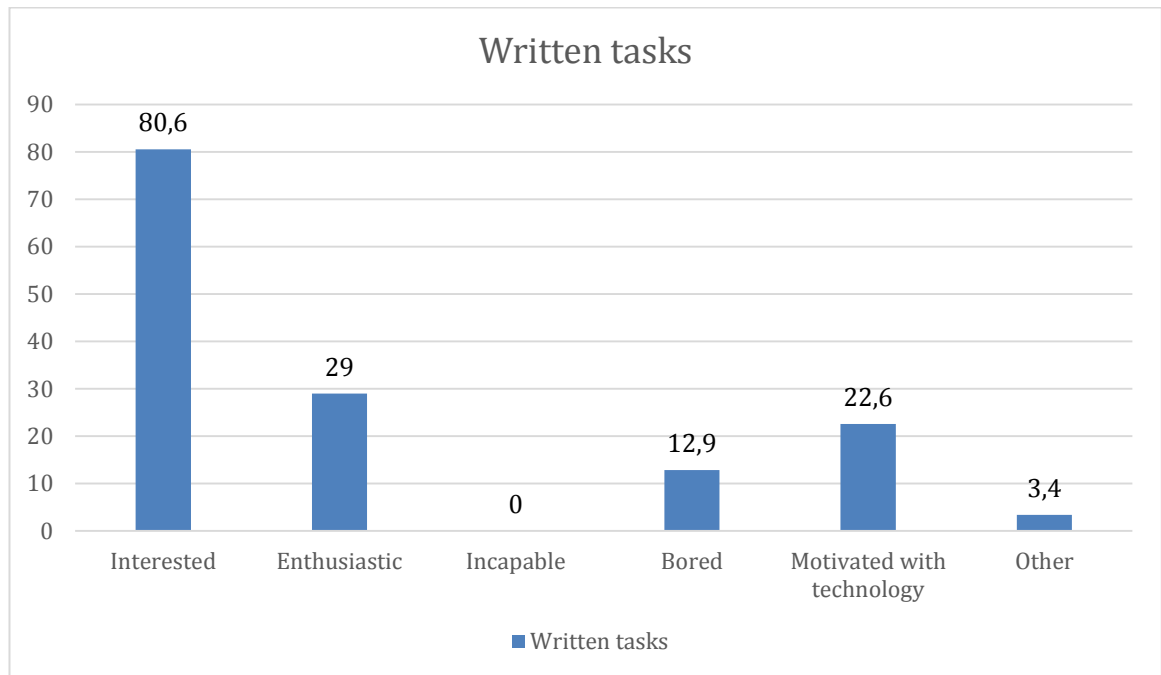
When they were asked about their feelings towards written tasks, 80.6% answered that they were *interested*, as displayed in Graph 4. On the other hand, only seven students commented that technology was motivating. Twenty-nine percent indicated that they were *enthusiastic* with their writing tasks. A few of them, only a 12.9%, which corresponds to four participants, felt *bored* with this skill. Two comments that were written included in the "Other" item were: 1. "it depends on the writing theme, if it is a topic that interests you, you will do it enthusiastically; I believe that technology doesn't make a big difference how we feel." 2. "Willing to learn." In this respect, Hamed (2012) recalls that people communicate among them all day long and using different venues. This may well support students' positive feelings and responses to this section. This also confirms that technology is not appealing for students in their educational context, at least for this sample.

Graph 5. Written homework.
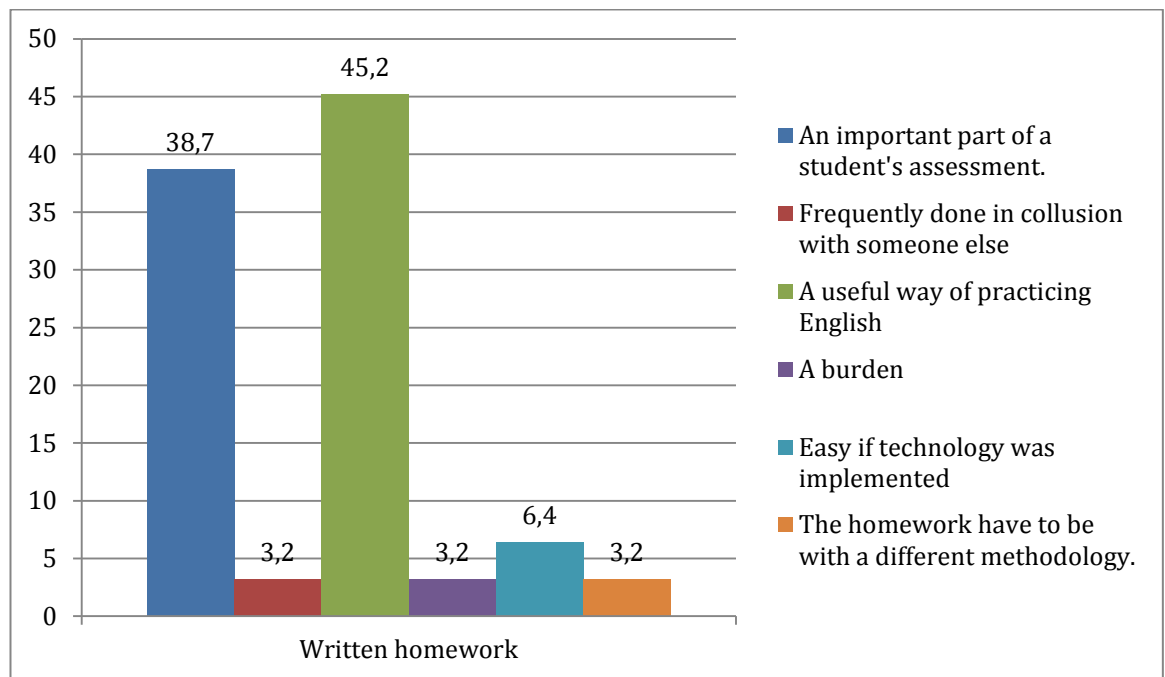
The next item in the survey questioned students about their thoughts in the matter of written homework. According to Graph 5, students believe that written homework is an important part to be assessed. They also mentioned that written tasks are useful to practice English (45.2%). Very few students (two and one) indicated that they do their assignment in collusion with someone else, that it was *a burden*, that it was easier if technology was implemented, and one of the students wrote that other methodology should be apply, maybe this student does not favor homework but classwork.

These results confirm what Amin, Seifoori, and Biglar (2013) sustain that writing is one of the most critical skills to acquire a language. Consequently, 45.2% of students perceive it is a good way to practice. The authors add that this difficulty and at the same time importance does not only happen in a foreign language but in the mother tongue.

Graph 6. Frequent impediments to start writing.
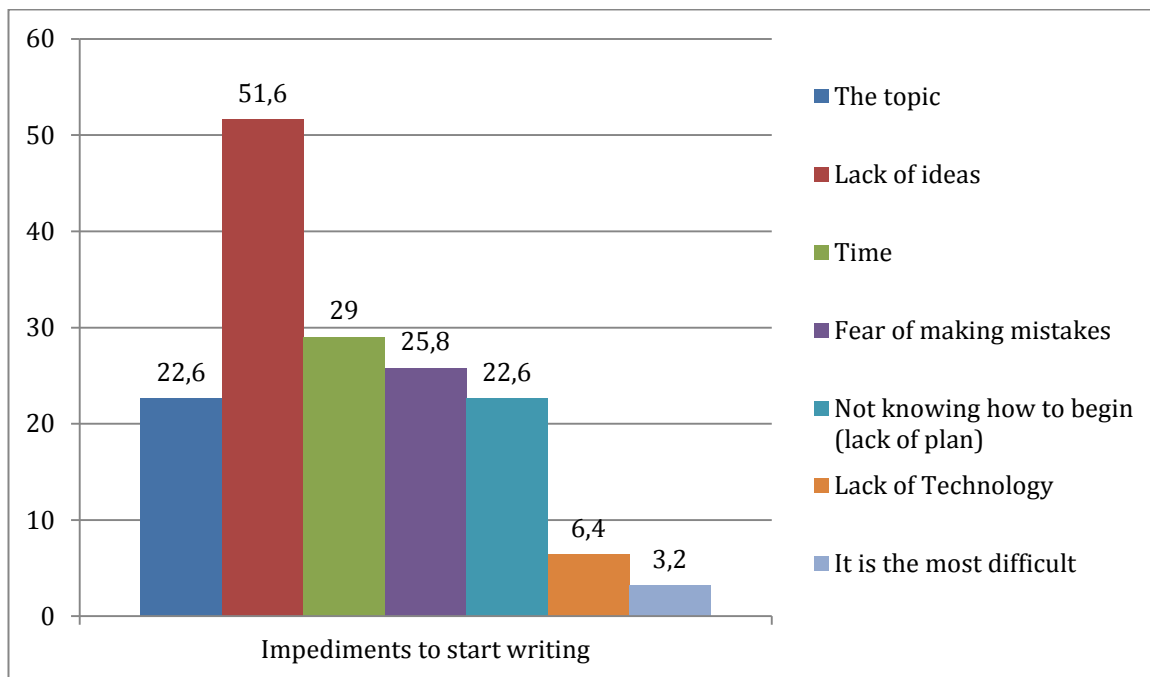
They were also questioned about the impediments to start writing which is shown in Graph 6. They responded that *lack of ideas* was impediment number one with a 51.6% of answers contrasted to *lack of technology* with a 6.4%. This section also included *topic*, *time*, *fear of making mistakes*, *lack of plan*, and others, which received a lower percentage. Even though, the topics are given and students have studied similar content in class, it seems students need more guidance from the teacher on how to start their pieces of writing as well as on the process.

Harmer (2007) suggests that the process includes planning, drafting, reviewing, and editing. He highlights that this is the process to be followed in real life, too. Students need to undergo this process in class and receive follow-up from the teacher. Within this process, in the planning stage, brainstorming can take place in class either guided by the teacher or monitored, and students in pairs or groups can come up with some ideas to include in their pieces of writing.

Graph 7. The most difficult characteristics of writing.
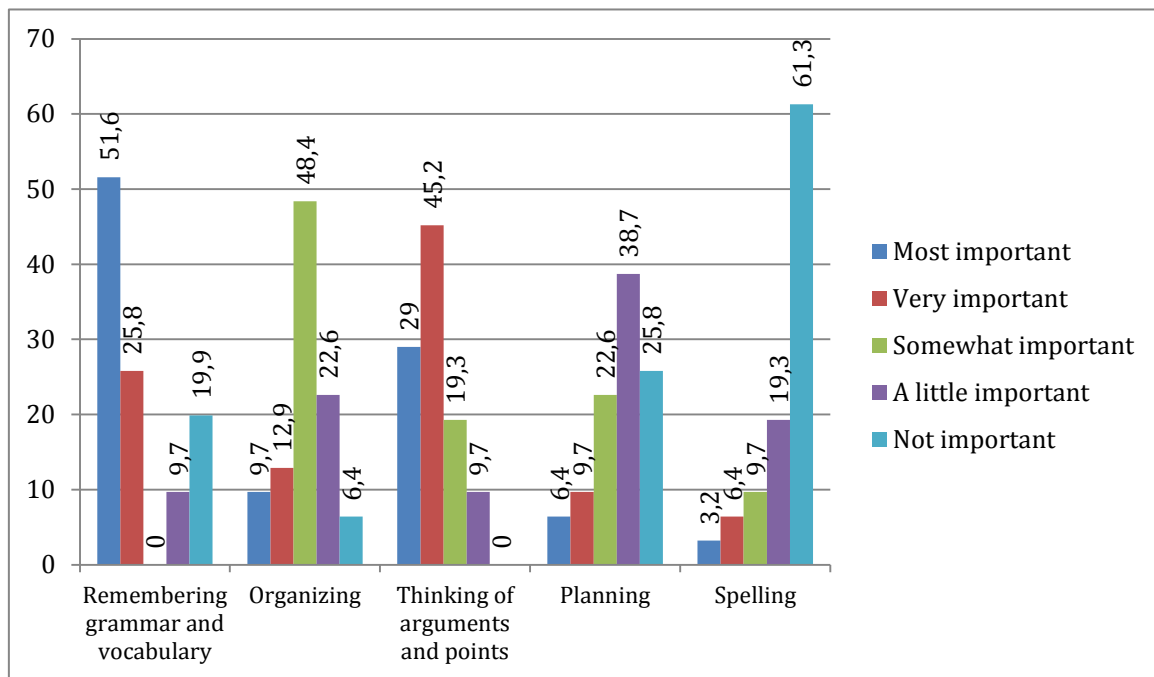
Important information was collected from students in terms of what they consider were the most difficult characteristics of writing, 51.6% concord on *remembering grammar and vocabulary*, followed by a 25.8% that considered these items very important. The second highest percentage was on *thinking of arguments and points*. The other items (organizing, planning, spelling, and other) got lower percentages. There is a high percent of students (61.3%) that do not consider Spelling important at all. These findings perfectly match what Amin, Seifoori, and Biglar (2013) claim that even recognized writers might spend their whole life learning about syntax and lexis. It is interesting to note that students do not pay attention to planning in the process of writing. This might be due to the consumption of time that it involves. However, it is important that students experience the process, develop writing skills, and practice them.

In this regard, Celce-Murcia et al (2014) explain that in writing grammar occupies two roles. The first involves grammatical structures, and the second corresponds to error correction. They add that this also depends on the style of teaching. This means if teachers focus more on the content than on grammar or the opposite. Consequently, this impacts

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students' perceptions and beliefs of what is more important in writing or the purpose of this skill in their learning.

Again, students repeat in their answers that they pay little attention to the writing process. Forty-eight percent of this sample considers organizing somewhat important, and 38.7% think that planning is a little important.

Graph 8. Reasons that might improve students' feelings towards writing.
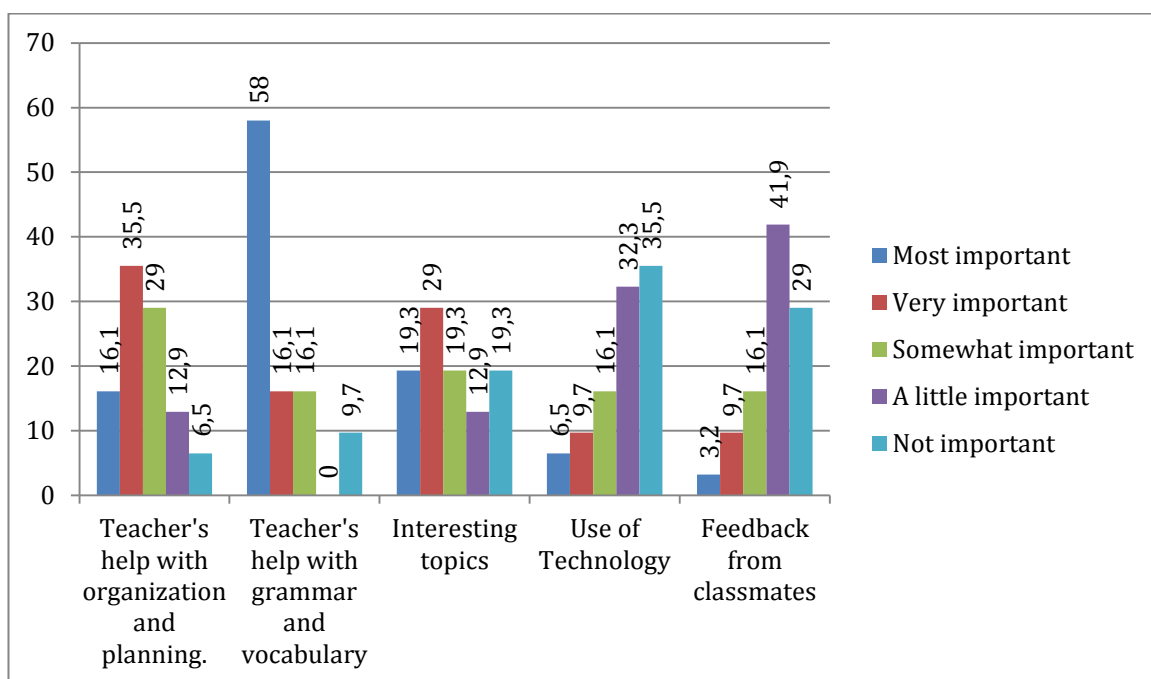

It was important to consider what would improve students' feelings towards writing. Graph 8 represents students' insights about this question. More than half of the class (58%) indicated that one reason will be if they receive more help from the teacher with vocabulary and grammar. If that was added to the very important, a total of 74.1% favored this item. This contrasts with Harmer (2007) who claims that it is very demotivating to receive a paper full of annotations from the teacher. Considering students' perceptions, that is what actually they are waiting for to improve their writings. This might be a consequence of the teaching style that students might be exposed to as Celce-Murcia, et al (2014) sustain. They consider two aspects when talking about writing accuracy or fluency. They add that this depends on the focus of the teacher.

Another important percentage (35.5%) was given to help from the teacher with organization and planning of the writings. If very important and most important are added, half of the class (51.6%) indicated that receiving help in organization and planning will improve their feelings toward writing. This is understandable, since in the context of this research study, there is no help from the teacher. Students are given the topic and they have to develop their compositions by themselves. Moreover, teachers are given from 10 to 20 minutes to check homework, among all the assignments, one of them is the composition. Most of the time, teachers just check the presentation of the task but not the content.

Only 32.3% of students said it was a little important *if technology was implemented*, and a similar percentage (35.5%) indicated that it was not important. This agrees with Calvo, Vella-Brodrick, Desmet, and Ryan (2016) who do not support the use of technology. They found out that even though half billion people use a mobile or smart phone, and that 46% of the world population is connected via internet, this does not make people happier. They conclude that this was a consequence of not using knowledge to design technology. Thus, common people need to see how others use or abuse it. They suggest a team of professionals to design applications that would make people feel better about it.

The item that referred to the topic received lower percentage in all scale. Regarding feedback from classmates, even though this item was not favored in most, very or somewhat important, it received a 41.9% in a little important. As Bijami, Kashef, and Nejad (2013) indicate feedback was a task done only by the teacher. Students might think that their classmates can help a little since they are also learning.

Graph 9. How students prepare their pieces of writing.
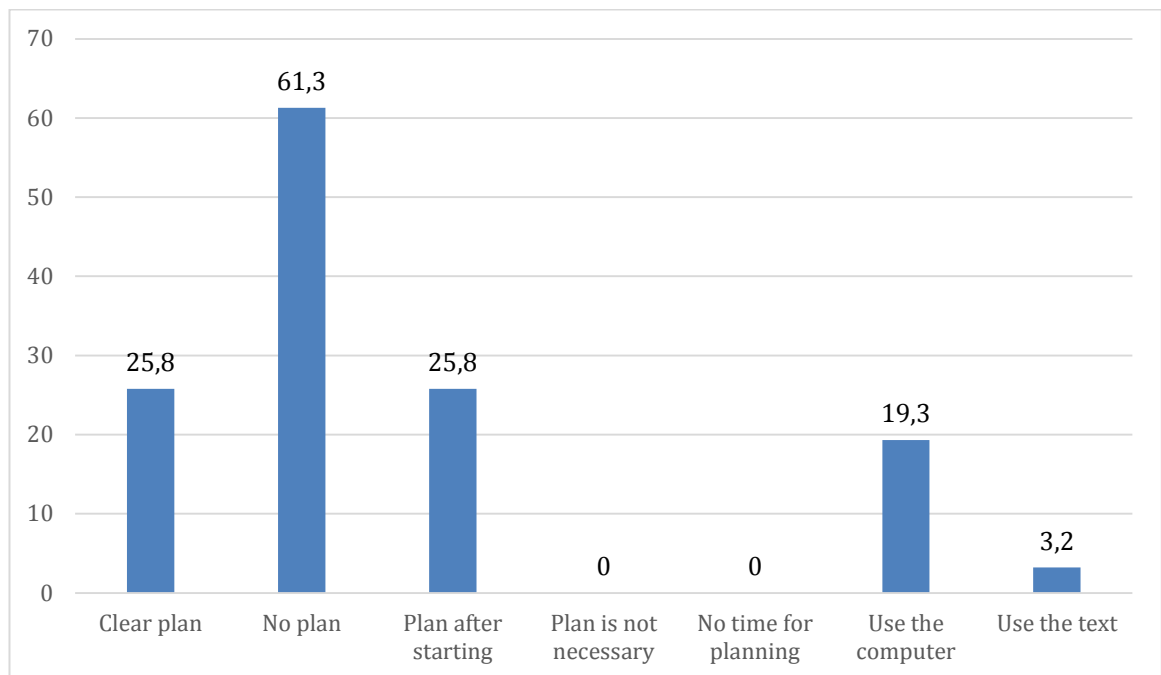
Five of the items of this question were related to "plan", for example having a clear plan before starting (25.8%), a plan appears after I have started (25.8%), a plan is not necessary (0%), and I do not have time to make a plan (0%). Graph 9 displays how students organize themselves when they write their compositions. Most of them (61,3%) indicated that they do not have a plan before they write. This ratifies that students are not following the process of writing that is recommended by Harmer (2007) which includes planning before doing the first draft. This can also be the result of the system of the English academy. Teachers are just required to check that students did the writing activity. Teachers do not provide feedback. Students were also questioned about using computers, 19,3% indicated that they did their assignments using computers. Even though, there is a computer in the house of all participants, not all of them decide to present the task in print.

Graph 10. What should teachers correct?
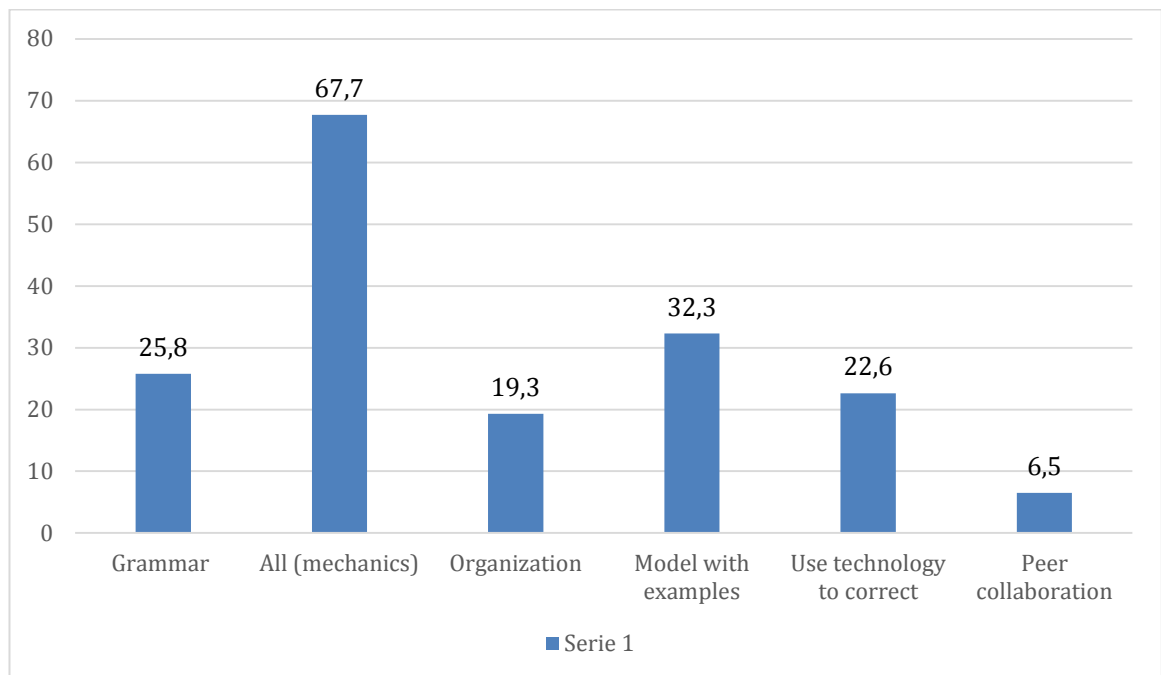
Graph 10 shows students' thoughts about how their work should be corrected. The highest percentage (67.7%) indicated that the teacher should correct everything: grammar, vocabulary, and spelling/punctuation mistakes. This might indicate that even though their compositions might be seen as visually terrible, after the corrections of the teachers, students are looking forward to know all their mistakes; as opposed to what Harmer (2007) sustains that it is not motivating, students' claim for corrections.

 This was followed by a 32.3% in "the teacher should try to write a ´good´ version of what the student was trying to say. This result matches what Mory (2003) describes as feedback in terms of reinforcement for learning, Students might become empower with the new knowledge and its repetitive process could lead to consolidate writing skills in its different components.

Similar percentages (25.8% and 22.6%) were given to "just correct grammar mistakes" and "teachers should use technology and send documents via internet". In this regard, Jalaludin (2011) adds that this skill involves several styles of the language, codes, and functions; one of those is parts of speech that students need to form cohesive and coherent

sentences and paragraphs. Even though technology represents a strong impact in the teaching-learning process, as mentioned by Wang (2009), for this group it is not an important feature to do their written assignments. Only a 19.3% deem that organizational mistakes should be corrected too. The least percentage (6.5%) favored peer collaboration before grading. Liu and Hansen (2002) mention that providing feedback was a unique role of the teacher. Therefore, there is not a culture of peer correction.

Graph 11. What students do when receiving their pieces of writing.
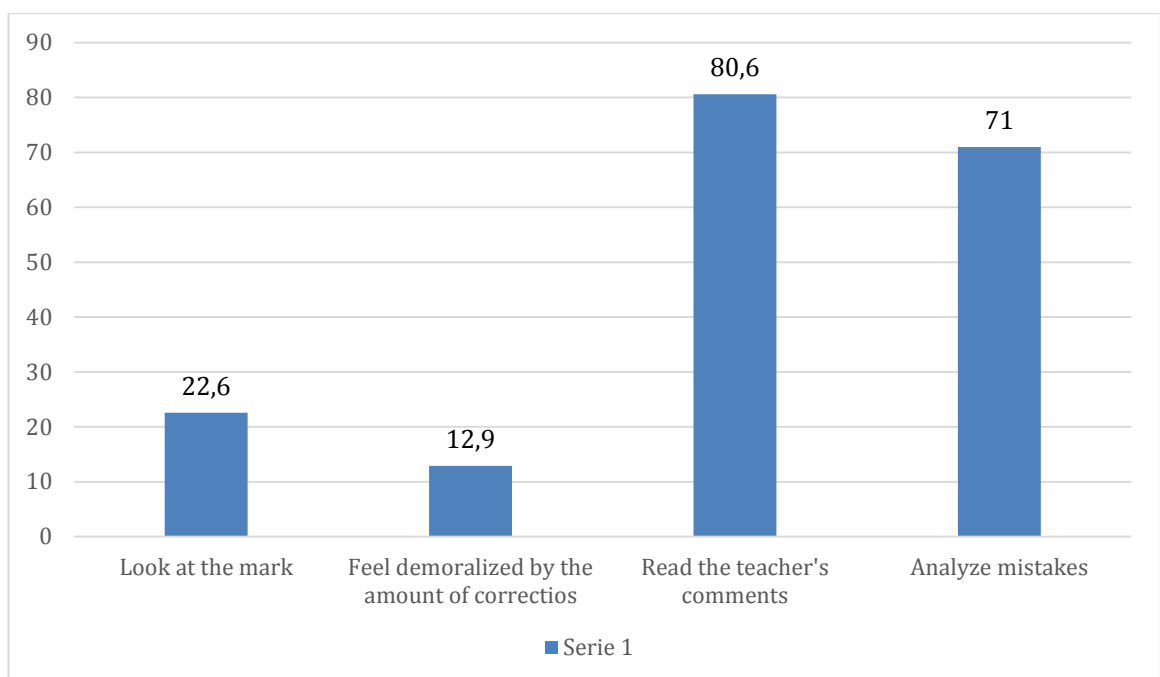
Once students finish their written task, 80.6% assure that the first thing they check when they receive the corrected paper is the teachers' comments, followed a 71% that said they analyze the mistakes. (See Graph 11) Some students look at the marks (22,6%), and only four students felt demoralized by the amount of corrections (12.9%). Peterson (2010) classifies feedback in two types: criterion-based and reader-based. According to these results, students expect a criterion-based feedback. This author describes criterion-based feedback as the one that addresses accuracy; that is correct use of conventions, and appropriateness of the content, among others. It is important to notice that these students are not considering the grades as

important in their writings what matters to them is teacher's corrections, and how they target the mistakes in following written activities.

Graph 12. Students' feelings towards feedback.
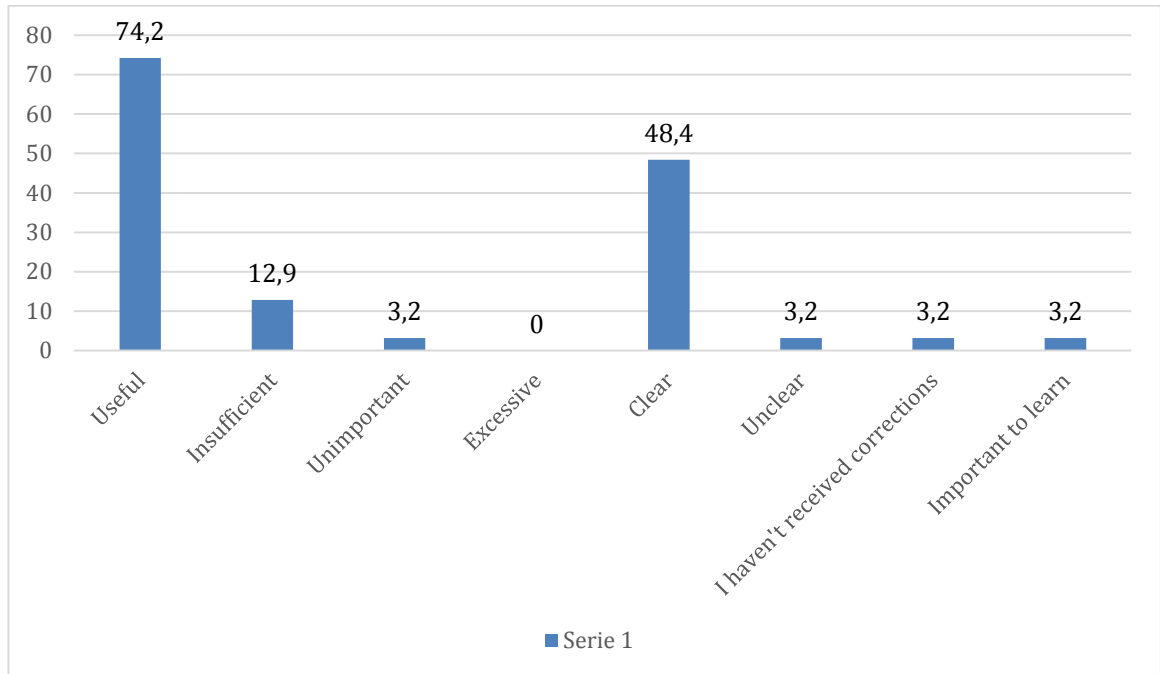
In order to know how students consider the corrections made to their papers, they were asked about the insights from the teacher. A high percentage (74%) finds *useful* the teacher's corrections. Another high percentage (48,4%) indicated that the corrections were *clear*. Very few students said that corrections were *insufficient*. Only one marked them as *unclear* or *unimportant*. One student believed they are important to learn. One mentioned not having received correction. Finally, none considered the corrections *excessive*. These expressions aligned with Orsmond, Maw, Park, Gomez, and Crook (2013) usefulness of feedback. They indicate that it is a resourceful venue to provide clear guidance that students need to improve their skills. Moreover, Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) implies that it clarifies what good performance in writing is; it facilitates reflection; it reports sound information about students' progress; among other principles. Therefore, students expect teacher's comments in order to keep improving their compositions.

Graph 13. Reasons for writing in English.
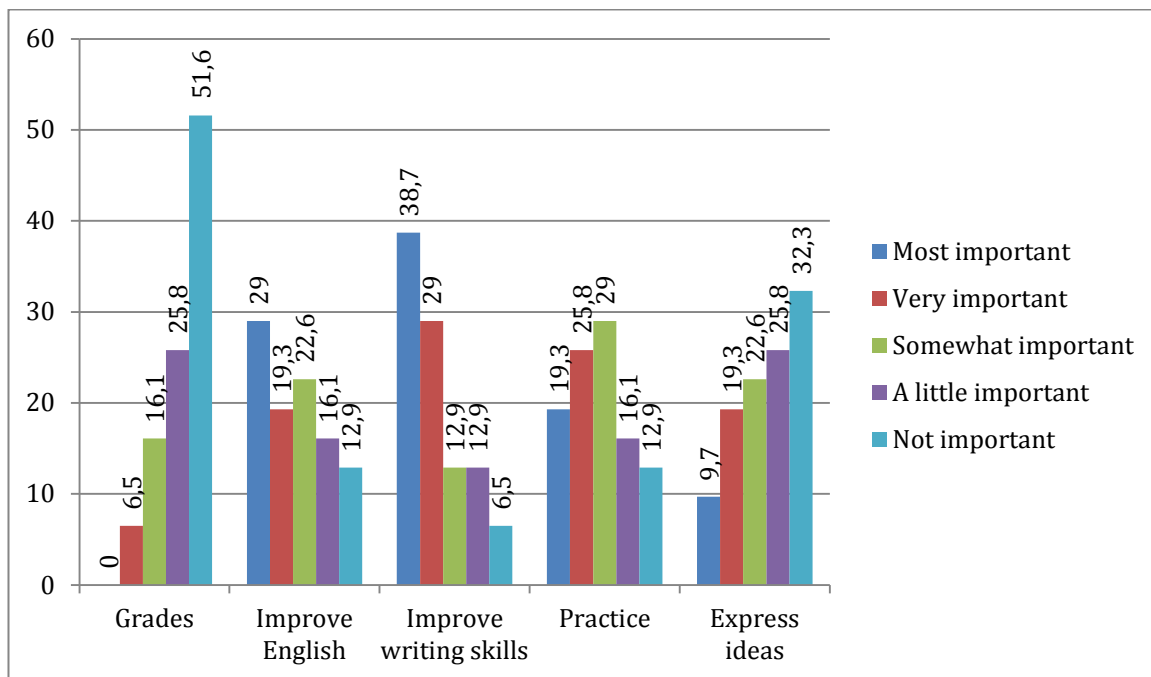
Part of the survey was devoted to know the reasons of students for writing in English. Considering most important and very important values, the highest score was given to improve writing skills in the target language (67.7%), and a 25.8% refer to it as somewhat or of a little important for the same reason. Almost half of the participants (48.3%) accounted this productive skill as a mean to improve their knowledge of English. A 45.1% responded that they write in order to practice something they have already learned. These high percentages aligned with Harmer's (2007) reasons for writing: reinforcement, and language development.

On the other hand, comparing the scores of the most important to the not important ones, a high percentage (51.6%) was given to marks as a not important reason to write. Another 32.3% of the participants considered unimportant the fact of writing to express ideas. Even though, 25.8% think that it is a little important, and 22.6% consider it somewhat important. This opposes Jalaludin (2011) when he refers to writing as a system for interpersonal communication as well as Hamed (2012) who considers this skill as key for personal and professional development.

Graph 14. The audience of students.
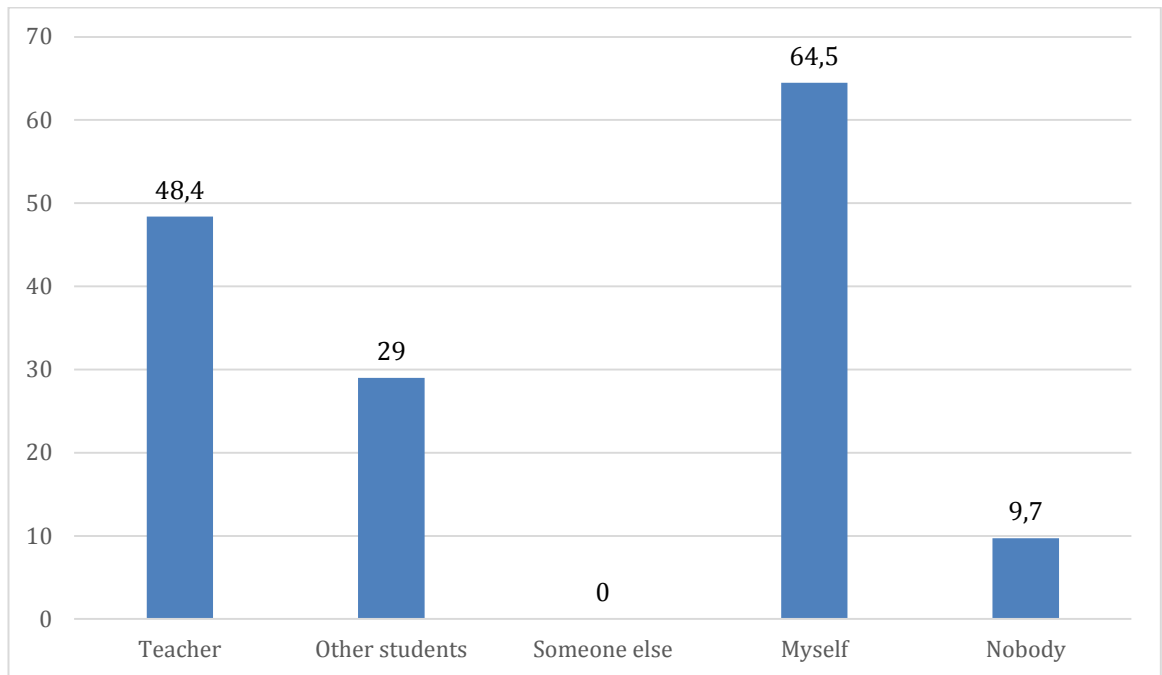
During the time of this research study, students indicated that they mainly write to themselves (64.5%). A 48.4% mentioned they write for the *teacher*. Twenty-nine percent responded that they write to *other students*. Few of them (9.7%) said they wrote to *nobody*. (See Graph 14) Nonetheless, authors like Hamed (2012), Jalaludin (2011), and Harmer (2007) emphasize the communication that involves this skill with others. Jalaludin (2011) highlights that students should have the opportunity to be exposed to different audiences and contexts so they develop the competences required in order to choose the appropriate register to address a specific audience. Thus, students are not used to write to one another, or to be exposed to an audience different from the teacher and themselves; and this might have the reason why students do not favor receiving feedback from peers.

Graph 15. Usefulness of writing to others
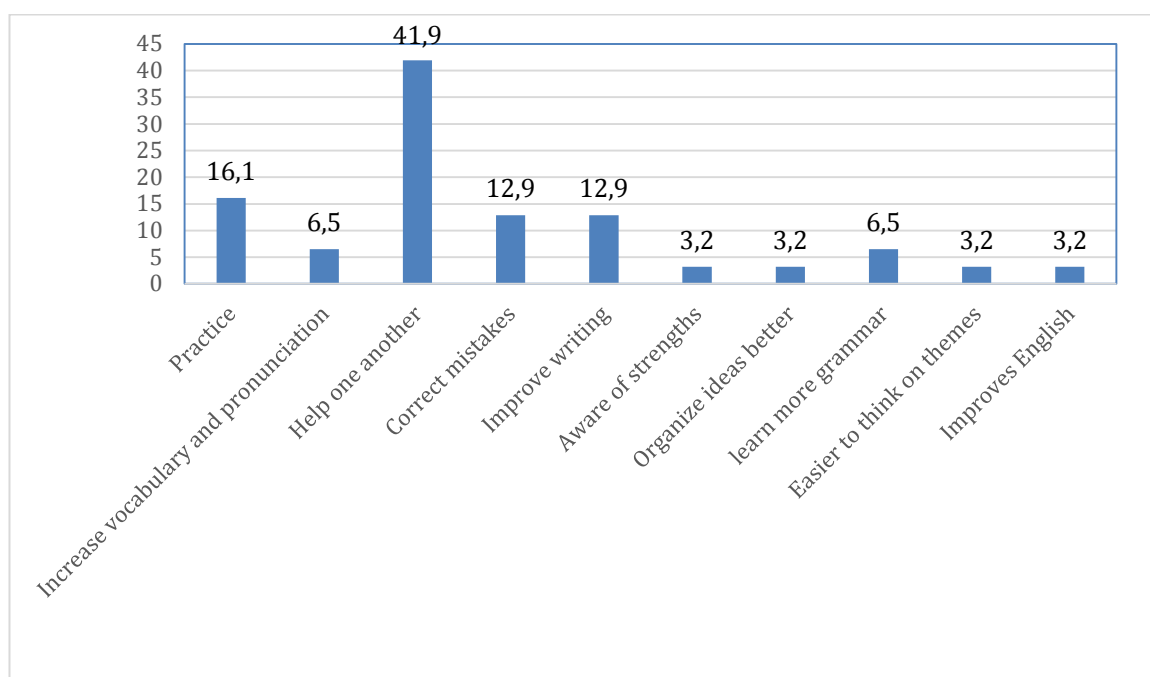
This was a close question. Students had to indicate if they thought that writing to someone else was useful and explain their reasons. Even though, they reported that they only write to the teacher and themselves; when students were asked about the usefulness of writing to others, 93.5% of the participants indicated it was useful. They provided several reasons, which were classified into the following categories that are displayed in Graph 15: practice, increase vocabulary and improve pronunciation, help one another, correct mistakes, improve writing, organize ideas better, to be aware of strengths, it is easier to think in a theme to write about, improves the level of English, and to learn more grammar. Graph 15 summarizes the results.

It is important to mention that these were comments provided by students that were sorted into these categories. All students wrote their ideas. Two participants indicated that writing to others did not improve or work well, and that they prefer writing to themselves. Even though in the question that asked who students write to, only 29% indicated that they wrote to other students, according to Graph 15, the highest score of the usefulness of writing to others was given to help one another (41.9%) followed by practice 16.1%. In this respect,

several findings reported in research studies concluded that students helping one another in terms of peer feedback had positive results in students' accuracy (Puengpipattrakul, 2013; Kitchakarn, 2013; Orsmond, Maw, Park, Gomez, and Crook, 2013).

Graph 16. Student's perceptions towards writing.
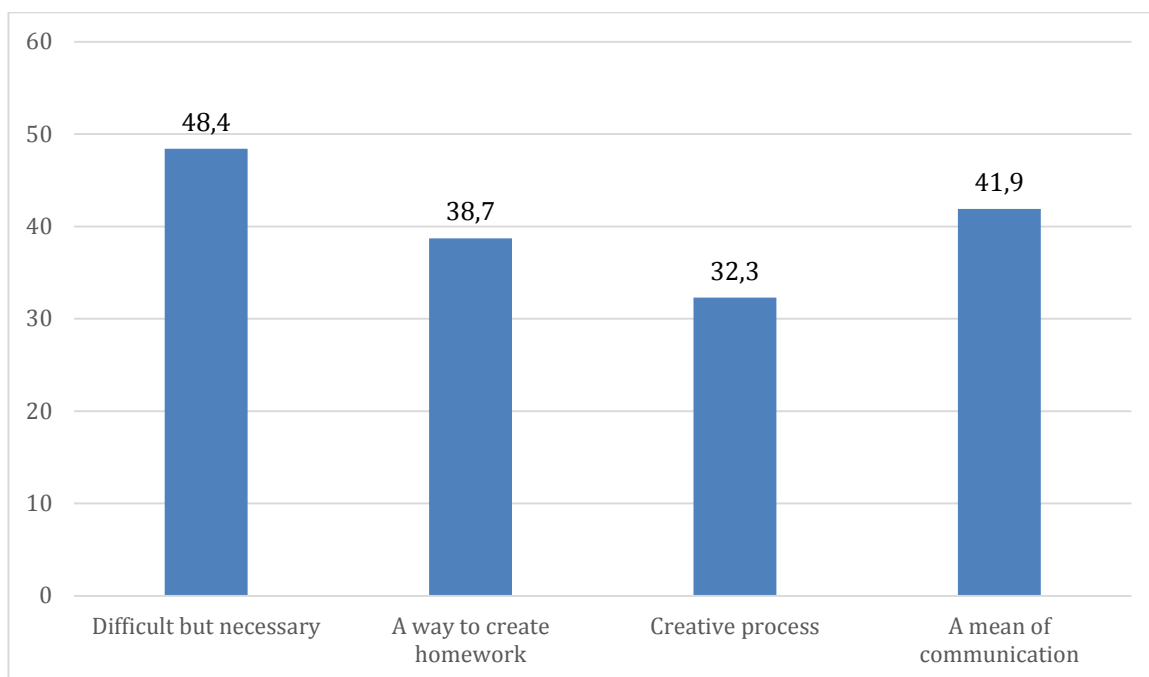
Three of the items in this question as students to consider writing as a positive skill to be acquired (difficult but necessary, a creative process, and a mean of communication), only one has a negative reason that would be "*a way to create homework*" Students also indicated their perceptions about this productive skill. Graph 16 represents the feelings of the participants. Almost half of them (48.4%) consider writing as a difficult but necessary skill. A 41.9% perceive it as a mean for communication. Several authors cited in this document share this point of view (Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2001; Jalaludin, 2011). Some other participants, 38.7% see it as a way of creating homework, and the lowest percentage (32.3%) take it as a creative process.

This reflects that students are aware of the importance of this skill for language development. That is their main objective of being in an English academy: to acquire, practice, reinforce, and consolidate their knowledge of English. As indicated in previous

results, when students were asked what they look for when they receive their compositions back, only 22.6% indicated that they look at the mark. That means very few students do their tasks because of the grade. This might imply that with the practice of writing students are acquiring the language not by consciously studying it, as Harmer (2007) claims. Their reasons for writing might well be the ones listed by Harmer: language development and reinforcement.

Graph 17. Students' experience with Google Docs and feedback.
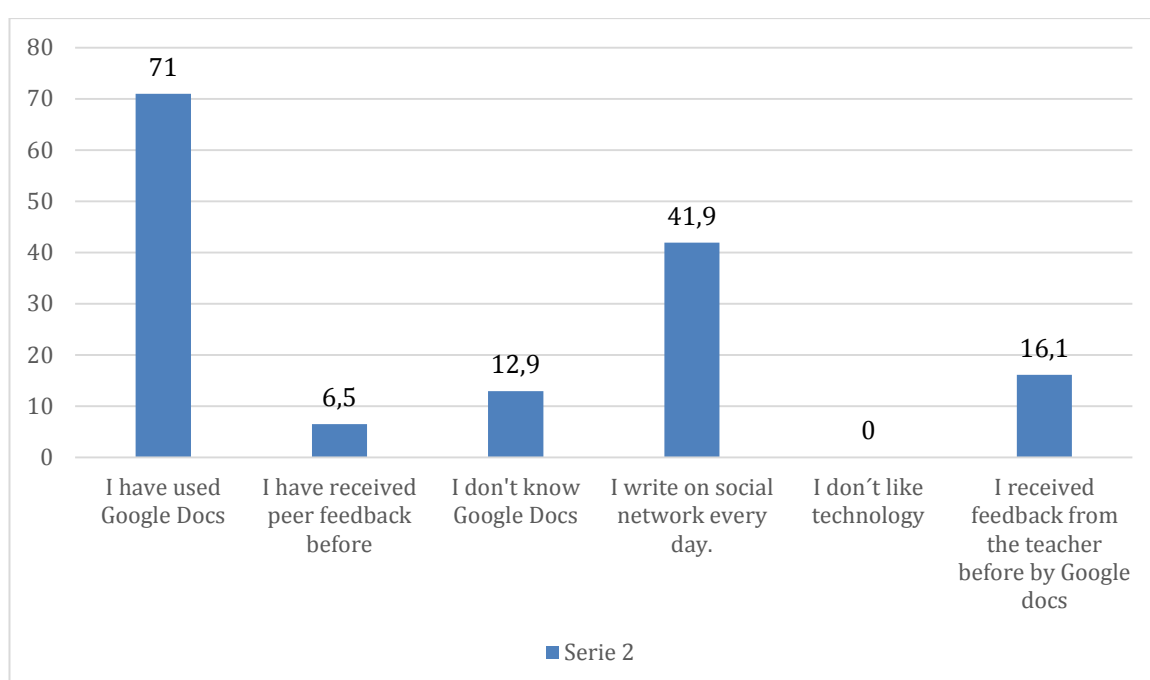
Regarding students' use of Google docs to receive or provide feedback from peers or the teacher, Graph 17 introduces students' thoughts about this section. Seventy-one percent indicated that they have used Google Docs. However, 6.5% confirmed to have received peer feedback in their writings before. Four students (12.9%) reported not knowing how Google Docs functions. Less than half of the class (41.9%) stated that they write on social network every day. All of them like technology since none checked the "*I don´t like technology*" item. 16.1% assured they had received feedback from their teachers using Google docs. A review of studies conducted by Chuenchaichon (2015) reported that 2012 was the year of the boost of research that included technology to enhance EFL. Moreover, Bagheri, Yamimi, and Behjat

(2013) assure that there is a strong impact of technology in the learning-teaching EFL process, especially in the productive skills (speaking and writing).

Graph 18. Students' final thoughts about writing
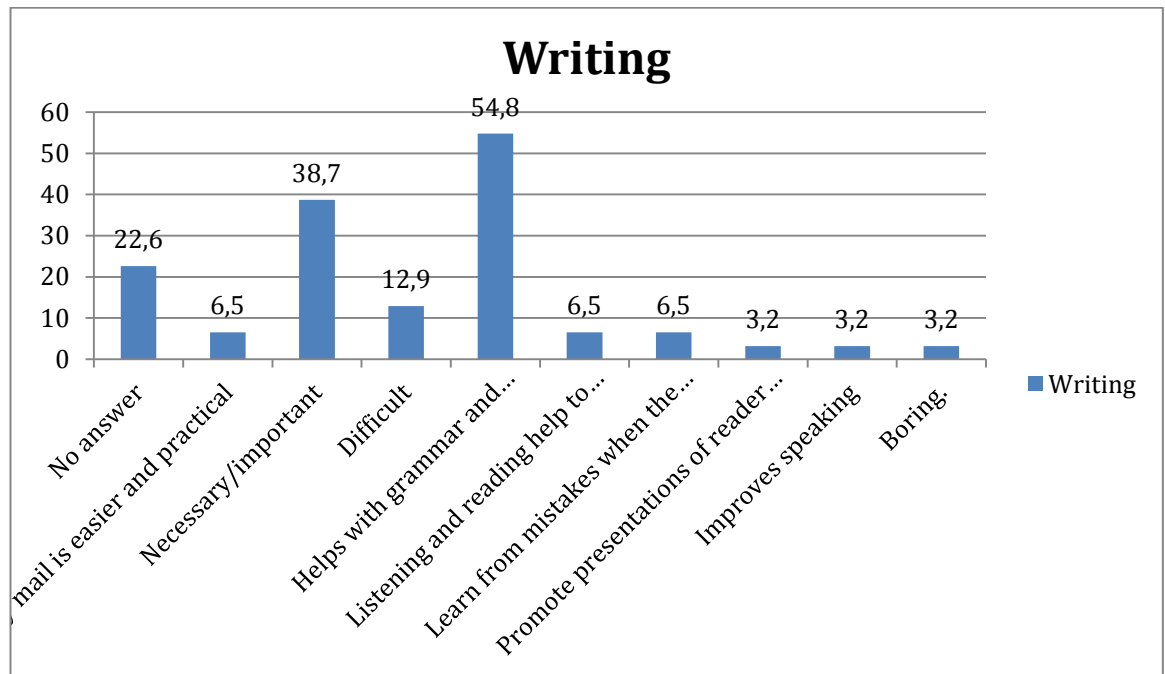
The last question was an open one. It required students to express their thoughts about writing in English. Answers provided were classified into the items listed in Graph 18. There were seven students (22.6%) that did not write anything. Half of the ones that answered (54.8%) believe that writing helps with grammar and vocabulary. 38.7% consider this skill as important and necessary, contrasted with 12.9% who think of this skill as difficult. One student from this sample considers writing as a boring skill. Another indicated that it improves speaking. Other suggested promoting presentations of the reader. Two students think that other skills like listening and reading improves their writing skills; another two share the idea of learning with the correction of the teacher. Two other students indicated that by using e-mail it would be easier and practical.

According to these results, students' focus when they write is to improve their grammar and vocabulary. They do not focus on communication. This may be a result of teachers only

grading using a criterion-based feedback which targets accuracy. That means no syntax or lexis mistakes, no spelling, or punctuation mistakes. Students are not considering the main reason of writing exposed by authors like Jalaludin (2011) and Hamed (2012) which is communication in various contexts and to different audiences. Students are just emphasizing their work in what Jalaludin (2011) considers codes and functions which include parts of speech that pupils need to domain in order to produce coherent and cohesive sentences and paragraphs.

Writing Logs

Two writing logs were considered to be studied as a pre and post innovation. They will be analyzed qualitatively since it was expected that after the innovation students wrote longer as result of students' and peers' feedback.

The topics students wrote about were internet, a person they admire, a cover letter, a review, and job application. Students were reminded to comment on classmates' compositions. Because they shared the document with the researcher, it was easy to notice that they did not participate as they were expected online.

Regarding the comments they made on their peers' documents, students agreed on the content of the writing log. On the other side, the teacher mostly focused on grammar and organization, but mainly on grammar and vocabulary. It is important to mention that students responded to the teachers' comments either by apologizing or clarifying their thoughts. Thus, they were applying the language for different functions.

On the final composition, there was more participation and feedback from students than from the teacher. They motivated or wrote positive comments to their classmates' writings. Another difference is that the structure of the writings is better in terms of longer paragraphs. As opposed to the first composition, there were paragraphs of one line, there was

only one paragraph. The study conducted by Jeong (2016) reflects some of these aspects, for

example: mutual collaboration and dynamic classroom interaction.

Pre-intervention

Post – intervention.

Comparing these two screenshots from one student, it can be seen that at the beginning the

student only wrote one paragraph, in the second there were more paragraphs and the structure

of a letter. The number of lines was also increased. In the first log, there is no interaction between the teacher and the student; different from the second where the student explains his reasons for having used a "double subject". This improvement can be shared with the results of Kitchakarn (2013) who used blogs to improve writing. Moreover, students did not only improve in the productive skill but in other important social skills like communication, creativity, critical thinking, voice, comments, and contributions.

Pre-intervention

In this screen shot, the writing was made up of only one paragraph of five lines, and two sentences. The teacher focuses the feedback on grammar by asking to complete the statement. There is no participation of other students.

Post-intervention

In these last two screenshots, the same observations can be made. The student wrote a bit longer in the last writing log. In the first composition, there was a comment from the teacher; different from the second, where besides the teacher, two classmates provided motivating comments to the student.

According to Walker (2009) feedback is a resource that might enhance students' academic performance, in this case writing. For Zhao (2010) feedback has been provided in different forms, sources, and settings. This author also highlights the importance of the content and the source. Furthermore, Bijami, Kashef, and Nejad (2013) suggest that it can promote learning either at a minimal or deep scale. Thus, students need to be scaffolded in order to provide good feedback or to be trained to give sound feedback. The low participation of students in this task might be due to their lack of confidence in this new duty. Besides Bijami, Kashef, and Nehad (2013) indicate that the task of providing feedback was only attributed to the teacher. However, recent studies have implemented peers to help one another by giving suggestions to improve their compositions with positive results.

Conclusions

The purpose of this innovation was to see the impact of Google docs in students' written compositions. To this end, two specific questions were proposed. The first question was to determine the effects of the implementation of Google docs to provide peer feedback and enhance students' written tasks; the second question was to determine if students will write longer and better compositions after using Google docs.

To answer the first questions, the interactions provided by sharing the documents in Google were considered. They indicate that very few students were willing to provide feedback to classmates' work. This might be due to lack of training on giving feedback. As Liu and Hansen (2002) remark feedback was a task for trained teachers. Thus, students need constant scaffolding to help them provide effective feedback. At the beginning, students did not provide feedback, not as it was expected. This might also be due to their low motivation of using technology. Surveys indicated that only a 6.4% of the sample favored online activities. This might also be caused because students consider writing a difficult but necessary task. Students might lack the confidence in their compositions to be able to help others. Another assumption could be lack of time. This innovation was conducted with a group of young-adults, and adult learners who attend classes twice a week. They all have other occupations, like studying at high school or university, and/or have a regular full-time work in a company.

Students were not willing to improve their tasks. They did not turn in a final product. The document remained the same. This could be a consequence of students thinking that writing is not as important as speaking. There was only a 6.4% of the sample that indicated this skill was the most important. They might not have improved their work because they did not know what to include or correct. The teacher helped with grammar and some suggestions about the organization, but maybe more ideas could be helpful too. A 51.6% of students

consider that one of their main impediment to improve their writing is the lack of ideas. Moreover, students are skipping the process. This is reflected in the answers that students provided when they were asked about the most important characteristics of writing, 48.4% said organizing was somewhat important, and another 38.7% indicated that planning was a little important. Harmer (2007) recommends the process of writing, since it is the same in real life situations. Lastly, students do not have to present a final product because it is not mandatory of the English academy. Part of the assignment is just to present their writing once not to make corrections of it if it happens to have mistakes.

One assumption of students (93.6) not favoring technology 93.6% may be that they are not accustomed to develop their assignments from the language school or of their high schools using their computer but in handwriting. Another assumption can be that this is not required by the institution. Nonetheless, 71% of students indicated that they were acquainted with Google docs. This lack of attention of the sample to technology contrasts with the study conducted by Bagheri, Yamini, and Behjat (2013) who confirmed that technology has a strong impact in teaching. This also opposes to Liu, Kalk, Kinney, and Orr (2012) when they assert that students are living in a virtual world, in front of their computers either reading or writing. These results shared the negative impact of technology in the teaching-learning process of Calvo, et. al (2016).

Important information was collected from students in terms of what they consider were the most difficult characteristics of writing, 51.6% concord on grammar and vocabulary. This was also emphasized on students' perceptions of how their writings should be assessed. They (67.7%) favored the item that teachers should correct grammar, vocabulary, and spelling/punctuation mistakes. If that percentage was added to the students that only want grammar to be corrected (25.8%), the total average will be 93.5% which corresponds to

almost the whole sample. Even in their final comments about writing in English, several students repeated the fact of the importance of grammar and vocabulary.

The second question was answered by comparing the writing logs. There was little improvement in lengths and organization of ideas. This might be caused to the lack of interests in the topics. Harmer (2007) points out that students need a reason to complete their assignments. In this language school, the only reason is to get a grade. However, students do not consider marks an important motivation to write. Harmer also suggests to consider students' ages, and interests. However, the topics are given according to the content of the main coursebook.

Jalaludding (2011) considers that when students write there are codes and functions involve. The screen shots indicate that most feedback was given on codes than on the functions of the topics or the content to communicate an idea. Students might not feel motivated to write because they mainly write to the teacher and themselves. However they consider that writing to someone else is useful to improve their writing skills, to practice, and enhance their performance in English.

Recommendations

Harmer (2007) highlights four reasons for teaching writing: reinforcement, language development, learning style, and as a skill. The main recommendations are for the language school, they should consider these findings in order to design activities to monitor and scaffold students' writings in order to enhance not only their writing but to assure the learning of the language. Furthermore, attention should be given to the process of writing. Even though, this study was conducted at an English academy, it can be a referent to include some aspects of writing in the program and help their public to enhance this skill. The design of the activities should include addressing their compositions to different audiences, contexts, and settings to make it more authentic. Most students think that writing to someone else will improve their English, their writing skills, and help them to practice the language. Attention should also be given to assessment considering that 77.4% of this sample indicated that written as well as oral activities should be included in the assessment plan. Even though, they also reported not to pay attention to marks.

Authorities should also take advantage that 80.6% of this sample is interested in writing activities and other 29% feel enthusiastic towards this skill. The academic department could ask students for feedback and develop the topics/themes according to students' preferences and recommendations, in order to increase their interest and enthusiasm.

Actions should also be taken on ideas. Students reported as their first impediment to write is the lack of ideas, 51.6% of the sample ticked this item. Thus, at least the brainstorming phase of the writing process should be conducted in class with the teacher to scaffold this step until students convert it into a habit and they can do it by themselves. Another idea could be to monitor the brainstorming step in class. Students can work in pairs or groups and the teacher can write the ideas on the board. This is also reinforced when 51.6% of students from this population indicated that they would improve their feelings towards

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writing if they received help from the teacher in planning and organization of their ideas previous and after they turn in their first draft.

Jalaluddin (2011) highlights that writing includes various styles of language. Maybe students need training on those different styles. Students might not be acquainted with the outline, and formats to be applied according to what is required. Currently, students are just sent the assignment. There are no specific instructions, or samples of excellent compositions according to the format. Feedback is not provided in class after the compositions are turned in.

It is important to indicate that Google docs are a useful tool to know students reasoning after their compositions. This was seen in students' explanations on their choices to both students and teacher. Teachers will have a better idea of what made students' choose certain words, topics, or ideas. They can also use this information to provide personalized feedback according to students' needs and mistakes. Peers will benefit from their own and others' comments.

Even though, this sample did not favor technology in the teaching-learning process, results indicated that with a little practice important feedback can be given through this tool among peers and to teachers. Some comments of the students were explanation of students' choices. Information, that without the help of this technology, might have never been found out by the teacher; and students would not have provided otherwise.

In order to motivate students to write, the topics should be adaptable to students' ages and interests. This sample was mainly made up of adolescents, young adults, and adults. The topic they wrote more was about their opinion about internet. Thus, they might be acquainted with the other topics or the topics may not be of their interest. That is why they were not motivated to comment on others, write longer, or redo their logs.

Another recommendation can be the implementation of this study with students from a big city like Guayaquil or Quito and compare/contrast the results with those here in terms of their negativeness /positiveness on using technology to enhance learning English in the big cities and confirm the lack of interest in computers or online activities shared among students and teachers.

It would be important to continue with this innovation to see effects in a long-term and confirm or contrast results of studies conducted in other countries that ratify the usefulness of peer feedback in student' improvement and acquisition of the language.

Class observations should be conducted, especially to note how teachers plan, address, and assess writing classes. It seems they are focusing on accuracy, and that might explain the reason of students favoring grammar in classes, as correction, assessment, proper feedback, and as a way to measure their improvement in the language. This was shown in the results of the surveys.

Lastly, being that writing can be challenging for teachers, it would be interesting to find out their perceptions towards this skill. It is important to understand how teachers feel about this skill in order to develop training sessions and help them to transfer that knowledge to students.

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Annex 1: Consent form for Adults

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
Masters in Pedagogy of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Study Title: IMPLEMENTING GOOGLE DOCS TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND ENHANCE STUDENTS' WRITTEN TASKS

Principal Investigator: Lic. María Verónica Espinoza Vera
      Address: COPEI Manta, Calle 16 Avenida Flavio Reyes - Esquina
      Telf: 098-455-0490.
      E-mail: mvespinoza2011@gmail.com

_____

Objectives
    3.1. **General objective:** To implement Google docs to provide teacher and peer feedback and thus enhance students' written tasks.

    3.2.Specific objective:
To determine the effects of the implementation of Google docs to provide peer feedback and enhance students' written tasks
To determine if Students will write longer and better compositions after using Google docs.

Procedures
- In case students are not acquainted with this digital resource, a mini-workshop will be planned to introduce Google docs. If this is possible, it can be done in class. If not, a projection will be shared with students out of class.
- Students will be asked to share their compositions/journals with the teacher and two other classmates. For each journal, students will have to pick different classmates. This will ensure that everyone provides/receives feedback.
- The teacher will develop a checklist that will be completed by students at the end of each feedback.
- A total of six journals will be considered in this study for analysis. Each will be developed every two weeks. They will be analyzed in terms of length, as evidence of the writing process, and as evidence of feedback given by peers as well as the teacher.
- A survey to measure students' motivation with this innovation will be applied at the beginning and at the end. This survey has been adapted from the one developed by Elliot in his study Motivating students to write.
- Everyone involved in this research study will provide their authorization to be part of the study.

Risks
There are no risks for students, you will not lose points for not doing this extra assignment.

Benefits
You are expected to have extra practice on writing and receive feedback from teacher and partners.

Compensation & Costs

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

There will be no cost to you if you participate in this study.

Confidentiality

Sharing of data with other researchers will only be done in such a manner that you will not be identified. Your name, address, contact information and other direct personal identifiers will not be mentioned in any such publication or dissemination of the research data and/or results by the researcher.

I understand that the researcher may want to use my information for illustrative reasons in presentations of this work for scientific or educational purposes. I give my permission to do so provided that my name and face will not appear.

_____YES   _____NO

Rights

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop your participation at any point. Refusal to participate or withdrawal of your consent or discontinued participation in the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits or rights to which you might otherwise be entitled. The Principal Investigator may at her discretion remove you from the study for any of a number of reasons. In such an event, you will not suffer any penalty or loss of benefits or rights which you might otherwise be entitled.

Voluntary Consent

By signing below, you agree that the above information has been explained to you and all your current questions have been answered. You are encouraged ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of the study and in the future. By signing this form, you agree to participate in this research study.

_____

PRINT PARTICIPANT'S NAME

_____   _____

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE   DATE

I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above individual and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of participation in the study. Any questions the individual has about this study have been answered and any future questions will be answered as they arise.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT   DATE

****

Adapted from Carnegie Mellon University (2015).

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
Masters in Pedagogy of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Study Title: IMPLEMENTING GOOGLE DOCS TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND ENHANCE STUDENTS' WRITTEN TASKS

Principal Investigator: Lic. María Verónica Espinoza Vera
>   Address: COPEI Manta, Calle 16 Avenida Flavio Reyes - Esquina
>   Telf: 098-455-0490.
>   E-mail: mvespinoza2011@gmail.com
_____

Objectives
>   3.1.**General objective:** To implement Google docs to provide teacher and peer feedback and thus enhance students' written tasks.

>   **3.2.Specific objective:**

To determine the effects of the implementation of Google docs to provide peer feedback and enhance students' written tasks
To determine if Students will write longer and better compositions after using Google docs.

Procedures
- In case students are not acquainted with this digital resource, a mini-workshop will be planned to introduce Google docs. If this is possible, it can be done in class. If not, a projection will be shared with students out of class.
- Students will be asked to share their compositions/journals with the teacher and two other classmates. For each journal, students will have to pick different classmates. This will ensure that everyone provides/receives feedback.
- The teacher will develop a checklist that will be completed by students at the end of each feedback.
- A total of six journals will be considered in this study for analysis. Each will be developed every two weeks. They will be analyzed in terms of length, as evidence of the writing process, and as evidence of feedback given by peers as well as the teacher.
- A survey to measure students' motivation with this innovation will be applied at the beginning and at the end. This survey has been adapted from the one developed by Elliot in his study Motivating students to write.
- Everyone involved in this research study will provide their authorization to be part of the study.

Risks
There are no risks for students, you will not lose points for not doing this extra assignment.

Benefits
You are expected to have extra practice on writing and receive feedback from teacher and partners.

Compensation & Costs
There is no compensation for participation in this study.
There will be no cost to you if you participate in this study.

Confidentiality

Sharing of data with other researchers will only be done in such a manner that you will not be identified. Your name, address, contact information and other direct personal identifiers will not be mentioned in any such publication or dissemination of the research data and/or results by the researcher.

I understand that the researcher may want to use my information for illustrative reasons in presentations of this work for scientific or educational purposes. I give my permission to do so provided that my name and face will not appear.

_____YES   _____NO

Rights

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to stop your participation at any point. Refusal to participate or withdrawal of your consent or discontinued participation in the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits or rights to which you might otherwise be entitled. The Principal Investigator may at her discretion remove you from the study for any of a number of reasons. In such an event, you will not suffer any penalty or loss of benefits or rights which you might otherwise be entitled.

Voluntary Consent

By signing below, you agree that the above information has been explained to you and all your current questions have been answered. You understand that you may ask questions about any aspect of this research study during the course of the study and in the future. By signing this form, you agree that your child may participate in this research study.

_____
PRINT PARENT'S NAME

_____   _____
PARENT SIGNATURE   DATE

_____
PRINT CHILD'S NAME

Minor's Assent. This research has been explained to me and I agree to participate.

_____   _____
MINOR'S SIGNATURE   DATE

I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above individual and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of participation in the study. Any questions the individual has about this study have been answered and any future questions will be answered as they arise.

_____   _____
SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT   DATE

****

Adapted from Carnegie Mellon University (2015).

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
LEVEL:	

Dear students,
In order to conduct an innovation to improve writing tasks and to know your motivations to write, please collaborate with your opinion on the following survey.

S U R V E Y

1. **Number** the following skills according to their importance: (1 = most important, 2 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = least important).

    _____ Speaking   _____ Listening

    _____ Reading   _____ Writing

2. Check only **one** answer. You consider writing:

    _____ a. A very important skill.

    _____ b. As important as all the others.

    _____ c. Not so important as speaking.

    _____ d. Not important at all.

    _____ e. Other (please specify) _____

3. Check only **one** answer. Student assessment should be based on:

    _____ a Written tests.

    _____ b. Equal importance should be given to written and oral work.

    _____ c. Progress in written work over the course using technology.

    _____ d. Other (please specify). _____

4. Choose **as many as** applicable. How do you usually feel when you have to do your writing tasks?

    _____ a Interested   _____ b. Enthusiastic

_____ c. Incapable   _____ d. Bored

_____ e. Motivated if technology was applied.

_____ f. Other (please specify)_____

5. Choose **one** answer. Written homework is:

_____ a. An important part of a student's assessment.

_____ b. Frequently done in collusion with someone else.

_____ c. A useful way of practicing English.

_____ d. A burden.

_____ e. Easy if technology was implemented.

_____ f. Other (please specify). _____

6. Choose **as many as**applicable. What is the most frequent impediment to start your writing tasks?

_____ a. The topic.   _____ b. Lack of ideas.

_____ c. Time.   _____ d. Fear of making mistakes.

_____ e. Not knowing how to begin (lack of plan)

_____ f. Lack of technology.

_____ g. Other (please specify) _____

7. **List** in order of importance. (1 = most important, 2 = very important, 3 =somewhat important, 4= a little important, 5 =not important) What are the most difficult characteristics of writing?

_____ a. Remembering grammar and vocabulary.

_____ b. Organizing.

_____ c. Thinking of arguments and points.

_____ d. Planning.

_____ e. Spelling.

_____ f. Other (please specify). _____

8. List in order of importance (1 = most important, 2 = very important, 3 =somewhat important, 4= a little important, 5 =not important) What would improve your feelings towards writing?

_____ a. If the teacher gave more help with organization and planning.

_____ b. If the teacher gave more help with vocabulary and grammar.

_____ c. If there were more interesting topics.

_____ d. If technology was implemented.

_____ e. If you receive feedback from classmates.

_____ f. Other (please specify). _____

9. Choose **as many as** applicable. When I write my composition, _____.

_____ a. I always write a clear plan first.

_____ b. I begin immediately – the plan is in my head.

_____ c. The plan appears after I have started.

_____ d. A plan is not necessary.

_____ e. I don't have time to make a plan.

_____ f. I always use my computer to write my homework.

_____ g. Other (please specify). _____

10. Choose **as many as** applicable. How should teachers correct students' writing?

_____ a. Just correct the grammar mistakes.

_____ b. Correct all grammar, vocabulary and spelling/punctuation mistakes.

_____ c. Just correct the organizational mistakes.

_____ d. The teacher should try to write a "good" version of what the student was trying to say.

_____ e. Teachers should use technology and send documents via internet.

_____ f. Teachers should include peer collaboration before grading.

_____ g. Other (please specify). _____

11. Choose **as many as** applicable. What is the first thing you do when you receive your work from the teacher?

_____ a. Look at the mark.

_____ b. Feel demoralized by the amount of corrections.

_____ c. Read the teacher's comments.

_____ d. Analyze your mistakes.

_____ e. I don't know I haven't received corrections.

_____ f. Other (please specify). _____

12. Choose **as many as** applicable. Are the teacher's corrections…

_____ a. Useful.   _____ b. Insufficient.

_____ c. Unimportant.   _____ d. Excessive.

_____ e. Clear.   _____ f. Unclear.

_____ g. I don't know. I haven't received corrections.

_____ h. Other (please specify) _____

13. List in order of importance your reasons for writing in English (1 = most important, 2 = very important, 3 =somewhat important, 4 = a little important, 5 =not important)

_____ a. To provide marks for the teacher.

_____ b. To improve my knowledge of English.

_____ c. To improve my writing skills in English.

_____ d. To practice something I have already learned.

_____ e. To express ideas.

_____ f. Other (please specify) _____

14. Check **as many as** applicable. During this level, who do you write to?

_____ a. Teacher.   _____ b. Other students.

_____ c. Someone else (please specify).   _____ d. Myself.

_____ e. Nobody.

15. Do you think it is useful to write to somebody else, for example: in pairs or small groups?

_____ Yes. Why? _____

_____ No. Why? _____

16. Check **as many as** applicable. How do you see writing?

_____ a. As a difficult but necessary task.

_____ b. As a way of creating homework.

_____ c. As a creative process.

_____ d. As a means of communication.

_____ e. Other (please specify)_____

17. Check **as many as** applicable. About your knowledge of technology:

_____ a. I have used Google docs.

_____ b. I have received peer feedback in my writings before.

_____ c. I don't know how Google docs functions.

_____ d. I write on social network every day.

_____ e. I don't like technology.

_____ f. The teacher has given feedback in my writings using Google docs.

_____ g. Other (please specify)_____

18. Do you have any **comments** you would like to make about writing in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Adapted from Elliot (w/d). Motivating students to write.
Thanks for your time and consideration.

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
La Universidad Católica de Loja
MODALIDA ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA
MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

STUDENT'S CHECKLIST

o   Did I read my classmates questions?

_____

o   Did I write positive comments?

_____

o   Did I suggest ideas regarding content, and/or mechanics (grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, or word order)?

_____

o   Did I make follow-up questions to make compositions longer?

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