

Enhancing Academic Paragraph Writing: The Role of Formative Peer Feedback Through Asynchronous Forums

Jessica Alejandra Jara Espinoza
Universidad Santo Tomas, Chile

Abstract

This action research was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication in a Chilean higher education institution. The general objective is to explore the contribution of formative peer feedback via Moodle asynchronous forums on the academic writing skills of a group of second-year undergraduate students. The results of a pre and a post-intervention test analyzed with descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), the use of peer feedback checklists under a combined quantitative and qualitative analysis and the focus group to gather students' perceptions discussed through a thematic analysis, revealed a noticeable improvement in students' use of cohesive devices, better paragraph organization, the development of participants' critical thinking skills, self-learning, and metacognition, along with a more positive attitude towards writing. Furthermore, the study identified Moodle's asynchronous forums as a valuable tool that facilitates peer feedback and promotes collaborative work. Therefore, these findings are considered vital as they not only validated the effective role of peer feedback in academic writing pedagogy but also highlighted its potential in developing a collaborative and reflective learning environment. Finally, this research contributes to the EFL field by offering insights into innovative pedagogical strategies that can be integrated into the academic writing curricula, emphasizing the significance of peer interaction and digital platforms in enhancing student writing outcomes.

keywords: academic writing, asynchronous forums, cohesive devices, formative peer feedback, higher education, paragraph organization.