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Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

Teacher mini conferences in class: An alternative to provide feedback in written tasks

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Magíster en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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Resumen:

Hattie y Timperley (2007) definen la retroalimentación como el resultado en el que un agente, como un maestro, proporciona información sobre los aspectos de la comprensión de la persona. Este estudio implementó la estrategia de retroalimentación mini conferencias de docente en clase. Esta estrategia consiste en actividades previas a la escritura y a la generación de ideas donde el maestro discute con toda la clase e ilustra qué habilidad deben usar los estudiantes (Grabe y Kaplan, 1996). El estudio se realizó en una escuela pública en la ciudad de Cuenca, Ecuador, con estudiantes que aprendían inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). Consistió en un grupo de intervención (n = 36) y un grupo de control (n = 31). Se llevó a cabo durante la primera unidad didáctica (seis semanas) del año escolar 2019-2020 donde los estudiantes produjeron un total de cinco párrafos. El primero cumplió el propósito de pretest, y el último fue el post test. La prueba de signos de Wilcox se utilizó para la comparación entre muestras relacionadas (Pre - post) y la prueba de U-Mann Whitney para muestras independientes. Los datos se procesaron a través de SPSS 25. El estudio determinó que la retroalimentación de los maestros tiene un impacto mayor considerando el desempeño de acuerdo con Yang, Badger y Yu, (2006), Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena y Struyven (2010), Zacharias (2007) y Van den Bergh, Ros y Beijaard (2014). Además, las mini conferencias de docente en clase revelaron un impacto positivo en el desarrollo de ideas de apoyo, organización y transiciones, mecánica y el desarrollo del estilo.

Palabras claves: Mini conferencias de docente en clase. EFL. Retroalimentación. Escritura. Párrafos.

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Abstract:

Hattie and Timperley (2007) define feedback as the result where an agent, such as a teacher, provides information on the aspects of the person' s understanding. The feedback strategy which was implemented in this study was teacher mini conferences in class. This strategy consists of pre-writing and idea generating activities where the teacher discusses with the whole class and illustrates what skill the students should use (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). The study was carried out in a public school in the city of Cuenca, Ecuador with students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). It consisted of a target (n=36) and control group (n=31). The study was conducted during the first didactic unit (six weeks) of the scholar year 2019-2020 where the students produced a total of five paragraphs. The first paragraph served the purpose of the pre-test, while the last paragraph was the post-test. The Wilcox sign test was used for comparison between related samples (Pre - post) and the U-Mann Whitney test for independent samples. The data was processed through SPSS 25. The study concluded that teacher feedback has a larger impact considering performance in agreement with Yang, Badger, and Yu, (2006), Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena, and Struyven (2010), Zacharias (2007) y Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard (2014). Further, teacher mini conferences in class revealed a positive impact on the development of supporting details, organization and transitions, mechanics, and the development of style.

Keywords: Teacher mini conferences in class. EFL. Feedback. Writing. Paragraphs.

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1. Introduction

In all academic environments, there are key aspects that help learning throughout the teaching process. In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, educators find several elements that either promote learning or others that obstruct it. As Hyland and Hyland (2006) stated, feedback has long been regarded as essential for the development of second language (L2) writing skills, both for its potential for learning and for student motivation.

As Ion, Barrera-Corominas, and Tomàs-Folch (2016) established, feedback has a clear purpose which is to develop autonomous learners that can think reflectively and adopt self-directed attitudes regarding their lifelong learning. These authors concluded that in an EFL learning context, several teachers have a specific and stablished method to give feedback and do not look for alternatives that could possibly help students, acknowledging the diversity of their learning process in their classrooms.

However, Paulus (1999) determined that revision does not always mean improving the quality of a written task. This could be caused due to the lack of clearness, purpose, meaning, and compatibility that teachers´ feedback has with students´ prior knowledge resulting in deficiency in logical connections (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Further, in the words of Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), there is not a clear agreement on defining quality feedback in active learning. Consequently, this study aimed to analyze the effects of teacher mini-class conferences after students produce written assignments as a mean of providing feedback.

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2. Problem statement

Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard (2014) claimed that most of the research done on feedback has been examined in traditional learning contexts where the priority is to change or confirm students´ knowledge. Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) claim that there is not a clear agreement on defining quality feedback in active learning. On the other hand, Zacharias (2007) established that a variety of attempts have been performed to help students improve their writing quality through feedback. In this manner, several concerns arise. As Hyland and Hyland (2006) stated, an issue that is permanently presented in feedback is its degree of quality. Therefore, Gamlem and Smith (2013) suggested that feedback processes need to be modified to help students improve in future tasks.

Although many researchers such as Yang, Badger, and Yu (2006); Gielen, Tops, Dochy, Onghena, and Smeets, (2010); and Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena, and Struyven (2010) have conducted studies on feedback, the main focus has been allocated to peer-feedback, very little has been researched on mini-class conferences in class to provide feedback in writing assignments.

From the researcher´s teaching experience and in agreement with Zacharias (2007), the students keep making the same errors and mistakes in their tasks after the feedback is conducted. As a result, this study emerged as an alternative to define the quality of teacher mini class conferences as a specific feedback method by analyzing the effects that it has on tenth graders on their written tasks.

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3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

3.1 Theoretical Framework

3.1.1 Feedback concept

Hattie and Timperley (2007) established that feedback is the consequence of performance where an agent, such as a teacher, book, experience, among others, gives information on the aspects of the person´s understanding. Voerman, Meijer, Korthagen, and Simons (2012) concluded that feedback can be interpreted as the previous level of performance of a student, an outside intervention with a desired objective or goal, and the new current level of performance of the same student.

3.1.2 Purpose of feedback

Feedback helps students maximize their potential in different stages of their training and learning process by identifying strengths and areas of improvement. This aspect allows the development of new action plans to improve skills (Alirio & Zambrano, 2011). Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard (2014) determined that feedback must be centered on developing metacognition in students, as well as knowledge of their socio-cultural skills as the teacher coaches them throughout the teaching-learning process

3.1.3 The importance of teacher feedback

Teachers´ feedback is still considered the most effective method. This perspective does not only come from students´ statements, but also from the teachers. Even when students are asked to provide feedback, most of the time,

they will go to the teachers and ask if the comments they are making to their classmates are accurate (Zacharias, 2007).

Teachers and students find frustration regarding the feedback process and may find it even disappointing. Therefore, providing timely feedback has become crucial to develop competencies and constantly motivate the students (Mahsood, Jamil, Mehboob, Kibria, & Khalil, 2018). According to the previously mentioned authors, it is necessary to administer formative feedback to positively impact the students´ learning; stating that the quality of information provided by the teacher will influence on students´ performance.

3.1.4 Teacher mini conferences in class

This technique is part of the teacher-students' responses. It involves several ways that this technique can be applied. For instance, talking about pre-writing and idea generating activities where the teacher discusses with the whole class and illustrates what skill the students should use. Also, teachers should have students write evaluations of their written drafts and discuss those evaluations. Further, the teacher can use a specific writing or writings from the students to lead to discussions of problems that students share. Moreover, a teacher can work with a volunteer to analyze the writing and receive feedback from the entire class. Finally, the teacher can apply language learning activities such as scrambling sentences, highlight opinions and arguments and discuss their effectiveness (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

3.2 Literature Review

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3.2.1 Studies on the importance of teacher feedback

Zacharias (2007) concluded in his study on teacher and students' attitudes towards teacher feedback that teacher feedback is an important tool to improve students´ writing. Through questionnaires conducted to 20 teachers, the study found that 95% of teachers believe feedback is important, with 55% stating that is very important. In the same manner, 93% of students thought teacher feedback is important, with 44% believing it is very important. By analyzing interviews, Zacharias (2007) found some of the reasons mentioned in favor of teacher feedback: teachers have higher linguistic competence in English, teacher feedback provides security for the students, cultural belief that teachers are the source of knowledge, and teachers control grades. The author stated that this belief makes teacher feedback more qualified, experienced, accurate, valid, reliable and trustworthy. However, the study claimed that not all students agreed, especially the ones who had received inappropriate teacher's feedback such as too much feedback or the use of unknown terms.

Voerman, Meijer, Korthagen, and Simons (2012) conducted a study on the types and frequencies of feedback in classrooms of 78 Dutch secondary-school teachers. What they found was that the number of teachers´ interventions, from a ten-minute fragment, were forty in total.   From those forty interventions, only seven were labeled as feedback interventions. The authors also found that 85.9% of the teachers studied provided non-specific positive feedback to students, 48.7% non-specific negative feedback, 35.9% specific positive feedback, and 60% specific negative feedback. The methodology applied in this study was videotaping the

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teachers and using an observation instrument developed in the pilot study to score 78 fragments of 10 minutes. In these fragments, interactions occurred between the teacher and the students, either as a group or individually. For the analysis, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to test for the existence of a relationship between variables and the feedback categories. Also, an Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for the existence of relationships between age and experience on the part of the teachers on the one hand and the feedback categories on the other. Finally, a Chi-Square test was applied to examine the relationship between the different feedback interventions that the teachers used. The research demonstrated that feedback interactions are low, and most are non-specific. However, specific feedback is among the most relevant tools to influence students´ learning (Hattie, 1999).

Moreover, Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard (2014) conducted a study in Netherlands where 47 primary schools were considered. The methodology applied consisted of weekly activities for four months that included four video interaction meetings, with videotaping in the teachers´ classrooms and selecting specific fragments. A beliefs instrument was used in which teachers identified concepts that they regarded as important for giving feedback during active learning. The research showed that around 50% of teacher-student interactions are regarded to feedback, precisely on assignments that students are working or on process. The authors affirmed that very few of these interactions have non-specific feedback or feedback focused on personalities. The authors stated that about 8% of the interactions are on student behavior, 20% are focused on gathering diagnostic

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information for the teacher, 5% have the aim of enabling the teacher to keep an overview of what the students are doing, 15% were related to motivating their students.

3.2.2 Studies on negative and positive feedback in L2 learners

Baker and Hansen Bricker (2010) conducted a research on native English and ESL speakers´ perception on writing feedback. Seventy-six higher education students were selected, 17 Romans, 13 Asians, 8 Easter Europeans, 3 other regions, and 30 native English speakers from the United States, that were used as the comparison group. The methodology used was two sample essays. The teachers' feedback consisted on comments that were indexed in the text and appeared after each section of the essay. Each essay version contained a set of six comments that were direct, indirect, or hedged. ANOVA was performed on the averaged response times for each comment type. The study found that both speakers were able to quickly identify positive and negative comments when they were direct. However, both speakers were slow to identify positive and negative comments when they were indirect. According to Baker and Hansen Bricker (2010), ESL speakers were   slower to respond to positive comments, but both speakers were slow at responding negative comments. The authors suggested that students easily understand feedback when they are praised, but when comments are negative, students take longer to understand them. This aspect results in a misunderstanding that negative comments are praise. It helps explain why some students do not make changes in their works after the teacher has illustrated some errors.

In addition, Burnett (2002) conducted a study in New South Wales, with students in years 3 to 6. A total of 396 boys and 351 girls from non-European background were considered. The first instrument applied was a Teacher Feedback Scale (TFS). The students were asked to determine their responses to the frequency of certain types of school work-related feedback and praise used by their teacher. Also, My Classroom Scale (MCS) was used to measure satisfaction with the classroom environment and students' relationships with their teachers. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the relationships between the variables. The data were analyzed using LISREL 7.0 within SPSS. The study found that negative feedback influenced students´ relationships with their teachers. The author concludes that students who perceived that the teacher was constantly giving him, or her negative feedback reported a negative relationship with the teacher while impacting on the classroom environment in a negative way. Thus, the study suggested that students' satisfaction is determined by the positive feedback that the teacher provides.

Kazemi, Abadikhah, Dehqan (2018) conducted a study to compare teacher-written feedback with joint feedback of student reviewers after intra-feedback session. A group of twenty-one university students and an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher participated in the study. From the results, it was found that both teacher and students were concerned with surface-level errors during peer feedback and indicated less engagement with other aspects of the composition such as content and organization.

3.2.3 Studies on feedback in EFL writing classrooms

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One of the most relevant studies on teacher feedback in an EFL writing class was carried out in China by Yang et al. (2006). This research consisted on comparing peer and teacher feedback by means of analyzing students' written drafts. The results demonstrated that students received 65.6% more feedback per word from their teacher compared to their peers´ feedback. Also, students incorporated 90% of the feedback when it was provided by the teacher against 67% from their peers. Finally, interviews were applied to the students where they stated that teachers´ feedback was more professional, experienced, and trustworthy than their peers'. These authors stated that teacher feedback leads to greater improvement.

Further, a similar study on teacher and peer feedback in writing was performed in a secondary school by Gielen, et al., (2010). Similar results to Yang et al. (2006) were recorded. Based on students´ perceptions, 56% of students did not consider peer feedback to be useful, and 63% of the students did not wish to continue using peer feedback.   Both studies by Gielen et al. (2010) and Yang et al. (2006), agreed that teacher feedback has a larger impact considering performance.

A case study conducted by Rajab, Khan and Elyas (2016) that aimed to identify English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions (n =184) and practices in Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) in the Saudi context found "time" as the main factor in following a particular strategy for written corrective feedback (93%).The study analyzed quantitative data gathered from an anonymous custom designed 15-question online survey and qualitative data from an open-ended question (at the end of the online survey) and semi-structured interviews.

4. Methodology

This study was a quantitative research design. The study was framed under this approach to analyze the effects of teacher mini class conferences on writing paragraphs, from a statistical view and from students´ perceptions. Thus, it was developed by integrating numerical results and students' points of views of this type of feedback. In agreement with Millsap and Maydeu-Olivares (2009) this study was quasi-experimental because it tested the effects of a particular type of teacher feedback in a unit (classroom) and did not focus on applying different treatments (feedback methods) to individuals. The study had an independent variable: teacher mini conferences in class and the dependent variable: paragraph structuring.

This research was done similarly to Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002) with a pre-test (appendix 1), treatment (appendix 2,3, and 4), post-test (appendix 5), quasi-experimental design in which the collected data was analyzed quantitatively. For the perception analysis, a survey (appendix 6) was conducted.

The study was conducted with 67 students made up of groups; the first, the "target group" with 36 participants: 30 men and 6 women between 14 and 16 years old. The other, the "control group" with 31 students: 28 men and 3 women between 14 and 16 years who regularly attended the English class during the period September - October 2019 at a public school in the city of Cuenca.

The application of the teacher mini-class conferences was conducted during the first didactic unit (six weeks) of the scholar year 2019-2020. During this time, the students produced a total of five paragraphs. The first paragraph served the

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purpose of the pre-test, while the last paragraph was the post-test. In the target group, after the students had finished writing their task, the teacher provided feedback through mini-class conferences. Meanwhile, in the control group, the teacher was free to provide feedback as she wished. After the feedback was given, the students were asked to write the next paragraph.

4.1 Data collection and analysis

The instruments that were used in this study for the analysis were: the five written assignments, in order to collect the data; and the survey to analyze the student´s perceptions. To grade the students´ paragraphs, Brown´s basic paragraph rubric used at Mesa Community College (Appendix 7) on a scale from zero to two for each criterion was employed.

The analysis is presented using measures of central tendency and dispersion, the behavior of the data was not normal according to the Kolmogorov Smirnov test (p <0.05). Consequently, non-parametric tests were used; the Wilcox sign test for comparison between related samples (Pre - post) and the U-Mann Whitney test for independent samples. The decisions were made with a significance of 5% (p <0.05). The data processing was done in the statistical program SPSS 25, and the editing of tables and graphs in Excel 2019.

5. Results

The results of the pre-test showed that each of the sub-skills before the intervention reached a maximum of 1 with a mean lower than 1, indicating a "moderately appropriate" level in each of them; topic sentence was the sub-skill

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with the best performance within this group (M = 0.83; SD = 0.27), followed by

supporting details (M = 0.54; SD = 0.40), while the weakest performance sub-skill

was organization and transition. After the intervention, a similar behavior was found

in the development of sub-skills. However, a significant improvement was found in

the total writing performance, and in 4 of the 5 sub-skills evaluated except in topic

sentence.

Table 1.
Writing Results Target group

	Pretest				Post				P
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	
TS	0.00	1.00	0.83	0.27	0.50	1.50	0.90	0.29	0.225
SD	0.00	1.00	0.54	0.40	0.00	1.50	0.82	0.36	0.001*
OT	0.00	1.00	0.13	0.28	0.00	1.50	0.47	0.51	0.002*
ST	0.00	1.00	0.18	0.32	0.00	1.50	0.58	0.47	0.000*
ME	0.00	1.00	0.21	0.35	0.00	1.50	0.53	0.45	0.002*
Total	0.00	5.00	1.89	1.24	1.00	7.00	3.31	1.77	0.000*

Note: *Significative difference (p<.05). TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting
Details, OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics

In the control group, before the intervention, a general oscillating performance

was found between 0 and 1 with average scores close to 0.5 which implies a poor

level of writing. It was found that the best developed sub-skill was topic sentence

(M = 0.55; SD = 0.35) followed by supporting details (M = 0.22; SD = 0.32), with

style being the weakest sub-skill within this group. The results of the post-test had

maximum scores of 1.5 and average scores close to one in each of the sub-skills

following a similar pattern of performance except organization and transition, that

proved to be the weakest in the post-test, being also the only one not to reflect a

significant difference between before and after.

Table 2.
Writing Results control group

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	Pretest				**Post**				P
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	
TS	0.00	1.00	0.55	0.35	0.00	1.50	0.85	0.29	0.001*
SD	0.00	1.00	0.22	0.32	0.00	1.50	0.74	0.38	0.000*
OT	0.00	1.00	0.23	0.38	0.00	1.00	0.18	0.28	0.642
ST	0.00	1.00	0.15	0.31	0.00	1.50	0.52	0.30	0.000*
ME	0.00	1.00	0.19	0.32	0.00	1.50	0.40	0.33	0.006*
Total	0.00	4.50	1.34	1.31	0.50	7.00	2.69	1.09	0.000*

Note: TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting Details, OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics.

The changes registered in the students from both groups had a maximum decrease of one point and a maximum increase of 1.50. It was also found that the *style* sub-skill was the one with the greatest progress (M = 0.40; SD = 0.55) while in the control group it was *supporting details* (M = 0.56; SD = 0.46). Differences were also found significantly in *topic sentence* and *supporting details* (p <.05) the students from the control group had significantly greater progress. On the contrary, in *organization and transitions,* the target group presented progress, and the control group setbacks (p <. 05).

Table 3.
Progress

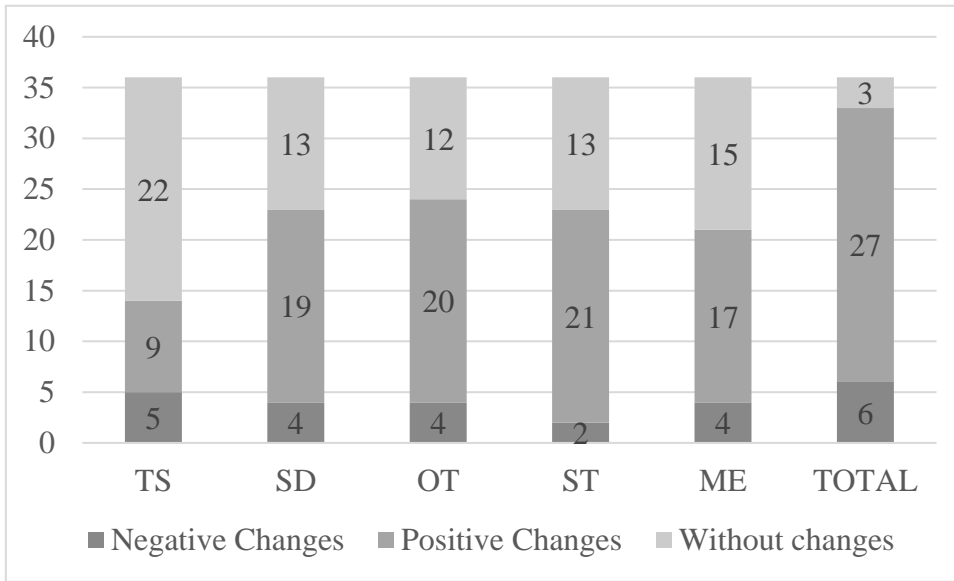|	**Target group**				**Control group**				P
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	
TS	-0.50	1.00	0.07	0.34	-0.50	1.00	0.32	0.44	0.010*
SD	-0.50	1.00	0.28	0.44	-0.50	1.50	**0.56**	0.46	0.015*
OT	-1.00	1.50	0.35	0.57	-1.00	1.00	-0.03	0.41	0.002*
ST	-1.00	1.50	**0.40**	0.55	-0.50	1.50	0.37	0.41	0.952
ME	-0.50	1.50	0.32	0.55	-0.50	1.50	0.24	0.44	0.770

Note: TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting Details, OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics.

In the target group, as demonstrated in table 4, at least 9 students showed positive changes (progress) in some of the sub-skills. 13 students showed this in *supporting details*, *organization and transitions*, *style,* and *mechanics*. On the other hand, regarding the sub-skill of *topic sentence*, there were no changes in 22
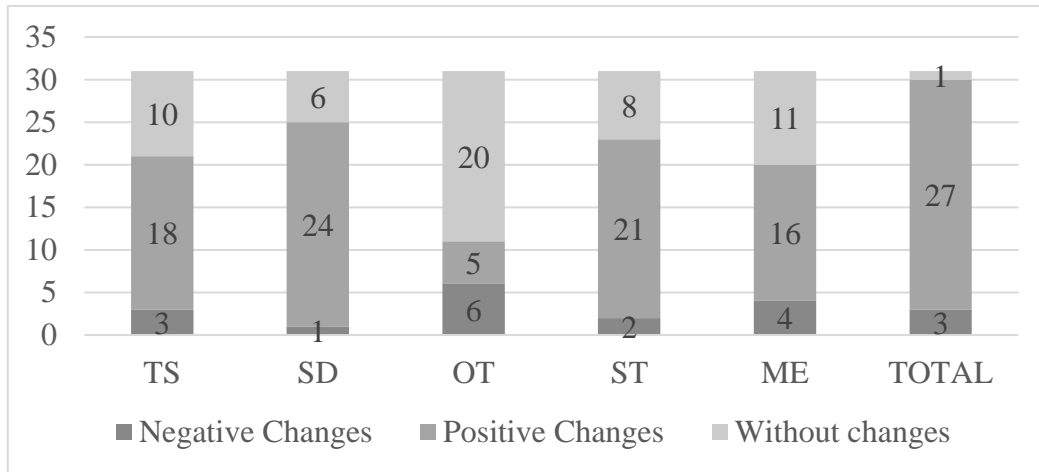
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students representing the sub-skill with fewer changes. Finally, considering the

final grade, overall, 27 students progressed in their writing.

Table 4. Target group changes. TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting

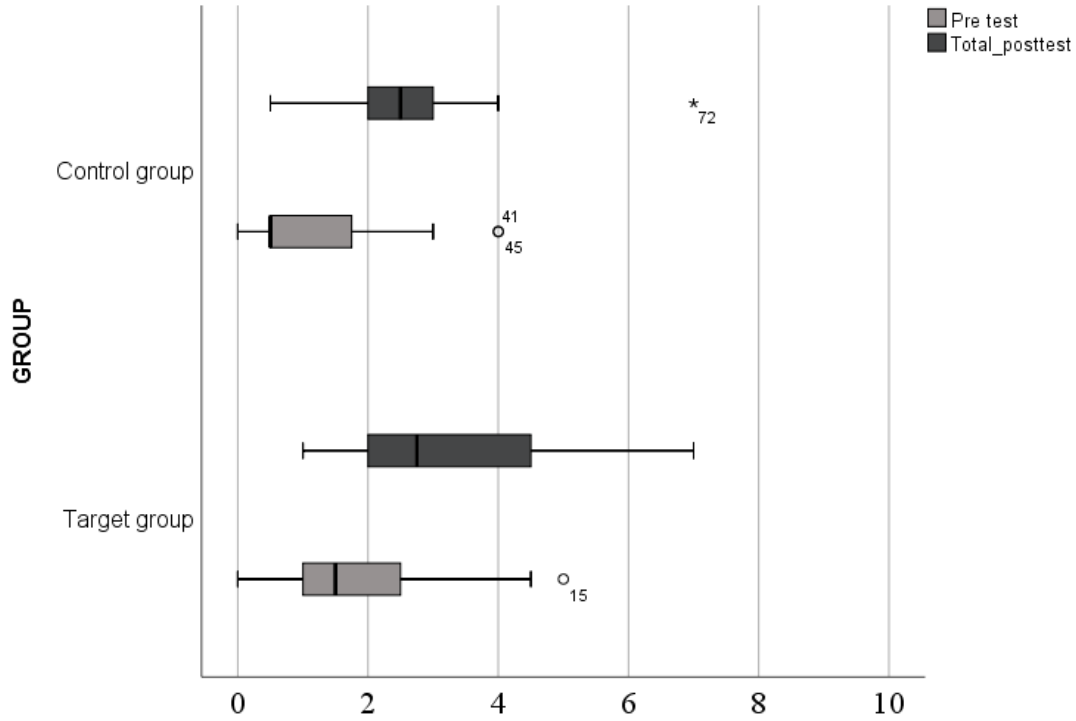*Details, OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics.*

The results from the control group revealed that at least 16 students had

registered positive changes in the sub-skills: *topic sentence, supporting details,*

style, and mechanics. While in *organization and transitions*, there were 20 students

who did not recorded changes.

Table 5. Control group changes. TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting Details,
OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics.

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Finally, table 6 shows that the overall performance of the students, on average, was less than 4 points, indicating that the students did not reach the required learning as stipulated by the Ministry of Education. However, there was an average change of 1.42 points (SD = 1.87) in the treatment group and 1.47 (SD = 1.45) in the control group. The target group revealed, in the post test, a high dispersion, which implies a heterogeneous behavior in the students, while the control group presented a quite homogeneous behavior.
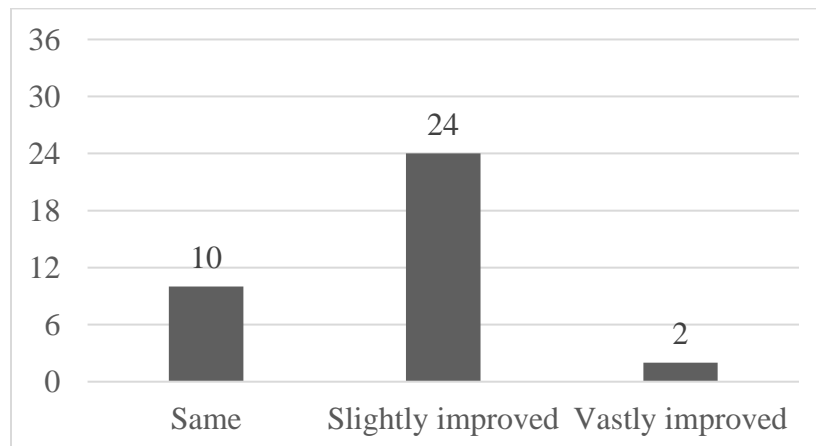
Table 6. Pretest and Posttest. TS=Topic Sentence, SD= Supporting Details, OT= Organization and transitions, ST= Style, ME= Mechanics.

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Perceptions

The results revealed that the writing of paragraphs with respect to the last unit studied in the English subject (prior to the intervention), had improved slightly (n = 24), in most of the students. In addition, 10 students considered a same performance, and 2 mentioned a high improvement.
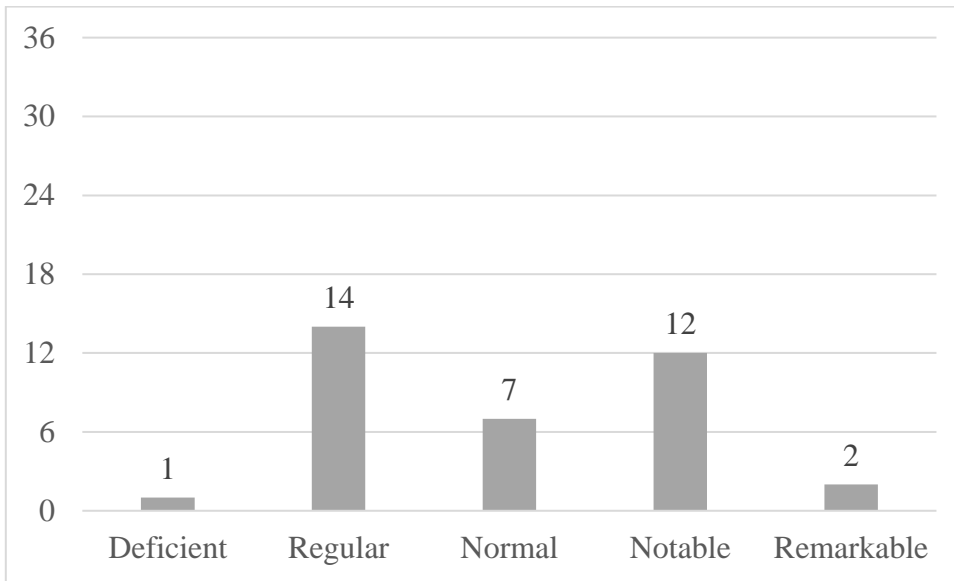
Table 7. Perception about improvement on their Writing
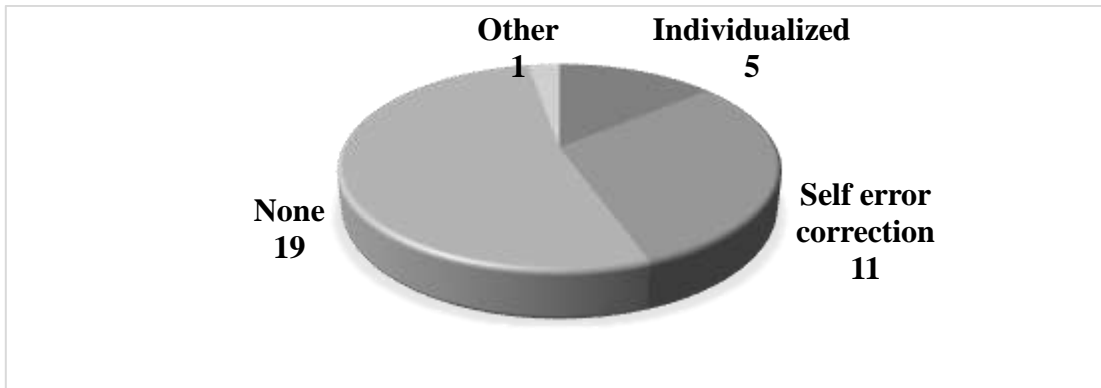
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The students' self-assessment, considering their performance within the unit, revealed an average score of 3 (SD = 1.04) generally reflecting a satisfactory level. It was also found that 14 students considered their performance *regular*, and 12 *notable*.

Table 8. Self-appraisal

The suggestions from the students regarding the feedback revealed that more than half (n=19) considered that the way the teacher applied it, was adequate. Further, 11 people preferred to be themselves, who discovered their mistakes. And, a minority (n=1) would have preferred a personalized feedback.

Table 9. Students´ suggestions

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6. Discussion

The results established in the post-test, after the teacher mini class conferences were applied in the target group, demonstrate that the unique subskill students did not show a significant difference was topic sentence (p = 0.225). However, in the control group, organization and transitions was the subskill that did not evidence a significant improvement (p=0.642). These results seem to be in line with Kazemi, Abadikhah, Dehqan (2018) where students are mainly concerned with surface-level errors during feedback and pay less attention to aspects of composition such as organization. On the other hand, after the intervention, in the target group, style was the sub-skill with the greatest progress (M = 0.40; SD = 0.55); while in the control group, it was supporting details (M = 0.56; SD = 0.46).

Overall, the target group presented improvement in their writing in a total of 27 students. In the control group, 16 students showed a general progress. Since both groups received feedback mainly from their teachers, it resembles Zacharias (2007) who determined that teacher feedback is an important tool to improve students' writing due to higher linguistic competence in English and provides security for the students. Consequently, both groups show a significant difference in 4 out of the 5 subskills.

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Voerman, Meijer, Korthagen, and Simons (2012), concluded that feedback interactions between the teacher and the students, are low, and most are non-specific. Notwithstanding, after the intervention and as evidenced in the post test, there was an average change of 1.42 points (SD = 1.87) in the target group and 1.47 (SD = 1.45) in the control group. Surprisingly, the target group, which received mainly a high level of interactions, revealed a heterogeneous behavior in the students based on a higher dispersion in their positive changes, while the control group, which received a low level of interactions, presented a more homogeneous behavior.

Regarding students' perceptions in the target group (n = 36), most of them (24) claimed that their paragraph writing had improved slightly, and only 2 mentioned a high improvement. These results agree with their average in the pre-test (1.89) when compared to the post-test (3.31). Their average reveals a significant improvement, but not a high significance to be considered. Since much of the feedback was positive, it will agree with the suggestions from Baker and Hansen Bricker (2010), that students easily understand feedback when they are praised. However, the study showed how involved they were in the writing from their own points of view after the teacher mini class conferences revealing somewhat of a lack of commitment. More than half of the class (22) felt their own participation to be normal to deficient.

Students mainly have positive attitudes towards the type of feedback given. The results yielded similarities to the studies conducted by Yang et al. (2006), Gielen, et al., (2010), Zacharias (2007), and Van den Bergh, Ros, and Beijaard

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(2014), all of whom established that teacher feedback has a larger impact considering performance. This statement is supported by the fact that most students (19) did not want to make any changes to the way the feedback was provided to them.

7. Conclusions

Teacher mini conferences in class as a mean of feedback revealed a positive impact on the development of supporting details, organization and transitions, and mechanics. Moreover, the larger impact, that this type of feedback seems to have, is on the development of style rather than other subskills. On the other hand, teacher mini class conferences do not show a significant improvement in the development of topic sentences.

Students benefited by conducting this type of feedback, as evidenced in the target group where 26 learners improved their overall paragraph writing. However, traditional teacher feedback also provided a fair amount of improvements on students' (16) writing process. Also, the study concludes that significant differences are shown in topic sentence and supporting details ($p < .05$) since students from the control group had significantly greater progress in these two subskills, than the ones from the target group.

Most of the students found teacher mini conferences in class to be appealing to them. Therefore, it is relevant to implement this type of feedback after writing assignments. Furthermore, students agree that teacher feedback is more meaningful and can bring greater improvement to their writing tasks. Nevertheless,

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it is important to take into consideration that this technique could cause a heterogenous behavior in the results of the students´ writings. Consequently, further research is needed to understand the reasons for these results.

The results may vary depending on different variables and other contexts. New research, related to this topic, could focus on comparing this type of feedback to peer-feedback, in this context, considering that some students did want their classmates to provide it. Also, this feedback strategy could be applied to different levels of proficiency and ages. Finally, it could be studied possible outcomes that include not only public education, but private education as well.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1- Task 1 (Pretest)

Number: M. G. 15   Date: 17/9/2019   Course: 10m "A"

- Read the instructions carefully and complete the tasks.
- Write a paragraph depending on the topic of the week.

Topic:	Unusual occupations
Think:	Write some ideas that come to your mind about unusual occupations - - -

Hint: Choose an unusual occupation you would like to perform in the future and write a paragraph. You can write about why you would like to perform that occupation, reasons why you selected it, what is interesting about it, how you would perform that activity, and so on.

You can select from a variety of occupations. Here is a list to help you out deciding the occupation that best fits you:
- Bounty hunter
- Video game tester
- Funeral service manager
- Waterslide tester
- Golf ball diver
- Pet food tester
- Worm picker
- Stuntman/woman
- Others you may like

Enjoy your writing!

I like the ocupation is I like to work in video game tester, I provated video games in my house otd I like play video games because is a good acti- vity, First I don't like the video games in the cell phone but i like play video games in play station. Second, I like is the work is a play in the free time, i work every days for morning at night, is a funny work for me. Finally I not a viscie the video game tester.

TS: /
SO: /
OT: /
ST: /

Needs: - Consistent use of English
- Sentence structures

After listening to the teacher, write some aspects you believe you can improve.

- Lo que puedo meforar es aclarando mis ideas, poniendas los puntos y comas al fi- nal de la oración, nd confundiéndome en los palabros del pasodo, presente o futuro en inglés.

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Appendix 2 - Task 2

| Number: 15 | Date: 24/05/19 | Course: 10mo "A" |

- Read the instructions carefully and complete the tasks.
- Write a paragraph depending on the topic of the week.

| Topic: | **Career** choices |
| Think: | Write some ideas that come to your mind about careers. |

Hint: Choose a career you would like to study in the future and write a paragraph. You can write about why you would like to study that career, reasons why you selected it, what is interesting about it, how you would like to work in the future, and so on.

You can select from a variety of careers. Here is a list to help you out deciding the career that best fits you:

- Lawyer
- Doctor
- Computer science engineer
- Petroleum engineer
- Physicists
- Statistician
- Economist
- Industrial engineer
- Architect
- Teacher
- Others you may like

Enjoy your writing!

My career choices is a lawyer because it is a good career and because it is easy of learn.
I like lawyer because not is never interesting.
How I like to work in the future and so on.
I earn to help people in cases to tribunal.

TS.	/
SD.	/
OT:	/
ST:	/
ME.	/

Needs:

After listening to the teacher, write some aspects you believe you can improve.

- los aspectos que puedo mejorar es aclarar un poco más ideas en inglés

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Appendix 3- Task 3

Number: 15   M.G   Date: 1/10/19   Course: 10mo "A"

- Read the instructions carefully and complete the tasks.
- Write a paragraph depending on the topic of the week.

Topic: My city

Think: Write some ideas that come to your mind about Cuenca

Hint: Write a paragraph about the future of your city. Choose a specific topic you are concerned and write a paragraph. You can write about why you selected that topic, what is interesting about it, what effects it may have in the near and long term future in the future, and so on.

You can select from a variety of topics. Here is a list to help you out deciding the topic that best fits you:
- Traffic
- Transportation
- Crime
- Pollution
- Job opportunities
- Housing
- Others you may like

Enjoy your writing!

In my city, a lot of much traffic because is a city big in Ecuador. In Cuenca, it's increasing the traffic every day. The traffic to found the one for to specify. Is not a bad city because is a very city.

TS	1
SD	0.5
OT	0.5
ST	0.5
ME	0.5
	/3

After listening to the teacher, write some aspects you believe you can improve.

- Los aspectos en que puedo mejorar son
- haciendo más oraciones, colocando
- preposiciones o nexos como porque,
- tambien, pero, etc.

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Number: 15	A.C.	Date: 22/10/19	Course: 10mo "A"
- Read the instructions carefully and complete the tasks.			
- Write a paragraph depending on the topic of the week.			

Topic:	**English in my life**
Think:	Write some ideas that come to your mind about the English language
	-
	-
	-

Hint: Write a paragraph about how you will use English language in the future. Elicit some ideas and write a paragraph. You can write about the benefits of knowing another language, specific purposes, cultural effects, and so on.

You can select from a variety of reasons. Here is a list to help you out deciding the reason that best fits you:
- Job opportunities
- Academics
- Writing poetry, books, articles, etc.
- Song listening and writing
- To meet new friends
- To do business
- Others you may like

Enjoy your writing!

(I want to understand english because)

I would like to learn English because I want to travel and I want to have job opportunities. Its a good team for meet new friends. It would help me improve ix e ce to study abroad, I like travel, to (Estados Unidos) and writing book for the world. Also, for work in differents stades of the world.

TS 1.5 to
SO 1.5
OT 1
ST 1
ME 1 / 6

After listening to the teacher, write some aspects you believe you can improve.

-
- Pueda mejorar en nexos o conecciones
- a palabras como in my house teracuse
- Espero esta clase escribir bien el pá-
- rrafo y superar mis notas.

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Appendix 5 – Task 5 (Posttest)

Number: AC	15	Date:	Course: 10mo "A"

- Read the instructions carefully and complete the tasks.
- Write a paragraph depending on the topic of the week.

Topic:	**The job market**
Think:	Write some ideas that come to your mind about jobs. - - -

Hint: Choose a place you would like to work in the future and write a paragraph. You can write about why you would like to work in that place, reasons why you selected it, what is interesting about it, how you would like to work in the future, and so on.

You can select from a variety of places; they can be countries or specific corporations. Here is a list to help you out deciding the place that best fits you:
- Wall Street
- Google
- New York ✓
- Cuenca or corporations within.
- Miami
- London
- Other cities or regions from Ecuador
- Microsoft
- Tesla Car Manufacturer
- School- University or High School
- From home
- Others you may like

Enjoy your writing!

I want to work in New York because is a very [?] city in United States. In New York lives my cousins and my uncle. It's a city dangerous for the terrorists. I need the passports and the visa for know their projects. Also, I like to work in Miami. In Miami also is the opportunities but is very big city.

(5,5)

After listening to the teacher, write some aspects you believe you can improve.
-
-
-
-

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Appendix 6- Survey

Nombre: _____   N°: 9   Fecha: 7/Nov/19

1- ¿Cómo considera su escritura de párrafos con respecto a la última unidad que estudió en el idioma inglés? Elija:
a) No existe mejora
b) Igual
c) He mejorado levemente
d) He mejorado mucho

2- Señale del 1 al 10 su desempeño dentro del proyecto:
e) 1: Muy malo.....7 promedio.....10 Excelente

3- Señale una o varias opciones que usted hubiera preferido se le brinde retroalimentación a sus párrafos adicional a la que recibió:
a) Ninguna, la manera como lo realizó el docente fue la apropiada.
b) De manera individualizada
c) Hubiese preferido que mis compañeros me brindasen la retroalimentación
d) Hubiese preferido ser yo mismo quien descubra los errores y poder corregirlos
e) Otra: _____

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Appendix 6 - Rubric for evaluation of Paragraphs

Rubric for Evaluation of the Paragraph

A rubric is a grading tool that describes the criteria, or "what counts," for the assignment. It also describes each of the criteria according to gradations of quality, with descriptions of strong, middling, and problematic student work. The criteria are listed in the column on the left. The numbers in the top row indicate quality, with 3 being the best. The number 0 is something everyone wants to avoid. Students may use the rubric as a check list to determine if the writing meets the criteria of the assignment.

Point Value	2 points	1 points	.5 points	0 points
Topic Sentence	Interesting, original topic sentence, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea.	Clearly stated topic sentence presents one main idea.	Acceptable topic sentence presents one idea.	Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentence; main idea is missing.
Supporting Details	Interesting, concrete and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic.	Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included.	Sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic.	Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples.
Organization and Transitions	Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas.	Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions.	Acceptable arrangement of examples; transitions may be weak.	No discernible pattern of organization; Unrelated details; no transitions.
Style	Appropriate tone, distinctive voice; pleasing variety in sentence structure; Vivid diction, precise word choices.	Appropriate tone; Clear sentences with varied structures; Effective diction.	Acceptable tone; some variety in sentence structures; Adequate diction and word choices.	Inconsistent or Inappropriate tone; Awkward, unclear, or incomplete sentences; Bland diction, poor word choice.
Mechanics	Consistent standard English usage, spelling, and punctuation. No errors.	Some errors, but none major, in usage, spelling, or punctuation. (1-2)	A few errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation (3-4)	Distracting errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation

Topic Sentences _____
Supporting Details and Organization _____
Organization/Transitions _____
Style _____
Mechanics _____

Grade Equivalent:

A = 8 - 10 points
B = 6 -7 points
C = 4 - 5 points
D = 2 - 3 points
F = 0 - 1

Total Points _____ = grade of _____
*Your instructor will average the scores of both paragraphs to generate your final grade for Assignment #1.

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