

## **Effect of Peer Assessment on English Writing Mechanics and Writing Apprehension of Undergraduate Students**

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### **KEY WORDS**

Peer assessment, English writing mechanics, English writing apprehension, Subject verb agreement, correct use of spellings.

### **ABSTRACT**

Writing as communicative skill plays significant role in human life. Writer can communicate well by incorporating writing mechanics properly. Writing apprehension hinders the writers to write what they want to communicate. An experimental study was conducted to find out the effect of peer assessment as an instructional technique on English writing mechanics and English writing apprehension of undergraduate students. Pre-and post-test control group experimental design was used to measure the effect of peer assessment. Researchers selected forty (40) undergraduate students randomly from a public sector associate college from district Lahore. The sample was divided into two equal groups. Peer assessment was used as intervention with the experimental group for 12 weeks. English writing mechanics were assessed through a test with three extended response items. English writing apprehension was measured through Likert type scale of English writing apprehension inventory. Data were analyzed by applying paired and independent samples t-test statistics. Findings reveal that peer assessment is effective to improve English writing mechanics and to reduce English writing apprehension of undergraduate students. Undergraduate level English teachers are recommended to use peer assessment as an instructional technique to improve students English writing mechanics and to reduce English writing apprehension.

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### **Introduction**

Assessment is a vital part of teaching learning process. Assessment from teacher gives feedback to the learners on their written work/assignments (Sridharan, Tai & Boud, 2019). When a written assignment is checked or reviewed by the students of the same level to

provide suggestion for improvement, it is defined as peer assessment (Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2020). Peer assessment is also named as peer review and sharing work with peers for their suggestions and comments. It involves taking responsibility for critiquing and giving feedback on their peers' written work honestly against set criteria (Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Peer assessment also helps individuals to assess their own work to improve its quality. Peer assessment helps to see the strength and weakness of the assignments and mostly it helps in knowing what things should be altered and improved (Adachi, Tai & Dawson, 2018). Constructive, specific, thorough, balanced, and respectful comments and reviews would be helpful for the peer to improve his/her work (Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2020). Peer assessment also helps to improve language structure to communicate effectively in writing (Yusuf, Jusoh & Yusuf, 2019). It hones the reviewer's understanding of practices and standards of written work and structure and arrangement of language while conveying ideas in writing (Ramon-Casas, Nuño, Pons & Cunillera, 2019). Sridharan, Tai and Boud (2019) have counted its benefits and say that it improves reviewer's quality of learning, enables him to learn from his own work, involves in learning by becoming a responsible and autonomous learner, enables to analyze work rather than just seeing marks, identifies the effective use of language, and encourages to become an independent and motivated learner.

Writing mechanics are set of rules and principles that make writing effective and easy to comprehend. Proper communication is possible when writing is clear and correctly used (Dilova, 2021). Grammar is fundamental to writing and mechanics are to make it correctly used clear for understanding. Both go hand in hand. Correct use of mechanics reflects that the writer is professional and has focused on what he/she is writing (Yuliawati, 2021). Writing mechanics refers to capitalization, use of articles, spellings, tenses etc. (Javadi-Safa, 2018). Learning mechanics of writing is critical to make the writing clear conveys the message to the reader successfully (Dilova, 2021). Subject verb agreement helps reader to have proper perception of the message intended by the writer (Yusuf, Jusoh, & Yusuf 2019). Similarly, capitalization gives proper meanings to the words. Punctuation works as signboards for the reader giving him clues about what the sentence is going to convey (Sapto, Welya & Lisa, 2020).

Writing is one of the four basic skills of a language. It is a communicative skill. Mastering of this skill is vital to become an effective communicator. Novice and foreign language writers feel it difficult to communicate through writing. The individual who is apprehensive takes writing as a form of punishing rather than rewarding. This state of anxiety was termed as apprehension by Daly and Miller (1975). Sense of evaluation, sometimes, creates the feeling of avoidance in writers to write something for others (Abbas & Asy'ari, 2019). At college level, students find writing as an

obstacle for the success in academic career because of their sense of apprehension about writing (Robinson-Kooi & Hammond, 2020). Beginning and novice writers often become victim of a deeply rooted anxiety due to the demand and requirements of their teachers about the writing task and their confidence in their own abilities (Li, Xiong, Hunter, Guo & Tywoniw, 2020). Students' feelings about being unable to write something good and effective make them apprehensive. A student reported that even if he could not write good and up to the requirements of the teachers yet he to write daily to pass the exam(Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2020). In the beginning, there may be fear of evaluation that makes them apprehensive about writing (Abbas &Asy'ari, 2019).

How can this writing apprehension be reduced at undergraduate level to make students confident about their ability to write effectively? How can mechanics of writing be improved among graduate students for correct writing? These questions need to be answered with scientific evidences. Students' fear of writing may be removed by involving them in writing more and more. Similarly, their mechanics of writing would be improved by making them busy in writing more and more and reading the content. To answer the above questions, peer assessment technique was selected as intervention to develop writing mechanics and reduce writing apprehension of undergraduate students. It was because undergraduate level is the higher education where students are expected to have mastery over writing mechanics and have confidence to write when and where it is needed and required.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Peer assessment is sharing written piece of work with course fellows or classmates having same level of education and abilities. Simply, it is students' feedback for students in relation to the quality of work. Students assess their fellow students' work according to set criteria (Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2020). It develops collaborative learning and grasps the objectives in sophisticated ways. It encourages students to boost their learning and have healthy discussion to improve writing for communication skill-writing (Sridharan, Tai & Boud, 2019).

Students become responsible and involve in their learning process. Students while assessing other students' work evaluate the usage of language-mechanics and it enables them to write correctly which results in controlling writing apprehension (Wanner & Palmer, 2018). Peer assessment hones students learning and evaluation skills and they criticize constructively (Adachi, Tai & Dawson, 2018). The authors have mentioned many benefits of peer assessment as: it improves students' quality of learning, enables and empowers them to learn from their own work, encourages involvement in self-work, develops habit to analyze own work besides others rather than just seeing at, helps to identify writing issues

which were ambiguous for them, and provides an opportunity to enhance their communication skills.

Peer assessment, also known as peer review, is practiced as an instructional approach that provides opportunity to the learners to evaluate and give feedback on the value, level, and quality of an intellectual work of persons-peers (Sridharan, Tai & Boud, 2019). This approach is typically considered effective for language skills development like mechanics, grammar, sentence structure, cohesion, and coherence (Yusuf, Jusoh & Yusuf, 2019).

According to Dilova (2021) peer assessment process has four parts. First part is writing. In which students write assigned task in the required language. That work may be an activity, assignment, or a correspondence. Second step is training. Students of the same abilities are given training how to assess the written work of their fellows. They are given complete instruction-rubrics. Third step is peer assessment. Now students exchange their work with other fellows and provide constructive, positive, and helpful feedback. Fourth step is self-assessment. At this step student go over their own work again to assess its quality and make the required changes. This is the product step. Peer assessment helps them to improve their own work which is the target of this instructional approach. In a language class, students are given training about what language aspects they have to review for giving feedback. It helps them to have a wider concept of these aspects of language writing like mechanics of writing. It also helps them to decrease their fear of evaluation.

Mechanics of writing means all the principles and rules adopted for effective writing. Application and use of certain principles and rules makes the piece of writing more effective and easy to understand for the readers (Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2020). Sometime, it is known as grammar but mechanics are sub part of grammar of any language. As grammar is necessary for speaking, mechanics are necessary for writing. Use of correct spellings, capitalization, punctuation, subject verb agreement, correct tense usage, and articles make the piece of writing more clear and more understandable (Arindra, & Ardi 2020).

The end of writing mechanics is to produce precise and grammatically correct piece of writing. It helps to write systematically and with correct spellings, punctuation, italics etc. Without following the mechanics of writing, a piece of writing would be very inconsistent and jumbled (Thuraisingam, Ean & Singh, 2019). Spellings make meaningful parts of the words and this is also known as formation of words. The meanings are inferred on the basis of spellings of the words. Misspelled words may convey no meaning to the reader (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021). Punctuation is considered half language. It gives direction to the sentence and clarifies meaning. For example, following sentence has the same words just comma changes its meaning completely. "Let us eat, grandpa!", "let us,

eatgrandpa!'. The first sentence says that I and grandpa together are going to eat something and second sentence conveys totally opposite meanings that we are going to eat grandpa. So, proper use of comma and the context save life. Use of subject verb agreement makes a sentence clear to understand (Wang & Zeng, 2020). Tenses help readers to have implication of the sentences according to tense. Articles guide to specify nouns in the sentences (Bailey & Cassidy, 2019). Mechanics of writing, as a whole, make writing clear and easy to understand for readers. Therefore, proper use of mechanics is every important.

The term apprehension was suggested by Daly and Miller and refers to the fear and anxiety leading to avoidance of writing. Many novice writers share the characteristics of apprehension about writing (Jafarigohar, 2020). Foreign language learners experience it most. Evaluation may be one of the influencing factor and cause of writing apprehension which may be reduced by discussing with the peers about problems and suggestions for improvement (Rafiee & Abbasian-Naghneh, 2020).

This strategy may enable them confident about their writing task. Jafarigohar (2020) report that it is not teachers' imposed standards that make the early writers apprehensive rather their self-imposed standards which they find difficult to meet. The authors further gave the findings that these writers did not dislike evaluation itself. They were ready to accept it as a necessary and part of learning to write. Wang and Zeng (2020) have reported that the problem of organizing the content and ideas to make the writing effective make learners apprehensive about writing. At early stages they feel it difficult because of the foreign language or weak mechanics of writings. It is due to unclear direction and intention that the, basic writers feel confusion to organize their ideas and produce a coherent text (Al-Ahdal & Abduh, 2021).

Arindra and Ardi (2020) have concluded that writing apprehension is behavioural problem which can be removed by adopting the strategies. They would be indulged in writing task and evaluation process to overcome their feelings of evaluation and comparison with their peers. They would be helped to identify, confront, and restructure their writing task to remove their fear of writing. Peer assessment is one of the strategies which may remove the hindrance of writing apprehension and improve students' writing mechanics.

It is summarized that writing mechanics are very important to produce clear and easy to understand writing. These are helpful to have communicative writing. Without the proper use of writing mechanics, writers cannot claim to create an effective piece of writing. Similarly, writing apprehension is a barrier in the way of progress for the novice writers of a foreign language, especially for English language writers. Students have many fears in their mind about writing in English. They try their best to avoid write in English. Anxiety and fear hinder their progress.

One of my graduate students commented that if he did not have to write in English, he would have got very good marks and got position. It shows that writing apprehension, particularly, for English writing do not let the students learn independently. Peer assessment as an instructional technique involves students in the process of evaluation and giving feedback to their fellows' work. This process lets them know how to write by reading their fellows' work. Otherwise, they would have fear about their low quality work. This practice hones their writing skill. They become courageous to write in English because other fellows write in the same way. Therefore, in the present study, peer assessment was selected as an instructional technique to increase its affection improve students writing mechanics and English writing apprehension at undergraduate level.

### Theoretical Framework

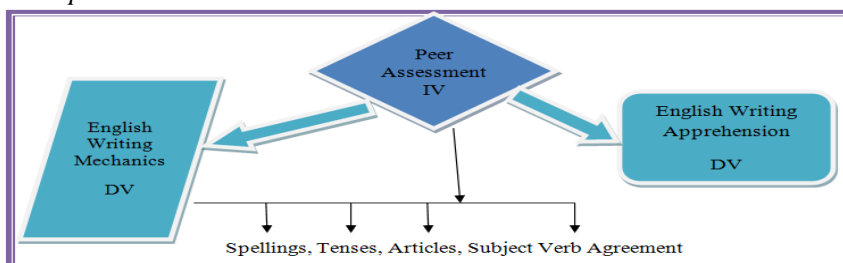
Language learning is a cognitive phenomenon for some theorists. It is supported by innate cognitive theory of Vygotsky. Vygotsky's social cognitive learning theory suggests that there is innate learning device which is known as LAD (Language Acquisition Device). It is inbuilt ability of language acquisition that lies in human being. Similarly, Piaget has presented cognitive development theory which suggests language as an innate ability in human beings. On the basis of these theories, present study falls in the domain of cognitive aspect of language acquisition.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. Here peer assessment is representing independent variable which was under as intervention. English writing apprehension is dependent variable which received the effect of peer assessment. English writing mechanics is the second dependent variable which was measured on four aspects. These aspects are also dependent variables of English writing mechanics. The conceptual framework can be viewed in figure 1 below.

Figure: 1

#### Conceptual Framework



### Statement of the Problem

Writing becomes clear and easy to understand with the usage of correct writing mechanics. Principles and rules which are necessary to be

applied for correct and clear writing in any language are defined as writing mechanics. For writing in English, parts of speech, punctuation, capitalization, spellings, tenses, subject verb agreement etc. are mechanics of writing. These mechanics are necessary to be incorporated while writing any piece of writing. Writing may be improved when students write more. They would write more when they have courage to write. Lack of courage to write courage by anxiety about writing is termed as writing apprehension.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Find out the effect of peer assessment on English writing mechanics used by undergraduate students.
2. Find out the effect of peer assessment on English writing apprehensions of undergraduate students.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics of undergraduate students.  
H<sub>0</sub>1.1: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics (correct spellings of undergraduate students).  
H<sub>0</sub>1.2: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics (correct use of tenses of undergraduate students).  
H<sub>0</sub>1.3: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics (subject verb agreement of undergraduate students).  
H<sub>0</sub>1.4: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics (correct use of articles of undergraduate students).
2. H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing apprehension of undergraduate students.

### **Method and Procedure of the Study**

An experimental study was conducted through pre-test post-test control group design. A public sector associate college of district Lahore was selected as cluster for the study. Forty (40) undergraduate students were selected through random number table and were divided into two equal groups. One group was selected as experimental and the second as control group. Experimental group was given the intervention of peer assessment for 12 weeks. The content was selected for assessment from short stories prescribed for the undergraduate part I students by University of the Punjab, Lahore. Before and during intervention period, students were guided about the criteria (rubrics for mechanics of English writing) of assessment of

written. Students were advised to assess their peers' written answers of the questions according to the work criteria of correct spellings, use of correct tenses, subject verb agreement, and correct use of articles.

Two instruments were developed for the collection of data. Data were collected from pre and post-tests. First instrument was an essay type test "Test to Measure Mechanics of English Writing" to measure mechanics of English writing. The test was marked with reference to developed rubrics. The second research instrument was "English Writing Apprehension Inventory". English writing apprehension inventory was developed by the researcher from the related literature and was designed on five point Likert scale with categories of 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree. Both instruments were validated by the experts and piloted to find out their reliability. Reliability measure for Test to Measure Mechanics of English Writing was .78 and English Writing Apprehension Inventory .80.

Data were analyzed using Paired and Independent Samples t-tests. Paired samples t-test was used to compare the pre and post-test scores of the same group. Independent samples t-test was applied to compare the pre and post-test scores of the independent groups.

#### **Data Analysis**

This section is comprised on data analysis presented in table's relation with hypotheses. Statistical values have been given in tables and interpretation and inferences below to have easy understanding of the results.

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics of undergraduate students.

Table: 1

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	Post-test	38.85	2.01	12.15	19	<.001
	Pre-test	31.25	2.92			
Control	Post-test	31.35	2.13	2.70	19	.014
	Pre-test	30.85	2.58			

Note: n=40, p=.05

Table 1 is about the statistical values of experimental and control groups on mechanics of English writing. The values reflect better performance of experimental group in post test scores (mean=38.85, SD=2.01) than pre-test (mean=31.25, SD=2.92) conditioned  $t(19)=12.15, p<.001$ . The control group could not show better performance in post-test (mean=31.35, SD=2.13) than pre-test (mean=30.85, SD=2.581) conditioned  $(19)=2.703, p=.014$ . It is inferred that peer assessment as



instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' mechanics of English writing.

Table 2

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	D
Pre-test	Experimental	31.25	2.92	.46	38	.649	
	Control	30.85	2.58				
Post-test	Experimental	38.85	2.01	11.45	38	<.001	0.87
	Control	31.35	2.13				

Note: n=40, sig=.05

Table 2 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for mechanics of English writings. The values reflect that both groups yielded equal performance on pre-test assessment (mean=31.25, SD=2.918) and (mean=30.85, SD=2.581) but in post-test assessment both groups differ statistically significantly (mean=38.85, SD=2.007) and (mean=31.35, SD=2.134) conditioned  $t(38)=11.448$ ,  $p=.000$ . This statistically significant difference is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis “ $H_0$ : There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics of undergraduate students” and alternate hypothesis is stated as “ $H_A$ : There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics of undergraduate students”. The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size 0.87 which shows positive effect size.

$H_0$ 1.1: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-correct spellings of undergraduate students.

Table: 3

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	P-value
Experimental	Post-test	10.90	1.48	12.08	19	<.001
	Pre-test	6.80	1.15			
Control	Post-test	7.85	.81	11.00	19	<.001
	Pre-test	6.75	.97			

Note: n=40, sig=.05

Table 3 is about the values of on mechanics of English writing-correct use of spellings. The values reflect that better performance is of experimental group in post test scores (mean=10.90, SD=1.48) than pre-test (mean=6.80, SD=1.15) conditioned  $t(19)=12.08$ ,  $p<.001$ . The control group could not show better performance in post-test (mean=7.85, SD=.81) than pre-test (mean=6.75, SD=.97) conditioned  $t(19)=11.00$ ,  $p<.001$ . It is inferred

that peer assessment as instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' mechanics of English writing-correct use of spellings.

Table: 4

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	Df	p-value	D
Pre-test	Experimental	6.80	1.152	0.15	38	.883	
	Control	6.75	.967				
Post-test	Experimental	10.90	1.483	8.07	38	.000	0.78
	Control	7.85	.813				

Note: n=40, p=0.05

Table 4 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for mechanics of English writing-correct use of spellings. The values reflect that both groups mean score did not differ on pre-test assessment (mean=6.80, SD=1.152) and (mean=6.75, SD=.967) but in post-test assessment both groups differ statistically significantly (mean=10.90, SD=1.483) and (mean=7.85, SD=.813) conditioned  $t(38)=8.065$ ,  $p=.000$ . This statistically significant difference is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis "H<sub>0</sub>: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-spellings of undergraduate students" and alternate hypothesis is stated as "H<sub>A</sub>: There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-spellings of undergraduate students". The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size 0.78 which shows positive effect size.

H<sub>0</sub>1.2: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-correct use of tenses of undergraduate students.

Table: 5

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	Post-test	11.85	1.27	8.43	19	<.001
	Pre-test	8.55	1.40			
Control	Post-test	8.45	0.69	3.68	19	.002
	Pre-test	7.95	0.83			

Note: n=40, p=.05

Table 5 is about the values of experimental and control groups on mechanics of English writing-correct use of tenses. The values reflect that group selected for experiment had better mean score in post-test (mean=11.85, SD=1.27) than pre-test (mean=8.55, SD=1.40) conditioned  $t(19)=8.43$ ,  $p<.001$ . The control group could not show better performance in post-test (mean=8.45, SD=.69) than pre-test (mean=7.95, SD=.83) conditioned  $t(19)=3.68$ ,  $p=.002$ . It is inferred that peer assessment as

instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' mechanics of English writing-correct use of tenses.

Table: 6

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	D
Pre-test	Experimental	8.55	1.40	1.66	38	.106	
	Control	7.95	.83				
Post-test	Experimental	11.85	1.27	10.55	38	<.001	0.85
	Control	8.45	.69				

Note. n=40, p=0.05

Table 6 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for mechanics of English writing-correct use of tenses. The values reflect that both experimental and control groups were equal in performance on pre-test assessment (mean=8.55, SD=1.395) and (mean=7.95, SD=.83) but in post-test assessment both groups differ statistically significantly (mean=11.85, SD=1.27) and (mean=8.45, SD=.69) conditioned  $t(38)=10.55, p<.001$ . This statistically significant difference is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis "H<sub>0</sub>: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-tenses of undergraduate students" and alternate hypothesis is stated as "H<sub>A</sub>: There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-tenses of undergraduate students". The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size 0.85 which shows positive effect size. H<sub>0</sub>1.3: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-subject verb agreement of undergraduate students.

Table: 7

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	Post-test	10.15	1.18	7.94	19	<.001
	Pre-test	7.95	1.10			
Control	Post-test	8.35	.75	4.49	19	<.001
	Pre-test	7.75	1.02			

Note. n=40, sig=0.05

Table 7 is about the values of experimental and control groups on mechanics of English writing-subject verb agreement. The values reflect that experimental group performed better in post test scores (mean=10.15, SD=1.182) than pre-test (mean=7.95, SD=1.099) conditioned  $t(19)=7.936, p<.001$ . The control group could not show better performance in

post test (mean=8.45, SD=.745) than pre-test (mean=7.75, SD=1.020) conditioned  $t(19)=4.485, p=.000$ . It is inferred that peer assessment as instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' mechanics of English writing-subject verb agreement.

Table: 8

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	P-value	d
Pre-test	Experimental	7.95	1.10	.597	38	.554	
	Control	7.75	1.02				
Post-test	Experimental	10.15	1.18	5.76	38	<.001	0.67
	Control	8.35	0.75				

Note: n=40, p=0.05

Table 8 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for mechanics of English writing-subject verb agreement. The values reflect that both groups did not had any difference in mean score on pre-test assessment (mean=7.95, SD=1.099) and (mean=7.75, SD=1.020) but in post-test assessment both groups differ statistically significantly (mean=10.15, SD=1.182) and (mean=8.35, SD=.745) conditioned  $t(38)=5.761, p=.000$ . This statistically significant difference is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis “ $H_0$ : There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-subject verb agreement of undergraduate students” and alternate hypothesis is stated as “ $H_A$ : There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-subject verb agreement of undergraduate students”. The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size 0.67 which shows positive effect size.

$H_0$ 1.4: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-correct use of articles of undergraduate students.

Table: 9

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	Post-test	11.05	1.36	5.047	19	<.001
	Pre-test	8.95	1.10			
Control	Post-test	8.95	0.89	3.249	19	.004
	Pre-test	8.45	1.00			

Note. n=40, p=.05

Table 9 is about the values of experimental and control groups on mechanics of English writing-correct use of articles. The values reflect that experimental group performed better in post test scores (mean=11.05,

SD=1.356) than pre-test (mean=8.95, SD=1.099) conditioned  $t(19)=5.047, p=.000$ . The control group could not show better performance in post test (mean=8.95, SD=.887) than pre-test (mean=8.45, SD=.999) conditioned  $t(19)=3.249, p=.004$ . It is inferred that peer assessment as instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' mechanics of English writing-correct use of articles.

Table: 10

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	d
Pre-test	Experimental	8.95	1.10	1.506	38	.140	
	Control	8.45	1.00				
Post-test	Experimental	11.05	1.36	5.795	38	<.001	0.67
	Control	8.95	0.89				

Note. n=40, p=.05

Table 10 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for mechanics of English writing-correct use of articles. The values reflect that both groups were equal in performance on pre-test assessment (mean=8.95, SD=1.099) and (mean=8.45, SD=.999) but in post-test assessment both groups differ statistically significantly (mean=11.05, SD=1.356) and (mean=8.95, SD=.887) conditioned  $t(38)=5.795, p=.000$ . This statistically significant difference is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis “H<sub>0</sub>: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-correct use of articles of undergraduate students” and alternate hypothesis is stated as “H<sub>A</sub>: There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing mechanics-correct use of articles of undergraduate students”. The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size 0.67 which shows positive effect size.

H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing apprehension of undergraduate students.

Table: 11

*Paired Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Group	Tests	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	Post-test	1.78	0.14	59.421	19	<.001
	Pre-test	4.27	0.09			
Control	Post-test	4.18	0.09	2.171	19	.043
	Pre-test	4.24	0.11			

Note. n=40, p=.05

Table 11 is about the values of experimental and control groups on English writing apprehension. The values reflect that experimental group showed reduced English writing apprehension in post- test (mean=1.78,

SD=.144) than pre-test (mean=4.27, SD=.090) conditioned  $t(19)=59.421, p=.000$ . The control group showed same apprehension level in post test (mean=4.18, SD=.085) as in pre-test (mean=4.24, SD=.105) conditioned  $t(19)=2.171, p=.043$ . It is inferred that peer assessment as instructional technique has statistically significant effect on students' reduced English writing apprehension.

Table: 12

*Independent Samples Pre-test Post-test Comparison*

Tests	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	d
Pre-test	Experimental	4.27	0.09	1.10	38	.278	
	Control	4.24	0.11				
Post-test	Experimental	1.78	0.14	64.22	38	<.001	-0.99
	Control	4.18	0.09				

*Note.* n=40, p=0.05

Table 12 is of Independent Samples t-test statistics for experimental and control groups for English writing apprehension. The values reflect that both experimental and control groups had same level of English writing apprehension in pre-test (mean=4.27, SD=.09) and (mean=4.24, SD=.11) but in post-test experimental group showed reduced English writing apprehension as (mean=1.78, SD=.14) control group (mean=4.18, SD=.09) conditioned  $t(38)=-64.22, p<.001$ . This statistically significant difference in the reduction of English writing apprehension is due to the intervention of peer assessment instructional technique. So, the sampled data failed to support the null hypothesis "H<sub>0</sub>2: There is no mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing apprehension of undergraduate students" and alternate hypothesis is stated as "H<sub>A</sub>: There is mean score difference between experimental and control groups on English writing apprehension of undergraduate students". The decision is further supported with practical significance d value of effect size -0.99 which shows reduced English writing apprehension of experimental group in post test results.

### **Findings of the Study**

The study was conducted to find out the effect of peer assessment as instructional technique on student's mechanics of English writing and their English writing apprehension at undergraduate level. An experimental study with control group (pre and post) test design was carried out. Results were analyzed by applying paired and independent samples t test statistical techniques. On the basis of data analysis, following findings are derived.

- a. Peer assessment as an instructional technique is effective for the development of undergraduate level students' English writing mechanics. English writing mechanics including correct use of spellings, correct use of tenses, subject verb agreement, and proper use of articles.

- b. Peer assessment is effective for the improvement of correct use of spellings and tenses in English composition at undergraduate level.
- c. Peer assessment is effective for the improvement of subject verb agreement and proper use of articles in English writing at undergraduate level.
- d. Peer assessment is effective for the reduction of English writing apprehension at undergraduate level. Students showed high level of English writing apprehension in their pre-test but in post-test they showed statistically reduced English writing apprehension as a result of peer assessment instructional technique. Peer assessment helped them to remove their fear of assessment and anxiety of writing in English writing.

### **Discussion**

Main purpose of the study was to find out the effect of peer assessment as an instructional technique on undergraduate students' mechanics of English writing and English writing apprehension. The finding that peer assessment is effective for the improvement of English writing mechanics is consistent with Abbas & Asy'ari, (2019). The study further showed improved scores on English writing mechanics-use of correct spellings. This finding is also in line with Adachi, Tai and Dawson, (2018). Peer assessment helped students to review their fellows' writing in detail to understand the true pattern and usage of spellings. After rigorous review, students improved their own spellings in their writing.

The study findings revealed that peer assessment showed positive effect on undergraduate students' use of subject verb agreement in their English writing. This finding is consistent with Wanner and Palmer, (2018). The authors suggested that reading and assessment were helpful for readers to improve their own way of writing. Good writers have good affect on readers.

Peer assessment is also effective for the improvement of correct use of tenses in English writing at undergraduate level. This finding is supported by Ramon-Casas, Nuño, Pons and Cunillera, (2019). Peer assessment helps students in using correct tenses to convey their thoughts effectively. Writing accuracy is possible when tenses are used in their correct sense. Jafarigohar (2020) also showed positive effect of reading for the improvement of tenses in English writing.

The current study showed positive effect of peer assessment as an instructional technique for correct use of articles in English writing. This finding is according to Bailey and Cassidy, (2019). The authors recommend that peer assessment and review of written work by fellow students to improve mechanics of English writing. Reading, especially fellow students' work, makes readers/ evaluators confident to correct and improve their mechanics of English writing.

Present study findings further reveal that peer assessment as an instructional technique is effective for the reduction of English writing apprehension. Students of experimental group showed reduced English writing apprehension in their post test scores. Peer assessment helped them to decrease their anxiety and fear while writing in English. This finding is consistent with Al-Ahdal, and Abduh, (2021) and Jafarigohar, (2020). Students, especially of English as foreign language, feel anxiety and fear while writing any piece of writing even they avoid the situation when they have to write in English. Peer assessment reduced their fear of evaluation of their own piece of writing. This finding is further consistent with Abbas & Asy'ari, (2019). So, peer assessment or peer review as an instructional technique is effective for the improvement of mechanics of English writing and reduction of English writing apprehension.

### **Conclusion**

The study was to find out the effect of peer assessment as an instructional technique on graduation students' mechanics of English writing and English writing apprehension. The study findings have concluded that peer assessment is effective for the development and improvement of mechanics of English writing. Correct use of spellings, subject verb agreement, correct use of tenses, and articles will be improved by teaching English content by using peer assessment as instructional technique at undergraduate level. Peer review is to review fellow students' written work which enables them to improve their writing with respect to the use of English writing mechanics. Study findings have further concluded that peer assessment as instructional technique is effective for the reduction of English writing apprehension. Students mostly have fear of evaluation of their written work in English. When they evaluated their fellows' work, this technique reduced their fear of evaluation and anxiety of writing in English. Students became courageous to write in English as a foreign language. So, peer assessment is effective for the reduction of English writing apprehension.

### **Recommendations**

The current study has following recommendations:

1. English teachers teaching at undergraduate level are recommended to use peer assessment as an instructional technique to improve students' mechanics of English writing.
2. Undergraduate level English teachers are recommended to use peer assessment to improve students' correct use of tenses, spellings, articles, and subject verb agreement in their English writing.



3. English teachers teaching at undergraduate level are further recommended to use peer assessment as an instructional technique to reduce graduation level students' English writing apprehension.
4. Undergraduate students are also recommended to adopt peer assessment techniques to improve their mechanics of English writing which are correct use of tenses, spellings, articles, and subject verb agreement.
5. Undergraduate students are also recommended to experience peer assessment to reduce their English writing apprehension.

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