

STYLISTIC IMITATION AND PEER-BASED INTERVENTION IN THAI EFL WRITING CLASSROOMS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF LEARNERS' WRITING DEVELOPMENT

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: August 2026 Revised: September 2026 Accepted: September 2026 Published: October 2026	<i>Writing remains challenging for EFL learners because it requires the simultaneous management of ideas, organization, language, cohesion, and genre conventions. Although model-text instruction and peer feedback have independently received considerable attention. This qualitative descriptive study investigated the extent to which stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention supported Thai EFL learners' writing and explored learners' perceptions of its contribution to drafting, feedback, revision, and writing independence. Participants were five EFL teachers and 23 learners involved in academic writing classes at secondary schools in Thailand. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations and analysed through data condensation, thematic display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicated that model texts reduced drafting uncertainty and made paragraph structure, cohesion, transitions, and rhetorical development more visible. Peer review helped learners identify unclear ideas, organizational weaknesses, and missing explanations, while repeated feedback cycles encouraged substantive revision and greater confidence. However, improvements were less apparent in grammar and vocabulary, and several learners remained uncertain about peer-feedback accuracy or dependent on model structures and teacher confirmation. The intervention therefore supported writing to a meaningful but differentiated extent, with its strongest contributions occurring at the discourse and writing-process levels. The study concludes that stylistic imitation and peer intervention can function as mutually reinforcing pedagogical practices when supported by clear models, focused rubrics, feedback training, teacher monitoring, and gradual withdrawal of scaffolding.</i>
Keywords EFL writing skills; Peer-based intervention; Stylistic imitation; Thai EFL learners; Writing instruction;	
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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a central component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education because it enables learners to communicate knowledge, construct arguments, participate in academic discourse, and demonstrate control of linguistic resources. Despite its importance,

writing remains one of the most demanding language skills for EFL learners. To produce an effective text, learners must generate and select relevant ideas, organize information logically, choose appropriate vocabulary, construct grammatically acceptable sentences, maintain cohesion, and respond to the conventions of a particular genre. These cognitive and linguistic processes must often be performed simultaneously, creating a substantial burden for learners with limited English proficiency. Conventional writing instruction may intensify this difficulty when it emphasizes error correction or the final written product without making the processes and textual choices of proficient writers visible. Consequently, learners may understand isolated grammatical rules but remain uncertain about how to transform those rules into coherent paragraphs, purposeful arguments, and stylistically appropriate compositions. This instructional problem has encouraged the development of approaches that provide learners with explicit textual support while preserving opportunities for creativity, reflection, and independent expression. One such approach is stylistic imitation, which uses model texts to reveal how effective writing is constructed and progressively guides learners from supported practice towards autonomous production.

Stylistic imitation is based on the principle that learners can strengthen their writing competence by closely examining and selectively reproducing the linguistic, rhetorical, and organizational features of proficient texts. Unlike mechanical copying, stylistic imitation requires learners to identify how particular textual features perform communicative functions. These features may include sentence structure, paragraph development, cohesive devices, transitions, voice, tone, stance, and strategies for presenting claims and supporting evidence. Model texts therefore operate as cognitive and rhetorical guides that help learners recognize the relationship between language choices and communicative purposes (Li, 2021; Pastrana & Diva, 2023; Yulianti, 2024). The instructional process may begin with close imitation, during which learners follow the structure or stylistic pattern of a model relatively carefully. It may then proceed to transformative or free imitation, in which learners adapt the identified patterns to new topics, purposes, and personal ideas (Pastrana & Diva, 2023; Peng & Barrot, 2023; Yulianti, 2024). This staged progression can reduce the initial cognitive demands of EFL writing because learners do not have to invent every element of a text simultaneously. Instead, they can concentrate on recognizing and practising a limited number of rhetorical and linguistic patterns before applying them independently. Stylistic imitation is therefore best conceptualized as scaffolded apprenticeship: learners first observe how experienced writers solve textual problems and subsequently internalize, modify, and extend those strategies in their own compositions.

The pedagogical value of stylistic imitation also lies in its potential to integrate form, meaning, genre awareness, and authorial development. Model-based instruction can make genre conventions more accessible by showing learners how paragraphs are organized, how coherence is sustained, and how writers position themselves in relation to readers and ideas. Corpus-informed and genre-sensitive models may further assist teachers in selecting examples that represent relevant language practices without treating a single variety of English as universally prescriptive (Gilquin, 2021; Selenya & Mwisongo, 2023). However, the use of models must be carefully managed. Excessive attention to formal resemblance can restrict student voice and encourage dependence on predetermined structures. Contemporary perspectives therefore argue that imitation should not require learners to reproduce an allegedly correct form without reflection. Instead, it should support dialogic engagement with voice, stance, purpose, and audience, allowing learners to understand conventions while making meaningful rhetorical choices (Liu & Chen, 2022; Pastrana & Diva, 2023; Smith, 2022). This balance is particularly important in multilingual classrooms, where learners' first-language resources and local English practices may influence how they interpret and adapt model texts. Effective stylistic imitation should scaffold participation in target genres without

erasing linguistic identity or reducing writing to formal compliance. The progression from imitation to innovation must therefore be explicit, with learners encouraged to evaluate which modelled features are transferable, which require modification, and how those features can be used to express original content.

Although stylistic imitation provides learners with visible models, writing development also requires interaction, response, and opportunities for revision. Peer-based intervention addresses this need by positioning writing as a social and iterative activity rather than an isolated attempt to produce a final text. In a structured peer-based classroom, learners exchange drafts, evaluate texts using agreed criteria, discuss alternative expressions, and determine which comments should guide revision. Such activities encourage students to become both writers and readers. When reviewing a peer's composition, learners must apply assessment criteria, identify successful and problematic features, notice linguistic and rhetorical choices, and explain possible improvements. This evaluative process can deepen their understanding of writing because weaknesses or strengths may be more visible in another student's draft than in their own. Research across EFL and higher-education contexts indicates that structured peer feedback can enhance writing performance, revision behaviour, self-efficacy, metacognitive awareness, and self-regulated learning (Çetin et al., 2024; Gong & Yan, 2023; Nussbaum et al., 2024; Singh & Halim, 2023; Yabukoshi & Mizumoto, 2024).

Nevertheless, peer intervention is not automatically beneficial. Learners may provide vague, overly general, inaccurate, or excessively form-focused comments when they have not been trained to evaluate writing. Some students may also hesitate to criticize their classmates or may distrust feedback from peers whom they perceive as equally inexperienced. Peer intervention must therefore be designed as an explicitly taught learning strategy. Effective implementation requires clear rubrics, model comments, guided practice, appropriate feedback language, reflection activities, and teacher monitoring (Allen & Katz, 2022; Banegas et al., 2020; Yabukoshi & Mizumoto, 2024). These supports develop feedback literacy, understood as the capacity to interpret criteria, judge the usefulness of comments, and make informed revision decisions. Peer comments should not be accepted uncritically; learners need to compare feedback with task requirements, model texts, teacher guidance, and their own communicative intentions. Self-efficacy is equally important because learners who believe they can provide and use feedback productively are more likely to participate actively in revision (Hasan, 2022; Liu & McFarland, 2021; Mahmood et al., 2021; Singh & Halim, 2023). Thus, the main pedagogical contribution of peer-based intervention is not simply the provision of additional corrections. It creates a collaborative environment in which learners articulate writing knowledge, negotiate meaning, evaluate alternatives, and regulate the development of their texts.

The integration of stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention offers a theoretically complementary approach to writing instruction. Stylistic imitation provides a visible reference for organization, cohesion, sentence construction, and rhetorical development, whereas peer intervention allows learners to examine how effectively those features have been transferred into new writing. A coherent instructional cycle may begin with guided analysis of a model text, followed by identification of its central linguistic and rhetorical features. Learners then produce an imitative draft on a different topic, exchange drafts for rubric-guided peer review, and revise their texts towards greater independence. The model gives peer reviewers a shared standard, reducing the likelihood that comments will be based only on personal preference. At the same time, peer discussion prevents imitation from becoming passive reproduction because learners must explain, question, and evaluate how a modelled feature functions in a new context. The final revision stage encourages movement beyond resemblance to the model by requiring learners to retain effective genre conventions while strengthening originality, relevance, and authorial voice. This integration is consistent with process-genre perspectives

that combine model analysis, drafting, feedback, and revision within a recursive approach to writing development (Liu & Chen, 2022; Peng & Barrot, 2023; Xing, 2024). It also reflects evidence that feedback-supported and self-regulated writing activities can produce deeper engagement with writing strategies than product-focused instruction alone (Çetin et al., 2024; Mills et al., 2025; Yabukoshi & Mizumoto, 2024).

This integrated approach is especially relevant to EFL writing classrooms in Thailand, where learners may possess knowledge of grammar and vocabulary yet experience difficulty producing coherent, well-developed, and rhetorically effective English texts. Thai learners' previous educational experiences may also influence their willingness to criticize peers, confidence in peer comments, and reliance on teacher authority. Research in Thailand suggests that peer feedback can improve essay-writing ability and self-regulated learning, and that learners generally view collaborative feedback positively. However, these benefits depend on the accuracy of comments, the structure of the activity, and learners' capacity to incorporate feedback into revision (Wichanpricha, 2020). These findings highlight both the promise and the limitations of peer intervention. A model-based framework may strengthen peer review by giving Thai EFL learners concrete textual evidence with which to evaluate organization, cohesion, and style.

Despite the independent support for model-text instruction and structured peer feedback, limited research has examined their deliberate integration as a unified intervention for Thai EFL writing classrooms. Existing studies frequently investigate imitation, genre modelling, peer feedback, or self-regulated learning separately. Consequently, insufficient attention has been given to whether stylistic models can improve the specificity of peer comments and whether peer dialogue can help learners move from close imitation towards more autonomous writing. The present study addresses this gap by investigating the efficacy of stylistic imitation facilitated through peer-based intervention among Thai EFL learners. It specifically aims to determine whether the integrated intervention improves learners' writing performance and to examine how learners perceive its contribution to drafting, peer review, revision, and independent expression.

The novelty of this study lies in treating stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention not as separate instructional techniques but as mutually reinforcing components of a structured writing cycle. It introduces model texts as both resources for initial composition and shared reference points for peer evaluation. It also examines whether peer interaction can facilitate the transition from imitation to stylistic independence, thereby addressing concerns that model-based instruction may lead to mechanical reproduction. By situating the intervention in the Thai EFL context, the research further contributes context-sensitive evidence regarding the role of feedback literacy, learner perceptions, and collaborative revision in model-supported writing pedagogy.

The study is guided by the following research questions: *To what extent does stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention improve Thai EFL learners' writing performance? And How do Thai EFL learners perceive the use of stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention in supporting their drafting, feedback, revision, and development towards independent writing?*

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the use of stylistic imitation facilitated through peer-based intervention in academic writing classes in Thailand. The design was selected because the study sought to obtain a detailed understanding of how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers implemented the instructional approach, how learners participated in the writing activities, and how both groups perceived its contribution to writing development. Rather than measuring the intervention exclusively

through numerical changes in writing scores, the study focused on classroom processes, participant experiences, instructional interactions, feedback practices, and the development of learners' writing during model analysis, imitative drafting, peer review, and revision.

A qualitative descriptive design was appropriate for addressing the research objectives because stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention are context-dependent practices. Their implementation may be influenced by teachers' instructional decisions, learners' proficiency levels, classroom relationships, feedback literacy, confidence, and previous experiences with academic writing. These factors cannot be adequately understood through numerical data alone. Interviews enabled the researchers to explore the meanings that teachers and learners attributed to the intervention, while classroom observations provided direct evidence of how the instructional procedures were enacted. The combination of these methods supported an examination of both reported experiences and observable classroom practices.

The study was conducted within the natural setting of academic writing classes in selected secondary schools in Thailand. The researchers did not attempt to control classroom conditions or isolate variables as would be required in an experimental study. Instead, the instructional cycle was examined as it occurred in the participating classes. The cycle included analysing model texts, identifying linguistic and rhetorical features, producing imitative drafts on different topics, exchanging drafts for peer feedback, and revising the texts towards more independent expression. This naturalistic orientation allowed the researchers to examine how teachers and learners responded to the approach under authentic classroom conditions.

The design addressed the first research question by examining teachers' and learners' accounts of changes in writing performance and by observing evidence of improvement in organization, cohesion, idea development, language use, revision practices, and independence. However, the qualitative design did not determine the statistical magnitude of improvement or establish a causal relationship between the intervention and writing achievement. Statements concerning efficacy were therefore based on converging evidence from teacher interviews, learner interviews, classroom observations, and examples of classroom behaviour rather than test-score comparisons. The second research question was addressed more directly through participants' descriptions of the usefulness, challenges, and perceived effects of stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention on drafting, feedback, revision, and autonomous writing.

Research Participants

The participants comprised five EFL teachers from secondary schools in Thailand and 23 EFL learners enrolled in academic writing classes at the participating schools. The inclusion of teachers and learners allowed the study to examine the intervention from two complementary perspectives. The teachers provided information concerning instructional planning, model-text selection, peer-feedback procedures, classroom management, perceived learner development, and challenges encountered during implementation. The learners provided accounts of their experiences in analysing model texts, producing imitative compositions, evaluating their peers' drafts, receiving feedback, and revising their own writing.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide information directly relevant to the research objectives. The teacher participants were required to meet the following criteria: they were currently teaching English at a secondary school in Thailand; they had experience teaching writing or academic writing; they were involved in implementing or observing stylistic-imitation and peer-based writing activities; and they were willing to participate in interviews and classroom observations. Preference was given to teachers who had sufficient familiarity with process-oriented writing instruction, model-text analysis, peer feedback, or related EFL writing practices.

The five teacher participants represented the instructional settings included in the study. Relevant demographic and professional information collected from the teachers included gender, age range, highest academic qualification, years of English-teaching experience, years of writing-instruction experience, and previous training in peer feedback or model-based writing instruction. To protect confidentiality, teachers were identified using codes such as T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5. Their institutional identities were also anonymized in the research report.

The 23 learner participants were selected from the academic writing classes taught or facilitated by the participating teachers. Learners were included when they were enrolled in the selected class, had participated in the complete instructional cycle, were willing to be observed, and provided informed consent. Where required, parental or guardian consent was also obtained because the participants were secondary-school learners. Students who did not complete the central writing and peer-review activities or who did not provide consent were excluded from the interview sample.

The learner demographic information included age or age range, gender, grade level, length of English study, previous experience with academic writing, and previous participation in peer-feedback activities. These characteristics were collected to help interpret possible differences in participants' experiences. For example, learners with previous peer-review experience might have demonstrated greater confidence in evaluating drafts than learners encountering peer feedback for the first time. Similarly, differences in English proficiency could have affected learners' ability to identify rhetorical patterns or formulate useful feedback. Learners were assigned codes such as S1 to S23 so that individual statements and observed behaviours could be reported without disclosing their identities.

Instruments

The principal research instruments were semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations. The instruments were developed with reference to the research objectives and the instructional stages of stylistic imitation facilitated through peer-based intervention. Their use enabled the researchers to collect complementary forms of evidence. Interviews captured participants' interpretations, attitudes, and reflections, whereas observations documented actual classroom practices, interactions, and responses during the intervention.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Separate interview protocols were developed for the EFL teachers and learners. The teacher interview protocol investigated five areas: teachers' understanding of stylistic imitation; preparation and selection of model texts; organization of peer-based activities; perceived changes in learners' writing and revision behaviour; and challenges associated with implementing the approach. Additional questions examined how teachers trained learners to provide feedback, monitored the accuracy of peer comments, encouraged learners to move beyond mechanical imitation, and responded to differences in writing proficiency.

The learner interview protocol explored participants' experiences of studying model texts, identifying stylistic and rhetorical patterns, producing imitative drafts, giving and receiving peer feedback, and revising their writing. Questions also investigated whether the intervention helped learners organize ideas, construct sentences, maintain cohesion, develop arguments, recognize weaknesses, and write more independently. Learners were invited to describe both positive and negative experiences, including difficulties in understanding models, evaluating peers' work, trusting peer comments, and deciding which suggestions to incorporate.

The interviews were semi-structured so that all participants responded to a common set of core questions while the interviewer retained the flexibility to ask follow-up questions. Probing questions such as "Can you provide an example?", "Why did you find that activity

useful?”, and “How did the feedback influence your revision?” were used to obtain specific and detailed responses. With permission, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews could be conducted in English, Thai, or a combination of both, according to participant preference. Where Thai was used, the relevant excerpts were translated into English and checked by a bilingual language specialist to preserve meaning.

The interview protocols were developed through several stages. First, the researchers constructed an instrument blueprint linking each interview question to the research objectives and research questions. Second, the questions were reviewed by experts in EFL writing, qualitative research, and language education. The reviewers assessed whether the questions were relevant, clear, culturally appropriate, and capable of eliciting sufficiently detailed responses. Ambiguous, leading, repetitive, or excessively technical questions were revised or removed. Third, the protocols were piloted with an EFL teacher and a small number of learners who shared characteristics with the research participants but were not included in the main study. The pilot interviews were used to assess question clarity, interview duration, sequencing, and participants’ interpretation of key terms.

Classroom Observation

A structured observation guide was used to record the implementation of the instructional activities and participants’ responses. The researchers adopted a non-participant observer role and did not directly teach the lessons or intervene in classroom interaction. The observation guide was organized according to the main instructional phases: model-text analysis, identification of stylistic features, imitative drafting, peer-feedback preparation, peer review, revision, and reflection.

During model-text analysis, the researchers observed how teachers introduced the model, explained its purpose, directed attention to linguistic and rhetorical features, and encouraged learners to interpret the relationship between form and meaning. During imitative drafting, observations focused on how learners transferred modelled features to new topics and whether they merely copied expressions or adapted the patterns meaningfully. During peer review, the researchers examined the use of rubrics, the specificity and accuracy of comments, learner participation, feedback language, negotiation between peers, and teacher monitoring. During revision, observations addressed how learners selected, rejected, or modified peer suggestions and whether the revised writing demonstrated increasing independence from the original model.

The observation sheet contained descriptive fields and reflective fields. Descriptive notes recorded classroom events, instructional actions, verbal exchanges, learner behaviour, and the sequence of activities. Reflective notes captured preliminary interpretations, questions, contextual conditions, and issues requiring further investigation during interviews. The observers avoided relying solely on evaluative statements such as “students were engaged.” Instead, they recorded observable indicators, including the number of learners contributing to discussions, the types of questions asked, the time spent reviewing drafts, and examples of feedback exchanged between peers.

The observation instrument was reviewed by experts to establish content validity and alignment with the study objectives. It was then piloted in a comparable writing class. Based on the pilot observation, overlapping indicators were combined, unclear categories were revised, and additional space was provided for contextual notes. When more than one researcher or observer was involved, they jointly observed at least one session and compared their records. Differences in interpretation were discussed until a common understanding of each observation category was reached. This observer-calibration procedure increased consistency without reducing qualitative observation to mechanical counting.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analysed using the interactive processes of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These processes were not treated as strictly linear stages. Instead, analysis began during data collection and continued through transcription, coding, comparison, interpretation, and reporting. Interview transcripts, observation notes, reflective field notes, and relevant classroom evidence were organized using participant codes and data-source labels.

Data Condensation

Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, coding, and transforming the raw qualitative material into analytically meaningful categories. The researchers initially read the interview transcripts and observation notes several times to become familiar with the data. During the first cycle of coding, descriptive and process codes were assigned to segments of data. Descriptive codes identified the topic of a passage, such as “model-text selection,” “feedback training,” “difficulty generating ideas,” “peer-feedback accuracy,” or “teacher monitoring.” Process codes represented actions and developments, including “noticing rhetorical patterns,” “adapting modelled sentences,” “negotiating feedback,” “rejecting unclear comments,” and “revising towards independence.”

A combination of deductive and inductive coding was employed. Deductive codes were derived from the research questions and conceptual components of the intervention, including stylistic imitation, model analysis, peer review, revision, writing development, and learner autonomy. Inductive codes were developed from meanings that emerged directly from participant accounts and observed classroom practices. For example, learners might report that model texts reduced anxiety, that peer review created fear of embarrassment, or that discussing a draft helped them recognize errors in their own writing. Such findings were coded even when they had not been anticipated in the initial framework.

During the second cycle of analysis, related codes were grouped into broader categories and themes. Codes concerning topic sentences, paragraph sequence, cohesive devices, and transitions could be grouped under “development of textual organization.” Codes concerning uncertainty, trust, comment accuracy, and teacher confirmation could form a category such as “conditions affecting feedback uptake.” The researchers used constant comparison to examine similarities and differences between teachers, among learners, across classrooms, and between interview and observation data. Data that challenged dominant interpretations were marked as negative or divergent cases and examined carefully.

Data Display

The condensed data were presented in matrices, thematic tables, charts, and narrative summaries to facilitate comparison and interpretation. A research-question matrix was constructed to connect each research question with relevant participant groups, data sources, codes, categories, and emerging findings. Teacher-by-theme and learner-by-theme matrices were used to determine whether themes were shared across participants or limited to particular individuals or classrooms.

An instructional-phase matrix displayed findings according to model analysis, imitative drafting, peer review, revision, and independent writing. This display helped the researchers identify where the intervention appeared most supportive and where participants experienced difficulties. A source-triangulation matrix was also used to compare interview claims with observation evidence. For example, perceived improvement in cohesion could be displayed alongside classroom instances in which learners identified transitions in a model, commented on peers’ cohesive devices, and revised their own paragraphs. The data displays did not replace the original transcripts or observation notes. Instead, they served as analytical tools that enabled the researchers to identify patterns, relationships, contradictions, and gaps.

Important quotations and classroom episodes were retained in the displays so that final interpretations remained closely connected to participants' language and observable practices.

Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Conclusion drawing involved interpreting the displayed data and constructing explanations relevant to the research objectives. Preliminary conclusions were developed concerning how stylistic imitation supported writing, how peer-based intervention influenced reflection and revision, and what conditions strengthened or constrained the integrated approach. The researchers also examined whether the combination promoted movement from close imitation towards more independent writing.

Conclusions were continuously verified against the complete dataset. The researchers returned to the original transcripts and field notes to ensure that themes were not based on isolated statements or decontextualized quotations. Evidence was compared across teachers, learners, interviews, observations, and classroom stages. A conclusion was considered well supported when it was reflected in multiple sources or when a particularly detailed case provided strong contextual evidence. Divergent findings were reported to demonstrate the complexity of participants' experiences rather than being treated as errors.

Credibility was enhanced through methodological triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement with the classroom data, and attention to negative cases. Dependability was supported by maintaining an audit trail containing interview guides, observation protocols, coding decisions, theme-development records, and revisions to the analytical framework. Confirmability was strengthened through reflective journaling and peer discussion of the coding and interpretations. Thick descriptions of the setting, participants, instructional procedures, and findings were used to support transferability. The final themes were reported through analytical narratives supported by participant quotations and observational evidence.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The findings were organized around the two research questions. Interview responses from 23 EFL learners and five EFL teachers were condensed, coded, compared, and displayed thematically. Classroom observations were used to examine whether participants' reported experiences were reflected in their writing activities. Six guiding interview questions were developed to explore the contribution of stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention to idea generation, organization, language use, peer feedback, revision, and independent writing. The findings suggest that the integrated approach was perceived as beneficial, particularly for paragraph organization, awareness of textual features, and revision. Nevertheless, the participants also reported limitations involving overdependence on model texts, uncertainty about peer-feedback accuracy, and differences in learners' English proficiency.

Research Question 1: To what extent does stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention improve Thai EFL learners' writing performance?

The qualitative findings indicate that stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention improved learners' writing performance to a considerable, although uneven, extent. Most learners reported that model texts helped them understand how effective paragraphs were structured, while peer-based activities enabled them to identify weaknesses that they had not noticed during initial drafting. Teachers similarly observed improvements in organization, cohesion, sentence construction, and revision behaviour. However, the intervention appeared to be more effective in improving visible textual features than in producing immediate gains in grammatical accuracy or fully independent writing.

How did model texts help learners begin drafting?

The first interview question examined whether stylistic models assisted learners during the early drafting stage. Eighteen of the 23 learners stated that model texts made it easier to begin writing because they provided a clear example of paragraph structure, sentence sequence, and idea development. Three learners considered the models moderately useful, while two learners felt constrained by them. All five teachers agreed that model texts reduced learners' uncertainty at the beginning of a writing task.

The teachers reported that learners previously spent considerable classroom time asking how to start a paragraph or what information should appear after the topic sentence. After analysing model texts, learners were more likely to begin drafting without extensive teacher direction. Classroom observations supported this perception. Many learners referred to the model when organizing their opening sentences, supporting details, and concluding statements. Nevertheless, some learners followed the models too closely and needed teacher guidance to modify the structures for new topics.

Illustrative learner excerpts:

"Before using the model, I had many ideas, but I did not know which sentence should come first. The example showed me the order."

"The model helped me start faster because I could see the topic sentence and supporting sentences."

"Sometimes I was worried that my paragraph must be exactly the same as the model."

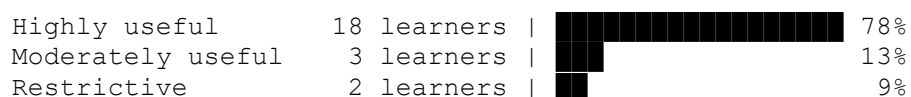


Figure 1. Perceived usefulness of model texts for drafting

Figure 1 shows that most learners regarded model texts as highly useful during drafting. The result suggests that stylistic imitation reduced uncertainty by giving learners an observable structure to follow. However, the two restrictive responses show that model use must be accompanied by instructions encouraging adaptation rather than direct copying.

Which aspects of writing improved most?

The second question explored the writing components that participants believed had improved. Seventeen learners identified paragraph organization as the most noticeable area of development. Fifteen reported improvement in cohesion and the use of transitions, while thirteen perceived greater sentence variety. Only nine learners believed that their grammatical accuracy had clearly improved. Because learners could mention more than one area, the categories overlapped.

The five teachers consistently described organization and cohesion as the strongest improvements. They observed that learners produced clearer topic sentences, arranged supporting details more logically, and used transitions with greater awareness. Teachers were more cautious about grammar, explaining that imitation exposed learners to accurate structures but did not automatically eliminate recurring language errors.

Illustrative learner excerpts

"My paragraph became more organized because I followed the pattern but used my own topic."

"I learned that transition words are not only decorations. They show the relationship between ideas."

"My grammar is still not always correct, but my writing is easier to understand."

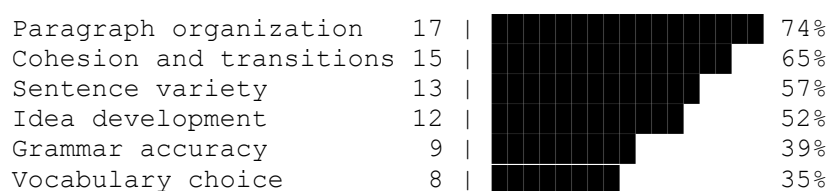


Figure 2. Writing areas Perceived as Improved

Figure 2 demonstrates that organization and cohesion were the most frequently reported areas of improvement. The lower frequencies for grammar and vocabulary suggest that the intervention principally supported discourse-level writing development. Stylistic imitation helped learners see how a text was constructed, whereas additional language-focused instruction was still necessary to strengthen accuracy.

How did peer review influence the quality of learners' writing?

The third question focused on the contribution of peer-based intervention. Sixteen learners stated that peer review helped them identify unclear sentences, missing explanations, and organizational problems. Four learners described its contribution as limited, and three expressed uncertainty about the accuracy of peer comments. Four of the five teachers believed that peer review improved the quality of revisions, while one teacher considered its effectiveness highly dependent on learners' proficiency and training.

Observations showed that the most productive peer-review sessions occurred when learners used a focused rubric based on the model text. Comments such as "add a supporting example," "the transition is unclear," or "this sentence does not connect to the topic sentence" were more actionable than general comments such as "good writing" or "check grammar." Learners appeared to benefit not only from receiving feedback but also from evaluating another person's draft. Several reported that reading a peer's text helped them notice similar weaknesses in their own writing.

Illustrative learner excerpts

"My friend saw that one supporting sentence was not connected to my main idea. I did not notice it before."

"When I checked my partner's paragraph, I understood the rubric better and then checked my own paragraph again."

"Peer feedback was useful, but sometimes I needed to ask the teacher whether the comment was correct."

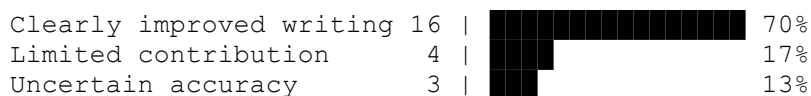


Figure 3. Perceived Contribution of Peer Review

Figure 3 indicates that peer review was positively perceived by most learners. Nevertheless, approximately one-third of the learners either saw only limited benefits or questioned the reliability of peer comments. This finding reinforces the need for teacher monitoring, feedback training, and clear assessment criteria.

Research Question 2: How do Thai EFL learners perceive the use of stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention in supporting their drafting, feedback, revision, and development towards independent writing?

Learners generally perceived the integrated approach as supportive and practical. Model texts reduced the difficulty of beginning a composition, while peer feedback helped them evaluate and revise their drafts. However, their perceptions were not uniformly positive. Some learners were uncomfortable commenting on classmates' work, while others remained dependent on models or teacher confirmation. The development of independent writing therefore appeared gradual rather than immediate.

How did peer feedback affect revision decisions?

The fourth question investigated whether learners used peer comments when revising their texts. Fourteen learners reported using most relevant peer suggestions, six used only selected comments, and three relied mainly on teacher feedback. Teachers observed that learners became more willing to revise content and organization instead of correcting only

grammar and spelling. This represented an important change because several teachers stated that learners had previously equated revision with surface-level correction.

The interview data revealed that learners did not accept all peer comments automatically. They compared suggestions with the rubric, the model text, and teacher explanations. This selective use of feedback indicated developing feedback literacy. Nevertheless, less confident learners tended to accept comments without evaluation or rejected them because they did not trust their peers.

Illustrative learner excerpts

"I used my partner's suggestion to move one sentence because it made the paragraph more logical."

"I did not use every comment. I checked the model and decided which feedback matched the task."

"For grammar feedback, I still wanted the teacher to confirm it."

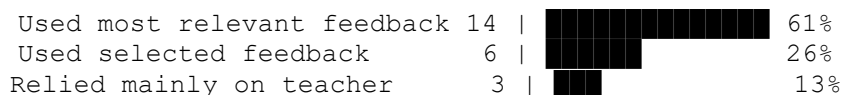


Figure 4. Learners' Use of Peer Feedback During Revision

Figure 4 shows that most learners actively incorporated peer comments into revision. The six selective users demonstrate that effective feedback use involves judgment rather than automatic acceptance. The remaining teacher-dependent learners indicate that peer intervention should supplement rather than completely replace teacher feedback.

Did the intervention increase confidence and participation?

The fifth question examined learners' confidence in writing and peer interaction. Fifteen learners stated that they felt more confident after completing several cycles of model analysis, drafting, peer review, and revision. Five reported a moderate increase in confidence, while three continued to feel anxious, particularly when classmates read their writing. Four teachers observed increased classroom participation, whereas one teacher noted that quieter learners still required structured roles and direct encouragement.

Learners associated their increased confidence with having a clear starting point and receiving confirmation that parts of their writing were effective. Positive peer comments helped learners recognize strengths, while focused suggestions made revision appear manageable. However, anxiety persisted when peer review was perceived as public criticism or when learners feared losing face. Teachers addressed this concern by establishing rules for respectful feedback, allowing anonymous or paired review, and requiring reviewers to identify strengths before suggesting revisions.

Illustrative learner excerpts

"I felt less afraid because I had a structure to guide me."

"When my partner said my topic sentence was clear, I became more confident to continue."

"At first, I did not want my friend to see my mistakes, but after several activities it became normal."

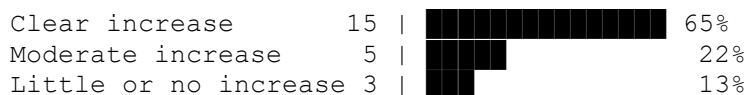


Figure 5. Change in Learners' Writing Confidence

Figure 5 suggests that the intervention positively influenced confidence for most learners. The gradual reduction of anxiety also indicates that peer-based writing practices need repeated implementation. A single peer-review session may be insufficient to establish trust and productive feedback habits.

Did learners become more independent writers?

The final question explored whether learners could move beyond imitation towards independent writing. Thirteen learners believed that they had become more independent because they could plan and organize new paragraphs without repeatedly consulting the

model. Seven learners reported partial independence, while three remained strongly dependent on model structures. Teachers described the movement towards autonomy as gradual. They observed that learners initially copied sentence patterns closely but later adapted organizational and rhetorical features more flexibly.

Classroom observations showed evidence of increasing independence when learners changed the order of ideas, selected different transitions, created original examples, or rejected model features that were unsuitable for a new topic. However, some learners continued to reproduce vocabulary or sentence structures without considering whether they matched the new communicative purpose. Teachers therefore emphasized that stylistic imitation should be progressively reduced as learners gain confidence.

Illustrative learner excerpts

"In the beginning, I checked the model for every sentence. Later, I only used it to remember the organization."

"I can now make an outline by myself, but I still need examples for academic vocabulary."

"The model is useful, but I need more practice before I can write without it."

Greater independence	13			57%
Partial independence	7			30%
Continued dependence	3			13%

Figure 6. Perceived Development Towards Independent Writing

Figure 6 shows that more than half of the learners perceived meaningful progress towards independent writing. Nevertheless, the combined proportion of partially or strongly dependent learners indicates that autonomy develops over time. Stylistic imitation should therefore be treated as temporary scaffolding that is gradually withdrawn.

Stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention improved Thai EFL learners' writing performance to a meaningful but differentiated extent. Its strongest contribution was observed in learners' ability to begin writing, organize paragraphs, use cohesive devices, develop supporting ideas, and revise content based on explicit criteria. Model texts reduced the cognitive burden associated with planning and organizing a composition, while peer review encouraged learners to notice weaknesses and consider alternative ways of expressing ideas. Teachers' accounts and classroom observations supported the learners' perceptions, particularly regarding clearer textual organization and more substantive revision practices.

The improvement was less evident in grammar and vocabulary accuracy. Although learners encountered accurate language patterns in the models, exposure and imitation alone did not eliminate persistent language errors. Peer feedback was also less dependable when learners lacked sufficient linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the intervention should be understood as an effective scaffold for discourse-level writing development rather than a complete replacement for explicit language instruction and teacher feedback.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that stylistic imitation implemented through peer-based intervention meaningfully supported Thai EFL learners' writing development, particularly in drafting, paragraph organization, cohesion, revision, and confidence. However, the improvement was not equally evident across all dimensions of writing. The strongest developments occurred at the discourse and process levels, whereas grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, and complete independence improved more gradually. This pattern is important because it suggests that the instructional approach should be viewed as a scaffold for making writing processes and textual conventions visible rather than as a comprehensive solution to every linguistic difficulty experienced by EFL learners. The convergence between learner interviews, teacher perspectives, and classroom observations strengthens this

interpretation. Learners generally described model texts as useful starting points, teachers observed more organized writing and substantive revision, and classroom observations indicated that students increasingly applied rhetorical patterns, transitions, and peer comments when improving their drafts.

The first major finding concerned the role of model texts in helping learners begin writing. Eighteen of the 23 learners perceived the models as highly useful, and all five teachers agreed that the models reduced uncertainty at the beginning of a writing task. This finding supports Pastrana and Diva's (2023) argument that stylistic imitation can improve writing by providing learners with identifiable linguistic and organizational patterns. It also aligns with the genre-based perspective described by Liu and Chen (2022), in which model texts make otherwise abstract conventions more accessible to learners. In the present study, students appeared to benefit from seeing how topic sentences, supporting details, transitions, and concluding statements were arranged. Model texts therefore functioned as procedural guides rather than merely examples of correct English. This contribution was particularly relevant for learners who reported having ideas but not knowing how to order them.

The findings also extend earlier work by showing that model texts can support drafting more effectively when they are connected to peer discussion and revision. Previous studies have often examined genre modelling, stylistic imitation, or peer feedback separately. In this study, the model served not only as a source for initial composition but also as a common reference during peer evaluation. This shared reference reduced the abstractness of peer review because students could compare a classmate's paragraph with previously identified features of the model. The result supports the process-genre orientation discussed by Peng and Barrot (2023) and Zhou (2023), which combines textual modelling with recursive drafting and revision. The present findings therefore add analytical depth to the literature by indicating that model texts may strengthen the specificity of peer comments when learners are explicitly taught which rhetorical and stylistic features to examine.

Paragraph organization and cohesion emerged as the most frequently perceived areas of improvement. Seventeen learners identified organization, and 15 reported improvement in cohesion and transition use. Teachers similarly observed clearer topic sentences, more logical sequencing, and more purposeful use of cohesive devices. These findings confirm the view that stylistic imitation can help learners notice relationships between form and communicative function (Li, 2021; Yulianti, 2024). Instead of treating transitions as isolated vocabulary items, learners began to understand how they signalled relationships between ideas. The findings are also compatible with Gilquin's (2021) discussion of corpus-derived and model-based norms, which suggests that examples can make patterns of language use more visible. Nevertheless, the current study indicates that the value of model texts lies less in prescribing a single ideal form and more in helping learners recognize available organizational choices.

In contrast, only nine learners perceived clear improvement in grammatical accuracy, and only eight identified vocabulary as a major area of development. This result qualifies the more optimistic interpretation of imitation as a general writing-improvement technique. Exposure to accurate structures did not automatically eliminate persistent errors in tense, articles, agreement, or lexical selection. This finding is consistent with Peng and Barrot (2023), who showed that form-focused instruction remains important even in process-genre writing classrooms. It also corresponds with Han's (2021) discussion of corrective feedback, which emphasizes that noticing a correct form does not necessarily result in stable acquisition. Stylistic imitation may provide accurate patterns, but learners still require explicit linguistic explanation, repeated practice, and teacher confirmation. The finding therefore does not contradict the value of imitation; rather, it clarifies its primary contribution. The approach appeared most effective in supporting rhetorical organization and writing processes, while grammar and vocabulary required additional instructional attention.

The second major finding concerned the contribution of peer-based intervention. Sixteen learners reported that peer review helped them identify unclear sentences, missing explanations, and organizational weaknesses. The findings support Banegas et al. (2020), who demonstrated that collaborative writing activities can strengthen motivation, self-efficacy, and awareness of writing processes. They also correspond with Wichanpricha's (2020) findings that Thai EFL learners generally regard feedback as useful for writing improvement. In the present study, peer review was especially productive when students used a focused rubric connected to the model text. Specific comments concerning missing examples, weak transitions, or irrelevant supporting sentences were more useful than broad statements such as "good writing" or "check grammar." This finding reinforces the importance of feedback literacy and confirms that peer review should be explicitly taught rather than treated as an informal exchange.

The study also revealed that giving feedback was itself a learning activity. Several learners reported that reading a partner's paragraph helped them understand the rubric and detect similar weaknesses in their own work. This result supports the broader argument that peer intervention develops metacognitive and self-regulatory processes, not merely additional sources of correction (Yabukoshi & Mizumoto, 2024). It also corresponds with Mak and Wong's (2024) emphasis on sustainable assessment practices in which learners become active evaluators of quality. By examining another student's writing, learners had to articulate criteria, compare alternatives, and justify revision suggestions. This process encouraged them to move from passive reception of teacher comments towards more active judgment.

Nevertheless, not all learners trusted peer feedback. Three learners questioned its accuracy, and some continued to seek teacher confirmation, especially for grammar. This finding confirms Wichanpricha's (2020) observation that the usefulness of peer feedback in Thai EFL contexts depends on comment quality and learners' ability to apply suggestions. It also supports Singh and Halim's (2023) argument that corrective feedback must be appropriate, understandable, and responsive to learner needs. Peer review was therefore most effective when teachers modelled constructive comments, supplied clear criteria, monitored discussions, and intervened when linguistic explanations were uncertain. The finding challenges any assumption that peer feedback can replace teacher feedback. Instead, the two forms of feedback appeared complementary: peers were particularly helpful for identifying reader-based problems and organizational weaknesses, while teachers remained important for confirming language accuracy and resolving disagreement.

Revision behaviour represented another significant area of development. Fourteen learners reported using most relevant peer suggestions, while six selected only comments they considered appropriate. Teachers observed that learners began revising content and organization instead of limiting revision to spelling and grammar correction. This constitutes an important shift from surface editing towards meaning-oriented revision. The selective use of feedback suggests the development of feedback literacy because learners compared comments with rubrics, model texts, and their own intentions. Yabukoshi and Mizumoto (2024) similarly emphasize that self-regulated writers evaluate resources and make strategic decisions rather than following feedback automatically. The present study extends this perspective by showing how model texts can serve as an additional decision-making resource during peer-supported revision.

Learner confidence also increased through repeated instructional cycles. Fifteen learners reported clear growth in confidence, while five described moderate improvement. This result is consistent with Palani and Sulaiman's (2022) review of strategies for reducing writing apprehension and with Hasan's (2022) emphasis on self-efficacy in language pedagogy. In this study, confidence appeared to increase because the model provided a manageable starting point and peer responses confirmed that some parts of learners' writing were already effective.

Nevertheless, three learners continued to experience anxiety when classmates read their drafts. This finding highlights the cultural and interpersonal dimensions of peer review. Teachers need to establish respectful feedback norms, protect learners from embarrassment, and introduce peer assessment gradually.

The findings suggest gradual movement towards writing independence. Thirteen learners perceived increased independence, whereas seven reported only partial independence and three remained strongly dependent on models. This confirms the value of imitation as temporary scaffolding but also supports Smith's (2022) warning that writing instruction should preserve authorial voice and dialogic meaning-making. Learners demonstrated emerging autonomy when they changed idea sequences, selected different transitions, created original examples, and rejected model features that did not fit their purposes. However, continued dependence among some participants indicates that models must be progressively withdrawn. Overall, the study extends existing research by demonstrating that stylistic imitation and peer-based intervention can operate as mutually reinforcing practices. Models make effective writing visible, while peer dialogue encourages learners to question, adapt, and revise those patterns. The approach is therefore most effective when imitation leads to transformation rather than reproduction and when peer intervention is supported by rubrics, feedback training, teacher monitoring, and explicit language instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that stylistic imitation facilitated through peer-based intervention offers a valuable approach to supporting Thai EFL learners' academic writing development. The qualitative evidence from learner interviews, teacher interviews, and classroom observations indicated that the approach was especially helpful in reducing drafting difficulty, clarifying paragraph structure, improving cohesion, encouraging idea development, and promoting more substantive revision. Model texts gave learners a visible representation of effective organization and language use, while peer-based activities enabled them to evaluate how successfully those features had been transferred to new compositions. The strongest effects were therefore evident in discourse-level awareness and writing-process behaviour rather than in immediate grammatical or lexical mastery. Learners became more willing to begin writing, discuss textual choices, identify weaknesses, and revise their work. However, stylistic imitation did not independently resolve persistent language errors, and peer comments were not always sufficiently accurate. Teacher guidance, explicit form-focused instruction, structured rubrics, and feedback training remained essential components of the instructional process.

The study further concludes that movement from imitation towards independent writing is progressive and dependent on the quality of scaffolding. Most learners perceived increased confidence and some degree of autonomy, but several remained reliant on model structures or teacher confirmation. Stylistic imitation should therefore be introduced as a transitional pedagogical resource rather than a fixed template for production. Teachers should gradually reduce learners' dependence on models by encouraging them to modify rhetorical patterns, create original examples, make independent organizational decisions, and justify whether particular stylistic features are appropriate for new communicative purposes. Similarly, peer-based intervention should be implemented repeatedly so that learners can develop trust, feedback literacy, and critical judgment. The principal contribution of the study lies in demonstrating that model texts and peer review can function as mutually reinforcing elements of a coherent writing cycle. The model provides a common standard for analysis and feedback, while peer dialogue helps transform imitation into reflective adaptation. Further research involving larger samples, multiple school contexts, longitudinal observations, and complementary writing assessments is recommended to investigate the transfer and durability of these developments.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study was voluntary. The teachers, learners, and, where required, the learners' parents or legal guardians were informed about the study's objectives, procedures, expected benefits, possible discomforts, confidentiality arrangements, and intended use of the findings. Written informed consent was obtained before interviews and classroom observations were conducted. Participants were informed that they could decline to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study without academic, professional, or personal consequences.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The qualitative data supporting the findings consist of interview recordings, interview transcripts, observation notes, reflective field notes, coding records, and analytical matrices. These materials are not publicly available because they contain contextual information that may permit the identification of participating teachers, learners, or schools.

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