

Abstract

Lots of studies have proved that picture prompts elicit English writing with concrete and relevant information. This present study aims to investigate the effects of using pictures as prompts on English writing performance of high and low achievers in senior high school in content, organization, vocabulary and overall writing performance. Participants in this study were 108 third graders in a senior high school in Pingtung County who were divided into two groups of high achievers (HA1 and HA2) and two groups of low achievers (LA1 and LA2) based on their scores in a GEPT writing test. Questionnaire I was done to know the participants' background information. Two types of narrative writing tests were administered to the 108 participants. One with verbal prompt was taken by HA1 and LA1 and the other with verbal-plus-picture prompt was taken by HA2 and LA2. Questionnaire II regarding the participants' attitudes toward English writing was filled out by all subjects. Questionnaire III was done by HA2 and LA2 to express their opinions on picture prompts. In-depth group interviews were conducted to further explore students' perception of and attitude toward picture prompts.

The findings of the study are summarized as follows. First, picture prompts had significant effects on the content, organization and overall writing performance of the high achievers but no significant effect was found on the vocabulary. Second, picture prompts had no significant effects on low achievers' writing in content, organization, vocabulary and overall writing performance. Third, both high and low achievers kept a positive attitude toward picture prompts and were better motivated to write when guided by picture prompts.