

# TEACHING WRITING IN THE EFL CONTEXT

*Insights for pedagogical purposes*

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## GENERAL EDITORS

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*Teaching Writing in the EFL Context* accounts for the necessary theoretical background connecting applied linguistics theories to be considered for linguistic purposes and pedagogical applications. Writing throughout the book is seen as a process and product that requires the understanding of not only the standard writing conventions but the social and cultural context in which the text is being written for.

The volume, therefore, attempts to serve both as a stimulating source introducing writing suggestions and as one of the many significant contributions to the research area. It ponders that in addition to following writing standards and sentence-

construction skills, vocabulary knowledge helps to produce intelligible and worthwhile, readable texts (c.f. research on corpus linguistics and applied linguistics).

Writing as a process requires the ability to think of texts beyond a composition consisting of sentences. It involves predicting the intended audience for the text, anticipating the potential reader's reactions to what they read, and assessing the criteria they use to judge the text. That is, authors should take a writer-reading responsibility at producing accurate texts in terms of content and structure with a rich and extensive vocabulary.

Writing as a product focuses on presenting the final draft of the manuscript bearing in mind that all-powerful readers in the field and outsiders can evaluate it as coherent and cohesive text that meets the writing standards of the language and conventions of the discourse community.

Such theoretical and practical approaches described in this book to students for whom English is not their first language (L1) somehow allow them to meet the conventions and standards for writing academic texts in English.

*The book has been developed as an attempt to close one of the research gaps for teaching writing in the EFL context*

*Rodrigo Tovar*



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*"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others."*

*Marcus Tullius Cicero*

We want to express our sincere gratitude to all people who have influenced on the development of this book. First of all, to our family, for their love, support and encouragement. To the authorities of the Human and Education Faculty and the Research Department at Technical University of Cotopaxi, for the support provided in the development of this academic work. A special thanks to Katy Toscano—a preservice English teacher who contributes in the data collection process. Finally, to the peer reviewers, for their valuable contributions to the quality of this book that is directed to all those who are involved in the teaching of English as a foreign Language.

*Mercedes Abata and Fabiola Cando*

## PREFACE

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There will hardly be a hundred of students who hate writing in English, but there are millions of teachers who hate what they mistakenly believe is teaching writing. We believed we were not in any of these groups because we had had certain experience in writing and in teaching it. However, our first approach to the topic—presented as a research proposal by two pre-service teachers— allowed us to realize that we actually were in the second group. The initial literature review about the nature of writing skills, its process, the approaches, methods and strategies motivated us to include more writing lessons in our classes. It clarified our doubts and misconceptions. Other researchers' experiences have been useful in our multiple attempts to put in practice ideas that better meet our students' needs. Since then, we have been interested in developing our pedagogical skills to teach writing more effectively.

We wrote this book not because we are experts, but because we want to motivate you to feel interested in trying some approaches when teaching writing in spite of the barriers. The book also includes other colleagues' experiences that can be useful for you to realize that they are able to do more than we have done. We do not pretend to say that we have done a lot, but we want to say that there are millions of things you can do in order to provide better opportunities for developing writing in your classrooms. You can find any teaching idea that better fit your classrooms in order to put in practice. Whatever you do, keep doing! Keep teaching writing even if there are not immediate results. The more you teach, the more confident you will become and better results you will have.

As most of the content included in this book comes from practical classroom applications, we suggest to apply and plan your teaching ideas by using Action Research. It is a type of classroom research to reflect on the teaching and learning process so as to improve them. Its cyclical process: diagnosis, plan, implementation, and reflection will be a useful tool in the long journey of the teaching of writing. It will help you develop your own theories and practical skills to overcome problems while you teach. We highly recommend to do literature review as you go by this process in order to clarify doubts and have new ideas to overcome how to teach writing skill.

*Mercedes Abata and Fabiola Cando*

# INTRODUCTION

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Writing is the final product of several separable acts (e.g., outlining, drafting, and editing) that are greatly challenging to learn simultaneously; “even in one’s native language, learning to write is something like learning a second language” (Leki, 1992: 10). Indeed, when teaching writing, some teachers find that teaching this productive skill is difficult (Thuy, 2009) and even a daunting process if the writing is not in the first language (L1). Certainly, second-language and foreign-language learners may face difficulties in following writing standards and conventions. For instance, the writing style in English differs across disciplines and scientific discursive communities. Therefore, understanding conventions and following English language patterns helps authors to produce texts effectively.

Writing in English is a complex activity that involves the development of the learners’ linguistic and communicative competence, which makes it quite a challenging task (Bilal et al, 2013), particularly for learners whose native language is not

English. It is mainly because “no one is native writer of writing” (Leki, 1992: 10). That is why learners from linguistic and cultural backgrounds other than English tend to transfer writing standards and conventions from the L1 to the target language, which, in many cases, affects the quality of the written composition. Such contextualization of writing motivates the writing of the current book, which provides teachers with insightful academic ideas to start teaching writing. It presents some views about the role of vocabulary in writing, the relationship of teachers' beliefs and their practices, a writing technique to guide students' writing task, and integrated approaches to promote the development of writing skills. The book also invites teachers to reflect on their teaching practices and on their own writing competence by presenting linguistic trends and approaches to writing.

The book “Teaching Writing in the EFL Context” is the framework for disseminating research outcomes and research evidence, sharing innovative initiatives and ideas related to academic writing with EFL students, experienced, and inexperienced writers on the process of writing. As stated above, writing academic texts is hard work, but such process, in this book, is simplified by describing theories, approaches, strategies, preconceptions, instructions, and pathways for writing texts such as essays, reports, manuscripts, etc., focusing on the context and audience to which the text is addressed. Research studies are not far-reaching until the findings are disseminated and communicated to others (Oermann & Hays, 2018). Thus, the main goal of the book is to transmit the authors' experiences, reflections, and knowledge about writing as a process and product approach in the development of writing skills, as well

as it highlights the importance of different learning scenarios and learners' needs. The book contains six chapters as the following:

The first chapter underscores the crucial role of vocabulary in writing, highlighting its influence on language acquisition. It acknowledges the importance of linguistic competences like pragmatics and syntax but emphasizes that vocabulary predominantly shapes language skills. It also highlights the significance of vocabulary in the dynamic process of writing and provides readers with pedagogical suggestions for second (foreign) language learners, encouraging them to seek learning opportunities that involve writing concrete texts with less complex sentences. Such a contribution makes teachers understand that without vocabulary there is no written production.

The second chapter delves into the state of teaching writing in selected public schools in Latacunga, Ecuador. It explores the interplay between teachers' beliefs and their instructional practices, offering valuable insights into the nature of the writing skill, its components, and the significance of teaching and feedback in the writing process. The chapter advocates for the early introduction of writing instruction, proposing a scaffolding approach that facilitates students' progression from guided writing tasks to independent writing. To enhance students' skills, the study recommends that teachers not only acquire more knowledge about teaching writing but also implement effective instructional strategies.

The third chapter offers a theoretical examination of the Process and Product approaches as means to improve writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It covers the fundamentals of writing skills, outlines what learners must grasp for skill development, and details the stages, advantages, and drawbacks of both approaches. Additionally, the chapter proposes a dual method that integrates aspects of both approaches and shares practical experiences in applying this integrated approach to enhance writing skills in both novice and advanced learners. The information provided serves as a resource for teachers, assisting them in choosing suitable approaches based on learners' levels and needs or integrating both methods for effective writing instruction.

In the fourth chapter, the focus is on Reverse Writing as a technique for enhancing students' writing compositions through the use of questions. This method guides students in understanding what to write, which tenses to employ, and the logical structure their writing should follow. Drawing on practical experience, the authors recommend the application of Reverse Writing, asserting that it fosters a deeper comprehension of the writing process for students. The conclusion emphasizes the belief in students' capabilities and underscores the importance of teachers trusting them while offering appropriate guidance in the writing process.

The fifth chapter explores the difficulties primary school children face in both Spanish and English writing due to inadequate language knowledge and an unclear understanding of the writing process, which hinders their skill development.

It also points out that English education is often undervalued in schools and taught through ineffective teaching practices, despite the importance of linguistic knowledge, critical thinking, and writing processes. To address these issues, the study introduces a dual teaching method, combining Product and Process approaches in order to enhance learners' writing skills, assessing the compositions across content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. The study advocates for the broader adoption of this balanced method among English educators.

The final chapter details the outcomes of applying the framework combining product-process approaches in children. It outlines the process of implementing this combination and highlights the positive impact on children's writing skills. The application of this approach proves beneficial in developing writing skills among children with limited proficiency in English. The method not only facilitates learning grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation but also encourages children to generate and organize ideas through the use of brainstorming techniques. The chapter underscores the effectiveness of the combined approach in fostering comprehensive writing abilities in children.

In summary, the combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience presented in this book serves as a compelling basis for recommending English teachers to embrace the challenge of teaching writing in their classrooms. The book provides a broadened perspective on various approaches to teaching writing, empowering teachers to



explore innovative methods tailored to their specific needs and contexts. It encourages educators to apply the insights gained from the book, fostering a proactive and adaptable approach to writing instruction in the English language.

*Writing could be challenging, but practicing  
makes that challenge a rewarding experience...!*

*Rodrigo Tovar-Viera*

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# CHAPTER I:

## VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE, A GOOD INDICATOR OF WRITING PERFORMANCE

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Vocabulary influences writing ability, yet "Students who are not native speakers of English often find the written demands of their courses very challenging. In addition to learning academic or sophisticated English words, they need to adopt new conventions of style, referencing and layout" (Bailey 1).

## Abstract

Writing needs the knowledge of vocabulary to communicate texts successfully. Additionally, writing requires the development of the linguistic competences, for instance, pragmatics and syntax, to effectively decode and encode the target language in a given context. Although the syntactic and pragmatic knowledge contribute significantly to building learners' writing ability, vocabulary knowledge, in many ways, predominantly influences the acquisition of any language skill. Even when the language skills are scheduled separately, the presence or occurrence of core vocabulary or academic vocabulary is inevitable. The aim of this chapter is to present a view of the significant role that vocabulary plays in the dynamic process of writing. It also provides pedagogical implications for second (foreign) language learners to look for learning opportunities of writing concrete texts with less complex sentences.

## Introduction

The majority of human beings learn to talk almost naturally or subconsciously by imitation. At the beginning, we hear the words and then mimic the ways in which people surrounding us put those words together to produce expressions. Once we learn the ways to put words together in our speech, the next stage, perhaps the most difficult, is how to arrange those words in a writing composition (e.g., essays, reports, abstracts). Indeed, the effective selection of words to transmit concrete and accurate information influences the quality of writing. Nonetheless, writing concrete and accurate academic or non-

academic compositions is not easy at all. This is, in great part, because writing, unlike other skills, for instance, talking, is not learned automatically; in fact, no one can write even a single letter and word without retrieving them consciously. In other words, writing is a skill that first (L1) or second (L2) language learners must consciously learn in formal environments to go further than the single acquisition of letters to the construction of isolated words.

Within the process of acquiring L2 writing abilities, it is a must that an L1 or L2 learner learns how to combine words and put them together into cohesive and coherent sentences to arrange them into paragraphs. Moreover, they also need to recognize what ways of arranging words are or are not conventionally accepted in particular contexts. This may be the reason why some texts are difficult to read, and others are easy. The difference in reading comprehension difficulty lies on the cohesion of sentences and how those sentences are coherently connected to the others. Cohesion, on the one hand, generates order of sentences, whilst coherence, on the other side, makes connections between ideas from one sentence to another. Then, cohesion and coherence determine how challenging the text is and how well the readers will understand it. McNamara et al. (2014) state that the difficulty of texts is attributed to the occurrence of difficult words, ambiguous meaning, and complex syntax. In the same vein, studies of McNamara et al. (292–330) and Beck et al. (251–276) showed that increasing text cohesion improves readers' understanding and memory for the text. Thus, if the text is cohesively constructed, the readers' understanding will be much more coherent.

Writing, then, implies using an appropriate knowledge of grammar, but writing itself is more than the act of following grammatical rules. It is also the act of using appropriate words and effective word combinations in such a way as readers understand what the text means to communicate. In other words, grammar and vocabulary knowledge are interwoven and should be developed simultaneously as learners become successful users of the second (foreign) language in any academic and professional setting. That is, the more structured and worth reading the text is, the more the readers understand the information content. This is, in great part, because when texts are cohesively and coherently written, the reader may connect new ideas with earlier arguments. In fact, grammatical errors result in ungrammatical sentences, whereas the inappropriate use of vocabulary affects the communicative act (Tovar 1-6). This is because, in large part, vocabulary carries more of the meaning of a text than the grammar itself (Schmitt et al. 105-126). Vocabulary, therefore, is one of the linguistic features that not only contribute to the development of learners' linguistic competence but also for gaining control of any language skills. For example, it significantly influences the understanding and production of written text; that is to say, learners may understand and interpret the meaning of some unknown words from context; by identifying its form, function, and meaning.

From this context, the knowledge of vocabulary is viewed as a fundamental tool to acquire second (foreign) languages; however, its learning requires following some conventions to be successfully integrated in any writing composition. The knowledge of the conventions, practices, and formats used to write academic or non-academic essays suggested in books, handbooks, and manuals is important in many ways (e.g., Yakhontova 25, 69; Zemach & Rumisek 5-17; Swales & Feak 1-53;

Wallwork 117; APA, 174-183). However, writing style, namely the manner in which an L1 or L2 learner uses linguistic features to express facts or opinions through effective vocabulary selection within cohesive and coherent structures connected between paragraphs, is essential in academic writing production (e.g., articles, dissertations) and writing in general. Candlin and Hyland, therefore, point out that "we cannot regard writing as simply words on a page or screen, any more than we can regard it as the creation of isolated minds" (3). This is, in the sense that "every act of writing is thus linked in complex ways to a set of communicative purposes which occurs in a context of social, interpersonal and occupational practices", which reproduces a particular mode of communication (2). With this in mind, writing as a complex process and as the product of such linguistic and cognitive processing (retrieving words to generate information) is strictly connected to the lexical and grammatical features that set up the writing style of any texts written in particular *genres* (type of literary production) and from different disciplines.

Swales (33) defines *genres* as instances of conventionalized and standardized discourse communicative practices, which display the organization of the discourse, either written or spoken. Writers, thus, are required to adapt their communicative style to the discursive practices, in the sense that there is no strict one-to-one correlation in the linguistic realizations of any specific linguistic form and the interpretation, which can be taken from a variety of discourse contexts. For instance, one linguistic form can assume a number of discourse values; similarly, several forms can realize a particular discourse value. This is why Bhatia (28) highlights that in the text analysis of either spoken or written texts, it is relatively common to find a stable relationship between the genre and its linguistic realizations, rather than fixed relationships from one another.

Based on Bhatia's point of view, then, it is important to be aware of the *dynamic quality, complexity, and versatility* of each genre and discipline. It is particularly the way a genre can be constructed, interpreted, used, and developed to express a range of communicative purposes through well-structured texts and by choosing the appropriate lexical and grammatical elements to enact such texts towards the discourse community or audience (see Bhatia 30). In essence, the foci of writing are engaging readers to be involved in the discursive practices and conventions of particular genres (e.g., narrative, expository, descriptive) that prevail in scholarly and non-scholarly writing.

## Writing skills

Writing, the non-natural skill, is like reading in that it needs the knowledge of words and phrases to successfully communicate and understand texts. Moreover, both reading and writing require the development of particular cognitive or mental processes (e.g., the process of generating and processing information) to effectively decode and encode the target language. Writing as a dynamic process embeds other components of the L2 processing (e.g., associative memory, grammatical sensitivity, analytic ability), which may influence learners' acquisition of active and passive language learning skills. Associative memory, for instance, helps L2 to make connections between L2 words and L1 equivalents. Grammatical sensitivity, meanwhile, helps learners identify the functions of words in sentence structures, and with the analytical ability, L2 learners not only may recognize and distinguish language patterns between form and meaning but also may produce new chunks of language (Artieda & Muñoz 42–48). Although the reading and writing relationship seems to be highly

figurative for the naturalistic way of acquisition, the above discussed clearly states the role that *vocabulary* and *sentence structures* play in the second (foreign) language acquisition, achievement, and performance. In this way, North (24) highlights that the writing skill is underpinned by orthography, lexical and grammatical choices, so that writing, without any doubt, implies learners place lexicon into appropriate and accurate syntactic structures. Lexis constitutes an important component of L2 grammatical knowledge, in the sense that written texts encompass the use of words and how those words are syntactically structured to form writing productions of syntactic sophistication or complex structures.

Biber et al. argued "that writing is more linguistically complex than speech, and that integrated tasks are more grammatically complex than independent tasks" (657). Therefore, in order to succeed in academic or non-academic writing, expert and novice writers require a confident level of vocabulary knowledge in which they may be able to recognize what expressions are conventionally accepted in a given context, as in formal and casual settings. Writing is a dynamic but complex process involving stages of *pre-write*, *write*, and *re-write* (see some exercises in Zemach & Rumisek 5-10). In the pre-writing stage, words or ideas emerge later on the paper, *writing stage* refers to the product in which conventional patterns of the language systems are produced, and *re-writing stage* embodies the executive process of drafting a final product. This dynamic process includes sub-processes, for instance, planning, retrieving information, and reworking on the text. This is because according to Kellogg, writing involves not only the knowledge of the language system, but also:

It poses significant challenges to our cognitive systems for memory and thinking as well. Indeed, writers can put to use virtually everything they have learned and stored away in long-term memory. But they can only do so if their knowledge is accessible, either by rapidly retrieving it from long-term memory or by actively maintaining it in short-term working memory. (2)

In academic writing and writing in general, numerous avenues are available for acquiring knowledge on how to write successfully, for example, books, guidebooks, and manuals. Hyland (32-37) in his book *Second language writing* highlights the importance of writing in a second (foreign) language. He provides theoretical and practical insights to teaching writing in different classroom settings. For instance, the use of proper writing instructions, instructional materials, and the use of corpus-based assistance show relevant templates and patterns to encourage the writing process in general. Hyland also makes emphasis on how texts reflect the adoption of certain discourse community practices (e.g., conventions, rules, formats, writing style) and the relationship between writing in the first L1 and second language L2. The first language, to some extent, may influence the L2 production; nonetheless, L1 transfer may occur once or after learners have developed the structural prerequisites for them in the L2 (see Pienemann 39-89). This is because the linguistic forms used to mark grammatical and semantic roles differ from language to language; that is, the word order responds to different lingua-cultural conventions and practices. This is the reason why second (foreign) language learners may transfer their L1 processing strategies when interpreting or producing L2 sentences.



Kormos (390) states that L2 writing needs to be considered in the social, cultural, and educational context in which it takes place. In fact, learners' attitude to L2 writing could be affected by L1 linguistic, cultural, and social environment. However, this view does not mean that clear-structured and coherent writing are undervalued or minimized just by the fact that writing happens in different language learning scenarios. On the contrary, the linguistic knowledge on the use of well-structured sentences is necessary to successfully produce high-quality texts. In academic and writing in general, native and non-native English speakers have to deal with the rules and conventions of the writing system to build up knowledge. Such a style and conventions could be automatically brought to mind when using them for the appropriate word choice, as lexical and grammatical features to produce L1 or L2 written texts.

Thus, if the text does not follow those conventions and writing styles, the meaning may be unclear, and readers can have difficulty understanding it. Hyland (195), Lau (2-20), and Swales (117) suggest that expert and novice writers should be consistent when communicating the information content to the discourse community, either national or international. Nonetheless, Kellogg (1-26) highlights that composing effective texts is rather difficult, so it should be seen as a process similar to acquiring expertise in any related skills. Moreover, learning how to write is a process that requires systematic training and instruction to successfully coordinate the mastery of both mechanical skills and creative production, which also demands thinking and memory. Writing, therefore, is not an apparent extension of an individual's biological capacity or predisposition to acquire spoken language. Writing, then, is a non-natural skill that needs instructional tasks to be successfully acquired.

Regarding the writing in language teaching, Tang (578-583) outlines that teachers sometimes find that despite the fact that they have invested much time and energy in teaching grammatical rules and vocabulary, L2 learners are still using simple words and vague writing compositions. What is more, in most cases, learners translate word by word to express themselves. One of the possible reasons for such world-wide phenomena may be due to the fact that there is much disconnection between language input and intake, intake and output in the process of SLA, or perhaps the language teaching relies on the quantity rather than on the quality of comprehensive input. Then, for the L2 writing processing to take place, the quality of instructional exposure to L2 is very important since it allows learners to comprehend and produce the language by going beyond the merely syntactic analysis and recognition of linguistic patterns. That is, active use of those lexical and grammatical features makes the linguistic information accumulate as passive knowledge becomes usable.

Writing, then, involves the effective use of lexical and grammatical features. Silvia (13) maintains that writing requires planning and prepping, for example pre-writing, writing, and post-writing, in the sense that *planning and prepping* contribute to organizing the information to prevent or anticipate readers' negative reactions concerning the information content. Readers' negative criticism on particular texts, according to Silvia, is because they frequently look for something good, interesting, and worth reading that contributes to their knowledge on disciplinary fields and makes their reading enjoyable or doable. In other words, good writing makes the text more pleasing to the audience (e.g., readers, teachers, peers). From this view, Silvia has noticed that some novice writers mishandle the process of planning:

Much valuable information ends up under-placed and underappreciated, usually because of common mistakes or a lack of craft. Then, writing [...] requires planning, sweating the small stuff, and overthinking everything. [...], it is easy for our impulsive side to want to get some data together and get it out there before thinking things through. (11)

Writing is a medium of communication that relies on the effective organization of sentences and vocabulary and on semantic and pragmatic knowledge to make texts written in the source or target language comprehensible and worth reading. That is, how writers organize their ideas not only directly or indirectly affects readers' engagement to perform particular reading tasks but also may influence readers' interest in reading the whole text. For this reason, the text must show a rich grammatical and lexical repertoire involving comprehensive sentence structures and concrete information so that readers can follow the text with minor or without reading difficulties.

## Style of writing

Although the writing style also differs massively from writer to writer and across genres and disciplines, appropriate lexical and grammatical choices may position expert or novice writers as effective language users to construct texts. Simply put, good writers are those who are better able to write clear and well-organized texts. Therefore, a good writer must be familiar with the formats, writing system, and conventions of the second (foreign) language that operate in particular contexts such as

academic or non-academic settings. However, many second (foreign) language novice writers, in some cases, may face difficulties when expressing themselves in the target language compared to their native counterparts. Perhaps this difficulty is because non-native speakers have a different linguistic knowledge base than native English speakers (see Hyland 32; Hyland 54). In other words, native speakers of English may expand their vocabulary through their innate ability to store several thousand words, having the capacity to retrieve them when producing texts. Writers to whom the first language (L1) is not English, on the contrary, often face the necessity of learning new conventions and vocabulary, that is, lexical and sentence structures of the writing system, before starting to write in the target language.

However, during this complex and dynamic process, it can be seen that non-native speakers of English can produce clear and well-structured texts as well as the native ones can do. The factors that probably make the difference between native and non-native writing compositions lie on the effective selection of *rhetorical patterns*, namely *organization of the text* and *style*, such as *vocabulary and sentence structures*, in the sense that both native and non-native speakers can write good or poor texts. That is, in any case, being a native speaker of the language is not the guarantee that he/she writes well and clear texts (Wallwork 35). This is because both non-native users of the language and native ones may find the style of writing and its conventional practices somewhat challenging when constructing lexically and grammatically correct texts. Nonetheless, it is very important to highlight that a text *poorly written in any source language remains poor in its target language after being translated unless the translator re-writes the whole text* (36). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the

impact that word-choice, word combinations, and sentence structures have on the written texts. From this context, language instructors should reflect on what type of writing opportunities to learn and what learning opportunities to write provide to the second (foreign) language learners. They should focus on how learners use writing to learn an L2 language, instead of how learners learn to write in that language. This view aligns with the communicative language teaching (CLT) philosophy, which emphasizes language as a tool for communication rather than as a set of isolated skills. It encourages a more holistic, integrated, and learner-centered approach that better prepares learners for real-world language use.

Regarding the adoption of a particular genre and writing style, Bhatia (21-39) states that it is almost like playing a game, wherein following its rules and conventions is essential. But rather than this, the manipulation and exploitation of those rules and conventions are the ones that help both writers and readers succeed in the game and also allow them to be accepted and recognized within the discourse community. According to Bhatia, writers and readers are skillful players who during the practice, learn and acquire the rules. However, as far as the literature suggests, providing writers freedom to exploit the genre and style with no knowledge of the discursive procedures and practices of the discourse community they wish to join may produce the construction of inaccurate texts. Such an argument depends on the fact that if learners (writers) do not have clear knowledge of what conventions to follow up, the practice may be academically unfruitful and unproductive in terms of compliance with those rules, and, as a result, the writing may not reflect the communicative purpose of a genre in particular.

## Vocabulary knowledge

A growing number of second language acquisition (SLA) studies have examined to what extent the vocabulary knowledge is sufficient for (English) learners' language comprehension and production. Laufer (127) states that at least 95 per cent of the language lexical repertoire is a must to ensure a reasonable level for understanding a text. In order to reach this level, students from high-intermediate to advanced levels need to master a core vocabulary of 2.000 high frequency words, plus some academic words and technical or specialized terminology (Paquot 10). Core vocabulary (words of high frequency) embraces those words that are commonly or frequently used in most of everyday (English) language scenarios. Academic words, meanwhile, consist of those low frequency words, which occur in particular contexts (see Academic word list, Coxhead, 181-185). These kinds of words are included in language teaching, testing, and development of pedagogical materials. For example, they have been used in vocabulary textbooks (e.g., Huntley, 10 50) and vocabulary tests (e.g., Schmitt et al. 55) to measure the knowledge of vocabulary of L2 learners. On the other hand, technical terminology (off-list words) is built up for those words that need disciplinary (scientific) knowledge to be understood and processed. These technical words characterize and distinguish disciplinary fields from one another and ensure communication.

Since those technical words have specialized uses and semantic connotations, which vary across disciplines, Nation (217) highlights that such words are best learned by the exposure of language materials that are attached to specialized fields (e.g., research articles, encyclopedias). This is because, as language

instructors are not specialists, for instance, in economics, law, natural science, or computing science, they may have difficulty in some technical meaning (Paquot, 13). Nonetheless, the knowledge of this technical terminology is necessary for learners who are engaged in specialized fields. Such technical terms, in large part, are characteristic of specific disciplines (as *#1q# AXA*, abiotic in biology texts) and are unlikely to find their occurrence in texts from other disciplines. In other words, the knowledge of technical terms allows those learners to have a broader ability to comprehend and produce written texts related to their field and discipline.

From the division of vocabulary into three exclusive lists of words, as high frequency words, academic words, and technical terminology, it seems very difficult to learn vocabulary for productive purposes rather than for receptive usage. Vocabulary for productive purpose implies the ability to use words that express appropriate meanings through the combination of words that commonly occur with them in a given context (Nation 24-26). Although the learning of core vocabulary and academic words, in some cases, may be difficult to process, they should be the focus of English language courses. According to Paquot (17), high frequency words and academic words are relatively frequent in academic texts, and learners may encounter them while reading those texts. Therefore, the exposure to these types of texts lets learners recognize and become familiar with such words as well as their use, form, and meaning. That is, learners, through the exposure to L2 and instructional procedures, will be able to keep those words in their mental lexicon, make connections with the words already known, and generate sentences from contextual lexicalized chunks. Hinkel points out that although in teaching languages, L2 skills have divergent degrees of importance, grammar and vocabulary set up positive

correlations in L2 learners' academic performance; thus, in the production of academic writing and writing in general:

Teaching instructions (grammar) for writing cannot take place in isolation from lexical and discourse features of texts. On the contrary, grammar instructions have to take place in tandem with instructions on vocabulary and academic collocation. Stock grammar and lexical chunks can become an efficient means to expand L2 writers' arsenal particularly when learners are also taught how to substitute discrete elements appropriately and in practical ways. That is, whole sentences and phrases, and recurrent pattern expressions are essential for L1 and L2 language acquisition and use. (38)

On the other hand, concerning the levels of interaction between L1 and L2 mental lexicons, Cook (7) points out that a "total separation is impossible since both languages are in the same mind"; however, he also recognizes that the "total integration is impossible since L2 users can keep the language apart". That is, there are different levels of interconnections between L1 and L2 separation and integration when words and word combinations are being stored in learners' mental lexicon. Nonetheless, within this dynamic process, only the strongest and contextual relevant meanings are stored and activated in learners' mental lexicon. Thus, it is important to note that every language articulates its lexical structure differently so that second (foreign) language learners that make use of the L2 lexical and grammatical system must be drawn on a system that is different from their L1. That is to say, as the lexical and grammatical system of the language varies from language to language and across culture, it is here where learners'



language difficulties to process L2 or FL languages come out. This is, mainly, because every language makes, at the same time, use of different sounds to make up words and different rules to construct sentences. Following this line of argument, any composing text is, then, a product of different cultural and social uses of language, which are, in some way, contextually shaped and connected to disciplinary cultures and preferred organization of written discourse (see Grabe and Kaplan 176). For this reason, language instructors should provide L2 learners with meaningful and comprehensive input materials so that they can master those lexical and grammatical features.

## **Pedagogical implications**

Research on academic writing highlights that graduate and undergraduate students, after years of ESL and EFL training, often fail to recognize the appropriate use of the conventions and features of writing (Johns 92). Thus, language instructors generally, when evaluating the mistakes of the student (writer) in writing, encounter numerous problems and shortcomings that make the texts difficult to read and understand. Since different types of writing (e.g., essays, dissertations) require different skills, a language instructor must take writers' linguistic and cultural backgrounds into account before assessing their writing skills. There are some textual and co-textual factors that affect the process of writing and impact the quality of written texts, such as students' age, educational background, writing experience, and familiarity with writing standards. Another issue to discuss is that in some cases, most language instructors waste time and energy trying to explain complex and sophisticated constructions, which instead of

clarifying learners' (writer) doubts, on the contrary, put them into trouble. In this way, Wallwork (43) suggests not to fall into the trap of trying to teach L2 learners everything to write a good composition, instead, tell them to read a book on the subject that addresses those learning gaps —*structures they cannot do or understand better*.

Therefore, teaching will be more meaningful because they understand what teachers are talking about and they could have positive interactions within the process. Wallwork's suggestions should be done according to learners' proficiency and also by selecting reading materials that fit L2 learners' needs and language learning goals. Most importantly, make sure that language teaching, particularly writing, will be a meaningful experience to both teachers and learners, and not a nightmare. Unclear or vague language instructions affect writing processes since learners, on the one hand, activate or increase their learning anxiety trying to write a perfect paragraph without the knowledge of the needed words to write. In addition, teachers, on the other side, feel demotivated when trying to decode what learners mean to communicate as learner's writing compositions mislead the language learning goals.

In essence, do not waste time teaching something that is likely to create problems rather than solve them (Wallwork 45). Be more practical; teach learners (writer) how to disentangle their long sentences or paragraphs into short and acceptable sentences and remove redundancy from the text (*see the examples below*). Focus more on the writing process and not only on the product. Of course, the product is the focus of any activity; in fact, I agree with most of you, but unfortunately, if the process is not well done, the product will not be satisfactory either. So, do not expect good products from poor materials and unqualified

processes. In the XXI century, there are thousands of materials, such as books, guidebooks, tech tools, just to mention a few, that contribute to the acquisition of any language skill (e.g., Bailey 83; Craff & Birkenstein 53; Silvia 83). On the other hand, make use of the e-learning environment to practice L2 (e.g., Akbari<sup>1</sup>, et al 2; Akiyama & Saito 585), corpus-based learning activities for improving reading and writing (e.g., Miyazoe & Anderson 185; Ginquin & Granger 57), and computer-assisted foreign language learning (e.g., Nishioka 131; Vijaya-Kumar & Shahin-Sultana 58) to support autonomous and collaborative learning beyond the classrooms.

The examples in version A contain long sentences, while in version B, they have been divided into more manageable and short sentences:

### **Version A**

*Using automatic translation software (e.g. Google Translate, Babel fish, and Systran) can considerably ease the work of researchers when they need to translate documents thus saving them money (for example the fee they might have otherwise had to pay to a professional translator) and increasing the amount of time they have to spend in the laboratory rather than at the computer.*

### **Version B (more manageable and short sentences)**

*Using automatic translation software (e.g. Google Translate, Babel fish, and Systran) can considerably ease the work of researchers when they need to translate documents. This can save them money, for example, the fee they might have otherwise had to pay to a professional*

*translator. It can also increase the amount of time they have to spend in the laboratory rather than at the PC.*

## **Version A**

*Our results show that the performance of the system, in terms of throughput and delay, depends on several factors including the frame duration, the mechanisms for requesting uplink bandwidth, and the load partitioning, i.e. the way traffic is distributed, connections, and traffic sources within each connection.*

## **Version B (more manageable and short sentences)**

*Our results show that the performance of the system, in terms of throughput and delay, depends on several factors including the frame duration, and the mechanisms for requesting uplink bandwidth. It also depends on the load partitioning, i.e. the way traffic is distributed, connections, and traffic sources within each connection.*

## **Version A**

*The aim of our study was to assess changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period in order to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism as already investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way, and to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically.*

## Version B (more manageable and short sentences)

*We assessed changes in the level of tolerance of natives of one country towards immigrants over the course of a 50-year period. The main aim was to be able to advise governmental agencies on how to develop strategies based on those countries that have been more successful in reducing racism. This aspect has already investigated in previous studies, but not in such a systematic way. The second aim was to establish correlations with data from the USA, which until now have been reported only sporadically.*

(From Wallwork 34-35)

The following example is a long paragraph which contains three very long sentences, 80 words each. Disentangling the paragraph into short sentences makes it both worth reading and manageable. Read the paragraph and examine the sentences (below), which may be used as alternatives to re-construct the paragraph into short and manageable sentences.

*The aim of this paper is to confirm that how we speak and write generally reflects the way we think and that this is true not only at a personal but also at a national level, and to this end two European languages were analyzed, English and French, to verify whether the structure of the language is reflected in the lifestyle of the respective nations. English is now the world's international language and is studied by more than a billion people in various parts of the world thus giving rise to an industry of English language textbooks and teachers, which explains why*

*in so many schools and universities in countries where English is not the mother tongue, it is taught as the first foreign language in preference to, for example, Spanish or Chinese, which are two languages that have more native speakers than English. As a preliminary study, in an attempt to establish a relationship between document length and level of bureaucracy, we analyzed the length of 50 European Union documents, written in seven of the official languages of the EU, to confirm whether documents, such as reports regarding legislative and administrative issues, vary substantially in length from one language to another, and whether this could be related, in some way, to the length of time typically needed to carry out daily administrative tasks in those countries (e.g. withdrawing money from a bank account, setting up bill payments with utility providers, understanding the clauses of an insurance contract).*

*(From Wallwork 39-40)*

## **Alternatives**

*The aim of this paper is to confirm that how we speak and write generally reflects the way we think, and that this is true not only at a personal but also at a national level.*

*The two aims of this paper are firstly to confirm that how we speak and write generally reflects the way we think. And secondly, that this is true not only at a personal but also at a national level.*

*Two European languages were analyzed, English and French, to verify whether the structure of the language is reflected in the lifestyle of the respective nations.*

## ***New paragraph***

*English is now the world's international language and is studied by more than a billion people in various parts of the world.*

*This has given rise to an industry of English language textbooks and teachers. In fact, in many schools and universities in countries where English is not the mother tongue, it is taught as the first foreign language.*

*This choice is in preference to, for example, Spanish or Chinese, which are two languages that have more native speakers than English.*

## ***New paragraph***

*As a preliminary study, we tried to establish a relationship between document length and level of bureaucracy.*

*We analyzed the length of 50 European Union documents, written in seven of the official languages of the EU.*

*This was done to confirm whether documents, such as reports regarding legislative and administrative issues, vary substantially in length from one language to another.*

*We also wanted to know whether length of documents could be related, in some way, to the length of time typically needed to carry out daily administrative tasks in those countries.*

*These tasks included withdrawing money from a bank account, setting up bill payments with utility providers, understanding the clauses of an insurance contract.*

*(From Wallwork 39-40)*

Based on the fact that long sentences and complex words are difficult to process and understand, writing should be clear, concise, and well-structured by avoiding the repetition of unnecessary words and phrases, which makes the text monotonous or superfluous. The words in bold in the Table below (Text A) have been removed from Text B to avoid redundancy in the text.

Table 1. 1 Alternatives

Text A	Text B
As we have already noted in Section 4.2.1, the presence of X can influence Y.	As noted in Section 4.2.1, the presence of X can influence Y.
Paint samples, as described previously, normally contain mixtures of different substances.	Paint samples, normally contain mixtures of different substances.
In comparative terms, there is no real difference between X and Y.	There is no real difference between X and Y.
Also, we present simulation results that will provide a twofold contribution: (1) confirm ...	Also, we present simulation results that: (1) confirm ...



The document was written in the English language and the contents represent a new innovation in the sector of telecommunications.	The document was written in English and the contents represent a new innovation in telecommunications.
In general, the phenomenon of e-commerce is often characterized by the absence of a direct contact between seller and buyer [Mugandi, 2016].	E-commerce is often characterized by the absence of a direct contact between seller and buyer [Mugandi, 2016].
They have shown [that] we should also consider the possibility of doing the testing in advance.	They have shown [that] we should testing in advance.
The solution adopted was to carry out a test of all the software on the market.	The solution adopted was to carry out a test of all the software on the market.

*(From Wallwork 72)*

On the other hand, with the integration of technological tools and corpus linguistics in teaching languages, learners will gain knowledge on how computer assisted language learning (CALL), data-driven learning (DDL), social networks, and e-learning environments can be used in the acquisition of specific language skills. The use of these sources facilitates teachers-students and students-students classroom discussions. Both teachers and students can utilize the massive information available on the website to create immediate corrective feedback, collaborative peer-pair interactions, video-conferencing sessions, native-learner corpora, etc. These sources, in great part of their language instructions, engage learners to practice the target language in native-like environments. Nonetheless, the effectiveness and applicability of those sources greatly depend on the methods and learning purposes used in the treatment (Ginquin &

Granger 57-80). For example, Vijaya-Kumar and Shahin-Sultana (57-86) while examining the efficacy of CALL in writing, found that the effective integration of multimedia and the process approach, which make emphasis on *generating ideas, drafting, structuring, reviewing, and focusing* help learners to perform better in the following assessed parameters: *task focus, cohesion and coherence, lexical resource, and accuracy*. That is, the instructional conditions focus on writing as a process rather than as the final product.

One useful strategy for L2 learners to gain control of the writing process is to devote time to the writing of paragraphs by introducing reading materials, which can be turned into writing opportunities. That is, use reading materials as a source of stimulation, as an object of analysis or interpretation, or as a model to be imitated. Imitation is not meant as plagiarizing, however; be careful of that meaningless and non-academic behavior, which might be practiced among your peers (see Pecorari 37). This non-academic practice could be avoided if language instructors teach learners (writer) some pattern structures that help them to distinguish what and when plagiarism counts as itself. Then, writing templates, namely pattern structures, let novice writers connect ideas, distinguishing what they say from what the others say. The following templates taken from the academic phrasebank of Morley (2018) illustrate the ways in which academic writing or essays may be addressed:

## Introducing the topic

Establishing the importance of the topic for the world or society

There is evidence that \_\_ plays a crucial role in regulating \_\_

\_\_ is a common condition, which has considerable impact on \_\_

In the new global economy, \_\_ has become a central issue for \_\_

## Referring the Sources

Previous research: a historical perspective

Research into \_\_ has a long history.

For many years, this phenomenon was surprisingly neglected by \_\_

Only in the past ten years have studies of \_\_ directly addressed how \_\_

## Describing Methods

Describing the characteristics of the sample

The cohort was divided into two groups according to \_\_

A random sample of patients with \_\_ was recruited from \_\_

Two groups of subjects were interviewed, namely \_\_ and \_\_. The first group were \_\_

## Reporting Results

*Referring to data in a table or chart*

Table 1 compares the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of \_\_.

The pie chart above shows some of the main characteristics of the \_\_

The results of the correlational analysis of \_\_ are summarized in Figure 1.

## Discussing Findings

Comparing the result: supporting previous findings

This study confirms that \_\_ is associated with \_\_

This finding is consistent with that of Smith (2000) who \_\_

Comparison of the findings with those of other studies confirms \_\_

## Writing Conclusions

Summarising main research findings

This study has shown that \_\_

The research has also shown that \_\_  
\_\_ made no significant difference to \_\_

According to Craff and Birkenstein, writing assignments in classrooms are performed better when those exercises provide learners with pattern structures or templates to organize and present their ideas. The pattern structures help learners "who are unsure about what to say or have trouble finding enough to say, often because they consider their own beliefs so self-evident that they need to be argued for". In other words, "templates encourage learners to modify and adapt to the prefabricated formulas to the peculiarities of the argument they are making" (Preface: xx-xxii). See the following examples below (a,b,c,d,e) cited in Craff and Birkenstein (1-9).

*a) In discussion of \_\_\_\_\_, a controversial issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_. While some argue that \_\_\_\_\_ others contend that \_\_\_\_\_. This is not to say \_\_\_\_\_.*

*b) You miss my point. What I am saying is not \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_.*

*c) I agree with you that \_\_\_\_\_, and would even add that \_\_\_\_\_.*

*d) He claims that \_\_\_\_\_, and I have mixed feeling about it. On the one hand, I agree that \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, I still insist that \_\_\_\_\_.*

*e) In recent discussions of \_\_\_\_\_, a controversial*

issue has been whether \_\_\_\_\_. On the one hand, some argue that \_\_\_\_\_. From this perspective, \_\_\_\_\_. On the other hand, however, others argue that \_\_\_\_\_. In the words of \_\_\_\_\_, one of his view's main proponents, "\_\_\_\_\_". According to this view, \_\_\_\_\_. In sum, then, the issue is whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. My own view is that \_\_\_\_\_. Though I concede that \_\_\_\_\_. I still maintain that \_\_\_\_\_. For example, \_\_\_\_\_. Although some might object that \_\_\_\_\_, I would reply that \_\_\_\_\_. The issue is important because \_\_\_\_\_.

Templates also offer the benefit of improving reading comprehension. This is because learners may see reading as the source not only to absorb information but also the matter to understand and enter in dialogues, either in written or spoken text (see Craff & Birkenstein 1-15). On the other hand, when referring to plagiarism, it is essential to note that writing does not always mean setting aside your voice or positioning on a particular piece of text, information, thought or claim. The crucial difference is in how that information is transmitted to the audience. Craff and Birkenstein, in this sense, highlight that plagiarism is categorized when the words or expressions used to fill in the blanks of such templates are borrowed from others without proper merit of authorship (13), as in the example of Pecorari (28), wherein words that frequently occur in both texts are underlined as a reference of plagiarism behind paraphrasing:

## Text 1

But this week politicians of both parties, some of them partisans of other candidates in the Democratic Presidential race, have pointed out to the press additional instances in which the Delaware Senator has borrowed memorable passages from others' speeches without attributing them.

## Text 2

This week politicians from both parties —some of them partisans of other candidates in the Democratic Presidential race— told members of the press of additional instances in which Mr. Biden had used the language and syntax of others, including John F. and Robert F. Kennedy and Hubert H. Humphrey.

Similarly, in the example (below), the writer has also made a few changes to the word order of the original text without citing the sources where those ideas or facts come from. The original text is from the book of Gredler (12) entitled 'Learning and instruction: Theory into practice'.

*Theories differ from philosophies and models of teaching. A philosophy is a value system, whereas a theory seeks to explain real-world events and can be certified through scientific investigation. Models of teaching are approaches to the management of some aspect of classroom instruction and they may not be independent of subject*

*area, grade level, age of the student, or the setting for learning. A characteristic of learning theories is that they address the underlying psychological dynamics of events. Thus, they provide a mechanism for understanding the implications of events related to learning in both formal and informal settings.*

The ideas on the second text (below) are similar to the first one so that it may be considered as plagiarism since the writer has arranged the order of the words from the original text, inserting synonyms. Moreover, the writer has copied word-by-word from the original source and did not use quotation marks. In conclusion, no credit to the author's work is given.

*Theories and philosophies are different from each other because theories seek to explain real-world events and can be certified through scientific investigation. Learning theories address the underlying psychological dynamics of events, so they provide a mechanism for understanding the implications of events related to learning in both formal and informal settings.*

The following text (below) may be considered as an acceptable version of the original source material. This is because to some extent, the author's research work is included in the text. Nonetheless, it is necessary to note that, in some cases, plagiarism may appear if the content is not well paraphrased.

*Theories and philosophies are different from each other because, according to Gredler (2001, pp. 12-13) theories seek to explain real-world events and can be certified through scientific investigation... A characteristic of*



*learning theories is that they address the underlying psychological dynamics of events. Thus, they provide a mechanism for understanding the implications of event.*

As we can infer from the examples illustrated above, plagiarism is an unethical and academically dishonest practice which may be done accidentally or intentionally; however, it must be eradicated since it is a serious offense for academia. In order words, to write a good text, you may have the ability to suspend your own beliefs for a time and put yourself in the shoes of those who think very differently from you as a writer (see Craff & Birkenstein 14-31). You have to anticipate the reactions of the audience you are not able to see or hear. So, write clear and concise information in such a way that readers can follow the text from the beginning to the end. Craff and Birkenstein suggest writing good and short sentences that show not only the knowledge of grammar but also the rhetorical ability in designing persuasive arguments for a particular audience in specific context of situations.

All in all, good writing is more than the act of obeying grammatical rules; it requires the art of building up well-organized and structured texts by arranging words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs coherently. A text coherently organized and well written persuades the audience's interest to follow the text. In other words, a good sentence itself does not only have a meaning with other sentences just for its structure 'grammar' but for its coherent organization throughout the paragraph. Writing is the process of combining sentences in order and sequence wherein coherence is fundamental to make that sequence, as of moving from one sentence to another will be effective. In effect, "to be a good writer means primarily to

richly explore and utilize the wealth of the native (non-native) language, to demonstrate the awareness of its grammatical norms" and an adequate knowledge of its lingua-cultural conventions (Yakhontova 18). In other words, writers become aware of the impact that word choice, sentences, and textual organization will have on their writing.

## Conclusion

Several issues remain to be addressed further, aiming to promote a deeper understanding of the relationship between lexis and grammar and the importance of vocabulary to L2 writing quality. Nevertheless, in this debate, I have tried to present a view of the significant role that vocabulary plays in writing and how vocabulary knowledge influences the acquisition of any language skill. The lexical access and vocabulary knowledge (size) of L2 is important to understand and to be understood in any communicative act. This is because, "when reading and evaluating a text, vocabulary greatly influence our judgment in deciding whether the given text is well-written or not" (Doró 117). That is, the acquisition of language knowledge and improvement of linguistic and communicative abilities depend on the expansion of vocabulary (Lewis 95, 109). However, the knowledge of grammar helps second (foreign) language learners in the recognition of mistakes and making improvements in their final written composition. Although the knowledge of grammar is necessary, it must not be learned in isolation; it must be learned in connection with vocabulary. This is, mostly, because every sentence structure requires the use of words to communicate a wide range of meanings. In other words, without the knowledge of needed words to express messages, even a single sentence cannot be successfully formed.

Throughout the text, some theoretical and practical frameworks of lexical and grammatical choices have been discussed, which figure as samples for L2 writing instructions. Apart from the nature of the writing skill and implications on writing pedagogy, L2 writing research has also discussed the degree of sophistication and what makes a text difficult to process: for example, complex structures, length of sentences, more passive than active voice, and accuracy in terms of content and structure. As syntactic variety, lexical choice, and accuracy are mentioned in most L2 writing instructions and assessment, these linguistic categories must be incorporated into L2 writing training programs. This allows learners to gain linguistic competence and develop L2 writing abilities as well. Nonetheless, for an effective quality of L2 writing, instructions should consider meaningful learning activities as well as learners' needs and learners' linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, the issues discussed here also provide possible further directions for both teachers and learners to use technological sources and corpus linguistics, for instance, computer assisted language learning (CALL), data-driven learning (DDL), social networks and e-learning environments, to practice particular linguistic features and skills of the second (foreign) language. However, "corpora (native or non-native) should be carefully chosen to reflect the model of English that the learners may want or need to acquire" (Carter & McCarthy 154). In practice, writing as a dynamic process is integrative and makes explicit the connections between linguistic and cultural knowledge. In fact, such a creative and analytical process allows teachers and learners to contextualize the writing composition critically and have authentic and meaningful learning experiences. Thus, a question for further study arises: do L2 learners use two qualitatively different processing systems for the L1 and L2 writing or the same perception, comprehension, and

production mechanisms? If yes or no, then, in which aspects are they similar or different.

The pre-learning or instructional exposure to the foreign language vocabulary have an effective impact on reading comprehension and writing production, which, in large part, may generate positive effects on a learner's ability to use or understand words in particular contexts (Webb 441). In this way, significant gains in vocabulary knowledge improve the quality of writing, and it is a good indicator of writing performance. In conclusion, for language instructors, administrators, and scholars to appreciate learners' written composition and understand it, writers have to write texts in more concise sentences and less complex paragraphs. As stated in previous paragraphs, a well-structured text allows readers to follow the information content without difficulties, moving easily from one paragraph to the next. Such writing suggestion is because no research has proved that complex language leads to a better-flowing paper (Wallwork 33, 69). On the contrary, the more concrete and shorter the sentence you write, the more readable the sentence will be so that readers make a minimal effort to understand and process the message. To put it in another way, the overlap between the context and the meaning of words, as well as the amount and quality of information, in terms of content and structure, may affect the comprehension of the complete text.

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## CHAPTER II:

# BELIEFS AND PRACTICE IN WRITING INSTRUCTION

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*"Knowledge without Practice is  
useless, practice without knowledge is  
dangerous"*

Confucious

## Abstract

The main aim of this research was to analyze the relationship between beliefs and practice in EFL writing instruction in 7 Educative Institutions from Latacunga—Ecuador. I have attempted to explain the situation of the teaching of writing by examining the relationship of teachers' beliefs and their practices because some scholars state that teachers' beliefs have relationship to their teaching practices. For instance, if teachers consider writing less important than other language skills, this can adversely affect their teaching and their students' performance in writing. On the contrary, if they think practice is fundamental to developed writing skill, it is most likely that they will do something to make students practice this skill. The data were collected from 18 English teachers and 120 students. Findings show that teachers have positive attitude and some knowledge about writing, but they do not know how to teach it. Most of the teachers do not teach writing because they consider it is more difficult than other language skills. However, they assign writing tasks inside and outside the classroom; these writing tasks are evaluated, but teachers do not provide any type of feedback. On the other hand, students think that they have poor writing skills, and they are not motivated to write in English. Hence, it is suggested that teachers get enough knowledge about the teaching of writing, and apply some activities, strategies, or methods to develop their students' writing skills.

Keywords: writing, practice, instruction, feedback

## Introduction

Based on data gathered from a group of teachers and students from public schools of Latacunga, this research presents insights about the current situation of the writing instruction in the EFL context. Writing is a long-life learning skill that is developed gradually and progressively. Therefore, writing instruction must start since the beginning levels with a scaffolding approach. Scaffolding allows the teacher helps students' transition from guided writing tasks to independent writing. When students start doing writing compositions, they can find many difficulties to express their ideas consistently and make many mistakes. That is why teachers' supports is crucial; they have to provide tools to overcome difficulties and to identify their own mistakes by using different feedback strategies. Little by little, the responsibility for completing the whole task can be transferred to students.

Certainly, poor writing skill is considered to be one of the biggest problems in EFL classrooms. It is more difficult than teaching writing in English as a Second language (ESL) context because of the few communicative needs. Generally, EFL learners have lower levels of writing skill than ESL students because they are not concerned about the importance of developing this skill since they do not actually need it. On the contrary, ESL learners have the necessity to communicate in both social and academic context, which increases their motivation. In spite of these difficulties, teachers have to take this challenge. They have to get knowledge about different process to teach writing and put into practice. They have to be conscious that they will not get immediate results, but little by little, they not only will develop their skills to teach writing, but also their students will be able to write better. We cannot expect that with 2 or 3 lessons of

writing, students will be able to write. It is a long process. It is a step-by-step process in which teacher's guide play an important role until the process is learned.

The paper presents some literature review about writing, its sub-skills, the instruction and the feedback. It describes the research process, analyzes and discusses data. The analysis and discussion of the results and the main conclusion are presented in the light of the theory and the researcher's professional experience. All in all, this research highlights the importance of knowledge of writing instruction and practical teaching skills in order to make readers reflect on their own practices and the current situation of them of students' writing skills.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Writing Skill**

Writing is a good activity to improve learning, understanding and knowledge discovery in any area of study. It also helps to develop solve-problem skills and to be smarter (Krashen 1). In the context of English language teaching (ELT), writing is one of the productive skills that allows people to communicate feelings, ideas, and thoughts. The Ecuadorian National Curriculum for teaching English as a Foreign Language defines writing as a highly cognitive and metacognitive intellectual act. Writing involves pre-requisites: intention of author; the desire to communicate and share ideas; knowledge of vocabulary, text types, and the organization of each; identification and



understanding of audience and purpose; and the ability to manipulate the written code (Ministerio de Educación 23). This curriculum describes the degree of development of writing competence that students need to have in each academic year. For example, 10th grade students must be able to produce long, detailed, complex transactional and expository texts (e.g. formal emails, imaginary biographies, etc.) with a variety of sentence structure and lexical range. (Ministerio de Educación 18) This description corresponds to the level A2.1 that addresses three kinds of genres: transactional and expository texts, and short, simple narratives (real or fictional stories).

Writing as a cognitive and metacognitive intellectual process involves the development of other sub-skills such as: planning, organization, expressions, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Hence, most teachers would agree that it is one of the most difficult skills to be developed. Choudhury claims "it is the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners" (27); it is much more difficult with the students of English as a foreign language because of the lack of practice and real communication needs. In this regard, Cameron mentions that there are some factors influencing L2 writing development: the nature of the written forms of the first language, the learner's previous experience in L1 literacy, the learner's knowledge of the foreign language, and the learner's age (134). Therefore, learners need to be taught essential elements (vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation) in order to develop literacy in the foreign language.

## Sub Skills for Developing Writing

There are some sub skills which help students to improve their writing production: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and organization. Students need to develop these sub skills by practicing in writing activities (Oxford University Press ELT par. 2). It is more effective to teach punctuation, sentence variety, and usage in the context of writing than to approach the topic by teaching isolated skills (Chin, 2). Students need to be involved in writing practice as much as possible. Even though teachers use the most effective skills or strategies to teach EFL writing, learners will not learn it if they do not practice. Regular practice can result in an improvement of students' written output (Bartley and Benitez 47). The linguistic resources (lexis, grammar, and discourse structure) for making meaning in a text have to be brought to consciousness and taught to novice EFL writers (Yasuda 125). There are different classifications of sub skills needed to produce good writing. In this research, we will focus on vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

The first sub skill in the EFL writing students must learn is vocabulary. EFL learners have trouble in writing due to insufficient lexical competence. Vocabulary is necessary for developing communicative competence; there is a productive correlation between the lexical competences with the production of quality writing (Bartley and Benitez 46). Thus, teachers must provide opportunities not only to learn but also to use vocabulary in communicative contexts. Regarding this, Schmitt explains that apart from learning a large amount of vocabulary, it is necessary to figure out how to use these words in written production (333).

The second sub skill is grammar; it allows giving meaning appropriately. The use of accurate grammar is an important aspect of any good piece of writing. Thus, Perfetti and McCutchen argued that grammatical development is essential in writing (106). Students should learn this sub skill in a context area rather than just as a set of isolated rules and structures. They can improve their grammatical use by producing written work; therefore, grammar instruction must not be separated from writing instruction.

Another important sub skill is spelling. Knowledge of spelling makes writing much easier. If students are good at spelling, they will have more time to focus on the relevance of ideas. Poor spelling, in addition to causing the writer frustration and embarrassment, adversely affects composition and transmission of ideas. So, it must be taught at an early stage of writing instruction (Kress 8).

Finally, punctuation is a crucial sub skill to structure sentences, organize and connect ideas clearly in writing. It ensures that a written composition makes sense and allows readers to follow the understanding. If punctuation is used effectively in writing, it permits the reader to process the information and make sense of the meaning (Kress 8). Teachers should focus on the teaching of punctuation from the beginning levels since learning it takes a long time.

## **The Writing Instruction**

One of the main aims of teaching English is developing writing skill. There are many approaches teachers can use according

to students' needs, level, and interests. The EFL Ecuadorian Curriculum suggests teaching writing as a process. Camps defines the writing process as "a sequence of a series of cyclical, recursive, and progressive stages with the purpose of producing a final piece of written work" (130). The process of writing must be taught to students so that they improve the length and the quality of their written compositions (Graham and Perin 11). The amount of time that the writer spends on each stage of the process will depend on the personality, experience, habits, and maturity (Murray 2), so teachers and students must be patient. This writing process approach to writing includes many activities such as: modeling writing, guided writing, freewriting, and free writing.

Modeling writing is the process in which teachers' model what students have to do; teachers show students the steps to start and finish their writing task. On the contrary, guided writing requires teachers to support learners in their difficulties during the task; teachers have to help students as they complete each stage of the writing process. Some researchers state that modeling and guided writing help to write compositions at any level, especially at elementary levels. Oczkus contends that "modeling writing alone is not sufficient to produce effective writers; rather, teachers need to scaffold students through guided writing techniques" (cited in Byrd 27). Khatri's research found that guided writing activities were even more effective in teaching writing (18); it serves as a scaffolding activity to independent writing. At the guided writing stage, the learner is given different exercises; completion exercises, replacement exercises, expansion of a simple sentence, writing summaries of stories and rewriting a story in a dialogue form or a dialogue in a narrative form (Raines cited in Khatri 19).

To explain *freewriting*, and *free writing*, we must differentiate the terms; the former is when students write ideas as they come to their mind, and the latter refers to the action of writing compositions without teacher's guide. These activities are useful when students know the process and the components of writing. Elbow define freewriting as writing any idea or thought that come to mind in a given time period without paying attention to grammar, spelling, and how good their writing is (43). Hwang contends that using freewriting has some positive effects on students such as improvement of fluency and increase of student's confidence. On the contrary, Polio considers that "focusing just on fluency students will have problems in writing quality (cited in Hwang 99). Regarding free writing, it is a stage where students are conscious about the process of writing and the linguistic components to develop compositions. Pincas defines free writing as the aim of a specific set of writing exercises; the ability to write freely about what has been taught, but not the ability to write anything at all (cited in Khatri 19). Students are free to express ideas, thoughts, but with careful planning (Khatri 20), and with appropriate feedback activities.

## Feedback in Writing

Hyland and Hyland mention that feedback is a key element to encourage, to consolidate learning, and to grow control over learners' composing skills (83). Feedback means giving suggestions and some comments about learners 'writing, so they can know how to deal with errors and edit their compositions. Teachers also need to consider what type of feedback they are going to provide. There are two types of feedback: direct and indirect (Bitchener, Young, and Cameron). The first one refers to an immediate correction by the teacher, and the second one

refers to the identification of the error without correction. A research carried out by Ferris et al. (as cited in Bitchener, Young and Cameron) showed that direct correction helped learners in their writing development, but indirect feedback helped learners to be aware of errors and reduce their errors frequently more than those who received direct feedback (194). Generally, teachers focus on correcting linguistic forms such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, but Hyland suggests that "teachers' feedback must respond to all aspects of student texts: structure, organization, style, content, and presentation, but it is not necessary to cover every aspect on every draft at every stage of the teaching-writing cycle." (185). Teachers must decide what to correct and how to correct it. Hyland suggests the following forms of correction: (a) giving nice comments about learners' writing, (b) providing rubrics with criteria about what to correct of a writing composition, and (c) giving some codes to identify the kind of error to be edited (177-209). Teachers can also apply self-correction and peer correction in order to make learners conscious of their errors; these strategies are self and peer feedback.

Self-feedback allows students revise their own work; the aim of self-feedback is that students develop effective error detection skills (Hattie and Timperley 90). Such error detection can be very powerful if students have knowledge and understanding of the task. Many studies about the effects of self-correction strategies on the development of EFL learners' linguistic competence show that it is a good way to provide feedback on written works. By using rubrics and checklists, teachers can make students reflect on their own writing work. Little by little, they will be more independent in the responsibility of revising and editing their own work.

Peer-feedback can be used during the revising stage in the writing process. It consists on asking students to comment each other on their writing assignments. Peer feedback offers opportunities to give and receive comments on writing compositions; it should focus on improvement rather than on grading (Hattie and Timperley). It is seen as a way of giving more control and autonomy to students because it involves them actively in the feedback process to fix up their writing tasks (Mendoca and Johnson cited in K. Hyland and F. Hyland 90). It also helps teachers to save time on specific tasks. Another positive aspect of the peer feedback process is that students get to see other students' work which can also deepen understanding of the learning goals, so they can improve their own writing task. Finally, peer feedback also helps students to develop a good degree of autonomy in learning (Yang et al. 179). For this reason, teachers have to train students and offer them a variety of tools to a good peer feedback process.

On the other hand, there are many research works that support the idea that teachers' feedback is more meaningful for students' progress than peer feedback. For example, Yang, Badger and Yu n/p) revealed that teacher's feedback led to a greater improvement in writing rather than peer feedback. However, teachers must not neglect the benefits of self and peer assessment.

## **Results and Discussion**

Tecle and Tefera state that teachers' perception influences their teaching practices. Thus, if English language teachers give less attention to writing due to their perception that writing is less important and that teaching writing is a difficult task, this can

adversely affect their teaching and their students' performance in writing. Results show that teachers have positive attitude and some knowledge about writing, but they do not how to teach.

Table 2.1

TEACHERS' CONCEPTION OF WRITING											
Item		SA		A		D		SD		T	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
1	Writing is the activity or skill of marking coherent words on paper and composing text.	11	61,11	7	38,89	0	-	0	-	18	100
2	Writing requires regular practice.	11	61,11	7	38,89	0	-	0	-	18	100
3	Writing is more difficult to teach than other language skills (listening, speaking and reading).	9	50,00	8	44,44	1	5,56	0	-	18	100
4	Students should not be made to write in English before they master the vocabulary and grammar of the language.	2	11,11	9	50,00	2	11,11	5	27,78	18	100
5	At school level, it is not necessary to teach writing because students can learn it at higher levels.	0	-	4	22,22	6	33,33	8	44,44	18	100



Most of the teachers seem to have some knowledge of writing; they think it is a skill that requires regular practice and it is more difficult to develop than other language skills. They think that it is necessary to teach writing at school, but first, students must have enough vocabulary and grammar knowledge. This fact is opposite to what some researchers suggest about the teaching of grammar and vocabulary. They say that the best way to teach grammar and vocabulary is through writing. (Laufer, Granger and Hinkel cited in Bartley and Benitez; Schmitt, Baleghizadeh and Gordani; Perfetti and McCutchen). Hence, it is important to offer a variety of writing opportunities. Teaching writing is a big challenge for all teachers, even more when students have poor knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of writing. However, it must not impede the teaching of it. Teachers should find approaches, methods or strategies to teach writing since the beginning levels.

Table 2.2

FREQUENCY OF TEACHING WRITING											
Item		SA	A	D	SD	T					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Teaching writing in English requires more effort than teaching grammar, vocabulary and other language skill. So, I do not teach writing.	4	22,22	8	44,44	2	11,11	4	22,22	18	100
2	I often give my students out-of-class writing activities.	2	11,11	15	83,33	1	5,56	0	-	18	100
3	I often give my students writing activities in the class.	2	11,11	15	83,33	0	-	1	5,56	18	100

From the results, we can infer teachers do not teach writing because it requires more effort than teaching other language skills; however, most of them assign writing activities to their students as classwork or homework. Even though there is not implicit instruction of this skill, students are required to present writing products. This teaching practice can affect negatively students' writing skill because it needs to be developed following a process, and this process must be taught to students so that they improve the length and the quality of their writing (Graham and Perin 11). Murray considers that writing must be taught as process (2). Students need to learn to write by following steps. The process of writing must be taught to students so that they improve the length and the quality of their writing (Graham and Perin 11).

Table 3.2

CORRECTION IN WRITING											
N°	Item	SA		A		D		SD		T	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Teachers' correction and feedback help learners to improve their writing skills.	11	61,11	7	38,89	0	-	0	-	18	100
2	When correcting writing, more focus should be given to content.	4	22,22	12	66,67	0	-	2	11,11	18	100
3	When correcting writing, more focus should be given to vocabulary diversity, coherence, originality and grammar.	0		0		3	16,67	15	83,33	18	100

4	Making students correct their own writing helps them to write better.	8	44,44	8	44,44	2	11,11	0	-	18	100
5	Making students correct each other their writing helps them to write better	8	44,44	8	44,44	2	11,11	0	-	18	100

Most of these teachers agree that teacher's feedback, self-feedback, and peer-feedback can help students to improve their writing. In this context, Hyland and Hyland mention that feedback is a key element to encourage writing, to consolidate learning and to grow control over learners' composing skills. Besides, teachers believe that more attention should be given to content rather than to vocabulary, coherence, originality and grammar when correcting pieces of writing. Teachers believe that focusing on ideas is more important when doing feedback, but Hyland states that "teachers' feedback should respond to all aspects of student texts: structure, organization, style, content, and presentation, but it is not necessary to cover every aspect on every draft at every stage of the teaching-writing cycle." (185).

Table 4.2

STUDENTS' RESPONSES TO CORRECTION IN WRITING											
Item		SA		A		D		SD		T	
		f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
1	My English teacher corrects and comments on my writing.	0	-	12	10,00	48	40,00	60	50,00	120	100
2	My English teacher makes me correct and comment on my own writing.	21	7,50	29	24,17	42	35,00	28	23,33	120	100
3	My English teacher makes me correct and comment on my classmates' writing.	0	-	0	-	18	5,00	102	85,00	120	100

Even though teachers show positive opinions about feedback, they do not apply any strategy to correct students' writing tasks, affecting the students' writing skill development.

Table 5.2

STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL											
Item		SA		A		D		SD		T	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	I can write coherent paragraphs in English.	1	0,83	1	0,83	30	25,00	88	73,33	120	100
2	I would like to write coherent paragraphs in English.	14	11,67	67	55,83	15	12,50	24	20,00	120	

Finally, most of the students mentioned that they cannot write coherent paragraphs in English, but they would like to be able to do it. These results show that 10 grade students are not meeting the assessment criteria (of writing) described in the EFL curriculum, which describes that they must be able to write about their family, living conditions, educational background, past activities, personal experiences, short, simple formal letters, and imaginary biographies. (Ministerio de Educación, 22).

## Conclusion

Teachers show positive attitudes to the teaching of writing, and they have some knowledge about it. They ignore how to teach it though. Most of them agree that they do not teach writing because it is difficult. They also agree on the positive influence of the different types of writing correction in students' writing development, but they do not apply them. While one of the assumptions of the EFL Ecuadorian curriculum is accepting writing as a process, teachers usually implement writing as a product for evaluation. It means that students are not involved in writing practice, but they are required to present a product—a piece of writing. Instead of engaging students in regular practice of writing through a process (generating ideas, drafting paragraphs and checking their writing individually or in groups), teachers expect learners to produce a piece of written product. Based on these findings, it is recommended teachers' training in approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques to teach writing.

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## CHAPTER III:

# APPROACHES TO WRITING INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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*"Start writing, no matter what. The water  
does not flow until the faucet is turned  
on." – Louis L'Amour*

## Abstract

The main aim of this chapter is to present a theoretical review of the Process and the Product approaches as methods to enhance writing skills in English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This chapter describes the writing skills, what learners need to learn in order to develop their writing skills, the process and the product approaches and the stages of each approach, benefits and drawbacks, a dual method to be implemented and some experience of applying the integrated method to enhance writing skill in beginners and advanced learners. Additionally, the information presented in this chapter helps teachers to be aware of what approaches to use according to the learners' level and needs or to be ready to integrate both of them to make learners write.

**Keywords:** Writing process approach, product approach, EFL learners, enhance writing skill

## Introduction

Writing skill has been neglected during the English teaching as a foreign language in all levels of Ecuadorian Education. It has caused learners do not know how to write in English and get frustrated when writing because teachers have never developed this skill, using adequate approaches according to their level, needs and interests. Most of the learners have problems to generate, organize their ideas and how to write those ideas with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. This lack of knowledge in teaching writing has caused students cannot write properly since they do not know the process of writing

and mainly because they have learned grammar isolated. That is why teachers and learners must know that writing involves developing two main aspects. They are the process that goes from brainstorming ideas to text composition and linguistic competence that contributes to use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation correctly, so learners can scaffold in different writing genres, according to their level. It is worth noting that students must develop both of them to produce a quality writing that conveys clear messages, so it is essential that teachers apply approaches such as process and product approaches as a dual method to enhancing writing skill.

Now, the Ecuadorian English curriculum has changed the perspective of teaching English and it is required that all learners can communicate and write competently in several genres according to the Common European Framework (CEFR) levels. Therefore, it is a really fundamental skill to be developed in English Foreign Language learners (EFL) because writing is a form of communication that contributes to putting their ideas and feelings on a paper. Even though it is a complex skill to be developed, teachers can make it easier if they select the appropriate approaches or combine them according to learners' needs. It means that it requires knowledge to apply different approaches and lots of practice to make intelligible written texts because writing is not just to write sentences but also write them in context and use correctly linguistics components to flow their understanding and communication.

There are a variety of approaches that teachers can select from, but this chapter will include just the process and product approaches as a dual method which has been applied in classes during a year with beginners and advanced learners at Cotopaxi Technical University. It helps us to provide experience about the application of the approaches in writing instruction in the different English levels.

This proposal encourages EFL teachers to provide an implicit instruction of writing by using different approaches that better fits to the students' learning context. It can be the process approach, the product approach or the combination of both of them as a dual method. In fact, this revision will allow teachers reflect on their styles and skills while teaching writing and it will also permit them to reflect on the importance of providing implicit instruction of this skill because writing involves many elements: knowledge of content, organization, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, accuracy, capitalization, paragraphing, the ability to generate ideas and organize them into a text composition to be able to write a variety of writing genres.

In agreement with the literature review and the authors' teaching experience, the writing process and product approaches are suitable for developing writing skills in EFL learners. For this reason, this chapter focuses on the analysis of the approaches mentioned in order to encourage teachers to apply them in tandem. The chapter is organized into two main parts. In the first part, we provide a wide description of writing skill, the process approach and the product approach pointing out some benefits and drawbacks. In the second part, the authors will present a dual method framework to develop writing skill and demonstrate

teachers the development to apply it in classes. It also focuses on important experience in applying the dual method.

## **Literature review**

### **Writing skill**

Writing is a quite important productive skill into the communicative process; it allows learners to give and get clear messages and ideas in a structured way. Therefore, it is mandatory that teachers must know what writing skill is and what learners need to learn in order to write their ideas on a piece of writing text adequately so that they can produce understandable quality writing.

To begin with, we as English teachers consider that writing is the act of using words properly in paragraphs using grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary to communicate thoughts, ideas, arguments and feelings in a readable form. Some researches as Gradener & Jhonson as cited in Hasan & Mohd mention that "Writing is a fluid process created by writers as they work, both consciously and unconsciously (78). In addition to, the Ministry of Education English as a Foreign Language defines writing as a highly cognitive and metacognitive intellectual act (23).

It means that is a process that teachers and learners must apply and learn in order to have good writers. At the same time, Ministry of Education (23) states that the act of writing involves pre-requisites to start writing: intention of author, the desire to communicate and share ideas, knowledge of vocabulary, text types and the organization of each, identification and

understanding of audience and purpose; and ability to manipulate the written code. Consequently, it is important to take into account all of these aspects when teaching writing. All in all, some authors mention that writing is not a highly organized linear process but a continual movement into the different steps of the writing process. It means that writing is not an isolated process. It needs some elements to write accurately.

## **What learners need to learn to enhance**

### **Writing Skill?**

Regarding what learners need to learn to enhance writing skill, we state that it is necessary that they need to learn how to generate ideas and organize them with correct grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary which are developed through feedback and practice. In respect of, Oxford University Press (2015) mentions that there are many skills involved in the written production which help students to improve their writing process and that they must be practiced separately. Oxford University Press (2015) mentions that planning, drafting, revising and some linguistic competence such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary are needed to produce good writing texts.

From our experience, we can mention that grammar, spelling and punctuation must be taught in context through feedback since grammar is not just rules to apply in separated sentences, they express meaning in paragraphs in order to understand learners' ideas. (Martin cited in Yasuda (125) suggests that



the linguistic resources for making meaning in a text, such as lexis, grammar, and discourse structure, have to be brought to consciousness and taught to novice EFL writers. Perfetti & McCutchen argued that syntactic competence grows the basic language competence and with an appropriate experience and linguistics dispositions drives to a grammatical development, which is quite essential in writing (106).

Furthermore, Kress affirms "spelling should be first taught at an early stage of writing and then focus on the process of writing" (8). However, we consider that those mistakes can be seen when they start writing, so it is the opportunity to give feedback according to students 'needs. Some authors also mention that knowledge of spelling is most closely related to writing and it makes writing much easier, allowing the writer to focus on the ideas to be conveyed. On the other hand, Joshi et al state "poor spelling, in addition to causing the writer frustration and embarrassment, adversely affects composition and transmission of ideas" (9). It means that students should learn spelling to become good and fluently writers.

Concerning punctuation mark, it is a crucial competence that permits to structure sentences, organize and connect the ideas clearly in writing. It creates sense and makes readers follow the understanding of writing compositions. Newcastle University states that if punctuation is used effectively in writing, it permits the reader to process de information and make sense of the meaning (par.2).

## The Writing Process Approach

The writing process approach is a generative process that allows EFL learners to think, generate and organize their ideas before writing and then, provide feedback during learners do the first draft so that they can produce quality writing texts. Camps (130) defines the writing process as "a sequence of a series of cyclical, recursive, and progressive stages with the purpose of producing a final piece of written work". (Leki as cited in Ho (2) states that the process approach places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process rather than the final product.

It is also mentioned as a process that encourages students to notice writing not as a grammar exercise but as an activity to convey ideas and thoughts through a written composition which is based on the purpose of the communication (O'Brien 4). In addition to, Murray (2) states that is fundamental to know that writing must be taught as a process and not as a product because it avoids learners are mechanicals. That is why it is essential that students can develop ideas and then learn how to use the language to convey a clear message in their compositions.

According to our experience using the process approach, it is an effective process to develop writing skill since it provides learners to plan their writing activity, so they know what to do and what to write. The writing process approach places a greater emphasis on planning and editing as opposed to knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Badger & White, as cited in Ho 2). It allows learners to come up with ideas and organize them to start writing and to have feedback to edit properly in beginners and advanced levels. Additionally, it creates confidence and changes learners' perspectives towards writing because it is seen as a complex activity to carry out. Regarding this, Ho

(2) found that the writing process approach brought positive results in both the upper and lower levels because learners are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. "This writing process help them to write freely and get a quality product" Ho (2). That is why it is appropriate to know the stages of the process approach. The process approach model is comprised of eight stages as Tangpermpoon (18) mentions:

Another linguistic competence into the EFL writing students should learn is vocabulary. EFL learners have troubles in writing due to the insufficient lexical competence (Laufer, Granger, and Hinkel, as cited in Bartley & Benitez (46). It is also mentioned that there is a productive correlation between the lexical competences with the production of a quality writing. Schmitt states that despite learning a large size of vocabulary, it is such as necessary to learn how to use it well in the context in order to produce a quality oral and written production (333).

Even though it is used the most effective skills or strategies to teach EFL writing, it is not enough if learners do not practice. Precisely, (Nation, as cited in Bartley & Benitez (13) states that regular practice in English academic writing should result in an enrichment of students' written output. However, this practice needs that EFL learners may have some linguistic competence in the organization of writing. All in all, writing is a skill that needs both the linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation) and the writing process to develop a good quality of written compositions.

According to our experience using the process approach, it is an effective process to develop writing skill since it provides learners to plan their writing activity, so they know what to do

and what to write. The writing process approach places a greater emphasis on planning and editing as opposed to knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Badger & White, as cited in Ho 2). It allows learners to come up with ideas and organize them to start writing and to have feedback to edit properly in beginners and advanced levels. Additionally, it creates confidence and changes learners' perspectives towards writing because it is seen as a complex activity to carry out. Regarding this, Ho (2) found that the writing process approach brought positive results in both the upper and lower levels because learners are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. "This writing process help them to write freely and get a quality product" Ho (2). That is why it is appropriate to know the stages of the process approach. The process approach model is comprised of eight stages as Tangpermpoon (18) mentions:

1. **Stage one (Brainstorming):** In this stage, students generate and track their ideas by note-jotting and discussion.
2. **Stage two (Planning/Structuring):** Students then convert their jotted ideas into note-form and judge the quality and usefulness of the ideas.
3. **Stage three (Mind mapping):** Students organize ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form (also called graphic organizers). This stage helps to establish the hierarchical relationship of ideas that help students to develop the structure of their texts.
4. **Stage four (Writing the first draft):** Students write the first draft. This is done in the class often in pairs or groups.

5. **Stage five (Peer feedback):** Drafts are exchanged so that classmates become the readers of each other's works. By responding as readers, students develop awareness of the fact that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else and thus they can improve their own drafts.

6. **Stage six (Editing):** Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback.

7. **Stage seven (Final draft):** A final draft is written. The students write being aware of teachers' comments to improve writing skills

8. **Stage eight (Evaluation and teachers' feedback):** Students' writings are evaluated and teachers provide feedback on them.

These stages are no difficult to apply in classes. They are easy to follow, but teachers must teach learners how to perform each step-in order to have good results. In the beginning, it takes time in the first two stages because students have troubles to generate ideas. They get shocked because they do not know what to write. It is important that teachers can guide this step by providing keywords information about the topic so they can come up with the ideas.

Then, peer feedback is also challenging because students need to know what to correct, so teachers must focus them on what they need to check. Another important aspect to mention is teachers' feedback. It is really useful because students learn from their mistakes, but it is demanding a lot of time especially in large groups. We suggest that during the first draft, teachers

can go around and check learners' writing thus teachers can provide a general feedback to all learners. All these stages make students be aware that writing is a process that takes time and they need to be conscious to apply grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary properly.

## **Benefits and Drawbacks of the Writing Process Approach.**

A writing process is an approach that really contributes with lots of benefits to enhance writing skills. Our experience in applying this process approach in classes makes us confirm some of them. One important benefit is that learners can generate ideas to make easy to produce writing and then analyze the sequence of the ideas so they are able to organize them in paragraphs. For beginners, it is easy because they write about common topics which do not require previous reading. However, for advanced learners the purpose of writing is different, so they need previous reading in order to be familiarized with the topic and connect with their experience, mainly in academic writing.

Another important benefit is that students change their perspectives towards writing. They are more confident to perform writing activities because planning using brainstorming helps them know how to start the activity and organize the ideas which are the most difficult part of writing. Learners do not see this activity as an obligation but as an opportunity to communicate through writing. And the last but not the least benefit is that this process permits learners and teachers to have a good relationship and take advantage of this relationship to create a positive attitude towards writing. Moreover, it encourages students to become more flexible with writing so that they may modify their writing as many times as it is necessary.

Some researchers as Krashen (24); Brown (10) claim that the application of this process permits students to get used to planning not only in the writing process, but also in their daily life. It will prevent students from becoming

frustrated when they present the final composition because their teachers have guided them in this process, helping them to organize their ideas and notice their grammatical mistakes before submission.

On the other hand, the writing process approach has some drawbacks. It requires time to generate ideas, to edit, to review, and to publish. The amount of time required may at times become an inconvenience or even a difficulty, especially, when teachers have a large group of students. They may not have enough time to guide all students without demotivating them or causing them to lose interest in writing. It is quite necessary to mention that the time students spend on each process stage, will depend on students' personality, experience, habits and maturity Murray (2), so teachers must be patient when developing writing skills. Another drawback is that the process approach may cause teachers to focus more on generating and organizing ideas rather than grammar and syntax. It can lead students to believe that grammar is not important when writing. We must remember that all linguistic components are necessary to develop both oral and written communication.

## **The Product Approach**

According to Thulasi, Abdul and Fauziah the product approach is one of the most commonly used by teachers in schools around the world (790). This approach is focused on modeling and emphasize the final product without any kind of feedback during the writing activity. Besides, it focuses on just checking grammar, punctuation and spelling without paying attention to the process to generate and organize the ideas, which are very vital to convey certain information or purpose. Khan and Bontha (96) state that "the product approach is an oriented-class due to the teachers supply learners with standard texts so that they can follow the model to write their own piece of writing". In addition to, Pinca (cited in Badger and White, 20) points out that the product approach is seen as linguistic knowledge, focused

on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesion. It means, this kind of approach leads students to produce a final composition based on models provided by teachers; the final product is the center of this approach and it is focused on imitating and modeling a text as well as structuring phrases and sentences to complete a specific format of writing based on a provided sample.

An important fact that Nunan (19) mentions is that the writing composition as a product must be coherent with no errors in the text. Therefore, teachers are concerned with the final piece of writing and provide learners teaching and feedback based on vocabulary, grammatical structures, spelling and little punctuation, which we consider they are not enough to produce a quality understandable writing. We strongly believe writing requires more than the linguistic competence, it needs teaching in how to generate ideas and how to write those ideas into paragraphs with the help of feedback. Then, we mean that both are important when writing so teachers must also know how to apply this approach properly. Here it is mentioned the stages of the product approach.

According to Badger and White there are four specific stages to follow when producing writing compositions (153).

1. **Familiarization** aims to make learners aware of certain features of a particular text. At this stage, the model compositions are given to learners to focus on grammar that teachers want to teach.
2. **Controlled writing** is where learners practice the new language in a limited way. They rehearse grammar or vocabulary by



completing exercises or writing sentences in an isolated way. It requires only the manipulation of the language learned.

3. **Guided writing** aims students can write compositional texts using the language previously taught.

4. **Free writing** is a stage where students are motivated to write a letter, story or essay on their own, but using the language that was taught before.

## **Benefits and Drawbacks of the Writing Product Approach**

The application of the product approach has some benefits. Related to our experience, teaching these stages are really useful since they help learners to be familiarized with the language in context by modeling and acquire linguistic components to later apply them in a writing activity. The purpose of giving models to learners is that they can learn grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary in context and not by memorizing grammatical rules. Similarly, some researchers mention that this approach helps students to understand how they must organize the paragraphs in structure and syntax to create a logical and accurate final product. That is why teachers must apply these stages in the way they are mentioned so that they can have better results. Our experience is also supported by Khan and Bontha who mention "the product approach provides students "linguistic knowledge" and understanding of how language is formed through modeling as a resource for enhancing writing skills (97).

We can mention this familiarization with the language through modeling contributes beginners and advanced learners feel comfortable and secure on what structures and vocabulary to use when they start writing all kind of texts. It avoids students to be frustrated at writing activities because they have just to replace some specific information and use the same grammar structures. It is worth saying that sometimes for advanced learners, it is hard to concentrate on the model structures and parts of the text because they tend to assimilate models from their mother language.

It is a problem because they have not been exposed to writing models and writing activities before. Related to, Mei (25) in her research mentions that the product approach proves to be more beneficial to lower students as opposed to higher students. This discrepancy is because beginner students are blank slates and teachers do not have to modify any knowledge learned—or mislearned—beforehand.

Another important fact about the product approach is that it helps teachers to save time in correction. In respect of this, Khan and Bontha (15) mention that teachers can correct works easily because they are based on form (grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary) rather than ideas and organization. Although this might be true, we can state that correction of linguistics aspects without any feedback beforehand, takes a lot of time since students are not experts and they do a lot of mistakes when writing. However, if teachers do a previous feedback, it can save teachers 'time when they correct because the mistakes are going to be less.

In spite of having some benefits using this approach, it also has some drawbacks that make as teachers to reflect on what approach to use when developing writing skill. We must mention that the product approach develops neither creativity nor critical thinking because they just follow specific models to write. Learners must focus on the content and the ideas that the model provides them to complete information. To reinforce it, Murray states that simply modeling texts do not help learners to develop their creativity (as cited in Pasand & Haghi 76). As teachers, we can say that students imitate the style and overgeneralize this process without paying attention to some steps to write. Students are only concentrated on imitating structures rather than developing ideas, which is extremely crucial in making a writing composition.

Another inconvenient when using just the product approach is that students have problems in thinking critically, producing ideas, and then connecting those ideas into paragraphs. Consequently, at this stage, both beginners and advanced students do not pay attention to the content or the communicative purpose behind their writing (Nunan as cited in Kham and Bontha 97). It can then be said that the writing loses the essence of communication and the message students want to convey. On the other hand, advanced students get into trouble when they have to think or give opinions because they got used to using only models and they have problems to develop their own ideas to write. It is hard to change, but teachers must help them to start working with a balanced approach to fortifying students' skills in writing especially in generating ideas to modify the way they write.

All in all, the benefits and the drawbacks that this approach can have will depend on how teachers use modeling texts in developing students' writing skills. Eschholz (28) emphasizes that when models are integrated appropriately into the content of the writing process, they become useful teaching tools. Models can lead students to be aware of various aspects of writing such as style, vocabulary, organization, and structure while the process approach helps students to generate ideas and organize them with feedback.

## **The Process Approach and the Product Approach as a Dual Method to Develop Writing.**

We have discussed the benefits and the drawbacks of the approaches before and that makes us reflect that it is essential to integrate both process approach and product approach to have a good balance in teaching and enhancing writing skill. Therefore, we present a dual method to use in classes, which has the most positive aspects of both approaches to develop writing skill, taking into consideration that, it is vital to start with the process approach to help either beginners or advanced learners to promote ideas to write rather than explicit grammar. However, it is also important to develop grammar, spelling and punctuation so learners can write accurately. That is why we present the following process-product approach framework to ensure develop both important aspects of the writing skills.

Table 1.3

PROCESS-PRODUCT APPROACH FRAMEWORK	
APPROACH	PROCEDURE
PROCESS	(Brainstorming): In this stage, students generate and track their ideas by note-jotting and discussion in a graphical organizer
PROCESS	(Mind mapping): Students organize ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form (also called graphic organizers). This stage helps to establish the hierarchical relationship of ideas that helps students to develop the structure of their texts.
PRODUCT	(Familiarization): At this stage, the model sentences or compositions are given to students to focus on grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation that teachers want to teach.
PRODUCT	(Controlled writing): Students practice new language in a limited way. They rehearse all linguistic knowledge by writing sentences using the ideas provided.
PRODUCT	(Guided writing): At this stage students can write compositional texts using the language previously taught.
PROCESS	(Peer feedback): Drafts are exchanged, so that classmates become the readers of each other's works. It is important to guide students on what they have to correct.
PROCESS	(Final editing and feedback): Drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback and also the teacher can go around and give some feedback so the text can be ready at the end of editing.
PROCESS	(Evaluation and teachers' feedback): Students' writings are evaluated and teachers provide feedback on them.

The reviewed literature on the analysis of the process and product approaches contributes to understanding that the application of the method must result in the ability to create logical and coherent long-lasting and strong writing skills. The experience in applying this dual method let us suggest teachers how to apply this dual method in classes and states that both of them really help either beginners or advanced learners to fortify their writing ability.

For beginners' learners, it is really useful since they model the way of writing in English and not using the interference of their mother tongue. It also helps learners to teach grammar, punctuation and spelling implicit. Meanwhile, advanced learners modify the way they write using their mother tongue and develop a new process to write appropriately, but they need to be taught explicit grammar before and practice it implicitly. Therefore, it is important for teachers to understand how to apply the dual method to ensure that learners develop quality composition texts with the purpose of communicating their ideas effectively and use proper linguistic components. We will discuss all the process written in the chart above.

This dual method, which starts with the process approach (brainstorming), teaches learners first how to develop or generate ideas to write. At this stage, the teachers must provide a topic and ask students to come up with some ideas related to the topic and write down in a graphical organizer. It is necessary at the beginning to help students by giving general topics so they can give specific information about what it is really needed for the writing activity. It will help them to notice what kind of information they must provide as general and specific. Of course, it takes time to make students think so be patient

and guide learners to the objective. Later, the planning stage makes learners reflect on the most important ideas and order them according to the importance or sequence in a graphical organizer so that they know what relevant information to focus on and write them in sequence in their writing task.

This stage is not difficult and it takes some minutes, just make learners reflect on the most important information to use in the writing task. These two stages are essential in writing because they provide the steps to start writing. After that, we integrate the product approach, using the familiarization stage in order to make students concentrate on specific grammar points according to the information they generate in the previous task. It helps them to concentrate on specific grammar aspects to write sentences which they are going to use in their writings. Here, teachers can provide examples of sentences using the specific grammar or provide them with a model so that students can realize what grammar to use and how. Both alternatives are great to work with learners at this stage.

It makes learners feel more comfortable with the writing process and motivated to do the task because they know what kind of grammar, they are going to use in the writing activity. Next, controlling writing and guided writing, which belongs to the product approach, make learners practice sentences by using their own ideas that they have generated previously about the topic, and then integrated those ideas into a paragraph as a guided writing activity.

Later, once learners have familiarized with the language, it is time to use all the information practiced previously to start writing the first draft. At this stage, it is really essential that teachers start providing feedback all the time because the

result is better and because learners can correct some errors from the beginning and learn from them. Next, peer feedback is another way to make students correct the errors. Here, teachers must make students exchange with their partners the first draft so that they can provide some feedback before to evaluate it. It is really an advantage to make all learners be aware of what elements they must focus on to correct, so teachers must guide it to have acceptable results.

It is also menester to motivate students to do it consciously and ethically as this peer-correction has two main reasons. The first one is to learn from their partners and the second one is to facilitate teachers' correction at the end of the final writing text. According to our experience, peer feedback works better with beginner learners rather than advanced learners. It is because of the level that advanced learners have. They do not accept that they need to learn more and that their partner probably knows more or less than them.

Consequently, teachers must encourage them to do the task by helping them recognize some errors. Later, the learners get back their writing with some observations that must be taken into account to start writing the final draft. At this final draft, learners must rewrite again the text and while they are writing, teachers must provide feedback so they can improve much more their writings. It is worth saying that, teachers can provide feedback to each individual learners or collect all common mistakes and teach them on the board. Using all these combined stages, the final written text is ready to be evaluated with a much better quality than the beginning. What is more, teachers are going to save time at the moment to evaluate learners' composition because they have been checking previously. Of course, it is a long process, but it is worth trying to make this ability easier for



learners to learn how to write. By scaffolding the integrated approaches, teachers will walk away with a more comprehensive and dynamic perspective of learning and developing writing in learners and make change their perspective towards it.

## **Important Experience in Dual Method Applied at the Language Center Of UTC**

At the Language Center of CTU, we have begun to implement the dual-approach method to ensure that EFL learners hone two important and specific skills: the former being the generation of original ideas, and the latter being the organization of those ideas into fully developed compositional texts. The results were quite satisfactory because learners really have improved the way they write in getting ideas to write and linguistics competences, and, of course, the way they see the writing activities. In the beginning, they saw writing as the most difficult skill to do, but later, they realize that if they have all the tools and knowledge, they can write their ideas accurately. Learner's writings were more satisfactory because they compare the previous writing with the last ones.

They really had a difference in content, organization and the use of linguistic components. In fact, they were more understanding and easy to follow in meaning and communication, so they understand that writing becomes much simpler for them as they have already developed all the essential writing process integrated for producing quality writing. An important advantage is that it turns into a challenge activity to do and not a forced one because learners know what and how to write. They simply need the appropriate method, time to practice and teacher's feedback to produce quality tasks.

According to our experience at the Language Center, we can state that the successful implementation of the dual-approach method has to do with the application of all the integrated steps to get excellent results in writing. It also includes teachers as a resource to provide help by providing good examples of the two approaches, extensive practice and feedback in classes develop writing skill because they guide to a writing final product.

## Conclusion

It is essential that teachers learn about the process and the product approach to applying in classes in order to enhance writing skill. This chapter helps them to be aware of what approaches to use according to the learners 'level and needs or to be ready to integrate both of them to make learners write. Some researchers consider that the lack of knowledge in these approaches make teachers neglected this vital skill in learning English as a foreign language. That is why learners are not motivated to write because there is no a clear applied method to teach them writing. So, it is necessary that teachers analyze the approaches they can use and how to implement them in classes, taking into account the experience given in the paper.

It will help them to manage the appropriate method or methods for enhancing writing skills. We as teachers who have been applying these methods can say that developing writing skill in EFL learners is a long process, but when teachers apply the appropriate approach or a dual approach, learners really understand the process of writing and it becomes into an easy activity to do in classes with really rewarding results. We also

can conclude that the application of these approaches together contributes to having excellent results in writing.

The writing process approach is appropriate to start developing new and advanced learners in generating and organizing ideas due to EFL learners usually do not know how to start their writing compositions, and the product approach helps these learners to expand their writing style and their linguistic knowledge to have coherent understanding according to the communicative purpose. It allows learners to be confident and enhance fluency when they start writing. Working in that sequence with a dual-approach method, teachers can have better results in enhancing writing skills and improving EFL learners' distinctive styles. Additionally, it will increase learners' motivation to continue scaffolding this skill. By the end of the process, students will be more aware of their ability to write and their confidence in themselves as their writing skills will be much stronger.

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## CHAPTER IV:

# HOW TO MANAGE REVERSE WRITING IN CLASS

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*My aim is to put down on paper what I see  
and what I feel in the best and simplest way.*  
*Ernest Hemingway*

## Abstract

Writing is one of the most important English language skills to be learned by students, but at the same time one of the most difficult to develop. New strategies and techniques are showing up every day so that teachers can use them in class. One of those techniques is presented in the following document. Reverse Writing is a variant of another technique that is very useful and effective in developing writing skills and creativity in students. This technique consists of a list of questions that students must answer coherently to have information they can use at the moment of constructing a text. This chapter is aimed to research the implementation and to find out student's responses to this technique in teaching writing. The research used a descriptive qualitative method. The data was obtained from questionnaires. The research was conducted at Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi extension La Maná where the participant was 13 students of the B1 level. Moreover, three writing tasks are presented about activities using Reverse Writing performed by students that include not only the procedure and the development of the task but also how to use that information to work on class projects to engage students in the learning process. The result of the research showed that the Reverse Writing technique was implemented under the previous theory about guided questions. Meanwhile, the students had a positive response toward the Reverse Writing technique implementation with 81,53% of students agreeing that this technique is interesting and easy to use. Moreover, with an average of 85%, attention and relevance aspects are the highest average indicators which can be illustrated that the Reverse Writing technique was interesting, challenging, and enjoyable.

**Keywords:** Reverse Writing, technique, creativity, students, skills.



## Introduction

English is the most important language around the world and every day a lot of people are studying it for many reasons such as business, education, tourism, work, etc. This language is present in almost every country in the world and is the main form of communication among different cultures that do not have much in common. Thus, having a good level of English is essential to communicate, to have access to knowledge and information, and to be updated.

In Ecuador, learning English has been seen as an obligation instead of as an opportunity, especially in high schools and universities, where students are forced to study this language, but they do not understand why, or what are the advantages for their future careers. The Ecuadorian Government established a requirement that to graduate from the university students must have a B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR); while this ensures that students study the language, most of them do not acquire the skills to be considered proficient.

Some people believe that the main problem at the moment of teaching English is that teachers use old methodologies and that they should use more modern strategies and techniques. However, the main problem is that Ecuadorian students live in a Spanish context and not in an English context, meaning that when students leave the class, they do not need to use English in real situations. English use is limited only to the classroom. This reality provokes students do not feel interested in learning a foreign language and they are not motivated to do it.

For this reason, teachers must adopt new strategies and techniques that root students' learning in authentic contexts that naturally pique their interest and inspire motivation. Teachers must challenge students all the time in class and trust more in students' capacities by letting them improve and discover the language by themselves.

A modern example that has shown to have success is called "Reverse Writing." This technique is a variation of another called "Reverse Reading" that was taught by Professor David White in one of several workshops at Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi. It has been applied with students from the extension in La Maná to improve their writing skills and served as a trigger to develop class projects where the interest, motivation, and results have been notorious for developing writing and all skills.

Writing is one of the most difficult skills for students to develop and because of that, it can be an excellent resource to challenge students. The technique "Reverse Writing" is presented and explained in how to use it in class and some advice is provided to create class projects where the students have the leading role in the learning process.

## **Literature review**

"Writing well in English – or any other language for that matter – involves somewhat more than avoiding errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Good writing is not just correct; it responds to the interests or needs of the intended readers. It must be planned, structured and designed with a particular audience and a particular purpose in mind" (Noone et al. 89).

"During the process of writing, students can exercise their skills. Throughout, writing teachers help shape students' ideas and the meaning they would like to record until they are satisfied with the content and form of the message they want to express" (Chantoem y Rattanaich 67).

"As with most languages, written language tends to use a more formal register than spoken language. The acquisition of literacy takes significant effort in English" (Soler 23). Writing is one of the most important English language skills. This kind of expression uses fundamentally the verbal language even if it also includes nonverbal elements such as maps, graphics, mathematics formulas, etc. One of the functions of writing is to leave behind a record of events.

Through writing, people can interrelate and get closer to the reality, describe everything which is around them, express in words their feelings in detail and so forth. Moreover, they can learn, imagine, reflect and communicate. Thus, it is a very complex skill and contains many possibilities that teachers should take advantage of as they manage new class activities and strategies and at the same time, students will improve their English level by themselves.

"In spite of all these advantages, they should be aware that the writing process is full of challenges" (Noone 89). Learning to write means learning to organize ideas, creating coherent texts, adapting the style according to the reader, managing brainstorming, checking a draft, correcting and rewriting a text. When people do this in a foreign language, they are faced with many types of obstacles: cognitive (What do I write?), communicative (Who do I write for?) organizational (How do I

structure my writing?), and linguistic (How do I correctly use grammar and creatively include style?).

Writing demands the instrumental use of the rest of language skills during the process of production. Each individual has different possibilities of learning how to write correctly according to the socio-cultural environment where they live. That is why to improve the writing of a foreign language it is indispensable to read a lot of information because through this, the learner will acquire a great number of contextualized models about the different aspects that this skill involves.

Rumelhart argues that "Reading involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between the reader and the text" (qtd. In Chantoem y Rattanavich 66). In a general sense, reading is what happens when people look at the text and assign meaning to the written symbols comprising that text.

While some fluent adult writers think of writing as a difficult process, L2 (second language) learners should not initially have the same attitude and the teacher should try to ensure that writing is not seen as a frustrating and unrewarding skill. On the contrary, learners should be encouraged to feel that writing is an important and effective means of self-expression, communication and information gathering. (Al-Gharabally 42).

To develop this skill, the students internalize psychological and pedagogic processes that allow them to read, analyze, compare, understand, and organize ideas to connect and present them logically and interestingly. These actions require skills that not all students develop at the same speed. However, these skills

can be exercised in constant writing sessions focused on how the students can generate ideas, organize them, use the general aspects of writing, check and edit the text so that the final draft is according to the initial basic requirements of the task.

"Writing is unfortunately very commonly used as a means of evaluation so it is not surprising that many people feel they are being judged when someone reads what they have written" (Al-Gharabally 42). In addition, this productive skill has been taught from a grammatical standpoint which turns all the writing tasks into boring, meaningless, and even frightening activities for students.

According to Al-Gharabally "teachers often assign writing tasks as homework. They choose not to devote class time to something which they believe can be done just as effectively at home" (44). Also, as students need different amounts of time to finish the activities, it is easier for the teacher to set the writing as homework rather than have students finish at different times and get bored while the rest of the class completes the task.

The problem to keep in mind with this is that teachers cannot guarantee that their students performed the writing activity independently and that they did not consult texts written by other people or use an online translator. In other words, teachers should ensure that they are not losing priceless time that might be used to improve the student's English language skills.

The teachers' tasks are certainly to explore students' stimulus for writing, which, contains attainment motivation, fundamental motivation, and extrinsic motivation, which is believed to assist the teachers to plan meaningful and significant writing tasks by taking into account the

students' level of motivation. The writing tasks must be oriented to challenge students. (Kellogg 12).

Many teachers believe that their students are not capable of performing certain activities and that way of thinking might be unconsciously affecting students too. They must plan and propose to students, activities that are not extremely difficult or easy. The activities must be difficult enough to challenge students and have to be related to something that is interesting and meaningful for them or that solves a problem in the community. Activities that once finished can be seen and recognized not only by them but by the rest of the people, university, or community.

For instance, teachers work every day with students that have different backgrounds, some of them have had a problematic life with economic or family problems that do not allow them to improve their skills in a normal way. As teachers, to know all of these issues would be very difficult especially if the class is big. Nevertheless, planning an activity where they have to write an autobiography will solve that problem easily because it is unbelievable the information and experiences that students can provide in a well-organized writing activity.

"To boost their students' motivation, teachers may share success stories with their students, instances of reputable individuals who had writing problems while undergoing education in schools" (Almubark 12). Moreover, if teachers use these activities constantly, students will be able to see works that were done before by other students at the same institution so that they feel encouraged to do a better job and think of new and better ideas to stand out.

Also, Reid argued that "individuals with writing difficulties may have a great deal to offer to societies through their creativity, skills, and talents which may remain inactive and untapped owing partly to the frustrations of not being able to write like the rest"(12). In fact, a well-planned, organized, and meaningful writing task might turn into a bigger project that may include supplementary activities where all students can participate and cooperate in additional aspects besides the writing, for instance: creating a video, designing a book or journal, present the project orally, etc.

The writing task is only the beginning of countless possibilities whose objective is not only to improve the students' English level but make them feel part of something significant and teach them that they can achieve anything if they want it and are willing to work for it.

Teachers are required to know that students learn in different ways, hence it may require different assets and requirements. For example, a low achieving student in writing may not be necessarily be a low-achiever in other aspects of academic achievement. Every student with writing problems may have their own learning style, interests, requirements, and assets. In this regard, it is the teachers who should be able to help the students to identify their interests and strengths (Shaywitz 12).

More important than that, teachers must work along with students to know their strengths and flaws but above everything they have to value their students' work and always provide positive feedback.

As a final point, Strickland et al., stated that "by means of cooperation, instructors may exchange thoughts about suitable teaching methods between one another and such a practice may help raise their awareness on how to deal with different kinds of learners in their classrooms" (13).

Nowadays, teachers must be updated in the use of new methodologies and techniques to provide their students with the best education and see the best results from their students. One of the most practical and effective ways to do this is by exchanging experiences with other teachers.

## **Reverse writing**

Using guided questions to improve writing skills has been used previously to improve writing skills by teachers around the world and it is not completely new. The guided questions technique is a technique that uses some questions to help the writer in developing the ideas. The questions are used as a basis for writing. In line with Traver qtd. In Indrasari and Julita "guided questions as a direction to find understanding by using the basic question" (164). Then, Giacomozzi qtd. In Darmawan and Andrianti stated "Questioning techniques are a key element of an interactive classroom which is constantly being invented and revised to help facilitate active learning" (56). The guided questions technique needs to be updated and improved to have better results and help students enjoy their learning process.

Furthermore, by providing several questions. Guided questions technique outlined guide in the writing process. Supported by Brown qtd. In Indrasari and Julita stated, "the guided question



technique used to push the writer to write from an outline" (165). Meanwhile, White qtd. In Indrasari and Julita called "the guided question technique by 5Ws and the H grid" (165). The questions include What, Where, When, Why, Who, and How. Those questions needed to know the topic. Afterward, adopted by Gould qtd. In Hariyanto (78) here: were some functions of the guided questions technique as follows:

1. Guided questions displaced the writer from observing simple physical details to discovering complexities inherent in a topic and it is the environment.
2. Guided questions encourage the writer to re-evaluate the writer's understanding of a topic and see it differently.
3. The writer can generate writing materials.
4. The writer can see the topic from a different point of view.
5. Guided questions may help the writer to clarify the position on a topic.

In teaching English by using guided questions technique that was some steps as follows:

1. The teacher gave a topic.
2. The teacher guided the students in gathering the ideas
3. The teacher provided several questions related to the topic
4. The teacher asked the students to answer all the questions

5. After answering the questions, the teacher asked the students to transfer the answer

of the question into a paragraph.

6. The teacher asked the students to check and revise the paragraph.

7. The teacher gave feedback to the students

Adapted from Hariyanto (79).

Some pertinent studies related to this topic have been found. The first study was conducted by Genta in 2017 entitled "The Effect of Guided Question Technique in Students' Writing Ability on Recount Text at eight Grade of Junior High School 30 Padang". This study shows that teaching using the guided question technique improves students' writing skills. The second study was conducted by Imanisa in 2017 entitled "Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text through Guided Question Technique at the Second Grade of SMPN 23 Bandar Lampung". This research suggests that the guided questions technique facilitates the students to improve their writing ability. The third study was conducted by Hariyanto in 2018 entitled "The Influence of Using Guided Questions Technique Towards Students' Procedure Text Writing Ability". This study concludes that guided questions are effective in improving students' procedural text-writing skills.

Based on these three studies, this research is different from the previous ones. First is location, The location of this research is at Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi extension La Maná in Ecuador. Second, the difference can be seen in the level, in this research,

the sample is taken from level B1 of university students, while other researches are from Junior High School and VIII grade.

Reverse Writing is a technique that teachers can use to improve the writing skills of their students by encouraging them to use significant information such as personal information or topics they like or that they are passionate about. This is a variant of another technique called "Reverse Reading" which was taught by Mr. David White in one of his workshops.

Most English students in Ecuador get stuck when they have to do a writing task because they are accustomed to writing independent sentences but do not know how to link them in a paragraph or provide give an adequate order and structure to their ideas.

The objective of this technique is to provide students with a path to follow to be able to know how to start, organize ideas, and finish the task. That means, facilitating the elaboration of the storyline and the use of tenses so that students can focus on the creativity and inventiveness in their writing.

Reverse Writing is an innovative and transformative technique that consists of presenting to the students a group of specific instead of general questions that will provide them with the information that the task must contain, the order that it has to have, and the tenses they must use. Next, students will answer the questions and use that information to construct the story, biography, or any other writing activity.

Besides, once the task is finished and checked, this technique encourages the teacher and students to put all the texts together and present them in a way that can be read by other people not only the teacher or the classmates; for example, a booklet of stories, a school newspaper, a magazine or even upload them on the Internet to be seen by the public in general to solve a problem or receiving feedback. This next step makes students aware of the importance of communicating through writing and makes them feel motivated and proud of what they have created. This way, they will continue writing but for pleasure and not as a form to complete a task and have a grade.

### **The procedure is as follows:**

- Choose the topic to write about. It must be something relevant or interesting for students.
- Write questions about the topic giving them a logical order and using the tenses you want students to use in the task.
- Give out the questions to the students and ask them to read and answer them.
- The answers must have some connection between them and use the appropriate tenses.
- Later, using their answers, they have to construct a story about the topic and they need to have appropriate linking words (however, all of a sudden, so... etc).
- When the students have finished writing, exchange the stories with their classmates. They must read the text and see if they can understand it and give some

recommendations to improve the task from the reader's point of view.

- Put the stories up around the classroom for everyone to read and get them to decide which one is the best / funniest / most unusual.
- Once all the stories or any kind of writing tasks are checked, organize a class project where these tasks can be read by people outside of the classroom in an interesting form.
- Show the students the comments from external people about their tasks and encourage them to keep writing.

This technique can be used for any topic and any level from easy to difficult or very specific ones. For example, real stories, fiction stories, biographies, autobiographies, summaries, reports, advertisements, tourist information booklets, etc. The questions will depend on the level of difficulty of the topic.

Let's suppose that you want your students to write about the biography of a famous person, the questions to be presented to them could be:

1. Where and when was he/she born?
2. Where did he study?
3. What did he/she do during his/her life?
4. What were his/her achievements?
5. What about his/her family?

6. What were his/her hobbies?
7. How was his/her social life?
8. What did he/she believe in?
9. When did he/she die?

At the moment of choosing the topic, the teacher has to take into account the level of their students and the purpose of the writing task. It must be a relevant and interesting topic for those who are going to write. They must be excited, interested, and motivated so that they feel engaged and committed to the process of writing and the final product. At the end, present the biographies in an interesting document that your students can keep a copy of and they could deliver to other teachers or friends.

## **Example tasks using reverse writing with B1 students in UTC La Maná**

This technique has been introduced and applied to university students in La Maná from level B1 for a year. Three examples of writing tasks using Reverse Writing are presented next:

### **1. - Name: "We write stories"**

#### **Objectives:**

- To improve writing skills in students by writing made-up stories.

- To develop creativity in students.

Level: B1 students.

Task: Individual.

Length: 700 or more words.

### Procedure:

- Students are asked to write a fictitious story.
- The teacher provides the questions to be answered to construct the story.
- The stories are gathered in a printed book and delivered to external people.

### Questions:

1. What genre is your story (fantasy, horror, romantic, drama, action, adventure)?
2. How many characters are there in your story?
3. What were their names?
4. What did they do?
5. What did they look like?
6. What are they like (personality)?
7. Where were they from?

8. Where did the story take place?
9. What time/time of day was it?
10. What was the weather like?
11. What were the characters doing?
12. How did they feel?
13. What is the problem in the story?
14. How did they feel about the problem?
15. How did the problem get resolved?

- Students answer the questions using coherent information.

- Using that information, they start writing the story adding complementary information and connectors.

- Students interchange stories and read classmates' ideas.

- They give and receive opinions to improve each other's work.

- Present the story to the teacher for a final check.

- The last part of this activity is maybe one of the most important because when the stories are finished, they were the beginning of a bigger project like printing a book. That is the testimony of the creativity and the capacity of the students. They noticed that what they created was meaningful not only for them but for other people too and they felt proud of that, in that way, they understood that writing can be fun, interesting, and rewarding too.



The following is a story written by a B1 student in La Maná:

*This is the story of three friends that lived in Africa. One was a lion who is the king of the forest and is big and dangerous; second is the panther who is admired by all the animals of the forest and is strong and brave; and last is the owl who is the advisor of both and is tenderhearted.*

*One day, the panther became jealous because he wanted the crown of the forest, but it belonged to the lion. So, he went to pursue the lion and challenge him to a competition in which the winner would be the king of the forest.*

*The panther said "Lion, I challenge you to a death competition where there will be blood and much pain. I challenge you in the highest mountain when the sun rises and before the sun sets there will be a winner and the loser will have to leave the forest forever."*

*The lion, surprised, confused, and furious replied "Panther I accept that challenge. The loser will be dismissed from home and humiliated by all of the forest."*

*Morning and evening became very desolate.*

*It was not the same with everyone. No one laughed and no one played. The night fell suddenly and everyone nervously awaited the morning.*

*The panther established three events in the competition:*

- *First, they had to go down the mountain and cross the valley of the roses with spines.*
- *Second, they had to cross the river full of dangerous crocodiles.*
- *And finally, and the most dangerous challenge was a hand-to-hand fight to death between the lion and the panther.*

*Morning came and when they got up, they were afraid to see what consequences the competition would bring.*

*The lion woke up and saw the white owl. The owl saw the lion and said, "I know you are a lion with a big heart and I see that inside you are very good--just listen to your instincts." The owl after saying this flew away, and the lion sat pensively. After a while he came out of his cave. When the lion arrived, they were all silent and the panther smiled and said "Hahaha, I thought you had withdrawn from the challenge."*

*The lion only walked towards the mountain and climbed slowly. When climbing the mountain the lion looked at the panther and said "Before starting the fight, I just want a fair game." The panther smiling said, "I agree."*

*The competition began and the two started out neck-and-neck, but the panther quickened his pace and began to win and slowly fill with pride. The lion only watched as the panther advanced until he saw him crossing the valley. Everyone was surprised because the lion started losing.*

*In the second competition, the panther moved energetically; however, the lion continued thoughtfully because if he lost that race, it would be end of his reign."*

*Slowly but surely, the lion started to win. The panther was furious and did not know what to do, so he cheated and took a hidden shortcut where he went straight to the river of crocodiles. The panther felt confident, slowly passing the river when suddenly he got distracted and fell in the rocks. He was stuck between two branches of trees. The lion saw that the panther was in danger because the crocodiles were approaching the panther, and he decided to help him. The panther was very frightened and could not run, so the lion crossed the finish line for the second event first.*

*The very angry panther looked at the lion and said, "Do not think that since you helped me, I'll let you win; now comes the last challenge and I will be the victor."*

*The sun was hidden little by little and the animals began to form a circle in the middle of the forest. The panther entered the circle first and prepared himself to fight. Meanwhile the lion was walking slowly to the arena thinking about his wife and his son when the owl appeared in the cave and offered him some advice.*

*The lion came in very worried and at that time he did not know whether to give up or fight one of his best friends. He did not want to fight, but he felt obligated to protect his position as the rightful king of the forest. The fight started and the two of them were in the middle of the circle. They stared at each other and the panther lunged first but did not reach the lion. The lion did*

*not want to fight but the panther was determined to kill him.*

*After the lion had been injured, the panther said, "You have lost. I always knew that you were a coward and should not be ruling this kingdom." The fierce lion told him, "You do not know what you are doing. I will give you the chance to apologize and I will forgive you. Do not make this harder."*

*Upon hearing that the panther became furious and attacked the lion, but he made a bad move and broke his hand and the lion attacked back.*

*Seeing that the panther was full of blood and could no longer fight, the lion decided to stop the fight and the animals quickly declared him winner. The panther, very disappointed, retreated amidst the laughter and scoffing of all the animals.*

*A few months passed, and the panther lamented what he had done. He had nothing to eat and wanted to come back to the kingdom, but he knew that everyone was going to make fun of him. Suddenly, he heard a few cries for help and to his surprise saw the lion stuck by a tree. He did not know if he should help him or not. But then the white owl came and told him, "What happened before is a thing of the past. Now think and listen to your heart." So he decided to help him. With the help of the panther the lion was saved and he was very grateful. The panther said nothing and slowly retired without looking back. The lion remembered what the owl had said and again he listened to his heart and said, "Panther, I do not know what happened to you. I do not know why you changed but the jungle is not the same without you. You are my brother, and you will always be. I love you and I want us to be together like before."*

*The panther bowed his head and with tears in his eyes said, "I do not know what happened either. I let myself be influenced by bad things. I do not know what I did. I'm sorry, but I cannot return because everyone made fun of me and humiliated me." The lion hugged his brother and said, "No one will treat you badly with me. You know that I have little time left to live, and I want to enjoy it with you. I want to share happy memories again, moments with no sadness or pain." The lion returned with the panther and minutes later, he called a meeting and made his pronouncement that the panther had come back. He stated that he had decided to forgive him and that he would be in charge after his reign Ended. Everyone was surprised and did not know what to do or say.*

*After a few weeks, the lion did not feel very well because the fall from the tree had caused internal damage. As the lion slowly fell more and more ill, and the panther did not know what to do. He was desperate for his health and went in search of medicinal plants but upon his return he had already passed away. The panther with tears in his eyes said, "My brother I will always remember you, and your legacy will live on forever." Then the panther announced the death of his brother, a great leader. And soon he took his place as leader of the forest.*

*The days passed and everything went smoothly. The panther decided to make a monument of his brother in the middle of the jungle. Everyone agreed and worked tirelessly. After a week they finished the monument and the panther with tears in his eyes looked towards the sky and said, "You are here where you will remain the leader of this jungle." Slowly, he walked away from the monument, but as he paused and looked back, in his mind he said, "I'll see you soon. Thank you, brother."*

The following is another task that was performed with this technique.

## 2. - Name: "Tell me about your life"

### Objectives:

- To improve writing skills in students by writing autobiographies.
- To develop creativity in students.
- To better get to know students' lives and issues.

Level: B1 students.

Task: Individual.

Length: 300 – 500 words.

### Procedure:

- Students are asked to write their autobiographies.
- Teacher provides the questions to be answered to construct it.

### Questions:

1. Where were you born?

2. When were you born?
3. Where did you study elementary school?
4. What was your favorite subject?
5. Who was your favorite teacher?
6. What were your hobbies when you were a kid?
7. Where did you study high school?
8. What activities did you use to do with your friends?
9. What is the happiest memory in school?
10. What problems did you have in school?
11. What were your achievements in school?
12. What were your hobbies when you were a teenager?
13. What major are you studying at the university?
14. What are your plans for the future?

- Students answer the questions using their own information.

- Using that information, they start writing their autobiography adding complementary information and connectors.

- Students give autobiographies to the teacher without writing names.

- Teacher hands out the tasks to students randomly.
- They read aloud and guess whose = biography is whose.

This particular task can be very useful at the moment of knowing more about students since, through writing they are more open to narrating their personal lives versus having to share those same details aloud. As teachers, we work with a lot of students; sometimes with too many and we do not have enough time to know them. This may be an extraordinary way to understand students better and subsequently help them in the learning process and sometimes in personal aspects.

The following is a biography written by a B1 student in La Maná:

*"He was born in Quero, Ecuador on November 20th 1993. He comes from a humble family. His parents are Gladis Italia Ordoñez and Segundo Erison Quispe, his brothers are Jonny and John, and his sister is Evelyn. He is the second son. They lived in Shushufindi in the province of Sucumbíos for four years. Then they moved to Quero, where they have lived for five years. When he was only 9 years old, his mother traveled to Spain, so he lived with his grandmother and with his brother. He suffered much in his childhood due to the absence of his mother, especially the second Sunday in May (Mother's day) on which everyone brought their mothers to the programs at their school.*

*He studied in "Heroes de Paquisha" school and when he was 12, he applied to study in "17 de Abril" high school. He was there for 6 years, and then he graduated.*



*Three years later he decided to go to the university. Nobody helped him directly--only his mother from Spain--and for this reason he felt alone. But this did not stop him. Among the options of universities, he chose the Technical University of Cotopaxi in La Maná. He arrived to la Maná on April 2015, where he began studying electromechanical engineering. There, he met many friends such as Christian, Jefferson, Paul, and Kevin.*

*His favorite subject is English and he is in the third level. He has had a great experience in English class because his teachers are more than his teachers--they are his friends and they have shared many great memories together. He is studying English because it is very important for communicating with people from others countries and for getting a good job.*

*In his spare time he likes to dance, go swimming, and listen to music. He dances in the dance group "Encanto Lamanence" of the Technical University of Cotopaxi because he likes it and prefers to go out to have fun with friends since he does not have family in La Maná.*

*He is graduating in 3 years and hopes to travel to other countries because he wants to live in an English-speaking country so that he can perfect his skills and continue to prepare for his professional life. Besides that, he hopes to find a good job and be able to reunite himself with his family."*

The last activity presented using this technique intended to solve a problem concerning the place where the students live.

### 3.- Name: "Let's advertise La Maná to the World"

#### Objectives:

- To improve research and writing skills in students by writing an advertisement to publicize La Maná.
- To develop creativity in students.
- To help the touristic promotion of La Maná and provide relevant information to foreign people.

Level: B1 students.

Task: Class project.

Length: 1500 – 2000 words.

#### Procedure:

- Students are asked to research information about La Maná.
- The teacher provides the questions to be answered using the information that was researched.
- Upload the information gathered on a page on the Internet like Wikipedia.

#### Questions:

1. What is the location of La Maná?
2. What is the origin of its name?
3. What is its history?
4. What is the weather like here?

5. What are the most popular tourist places in this place?
  6. What special dishes in La Maná would you recommend to try?
    - a. What do they consist of?
  7. What are the most famous festivities celebrated here?
    - a. What do people do on those festivities?
- Students research information and answer the questions.
  - Using that information, they start writing the advertisement adding complementary information and connectors.
  - Students check the final draft with the teacher.
  - Students construct a magazine using pictures that support the provided information.
  - They present their final work to the class.
  - They upload information on the Internet.

This activity allows students to work together as a class and they feel committed to this because they know that are helping to solve a local problem. In this particular case, the lack of information about La Maná, especially for foreign people. As is it a class project the writing is just one of numerous possibilities to publicize this town in Ecuador. Students posted this information on Wikipedia so that any person in the world can read it. Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La\\_Man%C3%A1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Man%C3%A1)

## Method

This study was conducted at the Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi Extension La Maná with 13 students at the B1 level. Data were collected using questionnaires. A questionnaire is an activity that provides and allows students to express their feelings and opinions about something. The questionnaire developed by Muhlisin (2018) was used. Surveys were completed at the end of three writing assignments after implementing the Reverse Writing Technique in the classroom.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

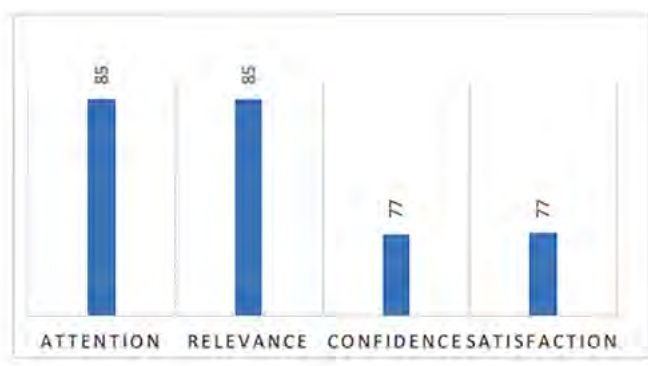
A questionnaire was used to collect student responses after practicing and implementing the Reverse Writing Technique during the semester. This is the result of the students' answers to the questionnaire grid.

Table 1. Students' Response Result Questionnaire Grid					
N°	Indicator	Statement	Strongly Agree & Agree	Neutral	Disagree and Strongly Disagree
1	Attention	Reverse Writing technique interesting to be used	92,30%	7,69%	0%
2		Reverse Writing technique helps to eliminate errors in writing	76,92%	15,38%	7,69%
3		Reverse Writing technique helps to remind of writing task subject.	84,61%	15,38%	0%
4	Relevance	Writing more easily with Reverse Writing technique	92,30%	0%	7,69%
5		Writing more fun with Reverse Writing technique	76,92%	15,38%	7,69%
6		Reverse Writing technique made writing task more understandable	84,61%	7,69%	7,69%
7	Confidence	Reverse Writing technique made the writing confidently	76,92%	15,38%	7,69%
8		Reverse Writing technique made more passionate to write	76,92%	15,38%	7,69%
9	Satisfaction	Reverse Writing technique gave freedom in writing	69,23%	15,38%	15,38%
10		Reverse Writing provides satisfaction on the outcome of the writing	84,61%	7,69%	7,69%
		Average	81,53%	11,54%	6,92%

From the questionnaire, results reveal that most of the students agree that the Reverse Writing technique can be used in teaching writing skills. In detail, each statement had a greater value in the option of strongly agree and agree. Moreover, the researcher also categorized the average students' responses in each indicator. The indicator was attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Each indicator in the questionnaire can show the tendency of students' responses toward the Reverse Writing technique. The students' positive response in each indicator was calculated to refer to the average value in each indicator.

Figure 1

Average of Student's Response in each Indicator



Based on Figure 1. the attention aspect has the highest average with 85% together with the relevance aspect which has the same percentage. Next, the confidence and satisfaction aspects with an average of 77%. It can be seen that this technique provokes students to pay more attention in the teaching-learning process, the students feel enthusiastic and give more relevance to the lesson.

From the result of the questionnaire most of the students gave positive responses. It can be seen from Table 1. which was from ten questions the students mostly agreed with the statement with an average of 81.53 %. where the students felt that the Reverse Writing technique can help them to write more accurately and creatively. Then, 11,54% of students stated neutral about this statement. Later, 6.92% of students did not agree to use the Reverse Writing technique. Then, Figure 1 shows the average student's response to each indicator. The highest average of response's results on each indicator

was on the attention and relevance aspect with an average of 85% and the lowest on confidence and satisfaction aspects with an average of 77%. It gave an illustration that Reverse Writing made learning interesting, challenging, and enjoyable, which the technique is interesting to use, limits student error and mistakes, and helps students understand the importance of writing to communicate and address the topic correctly. As Giacomozzi qtd. In Darmawan and Andrianti stated that "guided questioning techniques can be made active and interactive learning" (56). Moreover, as informed on previous research by Hariyanto stated the "guided question techniques had a good effect on student's writing ability" (77).

## Conclusion

Reverse Writing is a guided questions technique that uses more specific questions and encourages to present the tasks created by students in ways where other people can read and provide feedback to them. Teachers can use it in class with their students because it is easy, fun, interesting, and motivating for all of them. Teachers must focus on productive activities where their pupils can use all the language they have learned during the teaching-learning process. Students are capable of doing great things and the only thing they need is their teacher's confidence in them and appropriate guidance.

In the research, 81,53% of students gave a positive response to the use of Reverse Writing technique. Most of them felt attracted by the appliance of technique in class and consider it relevant to their learning. It is supported by a high average of students' attention aspect as a result of the questionnaire.

It can be concluded that the Reverse Writing technique is an interesting technique that gave a positive response from the students in developing writing skills. This technique helped develop students' ideas and organize their ideas correctly.

Students who performed these kinds of activities in La Maná changed their minds completely about writing. It changed from a tedious task to an exciting and thought-provoking opportunity. Their works are so powerful and interesting that other teachers and native speakers are fascinated with them, but most importantly; the students are tremendously proud of what they have accomplished.

All these aspects are proof that Reverse Writing is a successful technique since it provokes the motivation of teachers and students to read and write more. Using it in class will encourage them to have a profound approach to the English language where the beneficiaries will be teachers who employ the technique and especially students who will develop their creativity, self-esteem and language skills which will continue to expand and enrich their world.



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## CHAPTER V:

# A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK TO WRITING INSTRUCTION IN CHILDREN

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*"I continue to believe that if children are given the necessary tools to succeed, they will succeed beyond their wildest dreams!"*

*David Vitter, Former U.S. Senator*

## **Abstract:**

The main aim of this theoretical review chapter is to present a cyclical writing teaching framework for children to enhance their English writing skills. It begins by describing the importance of developing writing skills in children. Next, it outlines the positive aspects of the product and the process approach to integrate them in order to learn the English language. Finally, it presents the writing teaching framework for children. It includes seven stages: modeling, controlling writing, planning, guided writing, drafting, revising and publishing. The framework takes into account three ideas: how children learn a language by imitating, and the main problem they have, which is their low level of English. And the use of pictures to generate ideas to start writing.

**Keywords:** Writing skill, product approach, writing process approach, imitating, pictures

## **Introduction**

Writing skill has been neglected in primary and secondary education in Ecuador due to the lack of attention to improving writing and the lack of knowledge teachers have about the application of different approaches to developing writing skill. Then, teachers provide little time to teach writing so that children cannot write effectively. Teachers focus on teaching children isolated words and grammar rules which contribute to producing neither communicative competence nor writing skill. Children at this stage do not understand the rules of how

a language is formed. Therefore, they have big problems when they write sentences because they do not assimilate how to integrate all grammar rules in a sentence. That is why children do not use English at the end of their primary school years. Consequently, the Ecuadorian updated curriculum has changed some strategies to make students develop all four English skills. It states that students must have the ability to communicate rather than developing linguistic content learning (Ministry de Education 243). It means that students must be able to interact orally and written in context. Children must learn linguistic content implicitly to be able to communicate so they can get A2 level according to the Ministry of Education curriculum and the Common European Framework (CEFR).

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curriculum promotes the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It is based on a model used to integrate the learning of language with cultural and cognitive aspects to acquire the language acquisition, which serves as a driver for learners' development. It is a method that contributes to learn language but not all teachers are trained to apply the process with the activities and task in classes. Hidayati (30) states that "teachers need to match the tasks that they ask the learners to perform with their language level because they need to know the minimum language to perform the tasks. So it is vital to promote adequate methods, fun activities and tasks according to children's level, interest and necessities so that they can learn new concepts (Huete and Pérez 16).

Some authors state that exposing the English language to children at a very early age learn concepts quickly by imitating and adapting information. It contributes to acquiring language naturally, as they learn the native language. Hasan & Akhand

(72) states that it is necessary to give input to students at the early age so they can be sure to understand how language is formed and to learn how to produce and reproduce in order to write later their own texts. Therefore, the EFL curriculum establishes that students need to have two levels of learning. The first one is initial literacy, which begins with reading or modeling. Widosari, Suwandi, Retno (282) states that reading or modeling help students to acquire the language in terms of grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.

However, Oczkus contends, "Modeling writing alone is not sufficient to produce effective writers; it also needs to generate ideas and organize them" (Byrd 27). So, the curriculum presents the second one that is text production. It refers to students must use specific structures and organized ideas to write a different kind of texts. These two stages to acquire a language refer to learn principles aspect to produce a text. They are be familiarized with vocabulary, grammar and then children can be able to do text production.

In this context, Guarneros and Vega (28); Cicerchia (1) state that children must learn specific skills to start writing. They are: reading through modeling to learn vocabulary, sentence construction, grammar in context, spelling, punctuation, genre and content knowledge to know the purpose of the writing and the style of each genre and planning, editing and revising to write their ideas. It means that those skills are integrated into the product and the process approach. That is why it is advisable for teachers to understand and use the product approach, the process approach or a balanced approach to enhance writing skill in children because they will give children a vision of what to do in the writing activity.



Something interesting that teachers must know is that imitation, adapting and creating are principles of how children learn a language according to Pie Corbett (5). Therefore, it is suggested that teachers understand the importance of developing writing and apply proper approaches to enhance writing in the classroom taking into account students' needs, level and the teaching context.

Taking into account all this reference about how children learn, we have done a critical analysis of the approaches to be used to develop writing skill in children. At first, we thought that the dual method (process and product approach) will contribute to developing children 'writing skill, but it did not work because children do not have knowledge of vocabulary, grammar to start developing ideas about the topic or even write sentences. That is why children cannot produce their own ideas to start writing because of the lack of linguistic competences they have.

Their low level of English was an obstacle to applying the dual method process and product approaches. In this case, we consider that the dual method process and product approaches is appropriate with students that have previous basic knowledge in linguistic competences, but they are not so sophisticated to be able to produce their own ideas and sentences with the background they have learned. So, teachers must help them to develop this ability in order to complement the process approach.

Taking into account this conception we reformulate our method and we consider they need a change so we decided to integrate the product and the process approach to develop writing skill in children. With this perspective, the main objective of this paper is to describe the importance to develop writing skill

in children, some valuable aspects of the product approach and the process approach to develop writing and a teaching framework (product and process approach) to developing writing skill in children.

## **Importance of Writing in Children.**

Writing is a significant skill that provides children to be successful in school, work and later has a lot of opportunities to accomplish a variety of goals in their lives and how they will participate in society (Schickedanz and Renee 35). It also states that the most significant years for literacy development are when they are children, so it is vital that teachers use suitable strategies to promote learning in children because it contributes to the development of their abilities to be independent learners. Browker (2) argues that writing, in particular, is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life. In Addition, Graham, MacArthur & Fitzgerald (13) mention that writing provides a powerful tool for influencing others.

Through writing, we can change peoples 'minds and promote new alternatives to change society. Additionally, the authors state that writing is an indispensable tool for learning and communicating. It means that writing allows people to gather, preserve and transmit information so that it can be forgotten over time and be understood in different aspects through time. Genlott and Åke (104) also state that writing contributes to developing reading skills and vice versa when they are exposed to them. It is because they have to read and read to be sure that their writing is clear enough to be understood by others. Another vital fact we consider that writing contributes is the development of critical thinking. This ability makes children think and analyze ideas carefully in order to write on a piece of paper. It promotes

children reflection and have their own points of view and not to be influenced easily by wrong information or comments. Therefore, it is vital that teachers can provide time and apply proper approaches since school to teach writing. This big change will contribute to having better results in all areas of Education.

## **The Product Approach Based on Children**

The product approach is an oriented-class that focuses on introducing children to text structures with the purpose to read and acquire some linguistic competences such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation at first (Englert & Raphael, 519). It will help children to have previous knowledge to start writing and then be familiarized with the language, so later, they can write their own piece of writing. Khan and Bontha (102) state that the product approach focuses on modeling and imitating a text as well as structuring phrases and sentences to complete a specific format of writing based on a provided sample.

It contributes to give input in children through reading using models and they can build specific elements before writing. Spence, Fun, Speece, & Bashaala (98) state that generous reading increases children's writing. It means that product approach that uses models helps also to provide reading first to students and then acquire the linguistic competences to be ready to write. (Pinca (cited in Badger and White, 160) points out that the product approach is seen as linguistic knowledge, focused on appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesion.

According to Thulasi, Fauziah and Abdul the product approach is one of the most common methods used by teachers in schools around the world (790). But just applying reading does not ensure that children develop writing skill. Teachers must

know the steps of the product approach and apply it adequately to have the results teachers want. Otherwise, it will be a waste of time. This approach, apart from, modelling has other steps that make students practice and learn the previous knowledge about linguistic competences (vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation), which are elements of good writing (Gabrielatos, 13). Steele cited in Hasan & Akhand (80) state four main steps to apply the product approach.

1. **Modeling:** Students read a model text provided by the teacher. Then, they analyze the text by looking at the features, such as organization of ideas, use of language, etc.
2. **Controlled writing:** Students do controlled activities to practice the features highlighted in the analysis of the model text.
3. **Guided writing:** Students prepare to imitate the model text by organizing a pre-determined set of ideas to fit the model
4. **Free writing:** Students do the writing task by using the skills, structures and vocabulary they practiced to produce the expected written product.

This approach will contribute to making children be aware of how language is formed implicitly and get familiarized with some language to produce English orally or written.

## The Process Approach Based on Children

On the other hand, the process approach is seen as a method that allows teaching writing following a process. Camps defines the writing process as "a sequence of a series of cyclical, recursive, and progressive stages with the purpose of producing a final piece of written work" (130). The writing process approach encourages students to see writing not as a grammar exercise, but as an activity to convey ideas and thoughts through a written composition (O' Brien, 24). This method makes students to think and organize their ideas before a writing task. Students learn that writing is not only based on linguistic components but also on the meaning of the communication. Students develop their ability to generate ideas and to organize these ideas in their compositions. This approach also emphasizes drafting, revision and feedback. They really help to polish a written composition. Badger & White (155) mention the following steps of the writing process approach to follow in developing writing skill.

**Planning:** Students brainstorm, research, gather and outline ideas, often using diagrams for mapping out their thoughts. Then they organize them by reflecting on importance.

**Drafting:** Students create their initial composition by writing down all their ideas in an organized way to convey a particular idea or present an argument.

**Revising:** Students review, modify and reorganize their work by rearranging, adding, or deleting content, and by making the tone, style, and content appropriate for the intended audience. The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft. This revision can be by the same students or by the teacher.

**Editing:** At this point in the writing process, students proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity. Having teachers' feedback at this stage is helpful.

**Publishing:** In this last step of the writing process, the final writing can be shared in a bulletin board or in the classroom so that all students can go around and realize the job done.

Ariza (45) in his study states that the process approach in the stage of planning is effective with children using pictures to generate ideas rather than words. So, it is really vital to take into account this strategy because they will help children to be engaged and motivated to the task. Another subtle fact is that teachers' feedback and guide play a fundamental role to help children fortify writing skill.

We strongly believe that if teachers understand the importance of developing writing in children and know how to apply appropriate approaches to develop this skill, they will invest their energy and time to improve a suitable program to teach writing skill.

## **Valuable Aspects of the Product and the Process Approach in Children**

The following chart summarizes the positive aspects of each approach and make us to reflect that it is necessary to integrate both approaches in enhancing writing skill in children. But some authors mention that just product approach or process approach are not enough to develop writing skill quality. Sun

& Feng (283) state that if both approaches are integrated the results are much better.

Table 1.5

PRODUCT APPROACH VS PROCESS APPROACH	
Product approach	Process approach
Modelling is important to provide vocabulary through reading.	Planning, drafting and revising guides quality writing.
Linguistic components are acquired through modelling.	Organization and meaning are developed.
Ideas are adapting from writing models.	New Ideas are created and formulated by using pictures or flash cards.
Grammar exercises lead to good writing.	The process develops creativity and critical thinking.
Writing mechanics are applied by students in context.	This composing process requires drafting, feedback and rewriting that guide to polish the text.

## A Writing Teaching Framework in Children

All the background reviewed previously; make us think of implementing a writing teaching framework to develop writing skill in children. We decide that when children have a low English level, teachers must start developing language using the product approach to provide them knowledge on linguistic

competences and then, develop the process to write in order that their writings have sense in meaning and organization. We present this framework using a chart.

### Diagram 1

Integrated Product approach and Process approach



1. **Modeling:** Give children a model about the genre teachers wants them to learn so that they can read and highlighted vocabulary, structures, spelling and punctuation to familiarize. Make children also be aware what kind of information they need to write according to the genre. It can be a story, letter, or summary.



**2. Controlled writing:** At this stage, children must practice the highlighted information done previously with activities that required completion to write examples as in the reading text. Teach just what children are going to use in their writings.

**3. Guided writing:** Make children to imitate the model but writing sentences using the ideas provided previously with grammar, vocabulary thought in the controlling writing.

**4. Planning:** Use pictures according to the topic to help students generate ideas so they can know what to write. It is useful that you can write then using a brainstorm, then discuss with children the order of the ideas, and organize them to have the important information to be ready to write.

**5. Drafting:** Make children write their sentences into a paragraph taking into account the model provided, but with their own ideas. Here, it is vital that teachers provide feedback so children can correct learned from mistakes and be aware of specific problems.

**6. Revising:** Provide children teacher's feedback so that they can rewrite again to polish the final text.

**7. Publishing:** Use a bulletin board to publish children's writings.

## Conclusion

English writing is a vital skill to develop in childhood because it ensures that children can be successful in their school and

professional life, which will contribute to a better education and a better participation in society. We have decided to integrate the product and the process approach because children from rural areas have not developed a good level of English. They have received two hours of English at school per week, which are not enough to learn a language. Children have little knowledge or in some cases, they do not know anything about the language. This is why we recommend applying the dual method product and process approach to acquire the language and develop writing skills at the same time.

So, it is vital that teachers learn about the benefits of these two approaches in an integration. It will let teachers select and apply the appropriate approach for children to develop writing skills. This selection will depend on many factors such as children's level, interest, context and necessity of learning a language. Those are key factors in the selection, integration and application of any approach to have much better results. We consider that if students have a basic level of English, it is helpful to apply the process and the product approach together because students have some information and they can produce English. However, if students do not have any knowledge of English, they must start learning by using the product approach and then the process approach due to the first approach makes sure students acquire the language, and it will contribute to produce language easily in writing skill.

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## CHAPTER VI:

# EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCT AND PROCESS APPROACHES INTEGRATION TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL IN CHILDREN

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*"Children are great imitators. So, give  
them something great to imitate."  
Anonymous*

## Abstract

Children entering primary school level have problems in Spanish writing and even more in English writing because they do not know the language form and the process of writing. That lack of Knowledge affects children's learning writing skill. Academic literature suggests that children must develop specific components to start writing: linguistic knowledge, critical thinking, and the process of writing to be successful in writing their thoughts. However, English at schools is not perceived as important as it should be because English classes are thought by other teachers from different subjects, who often lack teaching capacity to apply many approaches to develop English writing skill. The main aim of this paper was to introduce a teaching dual method (the Product and Process approaches) to probe the influence to enhance writing skill in children at Ana Páez Educative Unit. Action research was implemented during the academic term October 2018- March 2019 with 37 participants. Teachers' observation through an anecdotal note was used to observe students' written compositions focusing on six components: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. The research developed three phases: the diagnosis phase, the implementation phase, and the evaluation phase. The study revealed that children's written compositions improved after applying the product and process approach to teach writing skill. As a conclusion, we considered that a balanced integration of product approach and process approach allowed children to enhance writing skills. Therefore, we suggest that English teachers can apply this dual method to give children the opportunity to acquire the language and develop their writing skill.

Keywords: Product approach, writing process approach, linguistic knowledge, writing skill.



## Introduction

English writing in children is considered a challenging skill to develop because they need to have a plenty of background knowledge of L2 language to produce either writing messages or oral information. So, children need to learn about vocabulary, how language is formed and the way to write adequately to complement abilities. Kellog (2); Harizaj (1) states that writing is an activity that implies not just language and memory but also thinking ability. All of them allow students to be ready to produce writing texts. That is why Hasan and Akhand (86); Tangpermpoon (7-8) suggest combining writing approaches to develop writing skills. These writing approaches combination will be according to the students 'level of English. Some authors suggest that if students have a good level of English, they can use the process approach and the product approach as a combination. And if the students do not know about the language, they suggest to use the product approach and the process approach as an integration to start learning about it.

Taking into account these suggestions, we as researchers decided to start teaching children how to write because it is an ability that will be productive to learn easily during all their studies and work. We consider that writing is a useful alternative to make children practice language and consolidate what they are learning. Additionally, some authors mention that writing as visual intelligence helps people to learn quickly because they can see and remember information. Nevertheless, writing in schools is the least important skill because teachers perceive writing as writing isolated sentences or complete exercises or just to develop grammar rules but not how to organize ideas and write what children's think in paragraphs.

In this context, children from Ecuador at Ana Paez Educative Unit have a lot of problems in writing in their mother tongue and even more in English because they are not exposed to writing. They cannot write spontaneously and coherence. They write like the way they speak without taking into account some forms of writing. Their spelling is a mix of English and Spanish so their writing is incomprehensible. They also cannot organize their ideas because they are get used to writing list of sentences without any relation. It is because there is a lack of attention to improving English writing skill at Ana Páez Educative Unit due to teachers do not know specific approaches to teach children. Thus, teachers are not trained to develop writing skill using different approaches.

Therefore, teachers provide little time to develop writing skill. They prefer developing speaking to writing, and when they decide to do writing, they just make students to complete vocabulary exercises and sentences. Even though teachers emphasize practicing some vocabulary, children are not familiarized with correct spelling because they do not practice writing in context so that children cannot use them effectively in writing.

Many authors believe that writing is not well thought in schools because it is understood that learning how to write is just to know vocabulary, grammar and write list of sentences. It is known this skill requires many sub-skills which contribute to having a good writing skill. Belly and Burnbay (cited in Ghuftron (37) state that writing implies a number of factors to write well such as content, spelling, grammar, punctuation cohesion and coherence. So writing is not simply to write sentences, it is how to organize our thinking into writing.

Huete & Pérez state that children learn English having fun, so it is necessary to apply adequate methods, appropriate activities and tasks according to children's needs so that they can learn new concepts (16). Indeed, children at a very early age learn concepts quickly by imitating and adapting information. It contributes to acquiring language naturally as they learn the native language. Hasan & Akhand (10) states that it is necessary to give input to students at the early age so they can be sure to understand how language is formed and to learn how to produce and use it in order to write later their own texts. Therefore, the EFL curriculum establishes that students need to have two levels of learning. The first one is initial literacy, which begins with reading or modelling. (Hammer 35) states that reading or modelling help students to acquire the language in terms of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation. However, Oczkus contends, "Modelling writing alone is not sufficient to produce effective writers; it also needs to generate ideas and organize them" (27).

In this context, Lee & Troia (1); Cicerchia (1) state that children must learn specific skills to start writing. They are: reading through modelling to learn vocabulary, sentence construction, grammar in context, spelling, punctuation, genre and content knowledge to know the purpose of the writing and the style of each genre and planning, editing and revising to write their ideas. It means that those skills are integrated into the product and the process approach. That is why it is advisable for teachers to understand and use the product approach, the process approach or a balanced approach to enhance writing skill in children because they will give children a vision of what to do in the writing activity. Something interesting that teachers must know is that imitation, adapting and creating are principles of how children learn a language according to Pie (8).

Taking into account all this reference about how children learn, we have done a critical analysis of the approaches to be used to develop writing skill in children. At first, we thought that the dual method (process and product approach) will contribute to developing children 'writing skill, but it did not work because children do not have the knowledge of vocabulary, grammar to start developing ideas about the topic or even write sentences because of the lack of linguistic competences they have. They have a low level of English which was an obstacle to applying the dual method thought at first. Then, we re-organized the methods and we integrated the product and process approach to see the results.

Consequently, the aim of this study is to probe the influence of using the Product and the Process approach as a dual-method to enhance writing skills in children from the fifth level of Basic General Education at Ana Páez Educative Unit. This research aimed to answer the following theory: whether or not the integration of the product approach and the process approach contributes to enhancing the main elements of writing: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.

We present the integration of the product approach and the process approach with an explanation of each step so readers and teachers can follow the methodology to expand in their classrooms. See the following diagram.

**Diagram 1**

Integrated Product approach and Process approach



## Teachers's Guide

**Modelling:** Give children a model text about the grammar, vocabulary that the teachers want them to learn so that they can read and highlighted vocabulary, structures, spelling and punctuation to familiarize. The teacher must present the text by reading and giving meaning to some words through mimic or flash cards to make the text understandable so students can learn vocabulary.

### Animals

There are wild animals such as lions, tigers, elephants, and monkeys. They live in the jungle and they are dangerous. There are also domestic animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, cows, and sheep. They live near the house and they are very cute and friendly. Some domestic animals are used as pet and some as food. My favourite animal is a rabbit. It is a domestic animal. It is white. It eats grass. It lives in the house. It is beautiful.

**Controlled writing:** At this stage, children must practice the highlighted information done previously with activities that required completion or answer questions all related to example as in the reading text. Teach just what children are going to use in their writings. Here it is the moment to practice vocabulary and grammar.

Example:

- What kind of animals are there? .....
- What are the wild animals?.....
- What are the domestic animals? .....

Guided writing: This stage is important because children will expand their practice using grammar and vocabulary with their imagination. Give students some pictures with the structure to follow and vocabulary to write sentences according to the picture. Remember that the pictures must be according to what teachers want them to learn. Make children to imitate the first example model and then they will write the next example using the ideas provided in the picture. Example:

### Animals

There are wild animals such as lions, tigers, elephants, and monkeys. They live in the jungle and they are dangerous. There are also domestic animals such as dogs, cats, rabbits, cows, and sheep. They live near the house and they are very cute. Some domestic animals are used as pet and some as food.



This is a lion.

This .....

.....

It is a wild animal

It is.....

.....

It's brown and yellow

It.....

.....

It lives in the jungle

.....

.....

It eats meat

.....

.....

meat



banana



grass



Planning: At this stage make students think about themselves to provide their own information according to the topic. Help them by using a brainstorming using teachers' ideas and then ask children to do their own example. Teachers can use pictures according to the topic to help students generate ideas so they can know what to write. When children have finished the brainstorming, it is useful to discuss with them the order of the ideas to be ready to write.

Example:



## Diagram 2.6

### Brainstorming



**Drafting:** When students have the ideas about what to write, make them to write their sentences into a paragraph taking into account the information provided in the model at the beginning, but with their own ideas. Teachers can give the first sentence to start. Here, it is vital that teachers provide feedback so children can correct some mistakes and learned from them. Example: of a child's writing.

My favourite animal is a dog. It is brown.

It live in the house. It eat meat. It is a domestic animal.

It is friendly.

**Revising:** In this stage the teachers play an important role because it is time to provide feedback. The teacher and give personal feedback or general feedback to children. All will depend on the number of children teachers have in the classroom. I recommend to read all the writings and provided a general feedback with the common errors so students can correct the next time they rewrite their paragraph so that they the opportunity to polish the final text.

My favourite animal is a dog. It is a domestic animal.

It is brown. It **lives** in the house. It **eats** meat.

It is friendly.

**Publishing:** When students have polished their writings, the teachers must use a bulletin board to publish children's writings. It will make children feel proud about their final result.

There are two extra examples about how to apply this dual method that students from the English Major have done to apply in classes. (See Annex 1and 2).

## **Methodology**

This study was carried out to introduce a teaching dual method (the Product and the Process approaches) to probe the influence in writing skill in children at Ana Páez Educative Unit. We used action research to solve the problem. It lasted for two months, one hour each week. There were 37 participants between 10

to 11 years old, 22 males and 15 females. The majority of the children had a low level of English and it made us take a long time to see better results. It was applied a teachers' observation as a data collection method to see the problems, the progress, and the results, which were registered in an anecdotal note; the principal components observed were: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation.

The research process was developed in 8 writing sessions. The first two sessions were used to identify difficulties children had in their paragraphs using a pretest. Then, it was implemented the approaches— as a dual method in the next four sessions and the final two sessions helped at investigating whether or not this integration helps students to improve their writing paragraphs, mainly in components mentioned above using a posttest. We used a rubric to check the children's writing and see the results.

## Results

The results showed that the pedagogical implementation of the product approach and the process approach contributed to improving children's writing paragraphs in the components: ideas, organization, grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary. The improvement was more in organization and grammar because they had models to follow, so it indicated that children need both approaches to develop writing skill. Therefore, the results let us to probe that the theory product and process approach as a dual method helped children to acquire language first and then develop writing skill. The following table shows the results.

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS RESULTS OF PRETEST AND POSTEST IN CHILDREN'S WRITING

Writing criteria	Content	Organization	Grammar	Spelling	Punctuation	Vocabulary
Average score in the Pre-test (over 5 points)	2,3	2,1	2,3	2,0	2,0	2,0
Average score in the Post-test (over 5 points)	3,8	4,5	4,3	4,0	3,5	3,4
Improvement	1,48	2,44	2,00	2,00	1,50	1,43

Vafeidou (11); Sakoda (14); Ghufon (45) states that it is useful to start applying the product approach when the students have a low level of English and low self-esteem. It provides students to learn the language and through the models of genres starts reflecting the process approach. The model guides students in organization and teachers must apply feedback and drafting to polish writing. Even though the hours used to apply the dual method were not enough in the school, we got good results because each stage helped to fortify vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organization of the ideas. It is in line with what Ghufon (50) states that writing requires many sub-skills to provide a good quality text.

At the beginning of this method, the teachers play an important role to make students get familiarized with the language features by giving the model text and by explaining the related grammar and vocabulary. Once students had learned about grammar, structures, and vocabulary, they were ready to practice the language by controlling and guided writing. Even these stages are not so challenging for children, they are really helpful to practice and consolidate their knowledge of the language. This

is the essence of the product approach, focusing on language form to provide children the opportunity to produce free writing followed by the process approach. It is line with what Ghufon (54) states linguistic form is necessary to produce writing language.

The Wring process approach contributes to being aware of the organization of the ideas presented in the model. It let students be sure about what they are going to write. An important element is a feedback because it helps teachers to improve children`s writing. Of course, because of the numbers of students, it is difficult to do individual feedback. Instead, we decided to do general feedback with all the mistakes made by the children. It is quite useful because children realize their errors and correct them. Hattie and Timperley (88) state that feedback is effective in writing because it provides learning.

Applying the product and the process approach requires time to develop writing because both contain specific stages that provide practice to produce writing. It is supported by Badger and White (155). Furthermore, it is a process that requires enough hours to learn writing and to provide the importance to learn the language, otherwise, the learning won't be successful.

To sum up, there is a clear connection between the product and the process approach in writing. Both contribute to developing writing and the implementation of teaching approaches depends on children`s level, motivation, and needs. Sun & Feng (151) mention that just the product approach or process approach are not enough to develop writing skill quality. It is always necessary to integrate them according to children's needs to have better results. Vafeidou (18); Sakoda (8); Ghufon (35) states that it is useful to start applying the product approach

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Once students had learned about grammar, structures and vocabulary, they were ready to practice the language by controlling and guided writing. Even these stages are not so challenging for children, they are really helpful to practice and consolidate their knowledge of language. This is the essence of the product approach, focusing on language form to provide children the opportunity to produce free writing followed by the process approach. It is in line with what Ghufroon (44) states linguistic form is necessary to produce writing language.

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(155) mention that just product approach or process approach are not enough to develop writing skill quality. It is always necessary to integrate them according to children's needs to have better results.

## Conclusion

The integration of the product approach and the process approach framework contributed to developing writing skill in children with a low level of English. It allowed children to acquire the language they had to learn according to the teacher's lesson plan. They learned grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. They also were aware of the way to produce ideas and organize them by using brainstorming. All of these helped children to write small pieces of writing. They were much clearer because they did not mix English and Spanish spelling. They wrote sentences into paragraphs using correct punctuation. Furthermore, an important factor was feedback during all the integrated process because students learned by correcting their mistakes. The teacher must do it from the beginning to the end of the process because it provides excellent results in learning.

We are sure that applying this integration by giving student's models of short paragraphs according to what they were learning let children be motivated and confident to start writing because they felt they could do it step by step without problems. They felt motivated because they could realize their progress. Another important issue that teachers must consider is that they must be well-prepared to use the dual-method to provide children good resources to practice the language and guide them to develop writing. It is a long process that teachers are not going to see good results in a short time because students

need time to acquire the language and manage it in order to produce. So, teachers must be patient because the results at the end even their progress is not a lot, it is really rewarding as teachers to see that children are learning and that you as teacher contribute in this process.

It is considered that the product approach is ideal to use first with young learners because of the small amount of language they have at their disposal. It helps them to learn structure features and then make young learners be aware and learn the process of writing through the different genres of model text. Other researchers can use these results as a reference to do new implementations in teaching children's how to write since there is not a lot of research on children's writing. This research encourages other researchers to apply different combinations of approaches to see benefits in children's writing.

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## ANNEX 1.6

### THE PRODUCT AND THE PROCESS APPROACH IN CHILDREN

(Lesson Plan example)

Title (Unit): Unit 2, Lesson 1, Daily Routine.

- Grade (Level): Elementary school, 7th grade.
- Lesson Focus: Writing
- Objective
  - ♦ To use vocabulary and adverbs of frequency to write texts about daily routine.
- Materials: markers and sheets.

#### 1. Modeling:

Teacher must read the paragraph showing the flashcards to students while reading the text to make students understand vocabulary.

I always get up at 6 o'clock. Then I take a shower and get dressed. I usually have breakfast at 6:30. Then I brush my teeth and then go to school. Classes start at 7:30 and finish at 12:30. After I go back home and have lunch with my mother at 1 o'clock. After I do my homework. I sometimes watch TV or play football with my brother and my friends at 4 or 5 pm. Next, I have dinner and spend time with my family at 6. Finally, I brush my teeth and go to bed at 8.

## Flashcards

### DAILY ROUTINES



## 2. Controlled writing

Students must fill the gaps using information from the the text with the appropriate words.

Fill the gaps in the text with the appropriate words.

I..... 6 o'clock. .... I ..... and  
get dressed. I ..... at 6:30. ....  
I brush my teeth and.....school. Classes  
..... 7:30 and ..... 12:30. After  
I ..... home and have ..... with my  
mother ..... 1 o'clock. .... I ..... homework.  
....., I always ..... or .....  
with my brother and my friends ..... 4 or 5 pm.  
Next, I ..... and spend time with my family  
..... 6:00. F....., I ..... and .....  
8:00 pm.

### 3. Guided writing

Write your own sentences as in the example.

- I always get up at 5:30.
- I take a shower at 5:40.
- I usually have breakfast at 6:15.
- I brush my teeth at 6:30.
- I go to school at 6:40.
- I go back home at 12:30.
- I have lunch with my mother at 1 o'clock.

- I do my homework at 2.
- I sometimes watch TV at 4 or 5 pm.
- I have dinner with my family at 6.
- I brush my teeth at 7:30.
- I go to bed at 8.

#### 4 . Planning

Make a brainstorm based on questions like: What time do you get up/ you have breakfast? What time do classes start/finish? What do you do in the afternoon? (Reverse Writing).



Ex: get up at 6:45, have a shower at 7, have breakfast at 7:30, go to school at 8, and so on.



# 4. Drafting

In this stage students are be able to write texts helped by their brainstorms and examples. So, ask students to write their paragraph using the text provided at the beginning and their own examples.

**Describe your daily routine. Use the notes from previous exercises**

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## **5. Revising**

Teachers must provide feedback so students can review, modify and organize their writings.

## **6. Publishing**

Students must share their texts with the classroom and read them in front of their classmates.

## ANNEX 2.6

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI  
FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION  
ENGLISH MAJOR  
PRODUCT AND PROCESS APPROACHES IN CHILDREN  
(Lesson Plan example)

**BY:** Daniela Calderón

Please follow this step. Good luck.

### **1. Modeling.**

Read this model of writing and underline the unknown words.

#### **My Family.**

There are 4 members in my family. My mother is Laura. She is 48 years old. She is an administrator. She is tall. She has short brown hair and brown eyes. My father is Rene. He is 50 years old. He is a businessman. He has short black hair. I don't have any brothers and sisters, but I have one cousin. Her name is Nicole. She is 18 years old. She is a student. She is beautiful and medium. She has a long brown hair and brown eyes. My grandfather is Jaime. He was a military. He is 74 years old. He is bald. He is tall. My grandmother is Rosita. She is a housewife. She is 76 years old. She has short white black hair and she is short.

## 2. Controlled writing.

Answer the questions about the text.

- What is Daniela's father's name?

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- What is Daniela's mother's hair color?

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- What old is Daniela's mother?

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- What is Daniela's mother's job?

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- What is Daniela's cousin's name?

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- Is her grandfather tall?





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- Does she have brothers?

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### 3. Guided writing

Look at the pictures and write sentences according to them.  
Use vocabulary from the text (modeling)

			
<p>Carlos is my father</p> <p>He is 40 years old</p> <p>He is tall.</p> <p>He is a driver.</p> <p>He has a mustache.</p> <p>He has short black hair.</p>	<p>Sara is my mother.</p> <p>She is.....</p> <p>She .....</p> <p>She.....</p> <p>She has.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>..... is my sister.</p> <p>She.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>He is my grandfather.</p> <p>He .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

## 4. Planning

Complete the chart about your family. It makes students produce ideas (brainstorming)

Member of the Family	Main characteristics	Age	Profession

## 5. Drafting

Write a composition about your family. Use the ideas from the guided writing and the brainstorming.

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DIRECCIÓN  
GENERAL DE  
INVESTIGACIÓN