



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA
“La Universidad Católica de Loja”

ÁREA SOCIO HUMANÍSTICA

TÍTULO DE LICENCIADO EN CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MENCIÓN: INGLÉS

Factors causing difficulties to productive writing skills among EFL. Case study of a comparison of a Public High School & a Private High School in Loja

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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LOJA - ECUADOR

2017

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DEDICATION

First of all, I dedicate my research to God. You might ask "why"? I dedicate it to him because he is the one who gave me perserverance to fullfill this work. Next, to my parents Juan Pupiales and Rosa Chuquin for being my inspiration. Also to my siblings Sonia and Nelson for giving me the support, confidence and advice I need to achieve this great goal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere thanks to the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. Also to its authorities, administrators, and professors for having contributed in my professional formation. I must say "I have learned from the best". A special thanks to Mrs. Eva Ulehlova; who has given me much support with her positive attitude, wise knowledge, interest in helping and responsibility as a thesis director. I couldn't have finished this research work without her.

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ABSTRACT

This research provides a study on a variety of factors that contribute to difficulties in writing skills in public and private Ecuadorian high schools in Loja. This includes the identification of the most common factors causing difficulties, an analysis of how such factors influence writing skills, and solutions to handle these issues.

This research was based on thirty high school students and two teachers from both private and public high schools. A descriptive case study was conducted; the instruments used were questionnaires and observation sheets. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for gathering the information.

The findings showed that students from public high schools did not write excellent paragraphs due to their lack of knowledge in writing techniques, whereas the learners from private high schools wrote admirably thanks to the strategies applied by their teacher in the classroom.

KEY WORDS: contributing factors, private & public high schools, learners' performance, students, writing skills

RESUMEN

Esta investigación provee un estudio sobre una variedad de factores que contribuyen a la dificultad en adquirir las habilidades de escritura en las escuelas secundarias públicas y privadas del Ecuador en la ciudad de Loja. El estudio incluye la identificación de los factores más comunes que causan dichas dificultades, un análisis de cómo estos factores influyen en las habilidades de escritura y soluciones para manejar estos problemas.

Esta investigación se basó en treinta estudiantes y dos maestros de colegios públicas y privadas. Se realizó un estudio de caso descriptivo, los instrumentos utilizados fueron cuestionarios y hojas de observación, finalmente se utilizaron métodos cuantitativos y cualitativos para obtener la información.

Los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes de colegios públicas no escribieron párrafos excelentes, debido a su falta de conocimiento en las técnicas de escritura, mientras que los estudiantes de las escuelas privadas escribieron admirablemente, gracias a las estrategias aplicadas por su profesor en el aula.

PALABRAS CLAVE: factores contribuyentes, colegio publico y privado, rendimiento de los alumnos, estudiantes, habilidades de escritura.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to write effectively and fluently in English is essential nowadays in the modern world, and so communication through language has become more important. Writing skills have often been used as drilling mechanisms in the class environment so that students can use them to improve their skills in the language they have been learning (Harmer, 2012). Writing is a necessary skill used in teaching and learning English, but it is not only an academic ability, but also a prerequisite aptitude for many careers.

In addition, educators are seeking more dynamic and practical methods to teach writing skills, it has become very important to communicate mainly in an educational setting and it is now essential to find ways to improve this skill.

The main goal of this research is to investigate the factors that produce difficulties in writing skills within Ecuadorian Public and Private High schools in Loja city. With respect to this the specific objectives for this research are firstly: to identify which are the most common ones that cause difficulties in students' writing skills; secondly, to analyse how these factors influence students' writing, and finally, to propose possible solutions to handle these issues.

Furthermore, various authors have done studies addressed specifically to demonstrate the difficulties that affect students while learning how to write in a foreign language and then provide a series of solutions for the main problems encountered.

Research was carried out by Younes and Albalawi (2015) on the most common types of writing problems among English Language and translation major sophomore female students at Tabuk University. The aim was to explore the grammatical, punctuation and spelling problems made by female students when practicing writing. The students were asked to give a sample of their writing modules and answer a questionnaire. The result of the research mentioned that the students faced problems in grammar, punctuation and spelling and the result revealed the reason behind the students' writing weakness from their perspectives.

On top of that, another study carried out by Rico (2014) was related to the identifying factors that caused difficulties with respect to productive writing and speaking skills among foreign language learners. The purpose of this study was to identify what were the main factors causing trouble in writing and speaking skills. The results indicated that there were six factors that caused difficulties in productive writing and speaking. The most relevant were

teachers' methodology, and unwillingness to use the target language, the other factors were more general and included time allocation by part of the teacher, lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge, insecurity and language transfer by students. The factors mentioned that caused difficulties to productive skills among foreign language students were both internal and external.

Moreover, in Ecuador, research was conducted with respect to Interference of Spanish on Writing skills in a foreign language. Solano et al (2014) conducted a study on Spanish Interference on EFL Writing Skills. The main objective was to research the influence of the Spanish Language on (L2) writing skills at several Ecuadorian Senior High Schools in Loja. The result from this study shows that English grammar and vocabulary were the linguistic areas that suffered the highest level of L1 language interference.

The results of this study should be used in order to help facilitate EFL teachers to identify the factors that cause difficulties in writing for high school learners, and provide alternative solutions to resolve these problems. Moreover, this study should serve as a point of reference for students who might be interested to explore this topic in the future.

Finally, an in-depth study pertaining to the factors affecting complications in writing skills with respect to EFL has not yet been carried out taking into account the needs and interests of the students in the city of Loja. Therefore, it was deemed important to conduct a descriptive case study in order to unearth the problems that learners face while practicing writing skills in class. This research is considered to be acutely important so that students can develop writing skills in the area of EFL, because in the Ecuadorian context, writing in English as a foreign language constitutes a primary concern for high school students as they will need this skill in their academic life for studying abroad or even understanding academic information (Solano et al., 2014)

CHAPTER I : LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will provide the main definitions of key words of the factors affecting productive skills, and a review of previous researches focused on identifying the factors affecting the EFL learners' writing skills.

Writing Skills

Writing is a vital life skill that we use in public and private workplaces as well as in school, and as hobby for personal communication. Bachillerato General Unificado (2015) states that writing skills are an intellectual task that is focused on several languages and cognitive skills, such as punctuation, grammar and word choice. Moreover, Aguilera (2012) claimed that writing accurately means spelling correctly, forming letters correctly, writing legibly, punctuating correctly, using correct layouts, choosing the right vocabulary, using grammar, joining sentences and using paragraphs correctly.

Furthermore, Peha (2004) stated, "the writing process is a method of helping student writers which has always, to my knowledge, been conceived of as a set of discrete stages wherein a writer engages in certain activities designed to solve particular problems unique to that stage"(p.4). The writing process needs to be an effective method if it is to result in teaching students to write in a natural and efficient way.

Moreover, Harmer (2007) affirmed that writing process is focused on different phases such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and then producing a final version and this process involves teaching students to write successfully and thus to obtain better scores on writing tests.

On the other hand, Sangamitra and Hameed (2016) mentioned that writing is a productive skill that can't be ignored by anyone who aspires to climb the success ladder, and developing writing skills in English is a stark necessity. According to Gonye, et al, (2012) "Writing requires greater precision and care than speech, as it is a more formal activity producing a permanent record" (pag.72).

Additionally, Sangamitra and Hameed (2016) revealed that writing is a skill that can't be overlooked by anyone who wants to achieve an objective in their lives, the development of writing skills is a major prerequisite to be successful in either the academic or the business field. According to Gonye et al, (2012) "Writing requires greater precision and care than

speech, as it is a more formal activity producing a permanent record” (p.72). In addition, the researcher explains that writing is a learning technique, and a person can achieve deeper insight writing about oneself.

Finally, Finn Driscoll et al (2010) declared that writing is a difficult skill and a purposeful act of communication that is accomplished in a variety of environments, under various time constraints and with a variety of language resources and technological tools. As well as, writing is a relation or negotiation between the writer and reader to achieve successful communication.

Importance of Writing Skills

Writing skills are more and more essential for students. Bachillerato General Unificado (2015) claimed, writing becomes extremely necessary at a sublevel. Many learners are studying for this program as a means of access to the academic and professional world, whereby excellent writing skills are a prerequisite. Also, Hosseini (2013) said writing skills are necessary for achieving a better academic position and greater educational success.

In addition, teachers’ awareness of good writing strategies is fundamental in passing on knowledge to enable students to write effectively for many purposes and in a variety of contexts and it is essential that students learn the writing process. It is an approach used to assist students to efficiently express their feelings, thoughts and knowledge (Cavkaytar & Yasar, 2008). Likewise, effective writers need to have a good knowledge of the writing process, and they should understand why it is important to learn to punctuate, spell and comprehend the proper use of grammar rules (Turbill & Bean, 2006).

Furthermore, Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2012) have stated that writing is probably the most difficult skill to acquire, and a teacher needs to dedicate time to teaching writing skills, energy and expertise in order to help students develop effective writing skills. In turn, the researchers have mentioned that teaching writing is indeed a difficult task because it focuses not only on grammatical structure, vocabulary, organization, but also on an appropriate assessment of the students’ written work.

According to Turbill and Bean (2006), “Teachers support a developing awareness of the social nature of writing, in particular the notion that writing is a form of communication” (p.

35). Moreover, through examples and explanations, a teacher can help students identify and appreciate the role of writing as a valuable form of communication with other people.

In addition, Abdalla (2009) argued that people should write well for the following reasons: to translate and materialize ideas and thoughts into accessible documents useful to others and to report their work in informative, concise and professional formats.

In summary, writing can be one of the most enjoyable and satisfying activities proposed by teachers to students in a classroom (Hosseini, 2013). Another author has also stated that writing opens the door to progress in almost any field a person might opt for in the future”(Hadfield & Hadfield, 2004).

Factors relating to student problems in EFL writing

Absence of grammar and vocabulary knowledge contribute negatively to students learning, particularly with respect to writing skills. Rico (2014) stated that a deficiency of vocabulary and the lack of knowledge related to grammar structures are factors that cause problems with respect to developing good writing skills. Moreover, Huy (2015) said a lot of students are not aware of the importance of grammar when studying writing skills, and they spend little time on studying it or practicing grammar.

According to Younes, and Albalawi (2015) they affirmed that the most common grammatical mistakes found in the written works of students were: tense errors, incorrect use of prepositions, subject verb agreement, syntactic errors and use of articles. They committed the grammatical mistakes in the writing sample due to the interference of their mother tongue at the moment of writing in English.

In addition, Mohamed and Zouaoui (2014) mentioned, “Still a lot of students showed many grammatical errors in their writing; the most frequently reported error category was subject-verb agreement” (p.153). The researchers stated that student difficulties with respect to grammar was in fact due to the interference of the mother tongue combined with the lack of reading and writing practice.

Furthermore, a negative factor that also contributes to poor writing skills is because learners practice little bit inside or outside the classroom. Rico (2014) mentioned, “The unwillingness to use the language was also caused by the lack of practice on the participants’ part” (p.77). Research affirmed that the process of learning writing implied

undertaking autonomous work and practice. Furthermore, Mourtaga (2010) also confirmed that teachers believed that students experience many problems in writing English, because they do not practice enough, and that teachers should employ techniques in class to ensure that learners practice this skill.

Moreover, Harmer (2007), said “Many students either think or say that they cannot, or do not want to write. This may be due to the lack of confidence, they think it’s boring or believe they have nothing to say” (p. 113). The researcher has suggested that the teacher should engage students by encouraging them to write easy and enjoyable tasks in order to practice and develop their writing skills.

What is more, insufficient time in class dedicated to the development of writing is an adverse factor in the development of this skill. Rico (2014) states that time allocation is a negative factor, which influences learners, and often students states that they could not finish their homework because they do not have adequate time; as a result they are not able to participate in class effectively. Furthermore, Huy (2015) confirms, the time dedicated to writing is insufficient, and that a teacher cannot manage to correct all the students written work as many teachers are busy and can only focus on pure teaching and thus do not have enough time to correct students’ written work.

In addition, language transfer from L1 to L2 becomes a negative factor when applied to the writing skill. Rico (2014) affirmed that, language transfer resulted in students producing error-laden writing tasks and in addition, it weaken their concentration. The researcher stated that when the learners mistakenly use a word from their native language when writing in English it often led to a mental block in the process.

Furthermore, Karim and Nassaji (2012) stated that students of a lower level are not able to transfer L1 based skills when writing in L2, while superior level learners are able to transfer their L1 based skills into L2 and therefore they are able to facilitate content for generating ideas, organization, and planning.

As well as, Asadifard and Koosha (2013) claimed that students were unable to transfer their writing skills from their L1 to L2 writing tasks, and they were not able to organize their thoughts while writing. Finally, Sersen (2011) said that the negative problems found were related to sentences written in English. Students needed more time to overcome this issue whereas a single semester timeframe was inadequate.

A further negative factor in the development of writing skills is the lack of an appropriate approach to teaching writing on the part of the teacher. Mourtaga (2010) stated that it is important for teachers to get some training in order to effectively teach writing. When employing the process approach, teachers should follow steps with their students such as topic listing, pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading and reflection. Likewise, Asadifard and Koosa (2013) mentioned that learners are not taught necessary writing skills, instruction, and strategies such as pre-writing; drafting and editing and in addition teachers do not provide sufficient feedback to the students.

What is more, Javid and Hummer (2014) have claimed that the use of traditional teaching methods is a great problem for students with weak writing skills and it is recommended that the teacher of all language institution should apply modern teaching techniques for improving the teaching and learning of writing skills.

Solutions for students in developing writing skills

Improving vocabulary and grammar is tantamount to acquisition writing skills. Huy (2015) has suggested some solutions to improve vocabulary, including some activities like reading books, playing games and creating vocabulary themes to increase vocabulary and learning in a group. This type of activity is focuses at correcting mistakes and practicing grammar. In addition, Bloomsbury International (nd) states that students should ask someone to check their writing and make sure you have used correct vocabulary correctly. Moreover, the researchers have put forward some solutions for improving writing such as: grammatical rules should be taught in context, grammar practice should be emphasized, also mother tongue should not be used to simplify the English grammar rules (Younes & Albalawi, 2015).

Furthermore, other researchers mention alternative strategies for enhancing the practice of writing skills for example: Bloomsbury (nd) affirmed that writing every day improves students writing skills, and that students should utilize different techniques such as writing a diary, sending an e-mail to friends in English and writing a short story each day. In addition, Alfaki (2015) said that free writing practice is a good exercise for improving one's writing ability. Free writing, is defined as writing without stopping and editing a specific topic. It is a powerful tool used for developing student writing in educational contexts (Li, 2006). Also, the researcher claimed that it is crucial to get students to understand the concept that nobody generally writes without having a specific topic for a specific audience.

Moreover, some researchers have given some recommendations with respect to the insufficient time being a negative factor in class. Huy (2015) has said that teacher should change or modify some parts of the class structure related to writing lessons in order to help the students and thus alleviate any pressure they may feel. It was suggested that teachers should provide additional writing resources so that students understand better the concept of writing in class. In addition, the instructions for teaching writing should be clear, so that students could develop correctly any exercises related to writing.

Furthermore, an activity called “Think Break” is an appropriate technique used to help and encourage students to write in English in a short space of time. It is said that the teacher should present a problem and ask the student a question, which should be answered within 20 seconds. For most students this is not an easy task and so they are encouraged to write something down to ensure that they will in fact work on the problem.

Some researchers propose remedies for language transfer from first language (L1) to second language (L2). The theory for this consists of encouraging students to practice various activities such as, classroom writing, essays, reading and later writing about different topics and to help students think in the target language (Muhammed and Ameen, 2014). Furthermore, another solution is that students should read a lot to cultivate their ability to write. In addition, the teacher may ask the student to work with another student to complete a writing activity. The student should plan how to begin and how to organize a writing assignment and then ideally be open to feedback from the teacher. Also, a teacher should strengthen students’ English thinking and their approach to expression in explaining grammar and presenting articles (Ye, 2013).

As regards to approaches for teaching writing, research related to improvement strategies of teaching of writing skills have been put forward. Asadifard and Koosha (2013) have claimed that process and product writing are two effective methods, which can be applied to writing classrooms. Likewise, Harmer (2007) mentioned that the process of writing involved planning what we are going to write, drafting it, reviewing and editing what we have written and then producing a final version.

In contrast, Hashemnezhad and Hashemnezhad (2012), said that product-based approach focuses on the structure of language, and writing development as mostly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher. Moreover, Younes and

Albalawi (2015) said that the teacher should transcribe the students 'samples and distribute them to other students for correction and analysis so the pupils learn from their errors

Types of Writing Skills

Generally, there are four different types of writing, namely: Expository writing, Descriptive writing, Persuasive writing, and Narrative writing.

Firstly, the expository writing is focused on informing an audience in the form of written work. Depending on age, this might be a research paper, report, essay, response to literature, compare and contrast pieces, college admission or job application letter (Empowering Writing, 2005). An example of this type of writing focuses on how to write an effective paragraph: the teacher gives a topic for the paragraph and the writers have to explain the main idea of the paragraph. Then the students should think of five details that would support the main idea and finally come up with a conclusion to the topic.

Secondly, descriptive writing is concerned about giving an effective description or details about a person, thing or place. The BCC tutoring Center (2010) mentioned that descriptive writing provides an image of people, places, events, situations and feelings. Also description is what makes writing come alive, it expresses an experience that the reader can actively write about using imagination. In addition, this activity is center for describing a photograph: For instance, the teacher might project an image of any place. The teacher would then ask students to describe the city in specific detail using a graphic organizer and then ask them to write a paragraph about their own city. Lastly, the teacher should check the paragraph and provide feedback to the writers (Gibbs Smith Education, 2014).

Thirdly, persuasive writing is a form of writing in which the writer uses words to convince the reader about his/ her opinion. This consists of encouraging the reader to solve a problem, and it is also based on getting the writer to express an opinion or stimulate discussion resulting in the analysis and evaluation of the task (NAPLAN, 2013). Furthermore, this type of writing is focused on logic and reasoning. The teacher presents a paragraph with some out of order sentences, which the student should read with the intention of stimulating the student to rewrite the paragraph in a logical order. Then the student is asked to read the paragraph to the class in order to gain and provide feedback to the other learners (M^cCarthy, 1998).

Finally, narrative writing comprises of relating stories concerning personal experience to others with specific elements that work together to create interest for not only the author but also the reader (Trischita, 2000). A good example of this type of writing would be to narrate a story of Little Red riding Hood. The teacher firstly shows a short video of Little Red riding Hood, and then he puts up some pictures on the whiteboard based on the story, and again stimulate the students to write down the story in their notebook according to the pictures.

Types of Writing Performance

Brown and Abewickrama (2010) have classified writing types into four categories such as: imitative, intensive, responsive and extensive.

English learners start learning to write in English at the beginning level of their education. This type of learning is fundamental to learn other types of writing. Imitative writing involves in producing written language such as writing letters, words, punctuation, and very brief sentences. Somaye (2015) has mentioned that other activities such as listening, cloze selection tasks, copying, and picture- cued tasks, form completion tasks and converting numbers and abbreviations to words are some examples of imitative writing. For example, with respect to the copying task the learner should read the word and copy it in the correct order. This process is changed into a paragraph in listening cloze task. The learner reads a paragraph, and then should complete the same paragraph in which some words are deleted (Brown, 2004). In picture-cued tasks some pictures are displayed and the learner should choose related words to adequately describe the picture.

In addition, writing correct words in context and correct grammatical features in sentence writing are two important elements in controlled writing. Form is much more important than meaning and context. Intensive writing, is focused on producing appropriate vocabulary with context, collocation and idioms, and correct grammatical features up to the length of a sentence. Also, Somaye (2015) has indicated that intensive writing is entailed on activities such as dictation, grammatical tasks, picture-cued tasks, short-answer and sentence completions, all of which are examples of intensive writing.

Assessment tasks rely on learners to work at a limited discourse level. Form is important at discourse level and meaning and context are emphasized as seen in responsive writing. This requires that students complete a task at a limited discourse level, connecting sentences in a paragraph and creating a logically connected sequence of two or three

paragraphs. In addition, it comprises activities such as a brief description, short reports, summaries, and interpretation of a chart and graph, all of which are examples of a responsive writing task (Brown and Abewickrama, 2010).

Achieving a purpose through organizing ideas logically and employing varieties of syntactic and lexical forms is essential and extensive writing is where this is developed. It consists of the organization of all the processes and strategies of writing for all purposes; it is centered on the length of an essay, a paper, a research and thesis. Likewise, the use of grammatical form is very limited to occasional editing or proofreading (Somaye, 2015).

There is a number of factors related to difficulties with respect to productive writing skills among EFL students. Several prominent researchers studied this topic.

The first research is presented by Rico (2014) on factors causing difficulties to productive skills. The main purpose of the investigation was to identify the factors causing problems in writing skills. Furthermore, the investigation was a qualitative case study focused on three students. The instruments used by the researcher were six observations, two interviews and field notes. The results indicated that there were internal factors and external factors involved. The internal factors were focused on unwillingness to use the target language, lack of knowledge and language transfer and external factors consisted of time allocation and the teachers' methodology. Finally, it is relevant to state that the six internal and external factors already mentioned above were considered as factors causing difficulties to productive skills among foreign language students.

Next, Alfaki (2015) conducted an investigation on university students' English writing problems: diagnosis and remedy. The aim of the investigation was to identify the kind of problems that university students face when they write in English, and suggested ways of helping students how to overcome the problem. What is more, the method used in this investigation was the descriptive research method in which 20 students and 10 teachers participated. The tools for gathering information were writing tasks. The results have shown that there were various writing problems, such as language problems focused on morphology and syntax, mechanical mistakes consisting of spelling punctuation and capitalization, lack of several writing development skills, cognitive problems and graph-motor problems. At the end, the researchers had identified several types of writing problems like mechanical problems, linguistic problems, cognitive problems and psychomotor problems.

Another study was carried out by Javid and Umer (2014), they conducted an investigation on Saudi EFL learners' writing problems: a move towards solution. The objective of this investigation was to identify important writing tasks, major areas of difficulty in academic writing and the factors causing difficulties and the corrective measure in the Saudi EFL academic context. In addition, the method applied by the researcher was a descriptive and comparative analysis, and the instruments used in this investigation were questionnaires, and 149 learners participated. The result shows that students have problems in academic writing due to their weaknesses in using the appropriate lexical, organization of ideas and grammar. Also they are weaker with prepositions, spelling, irregular verb articles, punctuation, suffixes and prefixes. Finally, the researcher has mentioned some factors like: writing practice in the classroom is not sufficient for developing writing skills, and the use of traditional teaching methods is reportedly a major cause for their weak writing skills.

In addition, Younes and Albalawi (2015) carried out an investigation focusing on exploring the most common types of writing problems. The aim of the study was to explore the grammatical, punctuation and spelling language problems made by English language and translation major sophomore female students. They were asked to give a sample of their own writing modules and to answer a questionnaire about what they think the reasons behind these types of writing problems they face when they write in English. In addition, the instruments used by the researcher were questionnaires, written interviews and a sample of writing modules produced by the students. The results of the study indicated that the students faced the following problems when writing such as: grammatical problems, punctuation problems and spelling problems. In conclusion, according to the students the principal reasons behind their weaknesses were due to the fact that teachers used the mother tongue to simplify the rules and instruction and focused on rote rules and memorization, taught grammar out of context and grammar practice was limited in class.

Moreover, Solano et al (2014) had realized a study on Spanish Interference in EFL Writing Skills. The main objective was to investigate the influence of the Spanish language on second language (L2) writing skills at several Ecuadorian High Schools in Loja. Furthermore, the study was focused on mixed methods research quantitative and qualitative methods and the population for this investigation comprised 351 learners and 42 teachers. Also, the instruments used in this investigation were questionnaires and written tests. In addition, the results of this investigation mentioned that grammar and vocabulary were the linguistic areas that suffered the highest level of L1 language transference. Finally, this study

shows that L1 causes interference in EFL learners when writing in English, which is often due to the fact there is a linguistic transference from the native language to the target language.

This topic was investigated further by Setiawan et al (2014) who examined the challenges associated with teaching writing skills. The main objective was to research challenges of teaching writing to young learners, especially in Junior High School. The study used the qualitative case study and the instrument used was an interview and two teachers participated. The results indicated several problems focused on the students, including lack of vocabulary, grammar problems, lack of motivation, learning environment and the teacher having difficulty motivating the students and the difference level between students. Finally, teacher provided some solutions in order to improve writing skills, like giving rewards and punishments, using technology, class organization and the use of interactive methods for the teaching and learning of writing skills.

Finally, the authors found in their research several factors that block achievement in writing skill like; absence of grammar and vocabulary, insufficient time, transfer from L1 mother tongue to L2 (second language learning) lack of regular practice, and paucity of an appropriate approach to teach writing skill. Due to this fact, the variables that affect the production in writing skill in Ecuadorian students could be identified and it would be possible to find the way to improve the current situation in Ecuadorian high schools.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

The purpose of the study is to find out the problems that students face while they have been practicing writing in Ecuadorian Public and Private High Schools in Loja city.

A descriptive case study research was applied in order to identify the most common factors that produce difficulties with respect to writing skills in students of Private and Public High Schools in the city of Loja through a series of questionnaires, and class observation.

Participants and Setting

This research was applied to sophomore students of Public and Private High Schools in the city of Loja. It took the form of a case study and was applied to 30 high school students in their second year of High School as well as to their English teacher. The students are all 16 years old and have been studying English for at least four years before taking part in this research.

Procedure

The study employed different instruments particularly: teacher and student's questionnaires combined with class observation. The students and teacher answered a questionnaire focused on factors such as grammar and vocabulary, time for completion of task, lack of practice, methodology and language transfer, and the questions focused on close-ended questions. In addition, two classes dedicated to writing attended using an observation sheet. One class noticed in a Public High School and one class in a Private High School.

Furthermore, to collect the necessary information for this research, preliminary questionnaires and class observation sheets were tabulated in order to triangulate the information. The first teacher based questionnaire was aimed at finding out the factors that produce problems in writing skills. In addition, the second questionnaire was administered to 30 students of both high schools to confirm the existing factors in writing skills. Likewise, the class was observed to determine the main factors associated with problems in writing.

In addition, with the results obtained from these tools, the observer instructed 10 classes focused on writing skills, divided into 5 classes for the public high school and 5 classes for the private high school. These classes focused on different types of writing skills

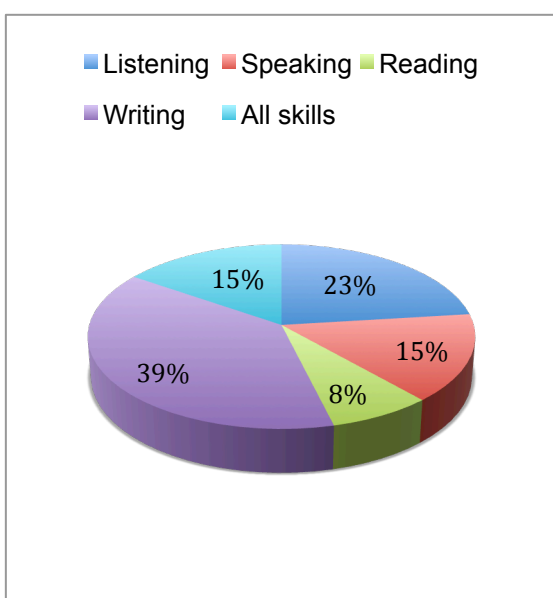
administered to the students who were asked to write different activities in order to recognize the difficulties that learners face while they were practicing writing during class.

Once, the results were collected, they were tabulated, analyzed, and the information obtained from the surveys was displayed in graphs such as pie charts detailing percentages of both public and private high school students' results. The outcomes of direct observation and answers from the teacher's questionnaire were both analyzed and contrasted throughout the qualitative analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the result and analysis and some recommendations were incorporated.

CHAPTER III: DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The aim of the present section is to describe, interpret and analyze the results obtained by means of observation and questionnaire applied to teachers and students. This study focuses on factors that hinder achievement in the writing skill of students of public and private high school of Loja City. The data was processed and represented through statistical graphics using Microsoft Excel in order to bring a clear view of the answers that teachers and students provided.

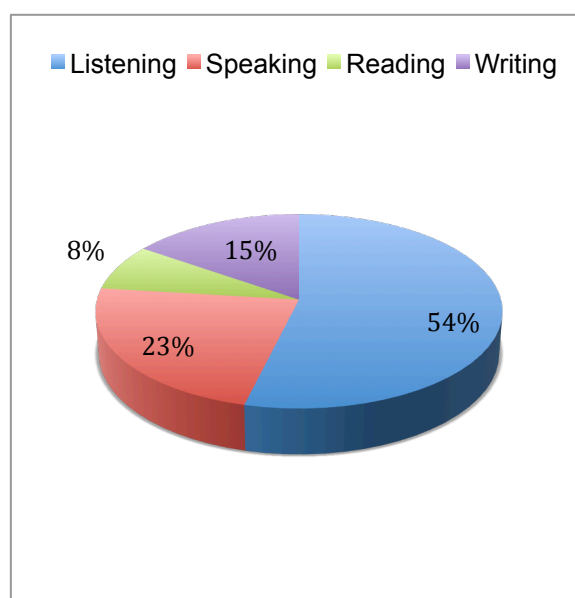
Indicate which of the following four skills is the most difficult for you to learn?



Graphic 1: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

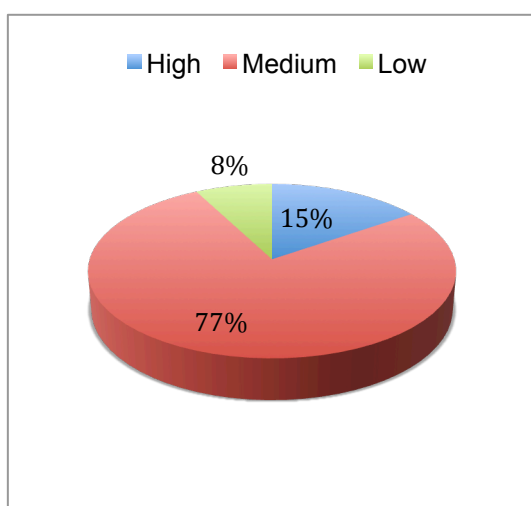
The data obtained by the students about the most difficult skill for learning EFL have the following outcomes. According to the results, the maximum students of this public school face complication in developing writing skill with (39%), while (23%) have trouble in developing listening skill and (15%) have problems with speaking and the lowest percentage correspond to Reading with (8%) of students.

In contrast, the second pie chart, which gives the outcomes obtained by the students for the most arduousness skill of learning EFL show the following results. According to the results obtained from students of private high school, (54%) of students have hardness in listening skill, (23%) face abstruse in speaking, while (15%) have problems with writing and

finally, the lowest percentage of students (8%) have trouble in reading. There is a big difference between both high schools, one of them mentions the most difficult skill to learn is writing, while the participants of the private institution mentioned listening is the tedious skill for learning, because the majority of them receive particular class of learning English. Consequently, the observations of this study revealed that students from the public institution had complexity in writing skill, whereas the participants from private institution had a better performance in writing skill and the result concurs with the direct observation. However, the teachers agree that the writing part proves to be the hardest area for their students. The data supports the outcomes of Adas and Bakir (2013) which showed that writing is an intricate and complex task; it is the most difficult of all the language abilities to acquire.

Graphic 1 Factor Concerning Grammar and Vocabulary

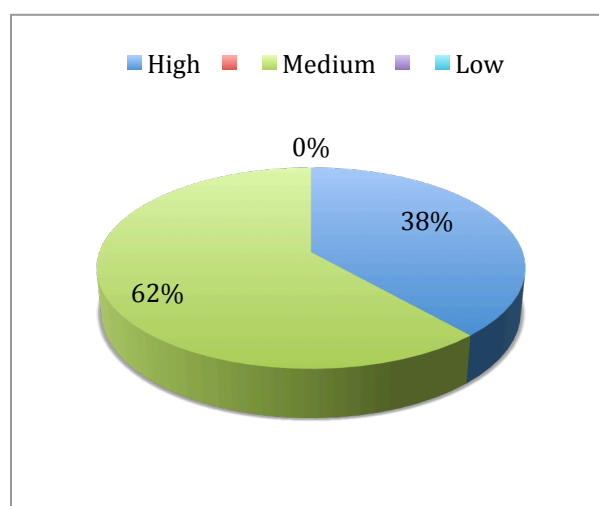
How would you assess your general English grammar knowledge?



Graph 2: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

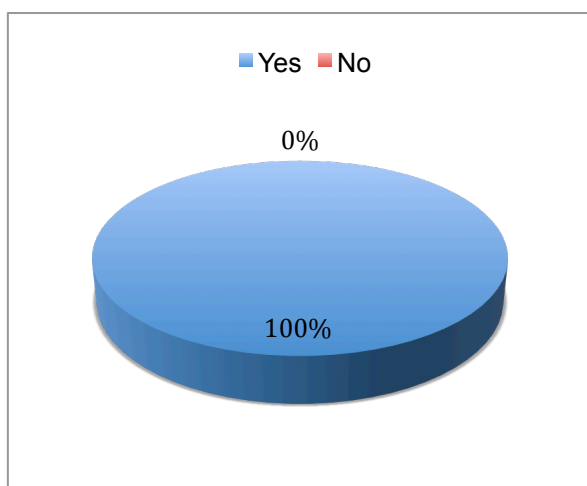
Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Graph 2 shows that the results analyzed deal with deficient use of grammar and vocabulary of students. Regarding public high schools students (77%) of the learners attain medium level in grammar, (15%) correspond to high level and the lowest percentage is for low level with only (8%), while the teacher claims that all her students reached a level of A1 in grammar. Analyzing the data from private institutions, the students pointed out that the level in this area vary from intermediate (62%) to initial / basic (38%). The teacher claims that the level of students in this area is B1, which indicates that the students have attained a desirable / adequate level in grammar. From this data, both high schools have a medium level in grammar, which is different from the answer of teachers. Moreover, Huy (2015) says

a lot of students are not aware of the importance of grammar when studying writing skills, and they spend little time on studying grammar.

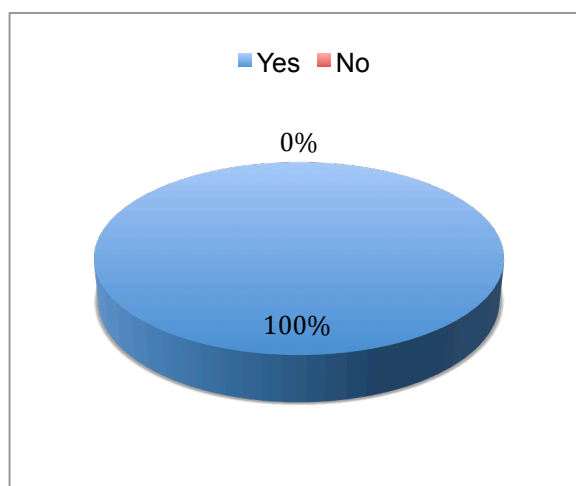
Does the English's teacher teach grammar rules before you start writing in English?



Graph 3: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



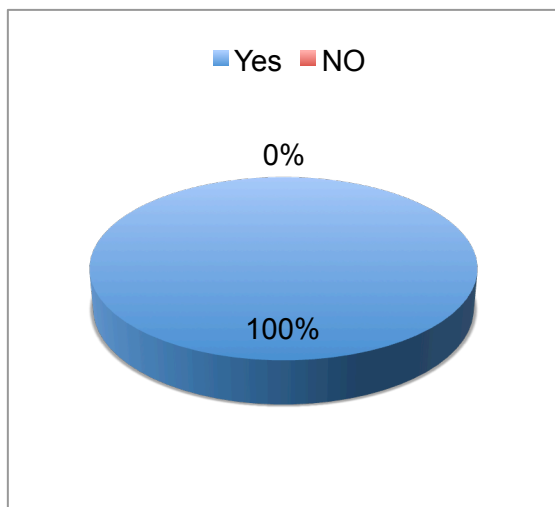
Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

As we can see above in graph 3, the students from the public institution said (100%) they learn grammar rules before they start writing. Teacher also affirms that she teaches grammar rules before asking her students to write and it was noticed that the teacher puts more stress on grammar rules. Similarly, (100%) of the students claim that the teacher teaches grammar rules before they start writing. This was substantiated by the information from the teachers and the observer. So it is evident that teacher focuses and gives emphasis on grammar. Figures for both institutions are quite similar since the highest percentage is in favor of the teacher's focus in teaching the grammar rules before asking students to write a task. The data is consistent with the result of Mássia (2012) who suggests that teachers should teach grammar to the extent of making use of this tool in order to provide students with social and intellectual progress.

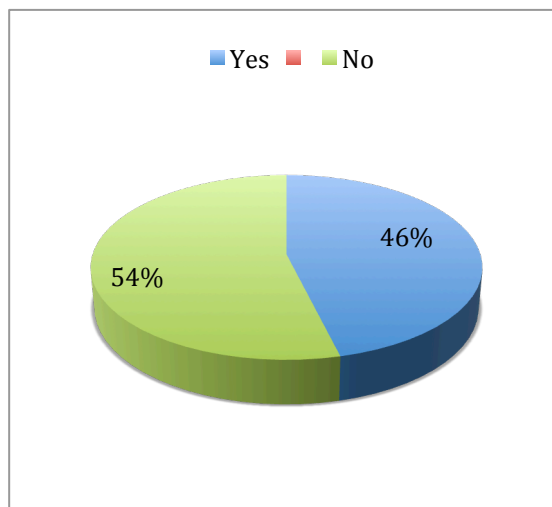
Do you make grammar mistakes when writing in English?



Graph 4: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

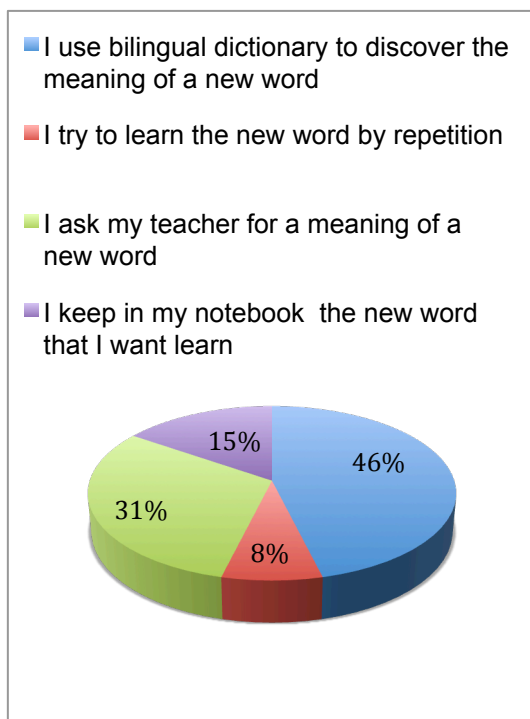
Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

As graph 4 illustrates, (100%) of the students from the public institution say that they make grammar mistakes when they write in English and the teacher also admits it. In contrast, the second pie chart provide information about the private institution shows, that (54%) of the students did not have problems in grammar and did not commit grammar mistakes while (46%) did. However, the teacher feels that most of the students lag behind in writing skill and are not able to write correctly following the grammar rules. Concerning this factor, Rico (2014) affirms that the deficiency of vocabulary and the lack of knowledge related to grammar are factors that cause problems with respect to develop good writing skills. There is a difference of (46 %) between the public and the private high schools with the problems of gramatical mistakes. In addition, the observation revealed that the students from the public institution produced most gramatical mistakes in their task compared to those in the private institution.

In conclusion, the students from the public higschool need to acquire more grammar rules knowledge in order to write good pieces of writings, while the learners from the private high school should improve on the application of adequate use of grammar rules. These findings

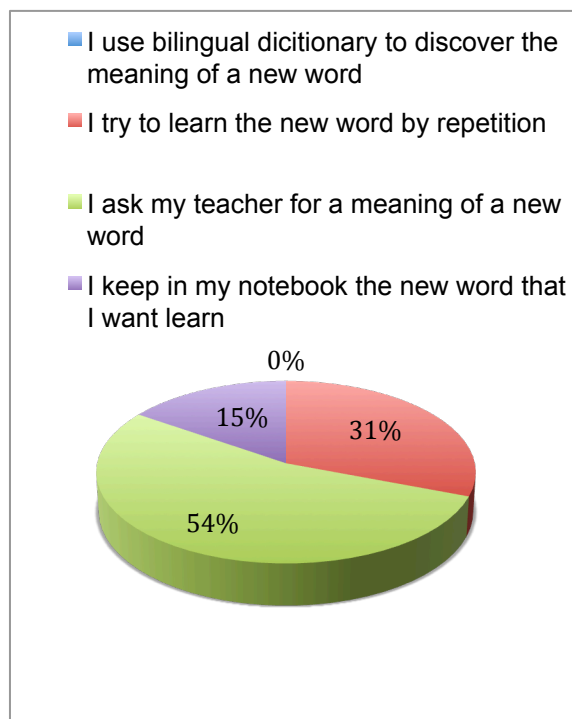
How do you best learn new vocabulary in order to improve your writing skills?



Graph 5: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

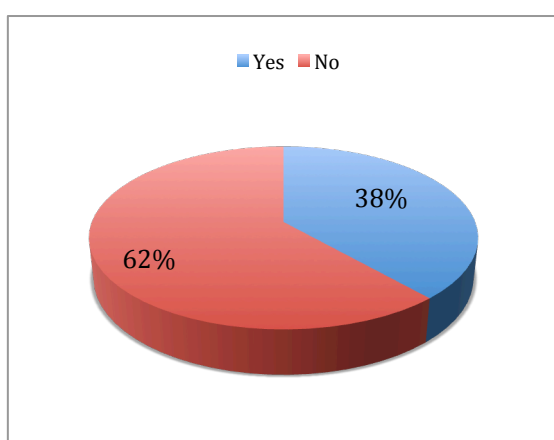
Observing closely graph 5 for public institutions, regarding vocabulary (46%) of participants use a dictionary to look for the meaning of words in the class, (31%) of participants ask teacher meaning of a new vocabulary for write in English and (15%) students say that they learn vocabulary noting the meaning of the words in their notebook and a very low percentage (8%) claims to learn vocabulary through repetition into the class. Moreover, the teacher mentions that her students learn vocabulary using a bilingual dictionary and by taking notes in the class. In addition, with the result obtained, the participants use bilingual dictionary to investigate the meaning and then write in EFL.

On the other hand, in the private institution, (54%) of students say that they learn vocabulary asking the teacher the meaning of the word, while (31%) of participants learn vocabulary through repetition and (15%) of them write the meaning of the vocabulary in their notebooks. The teacher also mentions that her learners take notes and paraphrase to pick up vocabulary. The observation reveals that students from both institutions use a dictionary and write vocabulary with the meaning in their notebooks and ask the teacher the meaning of the vocabulary in the class which concords with the obtained result. Finally, it should be

noted that the students of both institutions learn vocabulary through different forms; the public high school learn using dictionary and participants of the private institution learn by asking the teacher the meaning of the words, since the students know enough vocabulary to write in English. This finding goes in accordance with the results of Alqahtani (2015) who argues that teachers may encourage students to conserve a diary to take down notes of new vocabulary.

Graphic 2 Factors concerning lack of practice

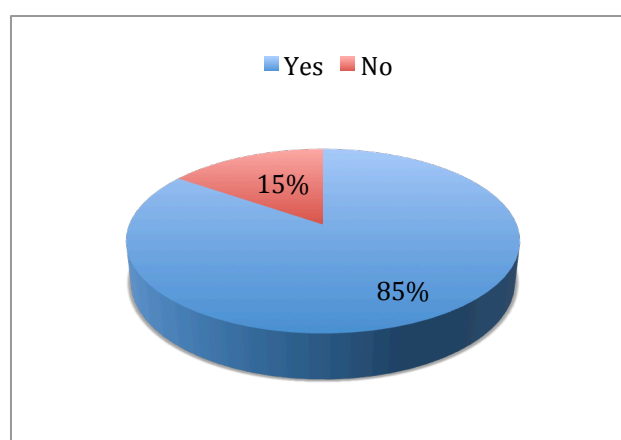
Do you write in English outside the class?



Graph 6: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

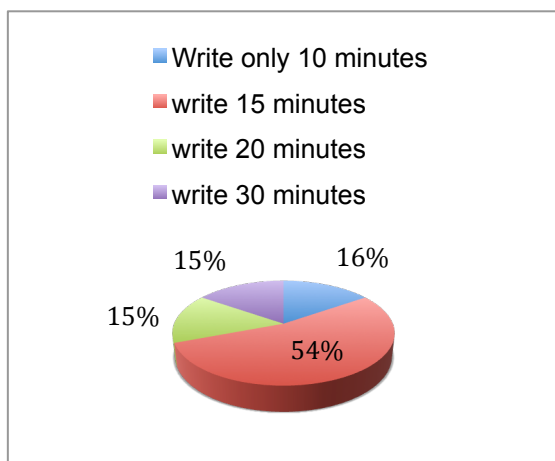
Graph 6 shows data concerning respect to lack of practice in writing skill, according to the results (62%) of the public high school students do not practice writing at home, because they find it difficult. On the other hand, (38%) of learners say that they practice writing skill at home and they mentioned that listen and transcribe song and write letter in English. The teacher mentions that her students write short sentence paragraphs. Interestingly, the private high school presents different results, the option "Yes" with (85%) of learners confirm that they practice writing skill at home and the teacher mentions that her learners practise writing a story, an email, and diary at home and "No" shows (15%) of students declare that they don't work out in writing skills at home, because it is difficult to achieve this skill. From the result observed we can see that both institutions need to practice writing skills both inside and outside the class.

Regarding these issues Mourtaga (2010) also confirms that teachers believe that students experience many problems in writing English, because they do not practice enough, and that teachers should employ techniques in class to ensure that learners practice this skill. Lastly, direct observation presents shows that both institutions practice writing skills in class, like dictation, writing short sentences on the whiteboard, and short paragraphs in their notebooks.

Graphic 3 Factor concerning absence of time

How much time do you spend practicing writing skill in class?

Graph 7: Public high school

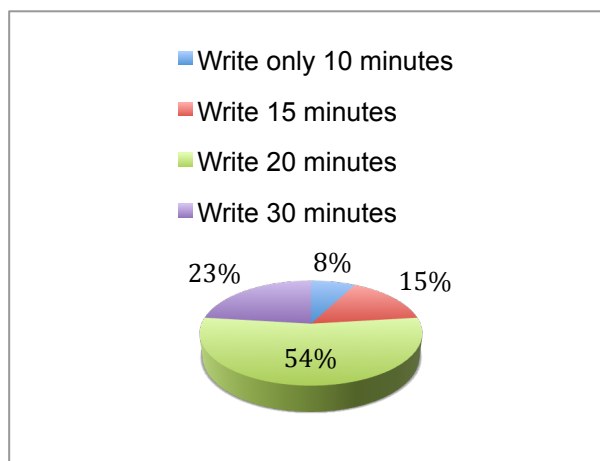


Graph 7: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Private high school



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

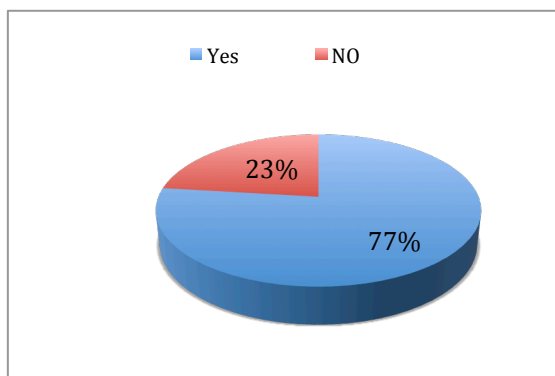
The next factor researched was inadequate time on writing activity, according to the results from public high school (54%) of students state that they write for 15 minutes in the class which is the highest percentage. (16%) of participants mention that they only write for 10 minutes and (15%) of them claim they write in English for 20 to 30 minutes. The answer of the teacher is similar, because she mentions the time is too short for teaching writing. In contrast, the private high school displays different results, less time devoted to developing writing skill, (54%) of participants declare they write in the class for 20 minutes, while (23%) maintain that they write for 30 minutes and (15%) affirm write about 15 minutes and the lowest percent is (8%) of learners write for (10 minutes) in class. The teacher determinates if this is enough time to develop writing skills. These results reveal that teachers from both institutions do not use the time effectively to teach writing skills in the class, as it also depends on which activity they spend time teaching on writing topics. In

regards to this factor, Rico (2014) states that time allocation is a negative factor which influences learners, and often students state that they cannot finish their homework because they do not have adequate time; as a result they are not able to participate in class effectively.

According to the observation, the students of the both institutions have two periods of 45 minutes of English class, and both teachers should take advantage of using the time to help students in the development of writing skills inside the class.

Graphic 4 Factor related to language transfer

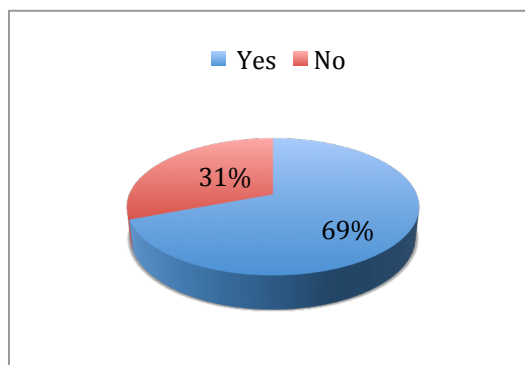
When you are allowed to use your first language in class does it help you with your writing in English?



Graph 8: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

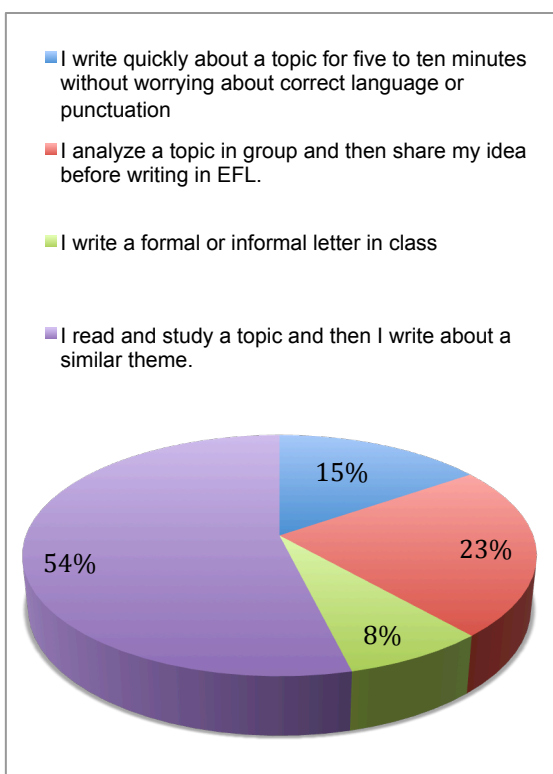
Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

The chart provides information about the transfer language, according to the results in the public high school (77%) of students claim that Spanish language helps to develop their writing skills, but only (23%) affirm that it does not help to improve their writing skill, but the teacher mentions that her students do not use the mother tongue to enhance their writing skill. It can also be observed that the students make use of their mother tongue to develop their writing skill. What is more, the participants from the public institution are easily affected by their mother tongue in a foreign language. Similarly, in the private institution, according to the result, (69%) of students declare that using Spanish helps them develop their writing skill, but only (31%) mention the use of Spanish in the classroom is not adequate for developing their writing skill, whereas the teacher says that her students do not use the mother tongue to enhance their writing skill. However, through the direct observation, it was found that the students do use the mother tongue before writing in English. The results of both high schools

show that the participants use L1 to write in English, and the mother tongue has more negative than positive effect in L2 writing. Regarding this factor Rico (2014) affirms that language transfer lead to error in writing and in addition weakens students' concentration. Students state that if they insert a word from their mother tongue when writing in English, it often leads to blocking the writing process.

Graphic 5 Factor regarding to approaches for teaching writing skills

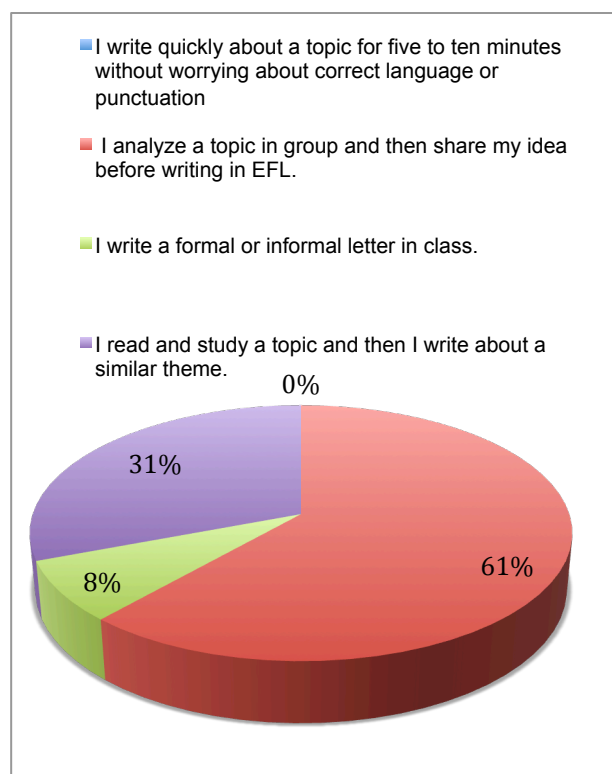
What exercises do you do in class in order to practice writing skill?



Graph 9: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

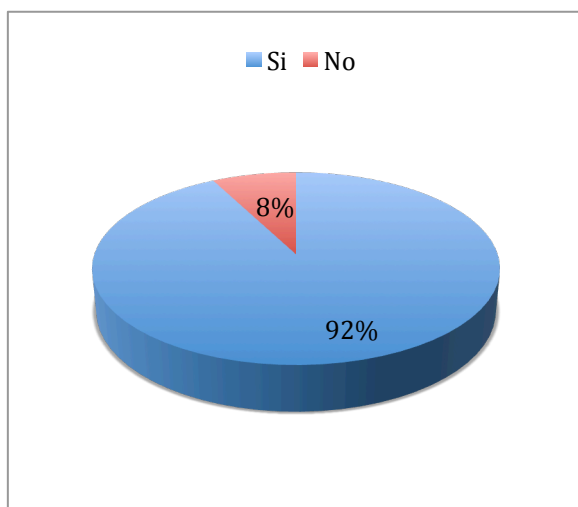
Graph 9 indicates information about the activities that teacher provides in the class for writing skills. In the public institution (54%) of the students affirm that they read a topic and write a similar theme, followed by the students work in group to analyse a topic before writing, with (23%) of responses. Other activities such as write quickly of any topic obtained (15%) of preferences and (8%) of students indicate that they write a formal or informal letter but the teacher claims that she does not use any specific method to teach writing skill. In addition, the direct observation shows that the teacher from the public institution does not

conform to any specific technique for developing writing skill, and it is necessary that the teacher uses methods, techniques or strategies to help her learners develop and improve their writing skills.

However, the graph of private institution presents different outcomes. The results indicate that (61%) of students work in group to analyse a topic and share ideas before writing any activities. (31%) mentions that they read and then write about a topic, whereas (8%) declares they write a formal or informal letter. Meanwhile, the teacher from the questionnaire mentions that she uses the product approach for teaching writing, and this can be corroborated through direct observation that the teacher indeed uses the product approach for teaching writing skill. Complementing this, Javid and Hummer (2014) claim that the use of traditional teaching method is a great problem for students with weak writing skills and they recommend that the educators should apply modern teaching techniques for improving the teaching and learning of writing skills.

Finally, the results reveal that the teacher from the public institution does not use any approach to teaching the writing skill and the professor from the private high school applies the traditional product approach in her classes. It is necessary that teachers apply other approaches in order to enhance the writing skill of their students.

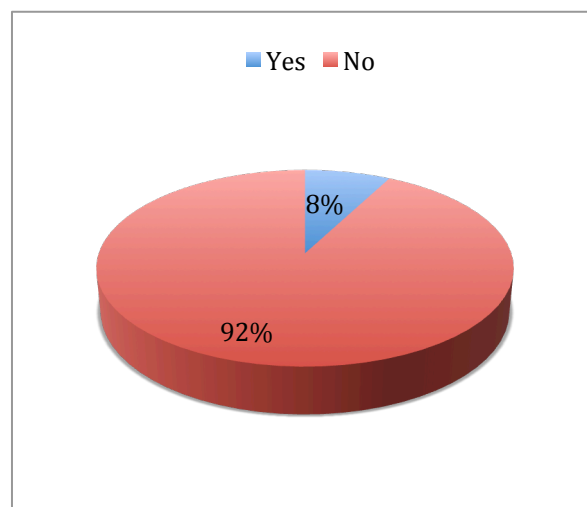
Do you face any difficulties when writing in English?



Graph 10: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

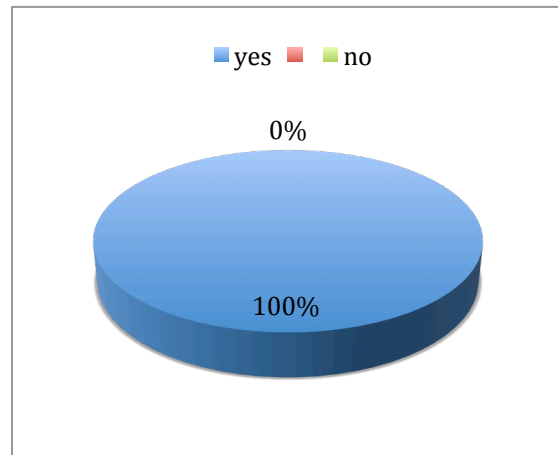
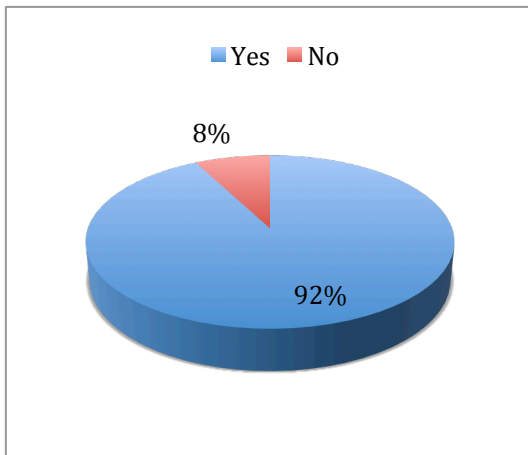
Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

The information in graph 10 shows the answer of the students about the obstacle in writing in English. According to the graph from the public institution (92%) of the students mentioned that they have difficulty in writing. In addition, the teacher claims it is due to lack of background knowledge in the subject and lack of practice. Meanwhile, (8%) students have not problem in writing skill. On the contrary, private high school students portray a different result (92%) mentions that they not have any difficulty in writing skill, on the other hand (8%) of learners face obstacle when writing in English. The teacher mentions that her students have no problem in writing skill.

Regarding these issues Mourtaga (2010) states that it is important for teachers to get some training to teach writing. When employing the process approach, teachers should follow steps with their students such as topic listing, pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading and reflection. The direct observation shows that the students from the public institution have a lot of complications in writing skill, because they do not have sufficient knowledge or little interest in learning to write in English, while the participants of private institution are able to write fairly well in English.

Did the feedback you receive from your teacher helped you?



Graph 11: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

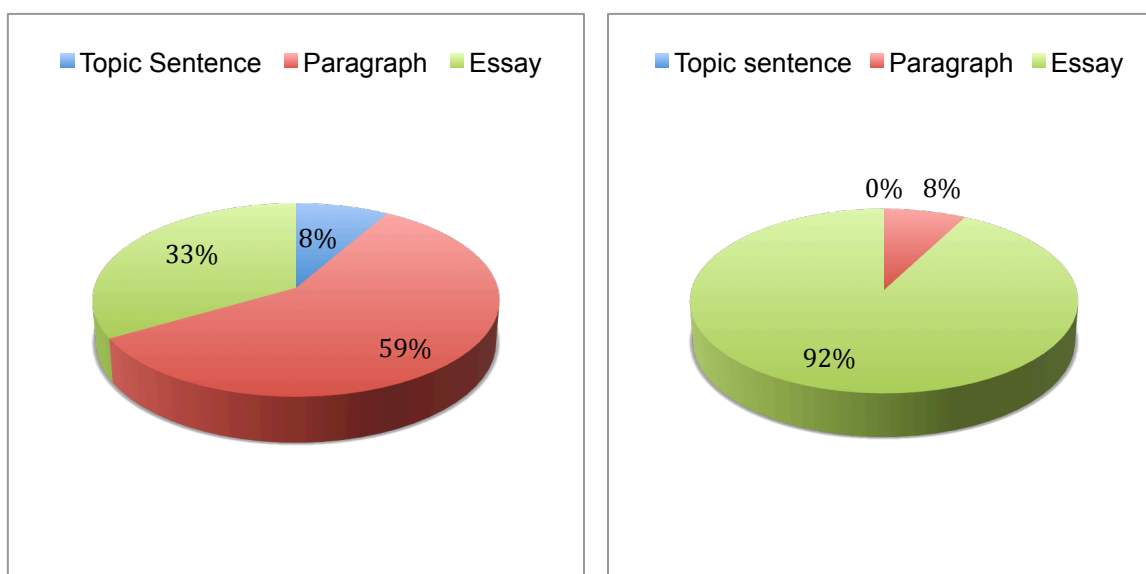
Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

As illustrated in graph 10 for public high schools (92%) of students are satisfied with the corrections of their homework made by their teacher, and (8%) are not satisfied with work of the teacher. However, the professor mentions that she uses the selective corrections to check out the written work. However, in private institution (100%) of students are convinced about the selective correction used by their teacher. Figures for both institutions are quite similar since the highest percentage is in favor with the correction of the teacher in the written work. In addition, it could be observed that the instructor checks the entire written work of all her students. Through the results it can be noted that the professor of both institutions use adequate technique for checking of written task of their learners. This result falls in line with that of Hamouda (2011) who reported in his research titled "Students and teacher preference about writing corrections" that 93.5% of students were more than satisfied with the feedback on error corrections they receive from their teachers on their written work or writing tasks/exercises

Where do you find difficulties when writing in English?



Graph 12: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

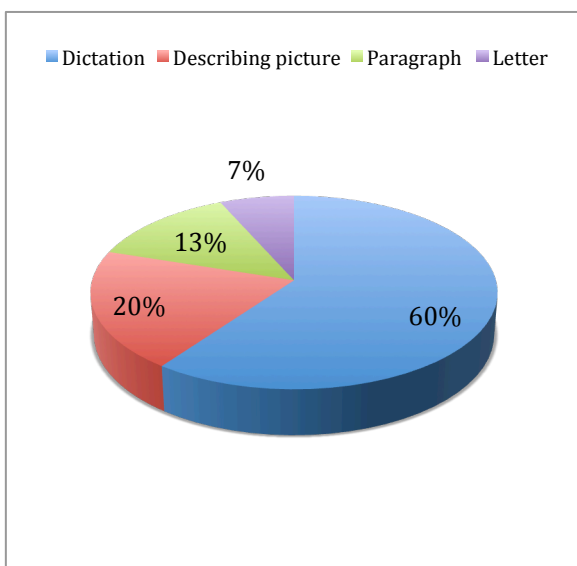
Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

According to graph 12, in the public institution the highest percentage is (59%) of learners claiming that they have difficulties in writing a paragraph because it consists of topic sentence, supporting detail and conclude sentence to write in English, whereas (33%) claim the main difficulty in writing an essay because it is long and the students should follow the sequence in order to write an excellent essay. The lowest percentage (8%) of students commented that a topic sentence is the most difficult part in writing in English, because some of them do no practice writing. Similarly the result of the learners concurs with the answer of the teacher who affirms that her students have problems in writing a paragraph. However, it was observed that students have many difficulties in writing short sentence in EFL which does not concord with the answer of teacher and students. In contrast, in the private institution (92%) of the students have difficulty in writing an essay, because it should have a clear structure and the student has to support with his/her own argument, while (8%) lag behind in writing a paragraph, because it should contain unity, order, and coherence which is in conformity with the teacher's observation.

According to the result describe above, the public institutions' students have a lot of difficulty in writing a paragraph, in second place it is essay and the last is topic sentences, while the in the other institution, the major problem is in writing an essay and the next is on paragraph. In this respect, Asadifard and Koosa (2013) mention, that learners are not taught

necessary writing skills, not given right instructions and strategies such as pre-writing; drafting and editing because the teacher uses only traditional strategies for teaching writing skills in the class

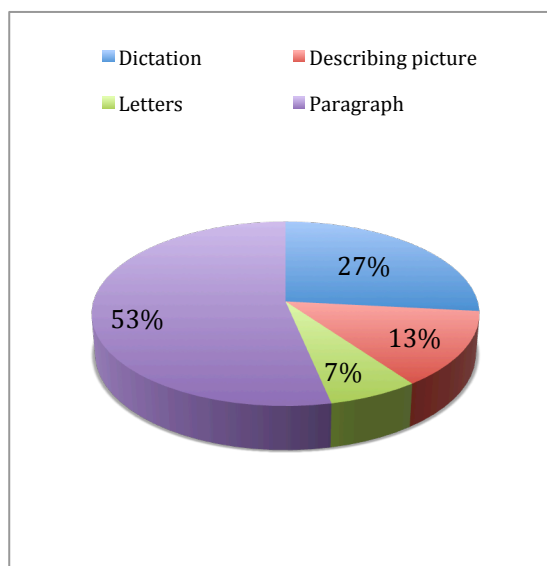
What activities do you do in class for developing writing skill?



Graph 13: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Graph 13 indicates that, (60%) of the students from the public institution report that their teacher is focused more on dictation to develop their writing skill, while (20%) depends on describing a picture, while (13%) of students focus on writing a paragraph and the lowest percent (7%) of participants are centered in letter writing. Whereas the teacher claims that she gives priority to instant writing, which conforms with the results of the students, and this can be confirmed through direct observation that the teacher focuses on dictation.

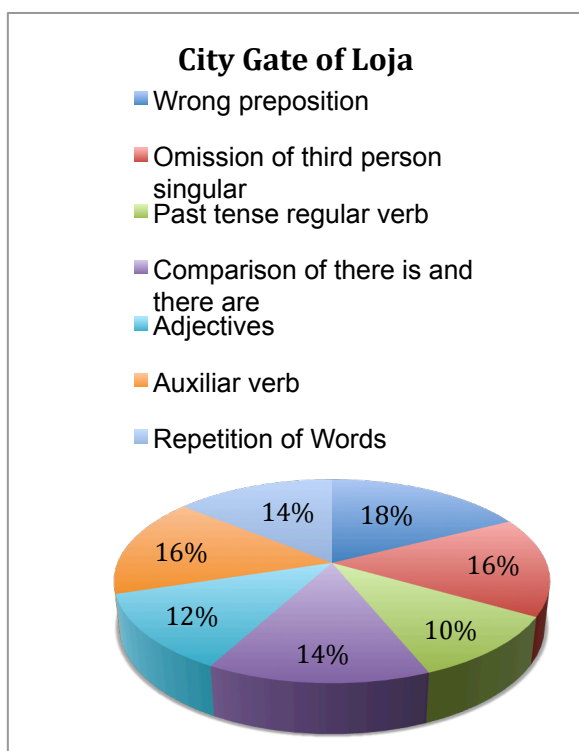
On the other hand, the private institution (53%) of the students claim that they are comfortable in writing a paragraph in the class, while (27%) center on dictation, also (13%) of learners could describe pictures and the lowest percentage (7%) of learners are focused in writing letter in English. The teacher claims that she focuses on instant writing, but the direct observation pointed that the teacher focuses mainly on dictation and concord with the answer of professor.

According to the results from both institutions the teachers apply the same strategies in order for the students to develop their writing skill in the class. However, it is notable that there are big differences between both institution on the activity of dictation and paragraphs . It is clear that students from the private high school are able to write a paragraph in EFL in comparison to students from the public institution. That is why students from the public high school only do dictation in class. In additon, it is necessesary that the teacher should apply more writing activities for the developing of writing skill as EFL. Regarding this question. Nguyen, Van & Nguyet (2011) claims that the instructor should involve them as much as possible in most of the writing activities. When the learners do the activities for writing skill, it help them practice and experience writing.

Graphic 6 Contrast and Comparison of Students writing paragraph of private and public high school.

Based on English language students' and teachers' responses the findings of the current research describes that there are some factors related to students' problems in writing skill as EFL (English Foreign Language). Some of these factors are; insufficient time, absence of the grammar and vocabulary, interference from L1 (mother tongue) to L2 (second language under study), lack of regular practice, and lack of an appropriate approach to teaching writing skill. Based on the performance shown in the graphs above, 5 kinds of writing strategie were proposed by the instructor to correct the flaws; these strategies are going to be shown next:

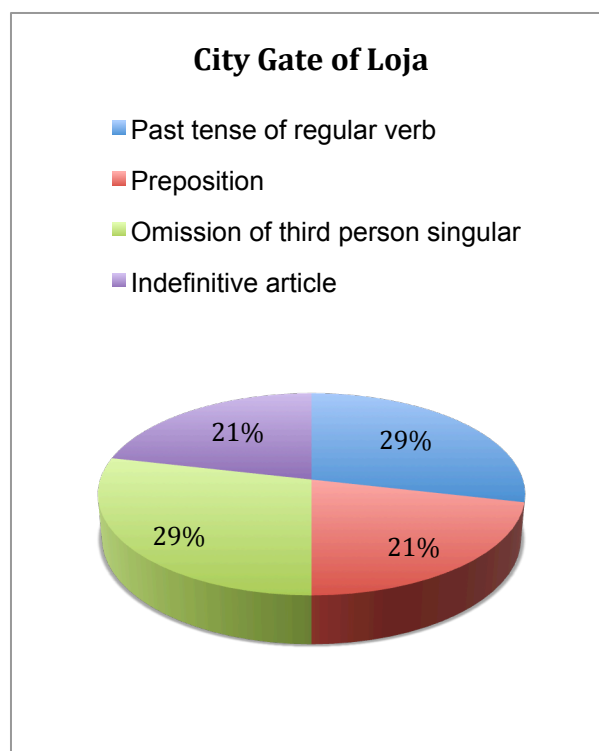
Writing paragraph, " City Gate of Loja", of public and private high schools.



Graph 1: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

With respect to grammar and vocabulary factor, a great difference can be observed between students from the public and private high schools. The task was focused on descriptive writing. The instructor provided some grammatical rules on adjectives, preposition, and "there is" and "there are". After, the assistant asked the students to describe a picture of the City Gate of Loja.

As well as, the students from public the institution could finish the task of descriptive writing, the paragraph is not easy to understand, it has many grammatical errors, but they described the picture of Gate city of Loja. In contrast, the participants of private high school didn't have problem in describing the picture, the paragraph is clear, understandable and they don't have grammatical mistakes.

Regarding the factor of grammar and vocabulary the instructor provided grammar rules before asking students to write a paragraph. It helped students a bit in the public institutions, because they possess limited vocabulary and poor understanding of grammar. The low understanding of the grammar causes difficulty in arranging their writing properly. While the students from the private institution have a lot of knowledge of grammar rules, they are provided with grammatical structures before writing which helps them a lot in the development of their writing skill. Moreover, Younes & Albalawi (2015) have put forward some solutions for improving writing such as: grammatical rules should be taught in context; grammar practice should be emphasized, also that the mother tongue should not be used to simplify the English grammar rules.

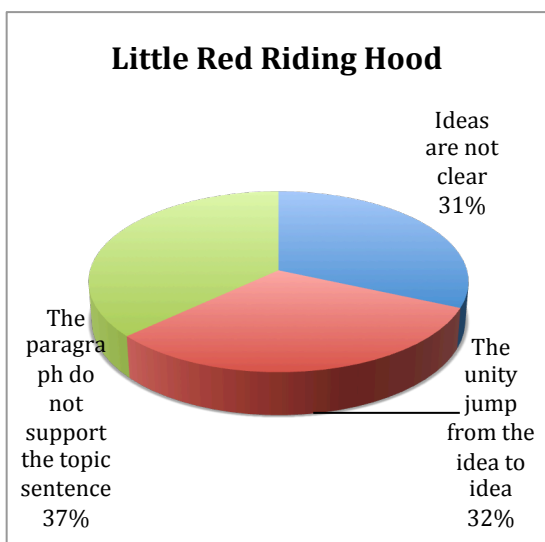
In addition, the problems discovered with respect to the grammar errors made in the students' paragraphs from the public high school could be attributed as follows: (18%) of participants used wrong prepositions, (16%) omitted the third person singular, (10%) resulted in inappropriate use of past tense of regular verb, (14%) was due to errors in using comparison of there is and there are, (12%) related to misuse of adjectives and the final (16%) was based on auxiliary verbs and repetition words. Whereas, the grammar errors from students in private high schools school were fewer but similar, for example (29%) made errors related to regular past, (21%) made errors relating to inaccurate use of prepositions, additionally (29%) were due to the omission of the third person singular, and finally (21%) referred to the misuse of the indefinite article which in turn was a completely different mistake noticed in the students' paragraphs.

As we can see above, from the results provided the students from the public institution make a lot of grammar mistakes, and there is no correct grammatical structure used in the paragraph and the students need to learn more vocabulary to write an adequate paragraph. It also shows that students are not familiar with basic grammar rules and the paragraphs written by the students are difficult to understand. Whereas, the analysis of the written sample of the private institution shows that students produce fewer errors in grammar, and they have an adequate level of grammar, and they have little difficulty in vocabulary which

means the writing sample is clear and understandable to read. In addition, the students' response of questionnaire from the public institution mentions that (77%) have a medium level in grammar, and the teacher also mentions that her students reached a level A1 in grammar, which is evident with the writing sample of learners. In contrast, the teacher from the private high school mentions that her students have a B1 level and the learners have an intermediate level, which is in concordance with the analysis of their writing sample.

In conclusion, according to the result found from writing sample of both institutions, it can be concluded that grammar and vocabulary are factors that influence a lot in students' writing skill, because without the use of adequate grammar and vocabulary, it is impossible to write an effective paragraph. Rico, (2014) states that a deficiency of vocabulary and the lack of knowledge related to grammar structures are factors that cause problems with respect to developing good writing skills.

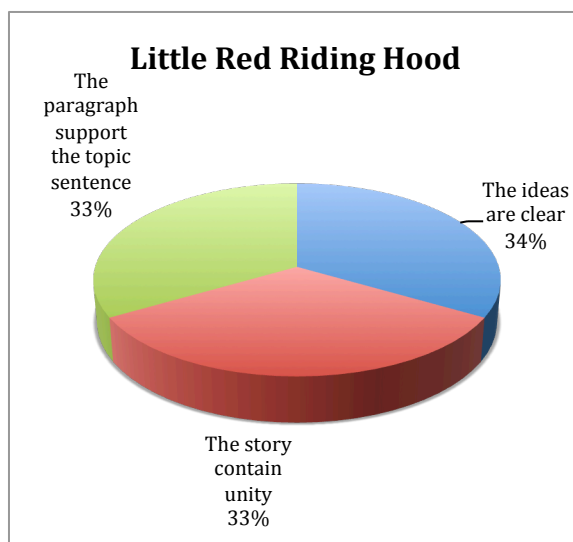
Writing paragraph "Little Red Riding Hood", of public and private high schools



Graph 2: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

With respect to writing practice factor, the students from the public and private high schools were exposed to retell and write a short story of Little Red Riding Hood. The instructor presented a short video of Little Red Riding Hood, and then asked students to write a short story in their own words. To analyze the writing sample, the instructor used the content /idea 's rubric for assessment.

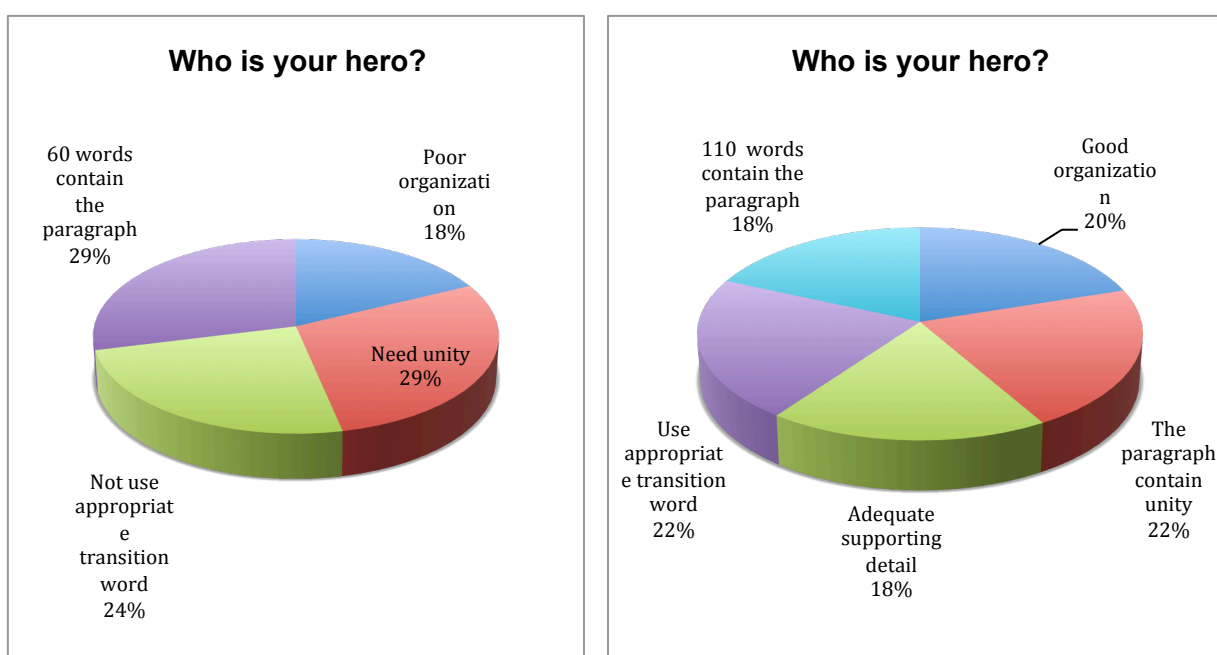
What is more, the results found from students' writing samples show there is a big difference between public and private institutions. The students from public institution had many obstacles in the task of narrative writing. The story of Little Red Riding Hood, was complicated to understand, (31%) of the ideas are unclear, the unity jumps from idea to idea corresponds to (32%), most of the sentences in the paragraph do not wholly support the topic sentence relates to (37%), but the majority of learners could finish the story.

Moreover, Harmer (2007), says "many students either think or say that they cannot, or do not want to write. This may be due to lack of confidence, they think it is boring or believe they have nothing to say" (p. 113). In contrast, the participants from the private institution were able to narrate the story of Little Red Riding Hood. The majority of the paragraphs have clear ideas which was represented by (34%) and the topic was correctly narrowed down by (33%) and (33%) of the sentences in each paragraph supported the topic sentence and the story is easier to understand by the reader.

With respect to writing practice factor, according to the results of questionnaire (62%) of the students from the public institution mentioned in the questionnaires that they practice writing at home and the teacher declared in the questionnaire that her students write short sentences or very short paragraphs. However, we can notice through the written analysis, that the students practice very little English, and they are able to write short sentences, which are reflected in the poor writing in English. However, the answer of questionnaire from the private institution shows that (85%) of learners practice writing skill at home and the teacher mentions that her learners practiced writing story, email, and diary at home, which is remarkable in the writing samples analysed from the students, because the results are positive.

In conclusion, with the results of samples writing of the students from the private institution shows that they practice a lot of writing skill inside and outside the class, and they are able to retell and write a story of Little Red Riding Hood with the use of adequate unity. In addition, the students of the public institution need to develop and practice their writing skill in class and at home. In the same way Bloomsbury (nd) affirms that writing every day improves students writing skills, and that students should utilize different techniques such as writing a diary, sending an e-mail to friends in English and writing a short story each day.

Writing paragraph “Who is your hero?” of public and private high schools



Graph 3: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

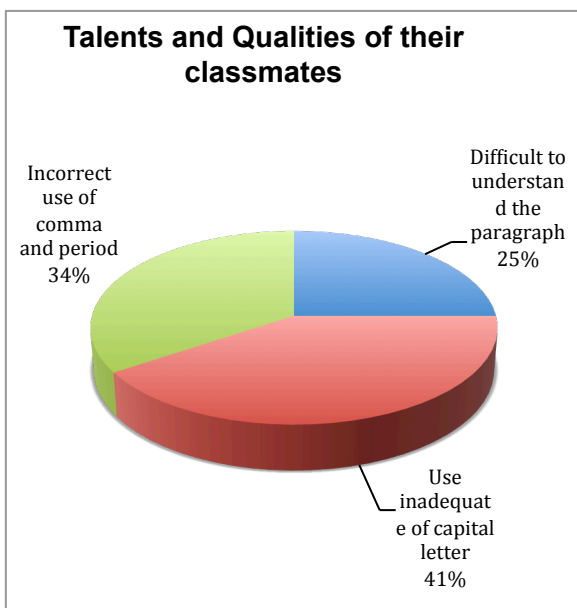
With respect to the factor of lack of adequate time in writing skills, students from both public and private high schools were exposed to choose a topic and then write a paragraph including the topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding sentence. The task was focused on expository writing. The assistant presented some materials, which consisted of two posters and worksheets. The first poster contained the parts of a paragraph, and the second one was focused on transition words to explained how to connect the first sentence with the next sentence. Additionally, students were asked to write a paragraph of eighty words in a period of 30 minutes.

Furthermore, the topic selected by the students was about “Who is your hero”. According to the analysis of students' writing sample of public institution, (29%) of participants were only able to write a paragraph containing sixty words in a period of 40 minutes and (18%) of these wrote poorly organized paragraphs, (29%) of some paragraphs needed unity, and the students needed more knowledge on how to develop an effective paragraph. The other problem encountered was that (24%) of learners had difficulties with the use of transition words and such as: again, furthermore, moreover, too, in addition and so on.

In comparison, the results of public high school there is a big difference in writing paragraph to that of private institution. Likewise, students from the private high school chose the same topic and wrote a paragraph about 110 words in 40 minutes which accounted for 18% and 22% wrote an effective paragraph using unity, also 18% of learners wrote effective topic sentences and supporting detail connecting the first sentence with the following sentence and 22% of students used the appropriate transition words in a paragraph

Regarding the time of factor, the students from public institution mentioned that they only have 15 minutes of writing task in class, but with the use of additional resources presented in class they wrote for 40 minutes in class. In the same way, the students from the private institutions claim they write only for 20 minutes, but they write a paragraph for 40 minutes in class and could finish the task, because the majority of them have more time for developing writing skill in class. Huy (2015) claims that teachers should change or modify some parts of the class structure related to writing lessons in order to help students and thus alleviate any pressure they may feel. The researcher suggests that teachers should provide additional writing resources so that students understand better the concept of writing in class. Finally, the use of additional resources for writing skill help to enhance the knowledge, and reduce the anxiety in the students and to increase the time for students develop better writing skill without obstacle.

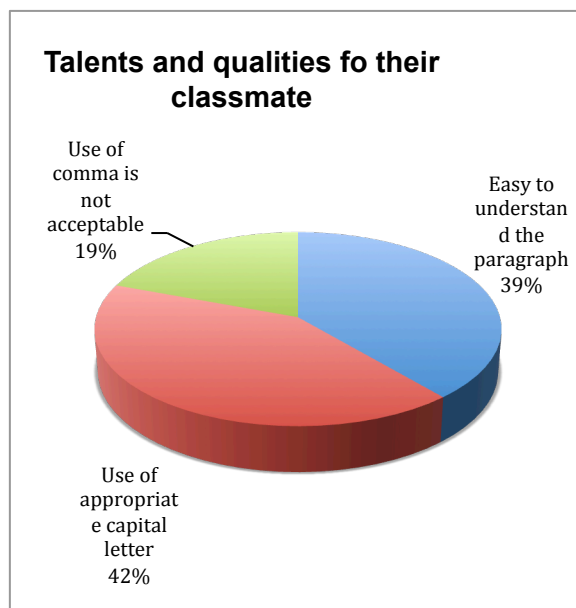
Writing paragraph, “ Talents and qualities of my classmates” of public and private high schools



Graph 4: Public high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students' questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

In order to examine the first language transfer in second language writing as EFL, the participants from the public and private high schools were asked to write a paragraph on their qualities and talents. The task was focused on persuasive writing, the students should give an opinion for the talents and qualities of their classmates, and the instructor asked students to work in pairs, and exchange information before writing a paragraph.

In addition, to analyze participant's written work, a convention-based rubric was designed to assess their work. The participants of both high schools were able to realize the task of persuasive writing and give opinion about talents and qualities of their classmates. (25%) of the paragraphs written by the students pertaining to the public institution were short and difficult to comprehend. (41%) of students experienced problems with the use of capital letter and (34%) of students did not use the comma (,), and the period (.) was not used at the end of each paragraph.

On the other hand, the result from private institution's students were different, (39%) of students enjoyed the activity and their paragraph was easy to understand, also (42%) of the students used the capital letter in the sentence but (19%) of learners used the comma

inadequately in the paragraph. Nevertheless, the majority of participants of both institutions used the mother tongue to write in English.

Regarding the language transfer, the problems found in written sample of students from the public institution were evasive use of personal pronoun, misuse of verb to be and, usage the (s) in possessive pronoun and the confusion in the use of preposition by and on.

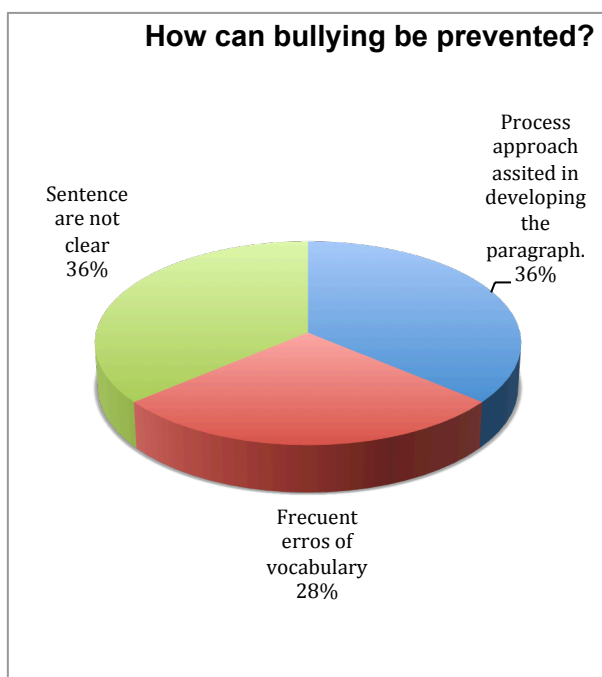
Likewise, the results from students of the private institution show they used the personal pronoun in the sentence inappropriately in some many cases, avoidance of am and articles and use of Spanish word order for nouns and adjectives.

Furthermore, language transfer is a negative factor in the production of writing skill of students. The results of students' questionnaires of public institution revealed that (77%) use the mother tongue to develop the writing skill, but from the analysis of the writing samples, it shows that students transfer from L1 to L2 and it produces many mistakes in grammar and some sentences do not make sense in the paragraph. Rico (2014) affirmed that, language transfer results in students producing error-laden writing tasks and in addition weaken their concentration.

In comparison, (69%) of students in private high school declared that they use Spanish to write in English, through the writing analysis we can notice they think in Spanish to write in L2. The participants used little mother tongue in the writing skill, but some sentences contain grammatical problems, and the paragraph is easier to understand. However, the students from the public institution use a lot of L1 to write in English, while the students of other institution realized fewer errors in the paragraph. In order to avoid that students use the L1 in L2 writing, the instructor asked students to work in pairs, so they can complete the task about their talent and qualities, which as we noticed, this activity only helped students of the private institution, and the students of public institution need more knowledge of writing in English. As well as, another solution is that students should read a lot to cultivate their ability to write. In addition, the teacher may ask the student to work with other student to complete a writing activity (Yeh, 2013).

Finally, the transfer language is a negative factor in the production of writing skill of students from public and private high school, and it is notable how the L1 cause a great difficulty in the writing skill as EFL.

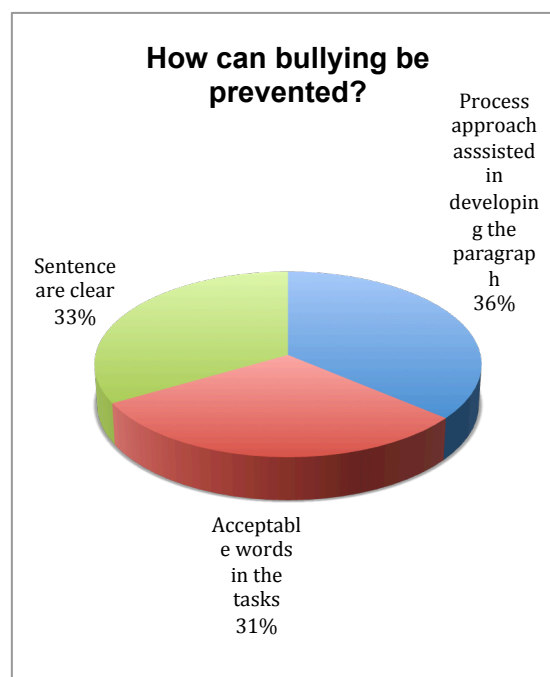
Writing paragraph“ How can bullying be prevented?”of public and private high schools



Graph 5: Public high school

Source: Students'questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin



Private high school

Source: Students'questionnaire

Author: Ector Geovanny Pupiales Chuquin

Finally, another observed sample of students'problem is the lack of appropriate approach to teach writing skills by some of the teacher, students of the public and private high schools were exposed to watch two videos and then they should choose a question. The question selected by the students was about "How can bullying be prevented?" The instructor asked the students to answer the question and then write paragraph related to the questions. In addition, to analyze participants's written work a vocabulary rubric was designed to assess their work.

What is more, the instructor applied the process approach to do the task. It is a positive method which enabled both teacher and students to interact more meaningfully, the participants from both institutions should have gone through the writing processes of planning the task, drafting, editing, and present the final task. The analysis shows that the student could develop a good paragraph on how bullying can be prevented. Harmer (2007) mentions that the process of writing involves planning what the learners are going to write, drafting it, reviewing and editing what they have written and the last task production.

On top of that, the public high school students made frequent errors of vocabulary in their paragraphs and the participants demonstrated little knowledge of vocabulary in English. The results indicate that (28%) of students lacked sufficient vocabulary to put their ideas into a paragraph, (36%) of the sentences in the paragraph were not clear to read, and the meaning was difficult to understand. However, (31%) of students from the private institution used adequate words in the writing task and they usually committed errors of usage of proper vocabulary in the paragraph. The majority of the writing samples, some (33%) were easy to understand by the reader. Both institutions have a different knowledge of vocabulary, the students of public institution need to learn more vocabulary to write an effective paragraph, and the private institutions students there is no problem to write an efficient paragraph.

With respect to the use of inadequate approach to teach writing skill by part of the teacher, according to the result of questionnaire (54%) of the students from public institution affirm, that their teacher applies the product approach, and the teacher claims that she does not use any specific method to teach writing skill. The instructor applied the process approach to realize the task of writing skill, and (36%) of students could finish the task activity without any problem, and could notice the process approach is an effective method for developing writing skill.

In comparison, (36%) of students from the private institution do not have many problems concerning the process approach, the approach helped them in developing an effective paragraph where they could use in planning, drafting, editing and writing a final draft.

According to Harmer (2007) students need to be encouraged to follow the four writing steps even if this may take sometime to do. Doing this will help improve their writing skills both for academic purposes and later for personal purpose in the future.

In conclusion, the process approach is an effective method to teach students to develop their writing skill in the class, which the learners of the private high school could do writing task without any problem, but the learners of public institution committed a lot of mistakes in their paragraphs in the use of process approach for writing in English as EFL.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research show that factors that produce difficulties in the production of writing skill in both institutions are; grammar and vocabulary, lack of practicing writing skills, insufficient time for practicing writing skill, language transfer errors and limited approach to teach writing in EFL.

The most frequent mistakes that cause difficulties in production of writing skill in the public high school are: lack of inadequate grammar knowledge and vocabulary, the absence of practicing writing skill, lack of time, language transfer errors and the lack of proper teaching approach for writing skill in EFL. However, the most common factors in private institution are only two the transfer of language from L1 to L2 and the absence of correct use of grammar, because most of students attend special English learning academies, and the teacher uses adequate time to teach and practice writing skills, and uses the product approach for developing writing skill in her students.

Grammar and vocabulary are factors that affect negatively the production of writing skills in both institutions. The finding indicates that the majority of students from the public institution often made mistakes in grammar when writing a passage of descriptive writing. Additionally, the sentences of the paragraphs do not contain the correct grammatical structure, the majority of the sentences are not clear to understand and the grammar limitation also affect the ability of using language for most of students. In contrast, the private institution participants have a lot of knowledge of grammar rules and they commit few grammatical errors and write good paragraphs, which are easy to understand.

Little practice of writing is another cause for lower proficiency for students from the public institution in writing paragraphs. The outcomes from the paragraphs show that the participants do not practise writing skills in their homes, which is reflected in the narrative writing because they cannot redact a satisfactory story of Little Red Riding Hood, whereas the learners from the private institution could write effective stories and the result proves that they practice writing skills outside the class.

Language transfer is a negative and influential factor of the participants from both institutions. The participants of both institutions use their mother tongue before writing in English, which blocks their mental process and the majority of them made many grammar errors in English.

The lack of appropriate approach by part of the instructor is a factor that produces difficulty in the production of writing skill of students from the public instituion, whereas students from the private institution answers show that they are able to write in EFL lessons. However, the finding of writing samples reveals that the use of process approach helps the learners from public institution write good paragraphs through interacion with the teacher, and it also helps the students from private institutions write effective paragrahs and enhance their writing skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Grammar rules must be taught to the students deeply, within a real context and related to real life situations, before asking them to write anything.

In addition, the teacher must apply the inductive and deductive approaches so that the students understand and avoid committing grammar errors when writing.

Writing effectively is a skill that needs a continuous practice. The teachers should motivate students to write a story, maintain a personal diary and chat in writing in order to enhance and practicing writing skills inside and outside the class.

In order to devote adequate time in writing skill, it is recommended that students write in class 40 minutes in order to develop and improve writing their skills, because they have two periods of 45 minutes and the teacher may use extra material like short videos, online resources in order to facilitate students understanding and have more time to finish their writing task.

With regard to transfer from L1 to L2, it is suggested that the teacher should introduce their students to contrastive analysis, so that the students know the difference and similarities between the Spanish and English languages.

Moreover, the teachers should apply peer correction strategy in class from L1 to L2 writing. The students may feel more comfortable about discussing their work with their classmates than with the teacher.

Regarding approach to writing skill, it is necessary that the teachers apply the process writing approach in order to facilitate the development of the writing skill and reduce anxiety in students. The learners should follow steps of the process writing approach like drafting, revising, editing and publishing with the purpose of interacting with the instructor and developing writing in English.

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ANNEXES

Annexe 1



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

Teacher's Questionnaire

The objective of this questionnaire is to identify and analyze some factors that hinder students' achievement in writing skill.

Educational Institution:

Date Year:

1: Indicate which of the following four skills is the most difficult for students to learn?

a-Listening () b-Speaking ()

c-Reading () d-Writing ()

2. What is the grammar level of students of second year?

A. A1 ()

B. A2 ()

C. B1 ()

D. B2 ()

3. In the writing classroom, do you find occasions where you might focus on language structure/grammar?

Yes ()

No ()

4. Difficulties in grammar are likely to cause students the biggest problem when writing?

Yes ()

No ()

5. Which methods do you apply for teaching writing skill?

- a. Process method ()
- b. Product method ()
- c. Another method specify _____

6. Do your students find difficulties when writing in English?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

If Yes, are these difficulties due to:

- a. () teacher
- b. () learner
- c. () Syllabus
- d. () lack of reading
- e. () lack of background knowledge in the subject
- f. () Lack of practice/time
- g. () Others, please specify _____

7. Do you encourage your students to write in English at home?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

If yes, do they write about?

- a. () write about daily routine diary
- b. () write a email to their fiend
- c. () write their own stories tales
- d. () write poems
- e. () A letter their friend
- f. other specify: _____

8. At which of the following levels do your students have difficulties?

A. sentence ()

b. paragraph ()

c. essay ()

d. other please

specify _____

9. What correction techniques are likely to improve your student's level writing?

Over correction ()

Selective correction ()

10. What do you think about the time dedicated to teaching writing skill?

A. It is too long ()

B. It is too short ()

C. It is enough for practicing writing skill ()

11. What strategies do you use to teach writing skills?

Instant writing _____

Collaborative writing _____

Poetry _____

Or another specify

12. What strategies have you used to teach vocabulary in order to develop writing skill?

a. Paraphrasing ()

b. Taking Notes ()

c. Verbal repetition ()

d. Bilingual Dictionary

Other

idea _____

13. Do your student use the first language for writing in English?

Yes _____

No _____

Anexxe 2



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

Cuestionario del Estudiante

El objetivo de este cuestionario es identificar y analizar algunos factores que obstaculizan el logro de los estudiantes en habilidades de escritura.

Institución educativa:

Fecha:

Año:

1. ¿Indique cuál de las cuatro habilidades es la más difícil de aprender?

Listening ()

Speaking ()

Reading ()

Writing ()

2. ¿Cómo usted evaluaría su conocimiento general de la gramática del Inglés?

Alto ()

Medio ()

Bajo()

3. ¿ Su profesor de Inglés enseña las reglas gramaticales antes de que usted empiece a escribir?

Si ()

No ()

4. ¿ Usted comete errores gramaticales cuando escribe en Inglés?

Si () No ()

5. ¿ Que actividades hace en su clases para escribir en Ingles?

a. Escribo rápidamente sobre un tema de cinco a diez minutos, sin preocuparme por el lenguaje correcto o la puntuación. ()

b. Yo trabajo en grupo y comparto mi idea antes de escribir. ()

c. Escribo una carta formal en clase ()

d. Leo y estudio sobre algún tema y luego escribo un tema similar ().

6. ¿ Usted tiene alguna dificultad cuando escribe en Ingles?

Si () No ()

Si la respuesta es Si estas dificultad es dividido a :

a. () Estudiantes

b. () Profesor

c. () Falta de motivación en escribir

d. () Falta de ejercicios en escribir

f. () Falta de un apropiado método para enseñar a escribir

G. ()transferencia del idioma (español/ ingles)

I. ()Otro, especifique

7. ¿Usted practica escritura en ingles fuera de clase?

Si () No ()

Si su respuesta es SI ¿De que forma practica la escritura en Ingles?

SI la respuesta es NO explique ¿por que no le gusta escribir?

8. ¿En cual de las tres opciones usted tiene dificultad en escribir en Ingles?

Oración () Párrafos () Ensayo ()

9. ¿ Usted esta satisfecho con las correcciones de su profesor en sus trabajos escrito?

Si () No ()

10. ¿ Cuanto tiempo usted dedica a escribir en su clase?

- a. escribe solo 10 minutos ()
- b. escribe solo 15 minutos ()
- c. escribe solo 20 minutos ()
- d. escribe solo 30 minutos ()
- e. nada ()

11. ¿Qué actividades usted realiza en clase para desarrollar la habilidad de escribir?

- a. Dictado ()
- b. describir imágenes ()
- c. escribir poema ()
- d. cartas ()
- e. párrafos ()
- f. ensayo ()

12. ¿Cómo aprende vocabulario para mejorar su escritura?

- a. () Yo uso un diccionario bilingüe para descubrir el significado del nuevo vocabulario.
- b. () Repito las palabras nuevas.
- c. () Le pido a mi maestro el significado de palabras nuevas.
- d. () Yo anota en mi cuaderno las nuevas palabras que yo deseo aprender.

13.¿Cuándo se le permite usar el español en la clase, le ayuda con su escritura en Inglés?

Si ()

No ()

Anexxe 3

Observation Sheet

Name Observer: Ector Pupiales

Use this form for every class observed.

| | |
|---|---------|
| Date of the observation: | |
| Teacher's name: | |
| Grade: | 10 year |
| Topic of the lesson: | |
| What the teacher was trying to achieve? Objective focus on writing activity: | |
| Methods the teacher used in the writing activity | - |
| Do students practice writing skill when tasks are given by their teachers? | |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| Does teacher's activity in the classroom encourage students to write in EFL? | |
| Are the students participating in all writing activities provided by their teacher? | |
| Is the time appropriate for developing writing activity? | |
| Do students have difficulties when writing in English? | |
| Do students transfer when writing in target language? | |
| Does the teacher uses the L1 when teach L2? | |
| Does teacher teach grammar rules related to writing activity, focused on story: past simple and adverbs and describing adjective so on, before asking students to write in | |

| | |
|--|--|
| target language? | |
| Does the teacher presents particularly vocabulary before asking to write in English? | |

THANKS!!!!