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Ecuadorian public high school students' errors in EFL writing skill

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to God and the Virgen de El Cisne because of having helped me to achieve this new goal in my life. Also, this research is dedicated to my mother Gloria Troya, my sister Diana, my brothers, Alonso, Gonzalo. They have supported me unconditionally since I was born. Moreover, I thank to the nature because it is very important for me and it makes me stronger every day not to give up.

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**Abstract**

This study is focused on the analysis of errors that Ecuadorian public high school students make when writing. The purpose of this research is to identify and to analyze which error has the highest percentage in each analyzed variable, which is the most frequent error in the students´ writing texts, and how the students and teachers perceive these errors in EFL writing. The study was carried out in a town located in the city of Loja, Ecuador, in a high school in Cariamanga in which 56 students and 5 teachers from second year senior high school participated. The methods used in this research were quantitative and qualitative. The results of this study indicated that the most frequent errors in each variable were *vocabulary*, *irrelevant sentences*, and *lack of punctuation*. In this study, it was noticed that teachers do not highlight the importance of the elements of the writing in class; therefore, it is necessary to use some strategies and techniques that help the students to overcome these kinds of errors when writing.

Key words: errors in EFL writing, most frequent error, "Cariamanga" high school.

**Resumen**

Este estudio está enfocado en analizar los errores de escritura que los estudiantes de colegios públicos del Ecuador tienen en el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. El propósito de esta investigación es identificar y analizar cuál es el error que tiene mayor porcentaje en cada variable, también analizar cuál es el error más frecuente en todas las variables, y como los estudiantes y profesores perciben esos errores. El estudio fue llevado a cabo en un colegio ubicado en la ciudad de Cariamanga. Para lograr este objetivo participaron 56 estudiantes y 5 profesores de segundo año de bachillerato. Los métodos usados en esta investigación fueron el cuantitativo y cualitativo. Los resultados indicaron que los errores más frecuentes en cada variable fueron vocabulario, oraciones irrelevantes, y carencia de puntuación. En conclusión se pudo percibir que los profesores no destacan la importancia de los elementos de la escritura en la clase; por lo tanto es necesario usar algunas estrategias y técnicas que ayuden a los estudiantes a superar esos tipos de errores cuando escriben.

Palabras clave: errores en la escritura EFL, el error más frecuente, Colegio “Cariamanga”

## Introduction

Writing is a fundamental tool to communicate our thoughts, ideas, and points of view to other people. Some researchers say that writing is a complex skill that requires a great quantity of elements such as, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical items to be understood by the reader without any problem.

Additionally, in order for writing to be understood by the reader, it needs to have coherence and cohesion. Harmer (2015) states that coherence is when a text has a logical order from beginning to the end; that is, the ideas, opinions, and parts of the written text are accurately coordinated; on the other hand, Ur (2012) argues that in cohesion, the sentences , paragraphs and phrases are associated each other.

Although these elements are carried out in some written texts, these are not always correctly applied or taken into account by the learners or students of another language; as a result, their written texts have many errors in the form of the language, content, and mechanical which are the principal elements for a good writing. For these reasons, this present study is based on analyzing the errors that Ecuadorian public high school students commit when writing an English text. The purpose of this research is to find the answer to these three questions: which error has the highest percentage in each variable? Which is the most frequent error in the students´ written texts?, and how do students and teachers perceive errors in EFL writing?

Some researchers have conducted previous studies with respect to the errors that the students make in the English classes, some of the most important are the following.

Khansir, Ahrami and Hajivandi (2013) developed a study whose purpose was to examine the errors of a paragraph writing such as topic sentence, supporting sentences, supporting details, and closing sentence in Iranian learners of English at under-graduate level in Bushehr University

of Medical Sciences and Health Services. The results of this study concluded that the Iranian foreign language students were not aware of the rules of paragraph writing of English; that is to say, the students committed more errors of paragraph writing in pre-test than in their post- test.

Another study was conducted by Rattanadilok (2015) whose purpose was to explore the major sources of errors and types of errors occurred in the writing of EFL in Thai university students. The results of this study concluded that the students had grammatical difficulties in writing, and that the most frequent types of errors were translated words from Thai, word choice, verb tense, preposition, and comma.

A third study was done by Faisal, Muly, and Syamsul (2016) the purpose of this study was to find the most serious errors produced by students in a junior high school in Indonesia. The errors were classified in two categories: surface strategy taxonomy (errors are classified in categories which include omission, misformation, misordering) and linguistic category taxonomy errors (errors are classified into grammatical categories such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, comparison, etc). The results of this research showed that the most frequent error was word selection in the surface strategy taxonomy category, and in the linguistic category taxonomy the most frequent errors were articles, non-finite verbs, verb tenses, plurality, and prepositions.

This study will benefit both teachers and students of second year of senior high school in Cariamanga. This research will also benefit English teachers of other high schools, since they can consider the analysis and the results obtained here to face common mistakes their students will make when writing an English paragraph and take the corresponding corrections.

## Chapter I: Literature Review

Many studies have been done regarding writing and its aspects; in this opportunity our attention is going to be focused on some of them: writing (definition, importance, the writing process), coherence -cohesion and unity, elements of writing (topic sentence, supporting sentences, transition words, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar in EFL writing), errors in EFL writing (causes / types), and errors in the EFL writing skill. Printed books, electronic books, journals, scientific papers were useful to research for some information related to these topics.

### Writing Skill.

#### Definition.

Writing is a productive skill that has been shown to improve academic achievement dramatically. To write about something is to comprehend it, and so writing is a cognitively demanding skill that requires high levels of understanding and knowledge. (Carrillo, 2011, p.103)

According to Hedge (2014) writing is a process to develop a text which involves a sequence of activities such as generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading, revising and editing. Aditionally, she states that this process is neither easy nor spontaneous in learners of another language.

However, Petelin (2016) refers to this skill as the writing-thinking-learning connection that is, the process in which thinking and learning take place in the course of the writing where grammar, syntax, mechanical, and genre conventions result in a communicative product.

#### Importance.

According to Pak-tao Ng (2008), writing is fundamental because it promotes the learning and it demostrates the things that the learner has learned. He also states that writing is important

because it raises the thinking, organization, and skills to generate ideas in the writer and deepen his/her understanding.

**The written process.**

The written process is another important point because it involves developing a written paper through a series of steps.

Gastel and Day (2016) state four steps in the writing process: 1) pre-writing, in which the writer collects replies of important papers in which he or she plans to write; 2) drafting, here the writer writes whatever of an article no matters whether the principal phases go first or not; 3) revising, the writer revises the writing until it is correct, and 4) showing it to others, with the purpose that other people can detect problems in the writer´s paper.

Furthemore, Herell and Jordan (2016) highlight some steps in the writing process: First, prewriting, in which students organize and plan ideas to write. Next, drafting in which the students write a draft taking into account the prewriting. Then, conferring, the students read the draft to their teachers to receive feedback and advice. After that, revising, the students should take into consideration the advice to make changes to their written piece. Lastly, editing, in which the students should correct the punctuation and spelling. Finally, publishing, the teacher presents the students´ written texts.

**Coherence , cohesion, and unity.**

These elements are indispensable in the writing skill. The next lines mention the definitions of some authors.

Ur (2012) states that coherence is the “macro” where all parts of a text are linked to set a better sense, and cohesion is the “micro” which the sentences, paragraphs, and phrases are totally combined with each other.

Similarly, Harmer (2015) highlights that coherence is when a text has logical order, that is, it is compressible from beginning to end, the ideas, parts of a written piece, and opinions are well fitted. He also states two kinds of cohesion: lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion. The first implies to use words to connect a good topic while the second one involves using pronouns, adjectives, nouns, articles, verbs, between others devices to determine the same purpose than lexical cohesion.

Mey, Meyer, Rys and Sebranek (2015) argue that in coherence every sentence has to be connected within a paragraph. A paragraph is coherent when all the sentences are linked one another through repetitions and transitions. They also argue that to achieve coherence it is necessary to use pronouns, parallelism, phrases, and synonyms to relate ideas adequately.

Bailey (2011) states that cohesion involves using reference words and conjuntions. The reference words (their, he, those, my, this, etc.) help the writer to link ideas. The conjunction words (but, and, then, etc.) help the writer to link one sentence to the other one. Also, in this regard, Marsen (2013), says that in cohesion all parts of a text are logically coordinated to be understable from one point to another.

According to Mc Donald, Salomone, Gutierrez, and Japtok (2017), unity is when a text is united with another one, in this case all the examples, details, reasons, issues have to be thoroughly allied to carry out a unified paper. Moreover, Soles (2010) states that unity is transcendental in a paragraph because all the sentences that conform it should be totally linked with the topic sentence, but if there is no unity within the topic sentence, the paragraph will not have sense.

**Elements of writing**.

**Topic sentence.**

According to Folse, Solomon, and Clabeaux (2015) the topic sentence helps the reader to understand the thoughts or points of view that the writer is expressing in the text. It is the most essential sentence of the paragraph because it constitutes the summary of it. The topic sentence has two fundamental parts: main subject which expresses what the paragraph is about, and the controlling idea which helps to guide the main topic.

In the same regard, Oshima and Hogue (2006) state that the topic sentence is the primordial idea within the paragraph because it tells what the paragraph is going to be about. The topic sentence helps the reader and the writer in two fundamental aspects: regarding the reader, he or she can predict what the paragraph is going to be about, and regarding the writer, he or she can highlight what is the most important information to add in the paragraph. The topic sentence has as fundamental base, a subject and one verb, giving as a result an entire sentence.

**Supporting sentences.**

Folse et al. (2015) mention that the supporting sentences are definitively the principal support for the topic sentence. They relate, explain, and give examples to hold the importance in the topic sentence. The supporting sentences answer questions such as  like Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? These questions allow the reader to know more information about the topic sentence.

Similarly, in this regard, Folse, Muchmore and Vestri (2010) hold that the supporting sentences are absolutely necessary. They are the fundamental base of the topic sentence because these have total relation with it and the controlling idea. If a paragraph does not have supporting sentences, the readers will not be able to understand the message that the writer is trying to say in the paragraph.

Oshima and Hogue (2006) mention that supporting sentences share important information about the topic sentence through examples, statistics and quotations, which give or prove more details to the topic sentence. In other words, the supporting sentences are followed by a sentence, example or idea, which are totally linked with the topic sentence.

**Transition words.**

According to Folse et al. (2015) transition words are phrases or words that show relation between sentences or ideas within a sentence. They also hold that there are two ways to use transitions words. The first sentence has to be connected with the one that comes later and it is also necessary the use of a comma to divide them, e.g., *an independent clause. + transition word, + independent clause*. While the second one is in informal writing where two sentences are totally linked within one sentence; here it is very important to use a semicolon after the first sentence to situate the transition word and it is also necessary the use of a comma after the transition word; for example, *independent clause ; + transition word, + independent clause.*

In contrast, Oshima and Hogue (2006) classify the transition words in some categories: transitions phrases, coordinators, subordinators. Transitions phrases (*in addition, on the other hand, as a result, etc*.) and conjunctive adverbs (*furthermore, thus, etc*) can be located at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of one independent clause, their principal function is to connect two independent clauses. Coordinators (*and, but, so, or, nor, for, yet)* similarly to transition phrases and conjunctive adverbs, these link two independent clauses. Subordinators (*although, while*) are used with dependent clauses which need of independent clause to make a sentence.

Zemach and Rumisek (2005) argue that transition words and phrases help to perform the relation between ideas and concepts within the paragraph. In general terms, they are used to set a

meaning more precise and coherent, between the most important transition words and phrases that relate time order are the following: *first , second ,third, next, then , after , after that, finally, the last step , before, while*.

**Punctuation.**

A text does not only need to have coherence, cohesion, and unity, but it also needs to have the correct punctuation to avoid confusion and lack of understanding in the reader.

Bailey (2011) states that through the punctuation the reader can understand the correct meaning or importance that the writer is trying to say. He has also highlighted some rules about the punctuation. In capital letters (the first word in a sentence, names of people, days and months, name of organizations, nationality words , among others important things). Apostrophes (´), are used to explain contractions and possessives. Semi-colons (;) are used to relate two phrases with the same meaning. Colons (:), are used to lists quotations. Commas, are used to separate ideas inside a paragraph or sentence. Quotations marks (“ ”) are used to highlight a word or quotation. Others, here are the hyphens (-), exclamation marks (!), question marks (?), parentheses ( ) to give additional information.

Also, Mey et al.(2015) hold some important rules where the punctuation should be present: a period, it has to be at the end of a sentence, request, mild command, indirect questions, after initial and abbreviations, and as decimal points; question mark, it is always located at the end of direct questions (not after indirect questions), after quotations that are questions, and to show uncertainty.

Similarly, in this respect, Folse et al. (2015), highlight that the period, the question mark, and the exclamation point are the most principal elements of the punctuation. The period (.) has to be placed always in the end of any sentence. The question mark (?) at the end of questions. The

exclamation point (!) it is used at the end of exclamation. In adittion, Westbrook (2014) argues that the commas are used to list adjectives and nouns with the objective that the reader can do a rest while he or she is reading a text.

**Spelling.**

In order for a text to be understood correctly, the spelling has to be adequate, in other words, the writer has to have the ability to form words with the correct order.

According to Peck and Coyle (2012) spelling refers to the use the adequate words taking into account the correct order; however, these authors mention some rules for spelling. Some of the most important are: sound -alike words, (*their and there*) *their* is belonging and *there* is a position, (*practice –practise*), practice is a noun and practise is a verb, (*were and where*) *were* is a past verb and *where* is a adverb of place; plurals, to form the plurals it is necessary to add *s* in the singulars; avoidable errors, (*it´s and its*) , *it´s* is a contraction and *its* is a possessive.

However, Gangal (2011) holds that spelling is the principal base to develop a good writing. Through spelling the words and phrases have a correct meaning and understanding to the reader and writer. Nevertheless, he argues that the poor spelling happens because there are 26 letters of the alphabet to form 44 sounds, it generally produces confusion in the learners. It is important to mention some rules by Gangal to use *v* before add *es* in nouns ending in *F*, when a word ends in *c* to use *k* after it.

**Capitalization.**

Folse et al (2015) highlight five rules of capitalization: 1.Before starting a sentence it is necessary to capitalize the first word; 2. The word *I* has to be capitalized; 3. Proper nouns such as, *people, places, or things will be capitalized*; 4. It is important to take into account the

capitalization of names of *countries, languages, geographic areas*; 5. Titles of *movies, books, pieces of art* will be also capitalized.

Moreover , Chin, Koizumi, Reid, Wray, and Yamazaki (2012) point some basic rules about capitalization such as: capitalize the proper nouns that is, *names of people, cities, and important groups among others*; is not essential capitalize *coordinators, prepositions, articles;* capitalize the *acronyms*, but do not capitalize *entire words*.

**Grammar in EFL writing.**

According to Cowan (2009) grammar studies how the words and groups of words are put into order to form sentences in a written text. Additionally, he highlights the importance of grammar in context in EFL which lies in a countless number of techniques to learn grammar instead formal methods with a series of prescribed steps that should be followed to achieve the objective.

**Errors in EFL writing (causes/types).**

To Agustin (2000) the ability to write in EFL enforces a particular change where the vocabulary is totally elemental in writing skill. She says that the causes to commit errors in EFL writing are: the distribution of letters in a syllable, double consonants, consonants cluster, repeated words, and vowels arranged in arrays which generate errors in the writing in EFL; likewise, Manchon and Matsuda (2016) state that the cross- linguistic inference (when a language influence in another) is the cause to commit errors in the writing, in grammatical , orthographic, and syntactical.

Hinkel (2012) argues that the most frequent causes to commit errors in EFL are: the first language transfer, deficient understanding of a word meaning, syntactic rules, etc. He also considers some types of errors such as uncountable nouns, form of noun irregular plural forms,

quantifiers, subject noun+prepositional phrase and verb agreement. Also, Shermis and Burstein (2013) mention through a system called "Pacific Metric´s CRASE" (used to identify grammatical errors), that the most general errors are: subject-verb agreement, abbreviations, capitalization, possessives, punctuation , fragments , and homophones.

Paquot (2012) states some types of errors that EFL learners make while they are writing which are: overuse adjective +noun sequences with nuclear adjectives, overuse adverb+ adjective, lexico-grammatical errors, the use of non-native –like sequences, misuse of the preposition *of* instead of *for*, the use of the preposition *about* after the abstract noun *account* among others.

Moreover, Al-Mahrooqi, Singh and Roscoe (2015) highlight two types of errors caused by Arabic language in Omani students which are interlingual and intralingual errors. In interlingual errors, the mother tongue obstructs the patterns to a second language writing; for example, the Omani students make syntactical errors because there are different rules to the Arabic such as, *omission of verb to be and have* where the students develop sentences without cupula, *wrong word order* where the students place the nouns before the adjectives in sentences, *no perfect tense in sentences* the students only use past simple in sentences, *use of articles* the students do not use correctly the article, *prepositional errors* here the students do not know what preposition to use to develop sentences, and they use the Arabic preposition which are literal translations. However, the intralingual errors occur in the target language; for example, *incomplete application of rules* here the learners use direct questions instead indirect questions because the lack of complex structures, *false concepts hypothesized* where *is* and *was* are used in present y past form, and in *communication strategies* the students can not communicate their ideas correctly.

Finally, a research of some studies related to errors in writing has been done. Six relevant studies that summarize the main points regarding "Errors in EFL writing skill" are going to be analyzed below. They include information about the purpose, the method used, the instruments and the findings and results obtained from each study.

**Errors in the EFL writing skill.**

Khansir and Shahhoseiny (2013) developed a study in Iranian pre-university whose purpose was to analyze the writing errors in *articles, tense, and active and passive voice*. They used two processes which were *data collection and data analysis*. In one hand, the *collection of the data* was based on the objectives which were: to examine the types of errors in the target language, to compare the types of errors (in tense, articles, and active and passive voice), and suggest remedial measures to overcome the errors. The participants were 100 students between men and women in three pre-university schools (Doctor Ali Shariati High School, Omm Abiha High School, Hejab High school) in Bushehr city, Iran, the instruments used in the study were three: a general English proficiency test (composed of 50 multiple choice vocabulary-grammar-and reading) to evaluate the skill of English in the participants, a background questionnaire (to obtain information about parents and language attitude of the students), and grammatical judgment test to measure the grammatical structure such as tenses, articles , and active and passive voice. These were applied in the following order: development of the questionnaire which was created by the authors of this research, administration of the proficiency test which was applied to the Iranian pre-university student, development of the grammaticality judgment test which was based on grammatical books. On the other hand, the *data analysis* was based in the tests mentioned above and classified in the following way: classification of errors (for example, whether it is an error of simple past tense is used instead of passive present perfect

tense), comparison of errors, and suggestion of remedial measures (the objective was to help the students to improve the language in Iranian EFL students). As a result of this research there were 1755 errors in relation to the grammar that is, the Iranian EFL students committed 669 errors in the omission of the definite *article "the"* being it the most common, the other error was in the *tense* category 580 errors where *simple present* tense was used instead of *present continuous sentence*, and the last regarding the use of the active and passive voice there were 506 errors where the *simple past tense* was used instead of *passive simple past tense*. Finally, the authors state that the omission of the article *"the"* was the most frequent error committed by the Iranian students in EFL, and the minimum error was in active and passive voice. Therefore, the errors in the Iranian students were systematics, and these errors can be used by the teacher to help the students to improve the English foreign language.

By the same token, Khansir, Ahrami and Hajivandi (2013) developed a study in Iranian learners of English at under-graduate level at the Bushehr University of Medical Sciences and Health Services whose purpose was to analyze the errors in the writing of a paragraph considering topic sentence, supporting sentences, supporting details, and closing sentence. They used two processes which were *data collection* and *data analysis*. *The collection of the data* was based on the objectives which were: to examine types of errors in the target language, the types of errors in paragraph writing, and suggest remedial measure to overcome the committing of errors. The participants were 90 students between 19 and 20 years in the Bushehr University of Medical Sciences and Health Services. The instruments used in the study were three: a general English proficiency test (composed of 50 multiple choice vocabulary-grammar-and reading) to evaluate the ability of English in the participants, a background questionnaire (to get the age, gender in the students), and pre-test and post-test of paragraph writing to measure the knowledge

of the Iranian students in paragraph writing. These were carried out in the following way: development of the questionnaire which was created by the authors of this research, administration of the proficiency test which was applied to the students from Bushehr University of Medical, development of the paragraph writing test which was based in scientific books. In relation to the *data analysis* it showed that there were 290 errors in the paragraph writing and these were classified into pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test there were 209 errors done by the students which were the most common ones , these were supporting details 63 errors, closing sentence 54 errors, absence of the topic sentence 47 errors, and the last most frequent error was the absence of supporting sentences 45 errors . In the post-test there were 81 errors done by the students which were the least common ones, these were supporting details 28 errors, closing sentence 22 errors, absence of the topic sentence 15 errors, and supporting sentence 16 errors. Finally, the Iranian students of EFL did not show knowledge about how a paragraph should be structured; similarly to the previous study, the errors in this case were systematic. Therefore, the teacher must use techniques, remedial material, strategies, and activities to write paragraphs correctly and achieve the desired learning.

Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2012) developed a study in Thai learners in EFL with the purpose to analyze the errors that the learners make because of the mother language interference (Thai language L1) in three different genres such as narration, description, and comparison/contrast. The subjects of the study were 40 participants of second year English major students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Thepsatri Rajabhat University, Thailand. The processes used in this study were: error analysis (EA) for first language (L1) interference identification which was used to detect that the first language interfered in the learning of a second language in the genres mentioned above, procedure of data collection which

the learners had to write three paragraphs with the genres of narration, description and comparison/contrast, and data analysis which were thoroughly analyzed through the EA (error analysis) and for experts in L1 interference categories. According to the analysis of 120 paragraphs in the three genres 16 L1 interference categories were found: verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, article, preposition, modal/auxiliary, singular/plural form, fragment, verb form, pronoun, run-on sentence, infinitive/gerund, transition, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, and comparison structure. Referring to narrative writing the *verb tense* was the most frequent error made by the learners, and *comparison structure* was the least frequent error in this topic. In relation to descriptive writing *article, sentence structure, word choice, singular /plural, and subject- verb agreement* were the most frequent errors, and similarly to narrative writing *comparison structure* was the least frequent error. Finally, in comparison /contrast writing *singular/plural* was the most frequent error, and the *verb tense* was the lowest error in this topic; therefore, the errors varied in every genre and the results of this study can be useful to the teaching and learning of English writing in the Thai context.

Besides, Rattanadilok (2015) did a study in Thai university students whose purpose was to analyze the source of errors and types of errors in the writing of EFL students. For this study two processes were carried out the *sampling* and *methodology*, in sampling, the participants were native speakers of Thai from second and third year between 18 and 22 years, the place of study was a public university in Songkhla, Thailand, regarding to the methodology 40 essays were applied in this study that is, 40 participants had to write a narrative paragraph of 300 words without use dictionaries. After that, the errors were analyzed by the researcher and two important experts in this topic, the results determined 1310 errors derived of two principal sources such as , interlingual and intralingual, these errors were classified in twenty –two types : wrong verb tense;

wrong verb form; pronouns (omission, addition or wrong choice); pronouns: inappropriate use; prepositions (omission, addition or wrong choice); articles; nouns; adjective (position); adjective (comparison); conjunctions; infinitive and gerund; subject-verb agreement; sentence fragment; translated word from Thai; word choice; confusion of sense relations; collocation; question mark; comma; full stop; capitalization; and spelling. In interlingual errors the most frequent ones were: translated word from Thai (141 errors), wrong verb tense (130 errors), prepositions (omission, addition or wrong choice 125 errors), and the most minimum error was in adjective position (8 errors). In intralingual errors the most frequent ones were: word choice (131 errors), wrong verb form (90 errors), and the most minimum error was in adjective comparison (5 errors). Therefore, the most quantity of errors was present in interlingual source (influence of the first language to another language). Finally, the author enhances that the learners had grammatical difficulties in the writing because of the influence of the first language Thai.

Another study was developed by Cabrera, Gonzalez, Ochoa, Quiñonez, Castillo, Solano, Jaramillo and Arias (2014) in some Ecuadorian senior publics and privates high schools in Loja city, whose purpose was to investigate and to analyze how the mother language (spanish) influences in the writing skill of EFL. In this study, 351 students of second year of senior from public and private high school in Loja city, and 42 teachers of the same institutions participated. A questionnaire with 11 questions about background English language, a written test where the students had to write a narrative paragraph about their childhood, and a teacher´s questionnaire to get quantitative information (methods, techniques, aspects of writing skill, the interference of the mother language among others) were used. As soon as the information was collected, the data were tabulated and analyzed using the quantitative and qualitative methods. The students and teachers´questionnaires of English were tabulated in excel tables; the analysis of the content was

done considering the data obtained about the semantic, syntactic, and morphological features. Thus, regarding the quantitative analysis the results highlighted that *grammar and vocabulary* were the principal errors that the learners made because of the interference of their mother tongue; while in the qualitative analysis the most frequent errors were in (misuse of verbs , omission of personal and object pronouns , misuse of prepositions , overuse of articles , incorrect word order , and misuse of articles), and the lowest errors were in omission of prepositions, false cognates, omission of articles, the misuse of personal and object pronouns, invented words , and poor noun concordance. As a result, they concluded that the first language interferes in the EFL writers and the teachers lack of strategies and techniques to teach English.

Finally, Faisal, Mulya, and Syamsul (2016) developed a study in a junior high school in Indonesia. The purpose of this study was to find the most frequent errors that the students commit. This study was based on the recollection of data where 19 students participated of second year at a middle between 14 years of age. They had to write an essay of 150 words about their unforgettable experience. Once the process ended, the researchers analyzed the errors considering the following steps: identifying, describing, explaining and evaluating. After that, the errors were classified and categorized in tables to set the la frequency and percentage. Then the errors were classified in two categories: surface strategy taxonomy errors (errors are classified in categories which include omission, misformation, misordering) and linguistic category taxonomy errors (errors are classified into grammatical categories such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, comparison, etc). The results showed 368 errors distributed in the following way, taking into account the surface strategy taxonomy: 259 errors were founded in mis-selection, 53 errors in omission (this type of error the verbs, preposition, articles are omitted), 39 errors in addition (the phrases of sentences are omitted to add incorrect phrases), 17 errors in mis-ordering, it was the

lowest error made by the students. Regarding the linguistic category taxonomy the errors were in word forms, articles, nonfinite verbs, verbs tenses, plurals, and prepositions. Finally, the authors hold that making errors was unavoidable for EFL learners; therefore, the teachers can take into account the teaching and learning based on those errors to encourage to students to increase their self-confidence and this way making students able to self-correct the errors.

## Chapter II: Method

### Setting and participants

This research was carried out in a high school in Cariamanga, Province of Loja, Ecuador. The sample corresponds to 56 students and 5 teachers from second year of senior high school who were selected in aleatory form. The students´ range age was approximately from 15 to 16 years old, among them there were 25 women and 31 men.

### Procedures

The first part of this study was the compilation of information for the literature review. This information was collected from printed books, electronic books, journals, scientist studies, and reliable pages on the Internet. The topics with respect to the literature review were: writing (definition, importance, and the writing process), coherence-cohesion and unity, elements of writing (topic sentence, supporting sentences, transitions words, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar in EFL writing), errors in EFL writing (causes/ types), and errors in the EFL writing skill.

The quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain information. Three courses from second year of senior high school were selected in aleatory form to be part of this study. The instruments used for this study were a students and teachers´questionnaires, and students´pieces of writing. The students´questionnaires consisted of twelve questions about the importance of writing in EFL, the most common errors that the students commit in a written text in the grammar, content, and mechanical, and the reasons which they commit these errors. The teachers´questionnaires consisted of twelve questions focused on information about the importance of the writing; also, these questions dealt with aspects such as the frequency that they find errors in the students´written texts related to the grammar, content, mechanical, and the

causes which their students make these errors. The third instrument included a sheet of paper that students have to fill in writing a paragraph about their favorite singer. The students were asked to write the reasons and characteristics about their favorite singer to support their paragraph. They had to use 25 minutes to write the paragraph (there was a minimum word limit of 100 words and a maximum of 150 words for doing this task).

It is important to say that before starting with the study, the teachers explained their students the purpose and the objective of this research. Once that the information was collected, it was ordered considering the course and its corresponding specialty such as accountancy, computer science, agriculture  and mechanic. After that, the data were tabulated using excel tables to do the corresponding analysis.

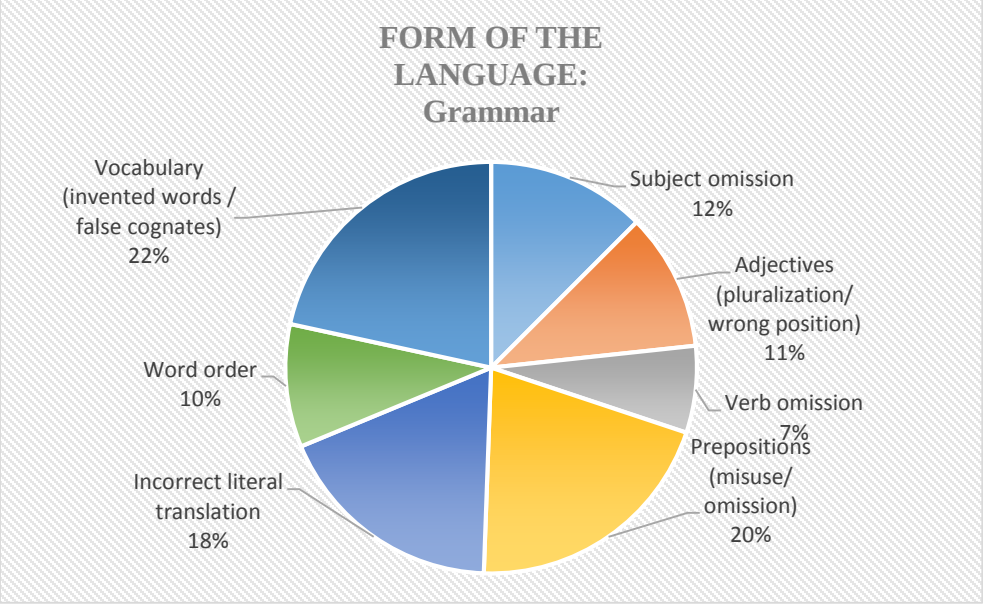
Finally, for doing the analysis of the results, it was necessary to consider the topic and the questions of research related to the types of errors that students commit in the written texts. These were analyzed using four pie charts. The first pie chart includes seven types of errors, the second one includes five types of errors, the third one includes four types of errors, and the last pie analyzes the most frequent error in the written texts. These results allowed to know the highest percentage in each variable and the most frequent error in the written texts. Also, the questionnaires applied to both teachers and students were very important to know the reasons and causes why the errors happened.

## Chapter III: Results and Discussion

### Description, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results.

This section describes, analyzes, and interprets the results obtained from the students and teachers´questionnaires, and the students´written texts regarding the errors that students from Ecuadorian public high school commit when writing an English paragraph; information about the reasons why students commit these errors is also included. The analysis shows that 356 errors were found in the 56 paragraphs the sample of the students selected wrote and which respond to the variables of *form of the language, content, and mechanical*.

**Form of the language: Grammar**




Author: Eduardo Tacuri
Source: students from second year of senior high school

Grammar plays an important role in writing because each part of a written text has to have the correct grammatical structure to be understood by the reader; besides, grammar is considered as an essential point because it helps to give coherence and cohesion to a paragraph. Although grammar is an important point in the writing process, it is not always applied correctly by the

students of another language because they have many difficulties to apply grammar rules when redacting sentences, paragraphs, and written texts being this the principal problem in public high schools. Therefore, this section highlights which error has the highest percentage in the variable *form of the language* where there are seven types of errors such as subject omission, adjectives (pluralization/ wrong), verb omission, prepositions (misuse/ omission), incorrect literal translation, word order , and vocabulary (invented words / false cognates) .

For the variable *Vocabulary (invented words / false cognates),* the results indicated that 22% of the students had problems with the vocabulary. It is important to take into consideration that this type of error has the highest percentage with respect to the others types of errors. One of the examples found was the expression: *"My favorite singer is Jose Tirony alins "Canserbero."* That example shows the lack of vocabulary in the word "*alins",* because the student has invented the word for completing the sentence about the singer. Considering the example, the correct word here would be *alias* which is used in this context to highlight another name of one person or singer. Hence, the correct expression would be: "*My favorite singer is Jose Tirony* ***alias*** *"Canserbero."*

For the variable *Preposition (misuse/ omission),* the results indicated that 20% of the students made misuse of prepositions. The following example shows an error related to this variable: "*My favorite singer is Maykel, he is of Guayaquil."* The previous example shows the misuse of the preposition *of* (is mainly used as a possessive). Considering the example the correct preposition would be *from*, which is generally used to determine a place of precedence or origin. Therefore, the correct expression would be: "*My favorite singer is Maykel, he is from Guayaquil."*

For the variable *incorrect literal translation,* the results showed that 18% of the students wrote literal sentences in their paragraphs. One of the examples found was the expression: *"My favorite singer is Cristhian Velez, he has 17 years old."* In the previous example the verb *has* should not be used to highlight the age of people because this verb is always used as a possession verb or auxiliary verb in some sentences. The correct verb would be *is,* because in general to talk about age it is necessary to use the verb to be (am, is , are ). Therefore, the correct expression would be: *"My favorite singer is Cristhian Velez, he* ***is*** *17 years old."*

For the variable *subject omission,* the results indicated that 12 % of the students wrote sentences without subject in their paragraphs. One of the examples found was the expression: *"My favorite singer is Daddy Yankee, is intelligent."* Analyzing the example, it can be observed that the expression *is intelligent* needs a subject to complete a sentence; that is, the omission of the subject or the pronoun influences grammatically in that sentence because one simple sentence must have a subject, verb, and complement (S+V+C). Considering the example, the pronoun ***he*** should be considered as a subjet of this expression. Therefore, the correct expression would be: *"My favorite singer is Daddy Yankee,* ***he*** *is intelligent."*

Another error that the students made was *adjectives (pluralization/wrong position),* the results indicated that 11% of the students had problems with the use of adjectives in their written texts. The following example shows errors related to this variable: *"Belinda is a person important in the pop music."* In the previous sentence the adjective has been used incorrectly because the student has placed the adjective (*important*) erroneously after the nouns (*person).* Aditionally, that example shows clearly first language interference because in Spanish the adjectives go after nouns and in English language the adjectives usually go right before the

nouns. Considering the English language the correct expression would be: *"Belinda is an important person in the pop genre."*

Another variable was *word order*, the results pointed out that 10% of the students committed errors with the order of words in the paragraphs. The following example was gathered from the students´ writing samples: *"Rihanna used to sing with her friends romantic music."* By analyzing the example, it can be observed that the sentence semantically conveys the correct meaning . Syntactically, it is evident that something does not fit here. In this case, the object of the verb *sing* (*with her friends)* is the part that does not fit. In this particular sentence, the verb *sing* should be followed by an indirect object (sing+romantic music) instead ( sing+with her friends). Thus, the correct example would be: *"Rihanna used to sing romantic music with her friends."*

The last variable with respect to the form of the language is *verb omission*. The results indicated that 7% of the students committed errors with this variable. It is important to take into consideration that this type of error has the least percentage with respect to the others types of errors. One of the examples found was the expression: *"My favorite singer Bryan Adams."* The previous sentence lacks of verb between *singer* and *Bryan Adams*. The verb is the heart of the sentence, without the verb the sentence does not make an action, also, if there is no verb in the sentence, the meaning of it will be altered. Therefore, taking into consideration the verb to be (am, is, are) the correct sentence would be*: "My favorite singer **is** Bryan Adams."*

The analysis of the errors in the form of the language (grammar) has been done. Now, it is fundamental to know the causes why students made these errors.

In one hand, regarding the students´ questionnaires with respect to frequency of errors that they make in the form of the language, the results indicated that 55% sometimes, 23% *frequently*,

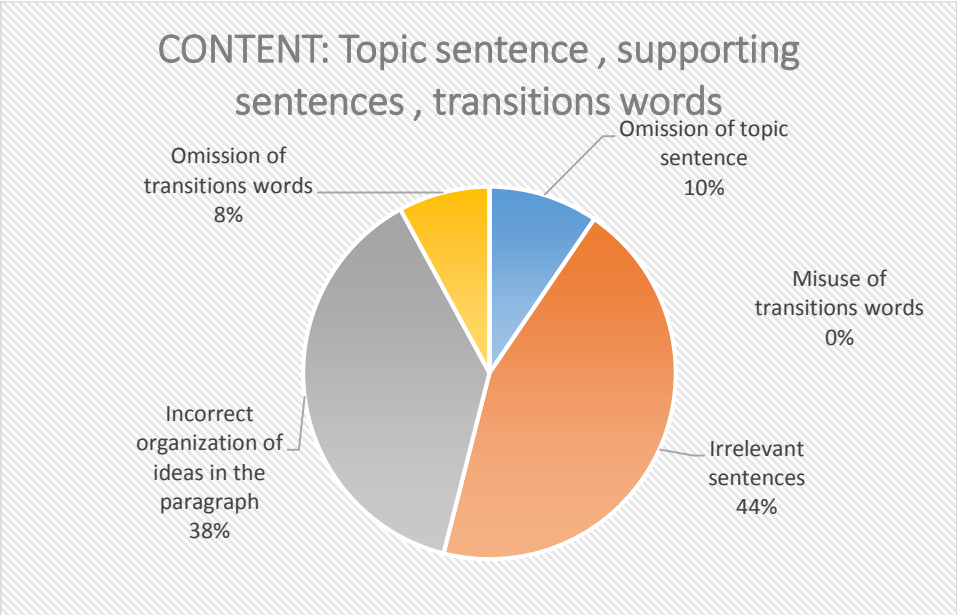
11% *always, 9% rarely,* and at last *2% never*. On the other hand, considering the teachers´ questionnaires regarding the times that they find errors in the *form of the language* the results indicated that 100% of the teachers found errors *often* in the pieces of writing of their students , always- sometimes- rarely – never were with 0%.

The previous results of the students and teachers´ questionnaires coincide. In general the students said that *sometimes* they make errors related to the form of the language; likewise, the teachers said that *often* they found these kinds of errors in the students written texts. The reasons that support this coincidence are the great quantity of errors distributed in the *form of the language* which were analysed above.

The causes which the students made these errors were: 1) the students have difficulties in applying the English grammar while writing a topic; 2) they cannot understand the explanations of their teacher in the course of the class. Additionally, the teachers do not correct errors in the pieces of writing of their students being this another cause for making grammar errors.

Finally, with respect to grammar it is necessary to mention Cowan (2009) who states that grammar studies how the words or groups of words can be used to form sentences in a specific language. Aditionally, he means that grammar in "English" refers to the formation of English sentences taking into consideration grammar context which lies in many techniques to developed this approach.

**Content: Topic sentence, supporting sentences, transition words**




Author: Eduardo Tacuri
Source: students from second year of senior high school

It is time to analyze the variable content. Content is very important in the writing because it helps the reader to understand what the text is about. Also, the content helps the writer to set, highlight, and promote ideas in the text. For the previous reasons, the content has been considered part of this analysis because in public high schools the students have many problems to use the content elements in their written texts. Thus, this section focuses on which error has the highest percentage in the variable of *content* where there are five types of errors such as omission of topic sentence, irrelevant sentences, incorrect organization of ideas in the paragraph, omission of transitions words, and misuse of transition words.

For the variable *irrelevant sentences* the results displayed that 44% of the students wrote irrelevant sentences in their paragraphs. It is important to consider that this type of error has the highest percentage with respect to the others types of errors. One of the examples found was the following expression: *"My favorite singer is Ozuna, I listen music the 2:00 o clock, did you go to*

*the city?"* In the previous examples, the expressions *I listen music the 2:00 o clock* and *did you go to the city?* have nothing to do with the singer especially the expression (*did you go to the city?)* which is a question. Thus, the correct example would be: *"My favorite singer is Ozuna, I always listen to his music at 2:00 o clock."*

For the variable *incorrect organization of ideas in the paragraph,* the results showed that 38% of the students committed errors related to this variable. This type of error can be observed in the following samples: *"My favorite artist is Paulina Rubio, she chant pop music, she is a beautiful and was born in Mexico"- "Belanova is my favorite singer , she have a dog and she love do videos , she lives in Mexico."* In the above examples, the organization of sentences is not correct because these are in disorder. Aditionally, these sentences have grammatical errors in the verbs (chant –have-love) these verbs should be in third person. A paragraph to be coherent and understandable needs to have the ideas in order to avoid confusion. Considering the context about the singer , the ideas need to be in chronological order; therefore, the correct sentences would be: "*My favorite artist is Paulina Rubio, she was born in Mexico, she chants (sings) pop music, and she is beautiful" -"Belanova is my favorite singer, she lives in Mexico, she loves to make videos, and she has a dog."*

For the variable *omission of topic sentence*, the result indicated that 10% of the students had problems with the topic sentence. One of the errors found in the paragraphs was the following expression: "*My favorite singer are you a music lover? Have you ever thought of going to a summer camp where you can meet other young people from different parts of the world and learn how to sing and dance? This is a camp that takes place every year."* The previous example lacks of a topic sentence, also, this paragraph is not related to the topic (favorite singer) because the student has written questions about an entertainment place. It is necessary to mention that

some students had the same example in different sheets, it gives as result that they have copied that piece of writing from the English book because although the paragraph is not related to the topic, it has good grammar structures. Therefore, the students must have written about their "Favorite singer" considering the most important reasons and characteristics about this person.

For the variable *omission of transition words,* the results showed that 8% of the students did not use transition words in their paragraphs. One of the examples found was the expression: *"My favorite singer is Corey Taylor. He was born in Iowa, he started his career when he had 23 years old. He sing nu metal with his band created in 2001.His inspirational person was his Grandmother because she listened to Elvis Presley. When he was younger he was addicted to heroin and cocaine. Corey Taylor is a lover to politic and he wrote a book titled "Seven since deals" published in January, 2008 and in that book he talks his life and the life of his wife."* The previous example needs at least three transitions words. Transitions words are words that help to link phrases and sentences to make the meaning clearer and coherent in a written. Also, this example has grammatical errors such as literal translation and misuse of verbs in the third person. Therefore, regarding the transitions words, and the grammatical structures here the correct example would be: *"My favorite singer is Corey Taylor. He was born in Iowa, he started his career when he* ***was*** *23 years old. He* ***sings*** *nu metal with his band created in 2001. The person who inspired him was his grandmother because she listened to Elvis Presley.* ***In fact****, when he was younger he was addicted to heroin and cocaine.* ***Besides,*** *Corey Taylor is a lover to the politic.* ***In addition,*** *he wrote a book titled "Seven since deals" published in January, 2008, and in that book he talks about his life and the life of his wife.*

Finally, the last error with respect to the content is *misuse of transitions words,* the results indicated 0% . The reasons for this percentage are the following: the paragraphs were composed

only by two or three sentences, the sentences were separated and irrelevant, and only a minor quantity of paragraphs had four or more lines. Aditionally, the major part of the paragraphs did not have a correct structure. For these reasons the analysys of results indicated 0% in *misuse of transitions words*.

It has been the analysis of the different types of errors in the *content variable*. Now, it is fundamental to know the causes why students made these errors.

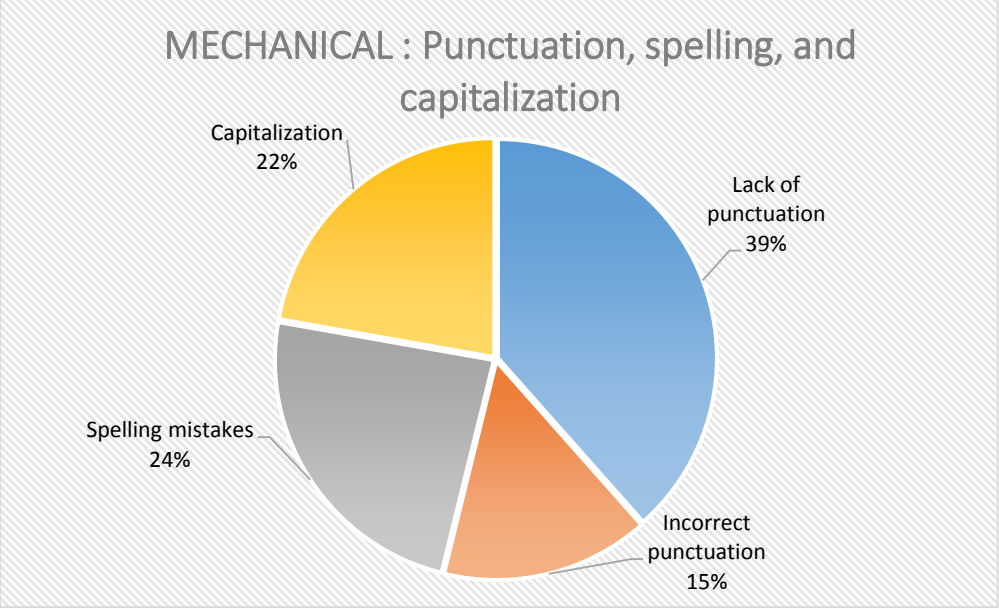
In one hand, considering the students´ questionnaires with respect to frequency of errors that they make in the *content,* the results indicated that 48% occur *sometimes,* 34% occur frequently, 11% always, *7% rarely,* and at last *0% never.* On the other hand, considering the teachers´ questionnaires with respect to the times that they find errors in the *content* the results indicated that 100% of the teachers found *often* errors in the pieces of writing of their students, always- sometimes- rarely – never showed with 0%.

The previous results of the students and teachers´ questionnaires coincide. In general the students said that *sometimes* they make errors related to *content variable;* similarly, the teachers said that *often* they found these kinds of errors in the students written texts. The reasons that support this coincidence are the great quantity of errors distributed in the *content variable.*

The causes which the students made these errors were: 1) the students said that it is very difficult to apply the content elements at the moment to write a paragraph; 2) they think that the errors of content do not influence in the correct writing. In addition, the teachers said that it is very difficult for their students to take into account the content elements in their paragraphs, and the correct use of these elements do not influence in their abilities of writing. Lastly, it is important to say that the causes between students and teachers also coincide with respect to the content errors.

Finally, to support the analysis of the *content* variable which has as items (topic sentence, supporting sentences, and transitions words) it is important to mention to Folse et al. (2015) for them, the topic sentence is the fundamental sentence because it contains the summarize of the paragraph. In relation to the supporting sentence, they argue also that these help to the readers to know more information about the topic, and transtition words connect two independent clauses in a written text.

**Mechanical: Punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.**




Author: Eduardo Tacuri
Source: students from second year of senior high school

Mechanical is an important aspect that the writer should take into account in the writing process. This aspect is transcendental and it has been considered as part of this research because it gives esthetic and coherence to the written text through the correct punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Although mechanical is important for writing correctly, it is not so easy to apply it while performing this skill, because it demands ability and knowledge on behalf of the writer. Considering the present study, this aspect is very complex for the students who are learning

English in public high schools because of the great quantity of rules and expressions that should be used. Thus, this last section analyzes which error has the highest percentage in the *mechanical* variable where there are four types of errors such as lack of punctuation, incorrect punctuation, spelling mistakes and capitalization.

For the variable *lack of punctuation*, the results showed that 39% of the students did not add punctuation in their paragraphs. This type of error has the highest percentage with respect to the others types of errors. One of the examples found was the following expression: *"My favorite singer is Thalia she is a person competitive in the music she lives in Mexico".* The previous example lacks of punctuation, it does not have period, nor commas, this situation alters totally the meaning and therefore the text will not be clearly understood by the reader. Also these examples have wrong position of adjectives in the expressions (*person competitive- person important)*, and incorrect organization of ideas . The period should be always used in sentences, paragraphs to finish an idea. The comma is used to make a pause and to separate sentences given the text coherence and sense. Considering the period and commas the correct example would be: *"My favorite singer is Thalia**,** she lives in Mexico**,** she is a competitive person in the music**.**"*

For the variable *spelling mistakes*, the results indicated that 24% of the students commited errors with this variable. In general terms, this type of error is very common because students write or omit unnecessary letters in the words, also they think that the words in Spanish should be written in the same way they are written in English or the most frequent is that they write the words in the same way they pronounce them. Some of the examples found in their paragraphs were: *"Carlos Baute is famous in the pop miusic."*-*"She is a beatiful singer."* The above examples have spelling mistakes in the nouns ( miusic-beatiful). Analyzing the first sentence the word (miusic) has been written by the student as the word is pronounced in English. The second

sentence, the adjective (beatiful) is misspelled because there is absence of a letter (u). As a result, the reader will have problems to read adequately the misspelled words. Considering the spelling, the correct sentences would be: *"Carlos Baute is famous in the pop* ***music****."- "She is a bea****u****tiful singer."*

For the variable *capitalization*, the results showed that 22% of the students made errors in capitalization. The following examples show errors about this variable:*"my favorite singer is marc anthony, he is from puerto rico."- "my favorite singer is eminem."* The previous examples show incorrect capitalization from beginning to end. Regarding the first example, the expression (my) the first letter should be in capital letter (M) because it begins a sentence; likewise, (marc anthony) should be capitalized the first letters of his name because it is a proper noun. The same situation happens with the second example in the expressions (my) and (eminem). Therefore, considering the capitalization, the correct expressions would be: *"My favorite singer is Marc Anthony, he is from Puerto Rico."- "My favorite singer is Eminem."*

The last variable with respect to the mechanical is *incorrect punctuation*, the results pointed out that 15% of the students committed errors with this variable. This type of error has the least percentage with respect to the others types of errors. Punctuation should be taken into consideration when writing, because if a sentence has incorrect punctuation, the meaning will be ambiguous and indefinite. Some of the examples found were: *"Michael Jackson is from United States?" -"My favorite singer is Jorge Moreno, he is from La Habana. Cuba."* The previous examples have incorrect punctuation in the end of the sentences (*United States?- La Habana. Cuba).* Considering the first example *"Michael Jackson is from United States?"* the question mark (?) is unnecessary in the end of the sentence, because this sign is used in questions and not as period. Analyzing the second example "*My favorite singer is Jorge Moreno, he is from La*

*Habana. Cuba."* the period **(.)** is not correct after La Habana, because to highlight the city of a country it should be separated by a comma which is not that so. Hence, the correct expressions would be: "Michael Jackson is from United States**.**"- "*My favorite singer is Jorge Moreno, he is from The Habana**,** Cuba."*

This has been the analysis of the results with respect to the third variable *mechanical*. Now, it is important to know the causes why students made these errors.

In one hand, considering the students´ questionnaires with respect to frequency of errors that they make in the *mechanical*, the results indicated that 46% *sometimes*, 23% rarely, 18% frequently, 11% always, *and 2% never*. On the other hand, considering the teachers 'surveys with respect to the times that they find errors in the *mechanical* the results indicated me that the 60% of the teachers found *always* errors in the pieces of writing of their students , and the other 40% *often*, sometimes- rarely-never showed with 0%.

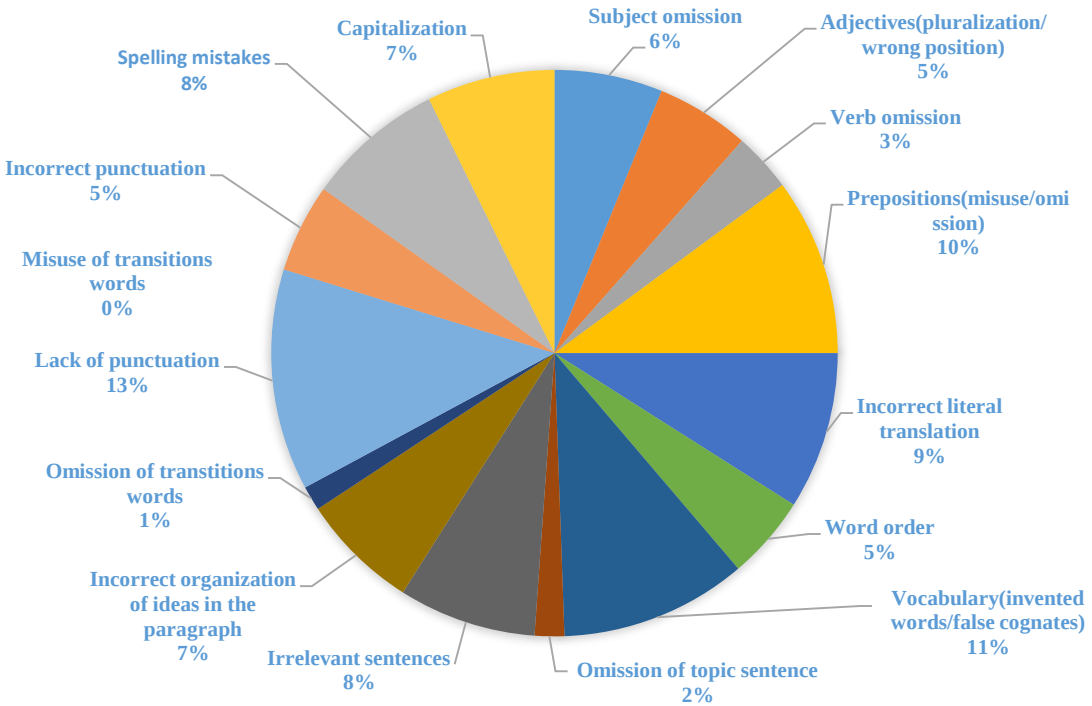
The previous results of the students and teachers´ questionnaires coincide. In general the students said that *sometimes* they make errors related to in the *mechanical variable;* similarly, the teachers said that *always* they found these kinds of errors in the students written texts. The reasons that support this coincidence are the great quantity of errors distributed in the *mechanical variable.*

According to the results of the questionnaires the causes which the students made errors were: 1) it is very difficult for them to apply the mechanical elements in their written texts; 2) their teacher does not explain nor correct the use of the signs of punctuation, capitalization , spelling in their written texts. Furthermore; the teachers said that they do not explain nor correct the punctuation, capital letters and spelling in the pieces of written of their students because they do not make writing activities related to the practice of the aforementioned elements in class.

Finally, to reinforce this analysis it is necessary to mention opinions of some authors related to the mechanical variable. According to Bailey (2011) the correct punctuation in the best way to understand the meaning that the writer is trying to say in the text. Gangal (2011) holds that spelling is fundamental in writing, through it the words and phrases have a correct meaning. Folse et al. (2015) highlight some rules in capitalization such as capitalize the first word in a sentence, the letter *I* should be capitalized, titles of books –geographic places between others should be capitalized.

After analyzing the results of the variables: *form of the language (grammar), content (topic sentence, supporting sentences, and transitions words), mechanical (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization),* it is important to know which is the most frequent error in the students´ written texts.

**GRAPH 4:**
The most frequent error in efl writing




Author: Eduardo Tacuri
Source: Students from second year of senior high school

Considering the graph number 4, the most frequent error is the students´ written text is *lack of punctuation* with 13% which belongs to the *mechanical* variable. As we can see this type of error has the highest percentage, but the difference with respect to the other types of errors is minimal. For determining the reasons about the most frequent error in the students´ written texts, it is necessary consider the students and teachers´ questionnaires respect to the mechanical variable.

Regarding the students, the reasons which they made errors were because their teacher neither explains the importance of the elements of punctuation inside of the class, and nor corrects these elements in their written texts which are very important to the correct writing; similarly, the teachers do not explain nor correct these elements in the pieces of written of their students because they do not focus on activities related to the practice of these elements in the English classes. Therefore, the reasons coincide between students and teachers with respect to most frequent error in the students´ written texts.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the errors that students from Ecuadorian public high schools make when writing .

Considering the analysis of results, the errors with major percentage in each variable were: *vocabulary (invented words / false cognates)* 22% which belongs to the variable *form of the language; irrelevant sentences* 44% which belongs to the variable *content;* and *lack of punctuation* 39% which belongs to the variable *mechanical*.

The most frequent error in the students´ written texts was *lack of punctuation* 13% which belongs to the variable *mechanical*. The main reason is because in the English classes the teachers do not encourage the students to learn these elements through activities related to the punctuation.

The students have many difficulties in applying the elements of *form of the language, content, and mechanical* because the teachers do not use writing activities related to these elements; as a result, the students cannot improve efficiently their writing skills being this a great problem in the public high schools.

The students have not received the necessary training to develop a good piece of writting because the major part of the written paragraphs were composed by one or three sentences. These paragraphs did not have the number of words (100-150) nor the characteristics about the topic; moreover, the paragraphs had many errors of grammar, content, and mechanical. It is evident that there is still a lack of activities and strategies being employed by the teachers to teach writing skill. As a result of that, the students do not make an effort for learn to writing in English.

The Ministry of Education has reduced the number of hours of English classes in public schools. This situation makes even more difficult for teachers to apply good strategies and

techniques related to the writing, and as a consequence of that, the students could not develop a good piece of writing in this research.

The teachers do not create an English environment while they are teaching writing skills. Also, the teachers do not bring to the class didactic material which is related to the practice of the elements: form of the language (grammar), content, and mechanical; consequently, the students do not develop good abilities in the writing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account the conclusions, it is very important to make some recommendations for improving the written process in the public high schools.

It would be very important that teachers motivate their students with interesting and catching writing activities such as *collaborative writing*, here the teacher can ask the students build a letter on the board, where each line is written by different students; *draw and write*, the students draw a picture about something that happened to them or something imagined, and after they write about it; *ten perfect sentences*, the teacher shows the students a picture, and the students have to write ten separate sentences about that. These activities will help the students to reinforce writing skill and avoid errors in the form of language, content, and mechanical.

In relation to the most frequent error in the students‘ written texts, the teacher should teach and explain the importance of punctuation while he is teaching a new topic. Also, the teacher should include punctuation activities when the students write a paragraph. These activities will help students to create good pieces of writing.

The teacher should focus on many techniques and strategies for the students understand their explanations about the writing. In addition the teacher must give importance to the variables: form of the language, content, and mechanical because these are fundamental for a correct writing.

The teachers should encourage their students to write as often as they can because writing is a process that demands a great quantity of time and effort for the learners. Additionally, it is recommendable that the teachers use technological reosurces for improving writing, one of these resources is wiki building, which is a website that allows students to develop writing skills effectively. These resources will help students to be more interested in learning to write correctly.

The Ministry of Education should assign more hours for the teaching and learning of English in the public high school. This will help students to learn better a second language and to be more competent in the use English. Also, it would be very important that the ministry of education trains English teachers through seminars or lectures which would help them to improve the teaching-learning process of the second language.

The teachers should create an English environment in the course of the class for their students are constantly exposed with the learning of this. Also, it would be fundamental that the teachers bring didactic material to the class, it would help the classes to be more interactive.

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# Anexo

## Annexes

**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**
**La Universidad Católica de Loja**

**MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**
**TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS**
**TRABAJO ESCRITO**

**Género: Femenino ( ) Masculino ( )**

**OBJETIVO:** Obtener información sobre el tipo de errores que se cometen en la escritura en inglés de un párrafo.

**INSTRUCCIÓN:** Escriba un párrafo sobre el tema: "My favorite singer"

**ESTRATEGIA:** El párrafo debe contener un mínimo de 100 a 150 palabras en un tiempo de 20 a 25 minutos. Incluya la información necesaria para dar a conocer cuál es su cantante favorito, las razones, y las características de este/esta.

**My favorite singer**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN**

**Annex 2**

UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA

TITULACIÓN DE INGLÉS

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Género: Masculino ( ) Femenino ( )

1. ¿Le gusta escribir en inglés?

Sí ( ) No ( )

Porqué?

_____

_____

2. ¿Considera importante aprender a escribir correctamente en inglés?
Sí ( ) No ( )

Por qué?

_____

_____

3. ¿Con qué frecuencia desarrolla Ud. actividades de escritura en inglés en el aula?
Siempre ( ) Frecuentemente ( ) A veces ( ) Rara vez ( ) Nunca ( )

4. ¿Considera que su nivel de escribir en inglés es….?
Muy bueno ( ) Bueno ( ) Regular ( ) Malo ( )
¿Por qué?

_____

_____

5. ¿Cree que los errores que se cometen al escribir inciden para que los demás comprendan el mensaje de su texto escrito?
Sí ( ) No ( )
¿Por qué?
_____

6. Cuando Ud. escribe sobre un tema nuevo ¿Aplica las correcciones que hizo su profesor en sus escritos anteriores?
Sí ( ) No ( )
¿Por qué?
_____

7. Marque con una X la frecuencia con la que Ud. comete errores gramaticales cuando escribe en inglés:

| TIPO DE ERROR | SIEMPRE | FRECUENTE MENTE | A VECES | RARA VEZ | NUNCA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GRAMATICALES (omisión de sujeto, pluralización de adjetivos, incorrecto uso u omisión de preposiciones, *traducción* incorrecta, palabras inventadas, etc.) | | | | | |

8. Enumere del 1 al 6 las razones por las que Ud. comete errores de gramática cuando escribe en Inglés? Siendo 1 la menos importante y 6 la más importante.
No se presentan actividades de escritura para aplicar los temas gramaticales del inglés aprendidos enclase. ( )
Su profesor no señala los errores gramaticales que Ud. ha comete cuando escribe en inglés. ( )
Su profesor no explica los errores gramaticales cometidos en su escrito. ( )
Considera que la gramática no es importante para escribir correctamente en inglés ( )
Le resulta difícil aplicar la gramática inglesa cuando escribe sobre un tema. ( )
Las explicaciones gramaticales de su profesor no son fáciles de comprender. ( )

Otra (especifique):
_____

9. Marque con una X la frecuencia con la que Ud. comete errores de contenido cuando escribe en Inglés:

| TIPO DE ERROR | SIEMPRE | FRECUENTE MENTE | A VECES | RARA VEZ | NUNCA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ERRORES DE CONTENIDO (Relacionados con: omisión de la oración principal, oración principal mal planteada, oraciones secundarias que no se relacionan con la oración principal, oraciones | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| mal ordenadas, oraciones mal conectadas, oraciones sin conexión entre sí.) | | | | | |

10. Enumere del 1 al 7 las razones por las que Ud. comete errores de contenido cuando escribe en Inglés? Siendo 1 la menos importante y 7 la más importante.

Su profesor de inglés no explica sobre la función de la oración principal, oraciones secundarias, organización de ideas, conexión y secuencia de ideas en el proceso de escritura ( )

No hay práctica sobre el uso de los elementos mencionados durante las actividades de escritura en la clase de inglés. ( )

Son difíciles de aplicar los elementos de contenido al momento de escribir. ( )

Olvida aplicarlos cuando escribe sobre un tema. ( )

Son elementos que tampoco los aplica cuando escribe en español ( )

Usted considera que los errores de contenido (pregunta anterior) NO influyen para que su escrito esté correctamente redactado. ( )

Su profesor no corrige este tipo de errores en su escrito. ( )

Otra (especifique):

_____

11. Marque con una X la frecuencia con la que Ud. comete errores mecánicos cuando escribe en inglés:

| TIPO DE ERROR | SIEMPRE | FRECUENTE MENTE | A VECES | RARA VEZ | NUNCA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ERRORES MECÁNICOS (relacionados con: el incorrecto uso u omisión de signos de puntuación, uso incorrecto de mayúsculas, palabras mal escritas) | | | | | |

12. Enumere del 1 al 7 las razones por las que Ud. comete errores mecánicos cuando escribe en inglés? Siendo 1 la menos importante y 7 la más importante.

Su profesor no explica la importancia del uso de signos de puntuación, mayúsculas, palabras bien escritas, etc. en la redacción de un texto en inglés. ( )

No hay práctica sobre el uso de los elementos antes mencionados en la escritura de un texto en inglés. ( )

Le resulta indiferente el uso o no de los elementos mencionados anteriormente. ( )

Son elementos que Ud. tampoco los aplica cuando escribe en español ( )

Son difíciles de aplicar estos elementos al momento de escribir en inglés. ( )

Olvida aplicarlos cuando escribe sobre un tema en inglés. ( )

Su profesor no corrige este tipo de errores en su escrito. ( )

Otra (especifique):

_____

¡Gracias por su colaboración!

**Annex 3**

**UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA**
**La Universidad Católica de Loja**
**MODALIDAD ABIERTA Y A DISTANCIA**
**TITULACIÓN DE INGLES**

# TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning your opinion about your students' errors in EFL writing skill.
The following information will only be used for academic/research purposes. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible based on the following questions:

**Gender:** Male ( ) Female ( )

**1. In your opinion, do your students like to write in English?**

Yes ( ) No ( )

**Why?**

_____
_____

**2. According to your opinion, is it important for your students to write in English accurately?**

Yes ( ) No ( )

**Why?**

_____
_____

**3. How often do you ask your students to do writing activities in class?**

Always ( ) Never ( ) Often ( ) Sometimes ( ) Rarely ( ) Never ( )

**4. Which is your students' writing level?**

Advanced ( ) Intermediate ( ) Beginner ( )

**Why?**

_____

_____

**5. Do your students write a piece of writing based on the feedback that you have included in their previous writing tasks?**

Yes ( ) No ( )

**Why?**

_____

_____

**6. Do you give feedback to your students when they make writing errors?**

Yes ( ) No ( )

**Why?**

_____

_____

**7. How often do you find grammar errors in your students' piece of writing?**

| TYPE OF ERROR | ALWAYS | OFTEN | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GRAMMAR ERRORS** (subject omission, adjectives: pluralization/ wrong position, verb omission, prepositions: misuse/ omission, incorrect literal translation, word order, vocabulary: invented words / false cognates, etc.) | | | | | |

**8. Number from 1 to 6 the causes why your students make grammar errors when they write in English. (1= the least important, 6= the most important).**

Grammar contents are not explained in writing activities ( )

You do not highlight your students' grammar errors in their piece of writing ( )

You do not include feedback in your students' writing activities ( )

Grammar is not considered by your students as an important element to write accurately ( )

Learning grammar is difficult for your students ( )

Your students do not understand your grammar explanation ( )

Others (Which one?): _____

**9. How often do you find content errors in your students' piece of writing?**

| TYPE OF ERROR | ALWAYS | OFTEN | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CONTENT ERRORS:** Omission of topic sentence, irrelevant sentences, incorrect organization of ideas in the paragraph, omission of transitions words, misuse of transitions words | | | | | |

**10. Number from 1 to 7 the causes why your students make content errors when they write in English. (1= the least important, 7= the most important).**

The concept and role of **elements** in writing such as **topic sentence, supporting sentences, organization of ideas, and use of transition words** are not explained in class. ( )

There is not any writing activity, related to the practice of the **aforementioned elements**, to do in class. ( )

It is difficult for your students to identify and include **these elements** in a paragraph. ( )

Your students forget to include these elements when they write. ( )

These **elements** are not important for your students neither in Spanish nor in English ( )

The correct use of these elements do not have any impact on the development of their writing skill. ( )

You do not highlight or correct these type of errors in your students' piece of writing. ( )

Others (Which one?):

_____

**11. How often do you find mechanical errors in your students' piece of writing?**

| TYPE OF ERROR | ALWAYS | OFTEN | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MECHANICAL ERRORS:** Lack of punctuation, Incorrect punctuation, Spelling mistakes, Capitalization | | | | | |

**12. Number from 1 to 7 the causes why your students make mechanical errors when they write in English. (1= the least important, 7= the most important).**

The importance of **elements** in writing such as **punctuation, capital letters, and spelling** is not explained in class. ( )
There is not any writing activity related to the practice of the aforementioned elements in class. ( )
The use of these elements is not important for your students when they write. ( )
These elements are not important for your students neither in Spanish nor in English ( )
It is difficult for your students to include these elements in a paragraph. ( )
Your students forget to include these elements when they write. ( )
You do not highlight or correct these type of error in your students' piece of writing. ( )

Others (Which one?): _____