

**DEVELOPING WRITING STRATEGIES  
IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

**de**

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# Subject Abstracts

## 1. Communication Strategies in English

The subject *Communication Strategies in English* was taught by Professors Dr. María Elena García Sánchez and Dr. Carmen María Bretones Callejas. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To acquire the skills and techniques in order to communicate in English in a level B2/C (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
  - b) To improve oral and written skills in both academic and professional backgrounds.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Writing Skills
    - English Grammar and Writing
    - Writing Paragraphs
    - Functions of Written English
    - Writing Essays, Reports, Letters and a Research Paper
  2. Reading Skills

- Reading Techniques: From Skimming to Scanning
  - Aim and Function of the Text
  - Understanding Meaning
  - Assessing the Text: Fact versus Opinion
3. Listening Skills: Developing Aural and Note-taking Skills
- Predicting
  - Monitoring
  - Clarifying
4. Speaking Skills
- Academic English: Discussion Skills for Tutorials & Seminars
  - Discussion Skills: Giving your Opinion, Agreeing and Disagreeing, Making Suggestions...

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

The course was divided in two main blocks: Speaking & Writing and Listening & Reading.

M<sup>a</sup> Elena García introduced us to the spheres of Speaking and Academic Writing, focusing on the main differences of the two skills and providing us the tools to make an adequate use of them. A special emphasis was put on the teaching of these two abilities in a classroom context

Carmen Bretones was in charge of the block devoted to the study of the Reading and Listening. In order to do so, it was important to analyse thoroughly the components and elements that affect each of the skills. She offered a introduction to some theoretical issues in Cognitive Science and Cognitive Linguistics and their importance for Reading and Listening.

- ASSESSMENT

The block for Speaking and Academic writing was evaluated by means of an essay, and in order to complete the assessment of the second block we had to take a test.

## 2. Britain and US Cultures and Societies

The subject *Britain and US Cultures and Societies* was taught by Professors Dr. José Ramón Ibáñez Ibáñez and Dr. Jose Francisco Fernández Sánchez. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from October 1<sup>st</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To increase concrete and specific knowledge about all the possible social and cultural aspects of these two countries: US and Great Britain.
  - b) To be able to express an opinion in a reasonable way about the most recent events in the history of Britain and the U.S.
  - c) To be able to interpret in a suitable context those recent events related to these countries.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Great Britain and the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth century.
    - Contemporary Britain: From Margaret Thatcher to David Cameron
    - Historical margins: From the Reagan Era to Barack Obama..
  2. Multicultural Britain. The American “melting pot”.
    - Multicultural Britain: Race and ethnicity
    - The American “Melting Pot”: Who shaped the US society over the last century.
  3. Domestic peculiarities: Emerging nationalities in Britain. The role of religion in America.
    - Identities and Nationalities: Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
    - The Puritan heritage in the US: the unfathomable burden of religion in Modern America.
  4. The external image of Britain and the US.
    - Mass media in Britain

- US foreign policy

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

It is essential in a Master's degree on English Studies to know the culture and society of two countries which have marked the developments of international issues in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: Great Britain and the United States. There cannot be the slightest doubt that these two countries have a great social and cultural importance around the world and although students have a general knowledge of these countries, with the study of this subject, they will see aspects in detail such as politics, education, mass media, religion, recent history, etc. A course of this type will consolidate previous knowledge and it will increase the cultural knowledge about these two countries.

- ASSESSMENT

The subject was assessed by means of an exam about the contents studied in class. Furthermore, we had to write an essay about a chosen topic from a list given by the teacher (in my case it was "The American Bible Belt"). Finally it was important to have an active participation in the classes through comments and interventions.



### **3. Oral Communication: Sociocultural, Linguistic and Psychological Factors**

The subject *Oral Communication: Sociocultural, Linguistic and Psychological factors* was taught by Professor Dr. Carmen María Bretones Callejas. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 14<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To know what is oral communication.
- b) To acquire the skills in order to communicate in different professional contexts.
- c) To acquire the necessary skills for an efficient communication in English within an intercultural professional context.

- CONTENTS

1. Oral Communication
  - Definition
  - Innovative mechanism for the development of oral skills
2. Diacronic study of the different linguistic theories and methods for the teaching of oral English.
3. Sociocultural aspects of oral communication.
  - Social sciences and the curriculum for second languages
  - Study of oral communication in social context
4. Psychological perspectives for language learning
5. Social and cognitive dimension in oral communication

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

Communication is one of the main reasons for the running of human societies. This communication is basically an interchange of messages among the individuals of that society. Human beings possess a brain structure that enables them to communicate not only in their mother tongue but also in

different languages. Sociocultural, linguistic and psychological factors of oral communication are extremely important in order to know everything what is in relation with human thought and to develop communicative abilities to reach success in professional, academic or personal spheres.

- ASSESSMENT

In order to evaluate this subject, we had to take an exam according to the contents previously studied in class.

#### 4. English as an Intercultural Vehicle: Literature and Society

The subject *English as an Intercultural Vehicle: Literature and Society* was taught by Professor Dr. Jesús Isaías Gómez López. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 14<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To focus on how literature is helpful to society.
  - b) To analyze how literary works show us various aspects from politics.
  - c) To analyze how literary works show us various aspects from economics.
  - d) To analyze how literary works show us various aspects from culture.
  - e) To give readers some knowledge of history.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Analytical strategies.
    - “Sociological Turn”.
  2. Literature, culture and the canon.
    - Introduction to the major theories, trends and critics: Harold Bloom, Umberto Eco, Jung, etc.
  3. Forces and relations of productions.
    - Different ways of approaching literary canonical texts:
      - a. Sophistication.
      - b. Manipulation.
      - c. Affection.
      - d. Psychology.
      - e. Art.
      - f. Films.
  4. From modern society to “Brave New World”.
    - The fundamentals, sources and course of our Modern Western Civilization as seen in Brave New World: Prophecy of Human Fate?

5. H. G. Wells: the principles of science fiction applied to society.
  - Literature and the latest technological and scientific discoveries through the last Twentieth century: H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*.
6. Novels into movies.
  - Cases of the most celebrated literary works turned into movies:
    - James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.
    - Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.
    - Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.
    - Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
    - H. G. Well's *The Time Machine*.
7. The aesthetics of poetry in society.
  - Poetry is present everywhere in society. Because the poetry of a period has typical subjects and favored styles, it can serve as a marker of the tastes of its era:
    - T. S. Eliot's "*The Hollow Men*".
    - W. H. Auden's "*Spain*".
    - Elizabet Bennet's.
    - Charles Bukowsky's "*The Genius of the Crowd*".
    - Aldous Huxley's "*Almeria*".

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

The skeleton of the course is that of the sociology of literature, which emphasizes an external structural approach to the systematic study of the production and consumption of literature in society. To fill out the skeleton and thereby to introduce sociology through literature, the course includes the reading of several fictional works that exemplify issues raised in the sociology of literature. In addition, students' in-class writing assignments provide the means to "test" some ideas about authors, critics, literary styles, and the consumption of literature. The analysis of these texts encourages active learning by requiring students to play out the role of the sociologist of literature.

- ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this subject was focused on two types of essay, choosing one of them:

1) The first one consisted of choosing a major character from any novel and design an outfit and accessories. Students had to write an essay on their chosen hero according to the 12 steps of Joseph Campbell's "The Hero with a Thousand Faces".

2) The second one also dealt with an essay focusing on one of these two novels: "Brave New World" (Aldous Huxley) or "1984" (George Orwell). Students had to answer the following questions: "Is it better to be free than to be happy?" and "Is the collective more important than the individual?"

## 5. Research Techniques

The subject *Research Techniques* was taught by Professors Dr. María Elena García Sánchez and Dr. Carmen María Bretones Callejas. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To acquire theoretical background about research methods
- b) To develop practical abilities in order to search for bibliographical references, supplementary materials and data recompilation
- c) To put into practice acquired knowledge about research

- CONTENTS

1. The search for knowledge.
2. Methodology.
3. Typology of research methods
4. Research techniques
5. Creation of a theoretical framework in research
6. Handling of sources.
7. Data analysis.
8. Concepts, protocols and structures of different academic text types for the elaboration of articles, reports, reviews, interviews, monographies and speeches.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This subject is closely connected with the increasing necessity of belonging to the present world of knowledge. The adequate use of information is an essential for both an academic and professional success. In order to do so, we were introduced to the different methods that can be used for research and how to analyse the obtained data.

Part of the subject was devoted to the online searching for information, working with sites such as Library of Congress (<http://catalog.loc.gov>) and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.es>).

Finally, we were introduced to the MLA style, which is an academic style guide widely used around the world that provides guidelines for writing and documentation of research in humanities, especially in English studies.

- ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this subject was based on two different tasks: Professor M<sup>a</sup> Elena García suggested an essay based on the book “Research Methods in Applied Linguistics” by Zoltán Dörnyei and Professor Carmen Bretones asked us to look for appropriate bibliographical references to be used in our Master Thesis, making use of the previously mentioned online sites and practicing with the conventions of the MLA Style.

## 6. Computer Appliances for English Teaching and Translation

The subject *Computer Appliances for English Teaching and Translation* was taught by Professor Dr. Nobel Augusto Perdú Honeyman. It was part of the compulsory common subjects of the Master degree. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from November 15<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To use a memory-translation program:
  - b) To use appropriately the program “Hot potatoes”, in order to create teaching activities
  - c) To design a personal web site with useful teaching contents to be used by potential students
  - d) To command online and electronical profits.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Hot Potatoes: operative working of the program for the design of exercises.
  2. Déjàvu: uses of the program and its memory translations.
  3. Other computer appliances for teaching and translating.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

Professionals on English studies need to make use of an increasing number of computer appliances since they are a valuable tool for both teaching and translating.

This course was divided into three great blocks. The first one, was devoted to the program Déjàvu (a computer aided translation system) and we learnt how to use it, creating and joining memory translations.

The second block was devoted to the creation of a personal webpage. The site had to include resources for teaching English to our “potential learners”, with links to practice grammar, dictionaries, listening activities... and other aspects of anglo-saxon culture and educational fields.



The third block was aimed to “Hot Potatoes”, a software program that includes five applications that can create exercises for the World Wide Web.

The applications are:

- JCloze
- JCross
- JMatch
- JMix
- JQuiz

There is also a sixth application called “The Masher” that compiles all the Hot Potatoes exercises into one unit. We were encouraged to add our personalized-Hot Potatoes exercises to our websites, achieving really positive results.

- ASSESSMENT

In order to be assessed, we had to complete three main tasks:

- a) Creation and proper use of memory translations with Déjàvu.
- b) Creation of a webpage with teaching resources.
- c) Design of five activities using the different applications of “Hot Potatoes”

## 7. Methods of Linguistic Research

The subject *Methods of Linguistic Research* was taught by Professor Dr. Jesús Gerardo Martínez Del Castillo. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from December 11<sup>th</sup> to January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To understand and possess knowledge.
  - b) To acquire the ability to consider an opinion.
  - c) To acquire the ability to work in an autonomous way.
  - d) To learning ability.
  - e) To think critically.
  - f) To acquire the ability to set out problems.
  - g) To acquire the ability to reason.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. The naive approach of the problem.
  2. The epistemological question.
  3. The appropriate conditioning of the problem.
  4. The concept of logos.
  5. The basic approach of logos.
  6. Solutions to the logos problem from linguistics.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

Linguistic research is the work of that person who wants to know about what to speak, to understand, to say and to know. It involves considering problems on what the activity of speaking is, an activity which speakers carry out in an autonomous way. The activity of speaking has three levels: universal, historical and individual. Each of these levels has different disciplines: language philosophy or general linguistics, linguistics of each language or historical linguistics and individual linguistics or text linguistics. Once we have specified

the level and the purpose, we will have our own methods to define the linguistic fact as an object of science.

- ASSESSMENT

This subject was be assessed by a summary of the first six chapters of the book written by the teacher and entitled “The language-thought relationship”. In this summary, we set out that this relationship is always present in every linguistic theory and even that this is a problem speakers have to consider. This approach has to do with the Cognitive Sciences, and the term “cognition” is an object of study.

## 8. Methodology in English Language Teaching

The subject *Methodology in English Language Teaching* was taught by Professor Dr. María Sagrario Salaberri Ramiro. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from December 11<sup>th</sup> to January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To apply theoretical knowledge and practical training to face learning situations.
  - b) To develop skills to plan didactic units.
  - c) To access to update information sources about regulations for the foreign languages curriculum in our context.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Theory and methods for teaching English
    - Methodology and innovation
    - New trends
  2. Planning of didactic units
    - Planning a didactic unit
    - Selection of competences, learning objectives and contents.
    - Selection of activities and tasks for the individual and collective developments.
    - Criteria, procedures and tools for evaluation.
    - Attention to diversity
    - Promotion of learning autonomy
    - Use of ICT in the learning-teaching process.
  3. Evaluation of the learning-teaching process.
    - Teaching role in the evaluation of theoretical-practical learning of the acquired knowledge.
    - Promotion of self-evaluation for teachers and students.

- Learning evaluation: methodology and tools, concepts, models and techniques for evaluation, research and innovation.
- Use of ICT in the evaluation of the learning-teaching process.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

All the contents of the subject were focused towards the training of future teachers. In order to do so, we were given methods for the design of tasks, didactic units, teaching programmes, etc. We dealt with other concepts related to teaching, such as “multiple intelligences”, the “Portfolio”, the “learning competences”, all of this with the aim of making us aware that the teaching activity is a complex process where different aspects take place.

- ASSESSMENT

We were requested to prepare a teaching project (a task, a didactic unit, a lesson,...). The last day of the course, all the students of the group had to make a presentation of their projects.

Apart from that, we also had to design a “Reading Plan” in order to respond to the increasing awareness in relation to the encouragement of the “interest for reading and the ability to express oneself correctly”.

I designed a programme called “Déjate de cuentos”. It promoted reading in student’s own. More than thirty books were selected to work with. They would be distributed among students so that they all would have a different one. Titles were related to Spain and Andalusia, and written mainly by English speaking writers. These were full texts that students should read in English. Some Lorca’s editions in English were included just to give students the chance of facing Spanish literature in another language.

## 9. English for Specific Purposes

The subject *English for Specific Purposes* was taught by Professor Dr. María Soledad Cruz Martínez. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from January 28<sup>th</sup> to February 18<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To show students the research possibilities that are implied within the term “English for Specific purposes”.
- b) To describe the main features of business English.
- c) To describe the main features of Legal English.
- d) To describe the main features of Academic English.

- CONTENTS

1. ESP definition.
2. Origin and development.
3. Varieties.
4. Register analysis as theoretical model in the description of academic and professional texts.
5. Genre analysis as theoretical model in the description of academic and professional texts.
6. Business English.
7. Legal English.
8. Academic English

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This course offered a different perspective for the analysis of texts in English language, from both academic and professional spheres.

There are different paradigms that must be taken into account when we analyse any text. Some of them are:

- a) Structuralism: it focuses on the description of sentences and structures. According to structuralists language is seen as a system.
- b) Generativism: it focuses on the psychological component in language description. According to Robert de Beaugrande "Generativism can designate an approach for relating language to the intuitive knowledge of speakers and to the mental capacities of humans at large."
- c) Pragmatics: it studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. According to pragmatics language has to be seen as discourse or text, and they also consider language as a crucial element for communication.
- d) Cognitive Linguistics: it is the study of language in its cognitive function, where *cognitive* refers to the crucial role of intermediate informational structures with our encounters with the world as they assume that our interaction with the world is mediated through informational structures in the mind.

In the subject we focused on the perspectives of the register analysis (structuralism) and the genre analysis (pragmatics).

The professor combined theoretical explanations with practical activities done in the class, analysing texts from different perspectives.

- ASSESSMENT

For the evaluation of the subject, we were required to make an analysis of three different texts (one academic text and two professional ones) from the perspectives of genre and register.

## 10. Classroom Research: Theory and Practice

The subject *Classroom Research: Theory and Practice* was taught by Professor Dr. María Elena García Sánchez. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from January 28<sup>th</sup> to February 18<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire a researching attitude within the classroom.
2. To improve our skills for teaching.
3. To enable us to act in different teaching situations.
4. To focus on motivation as a key factor for the teaching process.

- CONTENTS

1. Classroom research
  - Action research
  - Data compilation: quantitative and qualitative research
2. Reflective teaching
  - Teacher's thinking and students' thinking
  - Classroom observance
3. Motivation in the FL classroom
  - Theories and paradigms in motivation
  - Study of sources of motivation

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This course is a valuable tool for those teachers who want to reflect, analyze and research in the context of a FL classroom. It also values the importance of researching in the FL classroom in order to know the reality of the class-context and transforming it whenever necessary.

In traditional teaching methods, the focus of attention was the teacher, and little attention was put on the students. Nowadays the teacher is no longer



the fount of all wisdom and student-centered approaches are gaining importance in the teaching field.

It is important to change and evolve, as it is clear that the antique teachers do not get as positives results as those who try to innovate and motivate his/her students. Some teachers see themselves as omniscient and are extremely critical of students. The result from this behaviour will be the students' dislike about the subject and a generalized lack of motivation.

Because of that, it is important that teachers reinvent themselves and their practice, as new methods and techniques can be really helpful in the FL classroom.

Reflective teaching, action research and motivation are three key factors in the success or failure of a good teacher, and because of that it will be extremely productive to make an appropriate use of them in our classrooms.

- ASSESSMENT

In order to be assessed, we were required to write a paper about three important elements that should impregnate the teaching practice. First, *reflecting teaching*, focusing on its principles and benefits in every kind of teaching situation. The second concept was *action research*, and I concentrated on the reasons to use it and even in the tools that we could make use of. Finally, we had to focus on *motivation*, paying special attention to the concept in relation to the foreign language classroom.

## 11. Linguistic and Cultural Analysis of English Press Advertising

The subject *Linguistic and Cultural Analysis of English Press Advertising* was taught by Professor Dr. María Enriqueta Cortés de los Ríos. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from February 19<sup>th</sup> to March 12<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES
  - a) To familiarize with the basic characteristics of advertising language in the press.
  - b) To analyze the linguistic and iconic aspects of advertising language.
  - c) To analyze cultural aspects through advertising.
  
- CONTENTS
  1. Definition, objectives and functions of advertising.
    - Definition of advertising.
    - Objectives of advertising.
    - Functions of advertising.
    - Information function.
    - Persuasion function.
    - Economic function.
    - Aesthetic function.
    - The AIDA Model.
  2. Syntax of advertising.
    - Sentence preferences.
  3. Appropriate characteristics of the verbal message and the advertising image.
    - Graphological features.
    - Phonological features.
    - Lexical features.
    - Pragmatic features.
    - Characteristics of the advertising image.

4. Use of metaphors, metonymies and play on words in advertising.
  - Metaphor and Metonymy through Lakoff and Johnson's theory.
  - Play on words.
5. Cultural aspects in advertising.
  - Characteristics of Culture.
  - Cultural Dimensions in Advertising.
  - Stereotypes.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

Within the wide range of specific languages, the language of advertising is one of the most particular since it develops a conative, persuasive and form of address character. This subject presents linguistic (graphic-phonetic, morpho-syntactic and lexico-semantic), pragmatic and functional characteristics in English advertising. It also shows the characteristics of the text, the advertising image, the cognitive theory of metaphor and metonymy in advertisements. Finally, the subject deals with the cultural aspects in advertising.

- ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this subject was carried out through the analysis of an advertising corpus in which students had to analyze the ads of the corpus following different methods.

## 12. Art, Literature and Mass Media in English Studies

The subject *Art, Literature and Mass Media* was taught by Professor Dr. Blasina Jesús Cantizano Márquez. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from February 19<sup>th</sup> to March 12<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) Acquisition and reinforcement of the English language within artistic fields.
- b) Ability to analyze texts and other artistic manifestations.
- c) Interpretation of the correlation and influence of the artistic expressions among them.

- CONTENTS

1. Classical vs. contemporary art forms.
2. The arts in English speaking countries.
3. The romantic period.
  - Poetry: W. Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge and W. Blake.
  - Narrative: E. A. Poe.
4. The narrative experience: literature and film.
  - Point of view, place and time.
  - Authors: A. Proulx, R. Dahl.
5. New experiments: literature and media.
  - Bradford.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This subject was focused on the linguistic, artistic and humanistic cultural studies, which review the meaning of art in Great Britain and North America. It also covered the formation and ability in areas which answer new professional perspectives. A great part of the subject was devoted to train our abilities in

order to criticize and analyze different artistic manifestations as in the case of cinema, literature, painting, music, etc.

- ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this subject was based on a research work of one the following themes on mass media:

- i. The television.
  - Show and entertainment.
  - As an educational tool.
- ii. Journals and magazines.
  - Journalism.
  - Sensationalism.
  - Literary magazines and periodicals.
- iii. Internet.
  - As mass media.
  - Social networks.

In my case I decided to research about American television series, and I presented a paper entitled: “American TV series: LOST, a case study of the social phenomenon”.

### 13. Landmarks in Contemporary British and American Literature

The subject *Landmarks in Contemporary British and American Literature* was taught by Professor Dr. José Ramón Ibáñez Ibáñez. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from March 18<sup>th</sup> to April 8<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To understand the British and American cultural complexity of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- b) To analyze key novels in the contemporary British and American literature.
- c) To give personal opinion from a literary point of view.
- d) To compare the texts reviewed in class with the film versions.
- e) To understand the present multicultural amalgam of the Anglo-Saxon societies and the huge impact of non-Anglo-Saxon authors in the social and literary scene of these countries.

- CONTENTS

1. The repressive role of the state: Anthony Burgess's "A Clockwork Orange" (1962).
2. The unstoppable consumerism of the 1980s. Martin Amis's "Money" (1984).
3. Dialectics of horror. Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse-Five" (1969).
4. The American novel from Philip Roth to Don DeLillo.
5. Multicultural societies. East and West in Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" (2003).

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This subject involved an analysis of the British and American narrative from the 1960s to the present time through novels which show the complex cultural changes taking place in these countries in different periods. These

works illustrate the cultural and social fragmentation of postmodernism, social alienation, the repressive role of the state outlined in Burgess's dystopian novel, the chaos caused by the Vietnam War according to Vonnegut's view and the reflect of the aggravated capitalism at the end of the twentieth century stated by Amis. Special emphasis will have the social multiculturalism of Jhumpa Lahiri's work, unquestionable representation of the hybridization process occurred in the British and American societies. An important point is to take into account the perspective and the interpretation of film directors about the novels, and in order to do so we were offered the possibility of watching the film "A Clockwork Orange", directed by Stanley Kubrick in 1971 and also "The Namesake", directed by Mira Nair in 2006. The display of these two films originated very interesting discussions chaired by Professor Ibáñez.

- ASSESSMENT

It was necessary to read the four novels that were part of the programme and apart from that, the assessment of the subject took into consideration the participation in the different discussions about the films and the novels that originated in the classes. Even though, the most important factor was a final exam in which we were assessed in relation to the contents of the course.

#### 14. Cultural Studies: Narrative, Identity and Gender

The subject *Cultural Studies: Narrative, Identity and Gender* was taught by Professor Dr. María Elena Jaime de Pablos. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from March 18<sup>th</sup> to April 8<sup>th</sup> . The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To increase student knowledge about the different social roles of women and men cross-culturally
- b) To understand the different expectations and experiences of different gender roles in diverse societies

- CONTENTS

1. The construction of gender in literature.
2. Feminine identity in autobiographical narrative.
3. Inverted feminine myths in feminist literature.
4. Discursive strategies of feminine characters in texts form contemporary female writers.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

When dealing with the question of gender it is important to have a vision about the feminist literary theory. The basic objective of this theory is to criticize the marginal situation of women and their consideration as inferior to men.

Gender has to become a visible category of analysis as it has been considered invisible for traditional approaches.

In order to do so we find that:

- canons must be revised
- women must be included in canons
- texts must be revisited
- differences that originate discrimination must be spotted in order to subvert them



To study the concepts of narrative, gender and identity, we focused in the study of two outstanding novels: *A Room of One's Own*, by Virginia Woolf and *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker.

In *A Room of One's Own*, the narrator emphasizes the fact that women are treated unequally in her society and that this is why they have produced less impressive works of writing than men. To illustrate her point, the narrator creates a woman named Judith Shakespeare, the imaginary twin sister of William Shakespeare. The narrator uses Judith to show how society systematically discriminates against women.

In *The Color Purple*, we could see the oppression that Black women have experienced throughout history in the rural South in America. Following the Civil War, most Black Americans were typically viewed as less than human by many members of white society. Women were also regarded as less important than men—both Black and white—making Black women doubly disadvantaged. Black women of the era were often treated as slaves or as property, even by male members of their own families.

The subject is a valuable tool to make an approach to feminist literary theory by means of:

- Denaturalizing the subordination of woman within the family.
- Disclosing the sexual myths of feminine passivity.
- Erasing normative heterosexuality.
- Focusing on literary canons to include woman
- Studying relation between gender and genre

- ASSESSMENT

In order to be assessed, we had to write an essay about “Identity and gender” on one of the two novels previously mentioned. I chose writing about “A room of one's own”, by Virginia Woolf.

## 15. New Trends in the Literature of the English Language

The subject *New Trends in the Literature of the English Language* was taught by Professor Dr. José Carlos Redondo Olmedilla. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To know the main movements, authors and literary trends in the English language in our present time (twentieth and twenty-first centuries).
- b) To analyze from a critical and contextual point of view, certain meaningful and relevant texts within the well-proportioned teacher-learner frame.
- c) To acquire basic instrumental techniques related to the textual environment.
- d) To acquire other techniques which involve a greater knowledge when we deal with texts, their critical interpretation, their ideological and aesthetic expression.

- CONTENTS

1. Social and cultural historical context of the new society. Written literature in the English language.
2. African literature written in English: Wole Soyinka, J. M. Coetzee.
3. Indian and Caribbean literature written in English: A. K. Ramanujan, Derek Walcott.
4. Australian literature written in English: Les Murray, new Australian writing.
5. Canadian literature written in English: Alice Munro, Dione Brand, new Canadian writing.
6. Hybridization, globalization and literary production in the English language.
7. Market and art in the new literary production in the English language.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

One of the main points of this subject is to provide students with the most relevant authors and literary productions within the chronological and historical period that covers the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries (periods, movements, genres and authors) and the methodology of the textual analysis applied to texts within the new trends in the English language.

Although the core topic of the course was “literature” our entire lessons took place in a computers lab, where we could easily have access to every imaginable kind of information: texts, images, historical facts, etc.

- ASSESSMENT

The very fast pace of the lessons was maybe the reason for their success: working interactively with the computers made the content really interesting and consequently the attendance to the lessons was essential to know the content of the subject. The final assessment consisted on a summary about what we studied during the course, that's to say, about the new trends in the literature of the English language, focusing on three main places: South Africa, the Caribbean, Canada and Australia.

## 16. Other Cultures in English Speaking Countries

The subject *Other Cultures in English Speaking Countries* was taught by Professor Dr. José Francisco Fernández Sánchez. It was part of the compulsory subjects for Itinerary 2 (Research and Teaching) of the Master in English Studies. There were seven lessons devoted to the study of this course (3 ECTS credits) that took place from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 14<sup>th</sup>. The structure of the subject was as follows:

- OBJECTIVES

- a) To analyze the different cultures which form the Anglo-Saxon world and the English speaking countries
- b) To prove the variety of practices, ideologies, social and political systems which shape postcolonial societies nowadays.
- c) To value the identity and cultural diversity of these three countries: Ireland, South Africa and Australia,.
- d) To analyze critically going beyond national and linguistic barriers.

- CONTENTS

1. Contemporary Ireland.
  - Recent History. From Autarchy to the “Celtic Tiger”.
  - Cultural and identity issues.
2. South African history and society
  - South African recent past.
  - Conflicts and hopes for the future.
3. Modern Australia.
  - Australia’s troubled past.
  - Postcolonial approaches to Australian society.

- ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT

This subject was considered an essential complement in this Master’s degree, especially in what concerns to the global view in a world in continuous movement. The recent processes of decolonization and globalization in our present history have stated that the developing countries have an important role

in our world-wide scene. The new multicultural societies in Europe and America, or the new hallmarks of the emerging countries oblige us to think in a different way and to reconsider old territorial plans. This subject also examined the present situation of a group of former British colonies and gives a rich perspective of what we know as “English Studies”.

The course was designed combining both theory and practice, that’s to say: first we had a master class which included the theoretical and historical framework and then we watched a film from that country that contained the elements previously studied. The film selected to represent Ireland was “The Snapper” (1993), a film about a 20 year old girl living with her parents and many brothers who gets herself pregnant and refuses to name the father. In order to portray the contents related to Australia, we watched the homonymous film “Australia” (2008). This film includes many symbols of the country, such as the relation with the mother land, the prototypical image of the Australian man, the cattle, the drover, etc. Finally, South Africa was pictured through the film “Disgrace” (2008), in which we had a vision of post-apartheid politics.

- ASSESSMENT

The assessment of this subject consisted of an analysis of the three countries studied during the course, Ireland, Australia and South Africa, watching three films which will try to reflect the present moment of these countries, the changes produced in their history and the evolution suffered until they became independent nations. This will lead us to understand in a better way their recent situations and their cultural diversity.

# Research

## 1. Introduction

Writing in foreign language classrooms is often viewed merely as a way of completing homework assignments, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels (Lally, 2000). However, it is an important skill that helps reinforce language, content, culture and literacy in the foreign language.

In order to help move this skill toward its full potential, FL educators must begin to accept writing as a process, and – furthermore – writing as an activity that deserves explicit attention in the curriculum and daily lesson planning. Unfortunately, most students do not take the time to form and organize their ideas in a FL writing project; rather they simply aim for the final product, thinking that one draft is enough. This begins a vicious cycle, as pointed out by Barnett (1989) when she stated, “students submit frankly unpolished papers which teachers treat as final products, encouraging them to offer similar work the next time” (p. 32). Much of this is allowed to happen by our profession’s tendency to view FL writing as exercises in practicing grammatical or lexical skills, rather than as opportunities to develop written communication skills (Greenia, 1992; Lee, 1994; Williams, 2005). Leki (1996) even found instances of foreign language teachers implementing writing in their classrooms just for the sake of writing with no specific goal in mind.

Frequently, the students are given one topic and few guidelines, such as how many sentences or pages the final product should be. Students can struggle even to begin the task; much less complete it in a satisfactory manner. Clark (1983) emphasizes that students may need help to narrow the assigned topic, but are instead left to complete the composition by themselves (p.151). Kroll (quoted in McKee, 1981) emphasizes that without pre-writing guidance students launch into ideas that they may have trouble expressing due to limitations of linguistic forms. With the help of pre-writing activities, writers are given the guidance needed to produce a more successful piece of work, by allowing them to examine possible interpretations of the writing prompt, or review vocabulary necessary to complete the assignment successfully.

Pre-writing activities allow students to activate existing schemata or create new ones for vocabulary, syntax and cultural content for the writing task (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Kroll, 1990; Swaffar, 1988).

Pre-writing guidance is often given in the first language (L1) classroom and the students may not be aware that the skills they learn there can be transferred to their L2 writing project (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006). Most L2 teachers are not always aware of the skill that a majority of their students possess, into which they can tap to improve L2 writing (Barnett, 1989). Furthermore, writing is arguably a neglected child in L2 classrooms because very few teachers take the time to teach it explicitly. Rather, we assume that since our students can write in the L1, they can automatically transfer this literacy skill into the L2 content. However, this is not the case and the gap is most visible when students arrive at higher level courses and struggle with writing assignments that require them to address content in addition to mechanics and vocabulary (Lally, 2000). The present article offers some practical pre-writing techniques to help teachers activate their students' latent skills at all levels of L2 instruction in jumpstarting the writing process wherever it may be lagging and develop better student writing.

There is very little research on what teachers actually do when they teach writing. Cumming's (1992) study is unique in that it provides information about the characteristics of successful ESL writing teachers, he found that there

are certain types of teaching routines that can be observed. He lists six fundamental routines:

1. Attracting student's attention
2. Assigning tasks
3. Collectively constructing interpretations
4. Establishing criteria
5. Providing individual feedback
6. Guiding individual development



## 2. Aims

The focus of instruction at the elementary and intermediate level of language study is typically on listening and speaking. Students are encouraged primarily to develop skills that will help them to communicate interactively in the target culture. Writing is often reserved for advanced-level grammar and civilization courses. However, teachers in advanced courses are frequently dismayed by the quality of students' writing. They complain that students are ill prepared for the kinds of writing assignments that are required in their courses, and very often, this assessment is true.

If one of the goals of FL instruction is to prepare students to write in upper-level courses, teachers must reexamine their approaches to teaching FL writing at the beginning stages of language study.

One of the main aims of this study is to show that writing is crucial at all levels of language study and in order to do so, the following objectives have been established:

- To prove that the skill of writing is directly connected with the learning of a foreign language.
- To make students aware of the importance of using pre-writing and drafting techniques.
- To prove that the use of pre-writing and drafting techniques improves students' writing performance.
- To promote the use of an "Essay correction code" to make students participants in the correction process.

This project will require the collaboration for both teachers and students, as the type of tasks that are contained are different from the writing activities that they are used to. Although text books include activities for the development on the writing skills, very little emphasis is placed in the process of writing and teachers tend to correct the errors directly. Teachers are a key element in this project and they have to accept that the process of text production entails different dimensions. Student will need a plenty of support if they are to satisfy all the demands of a writing-to communicate task.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### *3.1. Approaches to teaching FL writing*

There are no clearly defined approaches to teaching FL writing per se. Writing is usually incorporated into the overall goals of a lesson. Because of that, an examination of approaches to FL teaching in general will provide us an insight into how FL writing is taught.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Audiolingual Method was the dominant approach in FL teaching. This approach was founded on behaviorist psychology and stressed the notion that language was speech, not writing. Oral language was learned through pattern practice and reinforcement; writing served only as a support skill for speaking activities.

In the 1970s it appears the notion of communicative competence, which stressed the view that language involves the negotiation of meaning and applies to both speech and writing. Writing instruction focused primarily on real-life tasks such as taking notes, making lists, and writing letters.

In 1986, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines was published, marking the beginning of proficiency-oriented approaches to FL teaching. The guidelines define proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing at four basic levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior. This document has had a profound impact on the FL teaching profession, as it serves both as assessment criteria and instructional guidelines (it includes explicit ways to evaluate student's proficiency and guiding principles for improving proficiency in each skill).

With regard to teaching writing, a proficiency-oriented approach involves designing activities that help students perform at a given level of proficiency as described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. In general, proficiency-oriented approaches to teaching writing are quite eclectic. Some teachers may focus on developing student's command of grammar and syntax, while others may stress practice of language functions, such as describing or expressing an opinion. In her book *Teaching Language in Context*, Hadley (1993) discusses activities that range from making lists and completing open-ended sentences for novice-level students, to writing simple descriptions and narrations for intermediate-level students, to sentence combining and guided compositions for advanced-level

students. Most proficiency-oriented approaches incorporate the notion that writing must be taught as a process with the activities for planning, editing and revising.

The truth is that teaching FL writing has been given relatively little attention, and teachers design instruction based on their individual sense of how students learn to write in a FL.

### *3.2. Primacy of speaking over writing*

The primacy of speaking has influenced linguistics and ESL studies and has come to overshadow the importance of writing.

According to Raimes (1983), since Charles Fries introduced an oral approach in 1945, the audio-lingual method of second language teaching strongly influenced second language learning in the 1950s and early 1960s. Since the appearance of this approach, spoken language continues to be emphasized in English learning and teaching.

Rivers (1981) explains that this method laid stress on developing listening and speaking skills by listening to utterances and repeating them as fast as native speakers uttered them. This approach holds that people normally learn their languages in a spoken form rather than in written form; therefore, quite naturally, listening and speaking were placed before reading and writing. To the extent that this concept is tenable, it is reasonable to assume that the concept underlying this approach is that speech was dominant, and writing was regarded as a secondary agenda and not a goal of language learning.

Widdowson (1987) states as follows:

Early developments in discourse analysis tend focus attention on spoken language, on the management of talk and the speech acts of conventional utterances. This preference may in part be attributed to the orthodox linguistic belief in the primacy of speech. Old tough habits die hard. Pedagogy too has tended to the same belief, even to the extent of sometimes supposing that communicative language teaching involved only the development of the ability to converse—as if written language was no really authentic communication.

Without a doubt, the teaching of speaking was dominant before the 1960s, and it still affects the view of writing in English learning.

From the historical standpoint of writing, the 1960s have been considered a revolutionary age because writing began to be one of the objects of researchers' and teachers' attention; yet it led to the disciplinary division between composition studies and ESL writing (Matsuda, 1999) . Silva and Matsuda (2002) point out that writing was a means of recording student's speech and a support for the learning of speech because the technology for sound recording had not fully developed before the 1960s. During the 1960s, however, with the growth of ESL students in American universities, writing got much more attention because it was necessary to become familiar with the form of writing and how to write ideas beyond the word and sentence level. Furthermore, composition studies were developed in the U.S.A. and the audio-lingual approach was felt at that time.

Contrary to this radical change, as noted by Matsuda (2005) , many teachers of L1 composition were troubled with ESL students because they were not willing to change their style of teaching grammatical and syntactic forms and did not know how to adjust to this new demand for speaking instruction. In order to solve this problem, ESL specialists who played a part in ESL writing (although they were not composition specialists) , attempted to help L1 composition teachers figure out how to teach writing in ESL classes. As a result of this ESL issue, the growth of composition studies and the popularity of second language writing, led to the separation of composition studies and ESL writing. Due to this separation, composition specialists lacked the interest in and enthusiasm for instructing ESL writers, and ESL specialists had to engage in teaching ESL writing.

The tendency to neglect writing in ESL has continued even after a communicative approach was developed. Since the communicative approach was introduced into the field of ESL, communicative language teaching has been praised for its emphasis on fluency rather than on accuracy. Yet, at the same time, it gathered much criticism because the systematic learning tended to be underestimated.

However discussed, in the relatively short history of the communicative approach, the importance of writing has not been acknowledged because the communicative approach focuses very narrowly on speaking and listening. For instance, although Littlewood (1981) , in his book *Communicative Language Teaching*, does not entirely ignore communication through written mode (writing and reading) , he identifies learners as speakers and describes communication mostly as oral activities such as discussions and role-playing. Since the term communication is associated for many people with oral communication such as speaking and listening, communication in the written mode tend to be glossed over.

Even though writing is believed to be an important communicative activity, writing courses based on the communication approach have not been systematically developed as a theory or a method of ESL writing, and, regrettably, the idea of writing as an important communicative skill has not been put into practice as much as it should have. The reason for this may be because there is no consensus on the method for teaching writing. For example, three approaches in writing emerged from composition studies: controlled composition, the paragraph pattern approach, and the process approach. In controlled composition, “writing is regarded essentially as reinforcement for oral habits and as a secondary concern” (Silva & Matsuda, 2002). Accuracy is the primary concern, and students are expected to adjust to the systematic process of English writing.

The paragraph pattern approach holds that the arrangement of sentences is the key element in effective writing, which means that following particular patterns is essential. These two approaches instruct certain formulas of writing, presupposing that adopting right ways of writing makes students good writers. Contrasting with

These two approaches, in the process approach, the content of writing is important. The measurement of successful writing depends on whether one can convey the message effectively through writing. However, whether this approach improves students ' writing ability has not been conclusively proved

(Mochizuki, 2007) . This confusion over different methodologies for teaching writing might make it hard for teachers to engage in writing classes.

The reason that teaching writing has not been actively engaged in English education is due to the primacy of speaking, limiting communication to oral activity, and having no consensus on teaching methodology. Institutions, researchers, and teachers must work in harmony to provide students with appropriate opportunities to learn writing as a part of a holistic English learning experience because, as Kaplan (1987) argues, speaking and writing are complementary communication activities.

### *3.3. Defining and conceptualizing writing in EFL*

#### *3.3.1 Linguistic characterization*

##### *3.3.1.1. Differences between speaking and writing*

Writers are at disadvantage with respect to speakers because writers cannot take advantage of elements in the speech act that speakers and listeners can make good use of.

In speaking we can find the following features (Hedge 1988)

- The physical context
- Paralinguistic features
  - Body movement
  - Facial expressions
  - Gestures
  - Pitch and tone of voice
- Prosodic features
  - Stress
  - Intonation
  - Rhythm
  - Pauses and hesitation
- Possibility of going back, clarifying or revising ideas in response to listeners as they ask questions or respond.

As Manchón et al (2005) indicates, the absence of a physical and contextualized context allows the appearance of certain characteristics of

written texts. Different scholars have also agreed that the features that we have in written texts are the following:

- **Permanence:** it refers to the lasting nature of the written medium. Whereas oral language is non-permanent and has to be processed in real time, the written medium 'leaves a trace' and is, thus, everlasting.
- **Production time:** it relates to the fact that in speech, the spontaneous nature of the medium makes that the flow of conversation has to be kept up with no enough time to totally monitor what is being said. Writers, on the other hand, go through a whole process of planning, drafting, and revising; hence, they have much more production time.
- **Distance:** it involves the absence of a shared context between writer and reader; there is no immediate feedback. Consequently, the text needs to be as clear and intelligible as possible.
- **Orthography:** sometimes we have problems when we transfer oral language into written one, because not all phonemes correspond to a concrete spelling. The difficulty is proportional to the `possibilities of spelling representation of the phonemes.
- **Complexity:** writing is a complex process because it involves a skillful writer able of eliminating redundancy, linking clauses and sentences, producing a wide range of lexical items, etc.
- **Vocabulary:** Vocabulary in written texts is greater than in oral texts. The reason is that when we write we need new terms to avoid problems of redundancy, style, etc.
- **Convention:** A writer has to follow different conventions which are specific for every culture. Any type of text needs a specific convention. EFL students have to learn the conventions of the forms that are relevant to their lives and note the similarities and differences between these and the conventions of Spanish texts.
- **Explicitness:** A written text must be explicit, in order to avoid ambiguities and confusion. Spoken texts can be vaguer as they have a physical and acoustic context.
- **Instruction.** Both reading and writing are skills that need to be learnt. It doesn't happen so with listening and speaking, which are innate abilities.

### 3.3.1.2. Essential features of written communication

When we write, we do it in response to a particular demand or purpose and with a real audience in mind. This is directly related with the approach to writing from the communicative perspective and with what Sampson (1983) refers to as “functional approach”. This communicative approach is characterized by four features:

- a product as a result
- a specific audience
- a function or purpose
- a linguistic focus

It is necessary to add two more characteristics to this communicative approach to writing, which are the concepts of “information gap” and “task dependency”. If we want an authentic communication to take place it is necessary to have an information gap, that is to say, the writer has some information that the reader does not have.

The principle of task dependency is closely related to the one of information gap: one student writes a text for another, who in turn has to use it to perform a task, that is to say, the task is dependent on what the first student has written.

Hedge (1988) insists on the importance of real audiences apart from the teacher (classmates, other students in the school,...). It is necessary to create a sense of audience in the students, and writing for other audiences different from the teacher, as in that case, writing in the classroom can become unrealistic.

Another important concept is the one of purpose, because students have to know why they are writing. Writing tasks will be richer and more coherent if they are contextualized within a theme, especially if this is authentic and relevant to real life. Because of that, topics for writing should be:

- i. the type of topics the students are likely to write about in their mother tongue.
- ii. interesting and related to the students' lives.



### 3.3.1.3. Text types

Many scholars have tried to characterize texts, and there is even some controversy about the topic. It was Hedge (1988) who provided a comprehensive typology of written texts. This classification can be used by teachers and students to select the types which are more appropriate to them and their needs.

Personal Writing	Public Writing	Creative Writing
Diaries Journals Shopping lists Reminders for oneself Packing lists Addresses Recipes	Letters of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ enquiry</li> <li>▪ complaint</li> <li>▪ request</li> </ul> Form filling Applications (for membership)	Poems Stories Rhymes Drama Songs Autobiography
Social Writing	Study Writing	Institutional Writing
Letters Invitations Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Of condolence</li> <li>▪ Of thanks</li> <li>▪ Of congratulations</li> </ul> Cablegrams Telephone messages Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To friends</li> <li>▪ To family</li> </ul>	Making notes while reading Taking notes from lectures Making a card index Summaries Synopses Reviews Reports of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experiments</li> <li>▪ Workshops</li> <li>▪ Visits</li> </ul> Essays Bibliographies	Agendas Minutes Memoranda Reports Reviews Contracts Business letters Public notices Advertisements Posters Instructions Speeches Applications Curriculum Vitae Specifications Note making (doctors and other professionals)

Figure 1. Text typology. Source: T. Hedge, p.96 from *Resource Books for Teachers: Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

### 3.4. *The process approach*

Most recent approaches have emphasized on writing as a process (not just as a product), and because of that it is important to pay attention to the different steps a writer takes before obtaining the product and the drafts a writer needs before the final editing. This has been called “the Process Approach”.

Students need as much writing practice as possible, and they also need be provided by models of good writing.

Hedge (1988) mentions the following principles in order to make students experience the fact of “being writers”.

- a) Making students aware of the process of composition.
- b) Helping them to get their ideas together.
- c) Encouraging reading techniques and analyzing the structure of written texts.
- d) Supporting students with a plan.
- e) Making the drafting process a sort of workshop.
- f) Building awareness for the usefulness of word processors- the possibility of correcting, adding, suppressing, changing position of paragraphs, etc.

#### 3.4.1. Organizing writing

Organizing a written text is something culturally determined, because each language has a particular way of handling a topic, of putting sentences together and forming paragraphs to construct a text.

When we write in English we have to be familiar with:

- how English sentences are constructed
- how paragraphs contain topic and comment sentences
- how we move back and forth from generalizations to specific ideas.
- how to punctuate in a meaningful way
- how to be precise in the selection of vocabulary

Hedge (1988) calls this stage ‘crafting’ and defines it “as the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure”. She also points out the advantages of integrating reading and writing skills, as people who read, write better.

Although organization is very important, the concern for meaning is paramount.

#### 3.4.2. Prewriting

Writing (in any language) can be a difficult experience, most of the times because the writes does not know what to say or doesn’t have linguistic

elements to express. This feeling is worsen when we deal with writing in English. It is necessary that we show our students techniques for warming up before starting to write, that is called the pre-writing stage.

This pre-writing stage is aimed to guide students and make them think, talk, take notes and work on the topic before writing about it. this provides them with something to say; prevents them getting stuck, allows them to write better essays, and in sum, helps them to overcome the psychological suffering that usually appears at the beginning of a writing task.

Some useful pre-writing techniques are:

➤ Brainstorming

This is a good beginning pre-writing task for L2 writers, as it does not require any special handout or much practice. During a brainstorming session, students are given a topic and they generate a list of words or phrases in a group. This can be done either in small groups at the students' desks or as a whole class activity (Sebranek, Meyer & Kemper, 2000; Williams, 2005). In a brainstorming session, it is easy to guide students, if necessary, by steering students towards ideas and vocabulary they may not have otherwise considered by asking specific questions, like 'who' or 'what' or by providing words or phrases with which they may not yet be familiar. For instance, to generate or review vocabulary through brainstorming for free-time activities, the instructor writes the phrase on the board or projects them on the screen via an overhead projector and allows the class to offer any item that they may think of related to the topic. The teacher can, if necessary, guide the students by asking, "When do we do our free-time activities?" or "With whom do we do them?" Conducting a simple brainstorming session can move beginning students beyond basic, simple sentences to more personal sentences that better express what they feel about the given topic. Remember that accepting words from the students' L1 is a viable option at this point in the writing process.

➤ Clustering

Vacca, Vacca and Mraz (2010) suggest that students begin a clustering activity by writing a key word (or phrase) related to their topic in the middle of a piece of paper. Student writer then enclose the topic with a shape, such as a circle or box. Ideas related to that main point can be connected to it are then

added around the main idea. However, another effective use for clustering allows students to consider their audience and their needs; a crucial step met by pre-writing activities. An example of this type of activity is offered in Figure 2.

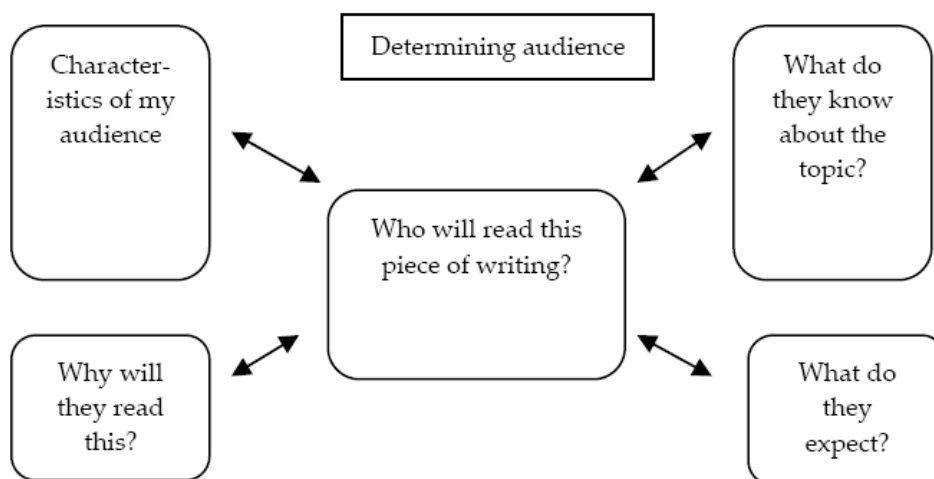


Figure 2: An example of Clustering activity

The students write, “Who will read this piece of writing?” in the middle of the paper, then draw a shape around it, where they can answer the question and keep the idea connected to it. Although the main reader of a paper is the teacher, this is not always the case and students can use this time to consider both the primary and/or secondary readers of the paper, depending on the level of the class and the complexity of the writing. The student can further consider the characteristics by listing ideas that describe the target audience. This can include ideas such as the audiences’ age, gender or educational level. Another vital idea to determine what the audience already knows about the topic. This will help the writer to realize the amount of background details that need to be included. For example, will the writer need to define key terms or will the audience already have that knowledge? The third box can include an examination of why the audience will read the piece that they are writing. Here the student can look at the type of writing, such as persuasive, informational or entertaining. A fourth box can examine the expectations of the audience members. Different types of writing may conform to certain structures, which the

audience may anticipate. For instance, if the piece is a compare/contrast piece, the audience can expect the two points to be presented in a highly structured fashion. It is also with audience expectations in mind that student writers can determine if the writing needs to be formal or informal. By determining ideas like these before writing, many of the concerns of students as to how the piece should be written will be addressed and students' stress levels will decrease. Students can be given up to five minutes per box, depending on the amount of information that needs to be included and the level of the students.

➤ Drawing

This technique is particularly useful for beginning students, since it requires little or no vocabulary in the beginning. On a sheet of blank paper, students draw a picture(s) relating to the assigned topic, using stick figure drawings, if necessary, and providing as much detail as possible, such as location or time elements. For instance, when generating ideas about dining, students can draw a picture showing who is participating, where the meal is taking place, what foods are being eaten and so on.

A drawing activity that focuses on the past includes a larger sheet of paper that students fold into eight sections. The teacher then asks eight questions, such as "What did you do last weekend?" or "Where did you go on vacation last summer?" and allows the students time to draw a detailed picture answering each question in a separate section of the paper. In this manner students create eight ideas upon which to draw for the topic of their paper. Later, usually as homework, students do a second pre-writing activity, such as brainstorming, focusing on one of the drawings.

➤ Dyads and Triads

Sometimes students need the opportunity to talk about their ideas before they begin their writing task (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). Dyads and triads are small discussion groups that allow students to express themselves verbally in order to bring out ideas and details. Students are grouped together in pairs or sets of three. The small grouping forces the students to talk, since participation is mandatory and they cannot 'hide behind' the larger number of students found in a full-class discussion. In these small groups, students talk about the topic of their writing, whether from a reading or an original writing topic, using as much

detail as possible. If others in the group do not understand a certain point or would like more information, they can ask for help. After everyone in the dyad or triad has spoken, students quickly write the details that they remember from the discussion. Others in the group can be encouraged to take notes to help the writer record his/her thoughts as they are spoken aloud.

Dyads and triads are a natural pairing with the drawing activity listed above. After the student writers have completed their drawings, they come together in these small groups and describe verbally what they have included in their picture. Again, the other members of the group ask for more details or explanations about the content of the drawing. They finish the activity by writing down the details that they have discussed in their groups.

➤ Free Writing

This pre-writing task works quite well for more advanced L2 writers and generally needs to be conducted for a minimum of five minutes (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2010; Williams, 2005). By ‘forcing’ students to write for a minimum of five minutes, ideas and connections can emerge from their long-term memory because students are concentrating deeply on the assigned topic (Martinez, 2010).

Traditionally, to provide focus, students write the topic at the top of their paper. Next, students write non-stop, generating ideas for their topic, while disregarding spelling or grammatical errors. If the writers cannot think of a new word or phrase, they simply re-write the last idea they had until they are able to move on to another idea or concept. After the writing period is finished, the students closely examine their free write papers. They determine what specific ideas occurred; which ones occurred multiple times naturally; and try to connect threads of ideas that interlink throughout. Based on these tendencies, they can ascertain what ideas can be used as details for their writing assignment.

➤ Graphic Organizers

Historically, this is a category of pre-writing that provides the students with some type of visual worksheet to bring together their ideas. Many, however, can be produced with blank paper and guidance. The following graphic organizer ideas provide students with a framework to identify patterns in reading/writing assignments and generate and/or organize ideas (Novak, 1998)

## ⇒ Narrative Strips

This graphic organizer works extremely well with sequential or chronological writing (Col, 2003). Narrative strips are a series of blank boxes on a sheet of paper with spaces between them that provide students the room to write words and phrases that supply the details for a sequential writing task, such as the example in Figure 3.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 3. Narrative strips

In the first strip, the student writers provide the information for the first action/event in their writing project. The second strip is for the second action/event and so on until details for all the actions/events are provided. Teachers can help guide students' writing by provided transition words, like 'first,' 'second,' 'next,' or 'last of all' in the strips. A significant advantage of this pre-writing technique is that, if students discover that they have a detail that is out of place in the narrative, the strips can later be cut out and re-arranged. Although labeled 'narrative strips,' they can be used for many genres, not just sequential stories. Students can use them for a pre-writing task for persuasive or argumentative writing, having the freedom to move arguments around so that they may be more effective if placed elsewhere in the essay. Similarly, the strips can be used to record the major events in a piece of literature and provide the basis for a summary written later on.

As an alternative to providing students with a handout, teachers can have students tear pieces of paper into strips. Students can then write their ideas on these strips as described above.

⇒ KWL

The KWL chart is an excellent tool to help students find where they stand in regards to their knowledge of a topic (Vacca, Vacca & Mraz, 2010). In the first column the students write whatever they know (K) about the assigned topic. Based on the information generated in the first column, students produce questions to fill in the second column to fill in the information that they do not already possess, or what they want to learn (W). The students are then encouraged to discover more about the topic before they begin writing. Any information that they learn or still need to learn (L) is written in the final column. This is an effective method to guide writing ideas for topics that are fairly new to the students. By discovering what they do not know, they have a direction to go for further research.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

K	W	L

Figure 4. KWL Chart

### 3.4.3. Drafting

The first attempt at writing should not be considered the final product but just a draft. Sometimes more than one drafting is required before handing in the written assignment. Drafting has to do with revision and rewriting, since after each revision a new draft can appear.

The first draft usually concentrates on content. As Hedge (1988) states “the drafting process focuses primarily on what the writer wants to say, while redrafting progressively focuses on how to say it most effectively”.

In a classroom context, students write a draft and give it to the teacher, who comments on content and organization first of all. The student writes a second draft incorporating those comments. That second draft is again read by the teacher, now including comments about formal aspects (spelling,



punctuation, word forms, article use, verb forms, concordance, word order, linkers and other grammatical issues). After that, a third – probably last- draft is written.

#### 3.4.4. Editing

Lewitt calls this stage “the final touch”. The writer should be ready to put everything together, to polish his/her previous attempts through the incorporation of the suggestions received and to hand a final written product to the reader.

In this part of the process, the writer improves the way s/he expresses his/her ideas. There are changes in words, sentence organization or punctuation to make writing more vibrant and exciting, clearer, more specific or more direct. You find a more effective way to say what you want to say.

#### 3.5. *Genre approach.*

Since the mid-1980s, considerable attention has been paid to the genre approach to teaching writing. In terms of writing in a second language, The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as “a framework for language instruction” (Byram, 2004) based on examples of a particular genre.

The genre framework supports students’ writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages. Swales (1990) identified a genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” . His definition offers the basic idea that there are certain conventions or rules which are generally associated with a writer’s purpose. Most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes; a personal letter starts with a cordial question in a friendly mood because its purpose is to maintain good relationships with friends, and an argument essay emphasizes its thesis since it aims at making an argument.

Swales (1990) and Martin (1984), as cited in Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), shared an essential viewpoint that all genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre

has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes . Therefore, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

The structural features that genres are made up of include both standards of organization structure and linguistic features.

Standards of organizational structure refer to how the text is sequenced. For instance, Hammond (1992, as cited in Paltridge, 1996) described the common organizational structure in a formal letter whose purpose is to file a complaint and suggest a proper action to solve the problem as follows: “sender’s address, receiver’s address, greeting, identification of complaint, justification of complaint, demand action, sign-off, and sender’s name” (p. 240).

Common sets of linguistic features can constitute a text type. Text type was defined by Biber (1988), as a class of texts having similarities in linguistic forms regardless of the genre. For example, Hammond (1992, as cited in Paltridge, 1996) examined the characteristics of several genres and categorized them according to similarities in text types: recipes are known to have the text type of procedure; personal letters are used to tell private anecdotes; advertisements deal with description; news articles have the text type of recounting; scientific papers prefer passive voice over active voice in presenting reports; and academic papers are likely to have embedded clauses (pp. 237-239) . This means that different text types involve distinctive knowledge and different sets of skills, so teachers should introduce a variety of genres to have students understand and practice different sets of skills.

### *3.6. Interference of Spanish language in English writing.*

When students are in the process of learning a language, they produce a type of language that is in an intermediate position between the native language and the target language, this is what is called “interlanguage”.

In this process, learners’ errors are caused by such phenomena as borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending patterns from the target language, and expressing meanings using the vocabulary and syntax which are already known (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992).

Spanish-speaking English language learners make errors in their interlanguage by borrowing patterns from their mother tongue, a process referred to as “negative transfer” or “interference” by a number of researchers (James, 1980; Nobel, 1982; Swan & Smith, 1987; Brown, 2001; Parker & Riley, 1994; Horwitz, 2008).

It is important for teachers to anticipate the characteristic errors potentially made by this particular student population and understand how these errors arise.

Typical interference errors are: exemplified and explained in the following areas:

- articles
- gender
- number
- personal pronouns
- relative pronouns
- adjectives
- prepositions
- possessives
- question formation
- negation
- verb tenses
- passive voice
- word order
- false cognates

The first serious attempt by applied linguists to explain second language writing was the field of study known as contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996), which was based on the assumption that language learners will transfer the rhetorical features of their native language to the target language, causing interference in second language writing.

L1 writing skill habits are transferred to L2 writing. There are also differences between writing in a language over which you have linguistic control and one which you are learning, as well as cross-cultural dimensions affecting appropriacy.

The field of L2 writing has raised theoretical concerns about how students improve writing skills. While some authors have looked into process writing as the optimum way to improve the skill (Roca de Larios, et al, 2002; Susser, 1994; Scott, 1996; Zamel, 1983), others have explored the effects of error feedback on writing proficiency (Ferris, 1995, 1999; Truscott, 1996, 1999; Ferris and

Roberts, 2001; Robb, Ross, and Shortreed, 1986; Semke, 1984; Lalande, 1982), and the processes involved in reading-to-write (Carson, 1993; Flower, et al., 1990; Ruiz-Funes, 2001).

Since the 1970s, studies present writing as a “recursive, nonlinear cognitive process in which the writer moves back and forth between prewriting, writing, revising, and editing until he/she is satisfied with his/her creation” (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Research in the last 10 years has moved towards a more comprehensive theory of L2 writing, and an examination of the notion that first language (L1) and L2 writing are the same “has led L2 writing specialists to rely for direction almost exclusively on L1 composition theories...” (Silva, 1993). Following this perspective, we should ask ourselves, can our students write in Spanish? The first answer that comes to our mind is “yes”, but statistical studies don’t say so.

The National Institute for Quality and Evaluation (INCE) evaluates students’ written expression in Spanish language and the last results show that:

At the age of 14,

- 15% of the pupils are not capable of developing a basic story, so that the writing is a list of related events, without a detailed description of these events or their contexts.
- 65% of the pupils are capable of telling a basic or extended story in which the events are related and details are given. However, problems of coherence can be detected in the development of the story or the story is confused or incomplete.
- 18% of the pupils are capable of producing a developed story, with details and with a simple resolution of the problems or events.
- 2% of pupils are capable of telling a well-developed story, describing a sequence of episodes in which all the elements are well developed, the objectives and resolutions of problems are developed, the events are presented in a coherent way and are well expressed and, finally, the writer adapts the story to the reader.

It was found that very few students (4%) actually plan the content before writing the composition and when they do such plans take the form of very preliminary rough notes which are of poor quality. It was also reported that

many students show little concern for the formal aspects of the different text types.

At the age of 16,

- 3.5% of pupils are incapable of producing a basic story.
- 44% of pupils can tell a story (14% basic/30% extended) in which episodes are related and details included. However, some problems of coherence and syntax are detected in the development of the story, or the story is confused, incomplete or lacks internal logic.
- 52% of the pupils are able to construct good stories.
- 37% of pupils are able to produce a well-developed story.
- 15% of pupils are able to construct well-worked out stories.

We observe that older pupils have a higher level of writing skills, both in terms of the quality of their stories and the presentation and the composition of the text. However, very few pupils at either age give any thought to the structure of their compositions beforehand, and in the cases where they do they use rough notes that are of little value. Furthermore, all students suffer problems of inaccurate spelling, poor punctuation, a poor range of vocabulary, inadequate paragraph construction and an inability to structure effectively the different parts of the text.

It clearly expresses the need among most students for additional support at all points in the writing process – from the more basic and routine elements, such as spelling, to the more complex, such as the planning and revision of texts.

### *3.7. The role of new technologies in teaching writing*

Technology suffuses the lives of adolescents. Almost all students use the Internet, and those who go online tend to do multiple times throughout the day. Moreover technology is increasingly found in the classroom and teachers and schools often expect students to have access and prior exposure to technology in addition to the training they receive in school.

We must agree with William Constanzo, who says that “computers are altering the way many of us read, see and even think”(11). At the least, they offer us a new and powerful tool for producing texts.

“Electronic mail talk” is one of the most dramatic examples of the medium affecting the message.

Although the Internet and electronic mail are becoming an increasing presence in the composition class, most of the research that measures the impact of technology on composition instruction is focused on the link between word processing, the writing process, and the quality of the writing product. Students indicate that word processors may aid students during all phases of the writing process: generating a text, changing it and deleting are quick operations on the computer. Furthermore, composing on the computer may also help to increase audience awareness. Owston and others write that “screen displays may facilitate the young writer’s development of a sense of their audience, perhaps psychologically distancing the creator for his or her own work” (250).

It is clear that students write a lot, but they do not think of their emails or instant text messages as writing.

Yet despite the nearly ubiquitous use of these tools by teens, they see an important distinction between the ‘writing’ they do for school and outside of school for personal reasons, and the ‘communication’ they enjoy via instant messaging, phone text messaging, email and social networking sites.

Teens generally do not believe that technology negatively influences the quality of their writing, but they do acknowledge that the informal styles of writing that mark the use of these text-based technologies for many students do occasionally filter into their school work (using text shortcuts such as ‘LOL’- which stands for ‘laugh out loud’ or using emoticons- symbols like smiley faces).

As highly interactive online activities such as blogging and social networking have grown in popularity, accessing the Internet has become more and more a daily activity for teens.

#### 4. Methodology

The existence of a sound theoretical background was the basis for the elaboration of this research. Once that an important amount of information was collected, the next step was looking for the sample to work on the field of research. For this purpose, I had the support of *Dickens, School of English*, a private language school in Almería.

I chose students in the first level of Upper Secondary Education (Bachillerato) to carry out the activities, as I thought it would be positive to see what the writing levels of students are once they have finished Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) and just a year before the University entrance exams (Selectividad).

Students didn't know they were taking part in the project, as I thought this information would make them pay a special attention and interest in the activities. The sample was made up by 7 students (4 girls and 3 boys) who started learning English in Primary Education. It means that they have been learning English for an average period of ten years.

The activity was divided into 3 parts that took place in different days.

##### STAGE ONE:

A number of 7 students wrote a composition about a topic. They did not know in advance that they would have to undertake this classroom task. They were given a list of 10 possible topics so they had the chance of choosing. The topics were:

- Lazy days
- Alien fears
- Old people
- Things I have lost
- Being late again
- Brothers or sisters?
- Running a marathon
- Nightmares become reality
- Cockroaches live forever!
- Best and worst TV show

The topics were chosen because teenagers are usually keen on writing about familiar topics. The students were asked to write a composition during the last 20 minutes of their class. No indications were given about the structure they had to follow or the type of text that they had to write. None of them required any extra sheet for rough work.

After collecting these first drafts, I corrected them by underlying the errors and writing some comments about the structure and the layout.

### *STAGE TWO:*

Once that the drafts were revised and corrected, I thought it was positive to devote some time to the study of different pre-writing and drafting techniques and the benefits that these would have on students' writing performances. It is important that students understand that writing is a process in which the writer has to fulfill certain steps before achieving the final goal. Writing is maybe the most time consuming skill but it is important to make it clear that the benefits and the results will be much better if we do it in the correct way.

I introduce the concept of "pre-writing", explaining some useful techniques that they could use in their writing productions (quickwriting, questioning, diagrams and brainstorming), and it was also time to talk about the importance of writing drafts. (See Annex 1).

With all this new information students were required to write again about the topic that they had previously chosen, but this time paying attention to the corrections that I had made in their first piece of writing and trying to use any of the pre-writing strategies that they had studied.

The compositions seemed to be more organized, but there were still some errors. This time I used a correction code, just indicating the type of error that they had committed but not giving them the right answer. This code was an adaptation from the one that Lalande (1984) proposed in his article "Reducing Composition Errors: An Experiment". It is as follows:



<b>Aux</b>	Use of an improper auxiliary verb, or the auxiliary is missing. It also affects the modal verbs.
<b>C</b>	Verb conjugation is faulty.
<b>L</b>	A lexical or dictionary error; includes cognates.
<b>L1&gt;L2</b>	A literal translation from the mother tongue (L1) into the target language (L2).
<b>N</b>	Number is usually faulty.
<b>Nag</b>	Noun-adjective-agreements are faulty in some way.
<b>NS</b>	A completely new structure is needed to convey the proper meaning.
<b>P</b>	Wrong use of a preposition.
<b>Pr</b>	Wrong use of the pronouns (possessive, demonstrative, etc).
<b>PP</b>	Principal part of the verb is incorrect (usually the stem).
<b>R</b>	Rewrite successfully completed.
<b>Sp</b>	Spelling error.
<b>SV</b>	Subject-verb-agreement is faulty in some way.
<b>T</b>	Tense selection is in some way inappropriate.
<b>UN</b>	Unknown: No such word or construction exists in English: includes the use of Spanish words where English versions are not known.
<b>WO</b>	Any error involving word order.
<b>Wr</b>	Wrong word: A word or words used are not appropriate.
<b>X</b>	One or more words are missing and must be inserted.
<b>+</b>	Indicates a especially nice touch. A well done sentence, structure, paragraph.
<b>//</b>	Double lines through a word indicate that it is not necessary and must be deleted.
<b>!</b>	Very important grammatical error.
<b>?</b>	The reviewer could make no sense of the passage. The student should consult a teacher, native speaker, etc.

**Figure 5. Essay Correction Code**

### *STAGE THREE:*

In the last part of the activity, students wrote the final draft. This time it was easier for them to recognize and correct the errors. Once I got them, I re-corrected the writing, counting up the errors and classifying them according to an established typology included in the following Quantitative Evaluation Chart.

STUDENT 1: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS						
DEFINITE ARTICLE						
DOUBLE NEGATION						
ADJECTIVES						
PREPOSITIONS						
AUXILIARIES						
WORD ORDER						
VERBS						
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES						
INVENTED WORDS						
INFLECTION						
OTHERS						
OTHERS						
Total:						

**Figure 6. Quantitative analysis chart**

In order to design the valuation chart, different variables have been taken onto account. They represent the most frequent errors that Spanish students make when they write in English. I have included two main categories in the analysis: grammar and lexicon.

In the grammar section, different variables are included. These are:

- **Subject pronoun:** Spanish speakers usually have trouble distinguishing personal pronouns (he, him), e.g. \**Did not know who was him*” instead of *“I did not know who he was”*.

Omission of subject is a very common (and understandable) mistake because, unlike Spanish, a subject is always necessary in English. Students often say: \**Is important to do this*”, whereas they should say, *“It is important to do this”*. The word *“it”* may not refer to anything in particular, but it is absolutely necessary to make the sentence grammatically correct.

- Definite article: Students frequently make interference errors in the use of articles. The main reason seems to be that they do not master grammar rules of the target language yet.
- Double negation: It must be remembered that two negatives in the English language destroy each other and are equivalent to an affirmative. When using the negative form of a verb (e.g. “*He isn't working ...*”, “*They aren't going to ...*”) we should not use a negative quantifier such as *nobody, nowhere, etc.*

For example:

*They aren't going anywhere special. NOT \*They aren't going nowhere special.*

*She hasn't spoken to anyone yet. NOT \*She hasn't spoken to nobody yet.*

- Adjectives: Spanish-speaking students may know a lot of adjectives, but the main problem is where to place them in the sentence. In Spanish adjectives are generally placed after the noun but in English it is exactly the opposite. Apart from the location in the sentence, another problem in relation with adjectives is their “pluralization”. Learners tend to transfer structures of their native language several times causing interference: in Spanish, grammar rules state that both noun and adjective must agree in number and gender, while in English, number must be marked just in nouns, never in adjectives.
- Prepositions: Students do not discern yet about what preposition they should use in certain sentences. In fact, they do not know that in English the main locative prepositions are, **in, on, to** and **at**; they rather only know that since in Spanish we only use “**en**”, they should use same preposition for every sentence they write. So, the preposition they prefer using most of the time is “**in**”.
- Auxiliaries: Learners of English tend to find it difficult to manipulate the various ways in which English uses auxiliary verbs. These include negation (e.g. *He hasn't been drinking.*), inversion with the subject to form a question (e.g. *Has he been drinking?*), short answers (e.g. *Yes, he has.*) and tag questions (*has he?*). A further complication is that the

dummy auxiliary verb *do /does /did* is added to fulfil these functions in the simple present and simple past, but not for the verb *to be*. Auxiliaries are not used in Spanish the same way as they are in English and therefore students who are learning English may make mistakes with them.

- Word order: Spanish-speaking students usually use inappropriate word order:  
\*“*He in kitchen has lunch*”, instead of “*He has his lunch in the kitchen*”; or  
\*“*Bobby is a black beautiful dog*”, instead of “*Bobby is a beautiful black dog*”.

In the lexicon section, the included variables are:

- False cognates: A false cognate is a Spanish word that looks or sounds similar to an English word but has a totally different meaning.
- Invented words: Most students utilize this strategy when they feel that their English lexicon is not good enough to express their ideas; as a result, they look for a “valid” word in English according to their own thoughts.
- Inflection: The next indicator I will analyze has to do with interference learners produce in inflections, but mostly through the use of suffixes where generally issue of third person is wrongly handled by students probably because of the negative transfer of lexical structures from the native language into structures of the second language.

For instance, in the following example:

\*“*Its flavor never change*”

We can infer that the student literally transferred from Spanish into English what s/he wanted to express; that is, “*Su sabor nunca cambia*”, since in Spanish structures we do not add the marker **s** to third persons as English does.

With all this information, a quantitative study was carried out, with the aim of showing how the students’ writing performance improved during the study.

The functional or positivist paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of inquiry is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective

ontological structure and that individuals are responding agents to this objective environment (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data (Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically.

Being deductive and particularistic, quantitative research is based upon formulating the research hypotheses and verifying them empirically on a specific set of data (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992).

The strengths of the quantitative method include:

- Stating the research problem in very specific and set terms (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992);
- Clearly and precisely specifying both the independent and the dependent variables under investigation;
- Following firmly the original set of research goals, arriving at more objective conclusions, testing hypothesis, determining the issues of causality;
- Achieving high levels of reliability of gathered data due to controlled observations, laboratory experiments, mass surveys, or other form of research manipulations (Balsley, 1970);
- Eliminating or minimizing subjectivity of judgment (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996);
- Allowing for longitudinal measures of subsequent performance of research subjects.

The weaknesses of the quantitative method include:

- Failure to provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation where the studied phenomenon occurs;
- Inability to control the environment where the respondents provide the answers to the questions in the survey;
- Limited outcomes to only those outlined in the original research proposal due to closed type questions and the structured format;
- Not encouraging the evolving and continuous investigation of a research phenomenon.

## 5. Results

After the three stages of the task, a total of 21 compositions were collected.

One of the main objectives of this study is to prove that the skill of writing is a very useful tool in order to improve the general level of the students' performance in English. For this reason, the quantitative charts that were used had to show a progressive decrease in the number of occurrences of the errors committed when writing English.

Another key factor in this study is to prove the effectiveness of the use of the pre-writing techniques and drafting techniques, and the use of the "Underlining" and "Essay correction code", and because of that, after the application of them, there should be again a decrease in the number of errors.

These two hypothesis were questioned by means of a quantitative analysis, in which there would be analyzed the number of total errors and the percentages related to each of the categories (subject pronouns, definite article, double negation, adjectives, prepositions, auxiliaries, word order, verbal tenses, false cognates, invented words and inflection).

In order to make the progress more visual, different bar charts were created using the data obtained from the quantitative analysis. There are three diagrams for each student: one represents "Draft 1", the second one represents the data of "Draft 2", and the third one depicts the information from the "Final version".

With the results I also designed three circle graphs showing the general progress of the sample during the three stages of the project.

The compositions, quantitative charts, bar charts and circle graphics are as follows:

Name: Student 1	Topic: Alien fears
Draft 1	
<p><i>There is some people who is affraid to aliens. But does that have sense? If they really exist, must we be scared of them?</i></p> <p><i>There is a lot of hypothesis about the existence of non-earth beings. Ones say that it doesn't exist and if they do, they live too far for knowing anything about them. Other believe that they exist but we don't connect between us because we don't know where the others are in the huge space.</i></p> <p><i>In another way, there is a theory about the begging of the evolution in the Earth. It's about the first microscopical beings that evolutes in the animals that now live with us. If that theory were true, it would mean that there is life in another planets and some of this beings would have come here and become into us and into other animals.</i></p> <p><i>We don't know certainly if they exist or not, but this unknowledge has been exploted in a lot of films, novels or even series.</i></p>	

Name: Student 1	Topic: Alien fears
Draft 2	
<p><i>There are people who thinks that we are the only beings in the universe and people who doesn't think that... But who is right?</i></p> <p><i>Independently, this idea has been exploited in the medias for example, at the very beginning of the radio there was a radio programme called "the war of the worlds" which is about the alien invasion to the earth. This made people panic because of the programme was very realistic and believable.</i></p> <p><i>In another way, there have been a lot of sightings of alien spaceship. Even, there was a massive sighting in Britain, where three lights, that doesn't belong to a plane, were seen.</i></p> <p><i>A theory related to the origin of the life in the Earth said that the first beings that evoluted in the animals that now live here came from a meteorite.</i></p> <p><i>To sum up, they can exist or not but their influence in the society is very notable. Even the "freaks" are usual interested in UFOs and aliens because aliens appear in a lot of science fiction.</i></p>	

Name: Student 1	Topic: Alien fears
Final version	
<p data-bbox="225 792 1359 887"><i>There are people who think that we are the only beings in the universe and people who don't think so... But, who is right?</i></p> <p data-bbox="225 904 1359 1104"><i>Independently, this idea has been used in the media for example, at the very beginning of the radio there was a radio programme called "the war of the worlds" which was about the alien invasion of the earth. This made people panic because the programme was very realistic and believable.</i></p> <p data-bbox="225 1122 1359 1216"><i>Furthermore, there have been a lot of sightings of alien spaceships. Even, there was a massive sighting in Britain, where three lights, that weren't coming from a plane, were seen.</i></p> <p data-bbox="225 1234 1359 1328"><i>A theory related to the origin of the life in the Earth affirms that the first beings that evolved in the animals that nowadays live here, came from a meteorite.</i></p> <p data-bbox="225 1346 1359 1491"><i>To sum up, aliens can exist or not, but their influence in the society is very notable. Even the "freaks" are usually interested in UFOs and aliens and they appear in a lot of science fiction films.</i></p>	



STUDENT 1: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	2 (11.7%)	17 (100%)	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	-	-	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	3 (17.6%)	17 (100%)	3 (25%)	12 (100%)	-	-
AUXILIARIES	1 (5.8%)	17 (100%)	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	-	-	-	-	-	-
VERBS	2 (11.7%)	17 (100%)	4 (33.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	-	-	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	2 (11.7%)	17 (100%)	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-
INFLECTION	3 (17.6%)	17 (100%)	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	4 (23.5%)	17 (100%)	-	-	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Total:	17		12		2	

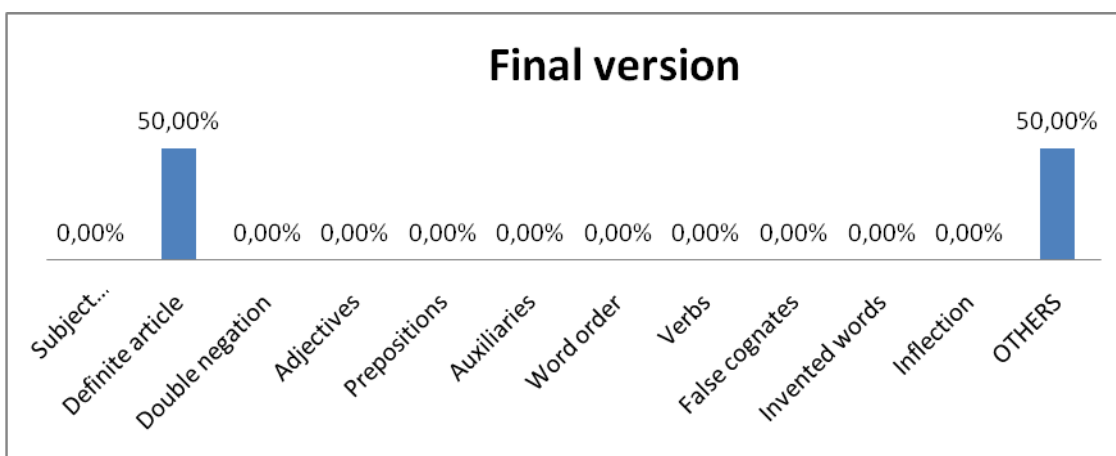
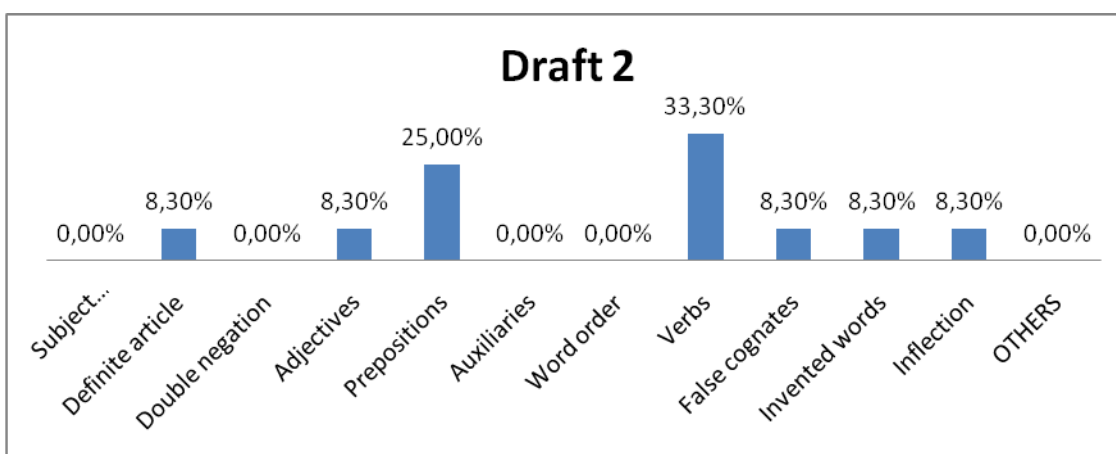
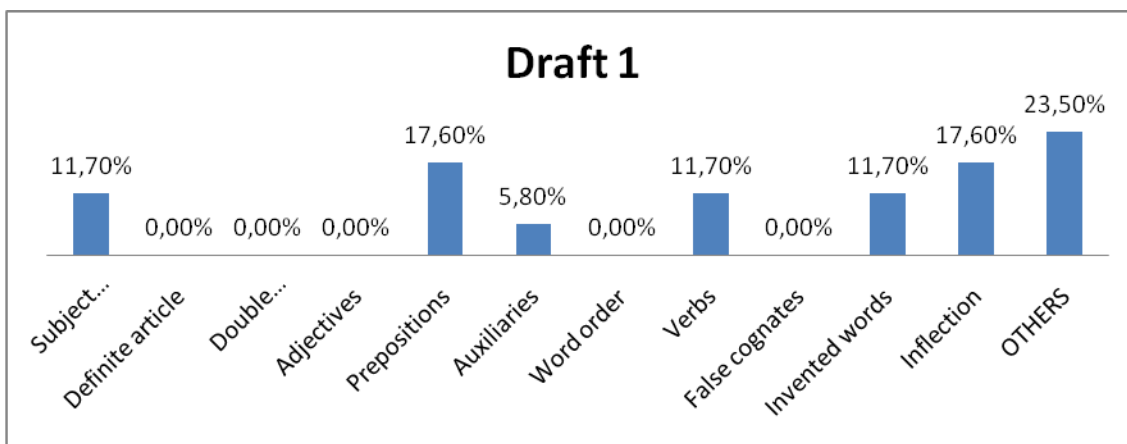
Since the first draft, Student 1 displayed the writing correctly, establishing correct paragraph distinction for the introduction, development and conclusion of the topic.

His/Her first piece of writing included mainly spelling errors (*\*affraid*, *\*microscopical*, *\*exploted*) although the number of errors in relation to prepositions was significant too (17,6%). After the first correction, s/he decided to follow a “Quickwriting” pre-writing strategy, which helped him / her to get more ideas to add to the original one.

In the second attempt, the number of errors decreased (from 17 to 12), but in this case, his/ her weak point was related to verbs. Errors related to verbs included aspects such as “noun-verb agreement” (e.g. *\*"people who thinks"*) and the use of wrong verbal tenses (e.g. *\*"which is about"*, *\*"that doesn't belong"*- in both cases referring to the past).

The use of the correction code was crucial for the completion of the task, and in the final version we can see how the student only made 2 errors.

## Student 1: progress



Name: Student 2	Topic: Brothers or sisters?
Draft 1	
<p><i>I'm a girl who lives in a small town, I'm sixteen years old and I have two brothers who are older than me, when I was a child I used to play with them but now I don't talk very much with them, I would like to have a sister because I could talk a lots of things (boys, make-up, clothers) with her, but have brothers isn't so bad because they can protect you if you have troubles or they can show you the male brain, so I'm happy with my brothers they're negatives and positives things like all things in the life.</i></p>	

Name: Student 2	Topic: Brothers or sisters?
Draft 2	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Having brothers and sisters is good or bad? and which of them are the best?</i></p> <p><i>I'm a girl who lives in a small town near the cost and I have two brothers, their names are Antonio and Luis who are older than me.</i></p> <p><i>A few years ago I used to play with them but nowadays I don't talk to them very much. I wanted to know How do you feel when you have sisters? I think that I would be very happy with sisters I could talk about a lot of things (boys, make-up, clothers) with them. Although having brothers isn't so bad because they can protect you if you have troubles or they can also show you the male brain.</i></p> <p><i>In short I'm really happy with my brothers but I wouldn't mind having sisters, both have negative and positive things like all the things in the life, so having brothers and sisters is the best. But I think that being only child isn't so bad because you could inherit all.</i></p>	

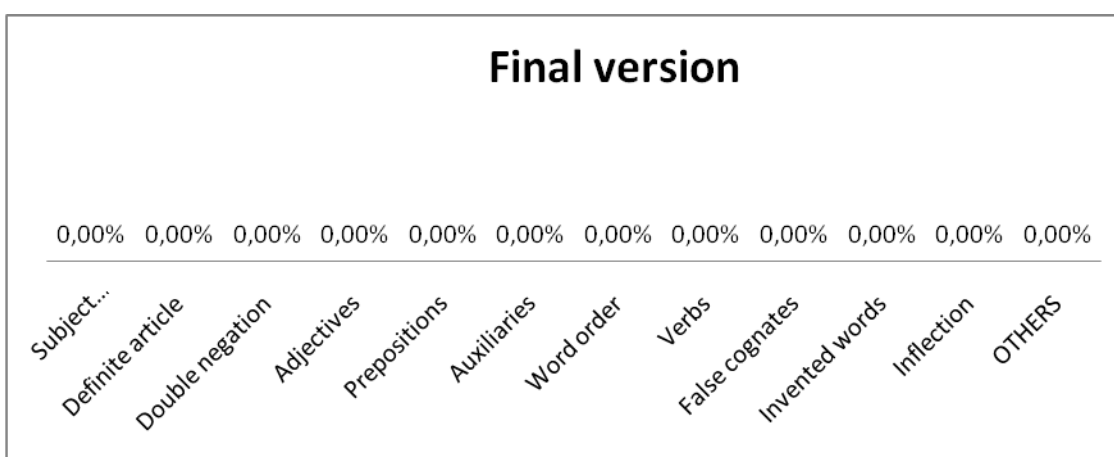
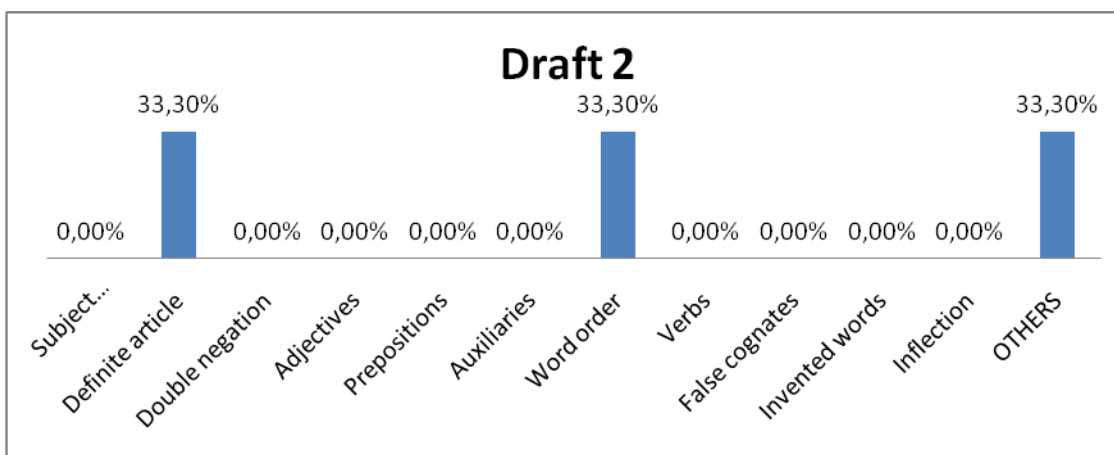
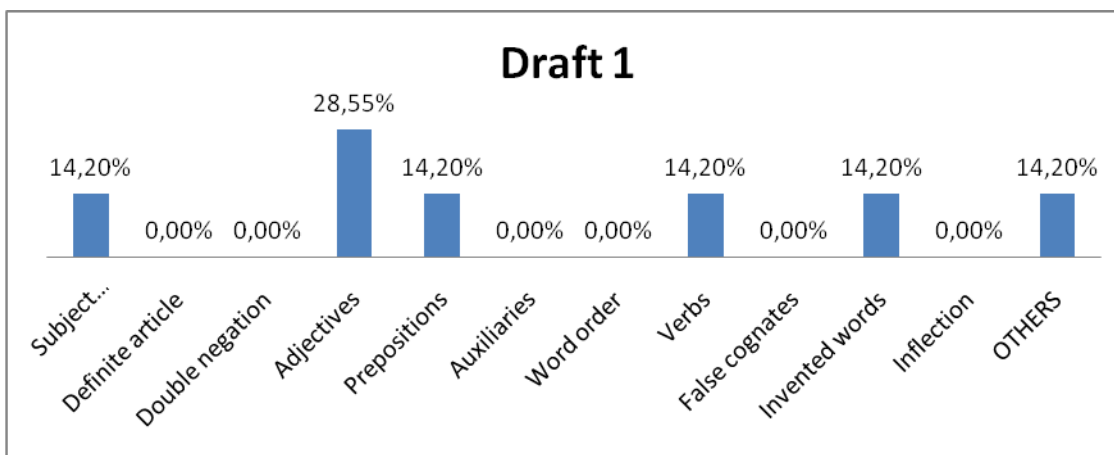
Name: Student 2	Topic: Brothers or sisters?
Final version	
<p><i>Having brothers and sisters... is it good or bad? and another question, which of them is the best?</i></p> <p><i>I'm a girl who lives in a small town near the coast and I have two brothers, their names are Antonio and Luis. They both are older than me.</i></p> <p><i>A few years ago I used to play with them but nowadays I don't talk to them very much. I would like to know: How do you feel when you have a sister? I think that I would be very happy, because with a sister I could talk about a lot of things (boys, make-up, clothes). But having brothers isn't so bad, because they can protect you if you have troubles or they can also show you the male brain works.</i></p> <p><i>In short I'm really happy with my brothers but I wouldn't mind having sisters, both have negative and positive things like everything, so having brothers and sisters is for me the best. But I think that being only child isn't so bad because you could inherit all your family's fortune!.</i></p>	

STUDENT 2: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	1 (14.2%)	7 (100%)	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	-	-	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	2 (28.5%)	-	-	-	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	1 (14.2%)	7 (100%)	-	-	-	-
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	-	-	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	-	-
VERBS	1 (14.2%)	7 (100%)	-	-	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	-	-	-	-	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	1 (14.2%)	7 (100%)	-	-	-	-
INFLECTION	-	7 (100%)	-	-	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	1 (14.2%)	7 (100%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	-	-
Total:	7		3		-	

In the first draft, Student 2's performance resulted in a composition made up by just one sentence. S/he didn't structure the writing and because of that the result was just one paragraph. Not many errors were found here (only 7) and they were of varied origin: prepositions (\*"could talk a lots of things"), pluralization of adjectives (\*"negatives and positives things"), wrong use of verbal forms (\*"have brothers" instead of "Having brothers"). After the first correction, s/he decided to follow a "Brainstorming" pre-writing technique, which helped him/her to add more ideas and to structure the original draft. In the second attempt, the number of errors decreased (from 7 to 3) and in this case the errors included word order (\*"Having brothers or sister is good or bad?"), misuse of the definite article (\*"things in the life") and a spelling error (\*"clothers" instead of "clothes").

The final version of his /her writing activity presented no errors and a correct layout including paragraphs for the introduction, development and conclusion of the topic.

## Student 2: progress



Name: Student 3	Topic: Being late again
Draft 1	
<p><i>I don't know how can I do it, but always there is something which doesn't let me to be on time.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes I really try to arrive on time when I meet my friends or when I have class, but an example very simple is that every morning I have to get up to go to school and I go with my friends. So every morning they have to wait for me, I'm a bit embarrassed when I see they're waiting, but I've already tried to wake up earlier, but I can't and if I can is my mum who entertain me, or I don't find my shoes or any thing!</i></p> <p><i>I think I'd have to get better this actitud, but by the moment I can't improve it! Ask to my English teacher she's always complaining about it... I'll go on trying it!</i></p>	

Name: Student 3	Topic: Being late again
Draft 2	
<p><i>I don't know how can I do it, but there is always something which makes me not to be on time.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes I really try to arrive on time when I meet my friends or when I have class, but a very simple example is that every morning I have to get up to go to school and I go with my friends. So everyday they have to wait for me, I'm a bit embarrassed when I see they're waiting. Although I've already tried to wake up earlier, I can't and if I can is my mum who entertains me or I don't find my shoer or anything else!</i></p> <p><i>I think I should improve this attitude, but by the moment I can't change it! Ask to my English teacher she's always complaining about it... I'll go on trying it!</i></p>	

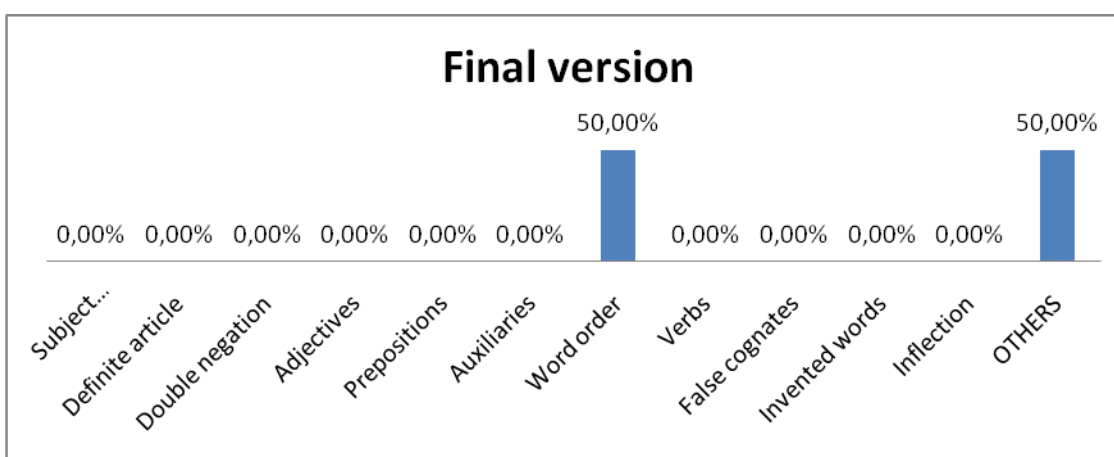
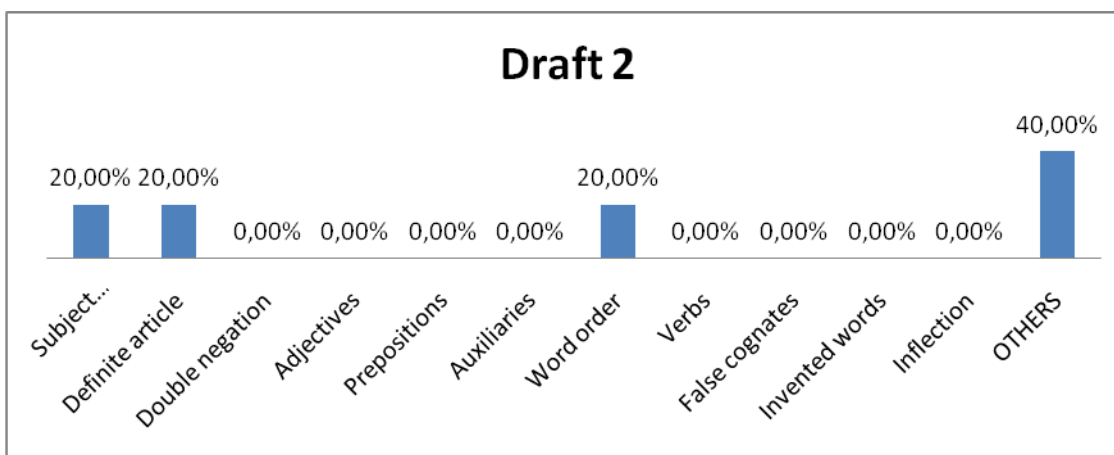
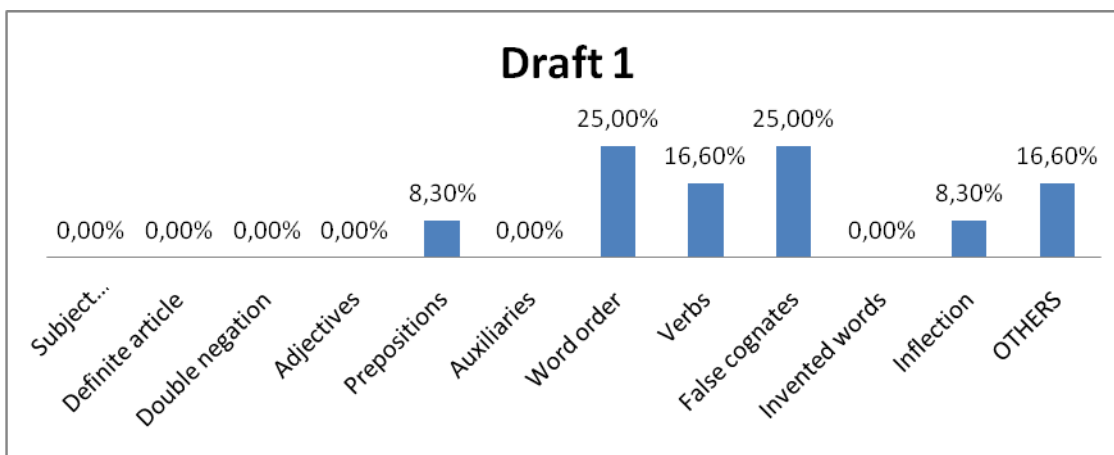
Name: Student 3	Topic: Being late again
Final version	
<p><i>I don't know how can I do it, but there is always something which makes me being late.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes I really try to arrive on time when I meet my friends or when I have a class. A very simple example is that every morning I have to get up to go to school and I go with my friends and it means that every day they have to wait for me and I really feel a bit embarrassed when I see they're waiting. Although I've already tried to wake up earlier, I can't and if I can, it is my mum who Interrupts me or I don't find my shoes or whatever!</i></p> <p><i>I think I should stop being so unpunctual, but by the moment I can't change it! Ask to my English teacher she's always complaining about it, but I'll go on trying it!</i></p>	



STUDENT 3: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	-	-	1 (20%)	5 (100%)	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	-	-	1 (20%)	5 (100%)	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	-	-	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-	-	-
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	3 (25%)	12 (100%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
VERBS	2 (16.6%)	12 (100%)	-	-	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	3 (25%)	12 (100%)	-	-	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	-	-	-	-	-	-
INFLECTION	1 (8.3%)	12 (100%)	-	-	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	2 (16.6%)	12 (100%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Total:	12		5		2	

Student 3 presented a well structured composition since the first draft. His /her most notable errors included word order (\*"always there is", \*"example very simple") and false cognates (\*"entertain"). S/he was told to add punctuation to the second paragraph of the composition, as it was too long. The second draft was then better structured including connectors to make the text more cohesive. In what concerns to the errors, there was an important decrease (from 12 to 5), reducing those about word order and using appropriately all the verbs. The final draft of the composition still presented a word order error that was present since the beginning of the activity (\*"I don't know how can I do it"), but in general terms there was an important fall in the number of errors (from 12 to 1).

## Student 3: progress



Name: Student 4	Topic: Old people
Draft 1	
<p><i>I love the old people. When I go to my village, I spend a lot of time with my grandfather and his old friends. They are always sitting in a seat all the day and they sometimes talking of politic and the future.</i></p> <p><i>My grandfather tells me a lot of histories that he lived when he was a child, he lived in the time of war and he suffered a lot. His mother died when he was a child and he looked after all his family, furthermore he worked when he was 11 years. All his histories are sad but very exciting.</i></p> <p><i>In general the old people are an “open book”.</i></p>	

Name: Student 4	Topic: Old people
Draft 2	
<p><i>I love old people. When I go to my village, I spend a lot of time with my grandfather and his old friends. They are always sitting in a bench all the day and they sometimes talk of politics and about the future.</i></p> <p><i>My grandfather tells me lot of stories that he lived when he was a child, he lived in the wars years and he suffered a lot. His mother died when he was a child and he looked after all his family, furthermore he worked when he was 11 years. All his stories are sad but very exciting.</i></p> <p><i>In general old people are an “open book”.</i></p>	

Name: Student 4	Topic: Old people
Final version	
<p><i>I love old people. When I go to my village, I spend a lot of time with my grandfather and his old friends. They spend the day sitting in a bench, sometimes talking of politics and about the future.</i></p> <p><i>My grandfather likes telling me a lot of stories that he lived when he was a child. He lived during the war years and as a consequence, he suffered a lot. His mother died when he was a child and he had to look after all his family, furthermore he started working when he was 11 years old. All his stories are sad but very exciting.</i></p> <p><i>In general old people are like an “open book” that can teach us about the past and life.</i></p>	

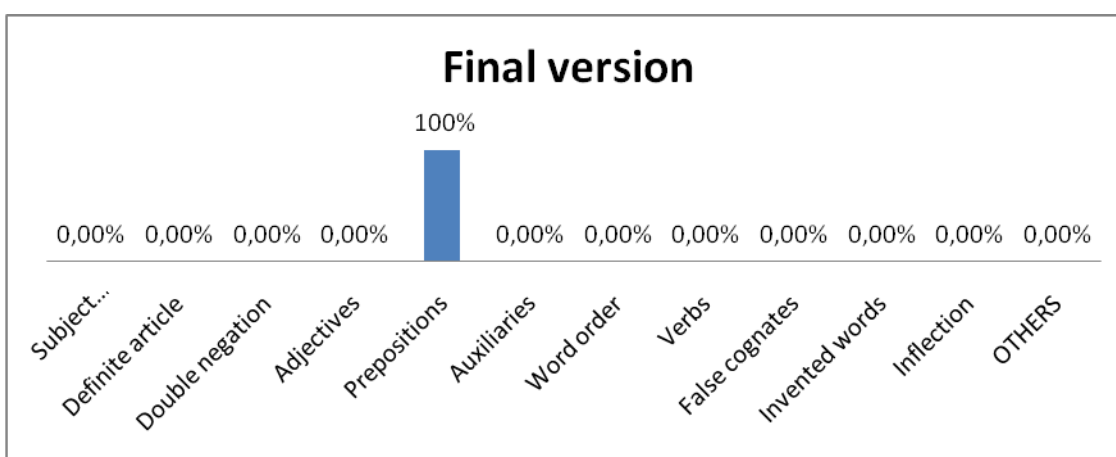
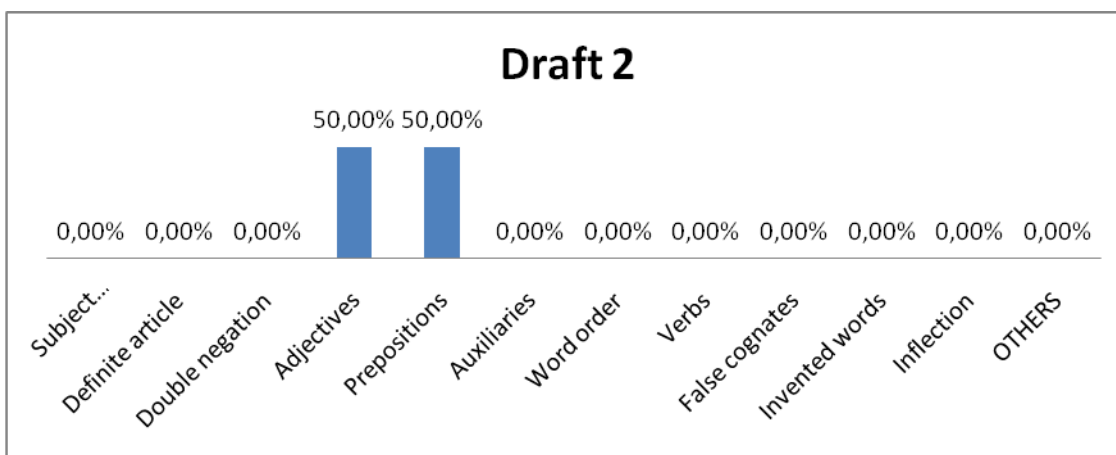
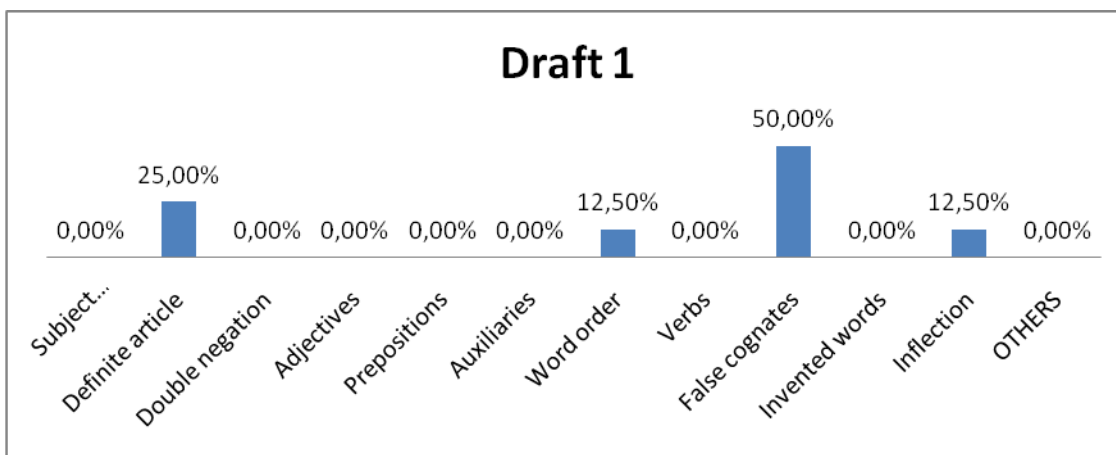
STUDENT 4: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	-	-	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	2 (25%)	8 (100%)	-	-	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	-	-	1 (50%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)	-	-	-	-
VERBS	-	-	-	-	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	4 (50%)	8 (100%)	-	-	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	-	-	-	-	-	-
INFLECTION	1 (12.5%)	8 (100%)	-	-	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:	8		2		1	

Since the first draft, Student 4 displayed the writing correctly, establishing correct paragraph distinction for the introduction, development and conclusion of the topic.

His /her first piece of writing included mainly false cognates (*“histories”*, *“politic”*) and the misuse of the definite article (*“the old people”*). After the first correction, the number of errors decreased (from 8 to 2), in this case adding an error related to the pluralization of adjectives (*“the wars years”*).

In the final version, the author included more elaborated expressions (*“My grandfather likes telling me a lot of stories”*) and it only presented a unique error in the misuse of a preposition (*“talking of politics”*).

## Student 4: progress



Name: Student 5	Topic: Running a marathon
Draft 1	
<p><i>I like practising all types of sports because I'm a very fit and healthy boy. Now I'm training to run a marathon so I have to train hard every day, five or six hours per day and I have to have a special diet. the marathon is in three months so I have some yet to improve my running and to rise the options to win the race, the problem is Pedro, my main competitor who has got a fantastic time last race so I'm a bit worried but I think if I believe in my options I can win.</i></p>	

Name: Student 5	Topic: Running a marathon
Draft 2	
<p><i>I like practising all types of sports because I'm very fit and healthy boy.</i></p> <p><i>Now I'm training to run a marathon because I have already got my last challenge (swim the distance between Africa and Spain) so, I have to train hard every day 5 or 6 hours per day. I have to have a special diet too. The marathon is in three months so I have still time to improve my running and to rise the options to win the race. The problem is Pedro, my main rival who has got a fantastic time in the last race and now I'm not it enough.</i></p> <p><i>I'm a bit worried about that but I think if I believe in my options I can win. Good luck for both.</i></p>	

Name: Student 5	Topic: Running a marathon
Final version	
<p><i>I like practising all types of sports because I'm a very fit and healthy boy.</i></p> <p><i>Now I'm training to run a marathon because I have already got my last challenge (swimming the distance between Africa and Spain) so, I have to train hard every day (about 5 or 6 hours per day). I also have to have a special diet.</i></p> <p><i>The marathon is in three months so I still have time to improve my running and to rise the possibilities to win the race. The problem is Pedro, my main rival who got a fantastic time in the last race and I feel now I'm not fit enough.</i></p> <p><i>I'm a bit worried about that but I think that if trust in my chances I can win. Good luck for both.</i></p>	

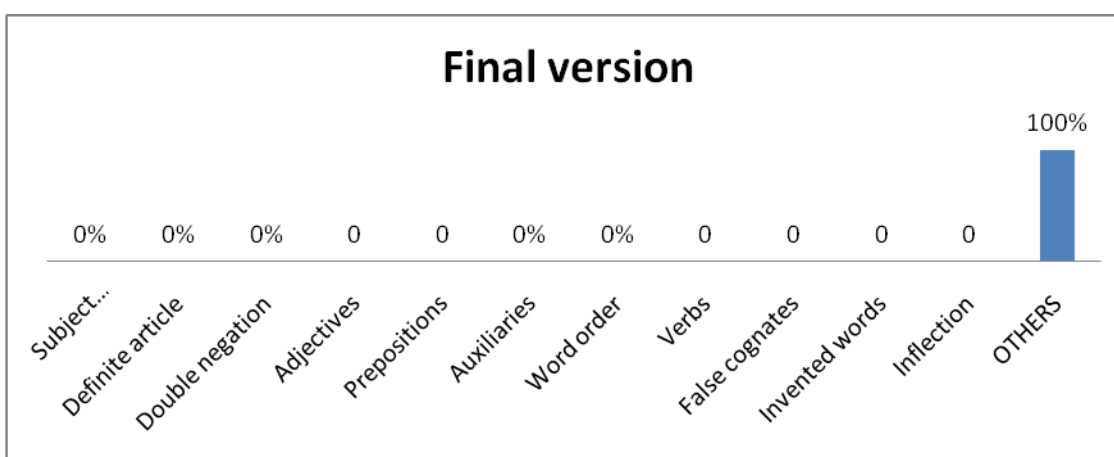
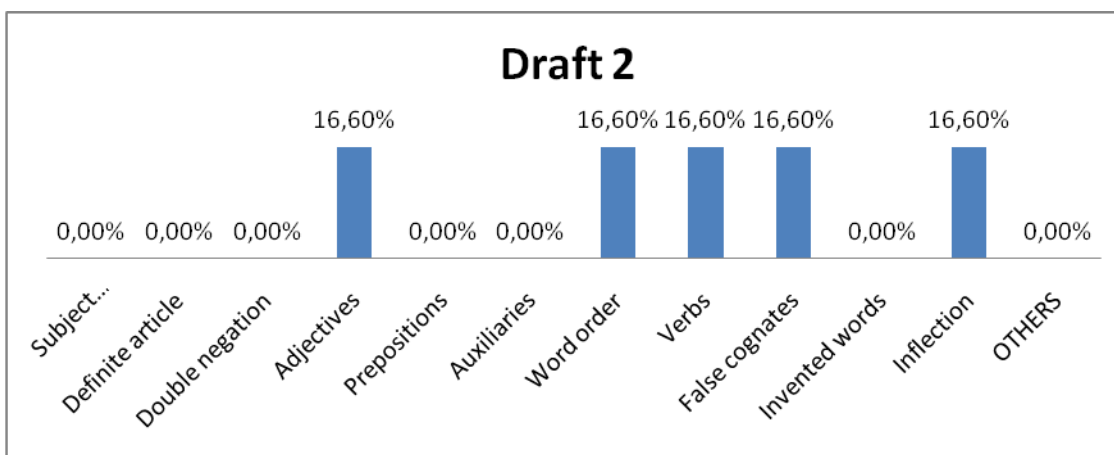
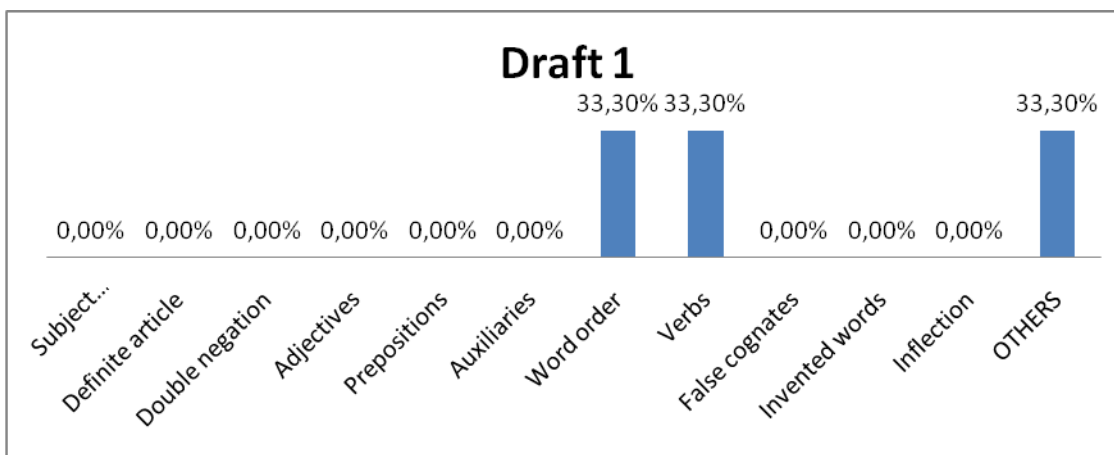


STUDENT 5: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	-	-	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	-	-	-	-	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	-	-	-	-	-	-
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	-	-
VERBS	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	-	-	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	-	-	-	-	-	-
INFLECTION	-	-	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	1 (33.3%)	3 (100%)	1 (16.6%)	6 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Total:	3		6		1	

In the first draft, Student 5 didn't use any structural devices to express his/her ideas. Everything was included in a single paragraph which was made up just by three sentences. There were not many errors, just one error in relation to word order, another one for verbal tense, and a last one related to spelling. In the first correction I recommended this student to use a different organization with different paragraphs to make his / her ideas clearer.

After my recommendations, Student 5 used a "Clustering" pre-writing technique that helped him / her to give a well structure to the piece of writing. Surprisingly the number of errors increased (going from 3 to 6). After applying the correction code there was again a fall in the number of errors, and the resulting writing just included one spelling error ("practising").

## Student 5: progress



Name: Student 6	Topic: Things I've lost
Draft 1	
<p><i>I'm a girl who lose everything I have. My mother always tell me I'm very immature and I shouldn't have values things, although she spends her life buying new clothes or something for me.</i></p> <p><i>I have lost a lot of things like gold earrings, my first communion's necklace, my father's new camera and some Rayban glasses too. Well, I've lost more things, but these things were very important to me so I've cried a lot for them.</i></p> <p><i>I remember perfectly when I lost my last sunglasses. Last year I was on the London airport, I came from a school trip, so I was tired and I had to have all my bags with my new clothes, so I wore my new sunglasses on my head. Finally, I got into the plane and when I look myself I had not the glasses. But now, I don't mine because last month I founded a Carrera glasses on a café. It was the first time I had lucky.</i></p>	

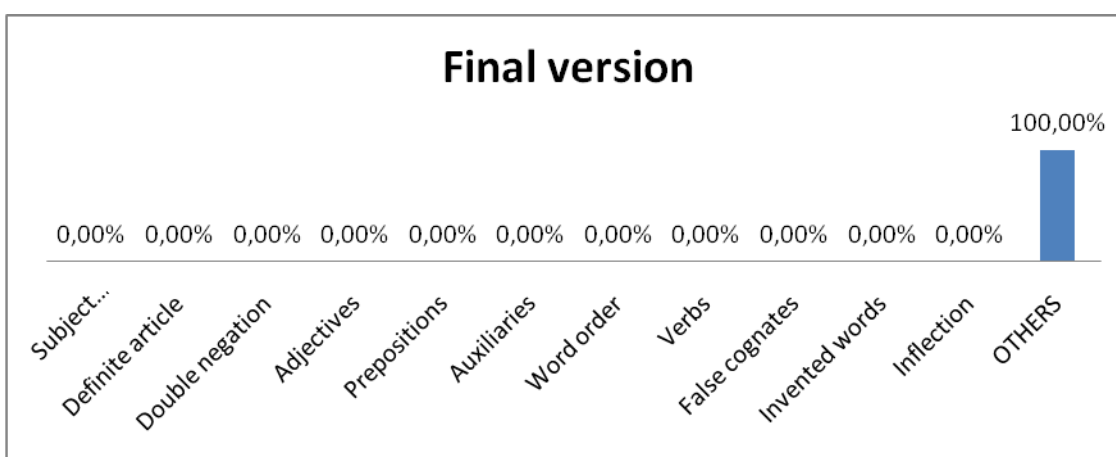
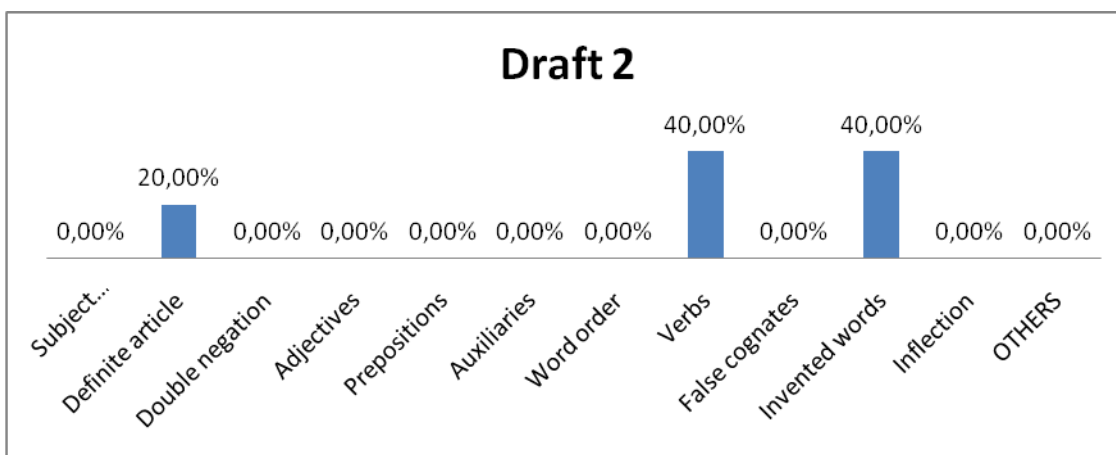
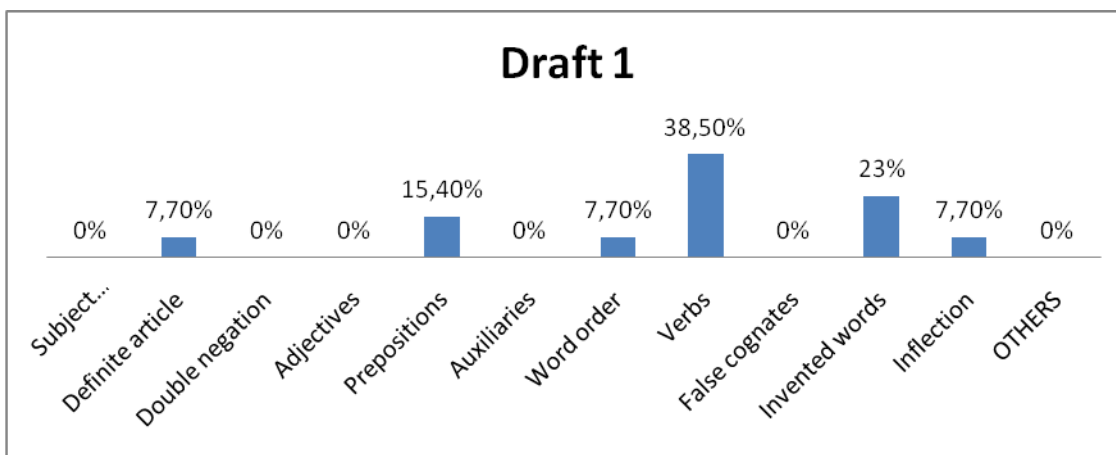
Name: Student 6	Topic: Things I've lost
Draft 2	
<p><i>I'm a girl who loses everything I have. My mother always tells me I'm very immature and I shouldn't have valuable things, although she spends her life buying new clothes or something for me.</i></p> <p><i>I've lost a lot of things like gold earrings, my first communion's necklace, my father's new camera and some Rayban glasses too well, I've lost more things, but these things were very important to me so I've cried a lot for them.</i></p> <p><i>I perfectly remember when I lost my last sunglasses. Last year I was at the London airport, I came from a school trip, so I was tired and I had to have all my bags with my new clothes, so I wore my sunglasses on my head. Finally, I got into the plane and when I look myself, I hadn't got the glasses. But now, I don't mind because last month I've found a Carrera glasses in a café. It was the first time I've had lucky.</i></p>	

Name: Student 6	Topic: Things I've lost
Final version	
<p><i>I'm a girl who loses everything I have. My mother is always telling me that I'm very immature and that I shouldn't have valuable things, although she spends her life buying new clothes and things for me.</i></p> <p><i>I've lost a lot of things like gold earrings, my first communion's necklace, my father's new camera and some Rayban glasses too! Well, I've lost more things, but the ones I've mentioned were very important for me so I've cried a lot for them.</i></p> <p><i>I perfectly remember when I lost my last sunglasses. Last year I was at the London airport, I was coming back from a school trip, so I was tired and I had to have all my bags with my new clothes, so I wore my sunglasses on my head. Finally, I got into the plane and when I looked to myself, I didn't have the glasses. But now, I don't mind because last month I found other sunglasses in a café. It has been the first time I've had a lucky strike!</i></p>	

STUDENT 6: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	-	-	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	1 (7.7%)	13 (100%)	1 (20%)	5 (100%)	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	-	-	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	2 (15.4%)	13 (100%)	-	-	-	-
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	1 (7.7%)	13 (100%)	-	-	-	-
VERBS	5 (38.5%)	13 (100%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	-	-	-	-	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	3 (23%)	13 (100%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)	-	-
INFLECTION	1 (7.7%)	13 (100%)	-	-	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	-	-	-	-	1 (100%)	1 (100%)
Total:	13		5		1	

Student 6 presented a clear structure since draft one. There were clear limits for the introduction, development and conclusion of the topic, but the errors were present too. The most important ones were referred to the misuse of verbal tenses and verbal forms (38,5%): e.g. “*had not*” instead of “*didn’t have*”, “*I founded*” instead of “*I found*”. After the first correction, this student decided not to use any pre-writing technique, and just concentrate in the errors that I had underlined. For the second draft, there was a decrease in the number of errors (from 13 to 5) and the final version just included a spelling error (“*althug*”).

## Student 6: progress



Name: Student 7	Topic: Lazy days
Draft 1	
<p>5<sup>th</sup> August 2011.</p> <p>Today... I haven't done anything special. I have slept until half past eleven, then I have had breakfast. The same breakfast that I ate yesterday ... and the previous day: some toasts and a cup of coffee. I didn't know what to do. I felt like going to the beach and sunbathing, so I phoned a friend and we went to the beach. At the afternoon I did the siesta... I think I should change, I have been all the summer doing nothing but sleep, eat, and go to the beach... I'm very lazy, I wasn't... but now... It's late, I'm going to sleep.</p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> August 2011.</p> <p>I have decided something... I'll definitely change. I won't waste the rest of the summer. This is my plan: I'm going to get up at 10 o'clock, and, after having breakfast, I'm going to do some exercise to keep fit. Afterwards I'm going to the beach but only one hour. Then I'm going to make lunch, because my parents are working and they'll be pleased if they find everything ok when they get home. In the afternoon I won't do the siesta no more, I'll see a film, meet friends, visit the family but I won't definitely stay in, lying in the sofa. I will enjoy the summer I have decided and ... I think I won't write here again because I won't have time!</p>	

Name: Student 7	Topic: Lazy days
Draft 2	
<p>5<sup>th</sup> August 2011.</p> <p>Dear diary,</p> <p>Today ... I haven't done anything interesting. I have slept until half past eleven, then I have had breakfast, the same breakfast that I had yesterday ... and the previous day: some toasts and a cup of coffee. I didn't know what to do, I felt like going to the beach and sunbathing so I phoned a friend and then we went to the beach.</p> <p>At the afternoon I didn't have a nap ... I think I should change, I have been all the summer doing nothing but sleeping, eating and going to the beach... I'm very lazy, I wasn't... but now... It's late, I'm gonna sleep. Good night, dear diary... see ya tomorrow! ♥</p> <p>6<sup>th</sup> August 2011</p>	

*I have decided something, I'll definitely change, I won't waste the rest of the summer. This is my plan: I'm gonna get up at 10 o'clock, and, after having breakfast, I'm gonna do some exercise to keep fit. Afterwards I'm going to the beach but only for one hour. Then I'm going to make lunch, because my parents are working and they'll be pleased if they find everything ok when they get home.*

*In the afternoon I won't have a nap, I'll see a film, meet friends, visit the family but I won't definitely stay in, lying in the sofa. I will enjoy the summer I have decided and... I think I won't write here again because I won't have time! Goodnight... and ... I love you! hahaha*

Name: Student 7	Topic: Lazy days
Final version	
<p><i>5<sup>th</sup> August 2011.</i></p> <p><i>Dear diary,</i></p> <p><i>Today ... I haven't done anything interesting. I have slept until half past eleven, and then I have had breakfast, the same breakfast that I had yesterday ... and the previous day: some toasts and a cup of coffee. I didn't know what to do: I felt like going to the beach and sunbathing so I phoned a friend and then we went to the beach.</i></p> <p><i>At the afternoon I didn't have a nap ... I think I should change, I have been all the summer doing nothing but sleeping, eating and going to the beach... I'm very lazy; I wasn't... but now... It's late, I'm going to sleep. Good night, dear diary... see you tomorrow! ♥</i></p> <p><i>6<sup>th</sup> August 2011</i></p> <p><i>I have decided something, I'll definitely change, I won't waste the rest of the summer. This is my plan: I'm going to get up at 10 o'clock, and, after having breakfast, I'm going to do some exercise to keep fit. Afterwards I'm going to the beach but only for one hour. Then I'm going to prepare lunch, because my parents are working and they'll be pleased if they find everything ok when they get home.</i></p> <p><i>In the afternoon I won't have a nap, I'll see a film, meet friends, visit the family but I won't definitely stay in, lying in the sofa. I have decided I will enjoy the summer and... I think I won't write here again because I won't have time! Goodnight... and ... I love you! hahaha.</i></p>	

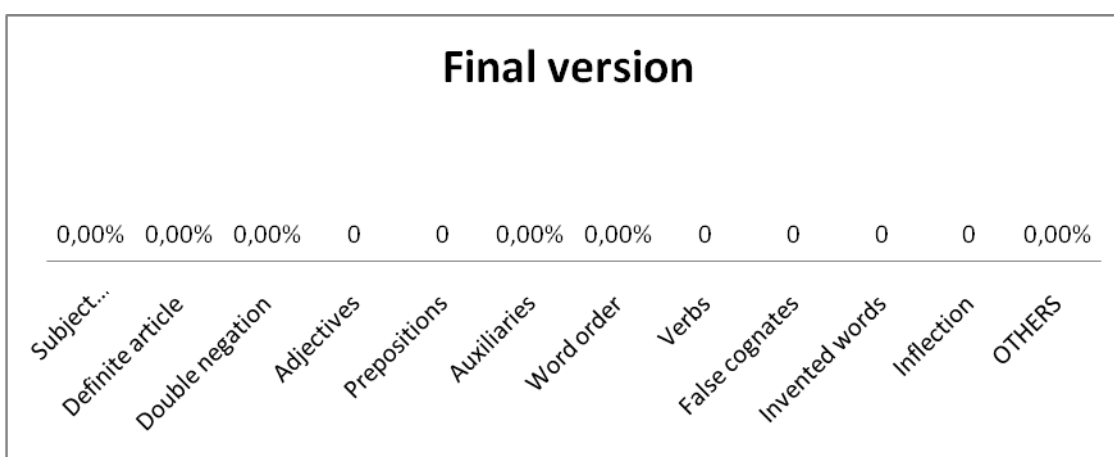
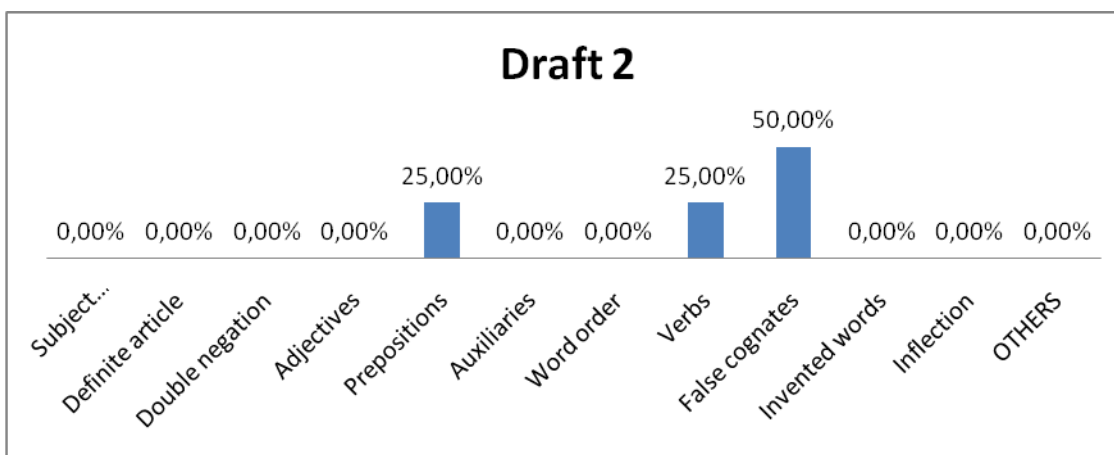
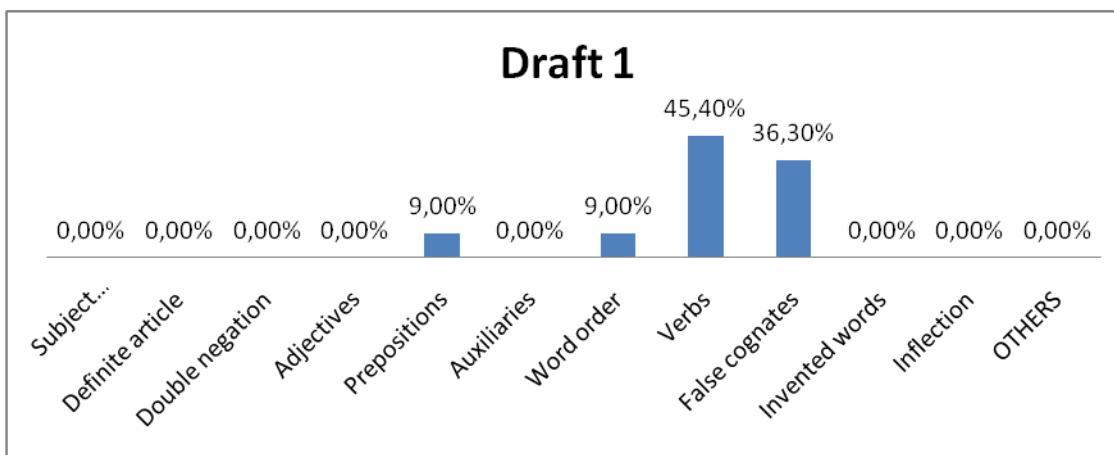


STUDENT 7: QUANTITATIVE TABULATION						
	DRAFT 1		DRAFT 2		FINAL VERSION	
GRAMMAR STRUCTURES						
SUBJECT PRONOUNS	-	-	-	-	-	-
DEFINITE ARTICLE	-	-	-	-	-	-
DOUBLE NEGATION	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADJECTIVES	-	-	-	-	-	-
PREPOSITIONS	1 (9%)	11 (100%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)	-	-
AUXILIARIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
WORD ORDER	1 (9%)	11 (100%)	-	-	-	-
VERBS	5 (45.4%)	11 (100%)	1 (25%)	4 (100%)	-	-
LEXICON						
FALSE COGNATES	4 (36.3%)	11 (100%)	2 (50%)	4 (100%)	-	-
INVENTED WORDS	-	-	-	-	-	-
INFLECTION	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHERS						
OTHERS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:	11		4		-	

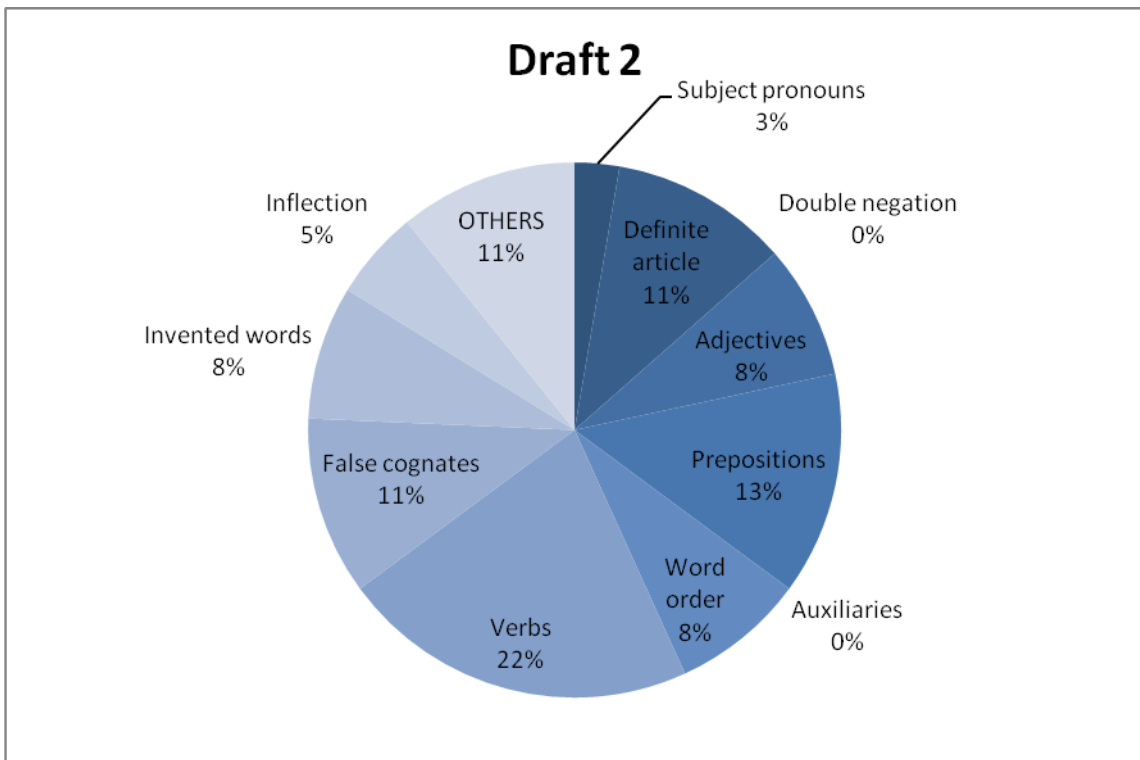
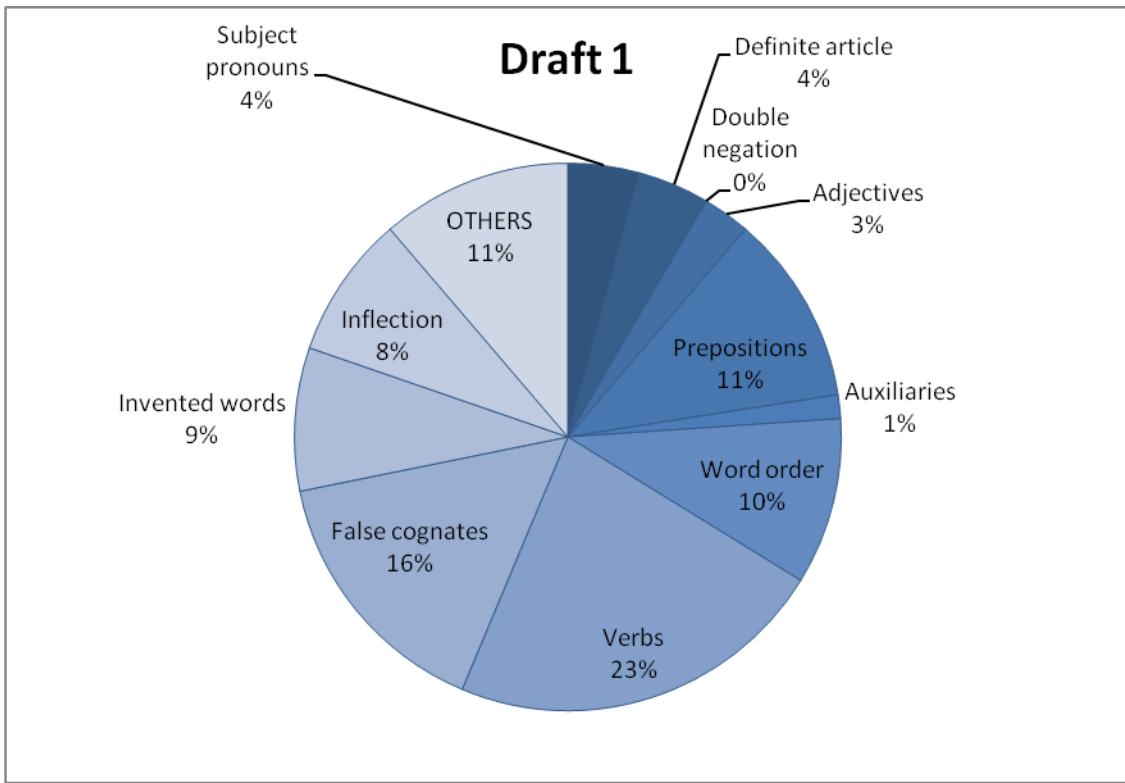
This student decided to write following the structure of a diary. It was a very original idea and I marked it positively in the comments I made. The main part of the errors in the first draft was in relation to the use of verbal forms. S/he tended to use the infinitive form when it was necessary to use de gerund (\*“*sleep, eat and go*” instead of “*sleeping, eating and going*”). There were also minor errors about prepositions and word order.

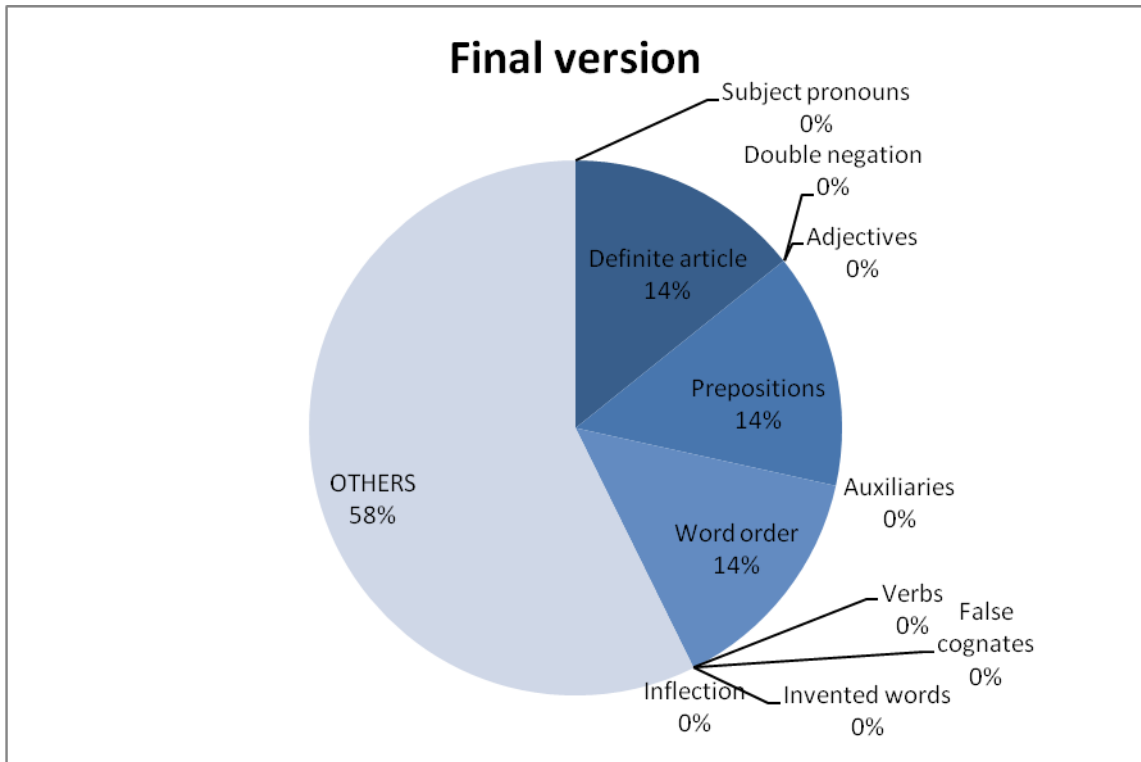
After the first correction the number of errors decreased (from 11 to 4) but this time, the student tended to use colloquial forms such as “*gonna*” (it appears three times). The writer included the use of an “emoticon”, very typical from text messages or chats (“♥”). I considered these would not negatively affect the correction of the writing as it was intended to be an informal piece of writing. There are not many differences between the first and the second draft, but it is important to highlight that the student used in the first draft the word “*siesta*” but in the second one, s/he preferred using the word “*nap*”. After using the correction code, no errors appeared in the final version of the writing.

## Student 7: progress



### General progress





## 6. General conclusions

In relation to the aims established at the beginning of this research, the obtained results lead to the following conclusions:

- ***The skill of writing is directly connected with the learning of a foreign language.*** Of the four language skills, writing is probably the most difficult. When we consider how hard it is for most people to write stylishly and clearly even in their native language, this is not surprising. Thus we cannot expect our students to produce very long or complicated written assignments in the early stages of their language study. Nonetheless, the ability to put at least some ideas into writing is an important part of mastering another language. Learning to be accurate in the production of written language is part of any foreign language course. Writing is a legitimate end in itself; it also involves motor memory, and it helps consolidate all aspects of what we are learning in the language.
- ***Students' awareness of the importance of using pre-writing and drafting techniques.*** Teachers should guide students through the writing process avoiding an emphasis on form to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and organizing ideas. Awareness of the importance of the writing process, as the results showed, is essential in the writing activity. Learners need to know that proceeding through the writing steps is not a waste of time; each stage contributes in making effective writing and in diminishing the troubles students face when they write.
- ***The use of pre-writing and drafting techniques improves students' writing performance.*** It has been proved that students' writings notably improved after the use of pre-writing and drafting techniques. Their function is helping to generate and organize ideas (e.g., focus on one topic; organize writing to include a beginning, middle and end; use descriptive words when writing about people, places, things, events).
- ***The use of "Underlining" and an "Essay correction code" makes students participants in the correction process.*** The results of the current study revealed that both types of feedback, underlining errors and correction codes, enabled learners to produce significantly more

accurate compositions. However, the coded feedback was significantly more effective in helping them to self-correct on the second draft.

Students' attitude in writing must be changed if writing is to be meaningful. Evans (2001) reports that the majority of students said a good piece of writing must be long, have all words spelt correctly, have correct punctuation to include capital letters and full stops and it must be neat. They paid more attention to the mechanical aspects of writing. It is desirable to change students' attitude in writing and prompt them to consider the content, audience, purpose or appropriateness of style in writing. According to Evans (2001), it is evident that to develop as effective writers, student need:

- The opportunity to try out things and to relate their previous knowledge to the personal situation;
- To feel able to take risks without being frightened of making mistakes;
- To be exposed to an adult role model who will sharing writing and the whole writing experience with them;
- To have something to write about and reasons to write.

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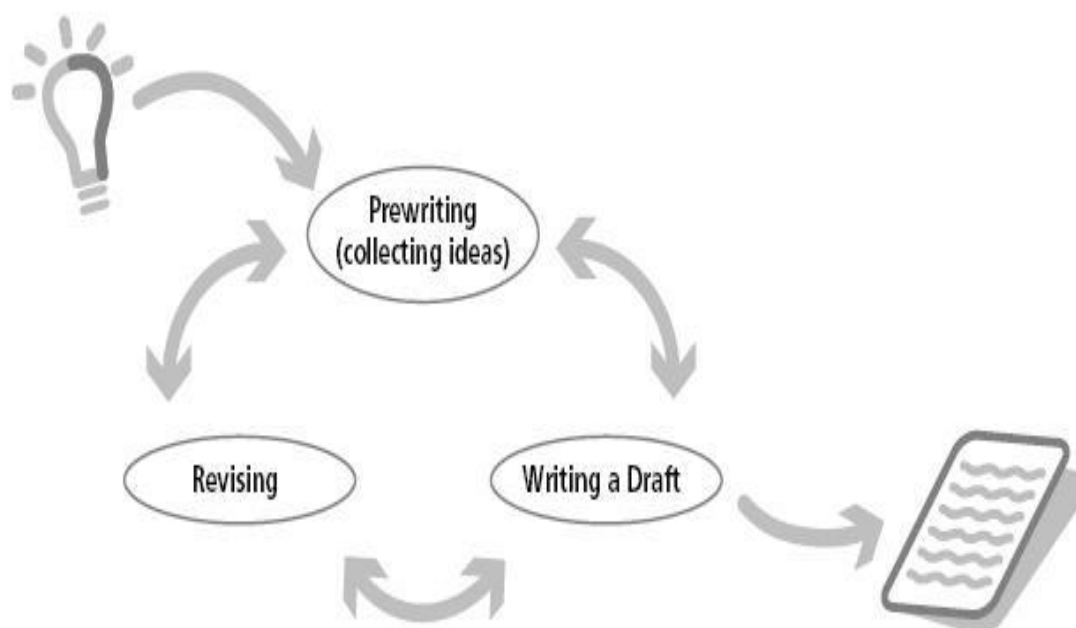
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## Annex 1

**The Writing Process**

No one can just sit down and, in one step, compose a polished piece of writing. Instead, writers go through a number of steps as they write. These steps or stages make up the writing process. The steps in the writing process are somewhat like dance steps. Instead of moving forward in a straight line, writers go forward a little and then back and then forward again. In other words, they think and collect ideas and then write and then go back and think again. As you can see in the diagram below, writing is a recursive, or nonlinear process.

**Prewriting**

*"I don't know what I think until I see what I've said."*

E.M. Forster

*"I write to find out what I'm talking about."*

Edward Albee

Prewriting is the first stage in the writing process. It's also the most important and the most interesting part. The purpose of the prewriting stage is to find a topic for writing, to collect ideas and information, and to do research if necessary. By the time you have finished prewriting, a lot of the hard work has already been done. It's not unusual for a writer to spend more time in the prewriting stage than in the writing stage. It's also common to return to the prewriting stage at various times during the writing process when you need to collect more ideas. On the following pages are some common strategies that writers use to collect and organize their ideas.

## Prewriting Strategies

### Quickwriting

Quickwriting is a good way to collect ideas for writing. Follow these instructions when you quickwrite.

- Write fast—as fast as you can.
- Don't worry about grammar or spelling.
- If your mind goes blank, write: *I can't think of anything to write. I can't think of anything to write.*
- Re-read your quickwriting and circle the ideas you might want to use in your writing.

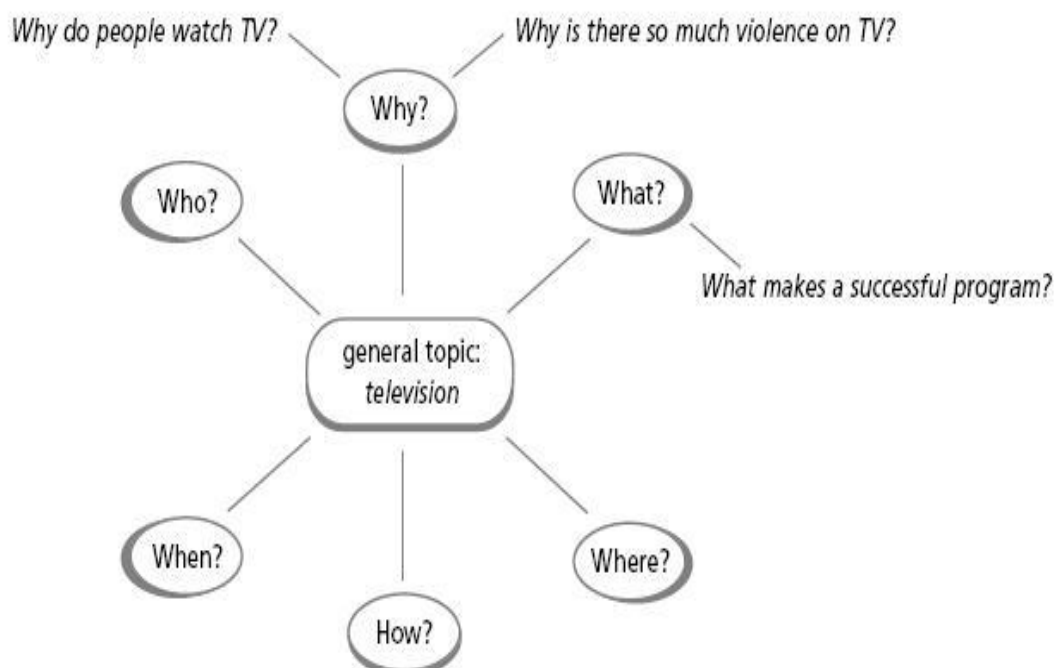
*Example:* We asked one person to quickwrite about television. Here's a small part of what he wrote.

*I don't know what my opinions about television are. I watch a little TV but I don't like to watch TV a lot. I really hate it when I go to someone's house and they leave the TV on. I don't know what to write. I don't know what to write. It makes me feel like they don't want to talk. I think a lot of the TV programs are pretty dumb. They are really a waste of time. It's one thing if a program is really funny. I mean, I'm not against watching TV just for the laughs, but most of the programs aren't even funny. There are some...*

### Questioning

Forming questions can help you come up with ideas for writing. Just think about your topic and write down any questions that come to mind. Afterward you can go back and underline the questions that you would like to explore further.

*Example:*



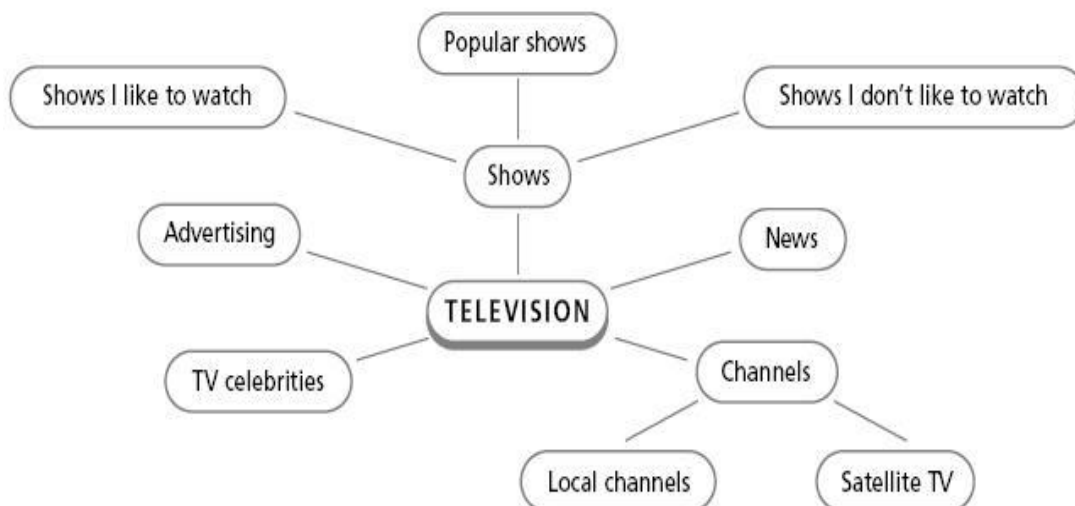
### Making a Cluster Diagram

Making a cluster diagram is a useful way to collect ideas and details to use in your writing. You can also use a cluster diagram to explore different ways to organize your ideas. Follow these steps to make a cluster diagram.

*Step 1:* Write your topic in the center of your paper and circle it.

television

*Step 2:* Think about your topic and write down any words that come to mind. Circle each word and connect it to the closest related word in your cluster diagram.



*Step 3:* Study your cluster diagram to find ideas to use in your writing.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a good way to collect ideas for writing. To brainstorm, think about your topic and write down every idea that comes to mind. Don't evaluate your ideas. Just write.

*Example:* We spent a minute brainstorming a list of things to do when you feel sad or depressed. You can see that some of our ideas were pretty silly, but we wrote them down anyway. When we finished brainstorming, we went back and put a check mark next to the ideas we liked best.

#### Things to do when you feel sad or depressed

- |                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ go visit a friend              | ✓ get some exercise |
| eat                              | sleep               |
| ✓ do something for somebody else | read a book         |
| ✓ watch a funny movie            | buy some flowers    |
| buy some new clothes             | ✓ go for a walk     |

## Writing a Draft

**draft** /dræft/ *noun* 1 [C] a piece of writing, etc., which will probably be changed and improved; not the final copy: *the first draft of a speech; a rough draft of an essay...*

As the dictionary definition above shows, a draft is a preliminary piece of writing. Writing more than one draft allows you to develop your ideas and to find the best way to present your ideas to your reader. Here are some things you can think about as you write a draft:

### Think about your audience.

The way you write and the information you provide depends on your audience—the people who will read your writing. As you write, keep these questions in mind:

- Who is going to read my writing?
- What does my reader already know about the topic?
- What will be interesting to my reader?
- What questions will my reader have?

### Think about your purpose for writing.

It helps to have a purpose for writing other than simply completing a class assignment. As you write, keep in mind that you are also trying to accomplish one or more of these goals:

⇒ to inform      ⇒ to entertain      ⇒ to persuade

### Think about how to organize your ideas.

Ask yourself questions as you experiment with different ways to organize your ideas.

- How can I group my ideas in paragraphs?
- What is the focus and purpose of each paragraph?
- In what order should I present my ideas?

### Think of an interesting way to begin your piece of writing.

It helps to start with an idea or some information that gets your reader's attention:

- Begin with a question. (*Do you know...?*)
- Begin with a personal story. (*When I was...*)
- Begin with an interesting quote.
- Start with a description.
- Start with an interesting fact.

### Think about how to end your piece of writing.

Look back at your purpose for writing and decide what you want your readers to be thinking about and how you want them to feel when they finish reading:

- Do I want to repeat my main idea at the end?
- Do I want to end with a recommendation?
- Would a quote work at the end?



## Revising Your Writing

### What does it mean to "revise your writing"?

The word revise means "see again." When you revise a piece of writing, you evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and think of ways to make your writing clearer or more interesting or more convincing. Here are some questions you can ask as you think about how to revise your writing:

- Is there a better way to organize my ideas?
- Do I need to add more details and examples?
- How can I make my writing more interesting?
- Will my reader understand what I am trying to say?

### How do you revise your writing?

There are lots of different things you can do to revise your writing. Here are a few suggestions:

- Read your writing out loud several times and underline the parts you like best. You can also ask different classmates to read your writing and to identify the parts they find interesting. You can then use these comments when you revise your writing. You may, for example, want to expand on the ideas you found interesting or add more details and examples to make your ideas clear.
- Pretend to be your reader. Think of questions your reader might ask. Then try to answer the questions.
- Does each paragraph in your writing have a purpose? In the margin, identify the main idea of each paragraph. If you can't do this, rewrite the paragraph so you can.
- Experiment with different ways to get your reader's attention in the first part of your writing. Then choose the way you like best.
- Use the checklist below to evaluate your writing. Keep revising your writing until you can check (✓) yes to each item on the list.

Revising Checklist	YES
— Are my ideas clear and easy to follow?	<input type="checkbox"/>
— Will my reader be able to find and understand my main idea?	<input type="checkbox"/>
— Did I provide enough details and examples?	<input type="checkbox"/>
— Did I take out all unnecessary information?	<input type="checkbox"/>
— Will the first part of my writing catch my reader's attention?	<input type="checkbox"/>

