ESCUELA SUPERIOR POLITÉCNICA DEL LITORAL

Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanísticas

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

"THE EFFECTS OF PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES ON COLLEGE EFL A2 LEARNERS' WRITING IMPROVEMENT"

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

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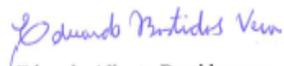*Eduardo Bastidas- Alejandra Pesantez*

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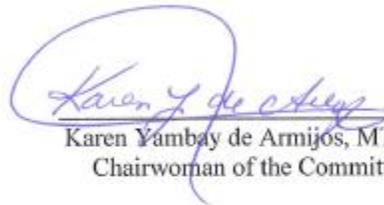
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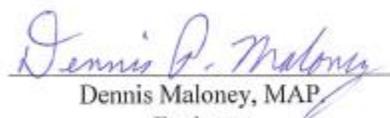
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GENERAL INDEX

Abstract

In writing most students fail when they do not know what to write and how to write it. This research examines the effects of using mapping, reading models, and editing as pre-writing activities on the writing outcome of college EFL A2 learners. Participants of the study were volunteers from two different A2 classes who were both male and female. Instruments of the study were pretest, instruction and posttest. The writing section of the IELTS was used as the pretest at the beginning of the research and the posttest where the students were asked to write a 150-word paragraph.

The study made use of Roebuck's Analytic Scoring Rubrics as a writing analytic assessment check list, and the t-test was used to address the questions raised in the study regarding the effect of the treatment conditions on the dependent variables, and to compare participants' writing achievement in the pre-tests and posttests scores.

Results showed statistically significant differences in students writing outcome under the three conditions. The results also revealed that the used of pre-writing actives in the writing process is more effective than the traditional instruction.

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ABREVIATIONS

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
EFL	English a Foreign Language
IELTS	International English Language System
L1	Native Language
L2	Second Language

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

Researchers and teachers of world languages have traditionally focused on methods and teaching problems, but recently the focus has changed to look at how students learn. Therefore, research and classroom practice have shown greater interest in the students' own experiences and problems, as they work on acquiring language skills. (Richards, 2002).

When a person learns a second language, the learning process is focused on four main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Zheng (2012) considers that writing in a foreign language assumes a very important place as a means of communication. Nation (2009, p 113) thinks about writing as an important skill because it prepares students for listening, speaking and reading activities. Also, it helps learners develop their thinking by allowing them to revisit their thoughts. This implies that the practice of these skills must come early since learning how to write needs time in both, first and second language (Barnett, 1992).

In the past, writing was focused on the "product approach" putting emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling without paying attention to the writing process. According to Mogahed (2013), young writers face problems when writing because they have not used pre-writing activities where they can gather information and play with ideas during the prewriting stage. The study also considers that for many writers, the difficult part of the writing experience is the very beginning. For this reason, prewriting activities must be given time and attention which will help to solve a problem called "writer's block". According to Sadauskas (2009), to help students make the writing process easier, it is important provide them with pre-writing activities which include graphic organizers,

mnemonics, and reminder cards, which assist students when planning a writing task, and can improve the quality of the written piece as well. "Research in second language writing suggests that specific writing strategies related to writing purposes, audience, brainstorming, and organizing ideas are teachable and have a potential to improve the quantity and quality of writing produced by English as second language (ESL) learners." (Dujsik, 2008). This paper suggests the use of three English prewriting activities (mind-mapping, reading models and, editing) in a classroom setting to help students generate ideas and organize them at the moment of planning what to write and how to write it, and the importance of them in the students' writing outcome. Students had to write five descriptive compositions, one per week, according to the syllabus of the institute. Before writing the compositions, students received the instruction of the three prewriting activities mentioned above during these weeks to test if the instruction and application of pre-writing activities help students improve their writing outcome.

1.2 Aims and Rationale

The general objective of this study is to test the use of prewriting activities to help students, who have the A2 English level according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), improve their writing outcome, using mind mapping, reading models and editing. Specifically, this study intends to:

1. Identify the writing level of proficiency of college EFL (English as a Foreign Language) A2 learners of a public university before the intervention.

2. Apply the instruction of pre-writing activities.

3. Understand if there is a difference in the development of the writing level of proficiency of the experimental and control group of college EFL A2 learners of a public university, after the pre-writing activities instruction.

4. Know if the students with the lowest scores in the pre-test improve their scores significantly in the post-test after the intervention.

5. Understand how the instruction and application of pre-writing activities help students improve their writing outcome.

The writing section is more heavily weighted (10/10) than listening and reading skills (5/5) because it is a productive skill which includes knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Vilina (2016) explains that writing is a productive skill because it requires students' concentration and effort to produce language. The EFL teachers should put more emphasis in the writing process because students face problems in both higher-level skills like planning and organizing, and lower-level skills such as spelling, punctuations, and word choice. Unfortunately, most teachers believe that the writing section should be taught without paying attention to prewriting activities, even though practicing such activities in the classroom will contribute to overcoming "writer's block" because the writer begins to think, plan, and organize the ideas to be used in a composition.

1.3 Research Question

What are the effects of prewriting activities such as: mind mapping, reading models, and editing on the writing outcome of college EFL A2 learners?

1.3.1 Sub-research questions:

Is the application of prewriting activities such as mind mapping, reading models, and editing more effective than the traditional instruction without these prewriting activities in improving students' writing outcome?

Do students who receive the instruction of prewriting activities before writing perform better at writing than those students who do not receive the instruction of pre-writing activities before writing?

CHAPTER 2

2.1   Introduction

This research was conducted with students of a public university in Ecuador. These students study English because it is a mandatory subject in the curriculum of the state universities in this country. The students' ages are between 18 and 23 years; they are all Ecuadorian. They were enrolled in the 3-credit English course level A2 offered by the University, which met five times a week for 3 hours per day for five weeks.

2.2   The Institution, its Students, and Instructors

The Language Institute is part of this university, and it is one of the most prestigious universities in Ecuador. In order to conduct this research, a permission letter from the principal of the institution was needed (Appendix A). All students enrolled in the A2 English Spring Break Course were native speakers of Spanish and have been studying English during the general baccalaureate. They were full time students and had 15 hours of class every 5 weeks. There were no books for this course. For this reason, before and during these weeks, teachers prepared their materials related to the students' communicative needs based on the syllabus for this level. It is worth mentioning, that students learn the four skills for communication in the Second Language (L2). For this reason, writing activities were chosen to help students enrolled in the A2 English class to achieve the writing goals. According to the Common European Framework (CEFR), students in the A2 English level can produce informational, transactional, and expository texts consisting of a sequence of simple sentences that have more detail and show more variety in lexical range and sentence structure.

English teachers, who work in this university, are interested in learning how to help students overcome the problems they face when learning a foreign language. Since writing is 33.33% of the overall grade according to the grading section of the university, it is necessary to find good strategies to apply writing skills in the classroom to help students in the writing process. Pre-writing activities facilitate the process of writing because it allows students to think more correctly about their assignment or topic.

2.3   The Need for this Research Project

Learning English as a foreign language is mandatory in all the levels of the Ecuadorian educational system: from elementary school to higher education. The purpose is that students obtain the B1 level of English proficiency by the time they graduate from college. This means students must be able to write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to their interests, write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a point of view, and write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences. Some Ecuadorian students struggle and fail during the writing process because of their lack of expertise; one of the possible solutions to help students overcome their problems in the writing skill could be the use of prewriting activities. This practice could yield positive effects on the students' writing ability which can also improve students' writing outcome. "Students who are not taught to use prewriting strategies struggle in different areas of writing, especially the areas of organization, creation of ideas, and word choice." Sinatra et. al. (1984 as cited by Servati, 2012). For these reasons, this study is relevant and their findings will help English learners improve their writing performance.

2.4 Conclusion

Writing is an active skill in which students address problems during the process of acquiring a second language. It has been found to be the most difficult skill for EFL (English as foreign language) learners to master because writing in a second language requires both syntactic and semantic knowledge (Watcharapunyawong, S., & Usaha, S. 2013). Even though there have been many studies related to writing proficiency, there has not been much focus on writing outcomes. According to Sadauskas (2009), pre-writing activities can help learners make the process of writing easier because pre-writing activities, such as graphic organizers; assist students when planning a writing task, and can improve the quality of the written piece as well.

However, students always need more practice in the four language skills especially in the productive area such as writing where teachers pay the least attention to the development of writing skills (Frydrychova, 2012). Ecuadorian students from state universities face problems when they are planning what to write and how to write it because teachers concentrate on structure rather than the writing process. According to Morris and Fink (2012), students struggle in different areas of writing especially organizing their ideas or giving them a shape. Kucer (2009), finds that the planning process of writing is extremely important and greatly influences the impact on which language is and can be produced.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

Writing is an active skill which plays a pivotal role in the process of explication, articulation, and externalization of ideas and thoughts. Writing has become undeniably essential in our everyday lives. Effective writing skills are necessary for communication in the personal, professional and educational contexts. Emails, blogs, social networking, written reports, writing assessment, and writing in the curriculum are some of the examples where writing is required in our lives (Magnifico, 2010). The burdensome nature of writing has been acknowledged by several authors. For instance, Shafieel, Kooshal & Afghari (2014) state that writing is the hardest skill for L2 learners. They proceed to add that writing frequently and expressively is the hardest skill to be mastered by language learners in their first language and target language.

3.2 Different Theoretical Areas Surveyed

3.2.1 Writing challenges and benefits

Writing is a difficult task even for skilled writers because it involves demanding and complex mental processes which create motivational challenges (Saddler, Moran, Graham & Harris, 2004). Therefore, students may address problems in learning to write during the process of acquiring a second language because mastering this skill for EFL (English as foreign language) learners requires syntactic, semantic knowledge, and cognitive-psychomotor cooperation (Watcharapunyawong, S., & Usaha, S. 2013; Paltridge, 2004; Chien, 2012). Writing is considered as the process in which the writer uses the language to discover the meaning in experience and communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and so on.

Williams (2012) explained that despite the importance of writing as a promoting and facilitative activity during the acquisition of a second language, it is still considered "as the result of the acquisition, rather than as a facilitator factor".

According to Blankenbaker & Hamstra (1989) a supportive way to teach writing is focusing primarily on the writer's ideas and provide a framework so they expand their ideas and secondly on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Novice writers struggle to generate ideas, narrowing or expanding the topic, and organizing the information for the first draft (Blankenbaker et al., 1989). To carry on an effective writing process, the writer can learn to implement strategies to unlock and organize their ideas. Writing is a problem-solving process which requires constant monitor along the path to reaching the objectives.

Even though writing is a complex process which may become overwhelming for students and even teachers, it is essential that we are aware of the important functions of writing during the learning process. According to De Simone (2007) students strive to get information, relate the ideas, and organize the concepts to construct meaning, by understanding what they are reading and help learners understand what they are reading and construct meaning in their writing.

Even higher education students struggle with regulating and monitoring their own learning process. Writing promotes active thinking in learners because it demands that the writers learn to generate and explore ideas and thoughts using several processes to make them visible and concrete in the text so they can be "examined, reconsidered, superseded, rearranged, and changed" (Zaid, 2011). Chien (2012) explains that writing gives the author the chance to prove the expertise given that mastering writing requires different skills and

strategies, for example: self-regulatory skills for planning and reviewing, discourse organization, and knowledge about the topic, the audience, and so on. When the writing skills are well developed, writing can be used "for learning other receptive and productive skills". Writing also promotes active learning as it requires that the communication is effective for expression and reflection. (Zaid, 2011).

3.2.2 Cognitive process tradition

In the cognitive process tradition, writing is a frame that can be used to examine how individuals think due to its individualistic nature limited by psychological processes such as planning, memory, and organization. In this tradition, the objective of writing is creating cognitive models. During writing, the writer engages in different mental processes and sub processes such as considering, planning, executing, etc. This constant mental practice, leads to building a writer, that is, novice writers become more skilled through the experience and learn how to manage factors like genre, audience, form, and so on (Magnifico, 2010).

3.2.3 Sociocultural tradition

In the sociocultural tradition, writing is considered as the reflection of the communicative practices that encourage the individual to write. According to this tradition, writing involves the social factors and particular experiences that encourage the writer to create meaning or write. This tradition states that the social tradition learned from the writer's own culture is the determinant in the writing process and more specifically the result, for example: the story, the text, the article, etc. The knowledge and understanding of the values and common practices of the writer's community will replace complex schemata in the improvement process of the novice writer (Magnifico, 2010).

3.2.4 Focus on the process of writing

Writing is a thorough researched field of the language learning process. Researchers and their findings have had a meaningful impact on the pedagogical practices applied in writing classes. Notwithstanding there have been several studies on writing as a process, it is still considered merely as a mechanical product rather than as an innate cognitive and psychomotor skill or aptitude to be developed and improved through practice. One disadvantage of this approach is that the focus of writing is often put on the result rather than on the writing process. This could stop teachers and learners from realizing and understanding that the writing process is a cognitive activity that comprises subordinate strategies, such as prewriting activities, that may influence on the writing outcome (Chien, 2012).

3.2.5 Flower and Hayes' model

Flower and Hayes were the pioneers in considering that writing is a process (as cited in Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001, p. 5). They developed a complex model explaining the cognitive approach to writing. It is composed of three main parts. First, the task itself which consists of external factors that influence the writing performance such as writing instructions, general theme, extrinsic motivational factors, and so on. Second, the writer's long-term memory, which includes knowledge of the writing topic and domain, pragmatic knowledge and knowledge of the intended audience, and linguistic knowledge. Third, the writing process itself, which consists of three different processes. Third, the writing process itself, which consists of three different processes: a.) During the planning process the writing plan along with the main goal and the sub-goals are established through the following strategies: generating or retrieving information from the task environment and the long-term memory;

organizing; and goal-setting. b.) The translating or composing process in which the writing

plan is developed from intangible to cohesive and coherent texts by means of lexical and

grammatical processing. c.) The reviewing process involves evaluating what has been planned

or written, in which reading and editing sub-processes carry out the task to judge the writing

under the view of the respective linguistic, semantic and pragmatic characteristics of the

objective or goal.

To ensure the progress and quality of writing, it is essential to include careful

monitoring, known as executive control, during the writing process to regulate and coordinate

the use of the different strategies and cognitive resources deciding why one is more suitable

than another for a specific task. The monitoring process varies greatly from person to person

and from writing to writing. Some writers will engage in the composing stage earlier than

others who may need to plan more thoroughly (Alamargot et al., 2001, pp. 5-7; Chien, 2012).

Hayes and Flower's theoretical model of the processes and writing representations has

remained a prominent foundation for the models that appeared later. This model works as a

frame for a detailed account of the relationship between the mind the writing tasks. Chien

(2012) explains that Hayes and Flower's model explains the sub-skills needed during the

writing process. It also established the relationship between different disciplines like cognitive

science, composition studies, and psychology.

3.2.6 Bereiter and Scardamalia's developmental model

According to Bereiter, Burtis and Scardamalia writing expertise is a process that

evolves from knowledge telling to knowledge transforming, via intermediate strategies (as

cited in Alamargot et al). Bereiter and Scardamalia's developmental model consists of two writing strategies: the knowledge telling strategy and the knowledge transforming strategy.

a. Knowledge-telling

The knowledge-telling strategy focuses on the author's ideas and thoughts; however, the author considers the audience's needs. The author must develop stable text representation or the understanding of the text; and reader representation or imagining how the audience would read the same text. Once the writer develops both representations, they can be used in the planning and reviewing processes (Kellog, 2008).

The knowledge telling strategy produces a text with ideas retrieved or generated from long term memory; however, the text is constructed without organization of the text content. The knowledge telling strategy is articulated through three components: a.) The mental representation of instructions or assignment defines the topic and function. It guides the entire writing activity. b.) This component is formed by the topic knowledge in which the text content is elaborated; and the discourse or text knowledge which involves the linguistic knowledge and knowledge about the nature of the text. c.) The writing process or knowledge telling process consists of seven stages, as follows: locate topic identifiers, locate gender identifiers, construct memory probe, retrieve content from memory using probes, run test of appropriateness, write, and update mental representation of text (Alamargot et al.).

b. Knowledge-transforming

In the knowledge-transforming strategy, there is an interaction between the writer's ideas representation and the text representation. Thus, the writer can review the text to edit

any possible dissonance between the text and the original intention of the writer. The editing process may lead to additional planning and further language generation. During the knowledge-transforming stage, writing becomes knowledge representations in the long-term memory (Kellog, 2008).

The Knowledge Transforming Strategy is directed to a more advanced audience, that is, teenagers and adults, due to the higher level of planning of the text content within rhetorical, communicative and pragmatic constraints and the fact that it allows to correct the conceptual content and the linguistic form to reach the communicative objectives. This strategy shares the same main components with the knowledge telling strategy, that is, a.) The mental representation of assignment component, b.) The content knowledge and the discourse knowledge, c.) The knowledge telling process (Alamargot et al.,2001).

c. Knowledge-crafting

According to Kellog (2008) the knowledge-crafting strategy is applied in a more professional use of writing. This means that the writer must retrieve from the working memory a text representation addressed to an unknown reader, for instance, written reports. In this stage, the writer must imagine the reader's interpretation of both the writer's message and the text itself. The role of the reader is essential and acts like the foundation for the revision and editing process on which the writer has to base what to say and how to say it.

3.2.7 Levelt's speaking model applied to writing

Alamagort et al. (2001) also analyzed the work of Levelt who designed a model to illustrate the oral processes but which can also be applied to explain the writing process. This

model presents the explanation of the theoretical comparison between the speaking and writing processes. Levelt's model consists of four different components.

The first component is the conceptualizer which transforms knowledge of the topic that originates in the long-term memory into a 'preverbal' message through two phases: the macroplanning and the microplanning. The macroplanning involves the selection of the communicative goal and the necessary domain knowledge for such goal. The microplanning involves the selection of the semantic functions necessary for the domain knowledge units and for the pragmatic parameters.

The second component is the formulator which transforms the grammatical, phonological, and lexical encodings of the preverbal message given by the conceptualizer into a linguistic structure. Another role of this component is to provide the input or entry information for the following component through two sub-processes: the grammatical encoding or the appropriate lexical and grammatical items; and the phonological encoding which transforms the grammatical encoding into lexemes.

The third component is the articulator which transforms the phonetic plan into speech. Therefore, this component allows the execution of the message. Finally, the fourth component included by Levelt, called self-monitoring which executes the control over all language aspects, either external or internal discourses. This component could be compared to the revising process proposed in Hayes and Flower's model (as cited in Alamargot et al., 2001). Levelt's speaking model was adapted by van der Pool and van Wijk to explain the writing process. The similarities that both models share include the functions of some components: the self-monitoring component which is made up of decoding and comprehension activities;

and the conceptualizer and the formulator whose are called invent and encode in this model; however, they share the same macroplanning and microplanning processes described in Levelt's model (as cited in Alamargot et al.,2001).

3.2.8 Review of Hayes and Flower's model

In their work, Alamargot et al., (2001) summarize the reviews of Hayes and Flower's model. They analyze the weaknesses of the model as follow: Hayes suggested some revisions in both the structure and the functions of some elements and processes of Hayes and Flower's original model. Alamargot et al. (2001) cite Hayes who states that the initial model is structurally incomplete and some of its processes are limited.

According to Hayes and Flower's model main focus is mainly the individual writing assignment leaving other type of writings aside, such as: collaborative writing. This model's purely descriptive characteristic does not specify the context to be used. The model is too general in terms of the different types of writers and ignores the differences in style, sentiments and even gender of the writers (as cited in Alamargot et al., 2011).

According to Kintsch, Hayes and Flower's model does not consider creativity as a component during the writing process, specifically in the domain knowledge transformation phase in which the writer could go further than just recalling information originated in the long-term memory (as cited in Alamargot et al.,2001). Kemper pointed out that in Hayes and Flower's model and in Kintsch' review of Hayes and Flower's model failed to include the writer's goals and motivation. In addition, the author claims that it is essential to include the different types of texts and the potential audience given that these factors can constrain the

writing process (as cited in Alamargot et al.,2001). Hayes and Flower's model could be adapted to a social perspective. Brandt explains that social context and social structure have an important role on the writer as well as the whole writing process (as cited in Alamargot et al., 2001).

The main interest of Hayes and Flower's model is to define and organize the processes and knowledge necessary in writing activity. Hayes proposed a new model in 1996 which involves some prominent changes and updates. The most important differences between the two models are explained as follows: The reviewing process was replaced by the text interpretation phase; The elaboration of the text plan that was in the planning process is now in the reflection process; and finally, the translating process was moved to the text production process. These modifications certainly constitute the most prominent differences between the two models. Hayes' model is presented in Alamargot et al. (2001) as follows:

a. **Hayes's model (1996)**

The model elaborated by Hayes comprises two main dimensions: the individual and the task environment.

Individual Environment

The first dimension is the individual environment which is formed by four components. 1.) Motivation-affects which includes the communicative goals, and the writer's beliefs and attitudes. 2.) Cognitive processes of text writing such as: a.) The reflection which consists of mental activities that collaborate in the elaboration of the content of the text, the reasoning, and the problem-solving activity or the inference process. b.) During this cognitive

process called text interpretation, the writer executes the comprehension of the text through re-reading. The aim of this process is determining if the text is coherent or if it needs conceptual or linguistic revision. c.) Following the reflection that takes place in the previous step, during the text production process, the text is produced. 3.) The long-term memory component includes five different types of knowledge that influence the writing process differently. Gender knowledge, audience knowledge, linguistic knowledge, topic knowledge, and task schemas which include the procedures for the text production. An additional component is presented in Hayes' revision, that is, the working memory. The working memory constitutes the central point for the cognitive processes and the knowledge from the long-term memory plus the influence of motivation and affects. It consists of three sub-registers which process the phonological, visuospatial, and the semantic representations.

Task Environment

The second dimension of this model is the task environment which includes all the external factors that affect the writers, in other words, the writer's social environment and physical environment. The first factor or social environment involves the audience and the possible collaborators in the writing process. The second factor or physical environment includes what has been produced and how it has been produced.

b. Kellogg's model

Kellogg's model integrates the writing processes, the visual-spatial sketchpad for conceptual representations, the articulatory loop to translate an idea or concept into a sentence, and the model of working memory which involves complex processes, such as: reflecting,

reasoning, etc. In the writing process, this model includes three components: the formulation, the execution and the monitoring. The formulation includes the planning to set goals, the required domain knowledge for these goals, and to organize the information; the translating which transforms these ideas into linguistic structures; the execution which includes the programming or the motoric system of reproducing the message and the executing or the realization of the message; and the monitoring which includes reading or verification of the message, and possible editing of the message. The interaction between reading and editing give place to feedback (as cited in Alamargot et al.,2001).

3.3 Writing Process

According to Schweiker and Marra (2000) separating writing in different stages improves the cognitive organization of unskilled writers. They propose that the writing process is divided in the following stages: prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. Similarly, Zaid (2011) suggests that the writing process is divided in prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Huff and Kline state that the writing process includes the following phases: rehearsing, composing, and valuing (as cited in Zaid, 2011). According to this writing process-oriented approach, writing should be taught through systematic and constant rehearsal of the writing skills; consequently, learners may achieve the understanding of the composing process and be able to criticize their writing work and those of others.

As noted previously, the process writing approach is potentially beneficial for the writers. First, writers have to "plan, draft, and revise" (Graham & Sandmel, 2011). Second, the extra instruction in writing does not only help students improve their writing quality but

also reveals the instructional individual needs of the learners. The writing process approach encourages writers to focus on content instead of the form and the whole process rather than just the product (Zaid, 2011).

Even though the process approach offers to prevent and solve writing problems some authors have pointed out that the writing instruction may not be effective enough to help students who have difficulty acquiring the basic writing skills. Another possible weakness of this approach is that there is not enough attention for foundational skills such as handwriting, spelling, etc.; and for basic writing processes like planning (Graham et al, 2011).

The writing process approach shows that there was a change of objectives in writing. Evaluating the product has become less important in comparison to evaluating the writing process and the mental processes used. In their work, Kang & Pyun (2013) showed an example in which the findings revealed that there was a significant difference between skilled and unskilled L2 writers regarding the use of extensive processes or activities such as brainstorming, revising, composing, and editing during the writing process. Raimes presented similar findings that showed that while composing skilled students engage in mental actions such as planning, reading, rehearsing, and so on. According to Kang (2013), unskilled writers do less revision and editing.

Nevertheless, the importance of writing process approach is undeniable. L2 writing research is switching its focus on a more socio-cognitive dimension rather than the purely cognitive dimension of writing strategies. From the cognitive and socio-cognitive perspectives, in writing the writer's mental behaviors are used according to the rhetorical contexts. However, the socio-cognitive perspective merely focuses on how learners develop

their skills and thus knowledge through a process of social mediation. In the view of this approach, research carried out by some authors has shown that when writing outcomes were expected from students in different contexts, they employed diverse strategies such as: using past writing experiences, employing appropriate features of their first language, conceptualizing writing tasks, applying feedback to adjust their writing strategies, models, and using ESL writing training (Kang et al., 2013).

In this regard, Riazi (1997) stated that the writer's cognitive process and their social factors influence the writing process. The author also explains that the participants in the study applied four kinds of writing strategies to reach the expected writing objective such as Cognitive, Meta-Cognitive, Social, and Search Strategies. The Cognitive strategies include "notemaking, elaboration, L1 use/transfer, inferencing, revising, and editing"; meta-cognitive strategies include "assigning goals, planning, rationalizing formats, monitoring, and clarification"; social strategies include "clarification, getting feedback from professors and peers"; and search strategies that include "searching and using libraries" (Kang et al., 2013). According to Wong (2005) the participants also used writing strategies; however, the author separated the strategies in only three types: cognitive, meta-cognitive, and affective strategies which included self-assessment. Learners' writing goals have a strong influence on the use of writing strategies therefore writing strategies should be analyzed in different activity contexts.

3.3.1 Prewriting/ planning stage

As stated by Morris & Fink (2012), students struggle in different areas of writing especially organizing their ideas or giving them a shape. Students always need more practice in the four language skills especially in the productive area such as writing where teachers pay

the least attention to the development of writing skills (Klimova, 2012). Kucer (2009), finds

that the planning process of writing is extremely important and greatly influences the impact

on which language is and can be produced. Servati (2012) explained that students who are not

taught prewriting strategies strive with organization, word choice and ideas during the writing

process.

An effective writing process requires that the writer develops their metacognition. The

writer needs to learn to self-regulate and control the cognitive processes, for example: the

strategies necessary for any particular writing situations. The initial stage of the writing

process is prewriting or rehearsing. This can be considered as the most crucial stage of the

writing process due to the activities taking place which set the foundation of the writing

assignment. This stage is a warm-up where the writer decides on the topic, identifies the

audience, and the purpose of the writing, if not given one (Schweiker-Marra & Marra, 2000).

The writer also receives several tools, techniques, and strategies to become ready before

writing, such as: brainstorming, drafting, responding, redrafting, etc. There are more examples

of activities that may be used during the prewriting stage, for instance: meditation, clustering,

journals, reading before writing, grouping, free writing, and so on.

Self-Regulation

As stated by Graham & Harris (2000) self-regulation results in developing writing

competence. There is more emphasis on self-regulation in the writing process probably due to

the influence of the cognitive and self-regulatory aspects of Hayes & Flower's model. Self-

regulation involves the independent direction of the composing process, from the planning

stage to the production stage. These stages or self-regulatory mechanisms can be considered

as a routine that serves as a guide to accomplish the writing task. These mechanisms can be adjusted by the writer's self-regulation along the writing process. Skilled writers are more self-regulated than novice or less skilled writers, for example they spend more time planning in the pre-writing stage and then in the revision stage. In their work, Graham et al (2000) explained that there is the assumption that self-regulation should not be generalized. It is essential to consider the individual differences in self-regulatory behavior; this means that writers self-regulate their writing production independently and differently from each other.

Prewriting Activities

Prewriting activities have been beneficial to help writers to improve their skills to do intellectual work. Therefore, a possible solution to help students improve their writing skills could be the use of prewriting activities aiming at using students' cognition actively with a purpose in mind. This practice could yield positive effects on the learners' writing ability which can also improve learners' confidence. Prewriting activities also play a fundamental role in the decision-making process of what to write and how to make the first draft (Zaid, 2011).

As claimed by Schweiker-Marra et al. (2000) focusing on teaching prewriting activities results in students improving their writing skills and scores in writing. They also become better writers through planning and defining the writing purpose. Pre-writing activities can help learners make the process of writing easier because pre-writing activities, such as graphic organizers, assist students when planning a writing task, and can improve the quality of the written piece as well (Sadauskas, 2009). The previous explanation regarding the positive effects of prewriting activities agrees with Chien (2012) who explained that during

the writing process unskilled and skilled writers perform planning and revision tasks in different levels of intensity and orientation. He states that skilled writers' focus is at the discourse level and unskilled writers at the word and phrase level.

Sadler et al (2004) propose that one way to help learners struggling with writing is providing them with exemplary writing instruction right from the beginning of the class. Clear instructions may maximize learners' writing development, and diminish or alleviate the difficulties that may lead to writing problems. This approach focuses on the assumption that providing instructions before writing is more beneficial than solving writing problems later. Sadler et al. (2004) also suggest that the tutor could provide additional instruction individually or in groups. In their opinion, the extra instruction and planning will result in effective writing outcomes. Due to novice writers' lack of effective planning skills, they see writing as the mere act of transcribing whatever ideas come to their mind and dismiss genre or the topic, the audience, rhetorical goals, etc. As Yang (2014) explains, experienced writers use strategies more often than novice writers who borrow texts directly from sources instead of reading and writing effectively.

Concept Mapping

Concept mapping, also called mapping, clustering, semantic maps or advance organizers, is a cognitive strategy which is helpful for idea-collecting purposes and identifying the relationship between ideas. The learners use mapping to choose the main idea of the text. Mapping helps clarify the key ideas to be focused on and developed in any task. The subject or topic is placed in the center of the page and the relevant ideas included in the map are

joined by lines which include connecting words. Mapping is very useful for students to take in new knowledge (Zaid, 2011; Blankenbaker & Hamstra, 1989; Simone, 2007).

According to De Simone (2007), this strategy is similar to approaches like networking, knowledge mapping, and multiple-relationship mapping. An important characteristic of this strategy is its "graphic illustrations of written statements"; therefore, mapping is placed within the visual-spatial strategies category. In her work, De Simone (2007) mentions that this strategy has been very helpful to remember main ideas in subjects such as geology, physiology, psychology, and education. Despite the usefulness of mapping as a tool in learning processes, students do not emphasize its use. De Simone (2007) explains that mapping activities are seen by students as cognitively challenging, time consuming or nonessential in relation to the task demands. The cognitive challenge addressed by students may be caused by the self-awareness that students must exercise when selecting the content and judging its quality to see if any change should be made. When mapping, students' role is very active because instead of receiving information passively, students go in search of the knowledge to identify ideas relevant to the topic, establish the relationship between those ideas, and organizing them coherently.

Reading Models

Couzijn (1999) explained that observation of models helps learners to improve their skills at monitoring and evaluating the process of the task to be developed. Observation-of-models or reading models offers a realistic concrete sample. According to Zaid (2011), reading can be considered as the foundation of writing because reading provides the writer with print-encoded messages, and clues for the use of grammatical, semantic, rhetorical, and

lexical constitutes. Hiverla (2005) explains that despite the belief that literacy is a situated activity, it requires the teaching of reading and writing skills which ensures that reading and writing complement each other.

Editing

Errors are part of the learning process during writing; however, an excess of discourse level errors may redirect the readers' attention to the errors instead of the text. The learner's writing ability is also in risk of being judged as inefficient or poor. These reasons may serve as an encouragement for both ESL writing teachers and students to improve their editing skills. Editing is the process of finding any error, either grammatical, lexical or mechanical; and correcting it before the final written product. If learners do not edit their written tasks, they may not develop accuracy in writing. Ferris (1995) explains some important aspects about editing. It is essential to correct the most frequent patterns of errors that interfere with the comprehensibility of the message instead of focusing on every single mistake. The common thought is that ESL students worry that grammar mistakes interfere with the presentation of their ideas. However, Ferris (1995) found out that students show little interest in grammar mistakes and do not consider the editing process as essential for their learning. Ferris (2005) explains that students find editing unimportant and leave the work for the teacher but the essential step is convincing learners that editing is necessary. There are some activities that aim at raising the awareness among learners regarding the importance of editing, for example, students analyze sentences or short essays to discuss how the errors obstruct the understanding of the text.

CHAPTER 4

4.1. Research Paradigm

4.1.1. Definition and rationale

The aim of this chapter is to show "prewriting activities" improve students' writing outcome. The first step of the writing process is prewriting. Teaching writing in a foreign language implies taking advantage of prewriting strategies where students' creativity can flow, and they can be focused on their purpose, audience, and format to generate ideas that will be included in their work. After they have their ideas, they can start their writing trait-organization using mind mapping, which helps students to put their ideas in a logical order. By organizing their concepts, the students can proceed to edit them to cross out irrelevant concepts. These activities will guide them in the writing process of sentences, paragraphs, and texts. Therefore, the main aim of this research is to help learners to improve their writing skills through the teaching and posterior application of prewriting activities for the development of their writing outcome.

4.1.2. Methodological stances

a. Constructivism, ontological and epistemological positions

The research began with the positivist view that student and teacher behaviors reflect objective realities in the classroom. Positivism claims that science provides us with the clearest possible ideal of objective knowledge of the world (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, pp. 11-15). Activities have effects on learned behaviors, and the data of social science offers legitimate information for analysis and interpretation. Therefore, an educator`s

objective is to help learners construct meaning in reading and writing and change behavior, by engaging them in learning experiences.

This study follows this belief by identifying classroom variables in students' experience, and imposing control over all variables except the use of prewriting strategies. The use of prewriting strategies could allow us to find the effects, if any, on quality and strength of student writing.

The control group will receive a "traditional instructional approach" that does not involve a focus on prewriting strategies, and will study writing skills only within the context of the assignment. The treatment group will study writing skills using prewriting activities such as mind-mapping, reading, and editing. There will be a pre-test at the beginning of this research and a post-test at the end of the research for both groups. During the research, the writing assignments will not affect the general score of the students. At the end of the research, the control group will receive the treatment too, for ethical purposes.

b. Researcher's role

During the intervention of the use of prewriting activities, the researcher's role was to guide students how to use mapping, reading models and editing to organize their ideas before writing. It was important that students had prior content knowledge related to the topic to be studied during each unit. For this reason, the topic, supporting sentences, conclusion, vocabulary, punctuation, grammar point and developing ideas were taught during each weekly class. Being with students during the learning process of pre-writing activities allowed us to get valuable information about the students' background knowledge and progress of their writing outcome.

c. Participants' role

The participants' role was voluntary during the intervention in this study; they accepted being part of the research, and collaborating in all the steps in the writing teaching-learning process. Students were asked to use mapping, reading models and editing in each writing section to test our theory. After that, they wrote a composition that included the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Their participation was the key to collecting the data and understanding the reality of students' writing when they have to write a composition, and, most importantly, how they can start organizing their ideas.

d. Research methods

The main objective of this study was to test the use of prewriting activities to help students improve their writing outcome. To conduct this study, we used a quantitative method. For this reason, it was necessary to have two groups. The control group received a "traditional instructional approach" that did not include pre-writing activities and studied writing skills only within the context of the assignment. The treatment group studied writing skills using prewriting activities such as mind-mapping, reading, and editing. There was a pre-test at the beginning of this research and a post-test at the end of the research for both groups. At the end of the research, the control received the treatment too for ethical purposes.

The prewriting activities used in class were mind mapping, reading models and editing. These activities were designed according to the syllabus (Appendix B) established by the university for level 1 in the Spring Break Course (intensive course) offered from Monday to Friday during the morning sections from 10: 00 A.M to 1:00 P.M. This course lasted 5 weeks.

The writing assignments during these weeks were graded to check if the prewriting activities had any effects on the students writing outcome, but these marks were not part of the students' score.

a. **Reading models**

Nation (2009) states that learning to read in another language involves a great deal of language learning. According to Zaid (2011), when we read we can write because reading provides us with the use of lexical, grammatical, semantic, rhetorical, and lexical constituents. Also, reading models offer a realistic concrete sample about how to organize information, and learn basic language structures by which students can analyze model sentences in the context of a paragraph, such as the topic and supporting sentences.

The idea of reading models as a pre-writing activity was taken from "Writing from Within 1", by Kelly & Gargagliano (2011). It is a writing practice book for intermediate students of English. This book is used with learners who are low in ability, low in confidence, and low in motivation and are attending mandatory English classes. The topics selected are mainly general topics which will be familiar and of interest to the students.

Students in the treatment group had four topics per week to read, each between 100 and 135 words. These topics were chosen according to the syllabus to fulfill the requirements of the course. There were three steps in pre-writing: reading models, mind mapping, and editing.

Students had to analyze the reading by doing the following activities: first, they underlined the topic sentence in the paragraphs. Then they circled the key words in the topic sentence that indicated what the paragraph was going to talk about. Next, they put a star above

the supporting sentences. Finally, they checked the structure of the grammar used in the model and vocabulary. This activity lasted between 15 and 18 minutes in the first week. In the second section, it lasted 16 minutes, the third one 16 minutes, and in the last week, 15 minutes.

b. Mind mapping

The second prewriting activity was mind mapping which allows writers to see the relationship between ideas and their order, and link paragraphs into cohesive and coherent essays (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003, p.8). Mind mapping also helps students' writing composition prepare presentations using the vocabulary learned in the topic. The textbook "Writing from Paragraph to Essay", by Dorothy E. Zemach and Lisa A Rumisek was used in this project because the activities presented in the book were suitable for this research as well as comprehensive.

For four weeks, students in the treatment group used mind mapping with four circles to write the main idea and each circle had three or four circles to write the ideas for the supporting sentences. As part of the activity, they had read a model for each topic. The vocabulary for the week was introduced during the listening and speaking activities and games were used to remember the vocabulary. In the first week of the intervention, students had between 12 and 14 minutes to organize their ideas in the mind mapping, connect their ideas with the topic "Best friend", write the vocabulary that they wanted to use, and look for new words if it was necessary. In the second week, the topic was "Family routines". Students had, in this occasion, 12 minutes to organize their ideas in the mind mapping and connect them with the topic apart from use the vocabulary learnt in the week. For the third week, the topic

was "Food preferences". Students had 11 minutes to organize their ideas and used the vocabulary learnt in classroom. Finally, in the fourth week the topic was places: My house, neighborhood or hometown, and students had 10 minutes to accomplish the task.

During each intervention using mapping, students first analyzed a model, reading about the topic of the week. Reading a model allowed them to have a better view of their writing trait-organization which helped students to put their ideas in a logical order in each circle of the mapping.

Without any intention, we wanted to reduce the time for this pre-writing activity, but students did not need the same time as the first week of the intervention because students' ability to do the task improved every week.

c. Editing

With this technique, students went back and edited their ideas, using the time to select the most useful and relevant ideas (Zemach & Rumisex, 2003, p.9). In mind mapping, editing can help students to cross out circles that do not belong, add new ones or change the order of them.

After students had completed their mind mapping and gathered plenty of ideas, they needed to go back and edit them. This was the time to choose which ideas were the more interesting, and which were the more relevant, important or necessary for the topic chosen. They were given four minutes to edit ideas in the first and second week. In the third and last week, they only needed 3 minutes or less because their ability to edit improved during the last week.

Nature of the Data Analysis

Writing assessment check list

The researchers adjusted Roebuck's Analytic Scoring Rubrics, modified by Mattoon & Rabiee as cited by Mahnam & Nejadansari (2012) as a writing analytic assessment check list. The reason this assessment check list was chosen was the simple separation of scores that have four components: mechanism, vocabulary, grammar, and organization. Each part has 5 potential scores, (5 means no errors, 4 means 1 to three errors, 3 means 4 to 6 errors, 2 means 7 to 9 errors, and finally 1 means 10 or more errors).

4.2 Research Tradition

4.2.1 Definition and rationale

The most common ways of conducting research are quantitative and qualitative. The current study is a quantitative research design, because it started with an experimental design where two hypotheses were established followed by the quantification of data and a numerical analysis was carried out, comparing the students' test results before and after an instructional treatment.

We conducted this research to test the use of prewriting activities to help students improve their writing outcome. Two groups were compared to check if pre-writing activities will affect college EFL A2 learners' writing outcome, or if there will be a difference in the writing improvement between the treatment group and control group.

The writing process appears to be one way to address the writing instruction. Looking for good tools to guide students in the writing process, pre-writing activities are the first step

and perhaps the most important stage in writing, because they improve the writing outcome, giving students the opportunity to organize ideas, design the writing, audience, topic, purpose and edit. This research will help us to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of pre-writing activities for the development of the students' writing outcome in institutions where pre-writing activities have not been previously used in the writing process.

4.2.2 Type

This is an experimental study. "In experimental studies, researchers deliberately manipulate one or more variables (independent variables) to determine the effect on another variable (dependent variable)" (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Following research by Mackey et al. (2005), there is a pretreatment and a post-treatment performance, which can be compared.

The research question of this study was: What are the effects of prewriting activities such as: mind mapping, reading models, and editing on the writing outcome of college EFL A2 writing. The independent variable is the effects of prewriting activities and the dependent variable is students' writing.

a. Control group design

Mackey and Gass (2005) state that there are two groups used in a typical experimental study, a comparison and a control group, to investigate research questions. For this study, we used a control group design. We had two different groups in which the control group did not receive the treatment, in order to investigate whether the use of prewriting activities had effects on students' outcome in the treatment, or comparison, group. The control groups took the pre-test and post-test just as the treatment groups did. After the research was done, the

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control group received the same treatment as the experimental group for the same period of weeks using the prewriting activities.

4.2.3 Ascertaining the warrant for the study

a. Validity

After designing the study and the process for collecting data, we had to prove that the results were valid on this study and had important relevance not only for the population tested at the university, but, at least for most experimental research with other suitable populations. According to Bryman (2005), validity refers to the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept. He also refers to five types of validity in quantitative studies: face validity; concurrent validity; predictive validity; construct validity; and convergent validity.

b. Construct validity

The hypotheses of our research were deduced from the theory by examining the importance of the dependent and independent variables, which is construct validity (Bryman, 2005).

Hypothesis 1: Prewriting activities will affect college EFL A2 learners' writing outcome.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in the writing improvement between the treatment group and control group.

c. Internal validity

Internal validity refers to the differences that have been from the two variables (Mackey et al., 2005). The research question had two variables, the dependent and independent one. It means that we had to find out how the independent variable (prewriting activities) affected the dependent variable, in this context the improvement of students writing outcome.

d. Sources of validity

Evidence based on internal structure was obtained through conducting statistical procedures to determine the relationship among the question "prewriting activities" to see if it was related to the overall scale which measured students' outcome. Moreover, the scores from the test support our theory.

e. Pilot testing

According to Mackey et al. (2005) "a pilot study is generally considered to be a small-scale trial of the proposed procedures, materials, and methods, and sometimes also includes coding sheets and analytic choices". We carried out a pilot study to test, revise and finalize the materials and the methods to avoid any problems, as well as to address them before the main study was carried out. Another reason for piloting the test was to assess the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods which helped us to make the corrections and any necessary changes before the test was applied. Also, the materials used in this study were overviewed by other English teachers to evaluate the efficacy of them. After that, the materials were used with some students who were not part of the study but have the same English level (A2).

f. Validity and reliability in tests

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) explain that factors such as the time of school year of the students, the day of the test administration, the way that the test is administrated, the way that the test is marked, the degree of closure or openness of test items can affect reliability. During the research, these factors were analyzed to avoid bias in the results. Validity, on the other hand, was focused on the test.

g. Reliability

Bell (2005, p.117) use the term "reliability" to refer to a test or procedure that produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions. In quantitative research reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept. This study was reliable, because the test was piloting before it had been used in the actual research and it tested all students equally. It was valid, because the activities were aligned with what was going to be tested.

h. Test-retest reliability

During the research, a writing IELTS (International English Language System) test (Appendix C) was administrated twice at different time intervals to examine the differences between the scores from the treatment group and control group. Moreover. there was only one version of the test which was applied at the beginning (first week) and at the end of Spring Break course which lasted 5 weeks. Finally, each participant in the study completed the test twice.

4.2.4 Ethical consideration

Research participants were given a printed "informed consent form" written in Spanish which was the participant's native language to avoid any misunderstanding in the purpose of the research due to the A1 English level of the participant (Appendix D). The "informed consent form" described the procedures and purposes of the research explaining how the research was going to be conducted, including details such as the method by which participants will be assigned to either the experimental or control group. They were told they were free to ask questions and may refuse to participate. The-names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mails of the researchers were included. The participants were informed of the features of the treatment and measurement process, although this study did not subject them to any obvious risk. Their anonymity was protected at all times, and all responses were reported as anonymous (Mackey et al., 2005, p.25).

4.3 Method

4.3.1 Definition and characteristics

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) in their book about research method in education define method as the range of approaches used in educational research where data is obtained which becomes a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction. In other words, the techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering in a quantitative study, following a positivistic model. These experimental techniques include describing objective phenomena, eliciting and recording responses to predetermined questions, and reporting these data.

4.3.2 Methods of data collection

For the purpose of data collection, a prompt of the writing section of the IELTS was used with both the treatment and control groups to measure their baseline level of writing comprehension.

a. Tests

The same writing section of the IELTS was used as the pre-test at the beginning of the research and the post-test at the end of the research for both groups. To apply the pre-and post-test in this research was necessary to have the written authorization from British Council (Appendix E. This test was previously conducted on 15 students not participating from the sample for reliability purposes. In the test, participants were asked to write a 150-word paragraph about this question "You are going to another country to study. You would like to do a part-time job while you are studying, so you want to ask a friend who lives there for some help".

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter:

- give details of your study plans

- explain why you want to get a part-time job

- suggest how your friend could help you find a job

b. Analytic marking and rubrics

Analytic marking is a tool used as a way of increasing the points of assessment, which has a marking scheme that awards marks in vocabulary use, grammatical accuracy, organization, and overall communicative effectiveness (Nation, 2009). According to Stevens

and Levis (2012), rubrics are a scoring tool that presents the way that the assignment and tasks are graded. The IELTS rubrics used in this research were scored by two professors from the same university who were trained together, and had a norming session to make sure that their evaluations were the same. A third researcher decided in cases when the first two had a difference of opinion on how to score a particular test.

The rubrics that were used in this research are IELTS rubrics:

Excellent: 2.5   Very Good: 2   Good: 1.5   Fair: 1   Poor: 0.5   No Production:0

Lexical Resource Use a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'.	
Task achievement Well organized and clear ideas; includes the topic, supporting sentences, and conclusion.	
Grammatical Range and Accuracy Use a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'.	
Coherence and Cohesion Well-developed and coherent content; makes sense to the reader.	
TOTAL	**/10**

c. Sessions

The sessions took place over 4 weeks. During each week, the three pre-writing activities chosen were applied with the treatment group. Every student wrote one composition

about the topic of the week stablished by the syllabus of the institution. Students wrote between 80 and 100 words in the first composition. The following week, they wrote a composition between 90 and 110 words. In the third week, they wrote a composition between 100 and 120 words. During the las week, students wrote a composition between 110 and 130 words.

d.   Writing time

Students were trained to write their first draft in 20 minutes. This time was stablished because in the mid- term exam and final exam in the institution, they have 20 minutes for this task. Moreover, in the pre-test and post-test the same time was used to keep the reliability of the test. Finally, the prompt of the Ielts test give students the same time to complete this activity.

4.3.3 Selection and handling of data

Once information had been collected during the research, it was transformed into quantitative data using Roebuck's Analytic Scoring Rubrics. After that, the t-test was used to analyze the quantitative data obtained to address the questions raised in the study regarding the effect of the treatment conditions on the dependent variables, and to compare participants' writing achievement in the pre-tests and post-tests scores.

4.3.4 Participants

Participants in this study were students selected from the English Break Course I, who were enrolled in the credit courses of the university where the research took place. They were the sample chosen to represent the population in this study because they were in the first English level and had an English level (A2) according to the Common European Framework

(CFR). The criteria used to select these students was the convenience sample, and students from the treatment and control groups were non-randomly sampled.

4.3.5 Selection and/or sampling

In an experimental study, the access to the sample could be difficult depending on the place where the study will be taken. There are two sampling strategies to be used in a study, probability or random sample and non-probability or purposive sample; probability sample represents the wider population consenting the use of test for statistical analysis in quantitative data, and non-probability sample is represented not for the wider population but for a particular group that could be a class of students, group of teachers (Cohen and Morrison, 2007).

The most suitable sampling technique for this research was a convenience sample, "the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied" (Creswell, 2012; p. 145). The larger the sample the better because this not only gives greater reliability but also enables more sophisticated statistics to be used (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p. 101).

4.3.6 Background of the participants

The participants who took part in this investigation consisted of 25 students in the treatment group who studied writing skills using pre-writing activities, and 25 students in the control group who received a traditional instructional approach. They were both male and female and in both treatment and control groups, and the average ages of them were between18 to 23. Students in this class were similar in many ways, e.g., they had similar linguistics backgrounds; Spanish was their native language; and they had all received English

education in their general baccalaureate at schools, which is the equivalent for a high school diploma in the United States, for the same period of time using similar EFL curriculum in Ecuadorian public schools.

At the time of the study, the treatment group was taught by the research instructor who was studying a master program in TEFL and had an undergraduate degree while the control group was trained by another teacher who was studying a Master program in Linguistics. The students' age ranged from 18 to 23 years old. These students were currently attending the first semester of the 2016-2017 academic year.

4.3.7 Conclusion

This study was carried out by two researchers who tested the use of pre-writing activities to help students to improve their writing outcome. During our teaching experience, we have realized that students get low scores in their writing composition. Mind mapping, reading models and editing were the three pre-writing activities used to help students improve their writing outcome during the Spring Break English course. We could check that the more they trained, the faster they were able to do the pre-writing activities. We conclude that during these four weeks, students worked faster and were motivated to write because they knew what to write, how to organize their ideas in paragraphs, and how to write it as shown in the findings.

These methodologies applied in the classroom helped students to organize their ideas and give them logical coherence to their writings saving time and stress at the moment of writing a composition, and improving writing outcomes because they knew what to write, how to organize their ideas in paragraphs, and how to write it.

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CHAPTER 5

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to find if there are effects of pre-writing activities on college EFL A2 learners' writing improvement. Participants in the treatment group and control group took pre-tests and post-tests. The tests were analyzed and checked using Roebuck's Analytic Scoring Rubrics, modified by Mattoon & Rabiee (2006) as a writing analytic assessment check list. According to this rubric, the overall score was divided in four aspects: Lexical Resource, Task Achievement, Grammatical Range and Accuracy, and Coherence and Cohesion. Each aspect will be graded over a minimum of zero (0) and a maximum of two point five (2.5). The scores were checked using the t-test. It was necessary to use two types of the t-test: paired two sample for means and two-sample assuming unequal variances. The data obtained is being presented in charts and whiskers plot.

5.2 The Presentation of each Individual Finding with Examples from Data

Table 5.2.1. Data of the pretest and posttest of the treatment vs the control group

	Treatment group		Control group		Pretest		Posttest	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Treatment group	Control group	Treatment group	Control group
Mean value	5.83	8.63	5.13	6.73	5.83	5.13	8.62	6.8
Variance	2.12	0.69	2.43	1.50	2.12	2.43	0.71	1.44
Df	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
t Stat	9.051750899		6.515467651		1.654931921		6.203744403	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.15E-09		3.99006E-07		0.052101455		9.23777E-08	
The t- value	9.051751		6.515468		1.65493		6.55127	
The p- value	< 0.00001		< 0.00001		0.052101		$< .00001$	
Significance	The result is significant at $p \leq 0.05$		The result is significant at $p \leq 0.05$		The result is not significant at $p < .05$		The result is significant at $p < .05$	

Table 5.2. 2. Mean of the scores of the pretest and posttest of the treatment vs the control group.

	Treatment group		Control group		Pretest		Posttest	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Treatment group	Control Group	Treatment group	Control Group
Lexical resource	1.90	1.92	1.90	1.92	1.90	1.90	1.92	1.92
Task achievement	1.08	2.25	1.10	1.62	1.08	1.10	2.25	1.62
Grammatical range and accuracy	1.81	2.12	1.40	1.85	1.81	1.40	2.12	1.85
Coherence and cohesion	1.10	2.35	1.04	1.50	1.10	1.04	2.35	1.50
FINAL SCORE	5.83	8.63	5.13	6.73	5.83	5.13	8.63	6.73

5.3 Scores Findings

Figure 5.3.1. Scores of the treatment group

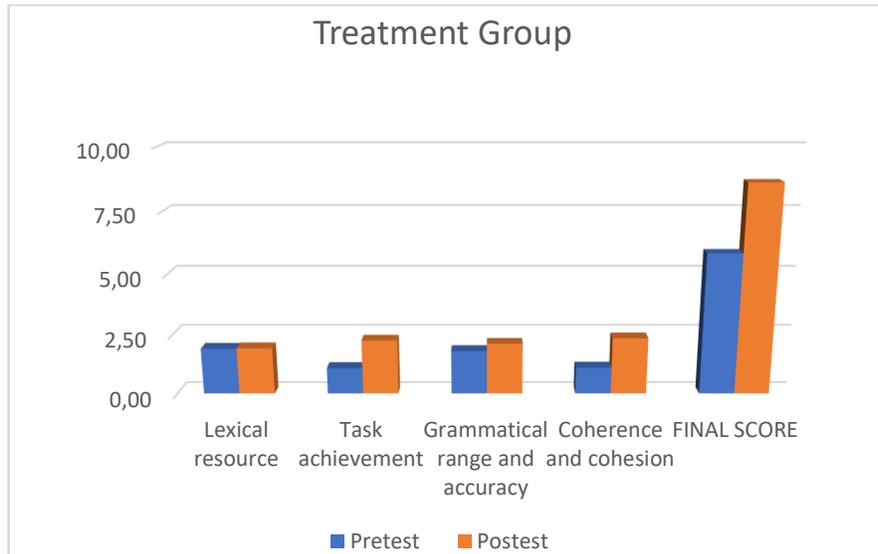**Figure 5.3.2. Scores of the control group**
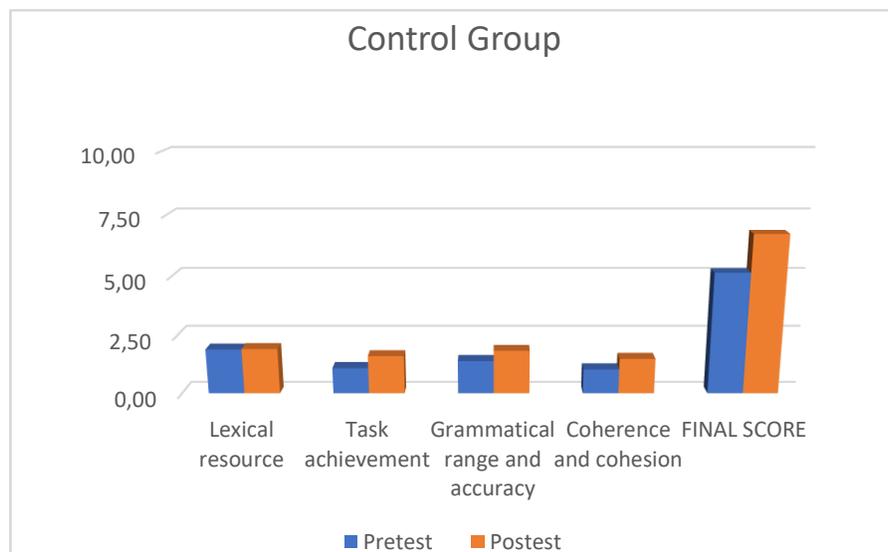
Figure 5.3.3. Scores of the pretest of the treatment group vs. the control group
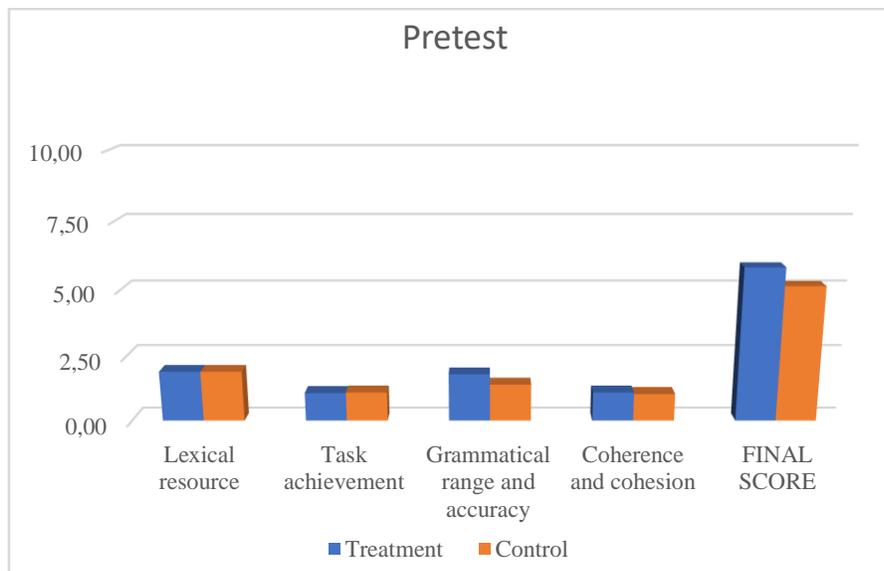
Figure 5.3.4. Scores of the posttest of the treatment group vs. the control group
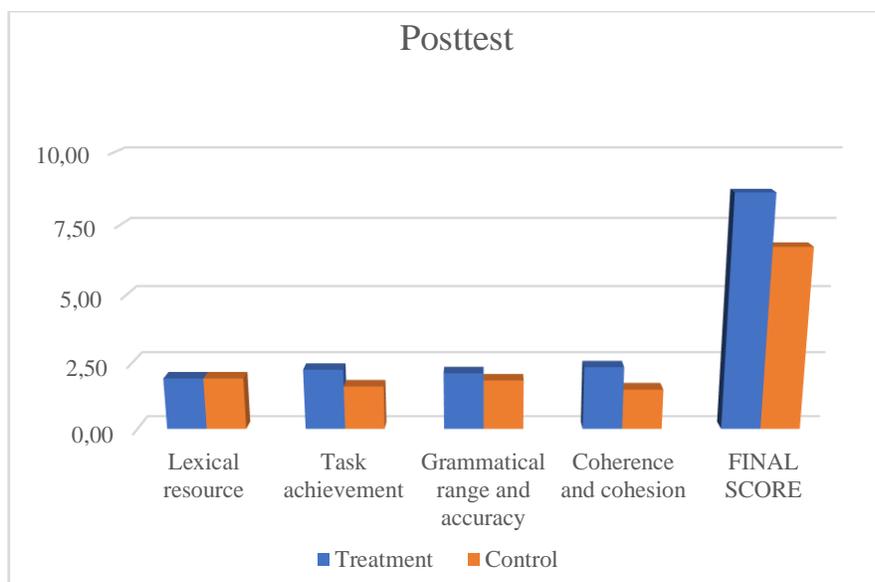
Figure 5.3.5. Comparison of the scores of the treatment group, pre-test vs. post-test
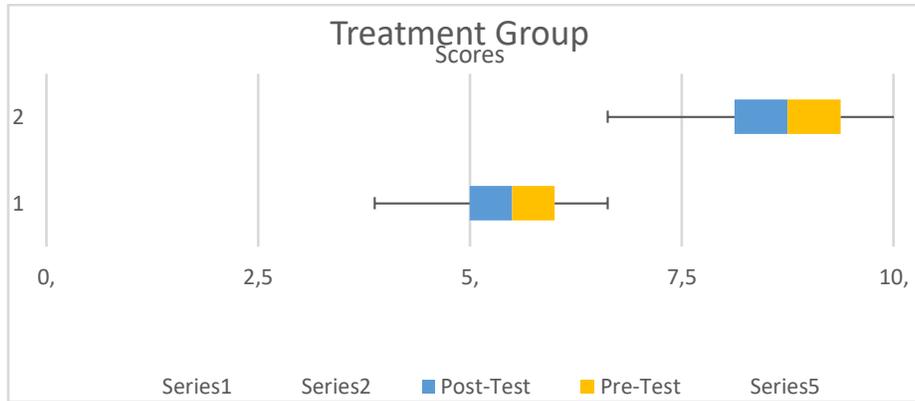
Figure 5.3.6. Comparison of the scores of the control group, pre-test vs. post-test
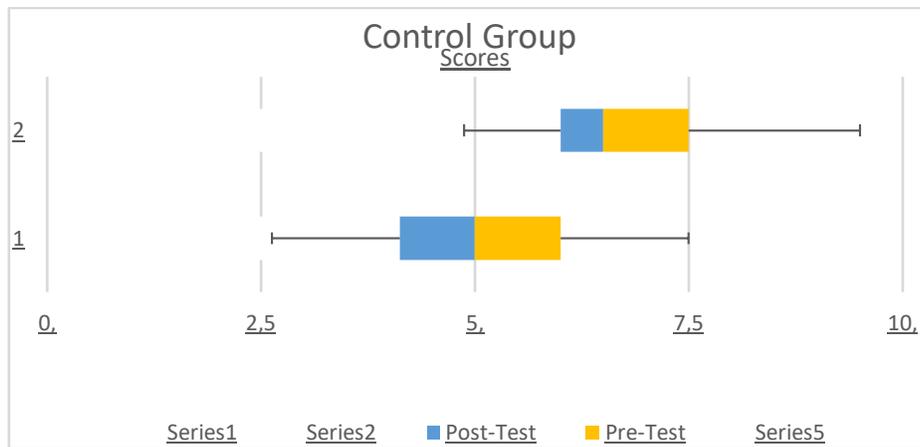
Figure 5.3.7. Pretest scores comparison, treatment group vs. control group
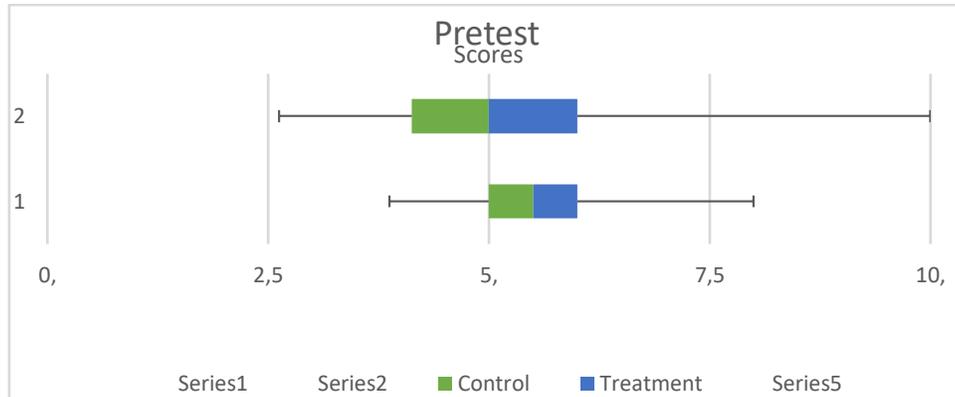
Figure 5.3.8. Posttest scores comparison, treatment group vs. control group
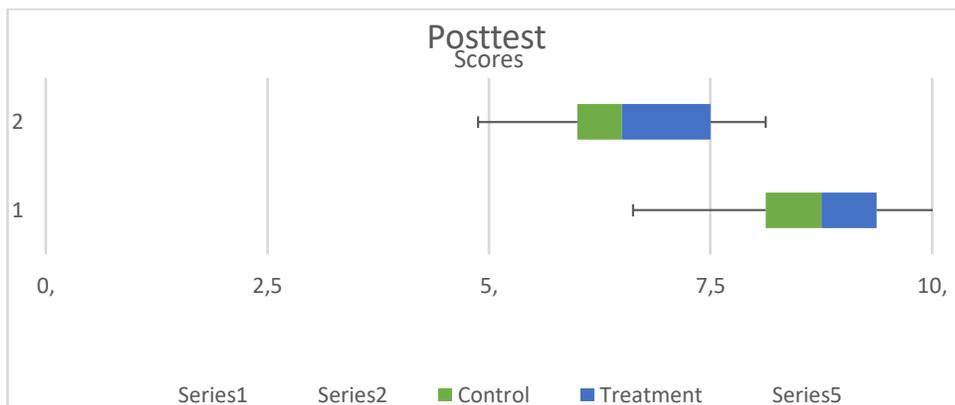
5.4 Word Counting

In the pretest and posttest, participants were asked to write a minimum of 250 words. However, some participants did not fulfill this requirement. This means that the amount of words varies greatly in the pre-test and post-test of both the treatment group and the control group.

Figure 5.4.1 Comparison of the number of words of the treatment group, pretest vs. posttest
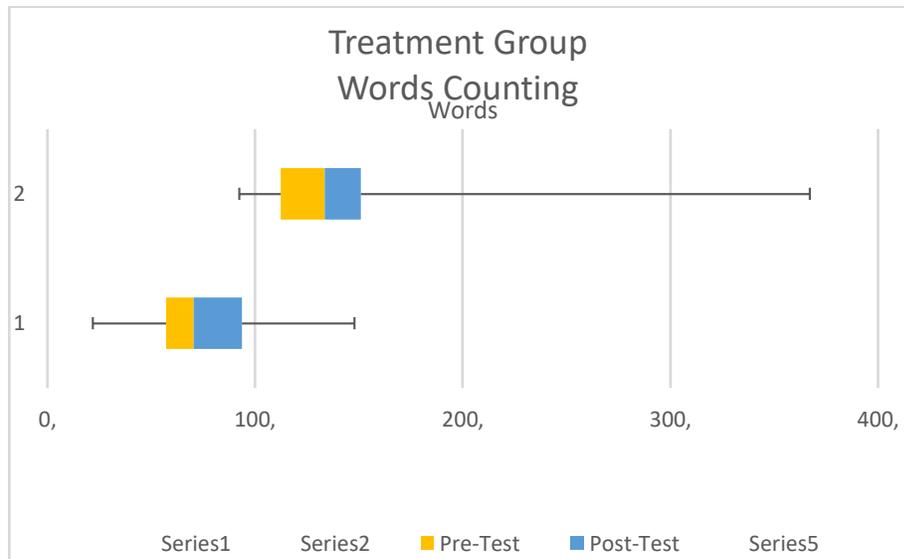
Figure 5.4.2 Comparison of the number of words of the control group, pre-test vs. post-test
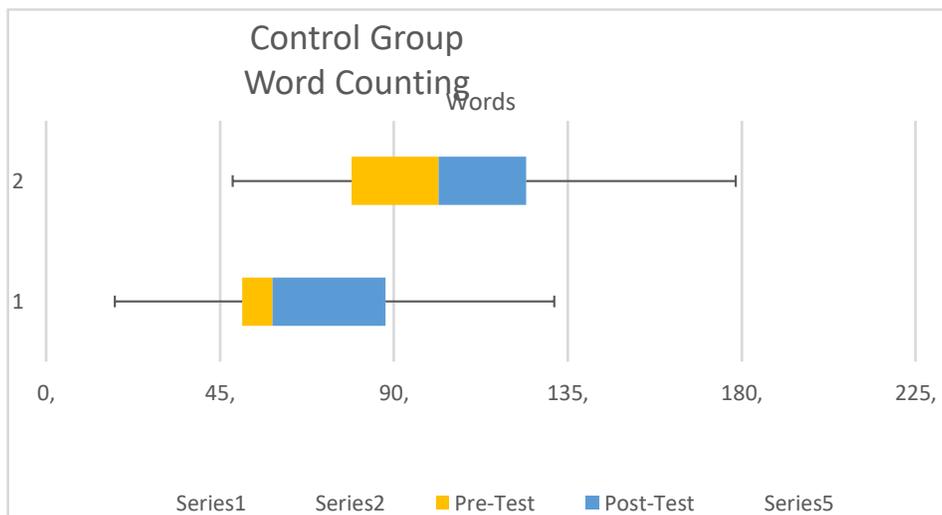
Figure 5.4.3. Comparison of the number of words in the pre-test of the treatment group vs. control group

Pre Test
Word Counting
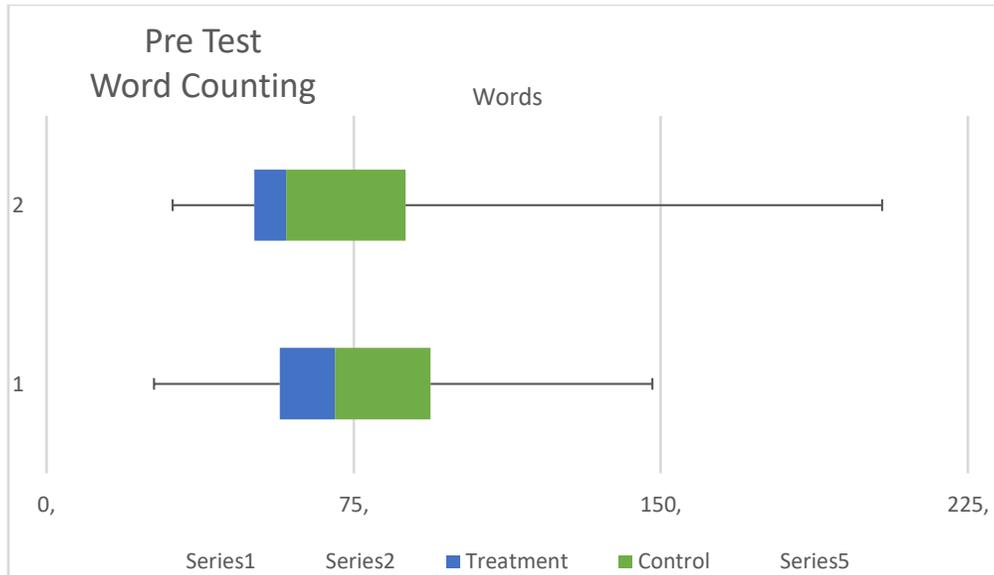
Figure 5.4.4. Comparison of the number of words in the post-test of the treatment group vs. control group

Post Treatment
Word Counting
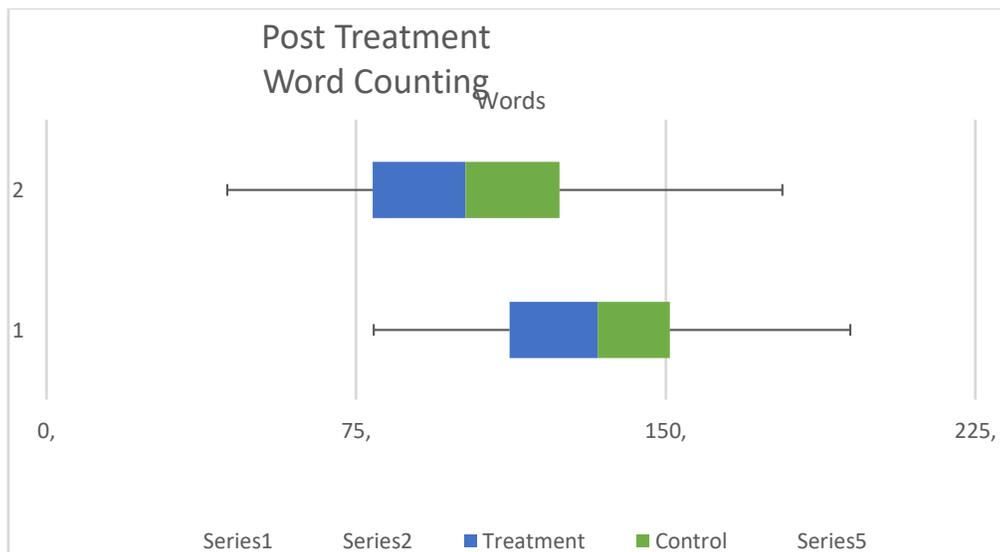
CHAPTER 6

6.1 Discussions of Findings

The data were collected, analyzed, and presented in response to the research questions stated in this study. The main goal of the collection and analysis of the data was to develop a base of knowledge about the influence of prewriting activities on the writing outcome of A2 English learners. The research questions will be analyzed using the data obtained. The results are presented to answer the following research questions.

6.1.1 Research question 1

Research question 1 asks, what are the effects of pre-writing activities such as mind mapping, reading models, and editing on the writing outcome of college EFL A2 learners?

6.1.2 Research question 2

Research question 2 asks, is the application of prewriting activities such as: mind mapping, reading models, and editing more effective than the traditional instruction without these prewriting activities in improving students' writing outcome?

6.1.3 Research question 3

Research question 3 asks, do students who receive the instruction of prewriting activities before writing perform better at writing than those students who do not receive the instruction of prewriting activities before writing?

6.2 A Discussion About how each Research Question is Answered

The analysis of the data shows that we found a significant difference between the mean value of the scores of the pretest and the posttest of the treatment group and the control group, implying that it appears that the pre-writing activities influenced the lexical resource, task achievement, grammatical range and accuracy, coherence and cohesion, and the final score of the pretest and posttest taken by the treatment and the control group.

According to the data shown in figure 5.3.1, the scores of the treatment group, we found that the result is significant at $p \leq 0.05$ and the p-value is < 0.00001 between the mean score of the pretest vs the posttest taken by the treatment group implying that it appears that the prewriting activities had an effect on the writing outcome of the posttest taken by the treatment group.

When contrasting the scores of the pretest taken by the treatment group vs the control group, we did not find any significant difference in the mean values at $p < .05$ and the p-value is 0.052101 implying that the scores of both groups are homogenous. The mean value of the scores of the posttest taken by the treatment group and the control group shows that the result is significant at $p < .05$ and the p-value is $< .00001$ implying that the prewriting activities had an effect on the writing outcome and scores of the treatment group.

As shown in figure 5.4.1, the number of words in the pretest of the treatment group are in the range of 37 to 150, but there is one participant who wrote 310 words. As with the number of words in the posttest of the treatment group are in the range of 77 to 205. As shown in figure 5.4.2, the number of words in the pretest of the control group are in the range of 20 to 142. As with the number of words in the posttest of the control group are in the range of 46 to

168. As shown in the figure 5.4.3, the number of words in the pretest of the treatment group are in the range of 37 to 210. As with the number of words in the pretest of the control group are in the range of 20 to 142. As shown in the figure 5.4.4, the number of words in the posttest of the treatment group are in the range of 77 to 205. As with the number of words in the pretest of the control group are in the range of 46 to 168.

CHAPTER 7

7.1 A Summary of the Findings and Relationship to the Questions

The results of the pre-test and post-test taken by the control group and the treatment group show that the application of pre-writing activities during the writing instruction have a positive effect on the outcome of college EFL A2 learners. Participants of the treatment group improved aspects of their writing such as lexical resource, and grammatical accuracy. They made less mistakes in these two aspects compared to the control group. The treatment group also improved in organizing their writing, including supporting sentences which lead to improving the coherence and cohesion of their writings. Regarding the final scores, in the pre-test there was not a significant difference between the scores of the treatment group and the control group; however, in the post-test the treatment group has higher scores than the control group.

7.2 Limitation of the Study

During the research process, there was a change in the number of the sample of participants. Four participants of the control group and four participants of the treatment group abandoned the English course. However, the sample was significant for the purpose of the study. The researchers carried out the study with samples of twenty-six participants in each group. Some characteristics of the participant, were not observable to the researchers, may influence the development of the topic, for instance their English level and writing habits in their L1.

7.3 Future Directions and Further Areas for Research

This study can lead to further research on the following areas:

    1. The benefits of using mind mapping to help students get confidence in speaking fluency.

    2. The use of reading models as a basis of lexical resources in writing instruction.

    3. The influence and role of L1 (Native Language) writing habits on writing outcomes in L2.

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Cuenca, febrero 1, 2017

Licenciada Ximena Orellana Mora, MSc.

DIRECTORA DEL INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE LENGUAS DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

Asunto: Permiso para conducir un estudio investigativo

Alejandra Carolina Pesantez Pesantez, me dirijo a usted para solicitar su autorización para conducir un estudio investigativo en el Nivel de Inglés H1 intensivo de créditos en el instituto de lenguas de la universidad de Cuenca el cual usted dirige, estudio que lo realizo con mi compañero de tesis Eduardo Bastidas Vera para obtener información para desarrollar nuestra tesis en el programa de Maestría de Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (MTEFL) en la Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL), y. El estudio se titula "The effects of pre-writing activities on college EFL A2 learners' writing improvement". Los objetivos del estudio son:

a. Testear el uso de las actividades antes de la escritura para ayudar a mejorar los resultados de la escritura.

b. Identificar el nivel de proficiencia de la escritura de los aprendices universitarios nivel A1 de una universidad pública antes de la intervención.

c. Aplicar la instrucción de las actividades antes de la escritura

d. Darse cuenta si hay diferencia en el desarrollo del nivel de proficiencia de la escritura del grupo experimental y el grupo de control de aprendices universitarios nivel A1 de una universidad pública

e. Saber si los estudiantes con las notas más bajas en el pre-test mejoran sus notas significativamente en el post test después de la intervención.

f. Entender cómo la instrucción y la aplicación de las actividades antes de la escritura ayudan a los estudiantes a mejorar sus resultados en la escritura.

Esperamos que usted como autoridad a cargo de la institución nos permita reclutar un curso de 30 individuos de la institución cuyo nivel de inglés sea A2 para participar en nuestro estudio.

El proceso de estudio será como sigue:

a. A los participantes se les dará un formulario de consentimiento para que sea firmada y regresada al investigador primario en el principio del proceso de encuesta.

b. Los participantes rendirán un pre-test.

c. Los participantes recibirán la instrucción de las actividades antes de la escritura durante las clases.

d. Los participantes rendirán un post test.

Es importante notar los siguientes aspectos:

a. La anonimidad de los participantes estará segura en todos momentos.

b. Los participantes no perderán la instrucción regular planificada de acuerdo al currículo de la institución.

c. No habrá ningún costo para la institución o los participantes.

Estaremos disponibles para responder cualquier pregunta o preocupación que puede tener en cualquier momento. Puede contactarnos a nuestra dirección de email: prewritingact2017@outlook.com

Si usted nos concede el permiso, por favor firme abajo. Usted también tiene la alternativa para enviar una carta de permiso con el membrete de su institución reconociendo su consentimiento y permiso para que podamos conducir este estudio en su institución.

Sinceramente,

_____

Alejandra Pesantez Pesantez

Yo, Ximena Orellana Mora, directora del Instituto Universitario del Lenguas de la Universidad de Cuenca apruebo que el estudio anteriormente especificado por Alejandra Pesantez se lleve a cabo:

_____

    Firma

The Informed Consent Form for a quantitative research was written in Spanish because the students English level was A2, and they did not know well how to interpret this authorization because of the new academic vocabulary and grammar structure as lexical resources. The following is the example used to ask students for their authorization to be part of this research.

SÍLABO

INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE LENGUAS

Período Académico: Enero 30 –Marzo 3, 2017

NOMBRE DE LA ASIGNATURA: Inglés	**CÓDIGO:**	7341

Denominación oficial de la asignatura: Inglés I Créditos

CARRERA	Instituto Universitario de Lenguas

CICLO O SEMESTRE	Primero – Idioma inglés
EJE DE FORMACIÓN	Básico – Obligatorio

CRÉDITOS SEMESTRALES:

TEÓRICAS	
PRÁCTICAS	
TEÓRICO-PRÁCTICAS	6 créditos
TOTAL	6 créditos

MODALIDAD:

PRESENCIAL	
A DISTANCIA	
SEMIPRESENCIAL	

PROFESOR(ES) RESPONSABLE(S):

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DESCRIPCIÓN DE LA ASIGNATURA:

El nivel 1 de los cursos de créditos se enfoca en un desarrollo equilibrado de las cuatro destrezas básicas: leer, escuchar, hablar y escribir. A través de una variedad de actividades y tareas comunicativas se plantea como meta llevar a los estudiantes a adquirir un nivel **A1** del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para Lenguas. La característica de este curso no sólo destaca la práctica del idioma a través de diferentes recursos tecnológicos y físicos, sino también el desarrollo de estrategias de aprendizaje que son la base de un aprendizaje continuo y autónomo.

PRE-REQUISITOS	CO-REQUISITOS

Asignatura Código	Asignatura Código
N/A	N/A

OBJETIVO(S) DE LA ASIGNATURA:

El estudiante será capaz de comprender y utilizar expresiones cotidianas de uso muy frecuente, así como frases sencillas destinadas a satisfacer necesidades de tipo inmediato. Podrá presentarse a sí mismo y a otros, pedir y dar información personal básica sobre su domicilio, sus pertenencias y las personas que conoce y cuando puede relacionarse e interactuar de forma elemental siempre que su interlocutor hable despacio y con claridad y esté dispuesto a cooperar.

RESULTADOS O LOGROS DE APRENDIZAJE, INDICADORES DE APRENDIZAJE, CONTENIDOS DE LA ASIGNATURA Y SITUACIONES DE EVALUACIÓN

RESULTADOS O LOGROS DE APRENDIZAJE	INDICADORES DE APRENDIZAJE	ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE	SITUACIONES DE EVALUACION
El estudiante puede:	El estudiante:		
LISTENING Identificar y extraer palabras y frases básicas y la idea principal en temas familiares y cotidianos escuchando diferente material de audio.	• Reconoce e identifica palabras básicas, frases, ideas principales e información concreta en las diferentes situaciones comunicativas. • Responde a preguntas acerca de las diferentes situaciones comunicativas. • Comunica ideas principales en	• Listening for the main idea (gist) • Predicting • Drawing Inferences • Listening for specific details • Recognizing word-order patterns	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas orales y escritas Examen Interciclo Examen Final

	diferentes situaciones.		
READING Comprender textos sencillos; por ejemplo, los que hay en letreros, carteles y catálogos.	• Responde a preguntas acerca de los diferentes textos. • Reconoce las ideas principales e información concreta en los diferentes textos. • Comunica ideas principales de los diferentes textos.	• Skimming • Scanning • Guessing meaning in context • Finding the main idea	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas orales y escritas Examen Interciclo Examen Final

SPOKEN INTERACTION Interactuar en conversaciones cortas y sencillas acerca de temas familiares y cotidianos a través de diferentes situaciones comunicativas.	• Interactúa con su interlocutor utilizando vocabulario y frases de acuerdo a la situación. • Se comunica utilizando estructuras gramaticales propias de una situación. • Se comunica acorde al nivel y pronuncia con claridad. • Utiliza entonación de acuerdo al contexto requerido. • Intercambia información de sí mismo y de otras personas.		Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas (diálogos en pares, grupos y con el profesor, role plays) Examen Interciclo Examen Final o Proyectos

SPOKEN PRODUCTION Describir temas familiares y cotidianos en diferentes situaciones comunicativas.	• Describe temas con una organización y secuencia coherentes. • Se comunica utilizando estructuras gramaticales propias de una situación. • Se comunica con fluidez acorde al nivel y pronuncia con claridad. • Utiliza entonación de acuerdo al contexto requerido. • Utiliza vocabulario y frases relacionados al tema.		Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas (diálogos en pares, grupos y con el profesor, role plays, exposiciones orales) Examen Interciclo Examen Final o Proyectos

WRITING			
WRITING Escribir textos narrativos y descriptivos, simples y sencillos sobre temas básicos y cotidianos a través de diferente material de escritura. *Writing Length* *80-100 words* *120-150 words* *Paragraphs*	• Utiliza signos de puntuación propios de este nivel (period, comma, semicolon). • Usa conectores de contraste, adición y ejemplificación para entrelazar ideas (and, but, or, because, for example). • Mantiene consistencia en el uso de estructuras gramaticales. • Describe los textos con una organización y secuencia coherentes. • Usa vocabulario y frases de acuerdo al tema planteado.	Brainstroming Clustering Outlining Highlighting Note taking Revising Editing	Trabajo en clase y deberes Trabajos y tareas en línea Pruebas Folder de escritura que contenga textos cortos y sencillos sobre temas básicos y cotidianos (Profiles, Online ads, E-mails, Forms, Notes, Postcards, Informal letters). Examen Interciclo Examen Final

CONTENTS

NUMBER OF SESSIONS (81 sessions)	LEXICAL CONTENTS	GRAMMATICAL CONTENTS

1st. Week Jan 30-feb 3	- Teacher-students introduction
	- Course introduction (Syllabus, class policy review, course expectations)
	- Diagnostic test
	- Classroom language
	- Personal information/details
	    o yourself and others
	    o Profiles
	- People we know
	    o Celebrities
	    o Friends
	    o Family
	- Abilities
	- Capitalization, period and comma
	- Connectors: and
	- Listening for specific details
	- Writing a descriptive paragraph
		Present tense of be
		Simple present
		Can/can't/could/couldn't
		Possessive adjectives
		Possessive pronouns
		Possessive case
		Subject and object pronouns
		Articles

2nd. Week *Feb 6-10*	- Daily routines - Frequency adverbs - Time expressions - Free time activities: hobbies and interests - Scanning - Listening for the main idea - Online ads - Guessing meaning in context - Writing a descriptive paragraph	Simple present Present continuous Connectors: but, because, for example
3rd week *Feb 13th*	Mid-term exam	
3rd week *Feb 13-17th*	- Shopping habits: prices, sizes, colors, preferences - Food ordering, habits and preferences - Drawing inferences - Finding the main idea - Writing a narrative paragraph	There is/there are Demonstrative pronouns Countable/uncountable nouns Quantifiers: some, any, several, a few, a little, much, many, a lot of
4th Week. *Feb 20-24th*	- Places: my house, my neighborhood, my hometown - Postcards - Past events - Writing a narrative paragraph	Prepositions of place Prepositions of time Past simple
5th Week. *Feb 27-28th*	- Work on the e-Virtual - Listening practice - Reading practice - Writing practice - Grammar practice	

	- Games	
Mar. 1-3	1st General Review 2nd Final exams 3rd Exam review 6th Make-up exam	

NÚMERO DE SESIONES, ESTRATEGIAS DE APRENDIZAJE Y RECURSOS O MEDIOS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE

NÚMERO DE SESIONES	ACTIVIDADES	RECURSOS O MEDIOS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE
El curso se desarrolla en 120 divididas en 5 sesiones de 3 horas diarias durante 5 semanas, tanto entre trabajo en clase y autónomo en la plataforma virtual.	Discusiones Dramatizaciones Juegos de roles Ejercicios de comprensión lectora Ejercicios de comprensión auditiva Ejercicios de vocabulario Presentaciones orales Diálogos en pares y en grupos Ejercicios gramaticales Juegos y competencias en pares o grupos Ejercicios de pronunciación	Material preparado por los docentes, hojas de trabajo, aula, pizarra, CDs, reproductor de CDs, laboratorio de cómputo, proyector, sala de video, televisor, reproductor de DVDs, videos, plataforma virtual.

CRITERIOS PARA LA ACREDITACIÓN DE LA ASIGNATURA

	Calificaciones Parciales (50)	Examen Interciclo (20)	Examen Final escrito-oral (30)
Exámenes	_____	20	30
Escucha	10	_____	_____
Lectura	10	_____	_____
Habla	10	_____	_____
Escritura	10	_____	_____
Gram. y Voca.	10	_____	_____
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

TEXTOS Y OTRAS REFERENCIAS REQUERIDAS PARA EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA ASIGNATURA

Textos principales de consulta.				
Autor	**Título del texto**	**Edición**	**Año publicación**	**Editorial**

Documento(s) de Internet

Web propia del estudiante

Autor(es)	Título del documento	Nombre del texto	Dirección URL	Fecha de consulta
Instituto Universitario de Lenguas	Database Credits 1	Database Credits 1		

Ximena Orellana M.   Guillermo Pacheco Salazar

DIRECTORA INSTITUTO UNIVESITARIO LENGUAS   COORDINADOR INGLÉS CRÉDITOS

Cuenca, January 20th, 2017

WRITING SECTION

Participant: _____   Level _____   Date: _____

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

You are going to another country to study. You would like to do a part-time job while you are studying, so you want to ask a friend who lives there for some help. Write a letter to this friend. In your letter:

- **give details of your study plans**

- **explain why you want to get a part-time job**

- **suggest how your friend could help you find a job**

Write at least 150 words.

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Rubrics

Excellent: 2.5   Very Good: 2   Good: 1.5   Fair: 1   Poor 0.5   No Production:0

Lexical Resource Use a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'	
Task achievement Well organized and clear ideas; includes the topic, supporting sentences, and conclusion.	
Grammatical Range and Accuracy Use a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'.	
Coherence and Cohesion Well-developed and coherent content; makes sense to the reader	
TOTAL	**/10**

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO EN INVESTIGACION

TITULO DEL TRABAJO: The effects of pre-writing activities on college EFL A1 learners' writing improvement.

INFORMACION DEL INVESTIGADOR:

ALEJANDRA PESANTEZ PESANTEZ

EDUARDO BASTIDAS VERA

Email: prewritingact2017@outlook.com

Usted está invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación conducido por Alejandra Pesantez Pesantez y Eduardo Bastidas Vera, estudiantes de la Maestría en Enseñanza de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera de la Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL). Estamos conduciendo esta investigación para nuestra disertación de tesis. Lauren Rhodes, PhD., es nuestra supervisora de tesis para esta investigación.

Su participación en este estudio es enteramente voluntaria. Usted debería leer la información a continuación y hace preguntar sobre cualquier aspecto que no entienda antes de decidir si participar o no. A usted se le está solicitando participar en este estudio porque es estudiante en este curso en esta universidad.

PROPOSITO DEL ESTUDIO

El propósito de este estudio es ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar sus habilidades en la escritura

PROCEDIMIENTOS

Si usted decide participar en este estudio, le pediremos hacer lo siguiente:

1. Le pediremos participar en las clases regulares en el horario regular.

2. Se le pedirá rendir dos tests, el resultado obtenido en los tests no afectará su nota en esta materia como parte del currículo.

3. Se le pedirá hace borradores escritos sobre diferentes temas y re escribirlos después de una revisión.

4. En algunos momentos, los investigadores lo observaran mientras toma parte de sus actividades en el aula de clases.

5. Le pediremos su autorización para permitir que los borradores, escritos y tests sean revisados por dos compañeros profesores de inglés.

RIESGOS POTENCIALES E INCOMODIDADES

Esperamos que cualquier riesgo, incomodidad o inconveniente sea menor y creemos que es poco probable que sucedan. Si las incomodidades se convierten en un problema, puede descontinuar su participación.

BENEFICIOS POTENCIALES A LOS SUJETOS Y/O LA SOCIEDAD

No es probable que usted se beneficie directamente de la participación en este estudio, pero la investigación nos ayudará a aprender cómo ayudara a los estudiantes a mejorar sus habilidades en la escritura.

COMPENSACION POR SU PARTICIPACION

Usted no recibirá ningún pago u otra compensación por la participación en este estudio. No hay ningún costo por su participación.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD

Cualquier información que se obtenga en relación con este estudio y que pueda ser identificado con usted, permanecerá confidencial y será revelado solamente con su permiso o como se requiera según la ley. La confidencialidad se mantendrá a través del uso de un código numérico para permitir que los investigadores, la Sra. Pesantez, el Sr. Bastidas y los dos compañeros profesores de inglés sepan quién es usted. No usaremos su nombre en cualquiera de la

información que obtengamos de este estudio o en cualquiera los reportes de la investigación. Cuando el estudio finalice, se destruirán la lista que muestra que código numérico va con su nombre.

La información que pueda identificarlo individualmente no será revelada a nadie fuera del estudio. Los investigadores, Pesantez y Bastidas, usarán la información recolectada en su disertación y otras publicaciones. La información obtenida en este estudio podría ser usada en publicaciones o educación. Cualquier información que usemos para publicación no lo identificara individualmente.

PARTICIPACION Y RETIRADA

Usted puede escoger estar o no en este estudio. Si usted se ofrece a estar en este estudio, usted también puede retirarse en cualquier momento sin consecuencias de ningún tipo. Usted también puede negarse a \responder las preguntas que no quiera responder. No hay pena/ castigo si usted se retira del estudio y no perderá ningún beneficio al cual tiene derecho de otro modo.

Entiendo los procedimientos descritos arriba. Mis preguntas han sido respondidas a mi satisfacción y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Se me ha dado una copia de este formulario.

_____

Nombre del Sujeto

_____   _____

Firma del Sujeto   Fecha

_____   _____

Firma del Testigo   Fecha

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Alejandra Pesantez and Eduardo Bastidas, students of a Master at Teaching English as a Foreign Language METFL from Escuela Superior del Litoral ESPOL. Mrs. Pesantez and Mr. Bastidas are conducting this research for their master dissertation. PhD. Lauren Rhodes is their thesis supervisor for this research.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You should read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a student in this course in this university.

· PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is helping students to improve their writing skills.

· PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following:

1. We will ask you to participate in regular classes given in the regular schedule.
2. You will be asked to take two test, the result obtained in the tests will not affect your score in this subject as part of the curriculum.
3. You will be asked to do written drafts about different topics and have to re write them after a revision.
4. Sometimes the researchers will observe you while you take part in your activities in the classroom.
5. We will ask your permission to allow your drafts, writing and tests be double checked by two fellow English teachers.

· POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

We expect that any risks, discomforts, or inconveniences will be minor and we believe that they are not likely to happen. If discomforts become a problem, you may discontinue your participation.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

It is not likely that you will benefit directly from participation in this study, but the research should help us learn how to help students improve their writing skills.

- **COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participation in this study. There is also no cost to you for participation.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a code number to let Mrs. Pesantez, Mr. Bastidas and the two fellow English teachers know who you are. We will not use your name in any of the information we get from this study or in any of the research reports. When the study is finished, we will destroy the list that shows which code number goes with your name.

Information that can identify you individually will not be released to anyone outside the study. Mrs. Pesantez and Mr. Bastidas will, however, use the information collected in their dissertation and other publications. We also may use any information that we get from this study in any way we think is best for publication or education. Any information we use for publication will not identify you individually.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether or not to be in this study. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. There is no penalty if you withdraw from the study and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Printed Name of Subject

_____   _____

Signature of Subject   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Witness   Date

Appendix E

Re: Requesting permission

Admin<admin@ielts-exam.net>

Responder|

mar 20/12/2016, 23:33

Usted

Reenviaste este mensaje el 22/12/2016 19:31

Dear Alejandra,

You have our permission to use the material, and you may simply reference them by mentioning the URL http://www.ielts-exam.net.

Regards

ielts-exam.net team