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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACIÓN

CARRERA DE IDIOMAS

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Theme: Outlining and the writing skill

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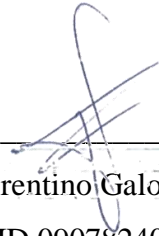
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I, Lic. Mg. Florentino Galo Rizzo Chunga, holder of the ID 0907824080 in my capacity as supervisor of the Research Dissertation on the topic:

“OUTLINING AND THE WRITING SKILL” investigated by Juan Carlos Gamboa Castillo with ID 180431151-0, confirm that this research meets the technical, scientific and regulatory requirements, so the presentation of it is authorized to the corresponding organism in order to be submitted for evaluation by the Qualifying Commission appointed by the Directors Board.



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I declare this undergraduate dissertation entitled “OUTLINING AND THE WRITING SKILL” is the result of the author’s investigation, and has reached the conclusions and recommendations described in the present study.

Comments expressed in this report are the author’s responsibility.



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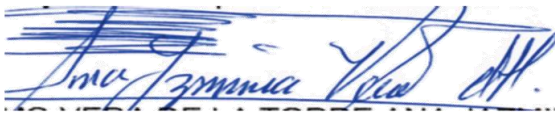
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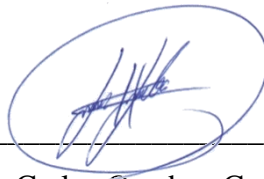
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Juan Carlos Gamboa Castillo

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DEDICATION

To my mother, who never expected to have an English teacher in the family, and to my grandmother, who is eager to witness my graduation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the most difficult times of my life because they showed me a different path to follow, and to the economist Rafael Correa Delgado, former President of Ecuador, whose scholarships gave me the financial support to begin and finish the dream of becoming a teacher.

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CARRERA DE IDIOMAS

Topic: “OUTLINING AND THE WRITING SKILL”

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ABSTRACT

The final aim of learning a language, beyond the acquisition of communicative competence, is the attainment of a certification that proves the proficiency in the L2. The international examinations that provide this accreditation have a specific section that evaluates the writing skill. Consequently, this research is aimed to analyze the importance of the development of the writing skill, the difficulties that students and teachers face to improve it, and the use of a strategy –outlining– to develop a particular aspect of the writing skill: coherence. Thus, an experimental research was carried out with students of fifth, and sixth level of PINE (Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros) at “Universidad Técnica de Ambato”. At the beginning, a pre-test was taken to evaluate the current capabilities of the learners. Then, they were divided into two groups named control, and experimental. During six sessions, the learners who belong to the experimental group used outlines to write three expository essays, and three persuasive essays. The control group carried out the same activities without using outlines. In this case, the control group was provided with prompts. After these six sessions, a posttest was taken. The results gotten were processed, compared, and analyzed with the Wilcoxon test. The information showed that the experimental group had a significant progress, while the control group keep its performance in the same levels. In other words, the results demonstrate that outlining influenced positively the improvement of the writing skill.

Keywords: coherence, outlines, strategy, writing skill

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

TOPIC

Outlining and the writing skill.

CONTEXTUALIZATION.

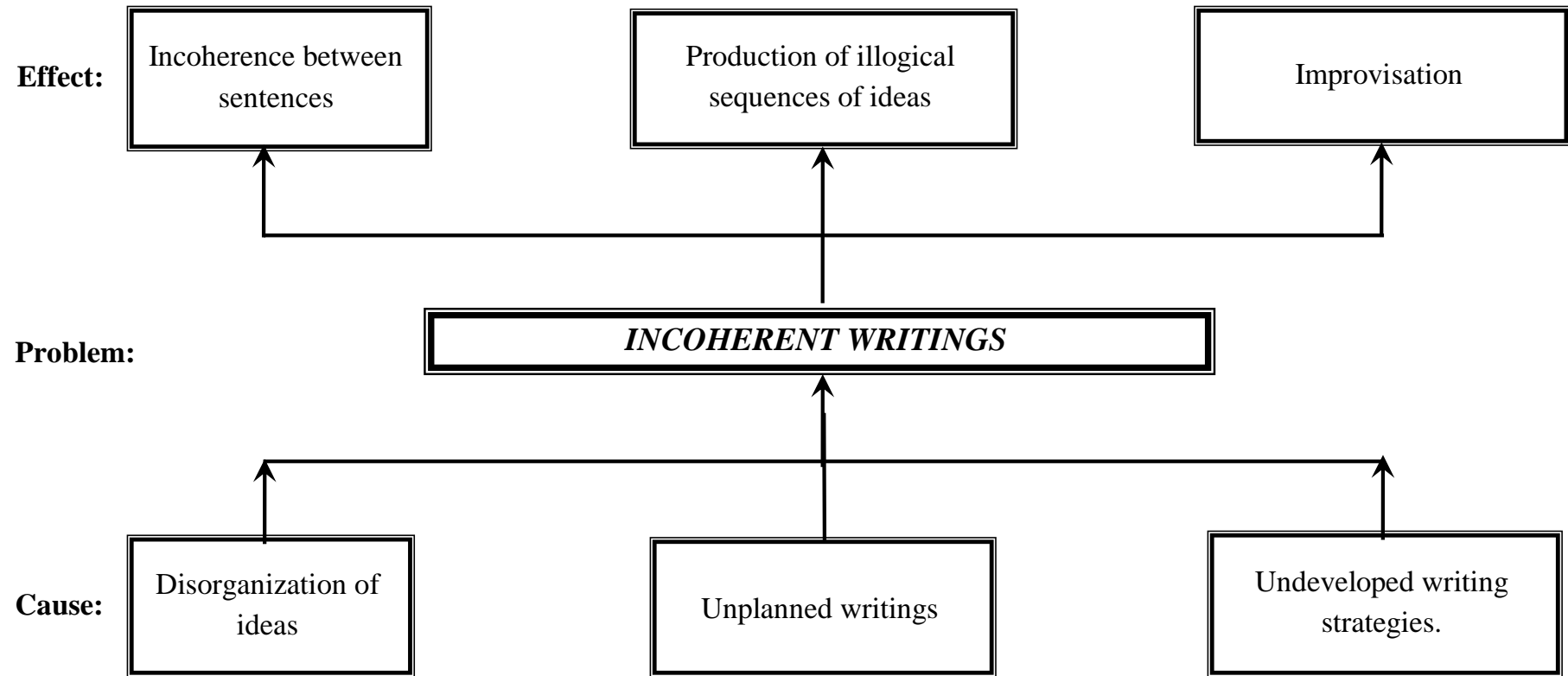
From the four language skills, writing is the forgotten one. The research, according to scholars like, Ahmed, & Abouabdelkader (2018), and Li & Edwards (2011), is sparse. For this reason, the development of writing is not as advanced as the other productive skill. Inevitably, it causes difficulties to EFL learners, around the world, especially to those who want to take an international examination to certify their proficiency in the language. Applicants around the world need a wide variety of strategies that can help them to overcome the difficulties that those exams involve like tiredness, limited time, and unawareness of the writing topics.

On the other hand, English Language Teachers face other difficulty in the lessons aimed to develop the writing skill. According to Dengerscherz, & Steindl (2016), students are unmotivated to use prewriting activities. The majority of learners avoid the prewriting stage, and write the ideas as they come to their minds. By writing in this way, they think that their creativity is fostered. However, the counterproductive side of this situation shows that coherence, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, and other aspects are not developed appropriately.

In Ecuador, EFL students also find difficulties when they do a writing task. Ahmed, & Abouabdelkader (2018) mention that those problems can be attributed to a sort of interference of the student's L1 on the L2. They explain that cultures where memorization, and rote learning are quite common the writing development is negatively influenced by the Culture specifics. Although the education system has changed the paradigms, and memorization has been displaced, it is currently used by students as a strategy for "survival". Unsurprisingly, students still memorize the information to get good grades in the evaluations. As a result, EFL learners are

negatively influenced by cultural aspects, so their writing skill performance is not the expected one, and have errors not only in terms of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and so on, but also in terms of coherence.

PROBLEM TREE.



Graphic 1.-Problem Tree

Source: Contextualization

Author: Gamboa J. (2019)

CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

The writings made by Ecuadorian EFL learners have a unique feature. It is the disorganization of ideas. The students usually write the information as it comes up to their minds. Unquestionably, this disorder affects negatively to the coherence of a text producing disconnections between sentences.

In the same way, it is common to see Ecuadorian students writing without planning what they are going to put in a text. They do not even write a draft. Therefore, it is not unusual to read texts that has an illogical sequence of ideas at a paragraph level, and at a whole text level.

The circumstances mentioned above might be overcome with an appropriate development of writing strategies. However, English courses in Ecuador do not pay too much attention to the development of strategies. They are still focused on teaching more about the form of language than about its use. Consequently, the writings made by Ecuadorian EFL students are good in terms of cohesion, but in terms of coherence, they show improvisation, and illogicalness.

PROGNOSIS

This problem must be tackled, otherwise EFL learners in Ecuador will continue making the same mistakes, and struggling at the moment of writing. For that reason, it is imperative to provide a viable solution, so that students will be able to write texts with a clear improvement on coherence.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

How does outlining influence the improvement of the writing skill?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do students use outlining frequently?
- Did coherence improve after applying the use of outlines?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of outlining?

RESEARCH DELIMITATION.

Field.

Communicative

Line of research.

Language Teaching

Spatial delimitation

This research was carried out in the Technical University of Ambato.

Temporal delimitation

The present study was done during the academic period September 2019 – February 2020.

Observation Units

This research was applied to intermediate level students.

JUSTIFICATION.

Among the productive skills, academic writing represents a challenge for EFL learners because their writing process consists in writing the ideas as they come to their minds. According to Dengerscherz, & Steindl (2016), language learners are not motivated to use prewriting strategies. It becomes counterproductive because the quality of the texts written by the students is affected specially in terms of coherence. In that context, this research justifies its **importance** because it is aimed to increase the motivation of the use of “outlines” as a prewriting strategy by demonstrating that they do not take too much time, they are not complicated to design, adapt, and follow, and by demonstrating the improvements in the quality of the texts, especially in terms of coherence.

After taking some modules designed to prepare candidates for international examinations like PET, FCE, CAE, and TOEFL, the **interest** of the researcher emerged for trying to find a suitable strategy that helps candidates to keep the focus of the task, and to manage the time allocated. From an experiential outlook, outlines meet the requirements already mentioned. The students, of the modules above named, who used outlines overcame the difficulties and achieve the objectives of the tasks with more ease than those who did not use outlines. However, it was only an empirical experience. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out an experimental research to demonstrate the suitability of outlines, so they can be consider as an appropriate strategy that contributes to the improvement of the writing skill.

Reaching the objectives of this investigation will be **feasible** because it does not depend on external factors like money supply. To achieve the expected results successfully, the only requirement needed is the opportunity to work with the units of observation, and time to measure how the exposure to the strategy works in a specific group of EFL students.

Other important aspect of this work is the **originality**. Outlines have been used for a long time. However, the use of them to improve the writing skill needs to be evaluated using a wide range of variables. This research will contribute to validate whether outlines are a good strategy or not for students, especially for those who reach the intermediate levels.

Finally, it is worth to mention that this research will **benefit** students and teachers because it will provide a supported outlook on the use of outlines, so teachers might use them in the same way as in this work, or in a different one to help learners improve the writing skill.

INVESTIGATIVE BACKGROUND

English language has four skills: two productive, and two receptive. Toalombo (2019) mentions that “the productive skills” are those that entails the use of language to convey an idea or a message rather than a passive process of receiving language. In other words, they are the tools that language learners have in order to express their ideas and thoughts to other people using the target language. There are works that are

focused on the way in which students receive language, but this one is dedicated to the productive skills, specifically to writing. The problems that surround the development of a particular aspect of this skill, specifically coherence, is analyzed from the perspective of the jobs done by worldwide-recognized scholars in the field of education.

There are numerous investigations that are aimed to offer possible solutions to the problems related to the development of the writing skill. One of them was carried out by Dengerscherz, & Steindl (2016) with 163 students from the University of Vienna through four discussion classes in which students wrote short texts. The objective of their work, approached from the qualitative and quantitative methodology, was to find out the attitudes that learners have towards the use of writing strategies. The analysis of the information collected was focused on two main categories: planning, and spontaneous writing. The use of outlines was included among the planning category. The conclusion reached by the scholars determined that students have a rejection towards planning their writings. According to the statistics, the 29.4% of the students use strategies to plan their writings, while the 70.6% write spontaneously. The authors mentioned that this mindset is generalized because learners strongly believe that using writing strategies means to give up flexibility when writing a text. Finally, and among the suggestions offered in this investigation, the researches proposed the use of outlines as an alternative to overcome that feeling of “rejection” because it allows students not to be forced to follow an initially developed macrostructure, so that they can be as creative as possible.

There are not too much contemporary evidence of the benefits of using outlines. However, among the few works done, the one carried out by Kartawijaya (2018) is of relevant importance for this research. This scholar, through the use of tests, observations, and field notes, identified that EFL learners from the grade VIII B of SMP Negeri 6 Sungai Penuh faced problems when writing because they were not interested in learning English, and consequently they felt boredom, and thought that writing was difficult. The students mentioned that when writing they do not have ideas than can be developed in the text. It caused a disorganization in the texts because they wrote as the thoughts came to their minds. To fix these problems, the classroom teacher used tests, observations, and field notes during an experimental research, in which

outlines were applied, as a teaching technique, to fix the problems above mentioned. The aspects evaluated by the teacher were content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Before applying this strategy, the mean score gotten was 52.85%. However, after some weeks of exposure, that score improved significantly to 76.87%. The conclusion drawn by this scholar was that outlines make easier to design and organize a text. This assumption was supported by the scores gotten because all the aspects evaluated showed a substantial progress.

Addressing specifically the matters arisen in writing essays, like the poor development of writing skills, Salija (2017) carried out an experimental research in which the main aim was to find out if the use of outlines influences the idea development quality. To meet the objective, this scholar uses expository writing tests. In other words, the participants of this investigation were divided into two groups. One of them wrote expository essays with an outline, and the other without the outline. The information collected from two tests were compared, and analyzed using the Turkey's test. They showed a significant difference between outlining, and non-outlining. When outlines were used, the mean score gotten was of 82.058, and when outlines were discarded, the mean score was of 78.681. Among the benefits found out by the researcher, it was mentioned that students were more focused on the materials of the writing, and connection between the thesis statement, the controlling ideas, supporting details, and the conclusions. It means that outlines influences positively the coherence of a text. Finally, this scholar suggests using outlines as a pre-writing strategy because of its multiple benefits.

Theoretical foundation of the independent variable: Outlining

Outlining is a tool used by writers to organize ideas. Kartawijaya (2018) points out that outlining is a blueprint that shows the structure of a text in levels, and it is a helpful way to organize ideas, and to keep the relationship between those "ideas" and the supporting details. In other academic text, Bahls (2012) defines outlining as a prewriting activity that helps students to organize, and connect their ideas. This strategy represents a roadmap that is followed by the writers during the whole writing process, and allows them to keep the hierarchical order of ideas. In other words, outlines provide a simple hierarchical structure of topics and subtopics that will be part

of a text. The information, which will be included in those points, is a matter of choice of the writer. Thus, the imagination, and creativity of the learners is not affected.

Before exploring the use of outlines as a strategy, it is necessary to clarify what a strategy is. Oxford (2016) states that strategies, in a broad sense, are activities designed by teachers, with the specific purpose of solving a problem inside the class. For example, the use of puppets is a strategy that helps teachers to engage children in the topics of a lesson, and even to correct misbehaviors. In other scenarios, strategies – like the use of outlines– might help teachers to solve academic problems like the lack of coherence in written texts.

Webb (2015) asserts that the strategies, specifically the ones designed for the writing skill, are sequences or processes that not only address grammatical problems because they are aimed to help learners to produce communicatively effective texts. Thus, by using strategies, the writer can meet the goals set for a task, compensate the lack of knowledge of a topic, and control the flow of ideas. When designing a strategy, it is important to bear in mind the sub skill that teachers want to enhance, or the problem that has to be overcome. For this specific research, the writing strategy is clearly oriented to solve the difficulties faced by learners with coherence. Thus, outlining can be considered as the strategy intended to control the flow of ideas, which will enhance the coherence of a text.

Butler (2015) provides an extensive perspective about the strategies that EFL learners can use. She classifies them into three groups: Pre-writing strategies, while-writing strategies, and revising strategies. Revision strategies are applied in the last stage of the writing process with the objective of reviewing and evaluating the text before submitting it. In contrast, while-writing strategies are implemented to expand the information gotten from the prewriting stage. They help writers to add details, facts, citations, and even the conclusion. On the other hand, the prewriting strategies are applied at the very beginning of the writing process, which is a stage characterized for being messy since the ideas flow without caring about important aspects like organization, grammar, lexis and so on. They are useful to organize and connect all the ideas that writers have in their minds, and they are also suitable to make up ideas and overcome the writer's block. Outlining is part of this category because it is aimed

to design a brief structure of a text before putting pen on paper, and provides learners an opportunity to organize their ideas beforehand, in such a way that they will be able to convey a message with precision. It is also a viable way to make up ideas, before writing when the writer does not have any knowledge about the writing topic.

The importance of the pre-writing strategies underlies in its benefits. Craig, (2012) remarks that those activities not only enhance the development of the critical thinking skills, but also encourage students to be creative, and to use the allocated time efficiently, so that they can submit a high quality piece of writing. In this context, this kind of strategies can be compared to the foundations of a building because the rest of the work depends on how well they are constructed. If the pre-writing activity is done well, the final product will be of high quality.

In order to provide theoretical support to the instruction of academic writing, Gladon, Graves, & Kelly, (2011), published a book in which they mention the multiple benefits of the use of outlines. They affirm that the advantages are not limited only to the organization of thoughts. Strategies also help the writer to choose appropriately the lexis, to improve the logical thinking and critical analysis of the writer, and of course, to keep focused on the topic, which influences positively the coherence of a text. It is a strategy that covers a wide variety of aspects, and helps the writer to make significant advances, so that the written production done by EFL learners can meet progressively the requirements set for the international examinations.

Outlining, as well as other strategies, requires an instructional process before being mastered, and becoming an efficient way to organize ideas. Fitzpatrick (2011) designed an instructional method that begins at a paragraph level, and ends in a whole text level. According to this scholar, there are some steps that have to be managed before designing and using outlines. Learners have to cope with how to brainstorm about specific topics, even though they do not have any knowledge about it. Teachers should also taught about the three levels that paragraphs have: topic sentence, supporting points, and supporting details, examples, or explanations. Then, students have to relate all that information, and create an outline to write a paragraph. Once those steps are achieved, learners have to expand this process to a whole text. The

suggested genre is the essay because of its structure and adaptability to the scheme of the outline.

Finally, it is important to analyze the classification of outlines. According to Alkhuli (2016), there are two types of outlines: Sentence outlines, and topic outlines. Sentence outlines list the ideas generated by the writer by using complete sentences. Each sentence should have a complete idea that must be covered, within the boundaries set, in a specific section of the text. Therefore, each sentence of this kind of outline is a thesis statement. Topic outlines, in contrast, list the ideas of the writer through words or phrases. Each word or phrase is a mini topic, which can be developed freely by the writer. The outlines to be used, for this work, are the topic outlines because they set enough freedom to the writers to develop their ideas. In addition, they do not require too much time to be done, since they only need words or phrases.

In relation to the differences between the outlines mentioned above, scholars like Sternlof (2015) state that there is a clear difference between the topic outline, and the sentence outline. While the first are short – only a word, or phrase –, and provide a quick overview of the subtopics that will be included in the text, the latter are extensive – complete sentences that include general, and specific information that will be covered by that section of the text –, and represents a sort of mini-thesis statements. In the context of this research, the topic outline shows more advantages than the sentence outline because sentence outlines requires considerable time to be developed, and they force students to write only about the points set. It means that writers have boundaries that are difficult to be overstep, change or adapt. On the other hand, sentence outlines require short time to be done, and allow students to be and feel free to write. It helps to overcome that misbelief about the negative influence of the writing strategies on the creativity of the writers, and encourages learners to use topic outlines as road map that offers endless possibilities to include secondary ideas, or subtopics that will be closely related to a main idea, or a thesis statement.

Weaver, Bost, Kassorla, McKinney-Holley, & Crowther, K. (2016) classify the outlines in a different way. They mention that there are three types of outlines: Alphanumerical, decimal, micro, and macro. The alphanumerical outline use roman numbers, Capitalized letters, Arabic numbers, or lowercase letters to describe the

hierarchical order of the ideas, and the relationship between them. The decimal outlines are similar to the alphanumerical ones. The only difference is that decimal outlines specify with more detail the hierarchy of the ideas, and the relation between the main point, supporting details, and the additional explanations. The micro outlines use full sentences, and even quotations, or analysis of quotes that will be part of a text. This sort of outline demands time to be designed, and it can be seen as the first rough draft of the text. In contrast, the macro outlines use short phrases or words to form the skeleton of a text. It is more flexible than the other outlines, and it is especially helpful for writing timed essays. The micro outlines, mentioned by these scholars, are similar to the topic outlines analyzed in the previous paragraph. They have the same features about flexibility, and purpose.

It has been established, from the theory, that outlines are an efficient strategy that helps writers to keep the focus on a certain topic. Although EFL learners think that outlines constrain their imagination and creativity, it has been demonstrated that topic outlines provide the required road map that can be completed with any sort of information without sacrifice the coherence of the text.

Theoretical foundation of the dependent variable: Writing skill

The instruction of English as a foreign language has been divided into 4 skills: two of them are productive, and the other two are receptive. Writing belongs to the so-called productive skills. Riddell (2014) asserts that writing can be considered as “the forgotten skill” because many courses do not spend enough time on the development of it. However, writing should not be ignored because it is an effective way to convey thoughts, ideas, opinions, facts, and so on. Other scholars like Doghonadze (2017) mention other reasons that make writing an important skill. In her work, she identified that writing influenced the development of the other skills. For instance, when it is appropriately developed, writing influences the analysis and synthesis of information, and the development of reading comprehension abilities. In addition, writing contributes to the improvement of the supportive skills for speaking, and helps less fluent speakers to gain confidence. It means that writing is not an isolated skill, and its development influences positively the improvement of the other skills. Therefore, English teachers should pay more attention to the activities and strategies used to

enhance the development of the writing skill, so EFL learners can develop integrally the productive skills.

However, the development of the writing skill has little theoretical support because, as mentioned by Li & Edwards (2011), the research is extremely sparse. In consequence, there is not enough innovation in the approaches, methodologies, and strategies used. Therefore, students struggle with the writing activities. Doghonadze (2017) remarks that EFL learners face problems in academic tasks, even though they have good grammar and vocabulary knowledge. In a broad sense, she asserts that language-based writing activities are not suitable to develop writing competence. In that way, it is suggested other alternatives to develop this skill like pair activities, more interactive tasks such as writing a letter to another student, or to a teacher instead of writing to a non-existing person, and the use of technology rather than on-paper tasks.

Writing sub-skills

The writing development is a complex process because it demands the improvement of many different aspects that goes beyond the appropriate use of grammar, register, lexis, and so on. Hence, it is necessary to pay attention to the sub-skills, so that more specific features of the writing skill can be improved. Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2011) divide those subskills into two groups: Subskills related to accuracy, and the ones related to communicating ideas. In the first category, they group spelling, forming letters, joining letters, writing legibly, among others. For the subskills related to the communication of ideas, the scholars afore mentioned include the style, register coherence, and so on.

The present work is focused on the development of a sub-skill related to the communication of ideas, which is coherence. Thus, the problems related to this sub-skill will be analyzed from the perspective of some scholars whose researches investigated the origins of certain problems faced by students when they have to carry out a writing task. It is important to bear in mind that each language skill displays a unique set of complications. For some students writing is more complicated than speaking. However, the research done by Haven (2014) concludes that writing is considered more difficult than speaking because it is a new human activity. He

supports that view in the fact that humans have been speaking for at least 1,000,000 years. However, historical records show people have been writing for no more than 7,000 years. This scholar also asserts that the human brain has dedicated specific regions to process language and speech, but it does not have a specific center for writing. In addition, it is stated that almost all the activities done by human beings depend largely on speech. Hence, speaking is automatically learned and flows naturally. In contrast, writing has to be taught systematically, so learners can improve their skills progressively. On this basis, it might be stated that writing is a new human activity which requires constantly updated proposals to cope with the complexity nature of its systematic process of development. In that way, new researches must be carried out to introduce alternatives for the stages of writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), especially in the field of academic language teaching.

Doghonadze (2017) also mentions that the development of the writing skill depends on the approach applied in the classroom. It is mandatory to point out that the writing skill has its own approaches. Among them, the one most widely applied nowadays is the process approach. Graham & Kelly (2009) state that in the process approach, writing is considered an activity which involves several stages of thinking and shaping meaning to produce a text, rather than just a simple elicitation of a product by the teacher. The popularity of this approach is justified by its multiple benefits. It encourages the creativity of learners because they have to build their own compositions instead of just imitating a text. It also enhances the responsibility of students because they have to take care of their own work, so they have to make decisions, by themselves, about when and how they have to make revisions and corrections. There are countless benefits besides the ones already mentioned, but without doubts, the most important one is the opportunity of giving students meaningful writing tasks. It allows learners to be engaged in the activities, and to comprehend easily the way in which the different texts –essays, letters, reports, mails, and so on– have to be written.

The theoretical foundations of the process approach offer numerous strategies to help students develop their writing skills. In this point, it is important to mention that, according to Cohen (2014), there are strategies for language teaching, and for language use, but in a broad sense, both are designed to enhance language performance. A key

point about strategies is that they are theoretical, and intended to achieve an overall aim. In that context, learners by themselves will decide whether the strategy is useful or not, in a sort of metacognitive decision. Nowadays, the development of strategies is more essential than in the past because, besides learning a language, people need to certify their proficiency. The International Association of Language Centers (2016) published an investigation in which it is demonstrated that the demand of learning English is rising gradually. One effect of this is that the demand of international examinations has also increased. Therefore, English courses must be aimed towards the development of the four skills by means of giving students a wide variety of strategies to be applied in specific sections of those exams. Outlining is part of those strategies. Although, it is specifically designed to be used in the writing sections of the exam, its structure is useful to other sections like listening, and even speaking.

Students who take a foreign language course have many different aims, but without doubts, the ultimate goal of learning a language is the attainment of a proficiency certification. However, it will not be easily achieved if writing is not fully developed. In that context, Fareed, Ashraf, & Bilal (2016) mention that the lack of time, and the lack of knowledge are pointed out with more frequency by students as the main reasons that causes difficulties they are required to complete a writing activity. Without doubts, those causes affect the scores of EFL learners when they take an international examination –like FCE, CAE or TOEFL– because the writing items, of those exams, are based on topics that are not of public domain, so learners who are not prepared feel frustration, and the short time to carry out the activity makes it more complicated. The development of strategies is the most suitable way to face those difficulties, and outlines have proved to cover the aspects aforementioned. They allow students to make up ideas about an unknown topic without sacrificing important components of a well-structured writing like coherence. In addition, outlining helps students to use the time allocated in an efficient way because they will be focused on the development of specific ideas, so they will not spend time trying to develop additional thoughts, which most of the time are unrelated to the topic of the text.

EFL learners, especially those who are looking for a language proficiency certificate, should bear in mind that not all the exams are the same. Each international examination has its own set of fixed criteria to assess writing. In the case of writing, coherence is

one of the main aspects to be evaluated. It is due to, according to scholars like Ahmed & Abouabdelkader (2018), coherence allows the reader to comprehend a text without difficulties. Additionally, they mention that EFL learners usually write with appropriate cohesion by using transitional signals, but they are not able to write coherent texts. Other scholars believe that coherence in the texts of EFL learners is affected by the exposure to the language. An investigation done by Artieda, Roquet, & Nicolás-Conesa, (2017) shows that after 300 hours of continuous exposure a notorious improvement can be perceived in the performance of the productive skills. However, this study concludes suggesting that this time is not enough, and that it should be increased. In the particular case of Ecuador the lack of the exposure to the target language outside a class is a counterproductive matter that must be overcome with the use of strategies that can supply the hours in which EFL learners do not use the L2.

There are many different writing types, and they are catalogued according to the view of the scholar who provides the classification. In words of Saraswathi, & Biswas (2018), there are eight different types of writing: Filling in forms, information transfer, composition, diaries, dialogues, letters, essays, and reports. Filling in forms is considered as the most basic writing type, and it is based on filling forms for different purposes like job applications, reservations on trains, and so on. Information transfer entails the transfer, or exchange of information from one form to other. Examples of this category include wiring a paragraph based on other paragraph, or completing a table based on given data. Compositions are regarded as meaningful tasks. They entail the use of pictures to create a story. Diaries are personal records that encourage the creativity of learners because they do not require the use of complete sentences, organization, or appropriate grammar. They allow students to write their thoughts and feelings as they flash to their minds. Although dialogues belong to the spoken English, they are also part of the written production. They can be simple as in day-to-day conversations, or more elaborated as in novels. Letters enable the communication between people by paying attention to two fundamental features: purpose, and register. Reports describe events or experiences, and are subdivided into newspaper, scientific or business, and so on. Essays are continuous pieces of writing made up of paragraphs,

which presents information from the perspective of the author to inform, persuade, explain, or entertain.

In this point, it is essential to analyze with more detail the writing sections of the international examinations, so the writing type of the tasks can be identified. It is obvious that exams like FCE, CAE, and TOEFL do not have the same tasks. However, all of them have something in common: They require the candidates to write essays, and its content varies based on the type of task. In order to be clear about those variations, it is important to establish the types of essays that can be written, nonetheless there is not only one classification of them. Each scholar offers his/her own typology. For example, Budiharso (2017) mentions three categories: expository, narrative, and persuasive. Lenski & Verbruggen (2010) indicates four categories of essays: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. On the other hand, Phillips (2015) introduces a different category of essays, which consist of: opinion, preference, hypothetical, explain or describe, and comparison or contrast. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to achieve consensus because each categorization pays attention to different aspects. Hence, to choose the essays to experiment with, the commonalities, and types of tasks of the international examinations were taken into account. While section 1 of CAE uses expository essays, task 1 and task 2 of both FCE, and TOEFL use expository and persuasive essays. In that way, the expository and persuasive essays were chosen. In the expository essay, according to Hogsette (2019), students have to explain a topic, using facts, giving reasons, or examples. In this type of writing, it is also valid to expose a perspective, or provide information about an issue or topic. With regard to the persuasive essay, the aforementioned specialist asserts that it is intended to persuade the reader to accept a point of view, or recommendation about a controversial topic.

After carrying out an investigative work, Lenski & Verbruggen (2010) concluded that Language Learners have difficulties to write expository and persuasive essays because academic writing is not part of the language courses. In a more complex research done in Spain, Manchón & Matsuda (2016) state that students who are exposed to the target language with more frequency show an evident improvement. However, they remark an important aspect that influences significantly the development of the writing skill in terms of coherence. It is the cognitive maturity of students, which is reached

between the ages of 13 and 17. Although there is not too much evidence about the effects of cognitive maturity on coherence, English teachers should be careful when they plan their lessons because learners might not be able to deploy all the features of “coherence” if they are not cognitively mature, no matter the language level in which they are. Hence, the use of strategies becomes fundamental to help students write coherently, even if they do not reached the stage aforementioned.

In a further analysis, Jacobs (2011) demonstrates that coherence is closely related to organization, which is ruled by the genre of the text. For example, an essay, a report, and a letter have different patterns. In other words, the logical organization of ideas is influenced by the genre. Furthermore, she asserts that grammar plays an important role in the development of coherence because grammatical structures show how one word is related to the other. She suggests using simple structures because the complex ones make coherence difficult to hold. Besides those observations, Jacobs discusses the current issues on the development of writing skills. She affirms that writing coherently has become challenging for learners because social media encourages young people to write short bursts of text, and this produces difficulties for them at the moment of trying to hold together a long text. As a result, the development and application of strategies such as outlining becomes vital to help students improve coherence in the writing skills development.

As stated above, the development of writing skill has been forgotten, and it has become a serious issue because the importance of this productive skill has increased as the demand of international exams applications has increased. The current research tries to solve this problem by addressing a specific question: coherence, which, in words of Pinker (2015), is not limited only to the relation between one sentence and the next. It is extended to the entire text. This work is now aimed to demonstrate, through the application of the strategy, that outlining helps students to organize their ideas into items, categorize their arguments, and present a well-structured text, so its use will be advisable as a strategy that allows students to keep the coherence during a whole text.

OBJECTIVES

General objective.

- To determine whether the use of outlines influences the development of the writing skill.

Specific Objectives.

- To apply outlining as a strategy to improve the coherence.
- To evaluate the performance of students about a specific aspect of the writing skill development, which is coherence.
- To analyze quantitatively the effects of outlining on the development of the writing skill.

Process to achieve the objectives

To achieve the first specific objective, it was necessary to get the permission of the authorities, and professors of “Universidad Técnica de Ambato”. After that, a schedule was designed to allow the researcher apply a pretest, expose the experimental group to the strategy, and to apply a posttest, in the allocated time.

To achieve the second specific objective, a scale with four criteria related to coherence was used to evaluate the pretest, and posttest. This scale was the one already used and validated by Higgins, Burstein, Marcu, & Gentile (2004), but it was adapted to evaluate the specific features that concern to this research.

Finally, to achieve the last specific objective, the scores were processed statistically, so the results of both groups could be compared. In that way, the improvement of the experimental group was more evident. Finally, all the information was validated using the Wilcoxon test.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

RESOURCES

Human resources

- Researcher – Juan Carlos Gamboa Castillo.
- Tutor.
- Students from the fifth, and sixth level of “Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros” major.

Institutional resources

- Classroom
- Projector
- Board

Materials

- Internet.
- Books.
- Computer
- Photocopies

Economical resources

\$200,00

METHODS

Methodology

This research was approached from the quantitative methodology because through the data processing the effect of applying outlines to help EFL learners develop the writing skill can be perceived. This information is fundamental to check whether students

improve the coherence in their writings or not after being exposed to the use of outlines. To achieve this goal, the units of observation, students from the fifth and sixth levels of “Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros” major, were divided into two groups named as the experimental group, and the control one, respectively. At the beginning of the research, both the experimental, and the control group were tested by means of writing a persuasive, and an expository essay. Then, during six sessions, the experimental group was exposed to the use of outlines, while the control group was provided with prompts to write the same texts. Finally, all the units of observation were tested again to determine if any change was produced in the coherence of the texts produced by the students.

After that, both the pretest and the posttest were evaluated using a scale that measures four aspects of coherence. It is attached in the section of annexes. The results were processed, and contrasted using Microsoft Excel. However, to verify the statistical validity of the results produced, and to confirm the validity of the hypothesis, the information was scrutinized using the Wilcoxon test.

Instruments.

For this investigation, three instruments were used: a pretest, a posttest, and a scale to assess the tests. The pretests has 2 sections. In the first section, learners have to write an expository essay about the reasons why they admire a particular person, in at least one hundred and fifty words. In the second part, learners have to write a persuasive essay about testing beauty goods on animals, using at least one hundred and fifty words. The posttest has the same structure. It has two items. First, students have to write, in at least one hundred and fifty words, an expository essay explaining some why they desired to live in a specific place abroad. Then, they have to write, in at least one hundred and fifty words, a persuasive essay on the relevance of reducing the amount of homework in schools. To evaluate the pretest and the posttest, a scale was used. This scale was adapted from the system to evaluate aspects of coherence developed by Higgins, Burstein, Marcu, & Gentile (2004). The instruments were validated through the expert judgment. Two experts were involved in this process. The judges were asked to review the categories of the scale using an observation sheet. Then, this information was processed using the Cohen’s Kappa Coefficient, in which

the results must be above 0.8 to consider an instrument as valid. The data gotten by this instrument was of 0.99, which is higher than 0.8. Consequently, the instruments are valid.

Type of research

Descriptive

This research is framed into the descriptive level because it is aimed to describe the problems faced by students at the moment of writing academic texts such as expository essays, and persuasive essays by means of applying a pre-test. Furthermore, it also allows the researcher to report whether the application of outlining as a strategy provides benefits to students or not through the application of a post-test.

Experimental

Based on the descriptions done by Iglesias (2015), the design selected for this investigation was the experimental. According to the aforementioned scholar, in this type of research, the experimental units are assigned randomly following the consistent framework of Riegelman, the double-blind trial is applied, the researcher is the one who applies the dependent variable, and he or she is also in charge of manipulating, administering, and adjusting the application of the independent variable. The specific experimental design chosen was the independent or parallel groups design, in which the experimental units were divided into two identical groups –in terms of writing skills–, one of those groups was exposed to the independent variable, and the other was not exposed. However, both of them did not know who belonged to the experimental, and who belonged to the control group.

In this work, the researcher was in charge of applying the activities related to the dependent variable, which were the writing of expository and persuasive essays. Furthermore, the investigator had the responsibility of managing the way in which the outlines –independent variable– were used to achieve the objective of the texts.

Field research

This is a field research because most of the work was done in the same place where the problem is verified. It means at the Technical University of Ambato, with students of “Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros”.

Bibliographic

It is also a bibliographic research because to support the theoretical basis of the investigation is necessary to look for information in books of recognized scholars.

HYPOTHESIS

Null hypothesis

Outlining does not improve coherence in writing skills.

Alternative hypothesis

Outlining does improve coherence in writing skills.

Variables of the hypothesis

Independent variable: Outlining

Dependent variable: Writing skill

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results gotten from the pretest, and the posttest were collected using a rubric in which four aspects of coherence were evaluated in a scale from one to three. One point represents a low achievement of the criteria, two means medium achievement, and three entails a high accomplishment of the measured conditions. In the charts below, the average score of each group will be presented.

Persuasive Essay - Results of the pretest

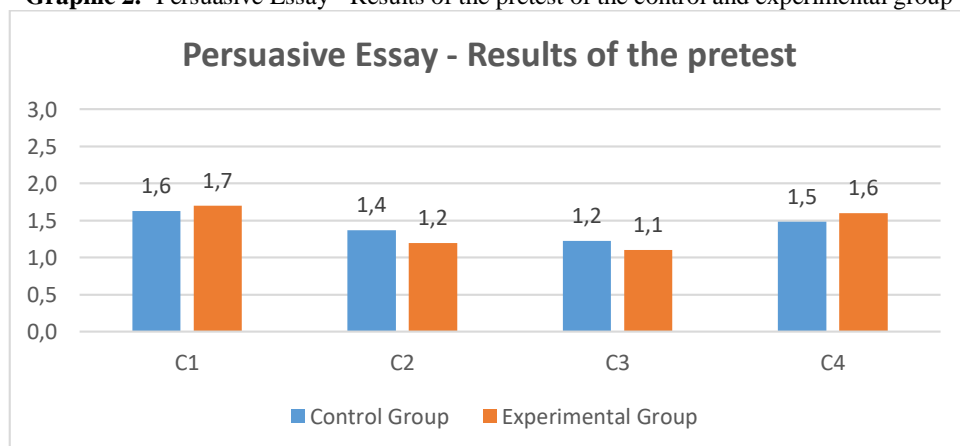
Criteria	Control Group	Experimental Group
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.6	1.7
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.4	1.2
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.2	1.1
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.5	1.6

Chart 1.- Persuasive Essay - Results of the pretest of the control and experimental group.

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 2.- Persuasive Essay - Results of the pretest of the control and experimental group



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

The results gotten by the two groups are similar. In three out of four cases, there is a difference of 0.1, between the groups. For the first criterion, the control group got 1.6, and the experimental group 1.7. For the third aspect, the control group 1.2, while the experimental one got 1.1. For the fourth criterion, the control group got 1.5, and the experimental group got 1.6. Finally, there is one case in which the difference is of 0.2, which is not statistically significant. In the second aspect, the control group got 1.4, while the experimental group got 1.2. From this information, it can be concluded that both groups are in the same level in terms of writing coherently. However, it should be mentioned that the numbers show that both groups are in a medium level of coherence

Expository Essay - Results of the pretest

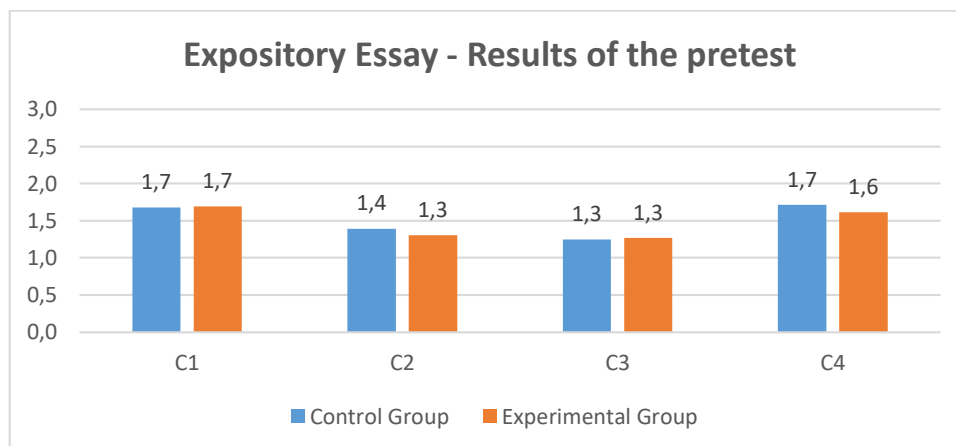
Criteria	Control Group	Experimental Group
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.7	1.7
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.4	1.3
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.3	1.3
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.7	1.6

Chart 2.-Expository Essay - Results of the pretest of the control and experimental group

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 3.- Expository Essay - Results of the pretest of the control and experimental group



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

The results gotten with the expository essay are similar to the ones gotten with the persuasive essay. The variations are of 0.1 that is not very significant. It allows the researcher to conclude that the skills that learners have developed for writing an expository essay are in the same level in both groups. Consequently, it is a good starting point to begin with the experimental research because the writing skill developed so far by learners is in the same level. In fact, the scores are the same in two out of four criteria. Thus, both groups got 1.7 for the first criterion, and 1.3 for the third one. In the second aspect evaluated, the controlled group got 1.4, while the experimental group got 1.3. Finally, in the fourth criterion, the controlled group got 1.7, and the experimental group got 1.6. This difference of 0.1 is not statistically representative. Nonetheless, the average scores show that coherence in the expository essays of the units of observation is in a medium level.

Persuasive Essay - Results of the posttest

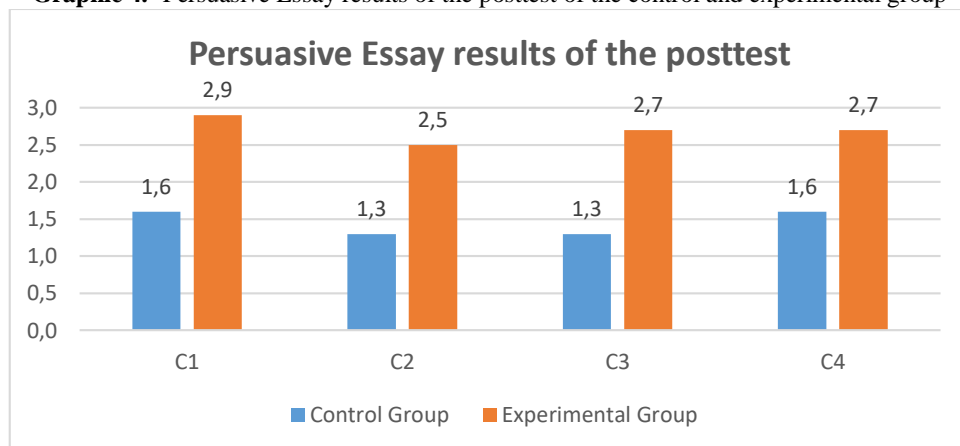
Criteria	Control Group	Experimental Group
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.6	2.9
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.3	2.5
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.3	2.7
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.6	2.7

Chart 3.-Persuasive Essay results of the posttest of the control and experimental group

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 4.- Persuasive Essay results of the posttest of the control and experimental group



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

From the data above, it can be concluded that students who use outlines when writing have a better performance than those that do not use this strategy. Thus, the experimental group, in the first component got 2.9, while the control group got 1.6. In the second criterion, the experimental group got 2.5, which surpass the 1.3 gotten by the control group. In the third element evaluated, the experimental group got 2.7 while the control group got 1.3. Finally, in the last criterion evaluated, the experimental group got 2.7, while the control group got 1.6. The results mentioned shows that, in average, the experimental group improved the coherence of their writings due to the use of outlines. The scores gotten by the control group are still within the boundaries of the medium performance. It means that the use of outlines has a positive effect in the experimental group.

Expository Essay - Results of the posttest

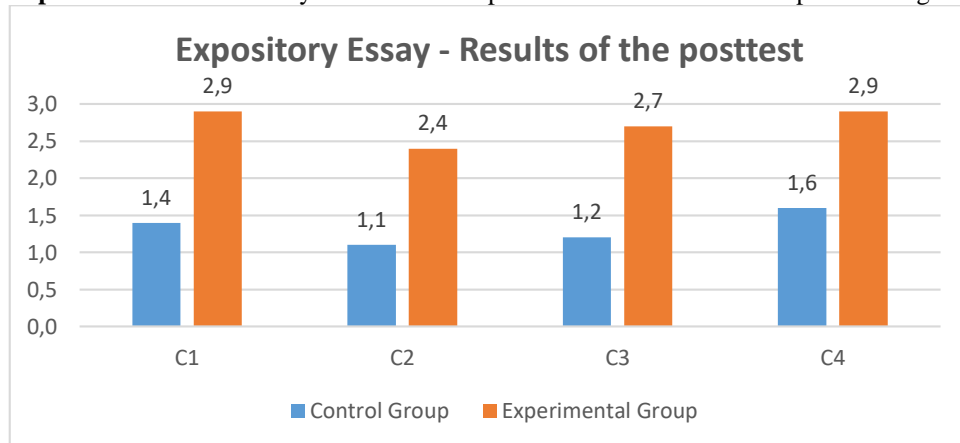
Criteria	Control Group	Experimental Group
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.4	2.9
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.1	2.4
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.2	2.7
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.6	2.9

Chart 4.- Expository Essay - Results of the posttest of the control and experimental group

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 5.- Persuasive Essay - Results of the posttest of the control and experimental group.



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

Once the experimental group was exposed to the use of outlines, the results gotten show an important improvement. In contrast, the control group showed similar scores to the ones gotten in the pretest. For the first criterion, the experimental group got 2.9, which is closer to the highest score, in contrast to the control group that got 1.4 that is within the boundaries of the medium performance. For the second aspect evaluated, the experimental group got 2.4 while the control group got 1.1. In the third element evaluated, students from the experimental group got 2.7, and the ones from the control group got 1.2. Finally, in the fourth aspect the experimental group got 2.9, while the control group got 1.6. It is evident that after some sessions in which learners used outlines, the levels of coherence improved in the experimental group.

Overall results of the control group – Persuasive essay

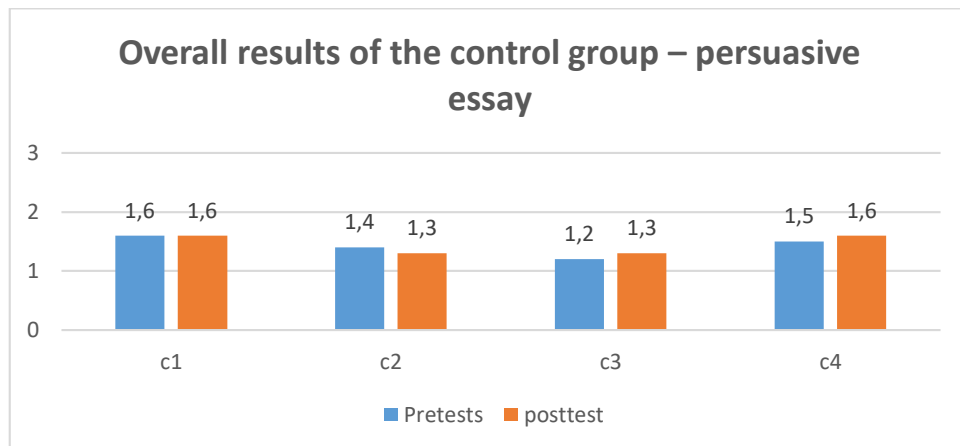
Criteria	Pretest	Posttest
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.6	1.6
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.4	1.3
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.2	1.3
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.5	1.6

Chart 5.- Overall results of the control group – persuasive essay

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 6.-Overall results of the control group – persuasive essay



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

From the data above presented, it can be concluded that, in average, the students from the control group got similar scores in the pretest, and in the posttest of the persuasive essay, in the second, third, and fourth criteria evaluated the difference between the pre, and posttest is of 0,1 which is not statistically significant.

Overall results of the control group – Expository essay

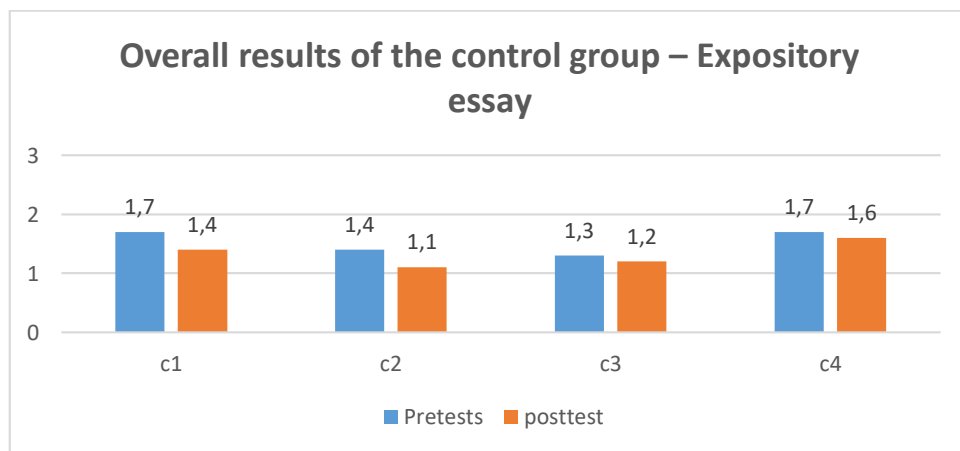
Criteria	Pretest	Posttest
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.7	1.4
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.4	1.1
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.3	1.2
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.7	1.6

Chart 6.- Overall results of the control group – expository essay

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 7.- Overall results of the control group – Expository essay



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

Likewise, for the expository essay, the results gotten in the posttest by the control group do not represent a substantial variation from the ones gotten in the pretest. It means that their performance does not change despite the fact that at this level, learners are supposed to manage a specific set of strategies to write a coherent essay.

Overall results of the Experimental group – Persuasive essay

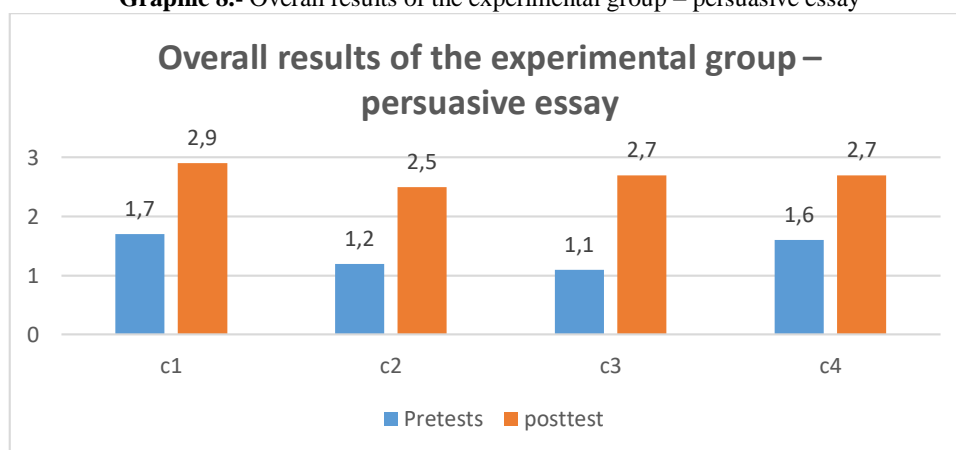
Criteria	Pretest	Posttest
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.7	2.9
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.2	2.5
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.1	2.7
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.6	2.7

Chart 7.- Overall results of the experimental group – persuasive essay

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 8.- Overall results of the experimental group – persuasive essay



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

In contrast to the results already analyzed, the scores gotten by the experimental group show an important change that illustrates an improvement in the coherence of the writings of EFL learners. Thus, for the first component evaluated there is difference of 1.2 points between the pretest, and the posttest. For the second criterion assessed, the difference is of 1.3 points. In the case of the third aspect evaluated, the variation is of 1.6. Finally, for the fourth criterion measured, the difference is of 1.1. In average, the improvement in terms of coherence is quite visible.

Overall results of the Experimental group – Expository essay

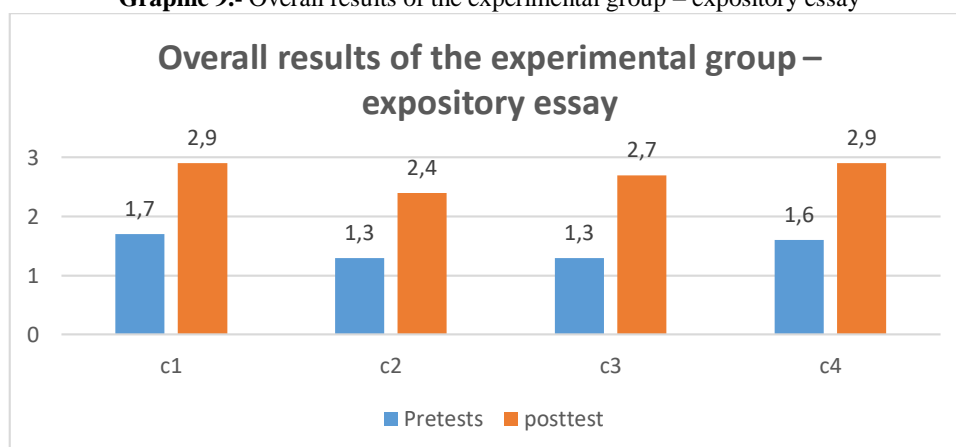
Criteria	Pretest	Posttest
1.The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic	1.7	2.9
2.The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.	1.3	2.4
3.Sentences within a paragraph are closely related	1.3	2.7
4.The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences	1.6	2.9

Chart 8.- Overall results of the experimental group – expository essay

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Graphic 9.- Overall results of the experimental group – expository essay



Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

Analysis and interpretation

Likewise, the results of the posttest show a visible improvement in the coherence of the texts done by EFL learners. In the first criterion, the progress is of 1.2 points, and the score is closer to the highest score. For the second element evaluated, the difference is of 1.1 from the results gotten in the pretest. Regarding the third component measured, the variation is of 1.4 points between the scores of the pretest, and the results of the posttest. For the last element assessed, the difference of the results between the pre and posttest is of 1.3. In general, those grades show that after the exposure to the strategy, and some exercises of practice, the coherence in the writings improves substantially.

Discussion of results

From the point of view of scholars like Dengerscherz, & Steindl (2016), one of the main problems that adversely affect the understanding of the message in the writings done by EFL learners is related to coherence. This study confirm, with the data of the pretest, that students are able to write without problems at a sentence level. However, there is a disconnection between the ideas at a paragraph level, and whole text level. Learners begin their texts with the focus on the topic allocated, but in the subsequent lines, they deviate from the theme, and in consequence the submitted text is not related to the assigned subject, as expected.

Some alternatives have been proposed to address this issue. Researchers, like Kartawijaya (2018), suggest that the use of outlines help EFL learners to organize and connect the ideas in such a way that the focus on the topic assigned might not be lost, improving the coherence of the text. The data processed in this investigation ratifies that assertion. After 6 weeks of exposure to the use of topic outlines, the experimental group shows a considerable improvement in the coherence of the writings submitted. The final performance in the texts almost reaches the highest score of the evaluation scale used in this work, which demonstrates that outlines are a useful prewriting strategy to improve specific aspects of the writing skill like coherence.

Even though this study is focused on the development of coherence by using outlines, there are other elements that belong to the sub-skills related to communicating ideas that are not influenced by this strategy. According to the classification done by Spratt, Pulverness, & Williams (2011), the other components of the writing sub-skills related to communicating ideas are: using appropriate style, using appropriate register, using the typical features of the text type, and using appropriate functions, e.g. narrating, complaining, requesting, concluding, and so on. Throughout this study, it can be observed that outlining also encourages the development of sub-skills like using the typical features of the text type, and using appropriate functions. However, it is noticed that outlining does not affect, either in a positive or negative way, other features of the writing skill like style or register. The writings done by EFL learners, during this study, are characterized by the informality

One important aspect to take into account when working with outlines is the cognitive maturity. In words of Spain, Manchón & Matsuda (2016), it is possible that students, who are not cognitively mature, will not be able to deploy all the features of “coherence”. This study, which shows positive results about the use of outlines and the development of coherence as a sub-skill of writing, has, as experimental units, students whose average age is twenty years. According to the aforementioned scholars, the cognitive maturity phase is reached between thirteen and seventeen years old, which means that students in this age group have just begun to be cognitively mature, while the experimental units, because of being older, are more cognitive mature. The strategy applied in this research is intended to be used by students from intermediate levels. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that there are teenagers who are in B1 or B2 classes. Therefore, and with the objective of deepening the analysis of the effects of outlines over coherence, further research should be done but this time with intermediate students who are between thirteen and seventeen years old, so the effects of cognitive maturity over the use of outlines can be tested.

HYPOTHESIS VERIFICATION

In order to verify the validity of the hypothesis set for this research, the data collected will be analyzed using the Wilcoxon test, and the software SPSS.

Chart 9.- Wilcoxon Ranges Test

		N	Average Ranges	Sum of Ranges
Posttest - Pretest	Negative Ranges	7 ^a	12,50	87,50
	Positive Ranges	36 ^b	23,85	858,50
	Ties	10 ^c		
	Total	53		

a. Posttest < Pretest

b. Posttest > Pretest

c. Posttest = Pretest

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

From the information shown above, the ranges indicate that the results of the pretest and the posttest applied to the 53 students that belong to both the control group, and the experimental one, produced 7 negative ranges, 36 positive ranges, and 10 ties. It entails that after the exposure to the strategy the scores gotten in the posttest improve significantly in comparison to the ones reached in the pretest.

Chart 10.- Wilcoxon Test Statistics

	Posttest - Pretest
Z	-4,662 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,000

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

Source: Pretest and posttest scores.

Author: Gamboa, J. (2019)

The Wilcoxon test determines that the null hypothesis must be rejected if the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level which is 0,05. For this research, the significance value is -4,662, and the significance (p-value) shows a result of ,000 that is less than 0,05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative one is accepted. As a result, it is established that outlining does improve coherence in writing skills.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the theoretical background, and the statistical data, the results gotten in this research support the following conclusions:

- Outlines do influence positively the development of the writing skill, in specific aspects like coherence, which is a sub-skill related to communicating ideas.
- Outlines are a suitable prewriting strategy to improve the coherence in the persuasive and expository essays done by EFL learners. After the six sessions of exposure to the use of outlines, the posttest applied revealed that the experimental group had a notorious improvement in the four aspects of coherence that were evaluated. With the experimental group, the connection between ideas at the paragraph level, and whole text level showed a stronger relation than the one of the pretest. In addition, the mistakes related to grammar, run-on sentences, and so on had a significant reduction. On the other hand, the control group show a similar performance to the one of the pretest.
- Outlines demonstrate –quantitatively– to have beneficial effects on the improvement of the writing skill. The data processed shows that the experimental units, in the expository essay, move from the medium scores, with an average grade of 1.47, to the highest scores, with an average grade of 2.72. In the persuasive essay, the results show that students move from the lowest scores, with an average grade of 1.4, to the highest scores, with a mean grade of 2.7.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Once the conclusions drawn by this research were set, the following considerations are suggested in order to improve the writing skill of EFL learners.

- It is recommended to the teachers to include the use of outlines in their writing lessons.
- It is suggested to use outlines with a higher frequency in the writing lessons of the intermediate level students, so they will create the habit of outlining their ideas before writing any sort of text. Outlines should be included progressively, to generate coherence at a paragraph level, and then to a whole text level.
- It is suggested to increase the amount of activities related to writing persuasive and expository essays, and to require in them the use of outlines, so that students can learn and develop metacognitive strategies about how to translate, connect, and adapt the ideas of the outline in the writing activities.
- During the development of this study, some limitations emerged. Among the main limits faced are the lack of wide theoretical support, and the lack of prewriting strategies usage. As stated in the theoretical framework, writing is considered as the forgotten skill. There is not too much updated research about its development. Therefore, it is recommended to encourage in-service and pre-service teachers to develop more studies related to the writing skill, so new and creative alternatives to improve this productive skill can emerge periodically.

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ANNEXES

Lesson plan 1 – (experimental group)	
Topic: Outlining introduction	Time: 40 minutes
Level: 5th	
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard	
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay by using outlines as a prewriting activity.	
TIME	PROCEDURE
2 min	Present the agenda
15min	<p>Topic Introduction: Outlines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a set of slides in which the structure, uses, and benefits of outlining is explained. • Exemplify the use of outlines by using the same writing topic of the expository essay taken in the pretest.(Explain why you admire a particular person) • Exemplify the way in which an outline can be used to develop a writing text. Students will notice the following levels. Topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. They have to perform the task in a similar way to the one described in the previous stage
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you admire a particular person.
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic.

Lesson plan 1 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing introduction	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction: Why you admire a particular person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0xfIObN_TU • Students will notice how they can use prompts to write a coherent essay on the topic: Explain why you admire a particular person • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you admire a particular person. 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

Lesson plan 2 – (experimental group)		
Topic: Outlining and writing practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 5th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay by using outlines as a prewriting activity.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show de purpose of a persuasive essay. • Explain the differences between the expository essay, and the persuasive essay. • Introduce the writing topic: Is it ethical to test beauty goods on animals? • Exemplify the way in which an outline is made, emphasizing the relation between the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details. 	
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. They have to perform the task in a similar way to the one described in the previous stage 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Is it ethical to test beauty goods on animals? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch again at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic. 	

Lesson plan 2 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing Practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbP5E4a11U8 • Explain the differences between the expository essay, and the persuasive essay. • Students will notice how they can use prompts to write a persuasive essay on the topic: Is it ethical to test beauty goods on animals? • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word persuasive essay on the topic: Is it ethical to test beauty goods on animals? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

Lesson plan 3 – (experimental group)		
Topic: Outlining and writing practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 5th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay paying special attention to the relation that the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details must have.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the writing topic: Explain why you specially enjoy a particular teacher? • Play a short extract of a video in which the speaker mentions some memories about her teachers. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmwy6r26vQY • Model the sample of an outline to exemplify the way in which the ideas can be developed, emphasizing the relation between the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details. 	
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you specially enjoy a particular teacher? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch again at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic. 	

Lesson plan 3 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing Practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmwy6r26vQY • Introduce the focus and scope of the topic: Explain why you enjoy a particular teacher? • Provide prompts (Personality, Methodology, Confidence, other reasons) • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you enjoy a particular teacher? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

Lesson plan 4 – (experimental group)		
Topic: Outlining and writing practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 5th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay paying special attention to the relation that the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details must have.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the writing topic: Is it right to use mobile-devices without a learning purpose during a lesson? • Play a short extract of a video in which two speakers talk about the pros and cons of using cellphones. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A39y6BqvYHo • Model the sample of an outline to exemplify the way in which the ideas can be developed, emphasizing the relation between the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details. 	
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word persuasive essay on the topic: Is it right to use mobile-devices without a learning purpose during a lesson? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch again at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic. 	

Lesson plan 4 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing Practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A39y6BqvYHo • Introduce the focus and scope of the topic: Is it right to use mobile-devices without a learning purpose during a lesson? • Provide prompts (Positive aspects: Looking for information, solve doubts, etc. Negative aspects: Distractions, disrespect, etc.) • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word persuasive essay on the topic: Is it right to use mobile-devices without a learning purpose during a lesson? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

Lesson plan 5 – (experimental group)		
Topic: Outlining and writing practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 5th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay paying special attention to the relation that the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details must have.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the writing topic: Explain why you like or don't like working in a team. • Play a video in which the benefits of living in other countries is shown. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ_Lsu_O0Z0 • Model the sample of an outline to exemplify the way in which the ideas can be developed, emphasizing the relation between the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details. 	
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you like or don't like working in a team. 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch again at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic. 	

Lesson plan 5 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing Practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write an expository essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJ_Lsu_O0Z0 • Introduce the focus and scope of the topic: Explain why you like or don't like working in a team. • Provide prompts (Job opportunities, Economy, Health system, other reasons) • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word expository essay on the topic: Explain why you like or don't like working in a team. 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

Lesson plan 6 – (experimental group)		
Topic: Outlining and writing practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 5th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay paying special attention to the relation that the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details must have.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the writing topic: Does doing homework actually help students learn more? • Make students brainstorm their ideas. • Model the sample of an outline to exemplify the way in which the ideas can be developed, emphasizing the relation between the topic sentence, supporting ideas, and details. 	
5min	<p>Development of outlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will prepare their own outline. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word persuasive essay on the topic: Does doing homework actually help students learn more? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch again at the outline done in the second stage. • Students will notice the process to write an essay using the ideas written in the outlines, by looking at a sample essay done with the same topic. 	

Lesson plan 6 – (control group)		
Topic: Writing Practice	Time: 40 minutes	Level: 6th
Materials and aids. Computer, projector (TV), markers, whiteboard		
Objective: Students will be able to write a persuasive essay by paying attention to the prompts.		
TIME	PROCEDURE	
2 min	Present the agenda	
15min	<p>Topic Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch a video, about the topic. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nq64rTKC_DY • Introduce the focus and scope of the topic: Does doing homework actually help students learn more? • Provide prompts (Pros and cons) • Exemplify the way in which they can write using the given prompts. 	
5min	<p>Developing ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will read the given prompts. • Students will make questions to clarify the focus and scope of the prompt, and to clarify vocabulary doubts. 	
10min	<p>Writing practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will write a 150 word persuasive essay on the topic: Does doing homework actually help students learn more? 	
8min	<p>Sample essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will watch the way in which they can write using prompts, by analyzing a sample essay. 	

2.-In your English class, you have been talking testing products on animals. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay. Write your essay in at least 150 words.

Is it ethical to test beauty goods on animals?

2.-In your English class, you have been talking about the amount of homework sent by teachers. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay. Write your essay in at least 150 words.

Do you think schools have to reduce the amount of homework they assign to students?

SCALE FOR ASSESSING COHERENCE				
CRITERIA	LOW		MEDIUM	HIGH
	(0 points)	(1 point)	(2 points)	(3 points)
The thesis statement, main ideas and conclusion are strongly related to the essay topic				
The main points, conclusion, and supporting ideas are related to the thesis statement.				
Sentences within a paragraph are closely related				
The text contains errors in grammar, word usage, or mechanics, incomplete sentences, or run-on sentences				

Adapted from: Higgins, Burstein, Marcu, & Gentile (2004)

Elaborated by: Gamboa, J. (2019)

CARTA DE COMPROMISO

Ambato, 13 de septiembre del 2019


Doctor
Marcelo Núñez
Presidente de la Unidad de Titulación
Carrera de Idiomas
Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación.
Presente

PhD. Verónica Chicaiza en mi calidad de Coordinadora de la Carrera de Idiomas y PINE, me permito poner en su conocimiento la aceptación y respaldo para el desarrollo del Trabajo de Titulación bajo el Tema: "OUTLINING AND THE WRITING SKILL" propuesto por el estudiante Gamboa Castillo Juan Carlos, portador de la Cédula de Ciudadanía N° 180431151-0, estudiante de la Carrera de Idiomas de la Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

A nombre de la Institución a la cual represento, me comprometo a apoyar en el desarrollo del proyecto.

Particular que comunico a usted para los fines pertinentes.

Atentamente.


.....
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Urkund Analysis Result

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Significance: 5 %

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Urkund- Blanco Guerrero - Rivera Valiente.docx (D34795888)
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