METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

ELIDA MAHOLY MONCAYO ZAMBRANO
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabi Extensión Chone

GEMA LISSETH QUIROZ ZAMBRANO
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabi Extensión Chone

CELIA MARÍA LORENA SALTOS DUEÑAS
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabi Extensión Chone
Methodological Strategies in the Development of Writing Skills in English Language

Elida Maholy Moncayo Zambrano
el1350652606@live.uleam.edu.ec
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2345-7665
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Extensión Chone
Ecuador

Gema Liseth Quiroz Zambrano
e1312257932@live.uleam.edu.ec
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9989-9005
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Extensión Chone
Ecuador.

Celia María Lorena Saltos Dueñas
celia.saltos@uleam.edu.ec
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8140-2364
Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí
Extensión Chone
Ecuador.

ABSTRACT

The following investigation paper aims to analyze the different methodological strategies used to develop writing practices in the English language in a class with 68 students in the sixth grade of primary school in Chone City. For its elaboration, researchers made use of a descriptive focus, at the same time, the sampling was chosen for convenience. Results were obtained from an interview with the unique English teacher at the school and five observation files in the English classes of sixth grade. Finally, results show the large students’ knowledge about grammar and orthography, but also the failure in the texts' clarification and coherency. This paper is advantageous for the educational field, specifically, to the factors that revolve around the writing learning–teaching process.

Keywords: methodological strategies, learning-teaching process, writing, english learning

1 Autor Principal
Correspondencia: e1350652606@live.uleam.edu.ec
Estrategias metodológicas en el desarrollo de la habilidad de escribir en el idioma inglés

RESUMEN
El presente trabajo de investigación tiene como objetivo analizar las diversas estrategias metodológicas utilizadas al momento de desarrollar las prácticas de escritura en el idioma inglés en una clase conformada por 68 estudiantes del sexto año de educación básica de una Unidad Educativa Fiscal de la ciudad de Chone. Para la elaboración de este se utilizó un enfoque descriptivo a la vez que se tomó un muestreo por conveniencia. Para la obtención de los resultados se entrevistó al único docente de inglés de la planta educativa, y cinco fichas de observación en las clases impartidas por la misma a los estudiantes del sexto año. Los resultados reflejan que si bien los estudiantes tienen un vasto conocimiento con respecto de las reglas gramaticales y ortográficas del idioma inglés existen falencias en tanto la organización de las ideas afectando la claridad del texto. El estudio favorece a la investigación y al área educativa, especialmente respecto a los factores a tomar en cuenta en el proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje de la escritura en una L2.

Palabras clave: estrategias metodológicas, proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje, escritura, aprendizaje del inglés

Artículo recibido 28 enero 2024
Aceptado para publicación: 29 febrero 2024
INTRODUCTION

Revisión de la literatura

Function of the methodological strategies

When people talk about methodological strategies there are several opinions about the topic. According to Arguello y Sequeira (2018), methodological strategies are discussed as the set of procedures that help the teacher in the development of the learning–teaching process, allowing the students to improve skills to create significant learning.

Gutiérrez et al., (2018) emphasize that methodological strategies are tools that not only contribute to students’ learning, but also, to the interactions and the social relationship between teacher and students, making learning environments that an innovative pedagogy that joins the learning and the classroom elements in some cultural and physical particulars.

Finally, Quimi (2019) states that methodological strategies refer to the way, or the steps that take advantage of the kids’ learning capacity, particularly in Reading – and writing skills during the early years of life.

The teacher must use methodological strategies and creative activities according to the learners' group and consider individual differences.

Skills.

Skills are described by authors as the set of habits, or as the capacity to successfully get the aim of each activity (Milerian E. A.; 1958). And even are theorized as the capability of doing specific activities which also depends on habits and the experience of the person.

García (2013) by side, defines skills as the expression of “know how to do it” that defines the action. “There is the framework of each process that a student learns. Inside the linguistic field the skills to develop are the comprehension, composition, and the text interpretation”.

When Gardner talked about the reading-writing process, he considered that the skill to develop is about reading, writing, storytelling, and data recording, among others. (García, 2009)

Writing teaching strategies.

Some authors consider that writing language acquisition is only possible through a series of long and tedious processes, the same process involves children having access to this kind of language like a
compilation of several text genres, as a result, the infant Will be able to identify poetry from a new or a novel with a single see, even if the kid is not able to elaborate it. (Tolchinsky, 1993; Camps, 1994; Schneuwly, 1995). At the same time, Caldera (2003) sustains that writing teaching is formed by three important factors: 1) writing as a product; 2) writing as a process; and 3) writing according to the context. The first factor refers to the traditional method, focusing on the product composition analyzing the superficial characteristics of the text, such as the grammar, the orthography, and the vocabulary; and ignoring the deep sense of the paper.

Malo Toledo (2020) suggested the use of diaries as a tool to encourage the growth of writing skills in students, demonstrating a positive effect on the capability of the learners to generate texts.

Otárola Heredia (2020) used technology implementation and the writing obtaining as a result not only progress but also, a better response from students to English class.

However, Almeida, Vilas-Boas-Barreto, and Alves-Argollo (2020) consider graphomotricity one of the most important stages of improving prewriting, this allowed the global development of efficient writing harmonizing children’s educative process.

Gutiérrez-Silva (2018) reinforces this theory by mentioning that graphomotricity is closely related to psychomotricity, being the second one responsible for human coordination development, this permits to identify of some strategies used nowadays by teachers and analyze of how psychomotricity affects the graphomotricity.

Methodological strategies propose for writing teaching.

Students show several problems when they try to learn English language writing, among these reasons readers can find the low level of technique application striking down the learners’ motivation; the lack of preparation of the professor before a class also produces bad learning and an estrangement between teacher and pupils.

According to Varela and Villamil (2010), the most favorable strategies to improve writing in students can divided into three fundamental parts such as pre-writing, writing, and post-writing.

In the first part, the sentence maker is indispensable being the easiest part, followed by the knowledge of grammar and orthographic rules permitting the student to discover his writing style about the different topics. It is inevitable as “What is written?”, “Who is going to read it?”, “How is written?”.
The second step is gathered in practice, despite, it is necessary that the person got the previous knowledge. Sadly, in the educative system exists failure in writing production, these mistakes are not grammatical, linguistical, or even glossary (Arias, et al., 2012) English teaching has no importance that the researchers would like it, consequently, learners handle with writing process without pass by the pre-writing process. If students get the correct preparation, they will be able to create detailed descriptions and well-structured paragraphs.

Finally, in the post-writing pupils can write essays, summaries, narrations, and reports.

Writing definition and its elements.

In so far as Numan (1991) “writing is a skill hard to acquire, especially in a second language” being this thought besides Palmer Silveira (2002) “that feeling of difficulty commonly turns into a nuisance for students’ at the moment to generate a text”.

What’s more, when teachers teach English writing as a second language this could be affected by students’ age, which means, “if the child does not know how to create text in a formal context in his L1 hardly he will do it in an L2” (Tribble, 1996).

The use of phonology at the instant to teach the reading-writing process, not only gets out of the traditional model, but also, allows children to develop openly other skills such as listening, thinking about the sounds, and avoiding the lack of letters in writing time. (Calderon, Carrillo & Rodriguez, 2006). Nevertheless, another defiance that revolves around English writing as a second language is the inexistent phonetic relationship in the language, which conversely exists in languages such as Spanish and Italian (O’ Shanahan, et al., 2010).

At this point, a technique called “free writing” appears to become a guide to students. In this technique, learners can write their thoughts and ideas without worrying about grammar, orthography, and other language parameters. Pupils don't need to think that this exercise going to be evaluated through grades, just is necessary to give them 10 minutes before the class and ask them to write about a topic of their interest. In addition to this Elbow expresses that “the best learning manner – in the practice, not in the theory – is separate the process from the production from the evaluation.”
METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive method with qualitative and quantitative methods, data were collected through observation files which were applied to 68 students from the sixth grade in a primary school. In addition, an interview was applied too to the unique English professor in the educative center. The collection time was about 5 weeks during the academic period. It was necessary to request permission from the respective authorities in the school and schedule an extracurricular meeting with the signature teacher. The instruments were valid by five experts in the educative field, specifically in English teaching.

Researching context: The study was conducted in Chone City, Manabi, Ecuador, with 68 students and 1 foreign language teacher. This context was selected because researchers realized in their first approach to the institution, during their teaching practices, a lack in the English writing teaching process. The sample was chosen by convenience, which means, participants were selected because they are more accessible for the researcher.

RESULTS

Interview results

After the interview, these responses were obtained

Question 1: The skills to improve in the writing process are reading comprehension and vocabulary revision, this response is supported by García (2013) previously explained.

Question 2: The strategies used by the professor in order to develop those skills are bingo, order words, etc. To sum up, the teacher used gamification, allowing the strength of the abilities and skills acquired in the learning-teaching process (Tenorio et al., 2022).

Question 3: In one line text, the teacher guides students giving clear instructions and monitoring each step. However, because of the large number of students and the low-class time the teacher cannot make a correct control to everyone.

Question 4: Depending on the activity, the teacher incentivizes students. Consider that Lisa and Wormington, (2019) express that the principal goal in education is to promote students’ motivation.

Question 5: The teacher sustains relevant know the age and the writing level of the students. This is necessary in the pre-writing process.
Observation results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Always %</th>
<th>Usually %</th>
<th>Sometimes %</th>
<th>Never %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The class’ aims must be clear and achievable for students.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students must comprehend the class aims to participate in the activities.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The methodological strategy must be adequate for the improvement level of students.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological strategy must encourage students’ participation and motivate them at the writing time.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Unidad Educativa Fiscal de Chone
Elaborado por: Elida Maholy Moncayo Zambrano & Gema Lisseth Quiroz Zambrano.

In the first table is possible to see that the teacher always stabilized clear and achievable objectives for students. Aims are defined by Salcedo (2011) as “expressions that show the intention or the purpose in the teacher’s mind.”

The children's participation was noticed in 100% of the classes when the aims were assimilated and understood correctly.

In 60% of the classes, the strategy used by the teacher was accurate to learners’ study level, promoting participation and encouraging them to write.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEVELOP</th>
<th>Always %</th>
<th>Usually %</th>
<th>Sometimes %</th>
<th>Never %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students show an accurate orthographic domain and basic grammar in the English language.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students structure their writing in a coherent and organized way.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher gives support to students during the writing practice.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students practice sentence and paragraph construction independently.

The teacher foments the revision and the correction of linguistics and orthographic mistakes.

The teacher recognizes and celebrates the students’ individual and collective achievements in their English papers.

The second table keeps the constancy that students usually show knowledge about the orthographic and grammar rules. Showing that even if exist lack in their creations these are expected by the teacher.

Despite this, in referential classes, students do not show the correlation between their ideas, therefore, they hand over a deficient product.

In 60% of the classes, the teacher can give accurate feedback to their students, but in 40% of the cases it is impossible to do it, that is because of the time limitations and the number of pupils in the classroom.

Related to the independent paragraph elaboration, students can work alone most of the time, nevertheless, on some occasions they need the teacher to push more than usual in the elaboration of the assignments.

The 80% of the class the teacher can make corrections to each student according to their mistakes in their texts, improving the production of those students who receive the feedback, but affecting those who do not do it, that is because of the factors mentioned before.

When it is about the recognition and the celebration of students’ achievements, the teacher usually celebrates with them, especially when these ameliorate are very significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusions</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher offers specific and constructive feedback about students’ papers.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: Unidad Educativa Fiscal de Chone
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The teacher adjusts the feedback according to the writing skill evolution of each student.

The teacher ends the lesson with activities that show the achievement of the initial aim.

The 60% of classes, show the teacher giving constructive and specific feedback about the papers handed over to the students, correcting key mistakes that were repeated in several worksheets.

The 80% of classes, the teacher used to adjust the feedback to previous lessons but forgot about some others. In 20% of classes, the teacher can remember the previous feedback and join it with the new.

Finally, each lesson ends in a totality with an activity that helps to evaluate the aim of the lesson.

**DISCUSSION**

Concerning the applied instruments researchers can highlight that specific aims set out clearly and concisely in the first stage of the class contribute favorably to the knowledge and the practice developed, being an important part of the learning-teaching process of the English language as Hernando (2011) considers that the aim expresses the need for the student to acquire certain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or abilities.

Also, the frequent feedback by the teacher helps in the constant improvement of text production and likewise contributes to the pupils’ vocabulary, expanding the L2 glossary. The Update Center in Higher Education (CAES, for its acronym in Spanish) considers that feedback promotes dialogue between the teacher and students. Moments of dialogue with students – in which information is provided about the work done – allow them to ask questions and, in this way, improve performance.

As work methodology, researchers suggest an approach change in teaching, borrowing more attention to the ideas coordination to get clarity in texts for the readers, avoiding confusion, and extolling paper quality.

Similarly, the authors suggest the diverse methodologies implementation that gets out to the traditional approach and allows learners to get excited about the assignments, keeping the expectation of finding a new challenge and reducing the monotony of boring lessons. Promoting in them an interest in research,
exploration, the search for solutions to real problems, overcoming different challenges, and creating meaningful experiences, which in turn invites them to reflect and criticize. (Yuridia, 2023)

Therefore, students become the protagonists in the classroom, having a proactive role and in which interactive processes are carried out through active communication, where teachers guide them and attend to their academic needs.

Analyzing the goodwill of the apprentices to develop text independently was possible to realize the high orthographic level, but, on some occasions is indispensable that the teacher push more than usual to obtain results and reduce students' exploration of the vocabulary by themselves, as well as the grammar rules.

CONCLUSIONS

The methodological strategies are those that draw the line of the class, becoming the most important factor now of elaborating the work plan, these strategies are the direct responsible of the motivation in a class, causing their success or failure.

One of the modern challenges in English writing teaching is the absence of dynamism in class, therefore students feel reluctant about work in this skill, even considering it low necessary in an L1, and reinforcing this thought line to an L2, where commonly prefer to develop listening and speaking skills because consider that in these skills, grammar rules are less, making its memorization easier.

Talking about writing production in an L2, refers to a productive skill of the language, meaning, makes part of the two necessary skills to transmit our feelings, thoughts, and ideas to a select group or a public, thus constant practice is required in these parameters to broadcast perfectly that the writer wants to project (Golkova and Hubackova, 2014).

Finally, emphasizes the problem of the class schedules and the number of students, making hard the performance, the specific feedback in search of personalized improvement in the creation of the content written by students.

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