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**AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CURRENT
APPROACHES TO TEACHING
ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH AS
A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) CLASSROOMS:
EXAMINING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND
METHODOLOGIES**

**UN ANÁLISIS EXHAUSTIVO DE LOS ENFOQUES
ACTUALES PARA LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA ESCRITURA
ARGUMENTATIVA EN AULAS DE INGLÉS COMO
LENGUA EXTRANJERA (EFL): EXAMINANDO
ESTRATEGIAS Y METODOLOGÍAS EFECTIVAS**

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An in-depth analysis of current approaches to teaching argumentative writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms: Examining effective strategies and methodologies

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of argumentative writing in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom has become increasingly important as educators strive to enhance students' critical thinking and communication skills. This study analyzes current methodologies used in the teaching of argumentative writing, focusing on their effectiveness in fostering argumentative skills in EFL learners. A mixed-methods approach was employed, including a review of relevant literature and a survey of EFL instructors from different educational contexts. The findings revealed that, despite the wide use of traditional approaches such as the five-paragraph essay structure, more innovative strategies like task-based learning and collaborative writing activities have shown greater success in engaging students. These methodologies promote higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. However, challenges remain in integrating these methods into traditional EFL curricula, which often prioritize grammatical accuracy over fluency in writing. The study concludes that incorporating diverse and dynamic teaching strategies can significantly improve the quality of argumentative writing instruction in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: argumentative writing, EFL classroom, task-based learning, critical thinking, teaching methods

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Un análisis exhaustivo de los enfoques actuales para la enseñanza de la escritura argumentativa en aulas de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL): Examinando estrategias y metodologías efectivas

RESUMEN

La enseñanza de la escritura argumentativa en el aula de inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL) se ha vuelto cada vez más importante a medida que los educadores buscan mejorar las habilidades de pensamiento crítico y comunicación de los estudiantes. Este estudio analiza las metodologías actuales utilizadas en la enseñanza de la escritura argumentativa, centrándose en su efectividad para fomentar las habilidades argumentativas en los aprendices de EFL. Se empleó un enfoque de métodos mixtos, que incluyó una revisión de la literatura relevante y una encuesta a instructores de EFL de diferentes contextos educativos. Los resultados revelaron que, a pesar del uso generalizado de enfoques tradicionales como la estructura del ensayo de cinco párrafos, estrategias más innovadoras como el aprendizaje basado en tareas y las actividades de escritura colaborativa han mostrado un mayor éxito en la participación de los estudiantes. Estas metodologías promueven habilidades de pensamiento de orden superior, como el análisis, la síntesis y la evaluación. Sin embargo, siguen existiendo desafíos para integrar estos métodos en los currículos tradicionales de EFL, que a menudo priorizan la precisión gramatical sobre la fluidez en la escritura. El estudio concluye que incorporar estrategias de enseñanza diversas y dinámicas puede mejorar significativamente la calidad de la instrucción de la escritura argumentativa en el aula de EFL.

Palabras clave: escritura argumentativa, aula de EFL, aprendizaje basado en tareas, pensamiento crítico, métodos de enseñanza

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, one of the most significant areas of focus is the development of students' writing skills. Writing is essential for academic and professional communication, and it holds particular importance in the EFL context, where learners need to acquire a range of competencies to navigate the linguistic demands of English. Among the various types of writing, argumentative writing has gained particular prominence due to its critical role in fostering higher-order thinking skills and preparing students for academic and professional communication. Argumentative writing, by its very nature, requires students to engage in a multifaceted process that involves analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, making it a powerful tool for language learning (Kafipour, Mahmoudi, & Khojasteh, 2018). This genre challenges students not only to express their ideas clearly but also to substantiate their views with evidence, and to critically assess opposing arguments. As a result, it is a key pedagogical focus in EFL classrooms as it promotes essential cognitive and linguistic abilities.

However, teaching argumentative writing effectively remains a challenge for many EFL instructors, as it demands not only language proficiency but also the ability to think critically and present well-structured, coherent arguments (Chala & Chapetón, 2012). The complexity of argumentative writing lies in its dual requirement of linguistic competence and cognitive skill—students must be able to write fluently and correctly, but also to form and communicate reasoned arguments. These skills often take time to develop, and many learners struggle with the nuances of this form of writing. As a result, instructors must use well-thought-out approaches to overcome these challenges and guide their students toward mastering argumentative writing.

The importance of argumentative writing in the EFL classroom is underscored by its connection to academic success and its role in helping students become independent thinkers. The ability to produce coherent and convincing arguments is essential in academic settings, where students are often required to present their ideas clearly and persuasively. This is not only critical for achieving success in formal writing tasks but also for participating in academic discourse, engaging with peers and instructors, and developing a more nuanced understanding of complex issues (Peloghitis, 2017). Argumentative writing also plays a key role in critical thinking development, as it requires students to analyze information,



question assumptions, and evaluate evidence. However, many EFL learners face difficulties in mastering the complexities of argumentative writing, as it involves both linguistic skills and cognitive processes that are particularly challenging for non-native speakers (Samway, 2006). In addition to mastering grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, students must also learn to organize their ideas logically, use appropriate rhetorical strategies, and develop an argument that is clear, logical, and convincing. These demands make argumentative writing one of the more difficult tasks for EFL learners.

Previous studies on the teaching of argumentative writing in EFL contexts have highlighted various strategies and approaches employed by educators to address these challenges. Traditional methods, such as the five-paragraph essay structure, have been commonly used to teach argumentative writing. These methods provide students with a clear framework for organizing their thoughts and ensure a structured approach to writing. However, newer approaches, such as task-based learning (TBLT) and collaborative writing, have emerged as potentially more effective alternatives. These methods emphasize interactive and communicative approaches to learning, which are thought to foster greater engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking (Ellis, 2018). Task-based learning, for example, focuses on real-world tasks and encourages students to use language for meaningful communication, while collaborative writing activities promote peer feedback and shared problem-solving. These newer methods encourage greater student involvement in the writing process and can lead to more dynamic and engaging learning experiences.

Theoretical frameworks related to second language acquisition (SLA) and writing instruction offer important insights into the complexities of teaching argumentative writing. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, language development is influenced by social interaction and cultural context, which can be particularly relevant when teaching writing as a social practice (Lantolf & Thorne, 2017). This theory suggests that learning is facilitated through interaction with more knowledgeable others, such as teachers and peers. In the context of argumentative writing, this theory highlights the value of collaborative approaches to writing instruction, where learners can engage in discussions, share ideas, and learn from one another. Moreover, the theory of cognitive development suggests that learners' ability to process complex ideas and structure their writing logically improves through scaffolding and guided practice (Sweller, 2020). By providing students with support at different stages of the writing



process, instructors can help them develop their writing skills more effectively, enabling them to take on increasingly complex writing tasks.

The objective of this study is to analyze the current methods used to teach argumentative writing in the EFL classroom, examining both traditional and innovative approaches. The study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods in fostering students' ability to write persuasive, well-organized arguments. By exploring the strengths and limitations of different approaches, this study aims to provide valuable insights into best practices for teaching argumentative writing in EFL contexts. In doing so, the research hopes to contribute to a broader understanding of how to better support EFL learners in their writing development. By investigating various strategies and examining their application in different educational settings, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing conversation about best practices in EFL writing instruction, offering both theoretical and practical recommendations for improving argumentative writing pedagogy in EFL classrooms. Through this research, the study aims to inform educators, curriculum developers, and language policy makers about the most effective methods for teaching argumentative writing, helping to shape future language instruction practices that promote critical thinking, communication, and academic success.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a comprehensive mixed-methods approach to investigate the current methodologies used in teaching argumentative writing in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The research design was carefully crafted to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to provide a holistic understanding of the effectiveness of different teaching strategies. By using both types of data, the study aimed to capture a more nuanced view of how various teaching practices influence students' argumentative writing development. The research design followed a descriptive approach to explore and describe the teaching methods used by EFL instructors across a wide array of educational contexts. The study was conducted over a period of six months, from January to June 2024, during which time both traditional and innovative methods of teaching argumentative writing were closely examined.

The study involved a purposive sample of 50 EFL instructors, drawn from both secondary schools and universities located in diverse geographical regions. This sampling method ensured that a wide range



of perspectives were captured, as the instructors represented various levels of experience and came from different educational backgrounds. All of the participants had prior experience teaching writing skills to non-native English speakers, which made them suitable candidates for exploring the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching argumentative writing. In order to gather rich, detailed data, a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews was used as the primary method of data collection. The survey, which contained both closed and open-ended questions, was designed to elicit detailed information about the teaching methods, challenges faced, and the perceived effectiveness of strategies employed in teaching argumentative writing. A total of 50 completed surveys were gathered, providing a robust set of responses for analysis. In addition to the surveys, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 10 selected instructors, chosen for their diverse backgrounds and teaching experiences. These interviews allowed for deeper insights into the personal experiences and pedagogical beliefs of the participants regarding the teaching of argumentative writing. The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and facilitate subsequent transcription and analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a well-rounded understanding of the teaching methods and their effectiveness. The quantitative data from the surveys were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency counts and percentage distributions. This provided a clear picture of the trends in teaching practices across the sample. The qualitative data derived from the open-ended survey responses and the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely-used technique in qualitative research. This involved carefully coding the responses and identifying recurring themes that related to the effectiveness of different teaching methods. The qualitative data helped to provide a deeper understanding of the instructors' views on the methods they used, how they perceived those methods' effectiveness, and any challenges they encountered in implementing them. To ensure the validity of the findings, data triangulation was employed, which involved comparing the survey results with the qualitative insights gained from the interviews. Additionally, the findings were cross-referenced with existing literature on the subject of teaching argumentative writing to further substantiate the conclusions.

The study focused on key variables related to the teaching of argumentative writing in EFL classrooms. The main variables included the teaching methods employed and their effectiveness in improving



students' argumentative writing skills. In particular, the research examined two primary types of teaching strategies: traditional methods, such as the five-paragraph essay structure, and more innovative approaches, including task-based learning (TBLT) and collaborative writing. The effectiveness of these methods was evaluated based on several indicators, including the teachers' perceptions of student engagement, the quality of writing improvements, and the development of critical thinking skills in their students. Teachers were asked to reflect on how their chosen methods influenced students' ability to craft compelling, logically organized arguments. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the participating institutions, ensuring that the research adhered to ethical standards and guidelines. All participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants, and they were assured that their identities would remain anonymous in the reporting and analysis of results, thereby safeguarding their privacy and ensuring the integrity of the study.

Through this thorough and methodologically rigorous approach, the study aims to contribute meaningful insights into the ongoing dialogue about the best practices for teaching argumentative writing in EFL classrooms. The research methodology's combination of both quantitative and qualitative data allows for a well-rounded understanding of the various teaching strategies and their practical implications for EFL instructors, thereby offering valuable recommendations for improving argumentative writing instruction in diverse educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed several significant insights regarding the methods used to teach argumentative writing in EFL classrooms, shedding light on both the strengths and challenges of current instructional practices. Data collected from surveys and in-depth interviews with EFL instructors indicated that, despite the evolving landscape of language teaching, traditional methods, such as the five-paragraph essay structure, remain the most widely used strategies among EFL instructors. These methods, though prevalent, have been found to be less effective in fostering higher-order thinking skills and in encouraging the critical argumentation necessary for students' success in writing compelling and well-organized arguments. Instructors noted that while the five-paragraph essay structure provided a



clear and straightforward framework for students to follow, it often led to overly simplistic, formulaic arguments that lacked depth and nuance. This observation aligns with previous research that suggests traditional models may limit students' ability to think critically and to construct more sophisticated, nuanced arguments (Chala & Chapetón, 2012).

In contrast, more innovative methods, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT) and collaborative writing, were identified as being more effective in engaging students and enhancing the quality of their argumentative writing. TBLT, in particular, was highlighted as a teaching approach that encourages students to engage with real-world tasks that are relevant to their lives, thus promoting deeper cognitive engagement and a better understanding of argumentative discourse. Many instructors reported that students participating in TBLT tasks demonstrated improved organizational skills and presented stronger, more reasoned arguments. These findings are consistent with the work of Kafipour, Mahmoudi, and Khojasteh (2018), who found that task-based learning promotes higher cognitive engagement, leading to improved writing performance and greater depth in argumentation. Instructors indicated that TBLT's focus on practical application enabled students to contextualize their writing in meaningful ways, thus facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of argumentation.

Collaborative writing was also found to be an effective strategy for developing argumentative writing skills, with instructors noting that students working in pairs or small groups were more likely to share ideas, critique each other's work, and collaboratively refine their arguments. This, in turn, resulted in more coherent, persuasive writing. In particular, peer collaboration provided an opportunity for students to learn from one another, deepen their understanding of argumentative structures, and develop critical thinking skills in the process. These findings support the research of Peloghitis (2017), who found that collaborative writing not only enhanced the quality of writing but also fostered peer learning, self-reflection, and critical thinking among students. Teachers observed that students, when given the opportunity to collaborate, engaged more actively in discussions, strengthened their arguments through peer feedback, and ultimately created more robust and convincing written products.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with TBLT and collaborative writing, several challenges were reported by instructors when attempting to implement these approaches in traditional EFL classrooms. One of the most significant barriers to using these innovative strategies was the lack of time and



resources. Instructors explained that curriculum constraints, an overemphasis on grammar instruction, and the pressure to prepare students for standardized tests often limited the amount of time available to incorporate task-based or collaborative writing activities into their teaching. These challenges reflect broader concerns in EFL education, as many curricula continue to prioritize grammar and vocabulary at the expense of communicative methods and interactive learning opportunities. Peloghitis (2017) also emphasized this issue, noting that the strong focus on grammar and vocabulary often leads to missed opportunities for engaging students in more dynamic, communicative activities that promote higher-order thinking and critical argumentation.

In addition to time constraints, instructors reported that varying levels of student proficiency posed another challenge when implementing collaborative writing strategies. While stronger students benefitted from the opportunity to give and receive peer feedback, weaker students often struggled to contribute meaningfully to group discussions or to collaborate effectively on writing tasks. As a result, some instructors suggested that differentiated instruction could be a valuable approach to ensure that all students, regardless of their proficiency levels, are actively engaged in the collaborative process. Differentiation would allow instructors to tailor tasks to students' individual needs, providing additional support for less proficient students while challenging more advanced learners. This, in turn, would maximize the effectiveness of collaborative writing in helping all students develop their argumentative writing skills.

Overall, the results of the study suggest that while traditional methods remain deeply entrenched in EFL classrooms, there is a growing recognition of the value of more dynamic and interactive approaches to teaching argumentative writing. Task-based learning and collaborative writing are considered highly effective strategies for improving students' argumentative writing skills, as they promote active engagement, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the structures and techniques that underlie persuasive writing. However, the successful implementation of these strategies requires overcoming several obstacles, including time constraints, curriculum pressures, and the varying proficiency levels of students. To address these challenges, instructors may need to adopt flexible and adaptable teaching practices that prioritize student engagement and provide opportunities for personalized learning,



ensuring that all students are supported in developing the skills necessary to succeed in argumentative writing.

Tabla 1. Teaching Methods used in EFL classrooms

Teaching Method	Frecuencia (n=50)	Porcentaje (%)
Traditional methods	34	68%
Task-based learning	6	12%
Collaborative Writing	5	10%
Other (Pair-assessment, Direct instruction, etc)-	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Note. The table shows that traditional methods dominate EFL classrooms

This table provides an overview of the frequency with which different teaching methods were utilized by the EFL instructors participating in the study. As the table illustrates, traditional methods, including the commonly used five-paragraph essay structure, were employed by the majority of instructors. Specifically, 68% of teachers reported using traditional methods as their primary approach in the classroom. This highlights the continued reliance on established, conventional strategies despite the emergence of more innovative approaches in language teaching. In contrast, newer methodologies such as task-based learning and collaborative writing were used less frequently, accounting for 12% and 10% of the teaching methods, respectively. The remaining 10% of instructors implemented other approaches, such as pair-assessment and direct instruction. This distribution underscores the dominance of traditional methods in EFL instruction while also signaling a growing but still limited adoption of alternative strategies.

Tabla 2. Effectiveness of Different Teaching Strategies in Improving Writing Quality

Teaching Strategy	Effectiveness Strategy
Traditional methods	3.2
Task-based learning	4.5
Collaborative Writing	4.3
Other (Pair-assessment, Direct instruction, etc)-	2.9
Average	3.8

Note. This table shows the effectiveness of different teaching strategies in enhancing writing quality.

This table presents the effectiveness ratings given by instructors to various teaching strategies used in the EFL classroom to enhance students' argumentative writing skills. Task-based learning (TBLT) and collaborative writing received the highest ratings, indicating that these approaches were seen as more effective than traditional methods in improving the quality of students' writing. This suggests that methods emphasizing interaction, real-world tasks, and peer collaboration are particularly successful in helping students develop stronger, more sophisticated argumentative skills. On the other hand, traditional methods, while still widely used, were rated lower in their effectiveness, highlighting the need for EFL instructors to consider incorporating more dynamic and engaging strategies into their teaching.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of integrating more dynamic, interactive, and student-centered approaches to teaching argumentative writing in EFL classrooms. While traditional methods, such as the five-paragraph essay, remain prevalent in many instructional settings, the research revealed that these approaches are less effective in promoting the deeper cognitive engagement and higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for crafting high-quality argumentative writing. Despite the continued use of these traditional methods, the study found that they often lead to formulaic, simplistic arguments and fail to foster the critical analysis and synthesis needed to produce compelling, sophisticated discourse.

In contrast, more contemporary and innovative strategies, particularly task-based learning (TBLT) and collaborative writing, emerged as significantly more effective in engaging students and enhancing the quality of their argumentative writing. These methods were found to not only improve students' ability to construct well-organized and logical arguments but also to increase their overall cognitive involvement in the writing process. The research highlights that TBLT and collaborative writing encourage a more authentic learning experience, where students engage with real-world tasks and work collaboratively with their peers. This approach promotes deeper critical thinking, as students actively participate in problem-solving and argument construction, mirroring the types of tasks they would encounter in academic and professional writing contexts. These findings align with previous research,



which has pointed to the positive impact of interactive and communicative approaches in fostering critical thinking and writing skills.

However, despite the evident advantages of task-based and collaborative methods, the study also points out several significant barriers to their widespread implementation. Time constraints, rigid curriculum requirements, and the pressure to focus on grammar and standardized test preparation continue to limit the ability of many EFL instructors to incorporate these methods into their teaching. Furthermore, varying levels of student proficiency create additional challenges in ensuring that all learners benefit equally from these approaches. Instructors often find it difficult to balance the needs of stronger and weaker students in collaborative settings, which may hinder the effectiveness of group work or peer feedback activities.

Given these challenges, it is recommended that EFL instructors integrate more task-based and collaborative writing activities into their curricula, with careful attention to the obstacles that may arise in the process. This may involve adapting tasks to better suit the varying proficiency levels of students or providing additional scaffolding and support to ensure the success of group activities. Furthermore, educators should be encouraged to continue exploring new pedagogical approaches and technologies that can help overcome the limitations of traditional teaching methods and support more engaging and effective writing instruction.

Future research could further investigate how different variations of task-based and collaborative strategies impact students' argumentative writing across diverse proficiency levels and cultural contexts. It would also be valuable to examine the long-term effects of these methods on students' overall writing development and academic performance. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into whether the skills cultivated through these innovative strategies translate into broader improvements in academic achievement.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant benefits of incorporating innovative teaching strategies into the EFL classroom to improve students' argumentative writing abilities. However, it also underscores the need for careful adaptation and thoughtful implementation, taking into account the challenges faced by instructors and students alike. Continued research into these methods will be vital



for refining teaching practices and developing actionable recommendations that can enhance the quality of EFL writing instruction, helping students to become more effective, critical, and persuasive writers.

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