



**UNIVERSIDAD LAICA VICENTE ROCAFUERTE
DE GUAYAQUIL**

**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
CARRERA DE MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

**MODALIDAD COMPLEXIVO PREVIO A LA OBTENCIÓN
DEL TÍTULO
DE**

**LICENCIADA EN LENGUA INGLESA ESPECIALIZACIÓN
LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA**

CASO DE ESTUDIO

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS: KAREN

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GUAYAQUIL

2024

CERTIFICADO DE SIMILITUD

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Apagado

Firma del tuto:

Mgr. Mélida Campoverde Méndez

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to give my thanks to God for bringing me to this part of the road of my life, to this valuable point where I will get my degree for the career I have been studying, where I took a recess but now I am finally finishing. Thanks to my family, my father who taught me to be a strong woman, to my mother who has always been near me, and specially my sons who are the motor of my life, who give me the strength and courage to face any situation and go along.

Also I want to thank to all my teachers and tutors that have guided me during my studies in the University, and of course to give my thanks to the Vicente Rocafuerte Laica University, one of the best University in Guayaquil, that allowed me to form as a professional.

DEDICATION

The present research is dedicated to my sons They have gave me the force to go ahead in life, at any time when I felt sad, they showed me that I was not never alone and that they will be always supporting me.

To Modesto, my father that is not with us anymore, He brought wise teachings to me, and lovely advises, he taught me to have objectives and get all the goals I propose myself.

To my beloved son Joseph that now moved to live into my heart, he was my partner of fight, and so young left of this world, but his love, kindness and smile is always with me.

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I. INTRODUCCIÓN

There is a case of study about Karen. Who has problems when creating short text messages in English, about topics related to her environment, especially when she needs to write some specific imaginary stories, the student is motivated to learn the language, she needs to use basic structures in order to make coherent texts that allow her to communicate her writing effectively, and in this case she shows frustration when she can't find the appropriate vocabulary to express her thoughts. The use of the dictionary is difficult for her to manage and she doesn't know how to organize the words in order to make a sentence and at the same time to associate it with an imaginary situation. There is not any specific didactic strategy that generates the student's concern for the development of this skill, demonstrating her low performance in the writing of the English as a language in a general form. So, her level of English is poor in writing.

1.1 Background

Writing is one of the most important skills in the learning of English as a foreign language. It is important not only to follow correct grammar structures in order to communicate an idea, but also to use all complements to construct sentences and get extensive paragraphs demonstrating how a good written communication can be made, or speech, or story, or summarize can be constructed for any topic. Learning to write in a foreign language such as English is a complex cognitive process. "This cognitive model generally corresponds to the three phases of writing: planning, translating, and revising phases. The three cognitive processes do not necessarily appear in a linear order but can happen at any moment in the writing process." (Galbraith, 2018, p. 196).

It is necessary to analyze problems that are encountered when improving writing techniques, "English writing is mostly taught with merely a blackboard and a piece of chalk. There are usually a few classrooms with multimedia equipment in universities" (Liu, 2006, p.97), therefore teacher must find resources to provide options to catch attention, to get interested to get tips and then start writing with a good motivation. "Written teacher feedback plays an important role in improving students' writing skills" (Zhang, 2016, p.73). Research on second language student has

demonstrated that not only student feedback is important, but also teacher feedback is, as a team work. Methodology and lesson plans give better results if students are in a good mood with the teacher.

1.2 Objectives and Scientific Questions

General Objective

- To Implement activities to improve writing skills for Karen, giving her appropriate tools to write well.

Specific Objective

- To identify type of difficulties does Karen have when writing
- To design a plan with working activities to help Karen to solve her writing problem

Question of Scientific Investigation for this case of study:

- Which is the effective didactic strategy to improve writing skills?

1.3 Case Description

Karen, is a girl that works alone her tasks. Her mother and father work all the day, so they do not accompany her when doing homework. She has difficulties creating short text messages in English about topics related to her environment, she cannot write imaginary stories, she cannot find appropriate vocabulary to produce long sentences, she gets confused when organizing written ideas. Her grammar is good, but need some help, as she has problems with connectors.

Her problems in writing could be related to the fact that she works alone her tasks without any type of supervision or help, and also added to the fact that the first stage of study were made on virtual mode, her learning aim has not been as successful as expected, she has not been able to acquire knowledge and techniques to enrich her writing skill; on the contrary she has gained frustration, she has lost motivation, she needs urgent and efficient corrective measure. Her home environment is an

important factor that should be improved, her parents play a very important role, too, so They will be called to be more closely present with Karen, both or at list one of them should take a time to check her homework, to talk with her. Her emotional position will be helpful, with a good strategy of study and a student encouraged the path to learning is assured.

She needs to practice with writing exercises and some other activities, these activities can involve the use of ICT tools. Karen will be able to write sentences in order, and work with exercises that allow her to build sentences using connectors, so she will learn in order to make large stories. To develop activities that help her strengthen writing in English and enhance motivation in learning the English language using the media technologies to develop writing skills. With written responses student is acquainted to write.

II. ANALYSIS

2.1 Theoretical analysis of the problem

“During the process of learning the foreign language, a written production is presented limited. The majority of writings written by students present large gaps of grammars that are taught.” (Uneme, 2016, p.13). For these reasons and others that were present in the students written production, we required to bring them closer to strategies that were useful during their school process and allowed them to get closer confident and motivated to write. “An important issue concerns the role of writing instructors and content course professors in helping students develop academic literacy.” (Zhu, 2004, p.40). This concern is about the methodology applied, and the focus that every teacher gives to the class, results are different from expectations, while one teacher focus on grammar structures, academic literacy, other type of teacher focus on the student social and psychological situation, being more emphatic obtained more results.

Learning leads to the objectives proposed in the plan of study, becoming repetitive and even boring both for the person who is learning and for the one who is teaching. This is the reason that motivation was an alternative and valuable tool in the development of the proposed strategies, as expressed by Harmer and Martínez. “This paper intends to emphasize two important issues in current language teaching practice that must be highlighted so that students become the protagonists in the teaching-learning process: the new role of the teacher of foreign languages as motivator and facilitator.” (Martinez, 2007, p.17). Motivation is one of the most important aspects in the process educational because it is a psychological factor that reveals the success of students when learning a foreign language. Students who are motivated learn faster and with better results than those who are not motivated. “There has been interest in the extent to which teachers’ stated beliefs correspond with what they do in the classroom, and there is evidence that the two do not always coincide.” (Phipps, 2009, p.380). So is necessary to consider both views, from student and from teacher

“When developments in technologies are taking place, it is vital to ensure that they prove to be advantageous to the individuals, organizations, communities and nation as a whole.” (Meenakshi, 2013, p.1). ICT has given a very important contribution to education field, education has gained in implementation of tasks that make use of technology, tasks as sending messages, preparing informs, essays, from the simplest task to a more complex one.

On the other hand, the widespread use that students make of the so-called information technologies communication and information (computers, equipment, multimedia, Internet, digital television, mobile telephony, among others) influences each of the social aspects that a student faces inside and outside the educational institution, therefore, such use becomes a great potential for educational growth, as proposed by Altaba and Viñarás who indicate that: “New technologies in teaching have caused a great impact, mainly due to the great variety of possibilities they offer to education, and for the numerous tools and services that are made available to us through the web.” (Altaba and Viñarás, 2013, p. 165).

By simultaneously integrating the strategies of this research with digital technologies, It was possible for both the students and the teacher to face self-learning processes, seeking to ensure that they were not temporary but transcendental and permanent, to give the students a series of pages on the Internet where they had the possibility of carry out individual activities and autonomous work, so Karen could make the decision to develop exercises to improve writing without having the pressure of the grade or the evaluation quantitative that occurs in the school context. And it was there where the motivation given to students by inviting them to constantly review and test their skills, motivation was also present through dialogue.

2.2 Empirical analysis of the problem

Based on the information collected, I could observe many problems and the possible solutions. The main difficulty is the application of connectors which derives on the lack of the knowledge of them, even though she has good vocabulary

knowledge, she is not able to connect sentences and make extensive and attractive paragraphs. Based on the test and in the interview to the teacher, I notice that one of the difficulties that Karen faces when making any type of writing tasks is that she writes isolated sentences, she is not able to connect sentences, then large paragraphs or compositions cannot be made, the fluency of an extensive story cannot be performed, also her delay in writing sentences or answering written questions demonstrate that she is not used to practice with writing exercises.

Planning could benefit to the writing performance. Written content today connects target audiences, providing them with whatever they want or need at a click of a button. As a result, writing skills are more essential than ever. As per, "Combine your creative ideas with compelling and effective writing skills and soar above the competition." (Von der, 2022, p.89).

With the use of connectors, Karen will be able to connect 2, 3 or more sentences resulting in long paragraphs and in consequence long attractive stories. We can make use of flash cards, students can demonstrate their creativity and imagination which is the door to start writing properly. The use of several resources and materials will create a pleasant environment for learning new skills to improve writing. Reinforcing it with activities outside the book, without losing sight of the contents programmed for the level. The strategies developed in this research were accompanied by motivation. "The best writers are also keen readers, and reading on a regular basis is an easy way to start developing your writing skills." (Home Block, 2014, p.1). Learning reveals the interest that the student has in the foreign language and its availability to learn, however it is observed that most activities in general are structured according to patterns given in the textbooks, where students have no opportunity to express their interests; such activities are standardized in such a way that the student cannot be the main actor in their learning process." Getting students to learn and sustaining their interest in what they are learning should be the sole objective of teachers in the classroom." (Filgona, 2020 p.18).

Techniques applied to identify problem:

A Test to Karen: A series of questions that involves order of sentences and use of connectors. The sample of the test can be found in the section of annexes

An interview to her teacher: A series of questions was made to Karen’s teacher to confirm the results obtained in the test. The sample of the interview can be found in the section of annexes.

2.3 Result on the application of instruments

When I started the analysis, I was concerned regarding the needs and processes of writing in English. Many difficulties were observed in the use of texts since Karen was confused with the use of grammar and the vocabulary, this generated in writing problems since she could not conclude the ideas, the sentences were not connected. Karen made use of tools such as translators, which increased the problems in written ability. She also wrote short writings with a basic command of vocabulary and were not motivated to expand these writings, nor to look for new words, since the topics were not related to her interests and the book activities, then it became monotonous, this can be evidenced in some tests of them. A test was applied to Karen, and the results were concrete, she wasn’t able to connect sentences due to the lack of connectors.

Results on the test took to Karen

Table 1.
Test Results

No.	Evaluation indicator	Results
1	Write sentences	Karen writes short sentences
2	Write coherent paragraph	Karen is not able to organize sentences resulting in incoherent paragraphs
3	Write long compositions	Karen is not able to write long compositions; she doesn’t know how to connect sentences.
4	Her parents help her with homework	Her parents work all day, she studies alone, if one of the parents go along with her, she will fell self-confident to learn to write properly.
5	Show interest in writing	She writes sentences without sequences, her interest for learning to write is evident because she never refuses to write.

Elaborated by: Lainez, S. (2024)

Results on the interview to the teacher

Table 2.

Interview Results

No.	Evaluation indicator	Results
1	Use connectors when writing	She does not use connectors when writing a sentence. She doesn't have a feedback on vocabulary of connectors.
2	Practice the use of connectors	She does not know the use of connectors.
3	Construct long sentences	Sentences are made in a simple basic structure and are short.
4	Know the concept of connector	She has an idea, but doesn't know concepts, types and vocabulary of them.
5	Can elaborate long paragraph on a specific topic	She is not able to make long paragraphs; she doesn't use any type of linking word.

Elaborated by: Lainez, S. (2024)

III. PROPOSAL

In attention to the problems found, Identify the weak points that affect Karen, that do not allow her to write correctly, and could be able to build large and connected sentences. To fortify writing techniques, enlarge vocabulary of connectors and compose long stories. Observing this, is necessary to create strategies that could improve the English writing skill. So, the object of this present work is focused on applying writing strategies through writing exercises, and virtual classes. Starting to eliminate the difficulties that Karen faces when producing a text, showing her how to find resources to develop this skill.

3.1 Writing with enthusiasm

The proposal in order to improve writing skills for Karen is: **Writing with enthusiasm**, that is based in the preparation of 3 classes of reinforcement.

With this little program Karen will find the support she is needing. After each extra classes, a new test will be taken and will observe advance on Karen's written work. Another important point is to get motivated to Karen. A student that is motivated is a student that is open to learn more effectively. The time of learning is very important. New activities can be incorporated to Karen's routine, new topics to work on, the point is avoiding routine activities and get interested to the student, Karen needs to have good base to get good results. The time class should be divided into segments, each day a part of time dedicated to review of these topics one by one, and then she can practice using connectors, as soon as she gets familiar with them she will start using them in a natural way.

3.2 Justification of the proposal

Learning reveals the interest that the student has in the foreign language and its availability to learn, however it is observed that most activities in general are structured according to patterns given in the textbooks, where students have no opportunity to express their interests; such activities are standardized in such a way that the student cannot be the main actor in their learning process. "The development

of interpersonal relationships is an essential component of a student-centered approach.” (Journal, 2008 p.34).

On the other hand, the widespread use that students make of the so-called information technologies communication and information (computers, equipment, multimedia, Internet, digital television, mobile telephony, among others) influences each of the social aspects that a student faces inside and outside the educational institution, therefore, such use becomes a great potential for educational growth, as proposed by Altaba and Viñarás who indicate that: New technologies in teaching have caused a great impact, mainly due to the great variety of possibilities they offer to education, and for the numerous tools and services that are made available to us through the web. (Altaba and Viñarás. 2013, p. 165).

By simultaneously integrating the strategies of this research with digital technologies, It was possible for both Karen and the teacher to face self-learning processes, seeking to ensure that they were not temporary but transcendental and permanent, to give the students a series of pages on the Internet where they had the possibility of carry out individual activities and autonomous work, so Karen could make the decision to develop exercises to improve writing without having the pressure of the grade or the evaluation quantitative that occurs in the school context.

Karen made use of tools such as translators, which increased the problems in written ability. She also wrote short writings with a basic command of vocabulary and was not motivated to expand these writings, nor to look for new words, since the topics were not related to her interests and the book activities, then it became monotonous, this can be evidenced in some of the tests. Observing this, the need arose to generate strategies that would improve the English writing skill of Karen. Therefore, the object of this present work focused on applying teaching strategies through virtual class guides, to improve the writing ability in English for her, starting from the difficulties that she faces when producing a text, the resources that she uses as a guide to develop this skill, these are: module, textbook and work, technological means, dictionary and notebook.

To what extent the didactics activities that make use of ICT (information and communication technology) improve students writing skills? It is necessary to develop activities that help strengthen writing in English Enhance motivation in learning the English language using the media technologies to develop writing skills, reinforce knowledge of connectors and practice writing exercises. "ICT can also play an important part supporting literacy work. Pupils writing about scientific concepts such as investigations, reports or work on historical ideas" (Barton, 2004, p.10) With appropriate technological tools as power points, videos, reports, a lot of material is collected at any topic, student can be guided to advance as far as possible in writing or any other field of learning. "Writing exchanges are a powerful tool for student reflection and risk taking. They offer children an opportunity to experiment with ways to position." (Bloem, 2004 p.54). Definitely with technology we find lot of tools to improve writing skills. "New educational modalities, supported by ICT, offer viable alternatives to improve aspects of coverage and quality." (Carneiro, 2008, p.68).

3.3 Proposal outline

- First class focused to the teaching of connectors, concepts and exercises.
- Second class, review of first class, development of sentences, and get familiar with the use of them.
- Third class: identify topics to work with, building more sentences connecting them and starting to create large stories.

First Class: Provide to Karen a clear concept of connectors, Explain clearly that connectors are words that can be used to join sentences, there is a wide variety of connectors and the use of them will depend on the sense of the sentence, so, sentences can be joined as complement of one idea, to contradict one sentence to another, to propose a cause, to propose a conclusion, and we can find many other functions It will depend on the academic environment and the special need and the correct use of them will provide Karen coherence to writing.

Second Class: This class is a reinforcement of the concept of connectors, to make sure she learned, she can distinguish what is a connector and starting to work with

exercises applying them. Karen will start to write short sentences connected to other, she will construct new sentences with the connected words, she will write more and more sentences, continuously and constantly. This class will be for practice.

Third class; identify topics to work with, building more sentences connecting them and starting to create large stories. At this point Karen will be able to identify a variety of topics to write about, she will be writing large paragraphs, her fear to write will be disappear, she will be self-confident and of course her writing skills will be improved. At each stage of this lessons test will be taken to assure learning skill acquisition.

3.4 Activities

Activity # 2 “Acquiring concepts and learning new words”

Skill : Learn concepts that are missed, use new words related to the new concepts

Resources: Flash cards with concepts and word examples of the concepts taught

Development: In class. It will be a working class, Karen will work along with the learning process, the concepts are reinforced with the immediate practice.

Time: 40 minutes’ class hour

Evaluation indicator: Acquire new concepts, so she can understand what was taught and is able to use it.

Activity # 2 “Arranging words”

Skill : Identify structure of the sentences

Resources: Sheet with words, to write in the paper

Development: In class. It will be a working class, so Karen can be monitored directly, she will work herself and she will ask for doubts to correct immediately the concepts learned.

Time: 40 minutes’ class hour

Evaluation indicator: Recognize parts of the sentence, then a proper sentence is constructed.

Activity # 3 “Building Great compositions”

Skill : Write sentences with long structures and connected

Resources: Pictures

Development: In class. It will be a working class; Karen will work in class. She will write compositions based in one specific topic

Time: 40 minutes' class hour

Evaluation indicator: She has improved her writing skills, now she is able to build a series of sentences about one specific topic and will result in large compositions.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this work was to generate appropriate strategies for the stimulation, invention, imagination and creative thinking when constructing a text. We sought to highlight these characteristics as tools to demonstrate to students the importance of daring to be different and optimizing your creation skills. During the development of the work, we constantly sought to encourage them and capture their attention, building didactic strategies to work in class, so that the students felt motivated and comfortable when practicing their writing.

“Conventional feedback approaches in contexts of English as a foreign Language (EFL) see teachers play a dominant role in the entire process, responding almost exclusively to written error and filling student papers with red ink” (Lee, 2016, p.518). This is a method still used, but can be improved with the use of technological tools. “One of the most central and challenging activities in which first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing instructors engage is responding to student writing” (Lee, 2018, p.35). The feedback from teacher is valuable to measure student, Witten responses are necessary.” feedback as the information provided by teachers that boosts students’ understanding and performance, helping students to recognize their errors and correct them accordingly” (Mao, 2019 p.1). Feedback allow to know is student stage, help to recognize errors. “The teacher could help ensure that the needs of the students are accommodated and their own intentions and priorities of feedback practices.” (Montgomery, 2007, p.82). So he teacher can provide more detailed information on the student needs and can make working tasks to improve the desired skill, in this case writing skill.

Computer science and education. Nowadays, technology has gained strength in our life, and has transformed the thinking of the human being allowing computing to be an essential part of education, generating teaching-learning environments focused on interactive participation, computers can be used in many ways in the field of education, as a tool. A computer is totally useful when it comes to improve teaching, these machines speed up work and also has the ability to create motivation, through them you can teach a lot of things, as spelling rules, vocabulary, operations with numbers, fractions; and many topics else, computers is not the only way to learn, but

we can make use of technology in our favor, we can use computers as a reinforcing tool, We can create a friendly environment, entertaining and exciting that allows anyone to learn a specific topic, and achieve our goals. "a past study also found that teachers were more motivated to teach their students in classroom as ICT provided sufficient information and materials online (Vee, 2019, p.117).

ICT is important in education, "ICTs in education provides access to all types of learners. All students can learn from the provided material. Even students with special needs can get the most out of its use" (Mutoni, 2013, p.1) there are many advantages of the use of technology, through a laptop or tablet is possible to get access to a variety of learning tools, children get involved, also promotes team work and improve participation and knowledge retention. "the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) have acquired prominence not only in the field of education, but in other fields as well." (Kapur, 2019, p.1).

According to the above, this research emphasizes the importance of writing skills and how we can make use of all virtual tools, the inclusion of technology in education, working with environments and activities in which technology is implemented, technology designed under specific parameters through blogs, where Karen is called to work with a series of practical exercises, to work in pages created by themselves so that she enjoys the class and at the same time promote the reinforcement of writing texts, paragraphs, stories, etc. "The findings suggest that through the use of technology, pre-taught vocabulary, various teacher influences and the implementation of positive diverse literacy practices, this goal can be attained" (Cole, 2015 p.2).

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VI. ANNEXES

Annex 1

TEST

1. Order the following sentences

Today park to the went _____
Sara piano the plays _____
the cat barking dog is to the _____
Ramon school every goes to _____
open the is door :: _____
working Jim is at school _____

2. Order the following paragraphs.

John and Nancy have dinner in the In the afternoon
John and Nancy, are very tired and go to bed.at night
John and Nancy walk every morning to school
During the break, at midday, They run around the school.
They have their lunch. When Classes finishes,

3. Fill in the blanks with correct connectors:

and but then anyway also so

I live in Guayaquil, I would like to visit Quito,I cant afford the trip
Guayaquil is hot Quito is cold
I like vegetables, chicken, meat. rice
I don't like sodas, there is no water, because I am thirsty

4. Choose the correct option

1. I visit my parents on Sundays, and/but I prefer to visit them on Saturdays

2. Cars can be dangerous. Moreover/but , they pollute
3. They have to travel to Quito, but/ also need to save money.
4. Paul works far away from the road and/so he has to walk 1 km
5. I must study hard to pass my exams, then/also need to practice

Annex 2

INTERVIEW TO THE TEACHER

I asked to the teacher about Karen's case

Does Karen use connectors when writing?

No She does not. She does not know how to use them

Does Karen practice the use of connectors?

No She does not. She does not know them

Can Karen construct long sentences?

NO, her sentences are short

Does Karen know what a connector is?

No, she does not. She has an idea, but does not exactly what it is

Does Karen make extensive paragraphs about a specific topic?

No, she does not. At the moment She is not able to make long sentences