

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



**“ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS’ COMPOSITION  
SKILLS REGISTERED IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION II OF THE  
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND ENGLISH  
COMPOSITION I OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MODERN  
LANGUAGES AT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT,  
SEMESTER I-2017”**

**PRESENTED BY:**

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**TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:**

**Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages with Specialization in French and  
English**

**ADVISOR:**

**Miguel Ángel Carranza Campos, MsE.**

**San Salvador, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017**



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**San Salvador, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Research is usually focused on speaking or listening, and little attention is being paid to writing which is a very important skill to demonstrate mastery of language in learning English as a Foreign Language. Writing is a complex skill since it requires a combination of grammar and syntax rules and the ability to write logically, legibly and in an organized way.

In El Salvador, new programs have been implemented due to the lack of reading and writing skills. When students get to the university, they barely know how to write essays or reports. The new curriculum from MINED was updated in 2008 for Junior High and High School, and it has been implemented for the past years. It is based on communication skills either written or oral. Authorities from MINED are aware of educational transcendence based on competences and the new curriculum aims to enhance the reading comprehension skill and the writing profile of students (Programa de Educación Media, 2008).

As students need to communicate orally, they also need to write compositions, essays, reports, homework assignments, lesson plans, among others. On one hand, it is a fact that students not always use writing outside the classroom. Most of the time, when students get a job, they are not asked or required to write academic texts that need composition skills. On the other hand, when students want to apply for a scholarship, for example, they need to write academic essays in order to get it. They need to have the proper knowledge and skills to produce a well-written academic text. For this reason, this research aims to analyze the current profile of composition skills among students of both majors, the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the Foreign Language Department.

This research Project has been developed to analyze the current performance in regards to composition skills: aspects related to form meaning grammar and



syntax, and content, cohesion and coherence of the composition itself. There is a slight difference between students registered in the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching who take the subject Composition II in the fifth semester while the students from the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages take the subject Composition I in the seventh semester of the major. This research aims to compare the writing proficiency skill in spite of the difference in the year the students take the subject.

A qualitative, descriptive and exploratory study was implemented. The researchers' team treated the topic as an exploratory research in order to analyze the current situation of the composition profile and provide more details about it.

This research project used the interview, the questionnaire, and the qualitative content analysis as instruments to collect the data that were analyzed to carry out the research. Through the interview, the researchers obtained important information from teachers in regards to the performance of students currently taking the Composition course. A survey was distributed to students in order to obtain background information from the subjects of the sample. The qualitative content analysis was used to check the conditions of the students' composition skills in order to identify weaknesses and strengths so as to provide recommendations and conclusions to the Foreign Languages Department to promote further investigation in regards to the composition profile.

## 1.1 Research Topic

*“Analysis of the Performance of Students’ Composition Skills Registered in English Composition II of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and English Composition I of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the Foreign Language Department, Semester I-2017”*

**Scope:** Students from Composition I (Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages) and Composition II (Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching)

**Time:** Semester I-2017

**Place:** University of El Salvador, Foreign Language Department

## **1.2 Objectives**

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

- To analyze the writing performance of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the Foreign Language Department in the University of El Salvador in semester I year 2017.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

- To compare and contrast the level of the writing profile of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the Foreign Languages Department in semester I, year 2017.
- To identify factors that interfere positively or negatively in the writing performance of students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching enrolled in Composition I and II, semester I year 2017.
- To assess students' writing performance of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching registered in Composition I and II, semester I year 2017.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

### **1.3.1 General Research Question**

- What is the level of English Composition achieved by the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages in semester I -2017 at the University of El Salvador?

### **1.3.2 Subsidiary Questions**

***To be answered through the instruments and data analysis***

- Is the current situation of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages related to English Composition skills the appropriate to the level that they are supposed to achieve?
- Which major (Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching or the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages) has better composition skills?
- What are the main factors that influence the level of English Composition of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages in semester I - 2017?
- What are the results of the assessment of students' writing skills currently taking the subject of Composition I/ II in semester I year 2017?

## 1.4 Justification

This research project is presented because it involves a great importance and impact for both majors since it represents an opportunity to analyze, examine and identify the current performance of students of the Foreign Language Department related to English Composition skills and the main factors that influence the current situation of students' writing abilities of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages at the University of El Salvador during the semester I-2017. Also, this qualitative research can serve as a basis or as a guide for future researchers wishing to go deeper in one of these aspects concerning the students' English composition.

As stated by Raimes (1983) one of the main reasons to learn a foreign language is to communicate with other people, and this includes not only to use oral communication, but also to be understood effectively through writing when the person is not at the same place. As a result, writing is a key element of learning a foreign language and that is the reason why the curriculum of both majors includes the subject of English Composition which is the essential aspect of this study.

Since writing is an important part of the English's learning process, students at the Foreign Language Department need to be prepared because it can give them more opportunities in several areas; for example, students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages that can write motivational letters can apply for an international exchange or scholarships. In addition, good writing skills help students in courses such as Seminar I and Seminar II where they are required to write reports or homework assignments. It is also helpful if some students have to do work in activities as the graduation project at the end of the major.

In the case of students of both majors at the University of El Salvador, they receive subjects to learn how to write and to improve their writing skills in general. One of

those subjects, as already mentioned, is English Composition, but there is a difference in the academic year that students of both majors take the subject of Composition. On one hand, students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching take English Composition I in the fourth semester, and English Composition II in the fifth semester. On the other hand, students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages only have the option to enroll one subject related to Composition which is English Composition I in the seventh semester. This research study compares and analyzes the advantages or disadvantages of having an additional subject in English Composition in the case of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, as well as the academic year in which this subject is taken by students from both majors.

Taking into account that writing is an essential part of learning a foreign language, this research study pretends to raise awareness of the fact that there are no other subjects to enhance writing skills; however, when it comes to oral communication skills, students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching take several subjects such as English Pronunciation, Readings and Conversation I and II, and English Phonology and Morphology, but as far as writing in English is concerned, there are not too many subjects to improve this aspect.

To sum up, it is important to know if students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching in semester I - 2017 at the Foreign Languages Department consider that the time they have been studying English at the University of El Salvador has made possible for them to feel adequately trained in the area of English writing. This information is of great value because each student should learn how to write and improve writing skills in general and especially given that these students will be professionals and they need to have correct writing that helps them express correctly in academic or non-academic situations.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Background

Writing is an important part of life because writing is everywhere, whether at home, at work or at school, and it is used either for our daily personal communication or as a hobby. However, writing presents difficulties and especially for a lot of people around the world who are learning a specific language as English as a second or foreign language. This is an aspect that many of the students know very well and taking all of the above into account, both the importance of writing and the difficulties it presents, some experts have done researches on writing skills.

Some of these studies or researches have been carried out by students of the University of El Salvador, and specifically by students of the Foreign Languages Department. One of these researches was focused on the writing skill difficulties of students taking the subject of English Composition I at the Foreign Language Department. According to this research (Aragón, Baires & Rodríguez, 2013); some difficulties to have a high writing performance can be:

a) In the case of students

Students are not aware that they have poor writing. Therefore, when given an option, students who need writing practice choose subjects that do not require writing. This may be due to the lack of interest on the part of the students, either simply because of their laziness or because writing has not been inculcated as an important and necessary aspect of their life.

b) In the case of teachers

Many teachers are not well trained in the area of writing; therefore, they do not know how to use appropriate methods not only while teaching their subjects, but also while teaching their students how to develop their writing skills.

c) In the case of educational institutions (High School)

Good writing requires practice and adequate feedback, and most public or private educational institutions do not emphasize the practice of writing constantly. Besides that, students are rarely able to assess the quality of their own writing; they are usually not taught on how to evaluate their own work and most importantly, students are unaware of the criteria teachers use in grading compositions.

In addition, there are many problems that students present at the moment of writing. Some of the most common difficulties for students of foreign languages are the following:

Aspects	Characteristics
Poor handwriting/ writing illegibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not follow lines on a paper</li> <li>Writes too small or too large</li> <li>Writes too light or too hard</li> <li>Mixes capital and lower case letters inappropriately</li> </ul>
Poor spelling skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spells phonetically and cannot remember patterns</li> <li>Spells words differently in the same document</li> <li>Reverses letters in spelling</li> </ul>
Difficulty taking notes from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to write homework assignments correctly</li> <li>Writing is too slow to get lecture points on a paper</li> <li>Takes notes but is unable to distinguish important information</li> <li>Reverses or ignores numbers, parts of sentences</li> </ul>



oral presentations	and/or whole words taking notes
May have problems with grammar, syntax and organization	Persistent problems with sentence structure (sentences may be incomplete or syntax may be incorrect or disassociated) Lack of punctuation and capitalization
Demonstrates writing skills inconsistent with verbal abilities	Writes short and/or simple essays even though he can verbalize more complex thought Can verbalize answers to tests but written answers are wrong, left blank or incomplete Oral vocabulary more complex than written vocabulary

(Adapted and retrieved from “An analysis of the writing skill difficulties of the English Composition I students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador”, 2013, p. 10-11)

All of the above are the difficulties faced by students of a foreign language including students from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. All these difficulties come from different areas such as the students' point of view about writing and the desire to learn and improve their skills in this aspect. For example, if one student considers writing as a waste of time, then he will never appreciate how important it is to have good writing and as a result, he will never improve in this aspect. But, if a student wishes to enhance this ability even if he has not received the correct training in his educational institution in the first years of learning, he must put into practice many things, for instance: reading more, practicing writing constantly and adopting a self-taught attitude.

On the other hand, taking into account the importance of writing skill, another research study carried out by the students of the Foreign Languages Department was focused on showing what the most common strategies and techniques that teachers from the FLD applied when teaching composition were. First of all, the research team made an introduction about how the writing process and the way writing is taught has been changing or developing over time. The researchers found that “In the 1970s many English L2 language program writing classes were in reality, grammar courses. [...] then, In the early 1980s, writing was limited to structuring sentences, often in direct answer to questions, or by combining sentences the result of which looked like a short piece of discourse.” (Orellana & Navarro, 2015).

It is notable that the area of writing was limited to learning grammar, which implies learning the rules and forms that should be followed when writing. In addition, it was expected that a person who could write well was one who could well structure a written response. But, developing writing skills goes beyond writing correct grammar and giving a good answer to a question. Good writing strives to explain, to make things a little bit clearer, write with unity and coherence, etc.

Over time, the way writing was taught has achieved a more critical and balanced perspective of composition theory because in recent years, academic writing is viewed as a communicative social act. With this in mind, more importance has been given not only to skills such as speaking and listening but also how to improve the writing area. Therefore, writing strategies were included because “learning strategies help learners become more autonomous. Learning strategies also enhance self-efficacy, individuals’ perception that they can successfully complete a task or series of tasks.” (Bandura, 1997). For this reason, there are some strategies which have as common denominator the fact that learning to write, then, involves becoming skilled in identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns. Nevertheless, some people concentrate on the final work rather than means and process. This means that some people can concentrate on the form

and structure of writing rather than how writers create writing that has form and structure, and in this way, the composing processes of good writers are ignored.

Then, there are some very helpful techniques of prewriting such as the following:

- Freewriting that is a strategy intended to encourage the development of ideas without concern for the conventional rules of writing (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mVxfZm>)
- Brainstorming: It is an informal way of generating topics to write about, or points to make about your topic (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mzIZzx>)
- Clustering that means putting words into groups (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mk2coE>)
- Asking questions in order to get ideas about a subject
- Keeping a journal which is an excellent way to practice writing skills and discover ideas for further writing

At the end, the main aspect is that apart from the different strategies that exist, learners now have more opportunities for meaningful writing, and they can be less dependent on the teachers' methodologies, and work collaboratively with other students or other people. When a person understands that writing is an important part of our development as human beings then he also understands that he must learn to express himself correctly not only in an oral way but also in a written form. Many people and students around the world, among them the students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador are aware of this fact, and proof of this is that some have even done their graduation work taking into account this topic.

## **2.2 L1 Influence**

The English language is now an essential part of our society and “even though it is not our mother tongue it has become a global language” (Sriprabha, 2015, p. 296). The need to learn English is mainly due to the fact that this language is known to most of the people in the world. So, knowing this language makes possible for us to have a common language with others and as a result to be able to communicate with people from other parts of the world.

Nowadays, English is being taught to children since they are at school because of its influence in this globalized world. Many people believe that “English is a trade language with other countries” (Sriprabha, 2015, p. 296) and if a person wishes to do business outside his country and improve financially he must learn this language. Besides that, many students want to travel abroad for education and jobs, and one way to achieve their goal is to learn English because this will make possible for them to communicate with the local people either in an oral or written way.

However, when learning a foreign language, such as English, there are many factors that interfere with learning and one of these factors is the mother tongue also known as L1. Mother tongue is “the language first learned by a person.” (retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/mother-tongue>) and It is usual that most of the time, students use their first language (L1), in an unconscious way, in order to try to reach an effective communication in the second language (also known as L2), which can have either positive or negative results given that languages do not share the same structure most of the time.

### ***2.2.1 Positive Influence of Mother Tongue on Foreign Language Writing Skills***

There are many theories about the influence of the first language when learning English as a foreign language. One of these theories states that “a learner’s

competence in a second language is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the L1, since bilinguals are able to transfer skills from their first language for use them in their second language” (Lasagabaster, 1997). It means that a person who has good writing skills in their mother tongue has the opportunity to have good writing in another foreign language. Therefore, if the L1 is highly developed, this will positively affect the L2 learning. Many people who know how to use grammar correctly, how to structure paraphrases, how to use connectors and others aspects in their mother tongue are more likely to have better writing in a foreign language because they are already familiar with these aspects.

Some studies consider that L1 and L2 writing have similar processes and this has positive effects to learners of a foreign language. There have been studies that have examined situations where students come back to the L1 in order to think about the writing task that they are required to produce. For example, “six adults (Spanish-speakers) in an ESL course used identical writing strategies in their L1 and in their target language” (Jones & Tetroe, 1987). The result was that those who use their previous knowledge in the foreign language had good results because they used analogous ways in the L2. This shows that most of the time, people who planned in L1 before writing in L2 were able to do a good job and even in a more detailed way than those who planned in L2.

There are more beneficial than negative aspects of switching to the mother tongue when writing an article, essay, etc. Some students translate vocabulary from their mother tongue in order to brainstorm and organize ideas for an essay or other writing work in L2. This is beneficial because it helps to acquire a wide variety of synonyms and antonyms that allow making more varied and versatile a written text. This happens particularly, when students have been required to write essays on themes related to their native languages with their native cultures or when asked to write essays on new issues that were extremely unusual for them. In dealing with themes that are typical of our country or themes that are typical of our culture, most of us tend to make great use of our mother tongue to explain and give an

understanding of our thoughts or emotions. This is very useful because it helps to generate more ideas and gives more details of a certain topic.

Some people may think that translating a text from the first language to a foreign language is not convenient, and although this may be harmful in some cases, in others it is not. A good example of this idea is a study that was conducted with 48 fourth-year Japanese university students. “One of the groups was told to write their first essay in their L1 (Japanese) and subsequently translate it into the foreign language, (English). Meanwhile, the other group was instructed to write directly in English” (Rushidi, 2012). The next day these two groups inverted their tasks and wrote their second essay on a different issue. The results were the following:

- Participants received higher scores in the translation mode than in the direct writing mode
- Higher levels of complexity in terms of syntax
- Benefits in terms of content and style
- Better organization
- Clear ideas
- Cohesion or Coherence in the text
- Good arguments

Studies like these show that it is better for a person to be trained in writing in their mother tongue because this will make it easier to learn a foreign language. The student of a foreign language can look for synonyms or writing strategies similar to those of L1 and this will make his writing in another language more detailed and comprehensive. Therefore, it is remarkable the fact that a person needs to have a correct use of their mother tongue, so that he can have good results in their writing with a foreign language.

### **2.2.2 Negative Influence of Mother Tongue on Foreign Language Writing Skills**

The most common suggestion on why students make errors while writing is that “Translating word by word idiomatic expressions in the learner's´ first language can generate typical blunders.” (Rushidi & Jeta, 2012). Translating word by word many times is something that should not be done because this causes the loss of the correct meaning of the phrase and alter the meaning of the same phrase or paragraph. Besides that, there are some people who argue that mother tongue disrupts the smoothness of communication especially in the writing skills. It is supposed that students with lack of confidence tend to use mother tongue instead of proper English.

According to Richards & Platt (1992) it is considered that during the learning process learner's errors are the result of many implications caused by a phenomenon that appears when the learners borrow or use specific patterns or representative characteristics from their mother tongue and, in this way, express meanings using the vocabulary and syntax which they already knew. This also means that, if the L1's degree of development is low or inadequate to a particular cognitive stage, it will be difficulties on the part of the learner to attain an adequate level of competence in the L2.

It has been seen that the mother tongue influence has positive aspect such as higher levels of complexity in terms of syntax, benefits in terms of content and style, better organization and cohesion or coherence in the text, while going back to the L1 in themes that are related to our native language or related to our culture or talking about issues that are not usual. However, the influence of the mother tongue can affect negatively, for example, if one student tries to translate word by word, this paraphrasing or this writing work will lose the original message or the main idea of the information. In the end, how to use the mother tongue will depend on each person whether it will be a positive or negative effect.

## **2.3 The Common European Framework of Reference**

Different learners have different language abilities. However, opinions about a person's level of English might be subjective. For example, people may consider your English is very good and advanced while some other people might consider you still need a lot of practice in order to improve it. Viewpoints can differ and some are biased depending on the way they choose to assess language. That is why a clear and objective way is needed to describe or to measure the level of English of a person, and in this form everybody can agree on.

### ***2.3.1 Levels of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)***

CEFR is an international and standardized way for describing language ability and it stands for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This is used around the world to describe learners' language skills. Using the CEFR: Principles of good practice (2011) noted: "What [the CEFR] can do is to stand as a central point of reference, itself always open to amendment and further development, in an interactive international system of co-operating institutions whose cumulative experience and expertise produces a solid structure of knowledge, understanding and practice shared by all (John Trim, 2011, xi)".

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment was created by the Council of Europe to provide "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1)" (Using the CEFR: Principles of good practice, 2011). It can be a valuable tool for purposes such as curriculum planning or preparing textbooks since it is a general guide useful for language professionals such as teachers and administrators in which 'the examples given are called 'illustrative descriptors' and these are



presented as a series of scales with “Can Do” statements from levels A1 to C2. These scales can be used as a tool for comparing levels of ability amongst learners of foreign languages, and also offer ‘a means to map the progress’ of learners (Council of Europe, 2011, xii) (Using the CEFR: Principles of good practice, 2011).

The Common European Framework of Reference separates the language into six reference levels. Those levels go from A1, which is a basic level, up to C2 which is for people who have mastered the language completely. CEFR describes what a learner can do in the four macro skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, and it describes the level of language ability the learner has reached from beginner to proficient. These six levels are named as follows:

Proficient user:	C1 Mastery C2 Effective Operational Proficiency
Independent user:	B1 Vantage B2 Threshold
Basic user:	A1 Waystage A2 Breakthrough

### **2.3.2 CEFR in Writing Levels B1 and B2**

When students of the FLD start the Composition class, they are expected to be in the B level (either B1 or B2 of the CEFR). As it has been mentioned before, students of both majors take the course at a different year. While some students have to take two Composition courses, some others take just one. Regardless of that, they are likely to be able to express themselves in written texts. Even though

students are going to learn how to write a good academic composition in the course, teachers might expect them to have at least good grammar that means to use structures accurately, so the message is conveyed effectively.

In written production activities the student as writer learns and then produces a written text which is received by a reader (in Composition courses the reader is almost always the teacher). It is significant to know what is expected from students to write when they are in the B1 and B2 level of English. The CEFR provides a scale in which a large set of common reference points are presented about what learners can do at different levels at different skills. According to the book Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2011), the general common reference points for the independent user B1 and B2 for writing are the following:

**B1:** The user/learner can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. The user/learner can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

**B2:** The user/learner can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to his/her interests. The user/learner can write an essay or report, passing information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. The user/learner can also write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experience.

The Common European Framework of Reference also provides scales for: overall written production, and two other sub-scales which are: creative writing, reports and essays. In the overall written production users can do the following:

**B1-** To write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.

**B2-** To write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.

Creative writing is the art of making things up. It is an original and self-expressive writing. The types of creative writing are poetry, plays, fiction and memoirs, among others. The CEFR also has a sub-scale for writing in which it describes what users/learners can do.

**B1-** User/learner can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest; he/she can also write accounts of experience, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text, write a description of an event, a recent trip –real or imagined and narrate a story.

**B2-** User/learner can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.

Essay and report writing are important skills to develop as it is a common form of academic writing. Report and essay writing is more complex since they generally have fixed structures. In this last sub-scale for writing in the CEFR, users/learners can do the following:

**B1-** Users can write short, simple essays on topics of interest. Users can summarize report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.

**B2-** Users can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Users can synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources.

(Retrieved from the book: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, 2001)

Writing in the B1 and B2 level requires a broad knowledge about vocabulary, grammar, syntax, cohesion, among others. Besides that, students are expected to connect ideas, support their opinion, give good arguments and write clear and detailed texts about any topic of interest. Writing is a skill which needs a lot of practice in order to be mastered. With the descriptions of the scales about writing in the CEFR, it is important to mention that learners that achieve B1 or B2 profile have an intermediate-advanced level in writing and are considered independent users.

## **2.4 Writing Process**

Writing is essential for students' success in schools. However, this assignment remains as a practice merely for English and Language arts classes in countries such as the United States where students are requested to read and write a lot because that is usually the way the curriculum is designed for these courses. Nevertheless, in Composition courses, students learn in a deeper way how to write and convey their ideas properly. They are taught to write academically and they

learn the process required for writing which involves different stages.

The writing process is usually seen as involving four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing. However, these stages are not established to follow a mandatory order or sequence. As it has been stated in research, “many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach – writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages (Krashen, 1984, p.17)” (Seow, A. 2002).

“The term process writing has been bandied about for quite a while in ESL classrooms. It is no more than a writing process approach to teaching writing” (Seow, A. 2002). Teachers often plan classroom activities in order to help students enhance the specific writing skills at every stage of the process. Seow (2002) noted: “The application of the process approach to teaching writing as a Second Language is affected by teachers’ instructional strategies that reflect “their underlying philosophy of teaching” (Kroll, 2001, p. 219)”. Process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages planning, drafting, revising and editing.

On the first stage students start thinking about what they want to write. Students can do different activities like brainstorming, which is a popular activity. Here, students generate ideas about a topic in order to stimulate thoughts for getting started. Rapid free writing and Wh-questions are also activities that can be done on the first stage.

The second stage of the writing process is drafting. This is the first attempt at writing where students write as much as they can about their ideas without concerning too much about form. “At the drafting stage, the writers are focused on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft” (Seow, 2002).

On the revising stage students reread what they have written to see how effective they have conveyed their ideas. “Revising is not merely checking for language errors (i.e., editing). It is done to improve global content and the organization of ideas so that the writer’s intent is made clearer to the reader.” (Seow, 2002)

On the last stage, students look for language errors like grammar, spelling, accuracy, cohesion, coherence, among others. “Editing within process writing is meaningful because students can see the connection between such an exercise and their own writing in that correction is not done for its own sake but as part of the process of making communication as clear and unambiguous as possible to an audience” (Seow, 2002). Editing is about correcting mistakes and trying to make the composition as perfect as possible because what is next is the evaluation by the teacher.

The writing process helps students to assimilate the four phases so that they will be able to produce logical and well written texts that will convey a clear and coherent message for a specific audience. Internalizing the writing process helps students to write effectively not only for Composition or English and Language Arts classes but also for different purposes in life or different subjects.

#### ***2.4.1 Writing Process: Differences between Writing L1 and L2***

Writing in a second language (L2) is a challenging and complex process and this applies for first and second language writing. While the writing process for the first language (L1) includes choosing appropriate vocabulary, producing content, drafting ideas, and editing text, writing in an L2 involves all of these elements mixed with second language processing issues that might overwhelm the writing process.

Many L2 writers use their L1 in some way while writing in the L2. However, this is not the case for all of them. Some L2 writers have automaticity and knowledge to

do all the stages of writing thinking and using L2 only. “The writing processes in native and second language learners are similar as a physical activity that goes through various stages - brainstorming, writing a first draft, and editing a final product. At the same time, they differ as a mental activity that requires non-native writers to engage in extra efforts when they want to express, argue, or discuss thoughts and concepts in a second language (Brown, 2007)” (Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. 2015).

Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. (2015) noted that “dealing with errors from students studying EFL (English as a Foreign Language) requires teachers to understand differences between common errors that EFLs make and errors in writing that native students make during the writing process (Ferris, 2002)”. Many English students may experience errors as a result of lacking L2 linguistic knowledge (grammatical structures, idioms, punctuation, among others) or as a result of L1 influence and cultural background. On the contrary, native students have intuitions about using grammatical rules and structures while they are writing. “Even though EFL students have reached an advanced level, it does not guarantee that they will have the automatic proficiency of native speakers. Native speakers use their intuition of linguistic knowledge effectively without attending to it that imposes cognitive efforts during writing as ESL students (Francis, Romo, & Gelman, 2002)” (Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. 2015).

Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. (2015) mentioned, “Scholars and educators have asserted that EFL learners need input as well as output to develop their writing competence and improve their performance (Canale & Swain, 1980; Swain, 2000)”. This can be applied whether to L1 or L2 writing. The writing competence is a complex skill that requires enough linguistic knowledge to produce a well-written text. Writing in the classroom is very structured and it could be seen as a program of instruction. Students need to understand the nature of the writing process at every point in order to write correctly and continue improving.

L2 Writing process is somewhat similar to L1 writing process. Both writing processes are a physical and cognitive practice. Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. (2015) noted: “both require writers to go throughout the stages of pre-writing, writing and redrafting. However, teaching writing as a skill is more than just physical conscious activities, with the most important part of the process approach for teaching EFL students being the unconscious process that puts mental efforts on EFL writers to go back and forth from classifying meanings to expressing thoughts in a second language (Brown, 2007)”. “These unconscious processes are affected by differences in discourse between the native culture and the second culture, as well as the level of proficiency in the second language (Silva, 1997)” (Lincoln F. & Idris A. B. 2015).

## **2.5 Writing Across the Curriculum**

Reading and writing are required in almost every subject. In most schools and courses, Students’ knowledge is assessed for what they read and write. That is why writing is critical for students’ success in schools. In countries such as the United States, schools have adapted the subjects to Common Core Standards that are focused on writing. “The Common Core State Standards [...] are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.” Taken from Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/>. For this reason, writing has been implemented across the curriculum in most of the schools of that country.

“Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) refers specifically to the pedagogical and curricular attention to writing occurring in university subject matter classes other than those offered by composition or writing programs (most often housed in the



English Department)” (Bazerman et al., 2005, p.19). “Writing Across the Curriculum is a movement that began in the 1970s and is gaining a lot of attention these days. It is designed to boost children’s critical thinking skills by requiring them to write in all of their classes—from math to social studies to science—and not just in language arts. And it’s a perfect fit for Common Core.” (Deva Dalporto, 2013).

Writing is an important tool for facilitating learning. There are many ways it can be integrated in content subjects. Writing can help students think about what they read. For example, they can take notes about what they have read; they can summarize, answer questions, or go deeper and express themselves by writing what they think about a topic or book and write how it can be applied in daily life. All this serve as a powerful tool for students to understand better their courses. They are studying while writing and at the same time they are thinking critically. In the book *How Writing Shapes Thinking*, Langer and Applebee (1987) contribute with some conclusions about writing and learning:

- Writing activities promote learning better than activities involving only studying or reading.
- Different kinds of writing activities lead students to focus on different kinds of information.
- In contrast to short-answer responses, which turn information into discrete small pieces, analytic writing promotes more complex and thoughtful inquiry but on a smaller amount of information. (Langer & Applebee 1987 pp. 135–136)

## 2.6 How Compositions are assessed

### 2.6.1 Form or Content?

As Cooper (1984) explained: "Braddock et al. (1963) say that composition exams, 'often referred to as measures of writing ability [...] are always measures of writing performance; that is, when one evaluates an example of a student's writing, he cannot be sure that the student is fully using his ability, is writing as well as he can.'" And also In addition to the "writer variable\*" as a source of error, Braddock et al. (1963) identify "the assignment variable, with its four aspects: the topic, the mode of discourse, the time afforded for writing, and the examination situation" (p. 7).

There has been constant debate on how compositions should be evaluated either there should be focus on form or content. Evaluating form means to take spelling, grammar, syntax or vocabulary as the most important aspects in a composition while evaluating content refers to the evaluation to the students' ideas. Essentially, evaluating form is an analysis of the correctness of the writing, and evaluating content is an analysis of the effectiveness of the message being conveyed.

This is a very controversial topic since teachers do not seem to agree on what is more important, if the message students attempt to transmit, or the exactness in which they produce this message. Some research has been done in this area to expose what are the benefits and disadvantages to choose form or content to assess compositions in ESL.

Form is easier to evaluate since there are specific rules to determine so. For example, the sentence "She do the laundry\*" is incorrect because of the main verb which does not contain the suffix "-es" for third person singular. Note that the \* refers to a sentence that is not grammatically accurate.

"Mechanical issues are objective; most of them have a clear right and wrong; they can be dealt with quickly and conclusively" (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mHerK2>). Teachers are able to determine if a composition is appropriate in form if they take into account the following aspects (Kroll, 1990):

<u>Sentence structure errors</u>	<u>Verb-centered errors</u>	<u>Reference errors</u>	<u>Word-level choice</u>
Whole sentence or clause aberrant	Tense	Non-pronoun agreement	Lexical/ phrase choice
Subject formation	Voice	Quantifier-noun agreement	Idiom
Verb missing	Verb formation	Epenthetic pronoun	Word form
Verb complement/ object complement	Subject-verb agreement	Ambiguous/ unlocatable referent	Singular for plural (except verbs)
Prepositional phrase/ infinitive mixup	Two-word verb	Voice shift	Plural for singular (except verbs)
Dangling/ misplaced modifier			
Sentence fragment			
Run-on sentence			
Parallel structure			
Relative clause formation			
Word order			
Gaping error			
Extraneous word			
Awkward phrasing			

Also there is a list of some questions that may help teachers evaluate form if they plan to add this to their rubrics for evaluation, these questions are:

- Are sentences complete? Does each sentence begin with a capital letter and end with the appropriate punctuation mark?
- Are paragraph breaks effective?
- Do subjects and verbs agree in number (both singular or both plural)?
- Are other verbs, pronouns, and modifiers used in the correct form?
- Is capitalization used appropriately? Are commas and other punctuation marks used correctly?
- Has appropriate credit been given for ideas that are not original?

Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mHerK2>

Assessing content is a more demanding and complex task for the teacher since it is mostly determined by his/ her perspective; that is why some teachers prefer to evaluate form instead. "Content issues [...] are more subjective; they have nuances; they beget additional issues and often seem to defy resolution" (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mHerK2>) as it is stated previously, it is easier for teachers to evaluate grammar and syntax errors since there are set of guidelines to separate right from wrong, but when it comes to content it is very challenging since it depends on the teacher's point of view either if he agrees with the student or if he considers the arguments are well organized.

There are four main categories to classify text by content rather than form in the level of preciseness of the information being expressed whether the text is incomprehensible, understandable, favorable and eloquent/ profound:

- *Incomprehensible*: Message cannot be understood due to serious problems with content and/or mechanics.
- *Understandable*: Basic points seem clear despite of many errors of various kinds.
- *Favorable*: Message seems clear. Content is probably well organized and supported.
- *Eloquent/Profound*: Not only does the clear message create a favorable impression, something about the content, word choice, sentence structure, figurative language, etc. moves the reader. Mechanical correctness alone cannot carry a piece of writing to this level (adapted and retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mHerK2>.)

Since evaluating content is a laborious work, here are some questions that could help a teacher to evaluate content:

- Does the composition effectively capture interest?
- Does the composition make sense?

- Is the composition clear? Are any parts confusing?
- Is the composition organized logically? Does it maintain interest? Are ideas supported and developed? Are transition words used to help readers see how ideas are related?
- Can you identify a main idea that pervades the composition?
- Does everything in the composition contribute to this main idea? Should anything be deleted because it is irrelevant? Does the ending of the composition leave the reader with a final impression that reinforces this main idea?
- Does the composition use concrete images that bring the composition to life? (This is effective for non-fiction as well as fiction.)
- Does the composition use precise vocabulary? Is the student correctly using words that stretch beyond his or her everyday vocabulary?
- If there was a specific assignment (regarding length, topic, etc.), does the composition fulfill all of the requirements?
- Does the composition “flow” when read aloud? Do the sentences have effective variety?
- Does the piece have an appropriate title that generates interest?

Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mHerK2>

Again, this type of questions is offered to teachers in order for them to choose the questions they consider most appropriate to create guidelines and rubrics to evaluate compositions fairly and in an integrated way, given that at the end of the day, none of the options, content or form is accepted individually to evaluate a composition, but they have to be merged to assess not only the aesthetic aspect of a composition, but also the ideas contained in it.

### **2.6.2 Errors**

There are some errors that student can make when creating a composition.

According to Frey and Fisher (2013), there are four kinds of errors in a composition.

1. Factual errors: they focus on incorrect information.
2. Procedural errors involve problems with applying routines, rules, or procedures (mostly related to mechanics or aesthetics of the text).
3. Transformation errors occur when students are asked to apply what they have been taught to a novel situation.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

This is a qualitative research considering that it "...is the approach usually associated with the social constructivist paradigm which emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality... researchers are interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of people's experience" (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/1By69or>) as mentioned before, one of the goals of this research is to analyze and understand the writing level that it is revealed students have, taking into account all the factors and influences that are around them. Shank (2002) defines qualitative research as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (p. 5).

This study is also a qualitative study given the fact that it is well known that the qualitative study does not manipulate variables, and also takes into account non-numerical data.

This research has an inductive research approach since "inductive approach does not involve formulation of hypotheses. It starts with research questions and aims and objectives that need to be achieved during the research process" (Saunders et al 2012) as it is stated, the researchers answered the research questions and achieved the objectives with the results of the data analysis coming from the instrument and the techniques that were used to carry out the research project.

#### **3.2 Type of Study**

Based on the topic and objectives, the type of study that was done was descriptive and exploratory. Exploratory studies "serve to increase the degree of familiarity with relatively unknown phenomena, obtain information on the possibility of carrying out a full research on a given context of real life, research problems of human behavior which are considered crucial for the professionals of a given area, identify promissory concepts or variables, establish priorities for further researches

or suggest verifiable affirmations (propositions)” (Dankhe, 1976). The research team aims to provide more information in regards to a topic that has not been studied very much. The study of students’ composition skills was carried out using a real composition from students, and this research is considered of academic relevance because several aspects that influence students’ composition skills were itemized.

Given that the research team was fully immersed in the composition theory, it is also considered a descriptive research since “in comparison to the little structured nature of exploratory studies, requires considerable knowledge of the area being researched to formulate specific questions that tries to answer (Dankhe, 1976). The research team was prepared to evaluate students’ compositions and that is why it is so important to be well-educated in regards to all the elements that are taken into account in a composition.

### **3.3 Research Design**

This research project is a non-experimental research since there are no experiments, and students’ abilities are presented as they are gathered because it is considered of relevance for the completion of the research technique.

It is a cross-sectional study given the fact that “The defining feature of a cross-sectional study is that it can compare different population groups at a single point in time... The benefit of a cross-sectional study design is that it allows researchers to compare many different variables at the same time” (retrieved and adapted from <http://bit.ly/10UeDJQ>) The research team studied the groups from the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching and Modern Languages at a specific moment of time (Semester I-2017) and many variables were taken into account in the instruments such as the influence of mother tongue, and the different aspects to be evaluated in a composition (grammar, syntax, vocabulary, content, organization).



### **3.4 Population and Sample**

In total, a number of 50 students were asked to participate in this study which makes 20% of the population of students that are currently taking the subject of Composition.

From each of the two groups, all of the students were asked to participate in the research project. On one hand, one group belonged to the students that were taking the subject Composition II (for the B.A. in English Teaching). On the other hand, the other group belonged to the students that were coursing the subject Composition I (for the B.A. in Modern Languages. It is important to emphasize that this is the only subject that they take regarding Composition).

The researchers' team used cluster sample. All the students of the two groups were chosen to fill the instrument, and the research team did not pay attention to the characteristics of the elements of the population, the only requirement is being registered in one of these groups. It is important to remark that even though students from the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching take part in the subject Composition I, and students from the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages only take Composition I, the last one supposedly covers the contents from both courses.

### **3.5 Research Technique**

Two techniques are used to gather information for this research project: the questionnaire, and also the interview.

According to [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com), an online dictionary, an interview is a "formal or informal meeting in which one or more persons question, consult, or judge the worth of another person", also they are defined as a "guided conversation where one person seeks information from the other" (Weiss, 1995) There were two interviews that were distributed (*see appendixes A, B and C*). First, the research team approached two Spanish Composition experts, and their

contribution was helpful for the development of the theoretical framework since it is aimed to discover if mother tongue has an influence when writing in English, and if its influence is positive or negative.

Also, there were interviews to experts in English writing, i.e. teachers from the Foreign Language Department that are or have been in charge of the subject of Composition for years. Four teachers were interviewed. The researchers included questions to collect information about their point of view about the students' performance.

In regards to the second technique, the questionnaire, some questions were presented to students for them to choose the best option. This questionnaire required half an hour to be completed, and the research team requested permission to the teacher in charge of the subject to be able to pass this brief questionnaire. The questions of the questionnaire went in detail about their opinion about their own performance asking miscellaneous questions about the curriculum and their own abilities when it comes to writing as well as some background information.

### **3.6 Research Instrument**

The research instrument that was used in this research is the qualitative content analysis which is defined as "Content analysis embeds the text into a model of communication within which it defines the aims of analysis [...] Qualitative content analysis defines itself within this framework as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification." (retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2IJK0ob>). and what the research team attempted to do with the content analysis was to check the condition of the students' composition skills in depth, analyzing an essay that students created, and in that way, many aspects were covered as the factors that have an impact on writing such as: mother tongue influence, French influence (for students in the

Bachelor in Modern Languages), and obviously aspects related to form (grammar, syntax, adequate vocabulary, etc.) and content (coherence, cohesion, organization, academic writing, etc.).

What the researchers aim to discover is if students fulfill the writing performance that is expected from them, specially taking into account the differences from both majors in regards to the academic year when the subject is to be taken and also differences in the curriculum of both Majors. Also, it is expected to list tendencies in their writing style.

### **3.7 Research Setting**

The research setting refers to the place where the data is collected. For this study; the information was collected from students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching (Composition II) and the Bachelor of Arts Modern Languages (Composition I) and teachers of the Foreign Languages Department at the University of El Salvador.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

### **4.1 Technique #1 Interview to Experts**

Experts were interviewed to check background knowledge from students and their perspectives on their performance. To begin with, the research team looked for the aid of experts in Spanish composition to verify if students had a good basis on how to write academic texts (see *appendixes H-K*).

Also, four professors from the Foreign Language Department were interviewed, to be more specific, professors that currently teach or have taught the subject Composition, and that would be experts in this field to share their experience with the research team.

The transcripts of these interviews are provided in the appendix of this research project (see *appendixes D-G*). Here is a brief summary of what the English Composition experts answered:

- **Grammar basis**

3 out of 4 experts considered that students have a good grammar basis when they reach either Composition I (for the B. A. in Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching). One expert said that students have issues with complex grammar structures.

- **Level students reach at the end of the course**

3 of the experts considered that students reach a B1 level. 2 of them specified that this is mostly true for students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, and both said that students from the B.A in English Teaching arrive to a B2 level. One expert did not answer the question.

- **Influence of Spanish**

The four experts agreed that there is an influence of Spanish in students'

compositions. Surprisingly, the four of them said that the most common issue is false cognates (English word that looks alike to the one in the mother tongue but that actually do not share meaning). Besides that, two of them said that there are issues with word order, and also spelling because of the mother tongue influence.

- **Evaluation of form or content**

Three experts said they prefer to evaluate both although one of these experts seems to be inclined to content. One of this experts mentioned that even though he/she evaluates both, form can interfere effective communication. One expert said he/she preferred to evaluate content.

- **English and Spanish writing process**

The experts agreed that Spanish and English writing process are similar, but one of them emphasized that they are similar in regards to the stages to follow, and another expert said that the distribution of content is likewise.

- **Influence of French (for students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages)**

One expert said that grammar and spelling are somewhat influenced by French. However, three experts said that there is no influence or very little to be considered.

- **Redacción en Español and Gramática Española**

All the experts agreed that these subjects should be added to the curriculum for the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages.

- **Difference between writing skills for students of both majors**

Two experts mentioned that Modern Languages students perform well even though they only take one composition; one of them explained that their writing process is better developed. One of the four experts did not answer, and another said that the

differences are mostly in content but did not specify which major wrote better.

- **Who writes better? Modern Languages or English Teaching students?**

One expert said that students from both majors should write something to be evaluated fairly. Other two said that students from the B.A in Modern Languages write better because “[they] work faster and harder.” One expert explained that “*Students of Modern Languages take the Composition course in the 7th semester and this gives them the opportunity to acquire more language*”.

All these responses will be contrasted in the qualitative content analysis.

#### **4.2 Technique #2 Background Questionnaire addressed to Students**

To carry out this research, the research team used the questionnaire as one of the instruments of data collection to make a comparison between what the students say they are able to develop in an efficient manner while making a composition and what in truth, they put in practice to create a composition. In addition, with the questionnaire\* (see *appendixes O and P*) it was possible to collect a lot of useful information such as background and complementary data concerning each student of both majors.

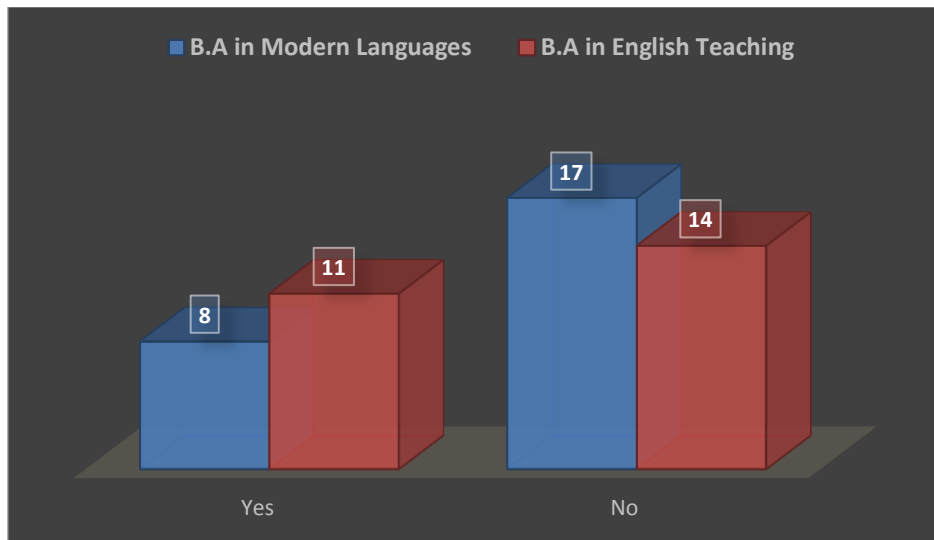
To distribute this instrument, the research team considered the subject of English Composition I in the case of students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the subject of English Composition II in the case of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching at the University of El Salvador in the same semester I – 2017.

The results obtained from the questionnaires are presented in the following graphs and tables through percentages, frequency of responses by students, and some numerical ranges. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the research team obtained new findings and new ideas about the topic of this graduation work while checking the results of this instrument.

\*Not all the questions are presented in this analysis only the ones the research team found most valuable.

- **Question 1: Do you have a job?**

Do you have a job?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	8	17
B.A in English Teaching	11	14



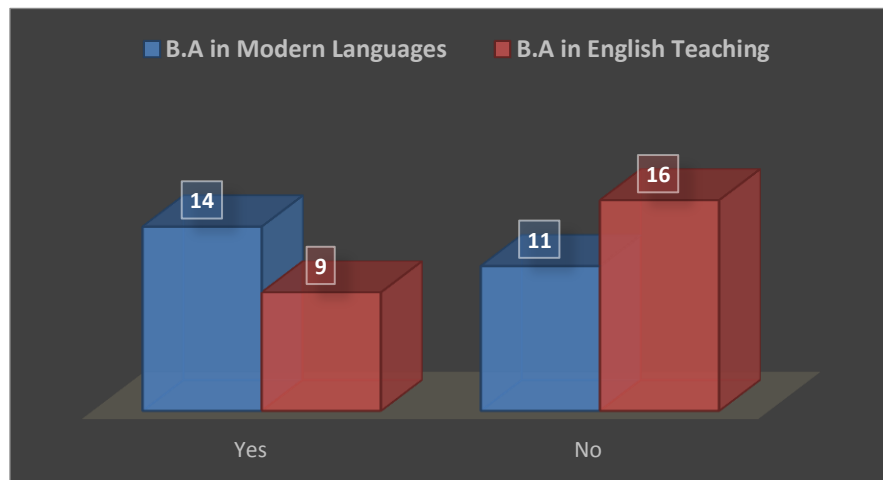
This graph reveals that 68% of the students of The Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages do not have a job, but the remaining 32% of students of The B. A. in Modern Languages who are currently taking Composition have a job. Concerning the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, 56% of them do not have a job; however, 44% of the population from this major does have a job.

As noted, the majority of students of both majors are not working during the semester I – 2017, but the ones that are working, which are nineteen students in total for both majors, are working in different positions. Seven students are working in a Call Center. Six students are working in the area of teaching, either teaching in an academy or in a private school and the other remaining six students are working in family's business.



- **Question 2: Have you ever changed major?**

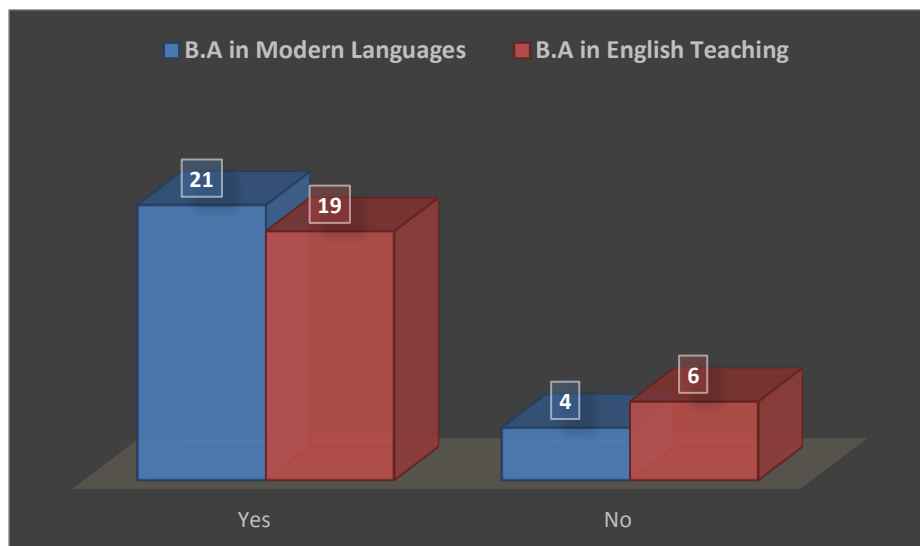
Have you ever changed major?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	14	11
B.A in English Teaching	9	16



In the case of students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 56% have changed major at least once, but the other 11 students meaning 44% of the population of the B. A. in Modern Languages have never changed major. 36% of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching have changed major at least once while 64% of this group has never changed major.

- **Question 3: Did you have high scores (above 7.0) in subjects like Ortografía and Lenguaje y Literatura in High School?**

Did you have high scores (above 7.0) in subjects like Ortografía and Lenguaje y Literatura in High School?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	21	4
B.A in English Teaching	19	6



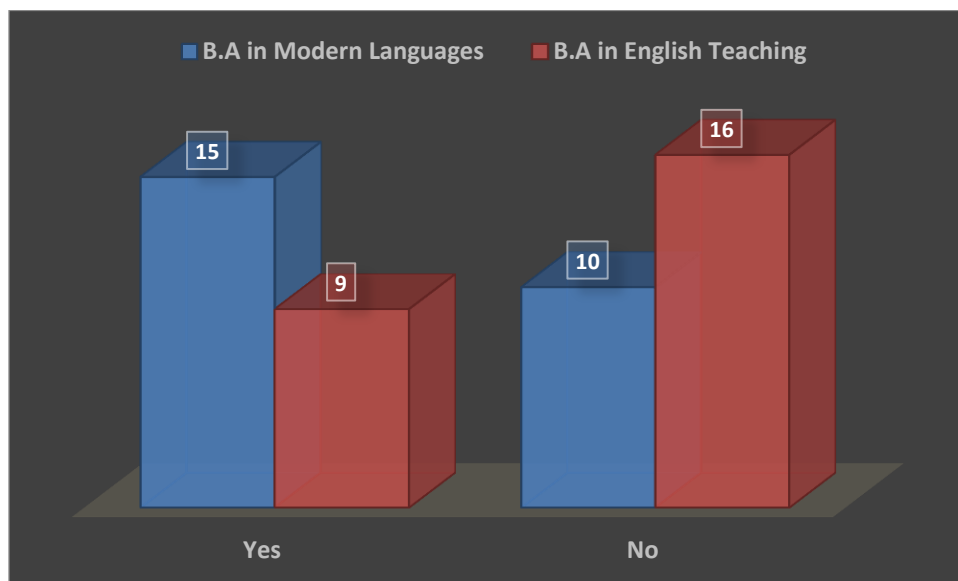
As expressed by the 25 students of the B. A. in Modern Languages, it is seen that the majority had a score above 7.0 in the subjects of Ortografía and Lenguaje y Literatura, meaning a percentage of 84% in comparison to 4 students who represent 16% who did not reach a score above 7.0.

About 76% of the respondents of the B. A. in English Teaching said they had a high score in this subject, it is seen in the same way that the majority of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages had a score above 7.0 in the subjects of Ortografía and Lenguaje y Literatura and only 6 students making 24% did not reach a score above 7.0.

If we join the target population of the two majors, it is noticed that 80% of students had very good scores in subjects related to the correct use of our own language since in subjects such as Lenguaje y Literatura students are supposed to learn the types of sentences, the correct use of prepositions and adjectives, the conventional use of punctuation marks: parentheses, commas, quotation marks, colon, semicolon, question and exclamation marks, and others. Taking this into account, it is assumed that most students have a good development in their mother tongue, but in the analysis of the compositions in English that the students performed demonstrates if there is a relationship between good performances in writing in the mother tongue and a good written performance in a foreign language.

- **Question 4: Did you study English before coming to the University?**

Did you study English before coming to the University?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	15	10
B.A in English Teaching	9	16

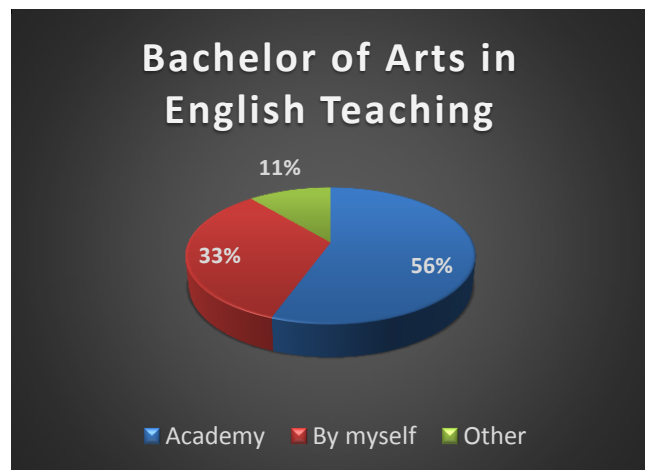
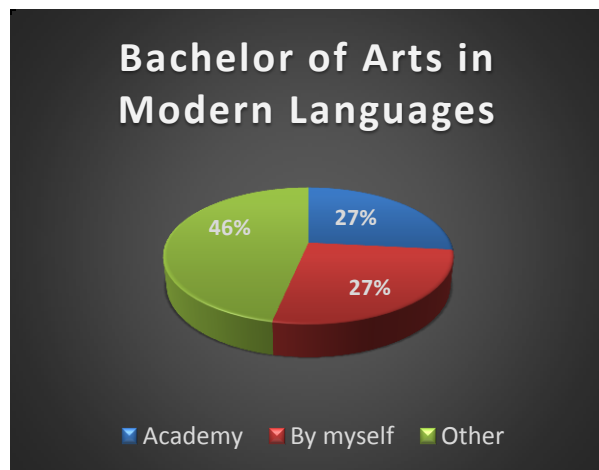


It is observed that in the major of Modern Languages 60% of the sample population had studied English before studying this foreign language at the University, contrary to 40% of them who had not studied English before coming to University.

Concerning the B. A. in English Teaching, it is observed that 9 students, meaning 36 % of this sample population had studied English before arriving to the University; but 16 students, meaning 64% of them had not previously studied English anywhere.

But there is one more question for those people who answered that they had studied English before and that question is: How? The next table and graphs show the number of people of both majors that answered “yes” and how they studied English before coming to the university.

How?				
Bachelor	Academy	By myself	Other	Total
B.A in Modern Languages	4	4	7	15
B.A in English Teaching	5	3	1	9



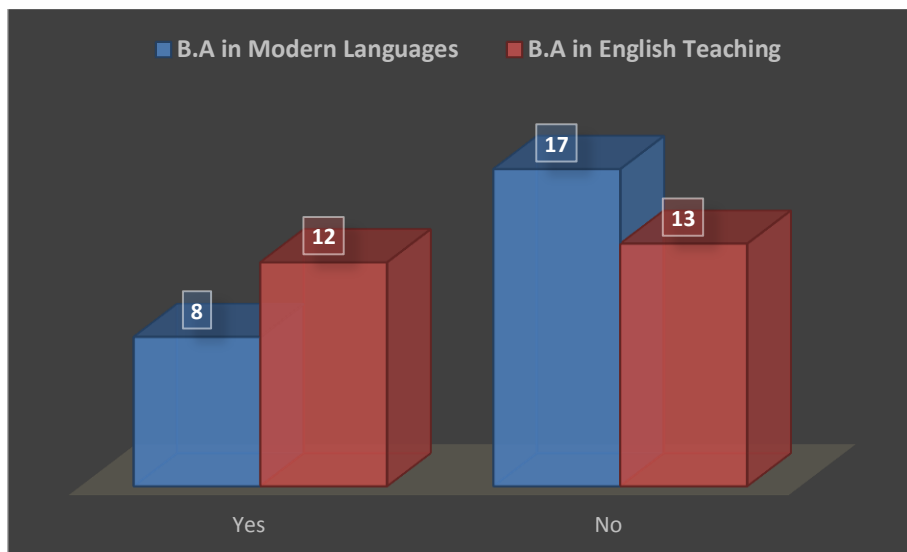
In the case of the B. A. in English Teaching most people had studied English in an academy of languages, 33% studied English by themselves and probably they studied through the internet or by other similar means. 11% used some other methods to study English.

In the case of the B. A. in Modern Languages most people, meaning 46% had studied English using some different methods but 27% studied English by themselves and with the same percentage the other 27% studied English in one of so many academies that exist nowadays in our country.

Analyzing answers from both majors, it is right to conclude that many students already had prior knowledge of the English language before coursing the bachelor at the University of El Salvador.

- **Question 5: Do you devote time to writing in English?**

Do you devote time to writing in English?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	8	17
B.A in English Teaching	12	13

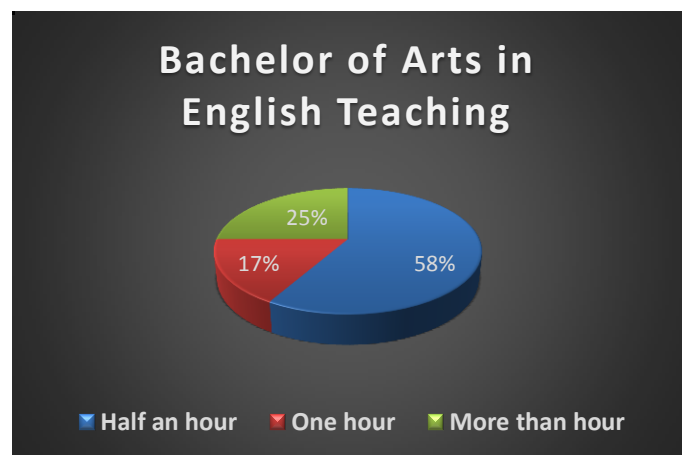
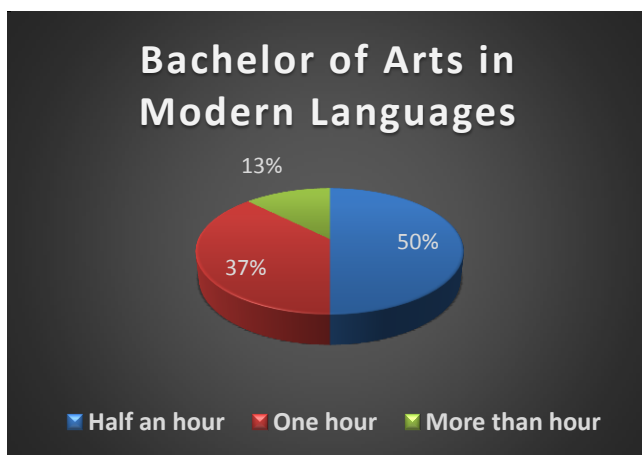


On one hand, in the B. A. in Modern Languages, the 25 respondents' answers were divided the following way: 8 students devote time to writing in English, meaning 32%; in contrast, 17 students do not take time to write in English, meaning 68% of the target population from Modern Languages.

On the other hand, in the B. A. in English Teaching, the 25 respondents' answers were divided into the following: 12 students devote time to write in English, meaning 48%, in contrast to 13 students who do not spend time to write in English, meaning 52%.

Concerning the 20 students of both majors who answered that they do take time to write in English, how much time do they spend on this per day? Precisely, the next table and graphics show the time they dedicate to it every day.

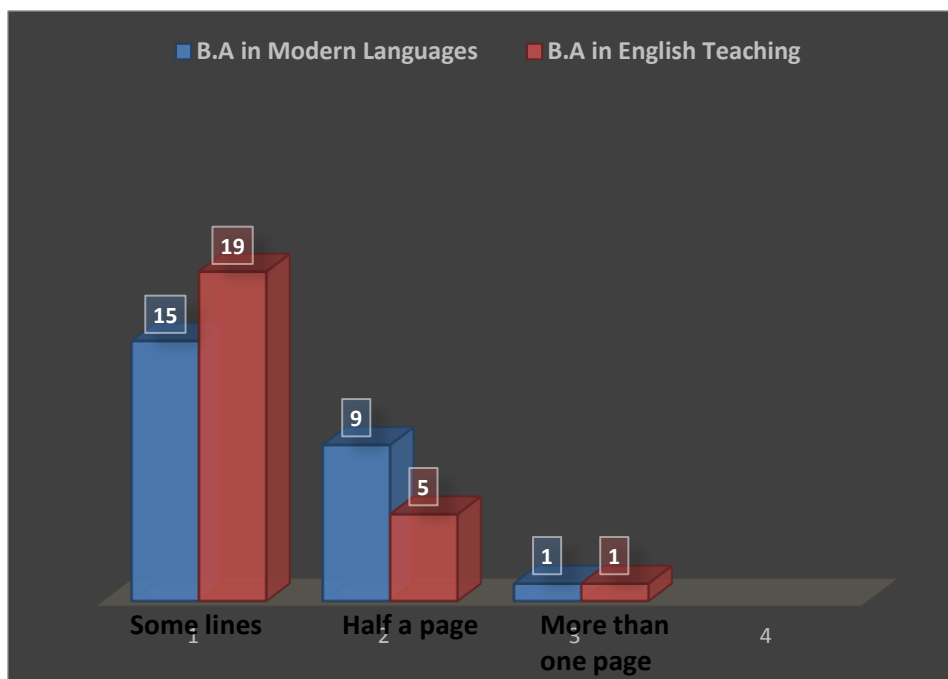
How much time do you dedicate to write in English per day?				
Bachelor	Half an hour	One hour	More than hour	Total
B.A in Modern Languages	4	3	1	8
B.A in English Teaching	7	2	3	12



As it is evident, not all the target population take time to write in English, but few people who have this habit spend half an hour a day on it. Writing in English is not a habit that many students develop as it is clear in the results of this question even though they are aware that practice is important.

- **Question 6: How many lines in English do you write per day?**

How many lines in English do you write per day?			
Bachelor	Some lines	Half a page	More than one page
B.A in Modern Languages	15	9	1
B.A in English Teaching	19	5	1



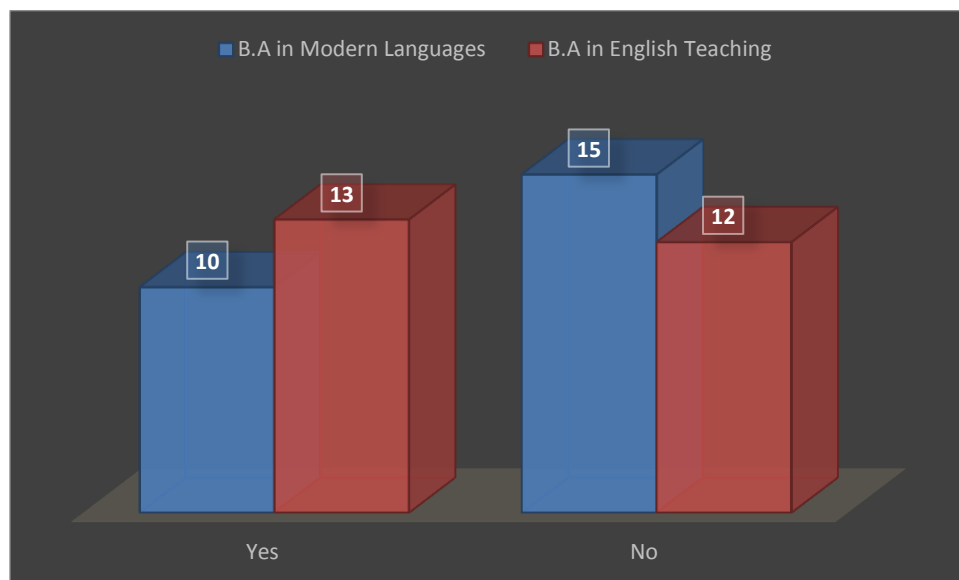
The responses were from 50 students in both majors, but in the case of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages the results are the following: 60% of them write some lines in English per day, the other 36% write half a page every day while the remaining 4% write more than one page per day.

In the case of students of the B. A. in English Teaching the results are the following: 76% of them write some lines in English per day, the other 20% write half a page every day while the remaining 4% write more than one page per day.

The percentages of the 50 students in total show that students of a foreign language are not familiar to practice in the area of writing since the majority of them do not even write one page in English per day.

- **Question 7: Are you a person that reads books in English constantly?**

Are you a person that reads books in English constantly?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	10	15
B.A in English Teaching	13	12

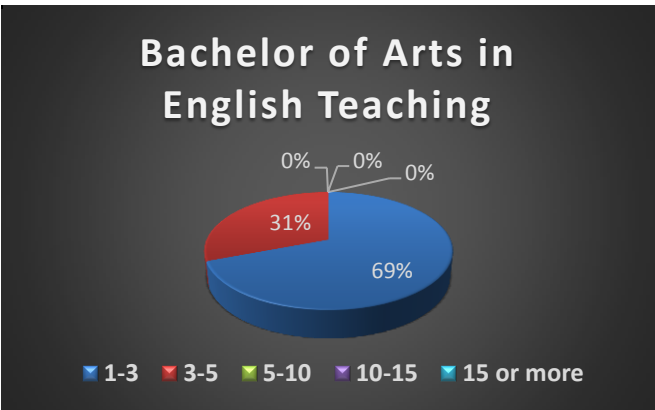
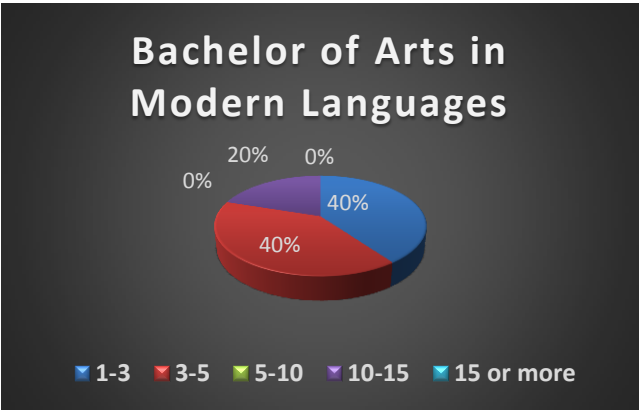




The results obtained from the questionnaire show that 40% of students in the major of Modern Languages read books constantly, but 60% of students in the same major do not read books very often. Concerning to the B. A. in English Teaching, 52% of students read books every time they have the opportunity, but 48% of them do not read constantly.

As highlighted by the bar chart the students of the B. A. in English Teaching read more than students of the B. A. in Modern Languages. However, the next table and graphs illustrate how many books per year read the ones that answered “yes” in the questionnaire.

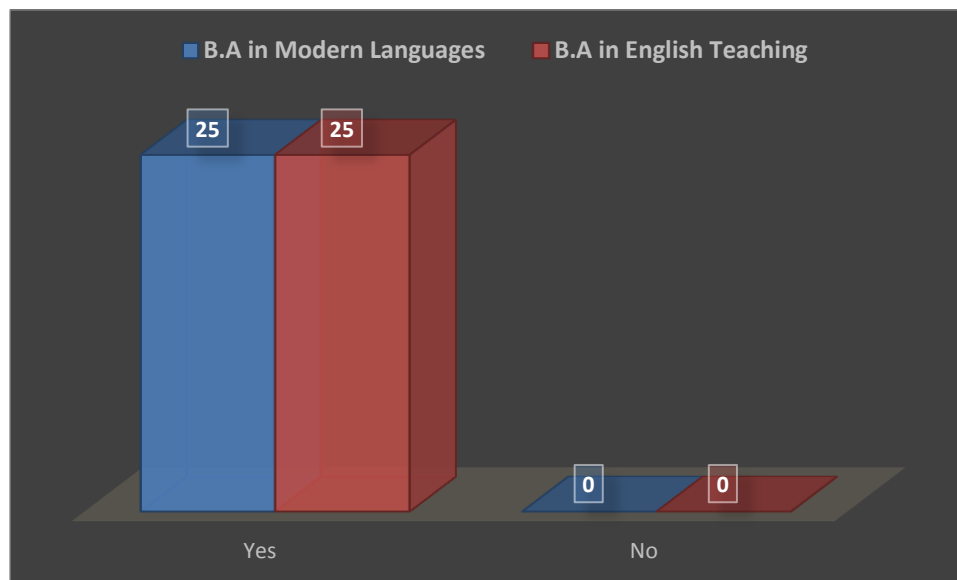
How many per year?						
Bachelor	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-15	15 or more	Total
B.A in Modern Languages	4	4	0	2	0	10
B.A in English Teaching	9	4	0	0	0	13



The result shows that nobody reads more than 15 books per year, but there are some students who read between 1 to 5 books every year (42% of the overall population), even in the major of Modern Languages there are 2 students of 25 respondents that read between 10 and 15 books per year.

- **Question 8: Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write?**

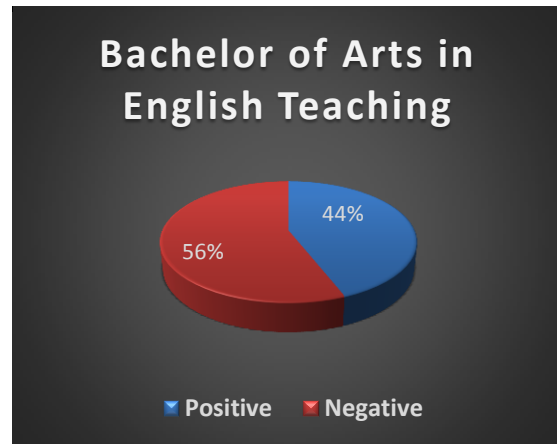
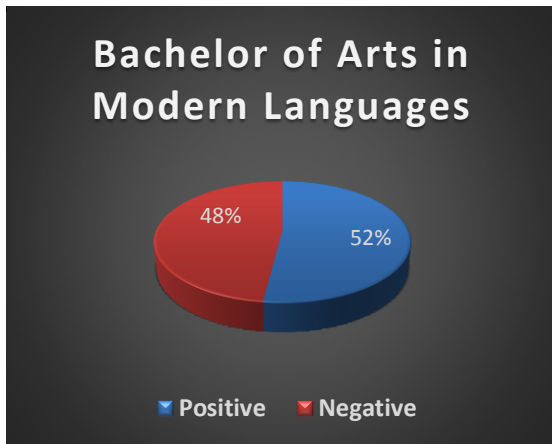
Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	25	0
B.A in English Teaching	25	0



The population of 50 students answered as follows: 100% of the students in the B. A. in Modern Languages considered that Spanish influences somehow while writing in a foreign language. In the same way, 100% of the students in the B. A. in English Teaching considered that Spanish influences in the way they write in English.

But then another question arises, and that is, how does the mother tongue influence the way we write in a foreign language? The table and the graphs reveal the students' point of view concerning if Spanish influences in a positive or negative way.

Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write?		
Bachelor	Positive	Negative
B.A in Modern Languages	13	12
B.A in English Teaching	11	14

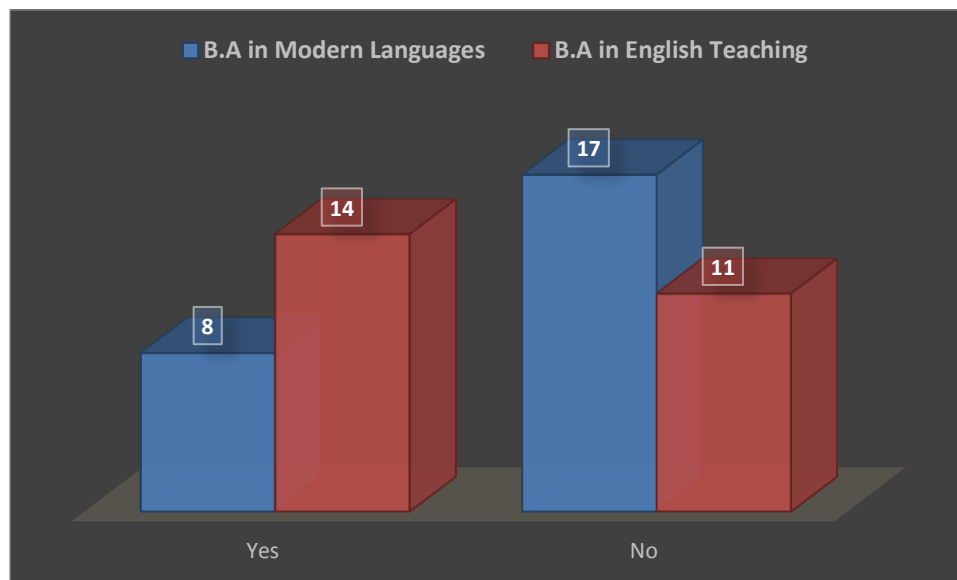


It is observed that 13 out of 25 students of the B. A. in Modern Languages think that the influence is positive, but the others, 12 students, believe that the influence is negative. In the case of the B. A. in English Teaching, 14 students of the target population, meaning 56%, think that the influence is negative and the rest, 11 students which constitute 44% of the population think that the influence is positive.

It is possible to say that the majority of the 24 students in both majors who said that the influence is positive believe that there are similarities between Spanish and English in aspects such as punctuation, and they may consider this to be an advantage. However, some students tend to use Spanish word order and false cognates in their English writing, and that is why 26 students of the target population are aware that the influence of the mother tongue is negative and is something that will be revised in the analysis of the qualitative content analysis.

- **Question 9: Do you think Spanish composition process and English composition process are similar?**

Do you think Spanish composition process and English composition process are similar?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	8	17
B.A in English Teaching	14	11



Regarding the B. A. in Modern Languages, 32% of students expressed that Spanish Composition process and English composition process are similar while 68% agreed that Composition process for both languages is not related.

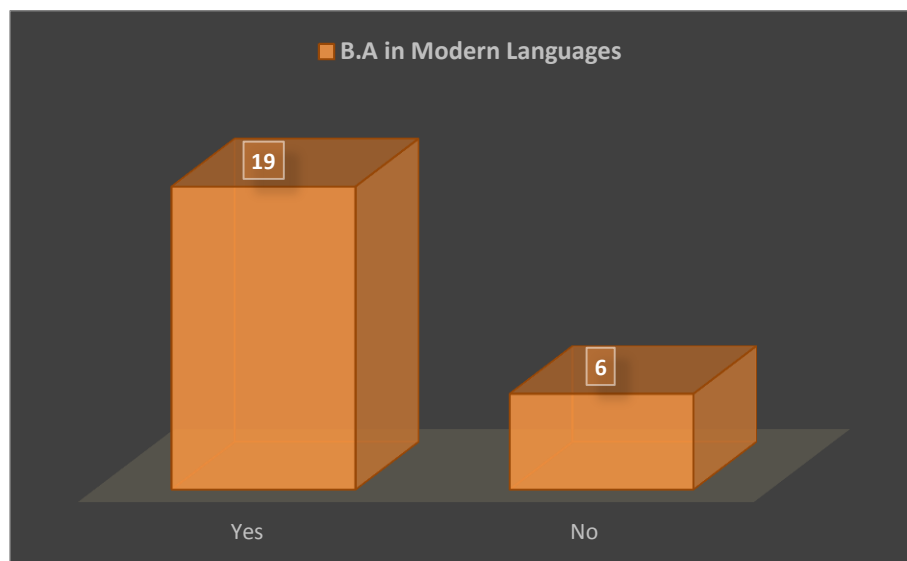
Concerning the B. A. in English Teaching, 56% of students expressed that Spanish Composition process and English composition process are similar, while 44% agreed that Composition process for both languages is not similar at all.

The results of each major vary because in the case of students in Modern Languages, most of them consider that the process of composition in English and

Spanish are different. However, the majority of students in the major in English Teaching consider that the process of composition in English and Spanish are similar.

- **Question 10: (Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages): Has the subject “Ortographie et Stylistique du Français” (French Orthography and Stylistics) helped you improve your writing skills?**

Has the subject “Ortographie et Stylistique du Français” (French Orthography and Stylistics) helped you improve your writing skills?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	19	6

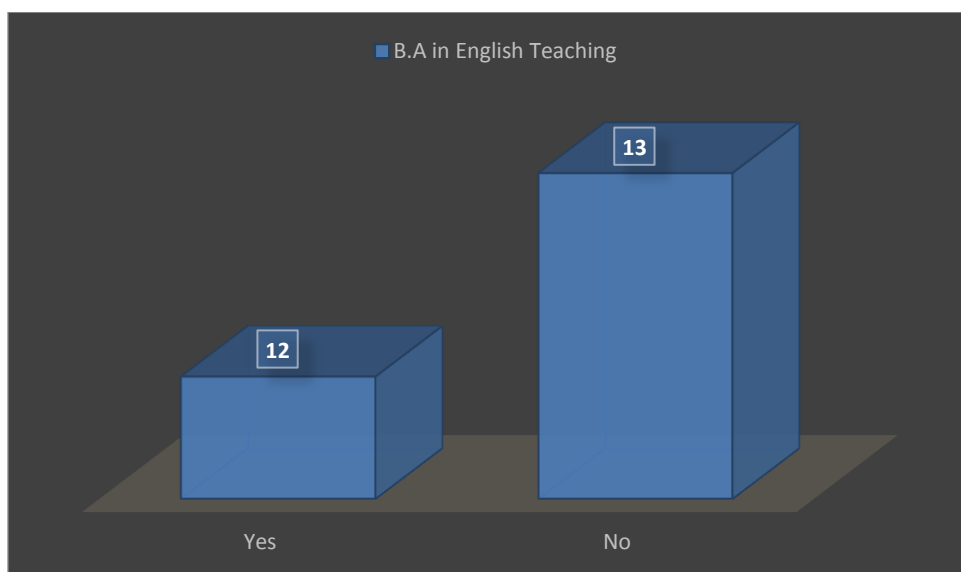


76% of students consider that the subject “Ortographie et Stylistique du Français” (French Orthography and Stylistics) helped them improve their writing skills, while 24% of them are not in agreement since they think that this subject in French did not help them to improve their writing in English.

It is evident that more than half of respondents believe that the subject French Orthography and Stylistics, which they took a semester before taking Composition I, somehow helped them to improve their English compositions. For these students, it was useful to review orthography and do some kind of reinforcement in French language and then compare and apply it in English composition.

- **Question 11: (Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching): Has the subject “Redacción en Español” helped you improve your writing skills in English?**

Has the subject “Redacción en Español” helped you improve your writing skills in English?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in English Teaching	12	13

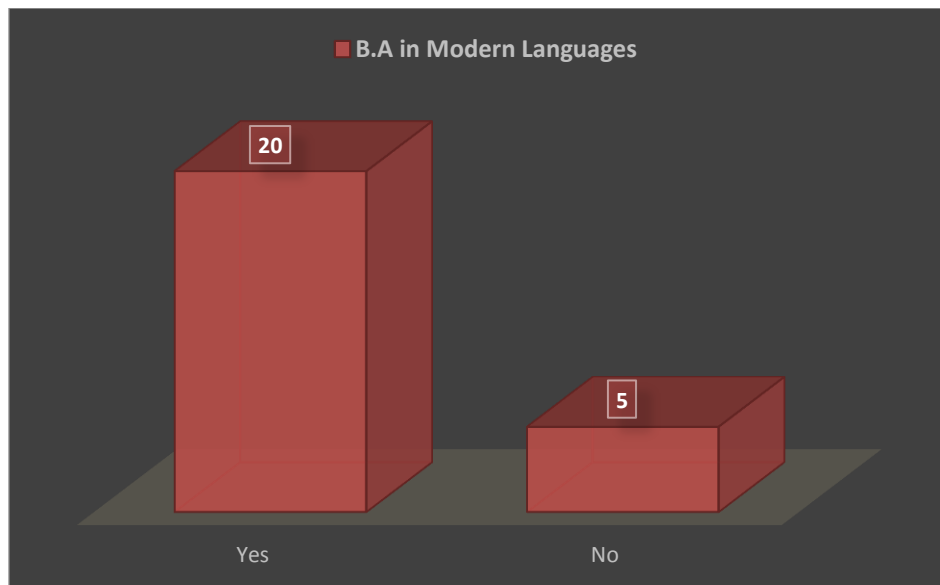


48% of students consider that the subject “Redacción en Español” helped them improve their writing skills, while 52% of them are not in agreement since they think that this subject did not help them to improve their writing in English.

It is evident that the answers are very similar since almost half of respondents believe that the subject “Redacción en Español”, which they took in the second semester of first year of the major before taking Composition I, helped them to improve in their English compositions. For these students, it was useful to review the contents of this subject in order to do reinforcement for English composition.

- **Question 12: (Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages): Do you think French has an influence in the way you write?**

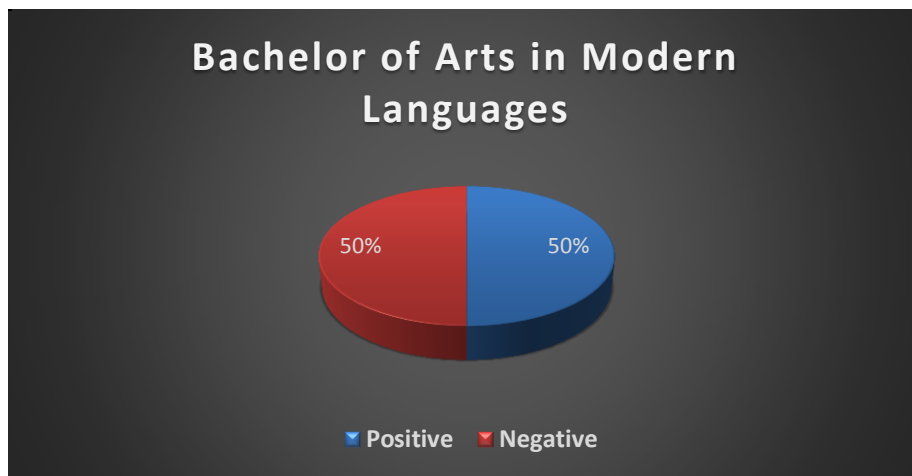
Do you think French has an influence in the way you write?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	20	5



80% of students consider that French has an influence in the way they write in English while 20% of them are not in agreement since they think that French does not have an influence in the way they write in English. However, concerning the

80% who answered that French has an influence the question could be: is this influence negative or positive? The table and the graph reveal the students' point of view concerning to this question.

Is the influence positive or negative?		
Bachelor	Positive	Negative
B.A in Modern Languages	10	10



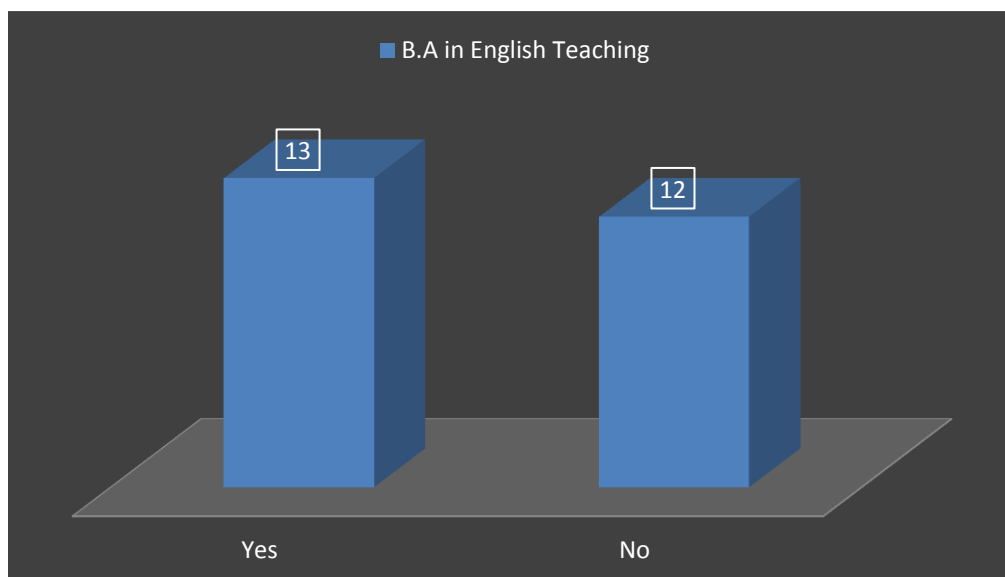
As it is clear, exactly half of the B. A. in Modern Language's students replied that the influence is negative, and the remaining 50% replied that the influence is positive.

Undoubtedly, it is very difficult for undergraduate students not to have an influence of the French language since from the very beginning of the major until the end of the major, students must take 15 subjects in French such as French Grammar, French Phonetics, etc. As a consequence, students of this major have the influence not only of their native language, but also the influence of a second foreign language: French.



- **Question 13: (Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching): Has the subject “Gramática Española” helped you improve your writing skills in English?**

Has the subject “Gramática Española” helped you improve your writing skills in English?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in English Teaching	13	12

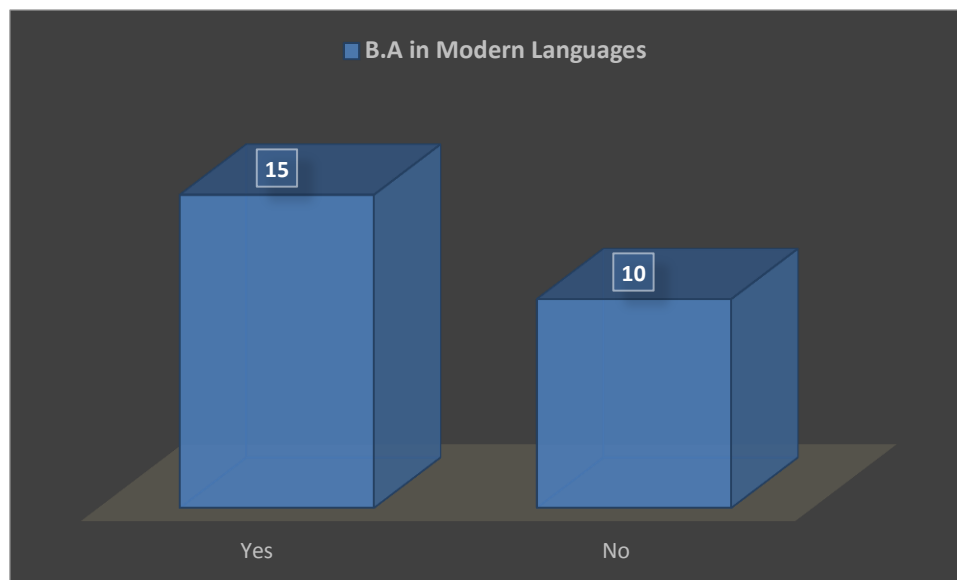


52% of students of the B. A. in English Teaching considered that the subject “Gramática Española” has helped them improve their writing skills in English, while 48% of them considered that this subject did not help them improve their writing in English.

A little more than half of the students of this major consider that analyzing the mother tongue in aspects such as grammar has benefits to improve the writing in another foreign language in this case: English, but others find it not beneficial to compare two types of language in regards to grammar since these are two languages totally different.

- **Question 14: (Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages): Should the subject “Redacción en Español” and “Gramática Española” be added to the curriculum?**

Should the subject “Redacción en Español” and “Gramática Española” be added to the curriculum?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	15	10

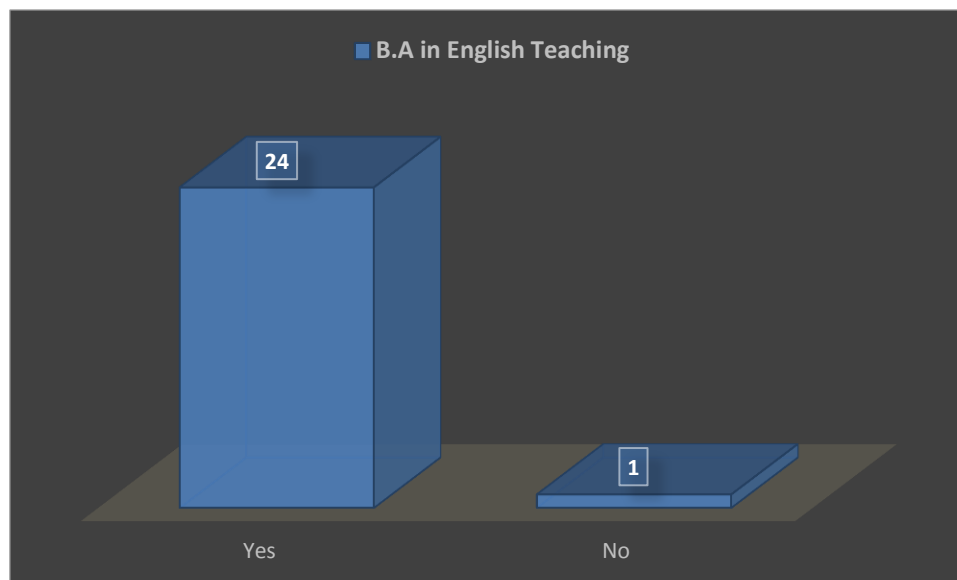


60% of students are in agreement that the subjects “Redacción en Español” and “Gramática Española” should be added to the curriculum while the remaining 40% are in disagreement with adding these two subjects.

The students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages think that these subjects can improve their writing skills in English, but it is worth mentioning that not all the students of the B. A. in English Teaching answered that these two subjects have helped them to improve in their writing skills.

- **Question 15: (Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching): Has the subject “Composition I” helped you improve your writing skills in English?**

Has the subject “Composition I” helped you to improve your writing skills in English?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in English Teaching	24	1

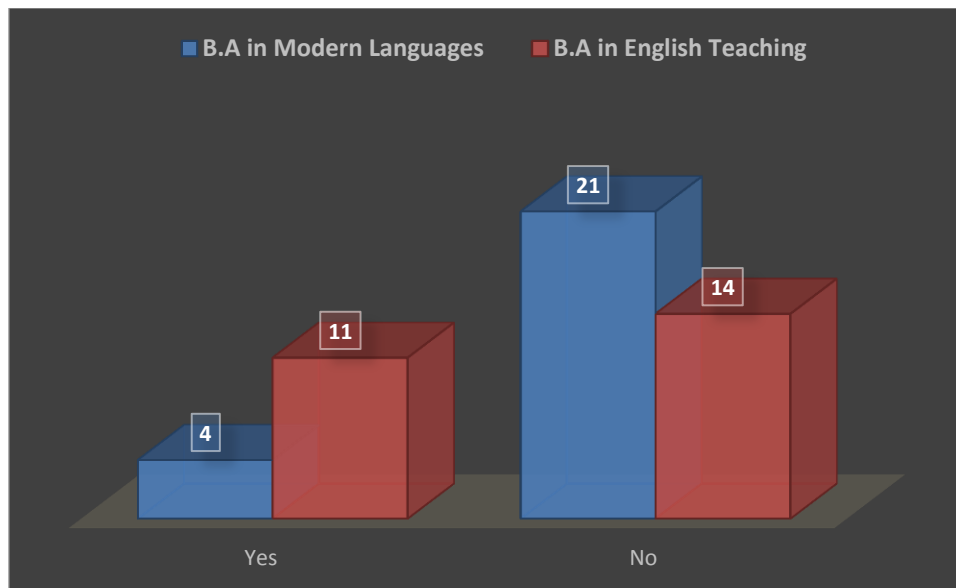


96% of students agree that the subject of Composition I has helped them to improve their writing in English. However, only 4% of them consider that the previous subject related to composition was not reinforcement or an aid to improve their writing in English.

Most students agree that the subject of Composition I has fulfilled its objective of helping them in the area of writing. If the students benefited from Composition I, they will undoubtedly benefit from the subject of Composition II. The fact of including the subject of Composition II for the students of the B. A. in Modern Languages should be taken into consideration.

- **Question 16: Do you consider there are enough subjects to help you write well in English?**

Do you consider there are enough subjects to help you write well in English?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	4	21
B.A in English Teaching	11	14

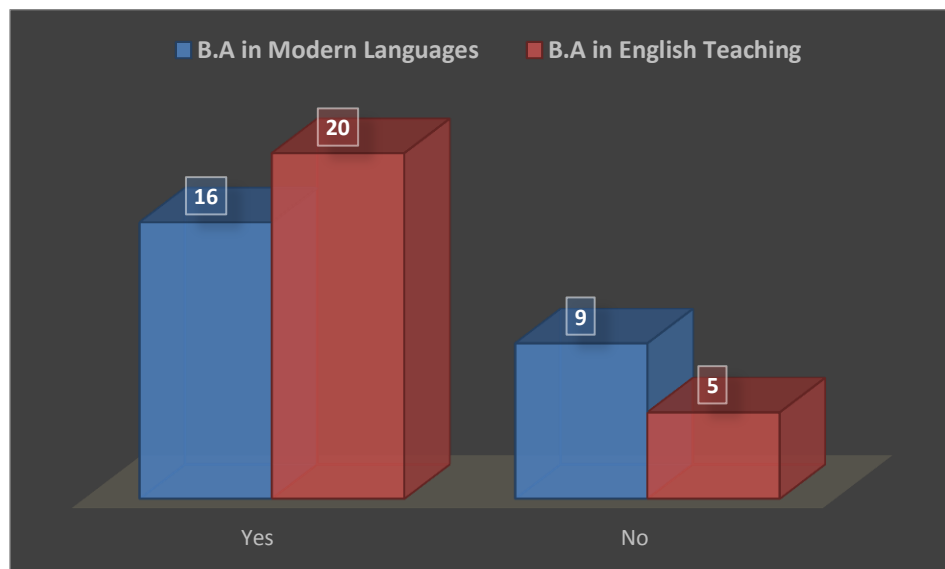


16% of the target population of the B. A. in Modern Languages is satisfied with the subjects that already exist in the curriculum; while 84% of students answered that there are not enough subjects to help them improve their writing in English.

Most students feel that there should be more subjects to help them improve in the area of writing; however, it is necessary to include them in the curriculum. This would be very useful for all students of both majors.

- **Question 17: Do you consider writing a difficult skill to develop?**

Do you consider writing a difficult skill to develop?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	16	9
B.A in English Teaching	20	5

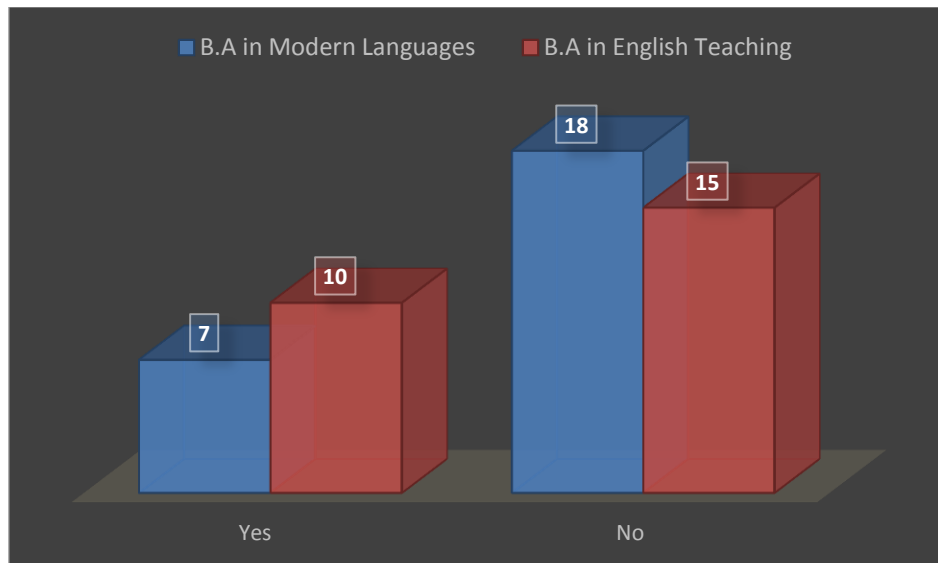


64% of the B. A. in Modern languages' students said that writing is a difficult skill to develop while 36% of these students, meaning 9 people, feel that writing is not a difficult skill. In the case of the students of the B. A. in English Teaching, 80% of students, meaning 20 people stated that writing is a difficult skill to develop; while 20%, meaning only 5 students, answered that it is not.

Most students of the two majors, to be specific 36 out of 50 students of the total population under study expressed that for them, the writing process is a very difficult skill to develop and the remaining 14 of the 50 students considered it is not too difficult to develop this skill which might be a good sign since writing is an important element throughout all the subjects of both majors.

- **Question 18: Do you feel confident in your grammar?**

Do you feel confident in your grammar?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	7	18
B.A in English Teaching	10	15



Regarding the B. A. in Modern Languages, 28% of students, which means 7 people, feel confident in how they use grammar while 72% meaning 18 people of the target population of this major do not feel confident concerning grammar mastery.

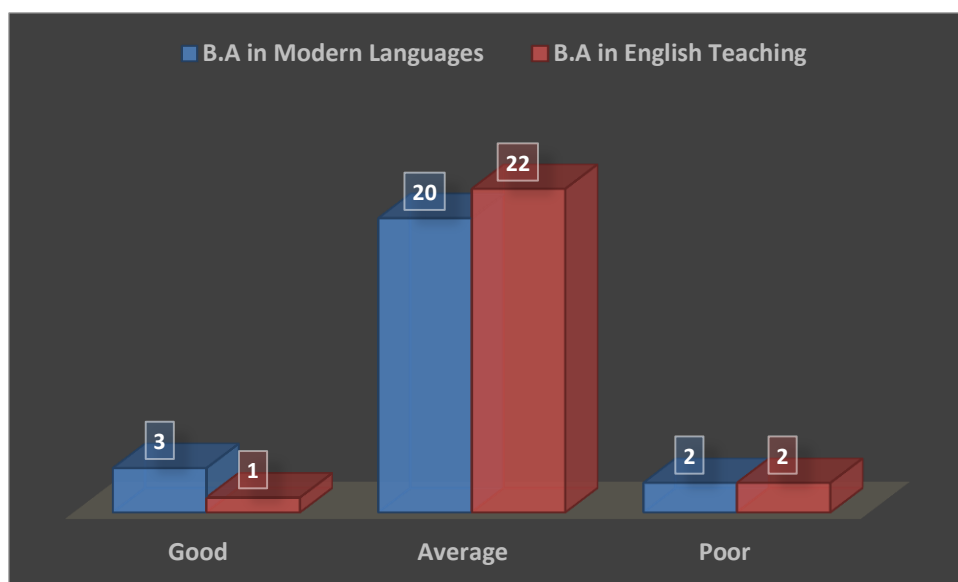
In the B. A. in English Teaching, 40% of students, which means 10 people, feel confident in grammar while 60% of them which means 15 students of the target population of this major do not feel confident concerning their grammar.

As noted in the bar chart above, the majority of students of both majors do not feel confident in their grammar, and there are very few students who feel very confident concerning grammar mastery. There are only 17 out of 50 students who feel satisfied and probably proud of their grammar level.

It is interesting that students of the B. A. in Modern Languages and B. A. in English Teaching do not feel confident in grammar; however, they have already taken the course of English Grammar I and English Grammar II before taking the Composition subjects in study.

- **Question 19: How would you characterize your grammar?**

How would you characterize your grammar?			
Bachelor	Good	Average	Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	3	20	2
B.A in English Teaching	1	22	2



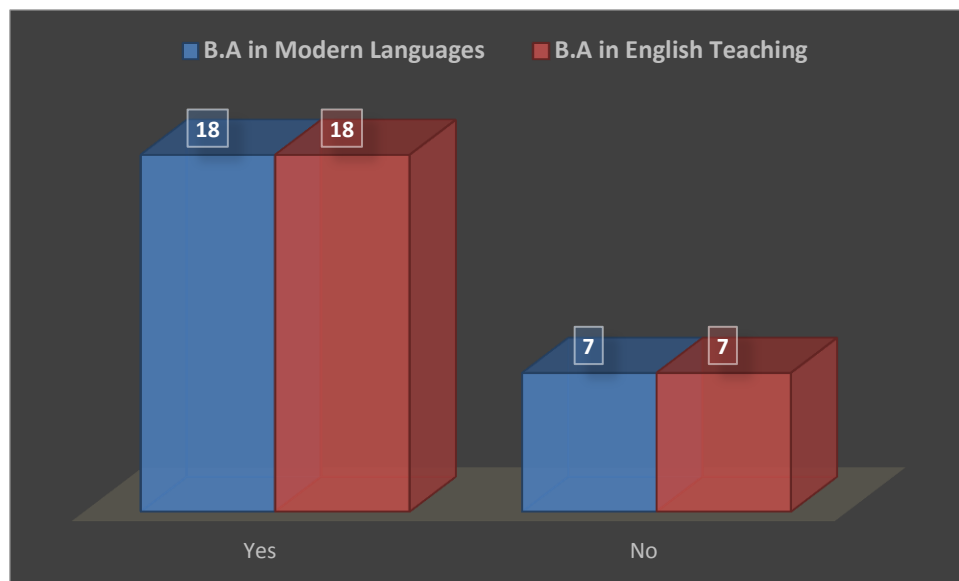
In regards to the B. A. in Modern Languages, 12% of students, which means 3 people, characterize their grammar in English as very good; while 80%, which means 20 of the target population of this major characterize their English grammar with an average degree and the remaining 8% which means only 2 people, define their English grammar as poor.

Regarding the B. A. in English Teaching, 4% of students, which means only 1 person, characterize his or her English grammar as very good; while 88%, which means 22 of the target population of this major characterize their English grammar with an average degree and the remaining 8% which means 2 people, characterize their English grammar as poor.

It is observed as it was noticed in the previous question that there are very few students who feel very confident concerning their grammar. Even when they had already taken subjects related to English grammar, the majority of students of both majors characterize their English grammar in an average degree. Only 4 students of both majors replied that they characterize their English grammar as very good.

- **Question 20: Do you know what cohesion is?**

Do you know what cohesion is?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	18	7
B.A in English Teaching	18	7



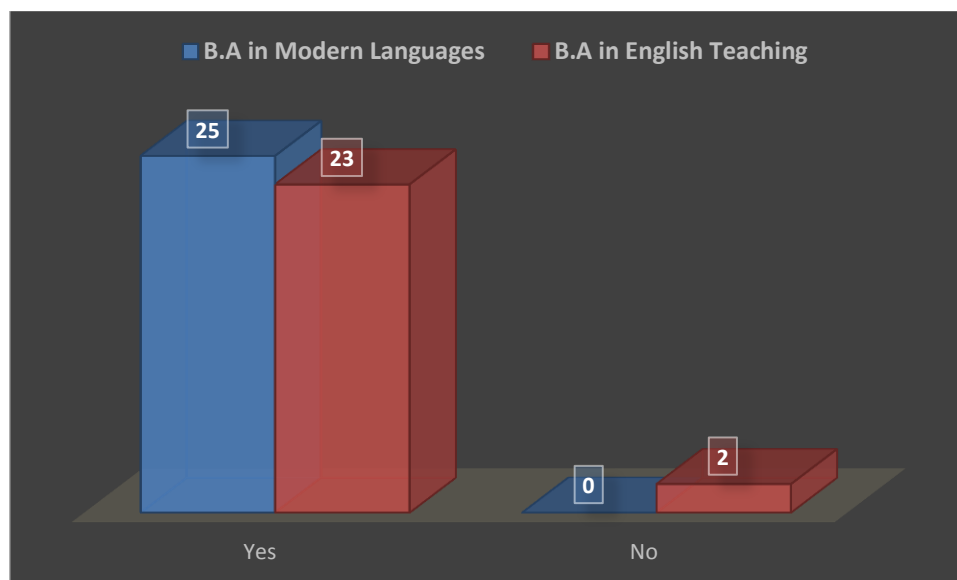


This is a peculiar case since the students of the two majors show exactly the same frequencies and the same percentages. 72% of students of both majors, meaning 18 students in each group of both majors, know what cohesion is. 28% of them, meaning 7 students in each of both majors, do not know what it is.

The majority of students in both majors (36 out of 50 people) are aware of what cohesion is about and they have in mind that cohesion is a quality that gives unity and purpose to a written or spoken text and that is why these students consider that it is important to know and apply it in their compositions.

- **Question 21: Do you know what coherence is?**

Do you know what coherence is?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	25	0
B.A in English Teaching	23	2

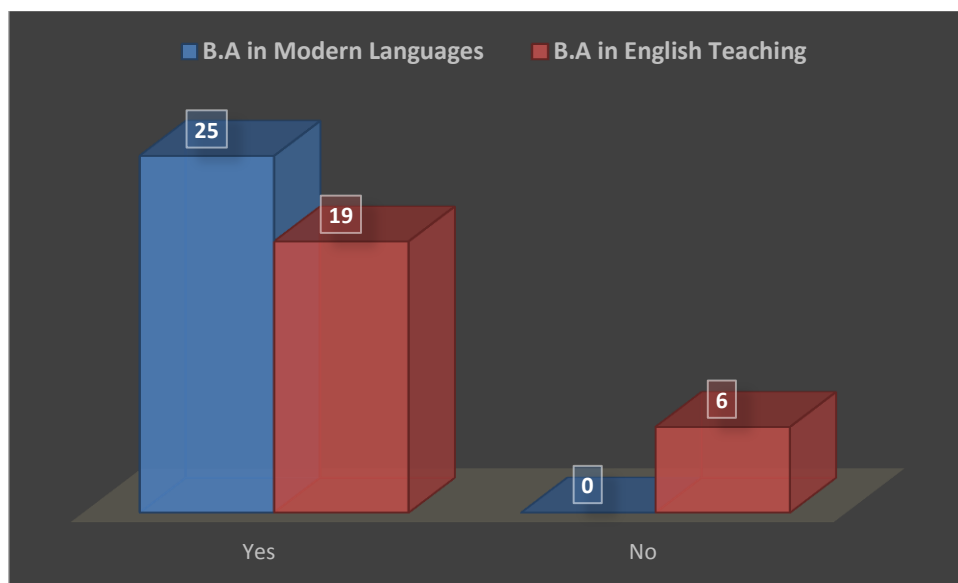


100% of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages, meaning all the 25 students, know what coherence is. In the case of the students of the B. A. in English Teaching, 92% of them, meaning 23 respondents, know what coherence is and only the 8% of them do not know what it is.

It is remarkable that all the students in the major of Mother Languages are knowledgeable about coherence. In consequence, the majority of students in both majors (48 out of 50 people) are aware of this concept. The results of the analysis of students' compositions will show if they really know what coherence implies.

- **Question 22: Do you know how to write an academic essay?**

Do you know how to write an academic essay?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	25	0
B.A in English Teaching	19	6

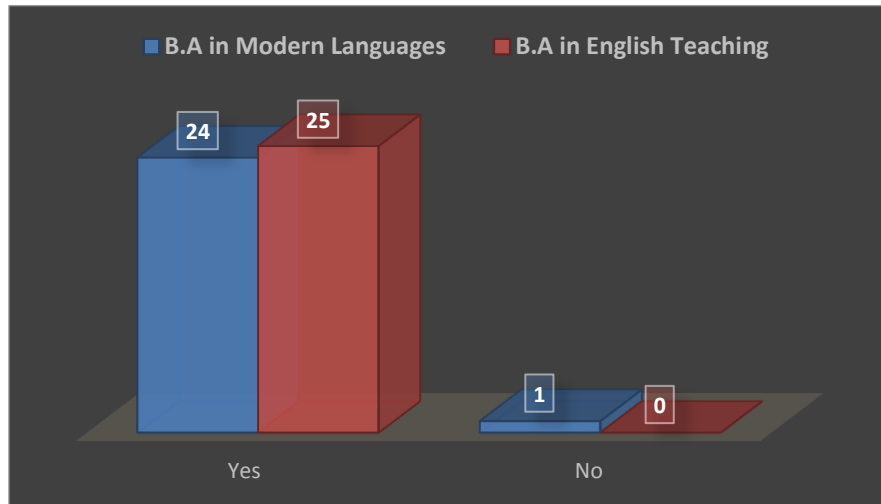


100% of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages, meaning 25 students, know how to write academic essays. In the case of the students of the B. A. in English Teaching, 76% of them meaning 19 respondents know how to write an academic essay and 24% of them do not know how to do it.

In general, it is appreciated that all the students of the major in Modern Languages have the knowledge on how to create an essay which discusses a particular issue, situation or problem; but in the case of the B. A in English Teaching, 19 out of 25 students know how to create a formal paper, but 6 out the 25 students in this major who are taking the subject of Composition II do not know how to create it. It is surprising to see this because one would believe that the students are more confident because of the previous Composition subject they have already taken.

- **Question 23: Do you consider form (grammar, syntax) is important when evaluating writing?**

Do you consider form (grammar, syntax) is important when evaluating writing?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	24	1
B.A in English Teaching	25	0

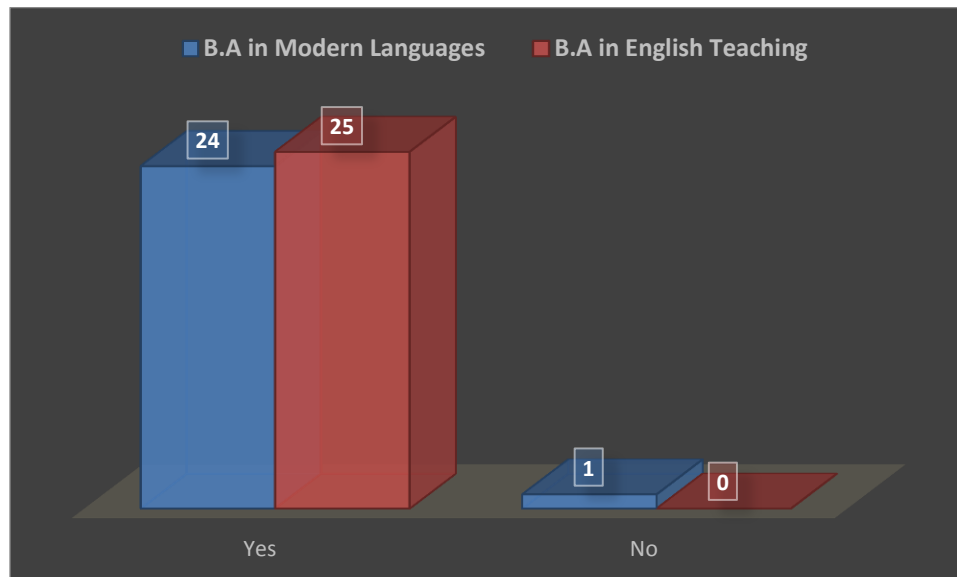


96% of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages, meaning 24 students, consider that form is very important when evaluating writing. Apart from that, 4%, meaning just one student, answered that it is not so important. In the case of the students of the B. A. in English Teaching, 100% of them, meaning all the 25 respondents in this major, consider that form is important when evaluating writing.

As shown in the graph and table above, only one student of the B. A. in Modern Languages do not think that form should be important when evaluating a composition, but the rest of students in both majors agree in the fact that it is important to consider, either in terms of grammar or vocabulary, aspects such as form. With regards to grammar, students must understand the sentence structure of a specific grammar rule. With regards to vocabulary, students must understand the pronunciation of a word. These 24 students of the B. A. in Modern Languages as well as all the 25 students of the B. A. in English Teaching are conscious that it is important form and all that this implies to create good compositions.

- **Question 24: Do you consider content (coherence, and cohesion) is important when evaluating writing?**

Do you consider content (coherence, and cohesion) is important when evaluating writing?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	24	1
B.A in English Teaching	25	0

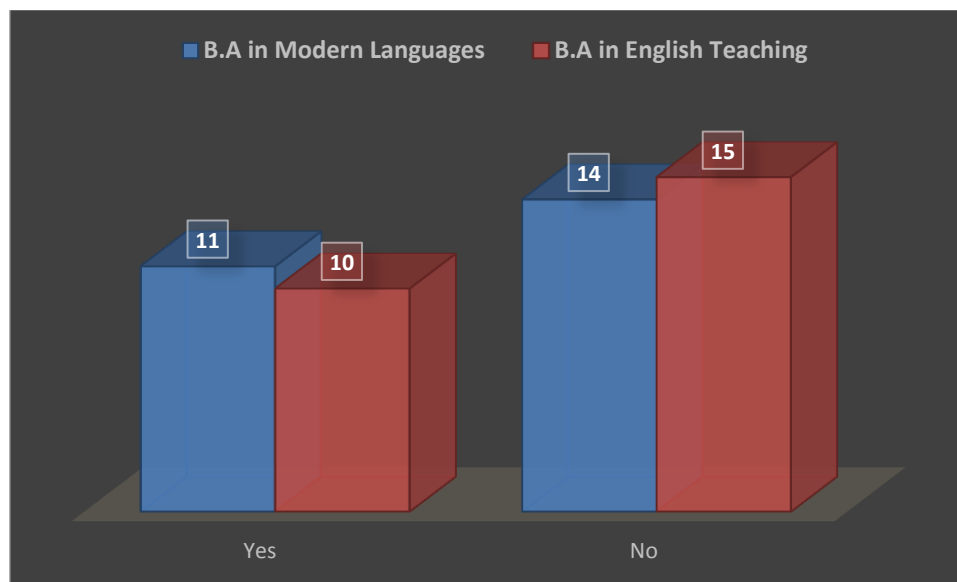


As the previous case, 96% of students of the B. A. in Modern Languages, meaning 24 students, consider that content is very important when evaluating writing. The other part, 4%, meaning just one student, answered that it is not so important to evaluate content in compositions. In the case of the students of the B. A. in English Teaching, 100% of them, meaning all the 25 respondents in this major, consider that form is important when evaluating writing.

These 24 students of the B. A. in Modern Languages as well as all the 25 students of the B. A. in English Teaching are conscious that it is important content when evaluating compositions.

- **Question 25: Do you consider content is more important than form?**

Do you consider content is more important than form?		
Bachelor	Yes	No
B.A in Modern Languages	11	14
B.A in English Teaching	10	15



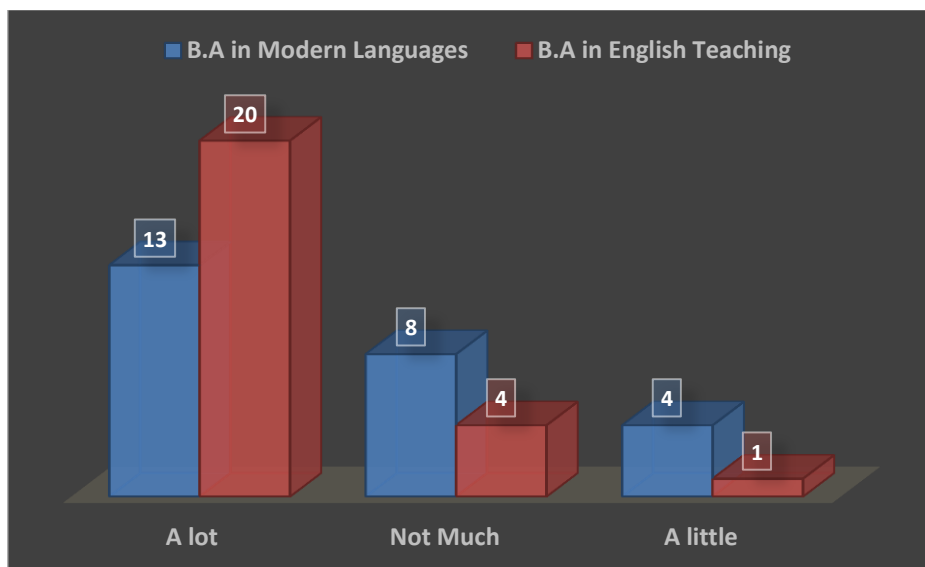
44% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, which means 11 students, state that content is more important than form, the remaining 56% of the target population in the major of Modern Languages, which means 14 students, state that content is not more important than form.

40% of target population in the major of English Teaching, which means 10 students, state that content is more important than form, the remaining 60% of the target population in the major of English Teaching, which means 15 students, state that content is not more relevant than form.

The table and bar chart show that not everyone considers that content has more relevance than form. Probably, most of them are aware of how important content and form are, but a great percentage of the target population do not consider that one of these aspects regarding writing has to be more important than the other. Instead, they agree that both are very important while writing.

- **Question 26: Are you familiar with the four stages of the writing process (Planning, drafting, revising and editing)?**

Are you familiar with the four stages of the writing process (Planning, drafting, revising and editing)?			
Bachelor	A lot	Not Much	A little
B.A in Modern Languages	13	8	4
B.A in English Teaching	20	4	1



52% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, which means 13 students, said they are familiar with the four stages of the writing process, 32% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, which means 8 students, state knowing the four stages but not so much, and the remaining 16% meaning 4 students, said to have little knowledge about it.

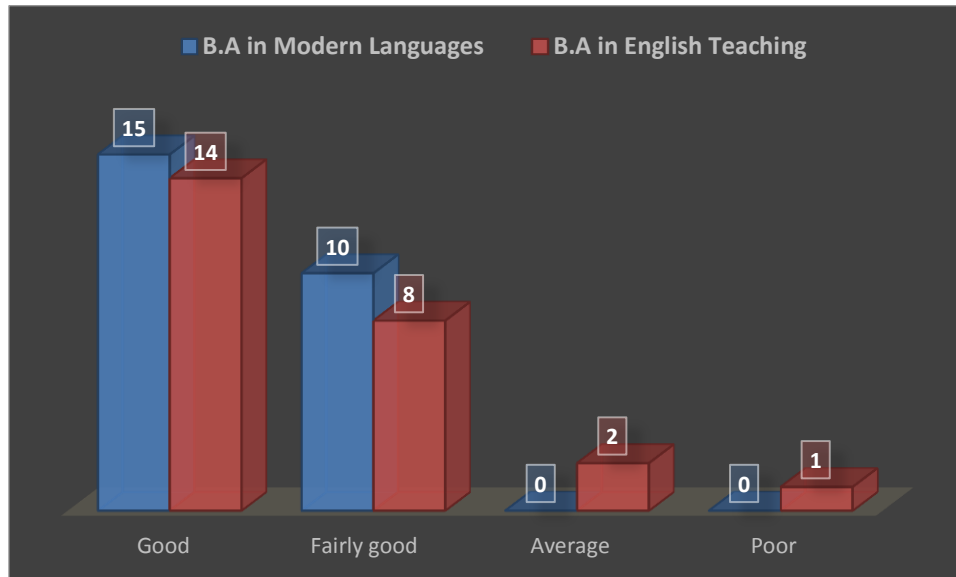
80% of target population in the major of English Teaching, which means 20 students, said they are familiar with the four stages of the writing process, 16% of target population in the major of English Teaching, which means 4 students, state knowing the four stages but not quite so much, and the remaining 4% meaning 1 student, revealed to have little knowledge about this process.

The table and bar chart show that the majority of students in both majors are familiar with the four stages of writing which consist first in getting ideas down on paper; then, transforming ideas into sentences in a semi-organized manner; after that, reshaping, expanding, deleting, and clarifying ideas; and finally, examining ideas, details, words, grammar and punctuation within each sentence. The remaining 5 students who answered have a little knowledge on these steps might be conscious that these 4 steps are very important, but they do not put into practice these stages while writing.

- **Question 27: Do you know how to create an outline?**

Do you know how to create an outline?				
Bachelor	Good	Fairly good	Average	Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	15	10	0	0
B.A in English Teaching	14	8	2	1





On one hand, 60% of the target population in the major of Modern Languages, meaning 15 students, said that they are good at creating outlines before writing compositions, 40% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, meaning 10 students, stated that they are fairly good at creating outlines.

On the other hand, 56% of target population in the major of English Teaching, meaning 14 students, said that they are good at creating outlines before writing compositions, 32% of target population in the major of English Teaching, meaning 8 students, stated that they are fairly good in creating outlines, 8%, meaning 2 students, chose the options average and 4% remaining, 1 student chose the option poor.

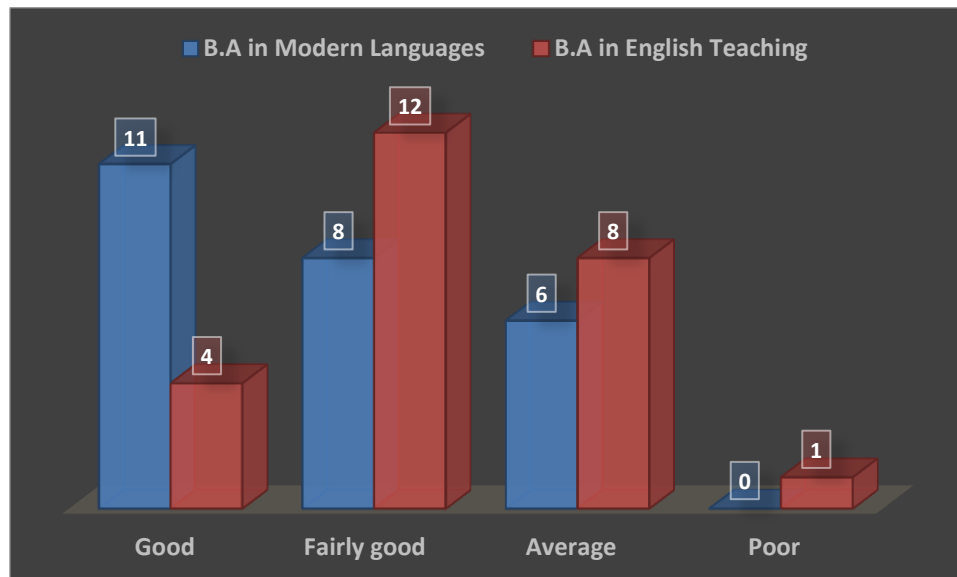
The subjects under study continue to show good results because, according to what they answered, they have good habits while writing since the majority of them replied to be good and fairly good creating outlines. This means that the target population puts into practice this manner of organizing thoughts and ideas.

In fact, none of the student of the B. A. in Modern Languages answered having problems with creating outlines. In the case of the major in English Teaching, there

are some students who admitted not to be so good with creating outlines but there were only few of them, to be more specific only 3 students. So, it can be concluded that the majority in both majors are doing outlines before writing.

- **Question 28: Do you have vocabulary to write a composition?**

Do you have vocabulary to write a composition?				
Bachelor	Good	Fairly good	Average	Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	11	8	6	0
B.A in English Teaching	4	12	8	1



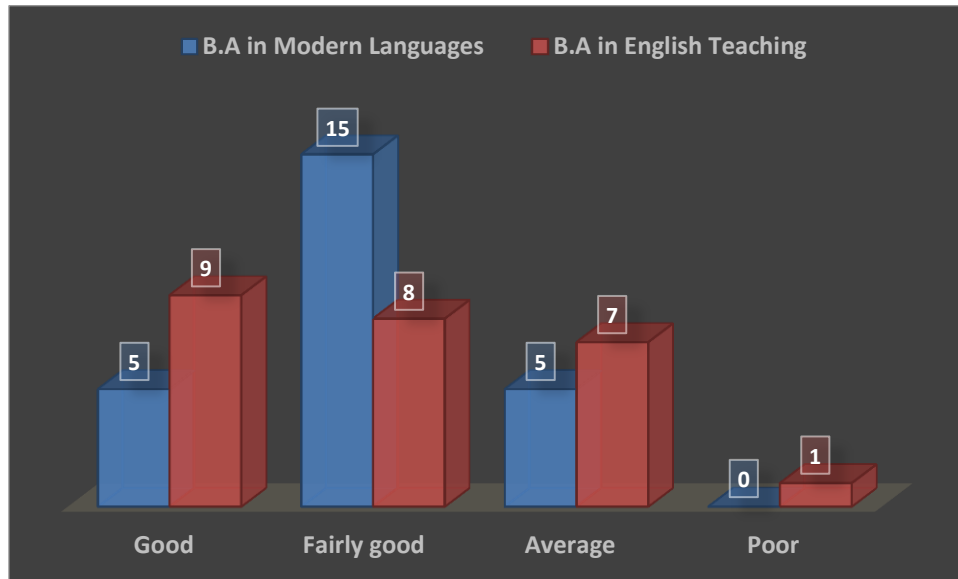
On one hand, 44% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, meaning 11 students, said that they have good vocabulary while they are creating compositions, 32% of target population in the major of Modern Languages, meaning 8 students, stated that they are fairly good regarding vocabulary, 24% of them, representing 6 students chose the option average.

On the other hand, 32% of target population in the major of English Teaching, meaning 4 students, said that they have good vocabulary while they are creating compositions, 48% of this population, meaning 12 students, stated that they are fairly good regarding vocabulary, 16% of them, representing 8 students chose the option average and 4% of them, representing only 1 student chose the option poor.

The results of the subjects under study are very varied in this case because even though many students agreed on having a vast vocabulary to create compositions, some others expressed not to have a wide vocabulary repertoire when they are required to create a written work. It is important for all the students taking Composition I and Composition II to increase or even acquire more vocabulary in order to make pleasant and interesting compositions.

- **Question 29: Do you know how to write an essay?**

Do you know how to write an essay?				
Bachelor	Good	Fairly good	Average	Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	5	15	5	0
B.A in English Teaching	9	8	7	1



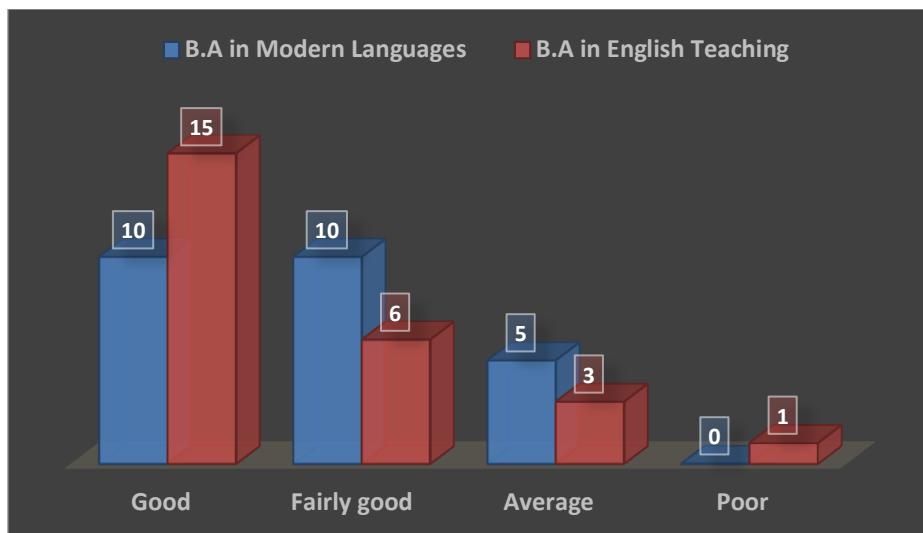
On one hand, 20% of the major Modern Languages' students said to be good at writing essays, 60% answered to be fairly good at creating one, and the remaining 20% of them answered to be in an average level concerning writing essays.

On the other hand, 36% of students who are in the B. A. in English Teaching answered to be good at writing essays, 32% answered to be fairly good at creating it, 28% of them answered to be in an average level concerning to this matter of writing essays, and the remaining 4%, meaning only one student answered the option poor.

The results of the subjects under study are very varied in this case because even though many students agreed to have a good and proper knowledge writing essays, some others expressed to have an average knowledge. It is important for all those students who are taking Composition I and Composition II to increase practice related on how to create essays in order to write interesting compositions.

- **Question 30: Do you create a draft before you submit your paper?**

Do you create a draft before you submit your paper?				
Bachelor	Good	Fairly good	Average	Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	10	10	5	0
B.A in English Teaching	15	6	3	1



On one hand, 40% of Modern Languages' students answered to be good at drafting before submitting their paper, 40% answered to be fairly good at doing this, and the remaining 20% of them answered to be in an average level concerning the creation of a draft.

On the other hand, 60% of target population of the B. A. in English Teaching answered to be good at drafting before submitting their final paper, 24% answered to be fairly good at making it, 12% of them answered to be in an average level, and the remaining 4% of them chose the option poor concerning to drafting.

The results of the subjects under study are very varied in this case because many students agreed to have the habit of drafting before submit their paper and some

others expressed to put into practice this aspect in an average degree. However, it is important for all those students who are taking Composition I and Composition II to take into account drafting involves that the writer puts his ideas into complete thoughts such as sentences and paragraphs. Then the writer organizes his ideas in a way that allows the reader to understand his message. In this way, the written work will be well organized and easy to understand for the reader. In addition, the students will have good grades in subjects such as Composition if they practice this important step.

### **4.3 Instrument #1 Qualitative Content Analysis**

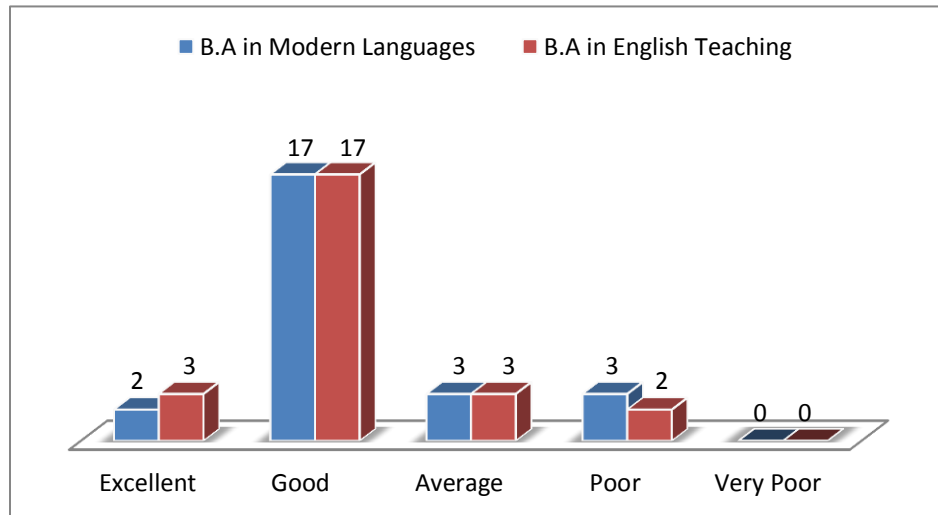
For the qualitative content analysis, students were asked to create an essay to use this as a pattern or analysis on how they write, what the most relevant highlights of their compositions are, to be able to evaluate their writing abilities, and to classify them into a category of the CEFRL (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The results provided here are the results coming from the evaluation using an already existing rubric (Jacobs, H. L. et al. 1981) that the research group modified in order to measure students' abilities. This rubric (*see appendix L*) took 5 aspects into account, 2 of them related to content: content, organization, and 3 of them related to form: vocabulary, sentence construction, and mechanics. Examples are also provided for each classification. It is to be noted that the examples, if sentences or phrases, are provided exactly as they were written by the student being evaluated. Besides that, a rubric with the descriptor of what students can do according to CEFRL when writing reports and essays was also taken into account to measure students' level of writing.

The results presented are the graphs of each aspect of this rubric as well as a graph to present the results of the evaluation of students taking the categories from the CEFRL.

## 1. Content

Bachelor	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	2	17	3	3	0
B.A in English Teaching	3	17	3	2	0
Total	5	34	6	5	0



When evaluating content, the research team took aspects such as: relevance (it means if all the arguments were related to the topic being developed) and knowledge of subject (either the student showed that he was an expert on the topic or if he had limited knowledge of the subject to the point of making the essay unintelligible, not because of form but because of the development of ideas).

The results as shown in the graphs are the following:

For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, only 8% meaning 2 students showed outstanding content in their essays, 68% of this population demonstrated an accurate development of the subject that they decided to develop, 12% which constitutes 3 students had an adequate range of relevance in the topic, but it was not really outstanding. Similarly 3 students which make 12% of the population from this major showed a poor knowledge of the subject being treated.



The results for the population of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching are surprisingly similar with slight differences. 12% of the students showed an excellent and impeccable development of the subject that they decided to write about, and 8% of them showed an extremely poor substance presented in the essay. 68% of the population had a good development of the topic, and 12% of them had an average knowledge of the subject.

Here are some examples on how the grades were assigned:

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- Excellent: a student wrote about avoiding procrastination providing 2 supporting ideas: organizing one's schedule and also breaking down tasks. The ideas were developed in great detail demonstrating the student was well-prepared and had precise knowledge of the subject.
- Good: The topic of one of the essays to receive this grade was "how to prevent hypertension in young people". It mentioned that doing exercise, eating healthy food, and being aware of family heritage to avoid this illness. Even though the subject was well developed, it really did not show that the student was an expert in the subject, but he was well informed.
- Average: an essay with this grade dealt with the benefits of eating healthy food which gives us energy and also helps control weight. Despite the fact that some arguments were good, there were also sentences that did not make sense, had little substance or were not pertinent, for example "if you eat those aliments [...] you prevent fatigue and you will never get tired" which of course is untrue. It could be possible to say that it gives us more strength so as not to get tired easily.
- Fair to poor: one of the students wrote about the dangers of consuming too much water. The student presented irrelevant ideas such as saying that eating a strawberry was the equivalent of drinking a glass of water. It seemed he had not looked for enough information regarding the topic and seemed to take his assumptions as scientific facts. Ideas were repeated in

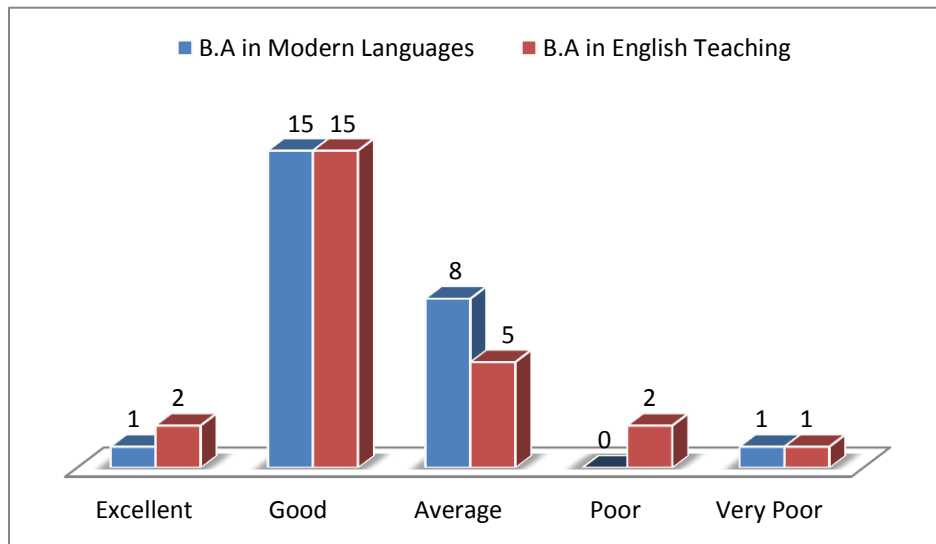
order to fill more space in the paper. An excess of errors in form also made his argumentation unintelligible to communicate a clear idea.

#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

- Excellent: one student who got the highest score wrote about quality life in zoos providing two supporting arguments: replicating the natural environment should be taken into account so as not to affect animal's psyche, and avoiding using zoos to confine animals instead of protecting endangered species. The arguments were neatly developed and showing mastery of the subject.
- Good: one essay with this grade mentioned the topic of problems that cell phones cause providing two supporting ideas: cellphones hinder learning process and can cause accidents. The essay had a good premise, but the supporting details were not impeccable or showing expertise.
- Average: the topic being treated in one essay with this grade was molecular cuisine which was wrongly named "molecular kitchen" which showed the student had not done enough research not even to mention the right name of the topic or a key element of the composition. The supporting ideas were that molecular cuisine is a different experience of cooking, and molecular cuisine merges science elements into cooking. The essay looked promising in its premise, but the result was mediocre and complicated to understand.
- Poor: a student who got this level discussed the topic of robots making humans' lives easier with two arguments barely developed correctly, one being that robots are tools for humans, and other about robots performing activities too dangerous for humans. Some elements already mentioned in the composition were repeated over and over providing little information to each idea besides the fact that the essay itself was extremely difficult to understand.

## 2. Organization

Bachelor	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	1	15	8	0	1
B.A in English Teaching	2	15	5	2	1
Total	3	30	13	2	2



In regards to organization, many aspects were evaluated such as the accurate sequencing of ideas, the fluency in expression, or development of supporting details.

For the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 4% meaning 1 student showed an excellent performance in the organization of the essay, and his/ her essay showed mastery in regards to fluency and thorough development of supporting ideas. 32% demonstrated that the essay was somehow choppy, somewhat organized, and logical but not thorough; and one student representing the 4% had such poor organization that it was not possible to evaluate him because there was no communication through the message he attempted to convey.

For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, 8% of students showed an outstanding work in their essay, 20% did good but not excellent, 8% used confusing or disconnected ideas or lacked logical sequencing while 4% had a really bad organization of ideas; therefore, it was not even possible to evaluate.

As it showed when evaluating content, the assessment of organization is similar in results. The majority of the population from both majors is in a good level in this aspect with a 60% of them showing a fluent expression, good sequencing and thorough development of supporting ideas.

Here are some examples on how these aspects were evaluated for both majors.

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- Excellent: a student wrote about the topic of child labor providing details for two supporting arguments: government creating a family income per month, and also an income for kids to continue going to school. The ideas were stated clearly, and there were no loose ends in the development. It is also good to note that there were almost no mistakes in regards to form which made the essay very smooth to read.
- Good: a student explained what the solutions are for teens to avoid obesity or overweight providing three good arguments: following a healthy diet, doing exercise, and going to therapy if need be. Many details were provided for each idea, but in some cases, there were too many details which were disconnected from the supporting idea, and some sentences were repeated in different ways.
- Average: the topic the student chose was procrastination, and different arguments were provided to fight procrastination, one of them was to eliminate interruptions, the second one was to break down tasks, and the last one to use internet wisely. The essay was really good; however, many things could have improved. Student could have used some sentences that were located in the supporting details in the introduction. Some sentences were unintelligible which disconnected the original message.

- Fair to Good: The topic of the essay was social networks, and two arguments were given to support the thesis statement: raising awareness of the correct use of social networks and also helping young people develop communication skills. One paragraph was difficult to understand since it was not sequenced correctly, and student did not show cohesion since he avoided repeating some words using pronouns instead, but these pronouns were really ambiguous on what he was referring to, making the paragraphs difficult to understand.
- Very Poor: one essay to receive this grade was titled “How to prevent car accidents” with two arguments to support this cause: improving infrastructure of streets and modifying traffic laws. The details of the arguments were not strong and many sentences were unintelligible or unidiomatic disconnecting the idea. For example: “street want drivers, but drivers want a jungle”, “another solution is better wages to officers for being able to extend to the night shift and avoid dangerous drivers could drive”, or “increase the minimum driving age from 15 years to 20 because a 20-years-old is considered more self-aware and less aggressive driving risks”. These sentences, as it was said before, hindered the fluency of the message.

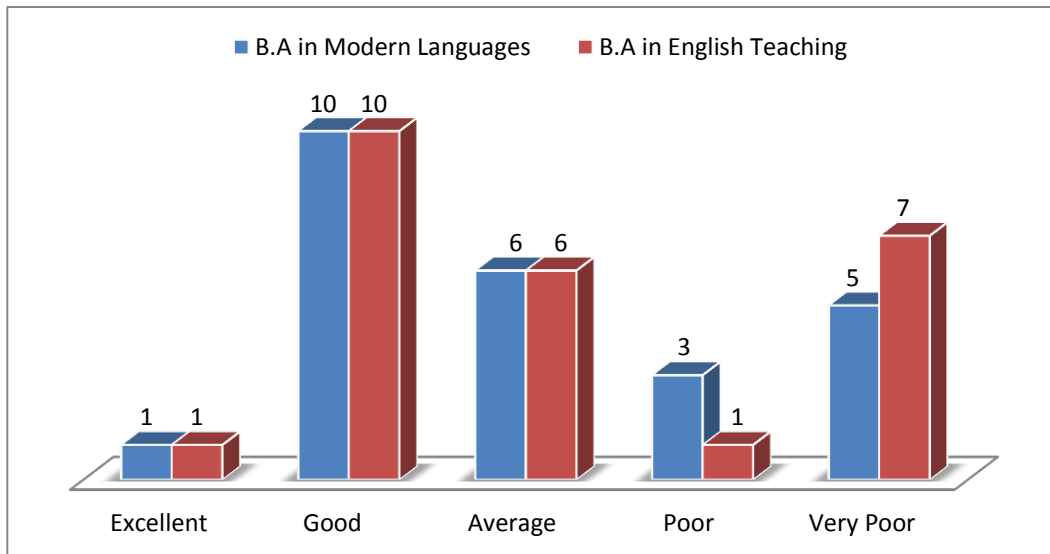
#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

- Excellent: the best grade was assigned to an essay about “El tunco” beach, and how this place looks like and what people like about it. There was a wide range of words used in the essay demonstrating mastery of expression since it was obvious the student was well-prepared with the necessary ideas and vocabulary to write all he needed.
- Good: a student who wrote an essay about the benefits of listening to music reached this level. The arguments supporting the main idea were that music helps decrease stress levels, helps falling asleep and makes you happier. The arguments were good, but they were not really outstanding to provide a higher grade.

- Average: a student wrote about demotivation at work and explained that people who work with this problem do not have goals, and they cannot work as a team. The development was really weak though supporting ideas stood out. There was incomplete sequencing.
- Fair to poor: importance of sign language was the topic of this essay, and besides having a lot of form issues, it did not have the correct expressions to be understood effectively or without offending some minority groups. The supporting arguments were really confusing, and only one of them was clear: learning sign language is good so as not to marginalize people with hearing problems. Here are some examples of sentences that hindered the logical sequencing of the essay or were offensive: "Learning sign language is the best way to understand the deaf world [...] This can be reflected in sincerity that deaf people bring when express...", "Besides as mentioned before, listener has coupled that deaf people will always tell the things as they think and expect the same from listener", "it can be understood that deaf people do not differ from listener people, if anyone can contribute to a better world for them; they are listeners, since they have the ability to interact in both worlds and to know about the two native languages that listeners don't have idea they exist". The essay was almost impossible to evaluate.
- Poor: this was for an essay about pregnancy. It was impossible to evaluate because it had too many mistakes of logic. Many sentences did not make any sense, for example: "in this cause the first quarter symptoms that moms-to-be experience but, remember every woman respond differently...", "As a conclusion, we can say that pregnancy in known a gestation and is the longest period for the woman..." The essay did not communicate anything.

### 3. Vocabulary

Bachelor	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	1	10	6	3	5
B.A in English Teaching	1	10	6	1	7
Total	2	20	12	4	12



To evaluate vocabulary the research team took aspects such as: range (it refers to the narrow or broad repertoire of vocabulary the student used in the composition), idioms (if expressions were imitated from mother tongue or they were expressions as they are expressed in the target language), word choice (if words were looked up in the dictionary or they were assumed to mean what the student tried to express), register (if the vocabulary was sensible, reasonable, not offensive or vulgar), lexicon (if the words were not repeated constantly or poor synonyms were used), and meaning obscured or confused (it means how the incorrect word choice occurred hindering effective communication or made the message ambiguous or even unintelligible).

In both majors, the results are very similar. For the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages and the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, only 4% meaning 1 student in both majors demonstrated consistently appropriate use of vocabulary in their essays, 40% of the population in each major showed good lexical accuracy, and 24% of them in both majors presented an average control of elementary vocabulary in their compositions. 12% of students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages revealed a narrow repertoire of vocabulary and 20% of them had extremely poor lexical accuracy in their compositions. For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, only 4% demonstrated poor vocabulary and 28% of them showed very poor lexicon in their essays.

Here are some examples on how the grades were assigned:

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- Excellent: the best grade was assigned to an essay about how to beat procrastination. This was the only essay from this major that got an excellent grade in vocabulary. The composition had a good repertoire of vocabulary. There were no mistakes of word choice, lexicon, and other aspects taken into account in this category which made the meaning clear and understandable.
- Good: the topic the student chose was about a monthly budget to avoid the disorganization of money. Most of the words were good, but there were slight errors of vocabulary and lexicon. However, meaning was not obscured.
- Average: lack of parking spaces in the University of El Salvador was the topic of this essay. The development of ideas was good, but there were occasional errors of vocabulary, for example: "One answer is to give an specific parking identification to students and the personnel work".
- Poor: the topic the student chose was "addiction or not?" There was only one argument provided to fight addiction to technology: creating a schedule. The student overused the word "adiction" (the word was always written



incorrectly) and “technology” through the essay. These words were repeated constantly even in every paragraph. The incorrect word choice made the message ambiguous and sometimes unintelligible, for example: “your parents need to make a schedule where they program the haours and days when you can use the technology such as videogames, internet, cellphones, and so on”, “you can program your daily activities after the job” or “you can put a specific hour to shut down your devices and look for other activities [...] to get ride of this adiction”. The development was weak because the same idea was very repetitive through the essay. The student used a narrow repertoire of vocabulary.

- Very poor: one essay to receive this grade was titled “Child labor in El Salvador” with three arguments to support this cause: providing more job opportunities to parents, modifying the Lepina law and providing better education. There were many errors of word choice in sentences, for example: “For instance the Lepina law establishes that the minimum age to work is 14 years old, but this result in an increase of children who are developing a work activity” or “the government will be able to provide stability for children who suffer this phenomenon by offering to their parents good places”. Some of the expressions in this essay were imitated from mother tongue, for example the student could have used more synonyms in his composition: instead of writing “good places” he or she could have written “good job positions” since he or she was referring to that. The incorrect word choice made the message ambiguous.

#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

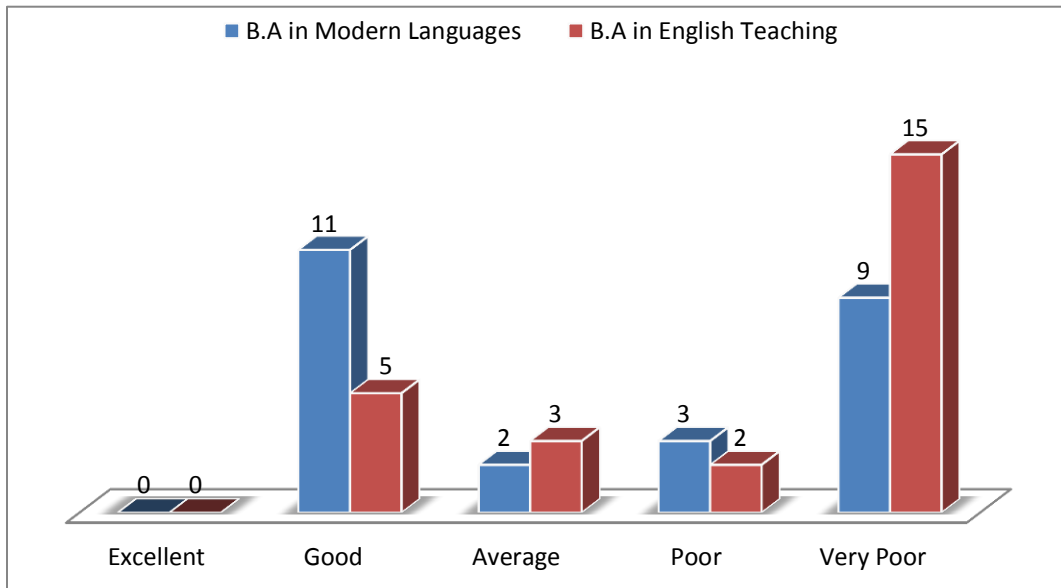
- Excellent: the essay that got the best grade was about business and how advertising is important to succeed. The argument was well developed with ideas clearly stated. The range of vocabulary used was broad and correct.
- Good: a student wrote an essay about forbidden substances used in sports providing two arguments: athletes that use drugs become a national shame, and athletes that use drugs betray the confidence of their supporters. The

vocabulary used was good, but there were some errors of lexicon and some Spanish influences.

- Average: this grade was for an essay titled “Climate Change” and explained the two causes: the greenhouse effect and the human breathing. The arguments were weak. There were occasional problems of word choice, but meaning was not obscured.
- Poor: “Developed Countries” was the topic of this essay. The ideas were supported, and it had a good sequencing. However, it had a lot of sentence construction errors, and it did not have the correct idiomatic expressions to be fully understood, for example: “The education system in advanced countries got better skills to teach the students.” or “... in some Europe countries to teach with interactive whiteboards are incredible because the kids improve their kills [...] students enjoy innovative classroom spaces with limited group of people in each subject...”
- Very poor: a student who got this level discussed the topic of molecular cuisine. The essay was wrongly named “molecular kitchen” through the essay which showed the student only assumed the term. Besides that, there was Spanish influence. Some examples are: “... by allowing science make the cook for you!”, “... turn something original to an encircle experience...” The essay had limited range of vocabulary.

#### 4. Sentence Construction

Bachelor	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	0	11	2	3	9
B.A in English Teaching	0	5	3	2	15
Total	0	16	5	5	24



The research team took different grammatical aspects to evaluate sentence construction. These aspects were the following: the use of coordinators and subordinators (if students used the necessary connectors to separate sentences), parts of speech, agreement (Subject-Verb agreement, tense, number), word order and function (correct use of prepositions, articles, pronouns and fragments), run-ons (sentences that had no pauses and were too long to be understood), parallel structure, and transitions (it means the use of connectors to mark the relationship between ideas).

The results as shown in the graphs are the following:

It is necessary to emphasize that none of the 50 students in the entire population from both majors was able to use phrases and clauses to form excellent complex sentences. For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 44% of them presented effective constructions with slight grammatical problems in their essays, 8% which constitutes 2 students formed simple constructions with some grammatical mistakes, 12% of them wrote major problems in simple constructions, and 36% of the population presented sentences dominated by errors in their compositions.

For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, 20% of them formed adequate complex constructions, but few errors were present in their compositions, 12% which constitutes 3 students formed average sentence constructions, 8% presented frequent grammatical errors in their essays, and 60% of them had virtually no mastery of sentence construction.

Here are some examples on how the grades were assigned:

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- Good: the title of this essay was “the best version of yourself!”, and different arguments were provided, one of them was to change some habits, and the second one was to spend time doing productive things. Ideas were developed for each argument but slight errors of sentence construction and mechanics made not possible for this essay to get an excellent grade in this category.
- Average: a student explained what the solutions are for teens to avoid smoking providing two very good arguments: creating new laws and educating not only teenagers but also parents. Many details were provided for each idea which made the content really good, but form could have been better without errors of agreement, word function and prepositions.

- Poor: one essay to receive this grade was about stress with two arguments: sleeping eight hours a day and practicing sports. There were many errors of sentence construction, word order, agreement, and word function that made the meaning confused, for example: “it is good to point out some bad habits that students get involve into for reducing stress, such as smoking cigarettes for lowering anxiety, or even worse drugs for reducing tiredness.” or “... the blame falls in stress, since this not allows students to focus on their academic activities.” Besides that, some sentences were a translation from mother tongue that made difficult the communication.
- Very poor: this was for an essay about overcoming insomnia. Many sentences did not make sense. There were several errors of subject–verb agreement, parallel structure, word order and function. Many unintelligible sentences made message confused, for example: “... go to bed until feeling sleeping. In addition, put on comfortable clothes makes your brains gets ready for the rest.”, “For example, schedule a relaxing time, stablish a regular habit when going to bed, and quiet of some bad customs” or “For instance stress situations.” The last example is only a sentence fragment which the student took as a complete sentence, but it did not communicate anything.

#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

- Good: a student explained the dangers of internet providing two arguments: cyber-bullying and pornography. Many details were provided for each idea with effective complex constructions but with slight errors in agreement and word order.
- Average: music changes lives was the topic of this essay. The student provided different positive effects of listening to music. However, there were errors of parallel structure, prepositions and agreement.
- Poor: the essay that got this grade was about demotivation at work. There were frequent errors where the subject of sentences was missing, run-on

sentences, agreement, and incorrect structure of sentences, for example: “When in a company is a crucial part and extra necessary for employees to work well together in any circumstance, for a demotivated person this is a completely different story.”, “This can be harmless and even normal since is usually reversible, but in the long term can complicate your job.”

- Very poor: a student wrote about addiction to technology. The student had virtually no mastery of sentence construction. There were several errors of prepositions, subject missing in sentences, agreement in tense, and word function, for example: “Secondly, They relation with unknown people could be dangerous, have sentimental or economical problems, for example, [...] teenagers are exposing to the sixteen, Bullying, etc problems leading death.”

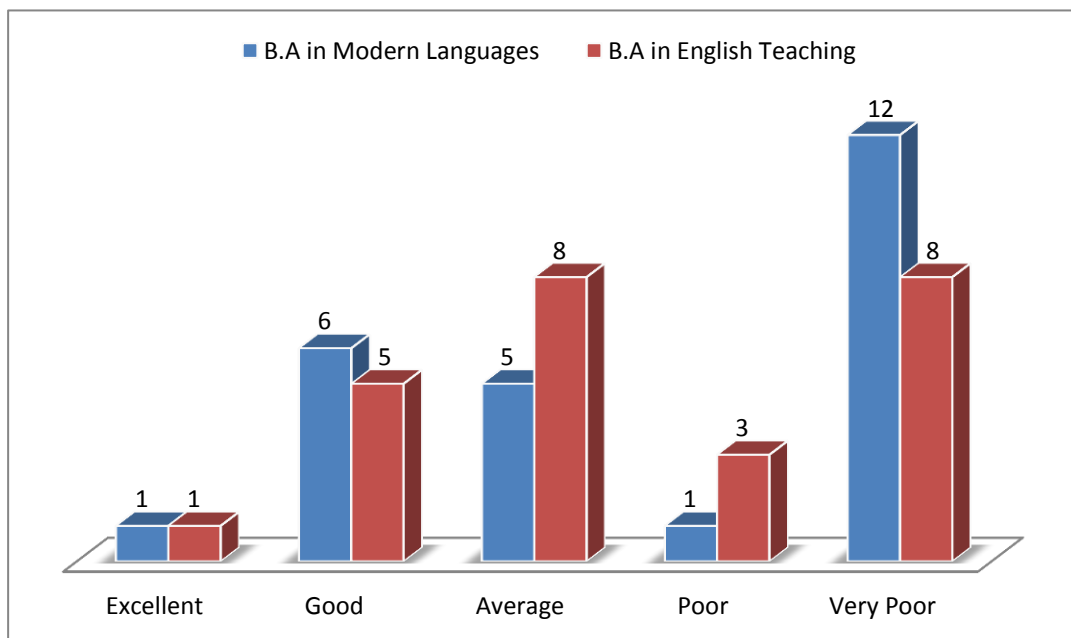
## 5. Mechanics / Proofreading

Bachelor	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
B.A in Modern Languages	1	6	5	1	12
B.A in English Teaching	1	5	8	3	8
Total	2	11	13	4	20

The aspects taken to evaluate mechanics and proofreading in the students' composition were the following: conventions which mean the surface feature of writing, punctuation (lack of use, overuse or misplacement), spelling (in the case of typos), capitalization (lack of or overuse), and paragraphing (it helps the reader to understand and process ideas into meaningful thoughts).

The results as shown in the graphs are the following:

For the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 24% demonstrated good use of conventions with few errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization in their essays, 20% showed that the essay had occasional errors but meaning was not obscured, and 48% had no mastery of conventions, and the composition was dominated by errors.



For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, 20% of them did good but not excellent, 32% meaning 8 students showed that the essay had some errors of conventions. Similarly, 8 students which make 32% of the population from this major demonstrated an extremely poor essay full of errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

Here are some examples on how the grades were assigned:

Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- Excellent: the only essay to receive this grade was child labor. This was one of the best essays that got excellent in almost every category. Punctuation was really good, and spelling was correct. The student demonstrated expertise of conventions.
- Good: a student wrote about traffic in San Salvador. There were few errors of punctuation and capitalization, but meaning was not obscured.
- Average: a student who got this level explained how to overcome shyness with two arguments, one was being oneself, and the second one was showing interest when talking to someone. The document had occasional errors of mechanics. A frequent error in this essay was the use of commas and periods in sentences which made it occasionally difficult to understand.
- Poor: an essay with this grade dealt with deforestation. Some words were written in capital letters, and there were frequent errors of misplacement of commas and periods, for example: "The last way, to use less paper is to recycle used paper." Or "... it is important that you help to preserve trees and to plant trees. Because trees are an essential part of our planet and also we need trees to life."
- Very poor: the essay with very poor mechanics was about glossophobia (it means the panic or fear a person feels when speaking in front of an audience). It was dominated by errors of use of semicolons and lack of commas which made the meaning not understandable. Some of the examples with errors of mechanics are: "you must treat yourself with; public



speaking classes, medication or physiotherapy.”, “... talking about anxiety ends up making it worse; keep a glass of water close, this is important because at some point you will feel dry throat; and finally...” These errors and some others made his or her argumentation unintelligible to communicate a clear idea.

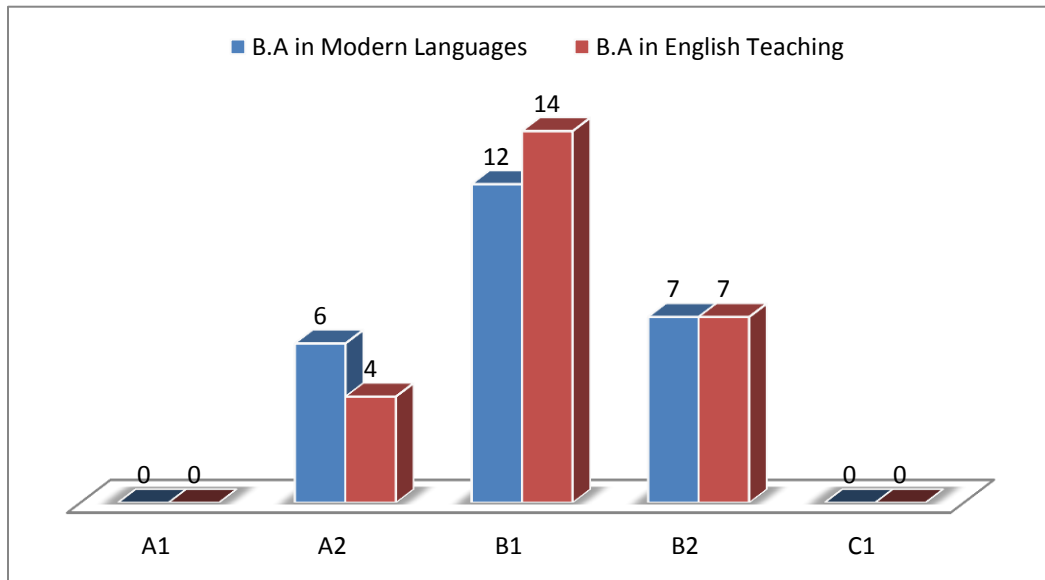
#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

- Excellent: the only essay that received this grade was about the Olympic Games. It was obvious the student was well-prepared with the necessary ideas and vocabulary to write all he needed in conjunction with the correct punctuation. The student demonstrated expertise of conventions through the essay.
- Good: a student explained the causes of sleeping problems in young people providing two arguments: the use of cellphones and watching TV. Ideas were stated clearly with slight errors of misplacement of commas.
- Average: a student wrote about the topic of cellphones in education. Some ideas were vague, but the student presented a very good conclusion of the essay. Frequent errors occurred in capitalization of words but meaning was not obscured.
- Poor: one essay to receive this grade was about a solar oven and the advantages of this invention. The essay showed an overuse of commas and semicolons; besides, there was a problem of capitalization, for example: “Solar Oven does not have any polluting agents, first of all, this artifact does not require gas to go off, in fact; you will not have to [...] or reheat it, Likewise, it does not produce any smoke...”
- Very poor: this was for an essay titled “Effects of toxic laboral environment”. There were different ideas stated about the importance of working in a good environment. However, several errors of word choice, Spanish influence, and overuse of commas hindered the message. The document showed no

mastery of conventions. Several errors of punctuation were present through the essay, for example: “Also, referring to the bossy bosses, giving orders in improperly ways could alter the mental peace of the employees feeling threatened by the words or the manner of the demand, in this way modifying their concentration...”

## 6. Levels of the Common European Framework of Reference

Bachelor	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
B.A in Modern Languages	0	6	12	7	0
B.A in English Teaching	0	4	14	7	0
Total	0	10	26	14	0



The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages breaks down the language into different reference levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. In order to evaluate the writing profile of every student in an objective way, taking into account the different aspects of form and content in the rubric, the research team classified every essay into a level of writing according to the descriptors of writing of the CEFRL (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

The results as shown in the graphs are the following:

It is necessary to remark that none of the 50 students in the entire population from both majors is at level A1 (a very basic user), but none of them is at level C1 (a proficient user) either.

For the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 24% meaning 6 students are level A2 meaning basic users in writing, 28% of them are level B2 which means they are independent users, and the majority of students meaning 48% showed to be at level B1 in their essays.

For the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, 16% meaning only 4 students are in level A2 of CEFRL of writing, 28% of them showed to be independent users in the B2 level, and the majority of them meaning 56% were considered to be at level B1 of the CEFRL in their compositions.

Generally, students have reached level B1-B2. The majority of both majors are independent users in writing which means 80% of the students obtained either B1 for the 52% of the population or B2 for the 28%. This means the level the population reached is average (they dominate most of the linguistic elements) but not excellent (they do not appear to fully master writing and its components). Students do seem able to write brief essays to a standard conventionalized format that develops an argument systematically; however, their discourse is not fully understandable because of unidiomatic expressions, bad construction of sentences, lack of proofreading and vocabulary.

Even though only 20% of the population got an A level, it is concerning because it means they are not intermediate but basic users of the language only. The compositions of this minority do not seem to dominate the elements of writing and its components. The essays in this category were almost impossible to evaluate due to the alarming amount of errors of form and content that showed students really could not develop an argument with a clear message in their compositions (see *appendixes M and N*).

Here are some examples on how these aspects were evaluated for both majors.

#### Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching:

- B2: A student wrote about avoiding procrastination providing 2 supporting ideas: organizing one's schedule and also breaking down tasks. The student developed his argument thorough the essay evaluating different ideas and solutions on how to avoid procrastination. Besides that, it is important to emphasize that this student got an excellent score in the different aspects evaluated in the rubric of form: sentence construction, vocabulary and mechanics.
- B1: A student wrote about how to overcome shyness providing different solutions to the problem considered being: shyness. The essay was well developed with good ideas. However, there were minor problems of vocabulary with some unidiomatic expressions, and problems of sentence construction that made the essay unable to reach the level B2.
- A2: This was for an essay about how to prevent car accidents in El Salvador. Different problems of content, organization, vocabulary, sentence construction and mechanics made impossible for the reader to understand the message. The essay showed a very strong Spanish influence which made the essay barely understandable. The message was obscured in this essay due to problems of content and form.

#### Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages:

- B2: A student who wrote about the importance of the Olympic Games reached this level. This student developed the essay with fluent expression and all ideas were clearly supported; the vocabulary used was sophisticated. Even though there were slight problems of sentence construction, meaning was clear. Besides that, he or she demonstrated mastery of conventions through the essay.

- B1: This level was given to an essay about climate change. When evaluating content, the arguments supporting the main idea were weak: the greenhouse and human breathing. Organization was very good. However, there were frequent errors of word choice, sentence construction and mechanics that made the meaning seldom obscured.
- A2: This level was for an essay about addiction to technology. The essay had too many mistakes of content and sentence construction. Moreover, it had a strong Spanish influence. Some thoughts presented were incomplete. It is necessary to emphasize that the subject of sentences was frequently missing. Besides that, there were problems of vocabulary and content. All these factors obscured the meaning of the composition.

The description of what a learner can do when writing reports and essays at every level was taken from the CEFRL. Starting from the beginner levels which are A1 and A2 (basic users), there is no descriptor available because report and essay writing is more complex since they generally have fixed structures. According to the CEFRL, learners at this level cannot write a report or essay. They can only write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.

When a student reaches level B1, he or she is considered an independent user. He or she can write short, simple essays on topics of interest. The students can also summarize reports and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his field with some confidence. Besides that, the learner can write very brief reports to a standard conventionalized format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.

At level B2 of writing essays and reports, the students have more abilities to develop a composition. At this stage, the learner can write an essay or report that develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant

points and relevant supporting detail. The student can also evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem. Besides that, he or she can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. The student can also synthesize information and arguments from a number of sources.

Students at level C1 have reached mastery of writing. They are considered proficient users. At this level, students can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Moreover, the learner can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Resolved Research Questions

#### 5.1.1 General Question

- What is the level of English Composition achieved by the students of the Bachelor in English and the Bachelor in Modern Languages in semester I - 2017 at the University of El Salvador?

Overall, students seem to have reached a B level which means they are independent users of language. On one hand, 48% of the students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages reached level B1 in writing just as one of the Composition experts predicted “*some students from English Composition I [students of the B.A in Modern Languages] may be qualified in B1 while others will remain close to reach that level*”, but unlike what the expert said 28% of them achieved level B2. On the other hand, 56% of students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching reached level B1, and similar to the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages, 28% of students achieved level B2 in writing. This confirms what an expert said about students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching “*some students in English Composition II [students of the B.A in English Teaching] reach the B2 level while others will remain in B1*”. Students of both majors dominate most of the linguistic elements, but they do not seem to fully master writing and its components. Basically, the level of English Composition achieved by students of the Bachelor in English and the Bachelor in Modern Languages in semester I - 2017 at the University of El Salvador is average, not excellent or particularly outstanding.



### 5.1.2 Subsidiary Questions

#### *To be answered through the instrument and data analysis*

- Is the current situation of students of both majors related to English Composition skills the appropriate to the level that they are supposed to achieve?

Even though the syllabus does not directly state which level students are supposed to reach, they should be expected to get a B level according to the CEFR. 80% of the students from both majors obtain that level, either B1 or B2. However, 20% of the population got an A level which means they are not intermediate but basic users of the language.

Students have already taken Grammar courses, but they do not seem to follow all the grammatical rules into account at the moment of writing because essays have many issues in regards to tenses, agreement and use of parts of speech.

- Which major has better composition skills?

The Bachelor in English Teaching performed slightly better in content and organization of essays. As one of the Composition experts mentioned “*Students of English Teaching option go deeper in their written works*”, and another one pointed out “*When students of the English Teaching option take the subject of Composition II they have more vocabulary and more ideas on how to create formal writings, so they go deeper in the structure of the essays. This could be the result of having taken two English Composition courses*”. Modern Languages’ students performed better in form (sentence construction, vocabulary and mechanics); however, the essays provided by the students from Modern Languages were shorter than the ones students from English Teaching provided. It is possible to say according to the number of students that reached B level that the students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching have better composition skills.

- What are the main factors that influence the level of English Composition of students of both majors in semester I - 2017?

The aspect that seems to have more impact on students' level of English Composition is form. One Composition expert summarized what this means "*While coherence, unity and transition among ideas are vital, form makes a composition easy to understand. Form can interrupt communication and must be graded to make sure a composition is entirely academic*". Students do seem to be able to create meaningful and organized writing; however, most of the time, their discourse is not fully understandable because of unidiomatic expressions (usually Spanish influence: false cognates, words that have not been looked up), bad construction of sentences (with no agreement, no use of appropriate parts of speech), and lack of vocabulary and proofreading.

All the experts agreed that the native language is a major influence of students' writing, but also lack of knowledge or overlooking grammatical conventions of the English Language has a great impact on how they write, as said by the experts "*Students show Spanish influence in their compositions when they use cognates*", "*word order seems to relate closely to L1 influence*", and "*Spelling could be another factor as making a negative transfer from Spanish to English*"; therefore, this is essential on how effectively they are or not understood.

- What are the results of the assessment of student's writing skills currently taking the subject of Composition I/ II in semester I year 2017?

Students from both majors (although with a slightly better degree the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching) use appropriate content in their compositions (not excellent though). The population from both Bachelors of Arts has major issues related to sentence construction (subject-verb agreement, tense agreement, parallel structure, or misuse of parts of speech), vocabulary (wrong register, lack of synonyms, false cognates) and mechanics (misuse, lack or overuse of punctuation

marks, spelling). Students mostly have reached a B2 level especially in the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching while students of the Bachelor of Arts handed a shorter composition than the one provided by the students of Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, who, as said before, performed slightly better in the evaluation of content.

## 5.2 LIMITATIONS

- The research team evaluated the essays of the students that were used as the qualitative content analysis in order to check what the level of students was as well as the assessment of different aspects that came from a rubric that the research team modified. However, it is necessary to emphasize that the research team is a group of students that investigated about the topic of writing, did their best to be familiar with writing process and all the elements that were evaluated, but in spite of that, they are not experts.
- The research team attempted to interview some Spanish language experts in order to get their insight about Spanish composition since the way students write in Spanish (regarding content and organization) is important for them to use the same planning when writing in English. Nonetheless, many people who the team considered experts did not give full opinion since they did not want to *venture* and provide information which they considered was subjective. Therefore, related to Spanish composition, the research team was not able to get much information. Moreover, unfortunately, in our country, there is not much literature about statistics or specifics about the current situation or performance of writing in students since it is not a topic that has drawn the attention of the authorities.

### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS

- Students of both majors reached in the majority a B level, either B1 for the 52% of the population or B2 for the 28%. Students from the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching had a better performance thanks to appropriate content and excellent organization of ideas. They wrote a longer paragraph, and they had the worst results in form especially in sentence construction and vocabulary. However, students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages had a better performance in aspects of form excepting mechanics. It is necessary to highlight that their essays were shorter. It is concerning that 20% reached a level below B which is the one expected for students.
- Most of the students of both majors revealed in the background survey that they do not write regularly which could be one of the reasons why they do not have really outstanding writing skills because they do not practice. 60% of the overall population does not devote time to writing in English. Also, they do not read many books per year (only about 1 to 4 books per year). Only 46% of the population mentioned they read books in English which could help them see how the language is used in context. One expert agreed that reading is vital for the writing process "*It is necessary that students read more since the more they read the better they perform*".
- Students of both majors are aware of the influence of Spanish at the moment that they write in English since 100% of the population agreed on that in the background survey. However, after reading the essays that were part of the qualitative content analysis, it is obvious that students have not worked very hard to get rid of this influence, either they have fossilized this type of mistakes, they are not paying enough attention, or they do not take the time to look for words in dictionaries (either false cognates or words that they assume exist in English but that actually do not). As an expert mentioned "*Many students need to be in contact with the target language a*

*bit more than usual*.

- Even though students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages (76% of the population) claimed that the subject “Ortographie et Stylistique du Français” (French Orthography and Stylistics) helped them improve their writing, and that French had an influence in the way they write (80% of the population said so), it seems French has no influence in the way students write, and the subject before mentioned did not really make any difference on how they write because they were the ones that received the worst results in content and organization. It is likely that given that French and Spanish grammar are similar in some aspects, students considered the influence came from French when it actually comes from the Spanish language.
- Students of the B.A in English Teaching and B.A in Modern Languages have a good basis regarding content and organization in a paragraph; as it is mentioned in one of the questions of the initial survey, 98% of students of both majors considered this element as a key component of evaluation in a composition, and according to the assessment of the essays, it is something they take seriously, and 58% of them considered in the survey that it was the most important aspect of a composition. Students are able to organize their essays efficiently as 58% of them said in the survey that they create an outline.
- At the same time, 98% of students of both majors said in the background survey that they consider form is important at the moment of assessing a written work. It does not seem to be the case when the team evaluated the essays that they provided because all of the essays without exception had issues with grammar, construction of sentences and punctuation, some to a lesser degree, but most of them with an alarming amount of errors that showed that students really do not take grammar rules into consideration at

the moment of writing, and do not proofread or edit.

- Students of both majors agreed that there are not enough subjects to help them write better in English. 70% of the population from both majors said this. From the point of view of the research team, it is actually a lack of putting into practice writing across the curriculum that has led to the level that students currently reach. Students have major errors of form meaning grammar, punctuation and construction of sentences. Still, it is important that students from the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages course the subjects Redaccion en Español y Gramatica Española, as mentioned by one of the professors from the interviews *“th[ese] subject[s] allow students to know and compare and contrast L1 and L2 structures. This can help them reduce the L1 influence when writing”*. Finally, as one of the experts mentioned *“they have the same areas of improvement and the same accuracy when writing”* which is a statement the research team agrees on.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered for related research in the field of writing performance of students taking English Composition I and English Composition II during the semester I-2017:

- Authorities in our country could see as a good option to introduce writing in students from an early age. The constant practice of correct writing in our native language, although at the beginning writing could be perceived by students as an obligation, could become an excellent habit for them eventually since written communication is as important as oral communication. This would not only have benefits in the short term but also in the long term since if a student wanted to learn a foreign language, it would be easier to him to develop a correct writing in this foreign language because he would already have a good writing in his own language.
- Usually, there is emphasis in speaking as the skill that has to be mastered the most when learning English as a Second Language. This vision should change, and the authorities from the Foreign Language Department should add more subjects to enhance composition skills. There are many subjects such as Readings and Conversations I and II, Phonetics, Expression Orale Du Français ([Oral Expression in French] for the B.A in Modern Languages) that cover speaking as the main skill, or the one the syllabus aims to improve, but only Composition I and II is the subject that directly helps students in the writing process. So, Composition II should be a subject added to the B.A in Modern Languages' curriculum, and possibly a Composition III should be added to both majors. Besides that, an attempt could be made to reduce the number of students allowed in each class group because if so, the teacher would have the opportunity to customize their classes and provide the specific help that each student needs, and more details about their mistakes or their strengths when writing could be



explored.

- At the time of teaching, professors should be more specific and go deeper in the subject that they explain to students. If a teacher, for example, is explaining a subject related to prepositions, he should not only mention what the main prepositions are, but also what the correct use of them is. For the case of connectors, not only their meaning should be taught, but also the order they can be used and also elements like how they should be punctuated depending on the position they are located. This will make the students perform better on the subject and not only have a vague idea on how to use parts of speech and consequently, students will create better compositions. Teachers should not assume students already know about a subject, but they could provide details that might be important. It is not good to assume what students know when they might not remember or have never been told. Little details should not be taken for granted.
- Professors in the Foreign Language Department should implement what is known as writing across the curriculum which implies that teachers must add writing to all the content of their classes. By doing this, teachers not only enhance their students' writing ability, but they also increase the understanding of the content of their classes and encourage them to acquire this important skill. Taking this into account, teachers can use writing as a classroom assessment for learning as they examine students' explanations of what they are learning. Practice is important, a strategy that one of the Composition experts provided is appealing "*Sometimes I ask my students to practice formal writing as if they were applying for scholarships, a job or any other program but there are not just letters. By doing this, student can have the proper knowledge and practice in case they have to create formal compositions in the future nor only in other subjects at the university but in other areas of their life*".

- Groups that represent and advocate for students right should propose new ideas to improve the syllabus relating to the area of writing in English or to strengthen the current syllabus that is already available. As it was mentioned, using writing across the curriculum could be a good alternative for students to get used to writing because practice is needed to improve composition skills.
- Each student needs to be aware that he or she will improve by his or her own efforts and interest in the matter. Because of that, each student should spend time practicing writing without a teacher asking for it. Moreover, students should spend more time reading in English as this will allow them to acquire more vocabulary and, at the same time, this will allow them to be familiar with the structure of the paragraphs, and other aspects such as developing main ideas, giving strong arguments, etc. Besides reading, of course, they have to write constantly, so as to get familiar with the production of ideas, and that writing is not seen as a challenge, but part of their everyday lives. One of the Composition professors that was interviewed mentioned that *“Students’ lack of interest for social, technological, political and environmental issues give them lack of vocabulary and lack of interest to read and write about important topics”*.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix A

### Technique #1

*University of El Salvador*

*Department of Foreign Languages*

*Research regarding writing performance from students coursing Composition I&II*

*Interview addressed to teachers that have taught or are currently teaching  
Composition I for Modern Languages or Composition II from the Bachelor in  
English*

### Individual Questionnaire

#### Objective:

The following questionnaire has been designed to check teachers' perspective in regards to the students' performance in the subject Composition either I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English).

**Instructions:** Please answer the questions from your professional opinion.

#### Questions:

1. Do you think students have good basis in regards to grammar when they take the subject Composition I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English)?
2. What is the level that you consider students reach at the end of the course? A2 (Basic)? B1 (Intermediate)? B2 (Proficient user)/ Basic, intermediate, advanced? Why?
3. Is there an influence of Spanish in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?
4. What is more important for you when you evaluate a composition: form or content? Both? Why?



5. Is Spanish writing process similar to English writing process?
6. Is there an influence of French (only for the Bachelor in Modern Languages) in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?
7. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramática Española be added to the curriculum for Modern Languages?
8. Are you aware of any difference between the writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?
9. Who performs better in this subject, students of the Bachelor in English or the Bachelor in modern Languages?
10. What positive or negative things could you say about the students' writing skills?
11. Does the academic year make a difference between students' writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?

**Technique #1**

*Universidad de El Salvador*

*Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras*

*Investigación sobre el desempeño de la redacción en los estudiantes que cursan la materia de Composición I o II en el departamento de Idiomas extranjeros*

*Entrevista dirigida a expertos en el área de Escritura y redacción en Español*

**Entrevista individual**

**Objetivo:**

La siguiente entrevista ha sido diseñada para verificar la perspectiva de expertos de escritura y redacción en español y el desempeño de los alumnos para contrastar el proceso de escribir en la lengua materna y un idioma extranjero.

Redacción: Composición escrita sobre un tema

1. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuál es la situación actual de la redacción en nuestro país?
2. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué factores positivos y/o negativos han contribuido a la situación actual de la forma en como los estudiantes escriben en nuestro país?
3. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuáles son los errores frecuentes que los alumnos cometen a la hora de escribir?
4. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué es preferible evaluar forma (gramática, puntuación) o contenido (coherencia, cohesión, mensaje de la composición), o ambos? ¿Por qué?

5. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué debe reforzarse el currículo de educación básica y media para mejorar la redacción?

*PARA EXPERTOS BILINGUES*

- A. ¿Cómo influye el idioma nativo a la hora de escribir en un segundo idioma?  
¿Por qué?
- B. ¿Es la influencia del idioma nativo negativa o positiva al momento de escribir en un segundo idioma? ¿Por qué?
- C. ¿Hay similitudes entre la escritura en el idioma nativo y un segundo idioma?  
¿En qué forma?

**Technique #1, Interview Translated to English**

*University of El Salvador*

*Foreign Language Department*

*Research about students' performance on the subject of Composition I or II in the Foreign Language Department.*

*Interview addressed to experts of Spanish composition*

**Individual Interview**

**Objective:**

The following interview has been designed to check the perspective of writing experts in Spanish and students' performance to contrast the writing process in the mother tongue and a foreign language.

1. From your point of view and your professional experience, what is the current situation of composition in Spanish in our country?
2. From your point of view and your professional experience, what are the negative and positive factors that have contributed to the current composition performance in students in our country?
3. From your point of view and your professional experience, What are the most frequent errors that students make when writing?
4. From your point of view and your professional experience, what is most important to evaluate, form (grammar, punctuation) or content (coherence, cohesion, composition's message)? Why?
5. From your point of view and your professional experience, what should be reinforced in the curricula of Elementary and Middle School to improve composition?

**Technique #1, English Composition Expert I**

*University of El Salvador*

*Department of Foreign Languages*

*Research regarding writing performance from students coursing Composition I&II*

*Interview addressed to teachers that have taught or are currently teaching  
Composition I for Modern Languages or Composition II from the Bachelor in  
English*

**Individual Questionnaire**

**Objective:**

The following questionnaire has been designed to check teachers' perspective in regards to the students' performance in the subject Composition either I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English).

**Instructions:**

Please answer the questions from your professional opinion.

**Questions:**

1. Do you think students have good basis in regards to grammar when they take the subject Composition I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English)?

*Yes, but more grammar practice is developed in grammar courses when the teacher verifies or checks that students make mistakes when writing their compositions. Some specific grammar structures are studied again.*

2. What is the level that you consider students reach at the end of the course? A2 (Basic)? B1 (Intermediate)? B2 (Proficient user)/ Basic, intermediate, advanced? Why?

*Which one? Grammar or writing courses?*

3. Is there an influence of Spanish in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?

*Yes, sometimes it happens. Sometimes it is evident that they don't organize their pieces of writing and present to the teacher only loose ideas as free writing. Spelling could be another factor as making a negative transfer from Spanish to English.*

4. What is more important for you when you evaluate a composition: form or content? Both? Why?

*Content is more important. I revise in the writing courses, what students want to express. Their ideas are the most important when they write. How to say, in English, their ideas or thoughts. Concerning form, it is students' responsibility to revise grammar, spelling and punctuation as they write several drafts to come up with the final version.*

5. Is Spanish writing process similar to English writing process?

*Yes, it is very similar. Writing is a process that begins with pre-writing activities, outlines, several drafts and a final version.*

*Taking into account that peer assessment could be developed to have a second audience or point of view.*

6. Is there an influence of French (only for the Bachelor in Modern Languages) in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?

*Yes, there is an influence of French in terms of grammar and spelling.*

7. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramática Española be added to the curriculum for Modern Languages?

*It could be if students are encouraged to write in their mother tongue. Practice is important, but taking into account the writing process (pre-writing, composing and revising).*

8. Are you aware of any difference between the writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?

*It seems students from Modern Languages develop better the writing process. They pay more attention to what they write. However, it is only an opinion not a fact. If we want to be sure, we need to do more research about it.*

9. Who performs better in this subject, students of the Bachelor in English or the Bachelor in modern Languages?

*It would be better to make them write and revise their pieces of writing. Then, we can compare their performance.*

10. What positive or negative things could you say about the students' writing skills?

*Positive: most of the students develop the writing process in class, but I don't know if their writing abilities are put into practice in their thesis or in other contexts such as other courses or in their personal documents.*

11. Does the academic year make a difference between students' writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?

*What makes a big difference it is that students from the B.A in English take two courses: English Composition I and II.*

*However, students from the B.A in Modern Languages take only one. Practice is important.*

**Technique #1, English Composition Expert II**

*University of El Salvador*

*Department of Foreign Languages*

*Research regarding writing performance from students coursing Composition I&II*

*Interview addressed to teachers that have taught or are currently teaching  
Composition I for Modern Languages or Composition II from the Bachelor in  
English*

**Individual Questionnaire**

**Objective:** The following questionnaire has been designed to check teachers' perspective in regards to the students' performance in the subject Composition either I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English).

**Instructions:**

Please answer the questions from your professional opinion.

**Questions:**

1. Do you think students have good basis in regards to grammar when they take the subject Composition I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English)?

*It is difficult to generalize the answer because some students show good domain of the grammar structures in context; however, some others seem to have difficulties with variety of complex grammatical structures and combination of tenses as well as with word order and spelling. This behavior is applicable to both groups. Not all the population seems to be affected by lack of good basis in grammar but a good percentage of it is.*



2. What is the level that you consider students reach at the end of the course? A2 (Basic)? B1 (Intermediate)? B2 (Proficient user)/ Basic, intermediate, advanced? Why?

*Considering the writing proficiency level only, some students from English Composition I [students of the B.A in Modern Languages] may be qualified in B1 while others will remain close to reach that level. Similarly, some students in English Composition II [students of the B.A in English Teaching] reach the B2 level while others will remain in B1.*

3. Is there an influence of Spanish in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?

*Yes, there is. Students show Spanish influence in their compositions when they use cognates. In some other cases, word order seems to relate closely to L1 influence. One last element that can be noticed is the double negation that is possible in L1 but it is not in L2.*

4. What is more important for you when you evaluate a composition: form or content? Both? Why?

*Both, I definitely grade both. While coherence, unity and transition among ideas are vital, form makes a composition easy to understand. Form can interrupt communication and must be graded to make sure a composition is entirely academic.*

5. Is Spanish writing process similar to English writing process?

*I have never taught Spanish composition; however, the rules for transition, coherence, organization and structure of a paragraph are considered standard for an academic composition. Therefore, if I must answer the question in a closed way, I will say that both processes are similar.*

6. Is there an influence of French (only for the Bachelor in Modern Languages) in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what ways?

*It is not present in their composition.*

7. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramática Española be added to the curriculum for Modern Languages?

*Yes, it should. In a way, this subject allows students to know and compare and contrast L1 and L2 structures. This can help them reduce the L1 influence when writing.*

8. Are you aware of any difference between the writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?

*No, I have to say that in general terms, they have the same areas of improvement and the same accuracy when writing.*

9. Who performs better in this subject, students of the Bachelor in English or the Bachelor in modern Languages?

*This answer is much related to answer in question 1.*

10. What positive or negative things could you say about the students' writing skills?

*Students' lack of interest for social, technological, political and environmental issues give them lack of vocabulary and lack of interest to read and write about important topics. This reduces their chances to select topics of interest.*

*If we understand what they like, students' motivation to learn how to write can be developed easily.*

11. Does the academic year make a difference between students' writing skills of students of B.A. in English or B.A. in modern Languages?

*It does. The experience, the confidence, the knowledge of the world and the academic knowledge are some of the most noticed elements between the two groups.*

**Technique #1, English Composition Expert III**

*University of El Salvador*

*Department of Foreign Languages*

*Research regarding writing performance from students coursing Composition I&II*

*Interview addressed to teachers that have taught or are currently teaching  
Composition I for Modern Languages or Composition II from the Bachelor in  
English*

**Individual Questionnaire**

**Objective:** The following questionnaire has been designed to check teachers' perspective in regards to the students' performance in the subject Composition either I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English).

**Instructions:**

Please answer the questions from your professional opinion.

1. Do you think students have a good basis in regards to grammar when they take the subject Composition I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English Teaching)?

*Yes, most of the students have a good basis, but there are some students who still need to review the grammar they studied in previous courses, not only in Grammar I and Grammar II, but also in the intensive English courses.*

2. What is the level that you consider students reach at the end of the course? A2 (Basic)? B1 (Intermediate)? B2 (Proficient user)/ Basic, intermediate, advanced? Why?

*The level most students reach at the end of the courses is B1, meaning an intermediate level.*

3. What is more important for you when you evaluate a composition: form or content? Both? Why?

*Both form and content are important because a good composition requires excellent form and appropriate content, but still there is something much more important, which is organization (paragraph and essay development).*

4. Is there an influence of Spanish in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what way?

*Yes, there is. Some students tend to use Spanish word order and false cognates in their English paragraphs or essays.*

5. Is L1 writing process similar to L2?

*Yes, the processes are similar and this fact should help English Composition students to write well, but the problem is that they do not know the writing techniques and strategies of their native language.*

6. Are you in agreement of brainstorming ideas first in Spanish and then translate them into English? Why?

*No, because using brainstorming in Spanish would prevent students from developing writing proficiency in the target language. The writing of English, in this case, would be handicapped in some way. Students do not need to use Spanish if they have a vast array of vocabulary and variety of grammar structures and patterns which can be grasped by students if they have good reading habits.*

7. Is there an influence of French (only for the Bachelor in Modern Languages) in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what way?

*Yes, but very little.*

8. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramática Española be added to the curriculum for Modern Languages?

*I think it would be a great idea to implement to the curriculum the subjects*

*“Redacción en Español” and “Gramatica Española”. It would help students to improve and develop the writing in their own language. Many students are learning a second language, which is good, but it is a shame that they don’t know the structure of their own language.*

9. Are you aware of any difference between the writing skills of students of the B. A in English Teaching and the B. A in Modern Languages?

*As for me, teaching two composition courses to students of the major in English Teaching is definitely good, but I can also state that I have had students of Modern Languages who really have excelled in their writing even though they just take one course.*

10. Who performs better in this subject, students of the Bachelor in English Teaching or the Bachelor in Modern Languages?

*In my case, students of Modern Languages, but there are students of the B. A in English Teaching who have done a great job too.*

11. What positive or negative things could you say about the students’ writing skills?

○ *Positive:*

- *If they have not developed their writing skills so much in their intensive courses, they still can do it in the Compositions courses*
- *When they read, they improve writing.*

○ *Negative:*

- *Many students need to be in contact with the target language a bit more than usual*
- *They do not write much in their free time*
- *They do not use writing strategies to begin writing paragraphs such as writing an outline, brainstorming, etc.*

12. What are the most common mistakes of students when writing?

- *Spanish word order due to the native language interference*

- *Use of false cognates and word choice*
- *Grammar mistakes*
- *Inappropriate or wrong organization.*

13. Does the academic year make a difference between students' writing skills of both majors?

*Students of Modern Languages take the Composition course in the 7<sup>th</sup> semester and this gives them the opportunity to acquire more language which they can use when they write in Composition I. But students of English Teaching don't have the same opportunity even though they take two courses of English composition.*

**Technique #1, English Composition Expert IV**

*University of El Salvador*

*Department of Foreign Languages*

*Research regarding writing performance from students coursing Composition I&II*

*Interview addressed to teachers that have taught or are currently teaching  
Composition I for Modern Languages or Composition II from the Bachelor in  
English*

**Individual Questionnaire**

**Objective:**

The following questionnaire has been designed to check teachers' perspective in regards to the students' performance in the subject Composition either I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English).

**Instructions:**

Please answer the questions from your professional opinion.

1. Do you think students have a good basis in regards to grammar when they take the subject Composition I (for Modern Languages) or II (for the Bachelor in English Teaching)?

*I consider that students have a good basis and a good level of English in both cases to start with these subjects of Composition I and Composition II.*

2. What is the level that you consider students reach at the end of the course? A2 (Basic)? B1 (Intermediate)? B2 (Proficient user)/ Basic, intermediate, advanced? Why?

*For composition I, I think students reach probably B1 place and relating to the*



*subject of Composition II, most of them reach B2 at the end of the course, but there are very few that reach C1 and they are very proficient users.*

3. What is more important for you when you evaluate a composition: form or content? Both? Why?

*It depends on the type of activity, but in more cases I check both of them: form and also content. Relating to composition I, for example, I check form and content but in Modern Language option if I ask them to write reactions in turn to something, they have read or to analyze an article or to give me their opinion in relation to a movie that I requested them to watch and things like those, I take into consideration content. But if it is something more academic such as an essay, I usually give them information, or I ask them to read about something before the class in order that they get ready in advance on what they can write and in those cases I take into account both: form and content.*

*Sometimes I ask my students to practice formal writing as if they were applying for scholarships, a job or any other program but there are not just letters. By doing this, student can have the proper knowledge and practice in case they have to create formal compositions in the future nor only in other subjects at the university but in other areas of their life.*

4. Is there an influence of Spanish in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what way?

*I could say that some students create some false cognates, and sometimes the pronunciation of words are as if were Spanish, and when they read they read the way they consider it is translated as if it were Spanish.*

5. Is L1 writing process similar to L2?

*There should be some similarities I have never taught Spanish classes but I think there are similarities in both languages. There are basic elements that are very similar and students have to take them into consideration to continue with the writing process. In fact, if they know how to create different types of sentences, it*

would be easier to them to write in English because it is almost the same process.

6. Are you in agreement of brainstorming idea first in Spanish and then translate them into English? Why?

*No, I am not. We don't encourage students to do that of translating ideas or words; instead of that, we encourage students to think and write in English and not to translate of Spanish to English.*

7. Is there an influence of French (only for the Bachelor in Modern Languages) in students' compositions? If the answer is positive, in what way?

*No, there is no influence of French in students' composition.*

8. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramática Española be added to the curriculum for Modern Languages?

*It would be a good idea. It could improve not only the writing skills in their own language but also the writing skills in a foreign language as well.*

9. Are you aware of any difference between the writing skills of students of the B. A in English Teaching and the B. A in Modern Languages?

*The differences I see are mostly in content. When students of the English Teaching option take the subject of Composition II they have more vocabulary and more ideas on how to create formal writings, so they go deeper in the structure of the essays. This could be the result of having taken two English Composition courses. In the case of students of Modern Languages, they have to practice and study a lot of information in a single semester. So, students of the English Teaching option have more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Even this situation is difficult for teacher since we have to move ahead very quickly with all the contents of the subject and most of the time, teachers can't go deeper in the subject because of the time in which we have to cover all the topics. It is a little bit complicated!*

10. Who performs better in this subject, students of the Bachelor in English Teaching or the Bachelor in Modern Languages?

*It is a hard question since I have said before we try to cover everything of the two classes of Compositions in a single subject in the case of students of Modern Languages, so making a comparison... I do not think it would be fair to say that one group is better than the other one. I just can say that students of Modern Languages work faster and harder.*

11. What positive or negative things could you say about the students' writing skills?

*In both majors, if I ask them to read and then to write something like a reaction to an article or any other document, I get very surprised about the knowledge they have about different things. I mean, sometimes we teachers tend to think that students do not know about different topics but that it is not true because they know a lot about different topics and that is one positive aspect of students.*

*Another positive aspect is to be aware of how close is English Grammar with English Composition because if they do well in the previous one, then they do a really good job in English Composition too. So, that is the reason why I recommend checking the notes on what students study in grammar in order to students can do a better job in this course. It is really nice to see them working into different stages to the moment they can complete an essay correctly in terms of content, form and organization.*

*I do not use the word "negative" but instead of that I say something that can be improved. So, in this sense, it is necessary that students read more since the more they read the better they performed. Another aspect in which students could improve is to be aware that writing is a process and it is not a matter of just adding words after words because sometimes students tend to think that they don't need grammar and intensive courses, and they think that writing words after words means that they are going to do a really good job in Composition and that is not true. Sometimes, we as teachers request them to react in some documents but they have to make use of the different things they have studied in previous courses*

*in order to attempt to apply that knowledge to the different tasks they have to do.  
Everything is linked!*

12. Does the academic year make a difference between students' writing skills of both majors?

*Students of English Teaching option go deeper in their written works. It would be much better to students of Modern Languages to take the subject of Composition II because it would give them more opportunities to learn about different things that we teachers are not able to cover because of the time we have to teach in one semester what should be consider in two semesters.*

**Technique #1, Spanish Composition Expert I, Spanish transcript**

*Universidad de El Salvador*

*Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras*

*Investigación sobre el desempeño de la redacción en los estudiantes que cursan la materia de Composición I o II en el departamento de Idiomas extranjeros*

*Entrevista dirigida a expertos en el área de Escritura y redacción en Español*

**Entrevista individual**

**Objetivo:**

La siguiente entrevista ha sido diseñada para verificar la perspectiva de expertos de escritura y redacción en español y el desempeño de los alumnos para contrastar el proceso de escribir en la lengua materna y un idioma extranjero.

Redacción: Composición escrita sobre un tema

Trasfondo: este experto trabajó previamente en una escuela, y actualmente se encuentra en una posición muy importante en el Departamento de Idiomas Extranjeros.

1. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuál es la situación actual de la redacción en nuestro país?

*Yo empecé trabajando en una escuela pública hace 15 años en la Libertad [...] lo que conozco de la escuela pública es que la composición no se trabaja como tal, se trabaja más una parte de la rama de la lingüística, se trabaja la gramática, un poco la ortografía pero la composición como tal, redactar buenos párrafos, redactar ensayos, eso es casi inexistente. En primaria o en bachillerato. No se enseña como tal, se enseña como ortografía o como gramática, se enseñan reglas gramaticales... de hecho habían concursos de ese tipo, pero no como ensayos.*

*También conozco la experiencia de la escuela de Estados Unidos donde la escritura es un eje transversal desde primaria hasta la universidad. O sea, el escribir un documento es una rutina [...] por eso cuando los estudiantes de bachillerato llegan a la universidad no tienen problema con la composición.*

*Y aquí el problema es que nosotros esperamos que [los estudiantes] lleguen a la universidad con esas competencias pero no se ha trabajado de manera seria y sistemática en los niveles previos. Y como aquí si hay que redactar, expresar ideas, hacer reportes, hacer ensayos, la tesis. Una de las cosas que más señalan [en los trabajos de graduación] es que muchas veces no es solo una cuestión de contenido sino la forma como se redacta, como se presenta, a tal grado que muchas veces al asesor le toca estar haciendo el trabajo de corrector de estilo. De darle forma a las ideas que los estudiantes presentan. Es un problema, si, que se refleja a la entrada e incluso al final. Es un aspecto que hay que trabajar bastante.*

*Últimamente como sabemos que [los trabajos de graduación] se publican en línea, ya los asesores son más cuidadosos porque ahí va a su nombre.*

*En términos generales no se trabaja como composición, algunos colegios privados si hacen el intento. [La composición] Debería ser parte del currículo. Hay ejes transversales que se deberían trabajar como la composición o la oratoria. En el sistema educativo argentino, la oratoria es un eje transversal y por eso los argentinos no paran de hablar, son buenos para expresarse. Eso se alimentó desde la primaria. Así como los norteamericanos son buenos para escribir, los argentinos son buenos para el discurso.*

2. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué factores positivos y/o negativos han contribuido a la situación actual de la forma en como los estudiantes escriben en nuestro país?

*Hay un dilema entre las intenciones que están plasmadas en el currículo, y la entrega didáctica que se hace en los salones de clase. Porque en una reforma*

*educativa no solo basta con escribir los documentos sino tener personal capacitado que lo pueda implementar. Yo trabaje en la formulación de los programas de tercer ciclo y bachillerato para la enseñanza del inglés. Se publicaron, pero hay muchos maestros que no lo usan porque no pueden usarlo porque no tienen la competencia lingüística y tampoco conocen de metodología. En algunas escuelas lo usan como referencia pero ahí está guardado.*

*¿Ahora que está haciendo el Ministerio [de Educación]? Invirtiendo en capacitar a los maestros en servicio para que puedan hacer uso del programa y algunos textos de apoyo. Entonces se necesita tener las dos cosas, un planteamiento y un documento donde se plasmen las ideas, pero también el recurso humano que lo pueda ejecutar.*

*Ahora si ustedes ven en el departamento ya hablando concretamente del departamento [de Idiomas Extranjeros], no todos los maestros se preocupan por la parte de la composición. Yo podría mencionar algunos casos [de maestros] que se han especializado casi de manera autodidacta porque han impartido cursos de manera repetitiva y que de alguna manera han acumulado conocimientos en composición.*

3. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuáles son los errores frecuentes que los alumnos cometen a la hora de escribir?

*Aparte de las cosas pequeñas como deletreo, gramática... [el principal problema] es darle forma la discurso. A veces no tiene forma lo que plantean. Las ideas son dispersas, difusas, y una composición tiene cuerpo. Esta la idea principal o thesis statement, luego vienen ideas secundarias usualmente tres o cuatro, y luego el párrafo de cierre. Ese es el formato más común. y a cada idea hay que agregarle supporting details que pueden ser números, ejemplos, pero hay que desarrollar esas ideas y a veces ese cuerpo no se ve. Una idea por acá otra por allá, no se desarrolla bien, no se apoya bien. Ahora lo que se conoce como cohesion y*

*coherence que también son aspectos donde se falla porque además de la forma el discurso debe ser consistente, coherente de principio a fin y esas son las cosas que a veces no se encuentra en los escritos. Hay ideas centrales sin desarrollo, la secuencia de las ideas, esa parte general y más gruesa de la composición no se trabaja. Caemos en el error de trabajar más en cosas específicas como deletrear palabras, la conjugación de los verbos ya que el discurso es todo lo que se escribe.*

4. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué es preferible evaluar forma (gramática, puntuación) o contenido (coherencia, cohesión, mensaje de la composición), o ambos? ¿Por qué?

*Hay que evaluar todo pero si me dieran a escoger yo prefiero que [la composición] este bien planteado y que vaya con algunos errores de deletreo o incluso con algunos errores de gramática pero si el mensaje se entiende y está bien estructurado y planteado, yo me quedaría con eso, pero hay maestros que no se preocupan por eso. Ellos se preocupan porque la palabra este bien escrita o que el verbo este bien conjugado y ahí no se ven los otros aspectos. Tendríamos que trabajar en esos dos aspectos, el específico y el más macro de la composición.*

5. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué debe reforzarse el currículo de educación básica y media para mejorar la redacción?

*Si a mí me tocara tomar decisiones, y a veces converso con personas del ministerio y he trabajado con ellos en varios proyectos. Yo siento que hay ejes centrales que deberían incluirse en el currículo además de las asignaturas principales. Yo pensaría en tres ejes transversales investigación [para crear profesionales reflexivos], composición y oratoria. Hay otros temas que son vigentes como el género, inclusividad, educación para la paz que son ejes*



*transversales oficiales pero hay otros que son importantes porque la comunicación es clave para acceder al conocimiento, y la investigación es clave para ser reflexivo y propositivo. Si no hacemos investigaciones y no reflexionamos sobre la realidad, nos conformamos con cómo están las cosas pero ser crítico, no criticón, es analizar la realidad. Proponer que podemos cambiar. Reflective teaching pasa porque el estudiante sea un investigador y el maestro inculca eso en el estudiante.*

*Lo que pasa es que resulta tedioso y trabajoso el trabajar un curso a plenitud. El maestro a veces no quiere echarse todo el rollo de calificar. Usted presenta el primer borrador, el maestro se lo corrige, y le da la retroalimentación. Después usted presenta el segundo, y el maestro lo regresa. La versión final [de la composición] queda después de cuatro [borradores]. En cada versión hay correcciones y se ha ido mejorando. Usualmente acá [el Departamento de Idiomas Extranjeros] se les pide una sola composición. Escriba un ensayo, preséntelo y a ese le ponen nota. La composición es un proceso guiado, necesita tiempo y dedicación. Tiene que ver con la disposición del maestro.*

**Technique #1, Spanish Composition Expert I, English translation from Spanish**

*University of El Salvador*

*Foreign Language Department*

*Research about students' performance on the subject of Composition I or II in the Foreign Language Department.*

*Interview addressed to experts of Spanish composition*

**Individual Interview**

**Objective:**

The following interview has been designed to check the perspective of writing experts in Spanish and students' performance to contrast the writing process in the mother tongue and a foreign language.

Background: This expert previously worked in a school and currently holds a very important position in the Foreign Language Department.

1. From your point of view and your professional experience, what is the current situation of composition in Spanish in our country?

*I started working in a public school 15 years ago in La Libertad. What I know about public school is that composition is not really taken into account, it is taken as part of linguistics. Students are taught about grammar, a bit of spelling, but not composition as it is defined: to create good paragraphs, write essays. That is inexistent in Elementary School or High School. Composition is mistaken for spelling or grammar. Only grammatical rules are being taught.*

*I also had the experience of studying in the United States where writing is across the curriculum from Elementary School to college. It means, writing a document is*

*a routine that is why when students from High School go to college, they do not have problems with compositions.*

*The problem in our country is that we expect students to arrive to the university with all those competences when they have not been developed in an organized manner in the previous levels. In the university, students have to compose, express ideas, write reports, make essays, graduation projects, etc. One of the aspects that is pointed out the most [in graduation projects] is that it is not a matter of content, but the way how a composition is written, how it is presented to such degree that sometimes graduation project advisors have to correct stylistics, shape the ideas that students present. It is a problem that is seen from the beginning of students' career to the end. It is an aspect that has to be considered.*

*We know that lately, [graduation projects] are published online; therefore, advisors are more careful since their name is shown.*

*In general terms, composition is not being taken into account as it should. However, some private institutions do try to consider it. Composition should be part of the curriculum and should be across the curriculum along with public speaking. In the Argentinian educational system, public speaking is across the curriculum, and that is why Argentinians never stop speaking because they express themselves efficiently. That habit has been nurtured from Elementary School. As American are good at writing, Argentinians are good for public speaking.*

2. From your point of view and your professional experience, what are the negative and positive factors that have contributed to the current composition performance in students in our country?

*There is a disagreement in the intentions of the curriculum and the teacher's delivery in the class. An educational reform needs not only documents but also trained personnel to execute the work that is needed. I worked in the creation of the syllabi of Secondary and High School for English teaching. They were*

*published, but there are many teachers that are unable to use them because they do not possess the linguistic competence, and they do not know about the methodology to use. In schools, they use this type of syllabi, but it is kept away and not put into practice.*

*Nowadays, what is the Ministry [of Education] doing? They are investing to train teachers, so they can use these syllabi and some supporting texts. We need to have the two things: an idea and a document where ideas are written, but also we need the human resources to execute the ideas.*

*Now, if you check the [Foreign Language] Department, not all teachers care about composition. I can mention the name [of some teachers] that have specialized almost by themselves because they have taught composition courses a number of times, and that is how they have accumulated knowledge about composition.*

3. From your point of view and your professional experience, What are the most frequent errors that students make when writing?

*Beside simple details like spelling, grammar... [the main issue] is shaping the speech. Sometimes, what they try to say is not correctly organized. Ideas are diffuse, dispersed, and a composition must have a body that is the main idea, then there will be secondary ideas, usually three or four, then the concluding paragraph. That is the most common format, and each idea must have supporting details that can be statistics, examples, but the ideas must be developed, and sometimes the organization is not clear. There is an idea here, an idea there, but there is no support. What is known as coherence and cohesion are aspects that students also fail to distinguish because discourse must be consistent and coherent from beginning to end, and those are characteristics that are not found in many written works. There are main ideas without development, no sequencing of ideas. The most general and complicated part of composition is not taken into account. We*

*sometimes make a mistake and that is to work on specific items such as spelling, verb conjugation, but the discourse is everything that is being written.*

4. From your point of view and your professional experience, what is most important to evaluate, form (grammar, punctuation) or content (coherence, cohesion, composition's message)? Why?

*Everything has to be evaluated, but if I were to choose, I'd rather have a well-developed [composition]. There may be some spelling or grammar mistakes, but if the message is understandable, well-structured and well-presented, I prefer that, but there are teachers that do not want that. They worry if how words are well-written or not, or a verb that is conjugated correctly, and then other aspects are not considered. We should work on those two aspects, the most specific one, and the most general of the composition.*

5. From your point of view and your professional experience, what should be reinforced in the curricula of Elementary and Middle School to improve composition?

*If I were to make some changes, and sometimes I talk with people from the Ministry of Education, and I have also worked with them in different projects, some items should be added across the curriculum, I believe, besides the already established subjects which are mandatory. I would believe in three items across the curriculum: research [to help professionals to reflect], composition, and public speaking. There are other aspects that are also important nowadays such as gender, inclusiveness, education for peace that are already across the curriculum, but there are others that are very important because communication is key to access to information and knowledge, and research is important to reflect and help the community. If we do not make research, we use to accept the things that surround us, we do not wish to change the statu quo. Being critical is helpful to*

*analyze reality, to propose what can be changed. Reflective teaching takes place because students is a researcher, and the teacher gives all the necessary tools.*

*What happens is that working fully a course is difficult and tiresome. A teacher does not want to complicate his life grading students' work. Students present the first draft, teacher corrects it, and feedback is given. Then you show the second draft, and teacher gives it back. The final version [of the composition] occurs after 4 [drafts]. Each version has corrections, and has been improving. Usually, here [in the Foreign Language Department] a single composition is handed in. The teacher asks an essay to be handed, and that is the one that is graded. Composition is a guided process, it takes time and dedication. It has something to do with the teacher's disposition.*

**Technique #1, Spanish Composition Expert I, Spanish transcript**

*Universidad de El Salvador*

*Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras*

*Investigación sobre el desempeño de la redacción en los estudiantes que cursan la materia de Composición I o II en el departamento de Idiomas extranjeros*

*Entrevista dirigida a expertos en el área de Escritura y redacción en Español*

**Entrevista individual**

**Objetivo:**

La siguiente entrevista ha sido diseñada para verificar la perspectiva de expertos de escritura y redacción en español y el desempeño de los alumnos para contrastar el proceso de escribir en la lengua materna y un idioma extranjero.

Redacción: Composición escrita sobre un tema

1. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuál es la situación actual de la redacción en nuestro país?

*No puedo opinar porque no sé en general pero aquí vienen grandes cantidades de estudiantes a la universidad que no saben escribir bien, meten demasiados temas en uno solo y se desvían de la idea principal a la hora de redactar.*

2. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué factores positivos y/o negativos han contribuido a la situación actual de la forma en cómo los estudiantes escriben en nuestro país?

*En las escuelas, colegios o institutos no se hacen actividades que realmente fomenten la redacción en los estudiantes. Ni siquiera los maestros a veces no saben cómo redactar y así como se puede esperar que los estudiantes escriban bien. Siempre hay una gran cantidad de errores que se cometen a la hora de redactar un texto y los estudiantes así van pasando los grados sin saber redactar*

*porque nunca les enseñaron a hacerlo.*

3. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Cuáles son los errores frecuentes que los alumnos cometen a la hora de escribir?

*Vienen grandes cantidades de estudiantes de diferentes carreras que vienen a que les revise algún programa que darán de redacción y en los programas siempre solo se incluye los signos de puntuación, el uso de las letras, la tilde: sus reglas y excepciones. Para mí, yo no le voy a decir que no es importante porque la experiencia me dice que esas cosas son cosméticas. A mí de que me sirve que un estudiante sepa usar bien las letras y sepa tildar bien las palabras y no se entienda lo que escribe porque no tiene la capacidad de organizar ideas y no poder fijarlas en un papel respetando la relación lógica entre ellas. Yo prefiero que el muchacho me organice el pensamiento de forma correcta y luego pulamos, depuremos y metamos asuntos de ortografía. Otro error que se comete es decirle a los muchachos: si usted quiere escribir bien, tiene que saber mucho de gramática y sus reglas, pero nunca le dicen que es lo que tiene que hacer con el conocimiento gramatical, como lo debe de usar y la gramática no necesariamente es conocer las estructuras para usarlas, la gramática es también conocer muchas estructuras para evitarlas porque el conocimiento gramatical me faculta a mí no para escribir correctamente porque el conocimiento gramatical no es para eso, el conocimiento gramatical es para perfeccionar el empleo de la estructura del idioma, porque las estructuras yo ya las conozco, las uso pero son estructuras imperfectas y cuando yo me acerco al conocimiento gramatical lo que hago es perfeccionar el manejo de esas estructuras. Yo le tomé la palabra a Noam Chomsky que dice que la competencia lingüística radica precisamente en la capacidad que yo puedo tener para poder construir oraciones como también para poder juzgarlas. Ahí aparece una famosa dicotomía de gramaticalidad e agramaticalidad que es una dicotomía con un carácter lógico que la agramaticalidad es la competencia que yo tengo para poder juzgar un enunciado y ver si está construido de manera correcta conforme a las estructuras del idioma, respetando el código. El conocimiento gramatical debe ir junto con el incremento*



*de vocabulario. Ambas cosas van de la mano porque permiten poder escribir bien. Mientras yo crezco el léxico, yo sé utilizar mejor las estructuras y el dominio también mejora. Hay una relación dialéctica entre ambos es por eso que se le debe de decir al joven que es lo que debe de fijarse cuando lea. El joven debe saber todo lo que ocurre en la oración porque la oración es la unidad fundamental del párrafo. El joven necesita ser instruido y tener el conocimiento gramatical y desarrollar el pensamiento analítico y el pensamiento sintético. En eso está fallando todo el sistema educativo nacional. No hacen ejercicios en el aula, ni en colegios, ni escuelas, ni institutos, los jóvenes no saben descomponer las oraciones y desarrollar ese pensamiento.*

4. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué es preferible evaluar forma (gramática, puntuación) o contenido (coherencia, cohesión, mensaje de la composición), o ambos? ¿Por qué?

*Evaluar forma o contenido eso depende de los objetivos que el profesor se ha trazado. Si lo que el profesor quiere evaluar la forma del texto, entonces obviamente que no queda otra salida más que evaluar el aspecto formal pero si lo que se busca es evaluar el contenido porque hay un objetivo enfocado hacia eso pues entonces se evalúa eso. A menos que alguien me diga hay que evaluar contenido y forma porque ese es el objetivo. Yo no puedo decir cuál es más importante porque todo depende de los objetivos que están y de acuerdo a eso así los voy a evaluar. Que la lectura no sea pesada sino que se vea que va siendo marcada por puntos, por comas porque eso me da una lectura ágil, dinámica y fluida pero si se usa punto y coma o solo comas se vuelve pesado el texto y hay un riesgo elevado de que en esa extensión se haya perdido la idea principal, el punto y coma solo va delimitando y la idea se va que luego uno se da cuenta que está hablando de otras cosas, se reserva solo para ocasiones que se sabe que quedan bien, son cosas que están escondidas en el manejo de los signos de puntuación.*

5. Desde su punto de vista y con su experiencia profesional ¿Qué debe reforzarse el currículo de educación básica y media para mejorar la redacción?

*Redactar no es cuestión de normas es asunto de conocimiento. Ese es el grave error del sistema educativo que para saber escribir se deben saber todas las normas, así ni ganas dan de escribir al ver el gran tanate de reglas que hay que aprender para redactar porque las reglas encarcelan pero el conocimiento libera entonces si hay que estudiar gramática pero con una actitud crítica y reflexiva no solo para memorizar el montón de estructuras y reconocerlas, eso no me saca de apuros, pero si yo reflexiono, crítico y propongo como un problema gramático se puede resolver con una solución léxico yo me traigo del vocabulario del idioma una palabra que me sustituya toda una construcción gramatical en buena hora por lo que retomo que no se puede separar el dominio gramatical del dominio léxico, por fuerza se deben llevar de la mano, pero el gran error que aquí se le da gramática pero no se les da léxico. Entonces como pretendemos que los estudiantes resuelvan problemas gramaticales y que cada vez escriban con mayor competencia cuando la materia prima que son las voces del idioma están completamente en el olvido, entonces la ruta tendría que ser a la inversa: incrementemos primero la competencia léxica, hagámoslo crecer en vocabulario y ahí si tiene sentido. Si los estudiantes quieren aprender a redactar entonces se van a leer pero buscando todas las palabras extrañas buscando su significado y aprender a usarlas en oraciones y después de ese dominio se estudia gramática y se reflexiona sobre ella. Evaluar cohesión o coherencia depende de los objetivos trazados para la composición del texto. La cohesión está más tirada al aspecto formal porque la cohesión se trabaja con recursos léxicos y gramaticales pero si los recursos léxico gramaticales no se manejan entonces los problemas de coherencia saltan a la vista. Si Le permito que coherencia lo asocien con contenido pero cohesión es aspecto formal dentro del texto no dentro de la oración. Cohesión aparece desde el momento que yo reconozco el texto como unidad de comunicación.*

**Technique #1, Spanish Composition Expert II, English translation from Spanish**

*University of El Salvador*

*Foreign Language Department*

*Research about students' performance on the subject of Composition I or II in the Foreign Language Department.*

*Interview addressed to experts of Spanish composition*

**Individual Interview**

**Objective:**

The following interview has been designed to check the perspective of writing experts in Spanish and students' performance to contrast the writing process in the mother tongue and a foreign language.

1. From your point of view and professional experience, what is the current situation in our country in regards to writing?

*I cannot express my point of view because I do not know in general, but what I can say is that lots of students come to the university, and they do not know how to write well. They include several topics in a single one, and they tend to stray the main idea when writing.*

2. From your point of view and professional experience, what are the positive and /or negative factors that have contributed to the current situation of writing in our country?

*In schools or high schools there are no activities aimed to foster writing in students. Sometimes, not even teachers know how to write. So, how can we expect students write well? There is always a big amount of mistakes made when writing and*

students go like that passing the next levels without knowing how to write well because they were never taught to do it.

3. From your point of view and professional experience, what are the most frequent errors students made when writing a composition?

Several students from different majors come to me because they want me to check and provide feedback on the syllabus of a Spanish writing course they are going to teach. What it is being included all the time is punctuation, spelling, diacritical signs and their rules and exceptions. For me, I will not say it is not important because experience tells me those are cosmetic things. What good does it do to students to know how to use letters correctly or put diacritics in word if what he writes is unintelligible because he does not have the capacity to organize his ideas and reflect them in paper respecting the logic relationship between them. I personally prefer the students know how to organize their ideas in a correct way and then refine, revise and check spelling. Another frequent mistake is telling students the following: "if you want to write well you have to know a lot about grammar and its rules", but they never tell them what is what they have to do with knowledge of grammar, how to use grammar. Grammar is not only to know structures to use them; grammar is also to know structures to avoid them. The grammatical knowledge is not to know how to write correctly. Grammar is not for that. Grammar is to refine the use of the structure of language. I know the structures, I use the structures, but those are imperfect structures, and when I get closer to the grammatical knowledge what I do is enhance the use of the structures. Noam Chomsky says that the linguistic competence consists in the capacity we have to construct sentences as well as the capacity to assess and judge those sentences. There appears a famous dichotomy of grammaticality and non-grammaticality. Non-grammaticality is the competence I have to judge a statement and see if it is well developed in accordance with structures of language respecting the code. Grammatical knowledge should go along with the increase of vocabulary. Both things go hand handy because they allow writing correctly. While I increase my lexicon, I know how to use better the grammatical structures and the mastery

increases. There is a relationship between both, and that is why the students need to be told that they have to pay attention to that when reading. The student needs to know all what happen in the sentence because the sentence is the main unit of the paragraph. The student needs to be taught and needs to have the grammatical knowledge and needs to develop the analytical thinking. That is what the national educational system is failing to do. Students do not practice good activities in schools, high schools, inside the classroom; they do not know how to break into parts the parts of speech and develop that thinking.

4. From your point of view and professional experience, what is better to assess: form (grammar, punctuation) or content (coherence, cohesion, message of the composition) or both? Why?

To assess form or content depends on the objectives the teacher sets. If the teacher wants to assess form only, then obviously he will only evaluate that aspect. If what he is looking for is to evaluate content, then he will do so because that's what the objective says. I cannot say which one is more important because it all depends on the objectives that are already established, and the assessment is going to be according to that. To see if the reading of the text is not heavy, but it has punctuation: periods and commas. If the text has only commas and semicolons the reading turns out to be heavy and there is a risk that due to that extension the main idea got lost.

5. From your point of view and professional experience, what has to be reinforced in the curriculum of junior high and high school to improve writing?

Writing is not about rules and knowledge. That is a huge mistake of the educational system that says: in order to write, you need to know all the rules. Nobody even feels up to write when knowing the huge amount of rules to learn how to write. Rules imprison you, but knowledge sets you free. Yes, there is a necessity to study grammar but with a critical and reflective attitude, not only to memorize several

structures and know them, that is not worthy. But if I reflect, criticize and propose how a grammatical problem can be solved with a lexical solution. For example, I can bring a word from the repertoire of vocabulary and use it to substitute the whole grammatical construction. For this reason I say that we cannot isolate the grammatical domain of the lexical domain. How can we pretend that students will solve grammatical problems and pretend every time they write they will do it with better writing competence if the main aspect which is vocabulary has been forgotten? So, the path is the other way around: let us increase first the lexical competence, let us have a broad repertoire because in that way it makes sense. If students want to learn how to write, they have to read, but when reading, they have to look for the meaning of those words they do not know and learn the meaning and the use of those. After they have mastered vocabulary, they should study grammar and reflect about it. To evaluate cohesion or coherence depends on the objectives set up for the composition of the text. Cohesion is more formal because are lexical and grammatical resources, but if there is no mastery of lexical and grammatical resources, then problems of coherence appear. I can allow you to associate coherence with content, but keep in mind that cohesion is a formal aspect inside the text, not inside the sentence. Cohesion appears since the moment I recognize the text as unit of communication.

## Appendix L

### Instrument # 1 Qualitative Content Analysis Rubric

English Composition I (Modern Languages)

English Composition II (English Teaching)

Category	Excellent 5	Very good 4	Good to average 3	Fair to poor 2	Very poor 1
Content	Expert – outstanding – impeccable development of thesis – appropriate to assigned topic.	Knowledgeable – substantive – accurate development of thesis – relevant to assigned topic.	Some knowledge of subject – adequate range – limited development of thesis	Limited knowledge of subject – little substance – inadequate development of thesis	Does not show knowledge of subject – non-substantive – not pertinent – or not enough to evaluate
Organization	Very fluent expression – all ideas clearly stated/ supported – fully organized – coherent sequencing – very thorough development of supporting details	Fluent expression – most ideas clearly stated/ supported – well-organized – logical sequencing – thorough development of supporting details	Somewhat choppy – loosely organized, but main ideas stand out – limited development of supporting details – logical but incomplete sequencing	Non-fluent – ideas confused or disconnected – lacks logical sequencing and developing of supporting details	Does not communicate – no organization – or not enough to evaluate
Vocabulary	Sophisticated range – perfect word/idiom choice and usage – word form mastery – precise register	Very good range – effective word/idiom choice and usage – word form knowledge – appropriate register	Adequate range – occasional errors of word / idiom form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured	Limited range – frequent errors of word /idiom form, choice, usage – meaning confused or obscured	Essentially translation – little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form – or not enough to evaluate
Sentence construction	Perfect complex constructions – exact use of coordinators, subordinators, and transitions – no errors of S-V agreement , tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	Effective complex constructions – slight problems in coordinators, subordinators, and transitions – few errors of S-V agreement , tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions	Effective but simple constructions – minor problems in complex constructions – several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured	Major problems in simple constructions – frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and fragments, run-ons, deletions meaning confused	Virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules – dominated by errors – does not communicate – or not enough to evaluate
Mechanics + proofreading	Demonstrates expertise of conventions – 0 to 1 errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.	Demonstrates mastery of conventions – few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.	The document has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing but meaning not obscured.	The document has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing, with poor handwriting. Its meaning is confused or obscured.	The document shows no mastery of conventions, and is dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.
Total score:					

**Instrument # 1 Qualitative Content Analysis Example I**

This student was classified in the category A2. The essay comes from a student of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages. The composition is shown exactly as it was handed by the student. No modification has been made.

**Title: Importance of sign language**

Would you like to understand a deaf person? in the world there are millions of deaf people, whose first language isn't a spoken language. So they adopt alternatives forms of visual communication that almost listener people don't understand. This alternative is well-know as sign language, where hands are the useful part of the body to learn it.

Unfortunately deaf people make up linguistic minorities making difficult communication with listener people. Taking this in account; everybody has to learn sign languages to communicate with them.

Deaf people have more opportunities to socialize when a listener learns their language. Most of the time deaf parents are listener; it is for that while their children are growing up, they have the responsibility to learn sign language, in order to helps them when they began to study. This, help deaf feel support by their families. However, deaf people not only develop in family nucleus, also in society. Where the situation becomes difficult, since they don't find whose has the ability to interact and provided them what they need where they aren't near of their families. Based on this, it can affirmed that learning sign language is the easy way to provide deaf people the opportunity to be taken into account and to be understood in the world that we all constituted.

Learning sign language is the best way to understand deaf world. Although we live in the same country, it must be taken into account that deaf's culture differs from



listener's culture. This can be reflected in sincerity that deaf people bring when express, also in his gesture when they want to make known how much news surprised, hurt or frightened them. Their gesture is an important skill at the time when listener wants to undertake the sign language's knowledge. Besides as mentioned before, listener has coupled that deaf people will always tell the things as they think and they expect the same from listener. Therefore it is necessary to investigate about deaf's culture to reach the maximum level of sign language learning.

Learning sign language provided deaf people more opportunities. Deaf people are undirected forced to study careers where speech isn't necessary. Although they have preferences for more complex careers, their linguistics limit between listeners forced them to take most of the time physical education. Creating in this way more careers opportunities such a degrees to engineering to have in the future more opportunities job also. Equality and opportunities through sign language is deaf people's needs.

It can be understood that deaf people don't differ to listener people, if anyone can contribute to a better world for them; they are listeners, since they have the ability to interact in both worlds and to know about the two native languages that listeners don't have idea they exist. Being part of a new culture to learn from each other and to make a better world for deaf people with equal rights is the most sincere act of humanism to listener's people from deaf's people.

**Instrument # 1 Qualitative Content Analysis Example II**

This student was classified in the category A2. The essay comes from a student of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching. The composition is shown exactly as it was handed by the student. No modification has been made.

**Title: Be careful with the water you consume everyday.**

You need to be careful when you drink water everyday. There is no doubt that drinking water everyday helps your body. However, drinking too much water can be dangerous because it can damage your organs and it can cause swelling in your body and you can die immediately, also it can lead to loss of sleep as people have to get up in the night to go to the toilet, another studies show it can even cause kidney damage, instead of preventing it. To solve this problem you should drink water that is necessary to drink everyday, you should drink less water if you consume some soups, beverages, and if you do not like to drink water, it does not matter, you should eat some fruits and vegetables.

You should only drink 2.3 liter of water everyday. This is essential for the body. However, if you drink too much water you can have disastrous consequences in your kidneys. It Plays a vital role in keeping your body balanced and healthy. The kidneys filter waste products and excess water out of your blood, which are then expelled in urine. I you drink too much water, the blood becomes diluted and the kidneys can not filter it fast enough to maintain the proper sodium balance. This condition is called hyponatremia and it causes a big infection including fatigue, nausea, vomiting and it can cause death.

You should drink less water if you consume some soups; beverages. New study in Australia, showed that the recommendation has been misinterpreted and we mistakenly believe that we must specifically take water, eight glasses of water per

day. However, the scientist Spero Tsindons found that is not only that helps the body but also the fluids found in soups, coffes, tea, juicy and hot or cold beverages. And that is why you need measure the water for avoiding the consume of a lot of water, if you drink a lot of water it can cause swelling in your body and you can die inmediately.

If you do not like to drink water it does not matter, you should eat some fruits and vegetables that contain a lot of water all days. Some research made in Australia showed that people who do not like to drink water can eat the following fruits and vegetables: watermelon, avocado, cucumber, strawberries, broccoli, chard, grapefruit, and lettuce. They contained 92 percent of water. For examples: if you eat two pieces of watermelon or two cucumbers it is equal two glasses of water, if you eat two strawberries or two grapefruit it is equal one glasses of water, if you eat one broccol or one lettuce it is equal two glasses of water.

It is important than you learn the measure of this vegetables and fruits for avoinding the consume of a lot of water and avoiding damage your organs. You need to eat these everyday because in that manner your body will be hydrated.

Drinking to much water everyday can cause series problems in your body and that is why you need to drink just the amount the water that Doctors recommend. you need to be aware of the amount of water you drink everyday. However, if you do not like to drink water you can replace it eating fruits and vegetables that are rich in water.

In that manner you will have a healthy life.

University of El Salvador

Department of Foreign Languages

Research regarding writing performance of students taking Composition I

Questionnaire addressed to students taking the subject Composition I of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages

Individual Questionnaire

Objective:

The following questionnaire has been designed to check: the background knowledge and students' opinion in regards to composition skills from students of the Bachelor of Arts in Modern Languages.

Instructions: Please fill in the circles with the answer that you consider appropriate.

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age: 15-20  21-25   
26-30  Older than 30

3. Place of residence:  
City  Countryside

4. Who do you live with?  
Parents  Relatives   
Classmates  Other

5. Have you ever travelled abroad?  
Yes  No

6. Do you have a job? Yes  No
- If previous answer is yes, in which field?  
Call Centre  Teaching  Other   
where \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever changed major?  
Yes  No

8. Did you graduate from...  
Public  or  
Private  school?

9. What is your PAES score?  
Below 6  6.0-7.0   
7.0-9.0  9.0-10

10. Did you have high scores (above 7.0) in subjects like Ortografía and Lenguaje y Literatura in High School?  
Yes  No

11. Did you study English before coming to the university?  
Yes  No

- If answer is yes: How?  
Language Academy   
By Myself   
Other

12. What academic level did your parents complete?  
Primary School   
Secondary School   
High School   
University   
Technical degree

13. Do you devote time to writing in English?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, how much time do you dedicate per day?

Half an hour

One Hour

More Than Hour

14. How many lines in English do you write per day?

Some lines

Half a page

More than one page

15. Are you a person that reads books in English constantly?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, how many per year?

1-3  3-5  5-10

10-15  15 or more

16. Do you consider reading books helps you to improve your writing skill?

Yes  No

21. Should the subject Redacción en Español and Gramatica Española be added to the curriculum?

Yes  No

22. Do you consider there are enough subjects to help you write well in English?

Yes  No

23. How confident are you about your writing?

Very confident

Somewhat confident

Not confident at all

24. Do you consider writing a difficult skill to develop?

Yes  No

25. Do you feel confident in your grammar?

Yes  No

26. How would you characterize your grammar?

Good

Average

Poor

17. Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write?

Is the influence positive  or negative  ?

18. Do you think Spanish composition process and English composition process are similar?

Yes  No

27. Do you know what cohesion is?

Yes  No

28. Do you know what coherence is?

Yes  No

19. Has the subject "Ortographie et Stylistique du Français" (French Ortography and Stylistics) helped you improve your writing skills?

Yes  No

20. Do you think French has an influence in the way you write?

Yes  No

Is the influence positive   
Or negative  ?

29. Do you know how to write a personal letter?

Yes  No

30. Do you know how to write an academic essay?

Yes  No

31. Do you know how to write a report?

Yes  No

32. Do you know how to write a formal email?

Yes  No

33. Do you consider form (grammar, syntax) is important when evaluating writing?

Yes  No

34. Do you consider content (coherence, and cohesion) is important when evaluating writing?

Yes  No

35. Do you consider content is more important than form?

Yes  No

36. Are you familiar with the four stages of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing)?

A Lot

Not Much

A Little

37. Do you brainstorm before writing a composition?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

38. Do you know how to create an outline?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

39. Do you have vocabulary to write a composition?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

40. Do you know how to write a topic sentence?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

41. Do you know how to write a paragraph?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

42. Do you know how to write an essay?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

43. Do you create a draft before you submit your paper?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

University of El Salvador  
Department of Foreign Languages

Research regarding writing performance of students taking Composition II  
Questionnaire addressed to students taking the subject Composition II of the B. A. in English

Individual Questionnaire

Objective:

The following questionnaire has been designed to check: the background knowledge and students' opinion in regards to composition skills from students of the Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching.

Instructions: Please fill in the circles with the answer that you consider appropriate.

1. Gender: Male  Female
2. Age: 15-20  21-25   
26-30  Older than 30
3. Place of residence:  
City  Countryside
4. Who do you live with?  
Parents  Relatives   
Classmates  Other
5. Have you ever travelled abroad?  
Yes  No

6. Do you have a job? Yes  No
- If previous answer is yes, In which field?  
Call Centre  Teaching  Other   
where \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever changed major?  
Yes  No

8. Did you graduate from...  
Public  or  
Private  school?

9. What is your PAES score?  
Below 6  6.0-7.0   
7.0-9.0  9.0-10

10. Did you have high scores (above 7.0) in subjects like Ortografia and Lenguaje y Literatura in High School?  
Yes  No

11. Did you study English before coming to the university?  
Yes  No

- If answer is yes: How?  
Language Academy   
By Myself   
Other

12. What academic level did your parents complete?  
Primary School   
Secondary School   
High School   
University   
Technical degree

13. Do you devote time to writing in English?  
Yes  No

If the answer is yes, how much time do you dedicate per day?

Half an hour   
One Hour   
More Than Hour

14. How many lines in English do you write per day?

Some lines   
Half a page   
More than one page

15. Are you a person that reads books in English constantly?

Yes  No

If your answer is yes, how many per year?

1-3  3-5  5-10   
10-15  15 or more

16. Do you consider reading books helps you to improve your writing skill?

Yes  No

21. Has the subject "Composition I" has helped you improve your writing skills in English?

Yes  No

22. Do you consider there are enough subjects to help you write well in English?

Yes  No

23. How confident are you about your writing?

Very confident   
Somewhat confident   
Not confident at all

24. Do you consider writing a difficult skill to develop?

Yes  No

25. Do you feel confident in your grammar?

Yes  No

26. How would you characterize your grammar?

Good   
Average   
Poor

17. Do you think Spanish has an influence in the way you write?

Is the influence positive   
or negative  ?

18. Do you think Spanish composition process and English composition process are similar?

Yes  No

27. Do you know what cohesion is?

Yes  No

28. Do you know what coherence is?

Yes  No

19. Has the subject "Redaccion en Español" helped you improve your writing skills in English?

Yes  No

20. Has the subject "Gramatica Española" helped you improve your writing skills in English?

Yes  No

29. Do you know how to write a personal letter?

Yes  No

30. Do you know how to write an academic essay?

Yes  No

31. Do you know how to write a report?

Yes  No

32. Do you know how to write a formal email?

Yes  No



33. Do you consider form (grammar, syntax) is important when evaluating writing?

Yes  No

34. Do you consider content (coherence, and cohesion) is important when evaluating writing?

Yes  No

35. Do you consider content is more important than form?

Yes  No

36. Are you familiar with the four stages of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing)?

A Lot

Not Much

A Little

37. Do you brainstorm before writing a composition?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

38. Do you know how to create an outline?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

39. Do you have vocabulary to write a composition?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

40. Do you know how to write a topic sentence?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

41. Do you know how to write a paragraph?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

42. Do you know how to write an essay?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor

43. Do you create a draft before you submit your paper?

Good  Fairly good  Average  Poor