

**AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN
BEGINNER LEARNERS IN THE ELT PROGRAM AT UNIVERSIDAD
INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER: AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED
ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AUTONOMY IN
WRITING**

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**UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
LICENCIATURA EN INGLES
BUCARAMANGA**

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**Trabajo de grado como requisito parcial para optar al título de
Licenciado en Ingles**

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"Beforehand, precious Friend, I appreciate the courage you gave me long time ago. I obtained your grateful support somehow people hardly notice: the written word. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Remarkable, imperceptible way of sealing my weak heart; extraordinary, barely discernible method of heartening the fragile will you provided me with. First time I heard such a phrase, I straightly set it in the place it should have been to. Thanks Lord.

Beloved two people; hard times, joy in life. Your path has been such an album of devotion to your offspring. Here you have just a minute outcome of your labour. I expect longer life to make your dream come true. Thanks Mom and Dad.

Dear models; surpassing you will require both long time and hard work indeed. Nevertheless, a heart, a mind and soul taught in your room will outdo when on earth. Thanks Esperanza Revelo Jimenez and Ernesto Gallardo.

People; just a small number for an enormous friendship. Just you, four friends, the ones who take the hint, enriched my life giving me part of yours. Plenty, masses, tons, lots of happiness from now on. Thanks Mauricio, Laura, Jorge, Javier.

Little girl; remember: I chose us.

Sergio Jaír Serrano Hernandez

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I am also thankful to PIVU (Programa de Inducción a la Vida Universitaria at UIS) for giving me the opportunity to be a university tutor since this experience gave me the first ideas to start with this project among other wonderful moments and experiences as a university student.

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Nhora Lucia Reyes Navarro

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GLOSSARY

Academic Writing: pieces of writing for academic purpose

Cognitive Development: relates to the development of intellectual abilities and skills. It includes all levels of thinking in all academic areas. The results of cognitive development are measured through tests and student-made product.

Comprehensible Input: making adjustments to speech, providing gestures, pictures, visuals, films, and other media so that the message to the student is understandable; one of the components of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol.

ELT: English Language Teaching Program

Ethnography: ethnography is a method of studying and learning about a person or group of people. Typically, ethnography involves the study of a small group of subjects in their own environment. Rather than looking at a small set of variables and a large number of subjects ("the big picture"), the ethnographer attempts to get a detailed understanding of the circumstances of the few subjects being studied. Ethnographic accounts, then, are both descriptive and interpretive; descriptive, because detail is so crucial, and interpretive, because the ethnographer must determine the significance of what she observes without gathering broad, statistical information. Clifford Geertz, whose thoughts about culture are excerpted in the Other Important Definitions of Culture, is famous for coining the term "thick description" in discussing the methodology of the ethnographer.

Interlanguage: it is a language that has been developed by the learners of a second language who have not fully acquired it, but only approximated it, preserving some features of their first language in speaking or writing the target language, and creating innovations. An interlanguage can be spoken by a small group of people, but it can also become a mass phenomenon. It can fossilize in any of its developmental stages. The learner creates an interlanguage using different learning strategies such as language transfer, overgeneralization and simplification. Interlanguage is based on the theory that there is a "psychological structure latent in the brain" which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language

Language Acquisition: the process of acquiring a first or second language. Some linguists distinguish between acquisition and learning of a second

language, using the former to describe the informal development of a person's second language and the latter to describe the process of formal study of a second language. Other linguists maintain that there is no clear distinction between formal learning and informal acquisition. The process of acquiring a second language is different from acquiring the first (Baker, 2000).

Language Proficiency: the level at which an individual is able to demonstrate the use of language for both communicative tasks and academic purposes.

Linguistic: the science which studies natural human languages

L1: the first language that a person acquires, also termed the mother tongue, primary, or native language.

L2: the second language that a person acquires; i.e., sometime after the acquisition of the first language has begun.

Model: the different ways in which a person can learn

Native Language: primary or first language spoken by an individual

Rhetorical: it is the art or technique of persuasion, usually through the use of language.

Skilled Writer: a second writing learner who does not need training because he/she already has his/her writing abilities well-developed.

Syntax: the study of the sentence patterns of a language and rules that govern the correctness of a sentence.

Transfer: one of the fundamentals of bilingual education is that knowledge and skills learned in the native language may be transferred to English. This holds true for content knowledge and concepts as well as language skills, such as orthography and reading strategies. The transfer of skills shortens the developmental progression of these skills in the second language. Language skills that are not used in the first language may need to be explicitly taught in the course of second language development, but content area knowledge does not need to be explicitly retaught as long as the relevant English vocabulary is made available (Hakuta, 1990).

Unskilled Writer: a writing learner who needs training to become a skilled writer.

RESUMEN

TITULO: AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS IN THE ELT PROGRAM AT UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER: AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AUTONOMY IN WRITING.*

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PALABRAS CLAVES: L1 (lengua materna), L2 (segunda lengua), estrategias metacognitivas, proceso de escritura, uso limitado de conectores, orden de las palabras (sintaxis), UIS, error analysis, análisis descriptivo.

DESCRIPCIÓN:

Este diseño instruccional está basado en investigaciones de diversos teóricos hechas sobre el aprendizaje de lenguas, las cuales tratan aspectos generales sobre el proceso de escritura en la adquisición de L2. Asimismo, los resultados de dos proyectos en el curso de Modelos Autónomos de Aprendizaje y la experiencia de sus autores, Nhora Lucia Reyes Navarro y Sergio Jair Serrano Hernández, como estudiantes del programa de Licenciatura en Inglés de la Universidad Industrial de Santander, aportan información clave tanto en la fase de creación del diseño instruccional como en la audiencia a la que él mismo está dirigida.

En estos proyectos de curso se describen los errores más comunes a la hora de escribir de los estudiantes de primer año en el programa de Licenciatura en Inglés y su relación con el proceso de escritura. Por una parte, los resultados obtenidos después de aplicar la técnica de Error Analysis sugerida por Barbara Kroll mostraron errores en: 1) Orden sintáctico y 2) Limitado uso de conectores. Por otra parte, el análisis descriptivo ratificó que el seguimiento incorrecto o la falta del mismo podrían generar falta de coherencia en los escritos.

Este diseño instruccional desarrollado por los estudiantes Reyes Navarro y Serrano Hernández, quienes optan al título de Licenciados en Inglés, ofrece una herramienta complementaria a las actividades de clase donde los estudiantes de primer año podrán desarrollar estrategias metacognitivas en el proceso de escritura en L2.

* Proyecto de Grado

** Facultad de ciencias humanas. Escuela de idiomas. Licenciatura en inglés. Directora. Esperanza Revelo Jiménez.

ABSTRACT

TITLE: AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS IN THE ELT PROGRAM AT UNIVERSIDAD INDUSTRIAL DE SANTANDER: AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP AUTONOMY IN WRITING.

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KEY WORDS: L1 (mother tongue), L2 (second language), metacognitive learning strategies, writing process, word order (syntax), connectors use, UIS, error analysis, descriptive analysis.

This instructional design is based on findings and conclusions from previous studies and theoretical foundations from diverse authors on the writing process in second language acquisition. Moreover, the results obtained from two class projects in the Autonomous Learning Models course, and the experience of their authors as ELT students at UIS, Nhora Lucia Reyes Navarro and Sergio Jair Serrano Hernandez, provides this instructional design with key information on not only the creation of it but on the audience who it is intended to.

These projects describe the most recurrent errors from freshmen at the ELT program at UIS when writing and their relation with the writing process. On one hand, the results obtained from applying the Error Analysis technique suggested by Barbara Kroll, showed errors in: 1) Syntactic order and 2) Limited connectors usage. On the other hand, from applying a Descriptive Analysis, a faulty writing process or a lack of it might provoke an absence of coherence in the written texts.

This instructional design developed by the senior students Reyes Navarro and Serrano Hernandez offers a complementary tool for class activities which freshmen will use to develop metacognitive strategies in the L2 writing process.

* Draft Grade

** School of life sciences. Language School. Degree in English. Director. . Esperanza Revelo Jimenez.

INTRODUCTION

The English Language Teaching (ELT) program at UIS attempts to develop strong four-skilled students as teachers to be. This program describes its graduates as professionals not only in education but also as individuals with a high command of the English language, mastering, as Bachman¹ stated, the grammatical, textual, illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences in given language.

The freshmen students in given program tend to be negatively influenced by their first language (L1), in particular, when composing. This situation affects their performance not only as professionals but individuals who fail to have a high command of the language.

According to Selinker², when foreign language learners are in the earliest stages of the second language acquisition process, they have already developed an L1 communicative competence, and use transfer processes to benefit from the knowledge they have of this given competence to communicate in the foreign language. If the knowledge learners have of the L1 system is limited and the transfers they make are negative (generate errors), learners will internalize inadequately L2 constructions. These negative transfers hinder the learners' performance in attaining higher levels of proficiency since when facing learning tasks based on writing production, learners fail to articulate coherently their ideas

Pointing out the freshmen ELT students' situation, it is essential for them not only to be aware of given problems, but to be given the appropriate tools to overcome them.

¹ Cited in Kamiya, Masushito. The Role of Communicative Competence in L2 Learning.

² Selinker, L. Interlanguage. *Internacional Review of Applied Linguistics*. 1972. 10:209-231.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Firstly, a foreign language learner who is in his or her earliest stages of the second language acquisition process, is naturally likely to support himself or herself using the knowledge he or she has of the L1 to elaborate and internalize the L2 code. This process called Language Transfer takes place as a natural starting point in the acquisition process, and may affect either positively or negatively the L2 linguistic code construction. The freshmen students at the ELT program at UIS are negatively influenced by L1 transfer showing an inadequate use of language aspects such as:

1. Applying the wrong word order when constructing sentences (Syntax).
2. Limiting connectors usage.

Secondly, concerning coherence in writing, Icy Lee³ defined it as the relationships that link ideas in a text to create meaning for the readers. Besides, she added, it is crucial to effective writing; difficult to teach and to learn. The freshmen students who follow a faulty writing process or even do not, show lack of coherence even though they talk about a specific topic, their ideas appear to be disjointed.

An instructional design based on metacognitive strategies to develop autonomy in writing will be highly feasible to prevent the negative transfer from L1 to L2 and viable to improve L2 writing skills among the Freshmen ELT students.

³ Lee, Icy. Helping students develop coherence in writing. English Teaching Forum, 2002

2. JUSTIFICATION

This instructional design seeks to have an impact on freshmen students in the ELT program at UIS in autonomy, language transfer and command of the language.

This design is intended as an autonomy development tool in writing which freshmen, applying metacognitive strategies, will use to reduce the most recurrent errors regarding sentence structure. Besides, the instructional design will start freshmen in the L2 writing process providing elemental knowledge on writing taking into account the students' preferred method of learning (learning style). Given knowledge will facilitate the freshmen's performance when taking writing systems courses at the ELT program. Finally, this design will help freshmen to reach not only any course objectives but also to reach a high command of the written language.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 GENERAL

To develop an instructional design based on metacognitive strategies and taking into account learning styles to develop autonomy in writing among freshmen students at the ELT program at UIS.

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To reduce the most common errors that influence freshmen students at the ELT program at UIS when composing in L2.
2. To start freshmen in the writing process in order to decrease the lack of coherence in their written texts.
3. To improve freshmen's academic writing proficiency in the L2.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A variety of sources were selected to provide this instructional design with solid conceptual foundations, dealing with four main topics: 1. the writing process, 2. learning Styles 3. metacognition and 4. Language learning strategies.

4.1 THE WRITING PROCESS

Writing performance is a process composed of a set of strategies that are applied in order to produce a text (Cassany, 1989). It is a recursive problem-solving task, for which there is not a unique model of representation. Even so, there seems to be a common understanding among scholars about the processes involved. The Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) model focuses on what writers do when they compose. The "problem-solving activity" is divided into two major components: the rhetorical situation (audience, topic, assignment), and the writer's own goals (involving the reader, the writer's persona, the construction of meaning, and the production of the formal text).

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) also propose a model that suggests reasons for differences in writing ability between skilled and less-skilled writers. The basic difference is revealed in their two models of writing: the knowledge-telling model, whose basic structure depends on the processes of retrieving content from memory with regard to topical, and genre cues, and the knowledge-transforming model, which involves more reflective problem-solving analysis and goal-setting.

Both the Flower and Hayes, and the Bereiter and Scardamalia writing process models have served as the theoretical basis for using the process approach in both L1 and L2 writing instruction. By incorporating pre-writing activities such as collaborative brainstorming, choice of personally meaningful topics, strategy instruction in the stages of composing, drafting, revising, and editing, multiple drafts and peer-group editing, the instruction takes into consideration what writers do as they write. Attention to the writing process stresses more of a workshop approach to instruction, which fosters classroom interaction, and engages students in analyzing and commenting on a variety of texts.

One model that best promotes autonomous learning is Anderson's (1985) model of language production, which can be divided into three stages: construction, in which the writer plans what he/she is going to write by brainstorming, using a mind-map or outline; transformation, in which language rules are applied to transform intended meanings into the form of the message when the writer is composing or revising; and execution, which corresponds to the physical process of producing the text. The first two stages have been described as "setting goals and searching memory for information, then using production systems to generate language in phrases or constituents" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 42). Writers vacillate between these processes as they actively develop the meaning they wish to express in writing. Anderson's learning theory supports teaching approaches that combine the development of language and content knowledge, practice in using this knowledge, and strategy training to encourage independent learning (Snow, 2001).

White and Arndt following the model suggested by Flower and Hayes developed a model about the writing process stages that must be followed when teaching L2 Writing process.

1. Choosing a topic and Narrowing it

2. Planning (tone ,purpose and audience)
3. Researching and Organizing
4. Drafting
5. Revising
6. Editing
7. Publishing

1. *Choosing a topic and narrowing* it by using the brainstorming technique will help the learner to question about what they really want to write and in this way start making notes about it.

2. *Planning* is key to succeed in everything you do in life. In the case of writing this is a step no one can skip. Learners must consider here the purpose, the audience and the form of their compositions.

3. *Researching and organizing* helps the learner to order the information gathered after extensive research on the topic.

4. *Drafting* also provides the learner with the first form of their writing compositions. In this step learners can look for effective ways of ordering their compositions.

5. *Revising* helps learners to check the content, organization and mechanics of the final product. In other words in here the learner can give the final stock to the product.

6. *Editing* in this step the learner can revise all the issues regarding word choice and assessing the draft.

7. *Publishing* is the last but not the less important. In this step learners look for the appropriate formats their compositions can fix.

The instructional design proposed in this paper follows White and Arndt's model.

Ana Virginia Ariza Martinez, a language teacher from Institución Educativa Distrital De la Republica de Ecuador, carried out a research project about the process writing approach which aimed to develop an alternative to guide the students' compositions. The samples were taken from a group of low-achieving teenagers whose writing was the last developed of the skills. Ana Virginia also researched about the process of connecting ideas and getting coherence in a text which was a daunting task for them. The research showed that it was not really difficult to guide the learners to write. Everything depends on the strategies, according to her findings, the best products were those in which pictures were involved. In general learners showed great interest and better outcomes resulted from pictures than from words. The simpler the task given, the better the written results.

On the same matter, Lee Miranda carried out a project on structure and cohesion of English narratives by Nordic and Chinese Students. The project succeeds in identifying important problems and suggesting solutions for students' writing in terms of discourse-level properties such as cohesion, and superstructure. The study examined two main areas in discourse development, namely superstructure and cohesion. With regard to superstructure, a consistent pattern was found in English texts written by Chinese and Nordic students, though their first languages are distinctly different. In term of cohesion, there seems no consistent conclusion that L1 plays a direct role in the density of connectors of Chinese ESL and Nordic EFL writing. In NORDWRITE study, connector density is not distinctly different between ES and Nordic EFL writing, and between Nordic L1 and their EFL writing. On the contrary, a remarkable difference in connector density was found between Chinese L1 and their ESL writing. Chinese L1 writing displays a significantly less density of connectors than their ESL writing. Chinese ESL texts do not pattern the same way as L1.

4.2 LEARNING STYLES

“Knowledge of the learning styles and brain behavior is a fundamental new tool at the service of teachers. It provides a deeper view of the learner” (Keefe, 1982: v)

According to Dunn and Dunn (1993), learning style is the way students begin to concentrate on process, internalize and remember new and different academic information. Students use their strengths according to their learning style to teach themselves. This term is also defined as “the characteristics cognitive and psychological behaviors that every person has and they work as indicators of how people learn better” (Keefe, 1979: cited in Richards and Lockart 1984). Dunn and Dunn carried out a research project in which it was found that individuals have such unique patterns for learning that it’s hard for the teacher accommodate their teaching style in order to reach every single learner according to own learning style. Here it’s when autonomy plays an crucial role in the learning process. Learning styles are the key to guide student towards autonomy and teachers are in charge to guide students to develop it.

In 1978, Dunn and Dunn identified three learning styles, namely: visual, auditory, and Kinesthetic.

Table 1. Learning Styles Chart. Dunn and Dunn. (1978)

Learning Styles	Characteristics
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processes information principally through seeing• Enjoys educational activities where he or she may take notes, read or watch videos

Auditory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes information principally through hearing • Enjoys educational activities where he or she may do active listening, communicate, listening to music or narrations
Kinesthetic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes information through the body and personal experiences • Enjoys educational activities where he or she may build, manipulate, or do experiments

Since the way learners learn determine either the success or the failure they may have on their own learning process, this instructional design includes Dunn and Dunn’s learning styles as a tool that helps students gain autonomy in their learning process of L2 writing skills.

4.3 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES-LLS-

“Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime” (Islam Proverb)

“Language Learning Strategies have the potential to be “an extremely powerful learning tool” (Ruben and Stern; 1975). Even with the best teachers, the learner is the only one who can make learning take place. Ruben conceived learning strategies as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge.” In the same matter, O’Malley and Chamot (1990) stated that “Learning Strategies are special ways of processing information and secure the retention of this” in other words learning. According to Rebecca Oxford (1990), “learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning.” Besides, she stated that “strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing

communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategies result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence.”

Thompson and Rubin (1975) carried out some useful research on the area that supported the effectiveness of using L2 learning strategies. They found that the use of appropriate language learning strategies often results in improved proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas. For instances, certain strategies are linked to particular language skills or tasks. L2 writing, like L1 writing, benefits from the learning strategies of planning and self-monitoring while L2 speaking demands strategies such as risk-taking, paraphrasing and self-evaluation.

The strategies could be better understood in the following chart:

Table. 2. Applying Language Learning Strategies. The National Capital Language Resource Center. (2002)

1.Remembering more effectively	.Imagery .Real Context/Role play
2.Using all your mental processes	.Graphic Organizer .Group Classify .Summarize .Inferences .Selective Attention
3.Organizing and evaluating your knowledge	.Personalize(setting your goals)
4.Managing your emotions	. Talk yourself or someone else about your feelings
5.Learning with others	.Cooperate (provide peers correction)

4.3.1 Metacognitive strategies. Oxford defines “metacognitive” as beyond, besides, or with the cognitive. Therefore, she adds, “metacognitive strategies are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. (...) Metacognitive strategies are essential for successful language learning.” The use of metacognitive strategies not only starts one's thinking but can lead to deeper learning and improved performance, especially among learners who are struggling. Besides, rather than focus students' attention solely on learning the language, second language teachers can help students learn to think about what happens during the language learning process, which will lead them to develop stronger learning skills.

The National Capital Language Resource Center (2002) in its project known as “The Elementary Immersion project” includes the following metacognitive strategies:

- *Organizing and Planning*: help the learner to set his own goals as well as decide exactly what needs to be learned. It also provides the learner with a vision of the real necessary time needed for each individual to accomplish the task. Teachers can help learners in here by being explicit about the particular learning goals they have set for the class and guiding the students in setting their own learning goals. The more clearly articulated the goal, the easier it will be for the learners to measure their progress. The teacher might set a goal for the students to master the vocabulary from a particular chapter in the textbook. A student might set a goal for himself of being able to answer the comprehension questions at the end of the chapter.
- *Controlling own learning*: assist the learners on making important decisions such as which method is more appropriate to learn best and which are the necessary conditions that help the students learn better.
- *Self-monitoring* (cf. to self-explanation (Chi, et al., 1994)): is a key metacognitive strategy that supports learning with understanding, and the

ability to apply the acquired knowledge to problem-solving tasks. However, self-monitoring is itself a complex cognitive task. In the context of problem solving, one that develops a sequence of steps to solve the problem, and a second that evaluates the correctness and efficiency of the problem solving process.

- *Examining and evaluating*: are also key strategies. Making corrections and receiving corrective feedback by metacognitive support will lead the learner to real understanding and learning because it makes learners aware of their own problems and the way to go around those problems to be solved.

National Capital Language Resource Center intended to combine given metacognitive strategies with the learning process.

METACOGNITIVES STRATEGIES

Table 3. METACOGNITIVES STRATEGIES. The National Capital Language Resource Center (2002)

Strategy	Description
Organize/Plan	-Plan the task or content sequence -Set the goals -Plan how to accomplish the task
Manage your own learning	-Determine how you learn best -Arrange conditions that help you learn -Seek opportunities for practice -Focus your attention on the task
Monitor	-While working on a task: -Check your progress on the task -Check comprehension as you use the language -Check production as you use the language
Evaluate	-After completing the task: -Assess how well you have accomplished the learning task -Assess how well you have applied the strategies

4.4 METACOGNITION

Metacognition plays a significant role in learning. It helps develop real thinking and learning. According to Nell, (2002) “Metacognition can be defined simply as thinking about thinking”. Learners who are metacognitively aware know what to do when they don't know what to do; that is, they have strategies for finding out or figuring out what they need to do.

Brawson and Brown identified metacognition as a critical process that support student learning and solving problem. Brown (1987) describes two component processes: (i) the ability to monitor one's cognitive activities, and (ii) the ability to take appropriate regulatory steps when a problem has been detected. These steps can include internal regulation (e.g., slow down when reading hard material) and external action (e.g., consult learning resources). Both abilities increase with maturation (Flavell, 1987), but appropriate educational opportunities can propel metacognitive development and improve subsequent learning.

5. NEEDS ANALYSIS

This instructional design is based on two previous class projects⁴ for the Autonomous Learning Models course in the ELT program at UIS. The first one was made on L1 transfer and the second, concerning to coherence in L2 writing. Given class projects, along with Seliger and Shohamy's parameters, were deductive research and were based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data; it was mainly collected by questionnaires and written samples within the action research design.

On one hand, the former class project was carried out with a sample population between ten out of forty freshmen students from the ELT program at UIS on the second term 2006. Three written samples were collected every two weeks as well as the application of a questionnaire. At the same time, a class observation journal was kept and three tutorials were given. The error analysis technique⁵ was used to examine the students' sentence structure errors. On the other hand, the latter was carried out with a population of ten English students whose age average was roughly between 20 and 25 and, according to the Common European Framework, they were placed in B.1.6 level, that is, Independent User, Threshold Level. At this level, they should be able to write connected pieces of texts related to different topics such as family, feelings, personal experiences and interests; taking into account a linear sequence. In this class project, two written samples were collected in two months and a questionnaire was applied as well. Besides, one tutorial was given and the descriptive analysis was used to study the students' written samples.

⁴ Lopez Suarez, Camilo & Reyes Navarro, Nhora L. L1 transfer into L2. 2006
Martinez Gonzalez Jorge A. and Mauricio & Jaimes, Javier & Serrano Sergio. On Coherence in writing: creating an autonomous learning model to improve the writing process

5.1 METHODOLOGY

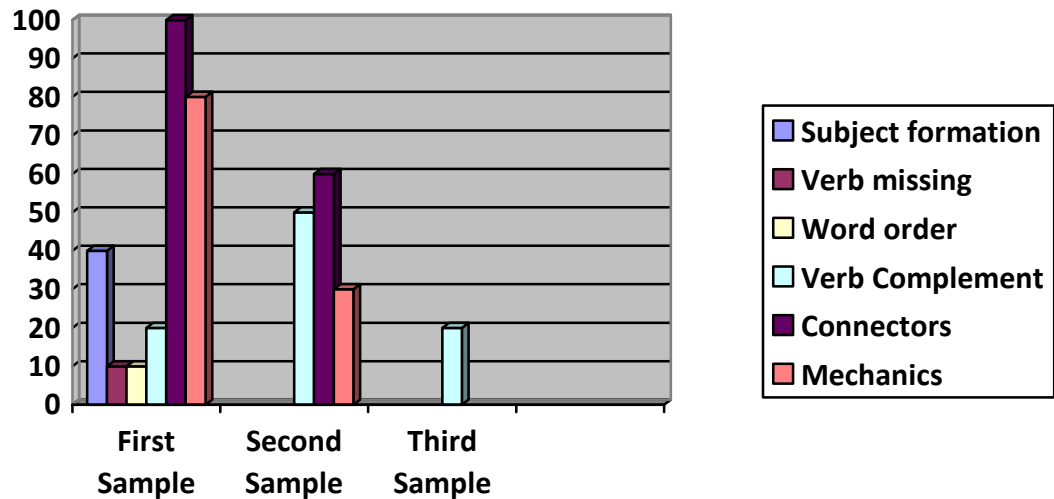
5.1.1 L1 Transfer into L2 class project. The data was basically gathered by three written samples, three tutorials and a questionnaire. The purpose of the written samples was to identify the most common errors regarding sentence structure. The first one was a free writing activity which aimed at diagnosing students overall writing performance. In the second sample freshmen were asked to organize some images and then create a story. Its purpose was to assess the students writing performance after the tutorials. Lastly, once again, the third sample was a free writing activity which not only attempted to assess the students writing performance after the tutorials but also how worthy they were. Finally, the purpose of the tutorials was to guide students in the English language sentence structure.

Samples Analysis. The second language writing error analysis sample method suggested by Barbara Kroll (1990 taken from Second language research) was applied to the samples collected. This method suggests that errors are to be tabulated to assess the frequency and distribution as well as to determine the accuracy level of each individual paper (see appendix 4). The results showed the problems the L2 pieces of writing had. They were categorized in the following way:

The first samples analysis showed that a potential problem was the use of connectors since in the majority of the samples students wrote single sentences instead of paragraphs. Besides, wrong use of connectors was identified. For instance, after final period they began the other sentence with a connector. So, taking into account the data from this samples analysis, the problem was due to L1 negative transfer.

⁵ Kroll Barbara. "Second Language Writing Research Insights for the Classroom". 1990.

Figure 1. Sentence Structure Errors. Samples Analysis.



In the following week the tutorials were given. The subjects did writing exercises necessary for them to improve on the use of connectors. Then, the second sample was collected.

As the bar graph showed, the use of connectors was a recurrent problem indeed. However, compared to the analysis of the first written sample, the number of errors had been reduced in almost all the categories.

From the third sample, as showed in the bar graph, the subjects showed progress regarding grammatical errors. For instance, some categories disappeared and this time the samples did not provide new error categories.

Other data collection procedures. This research also used two more procedures to gather data from the subjects: a Questionnaire and Class Observations.

This questionnaire was prepared to have an idea of what informants thought about L1 transfer into L2 writing and if they knew or were aware of this (See Appendix 1).

Basically, the analysis of the data from the questionnaire was carried out by using descriptive statistics. The results are attained in the following charts:

Figure 2. What do you do when you write in English?

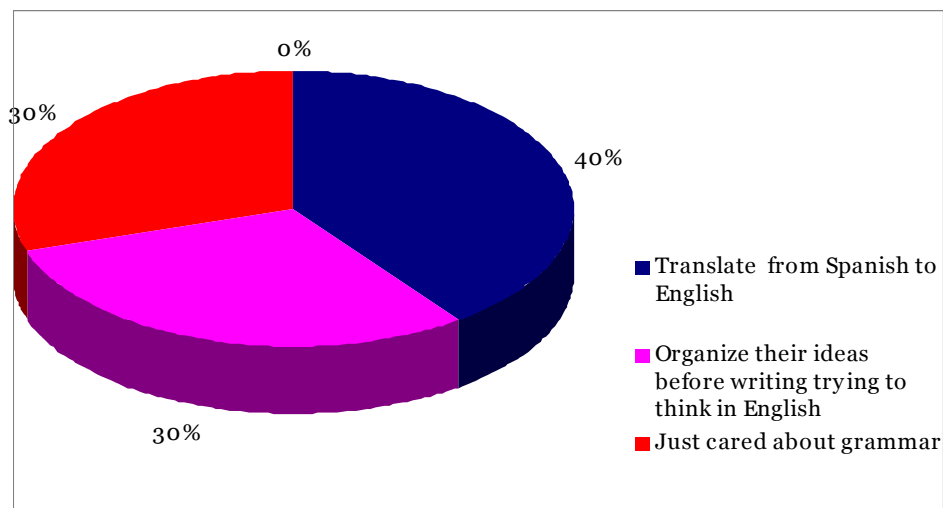
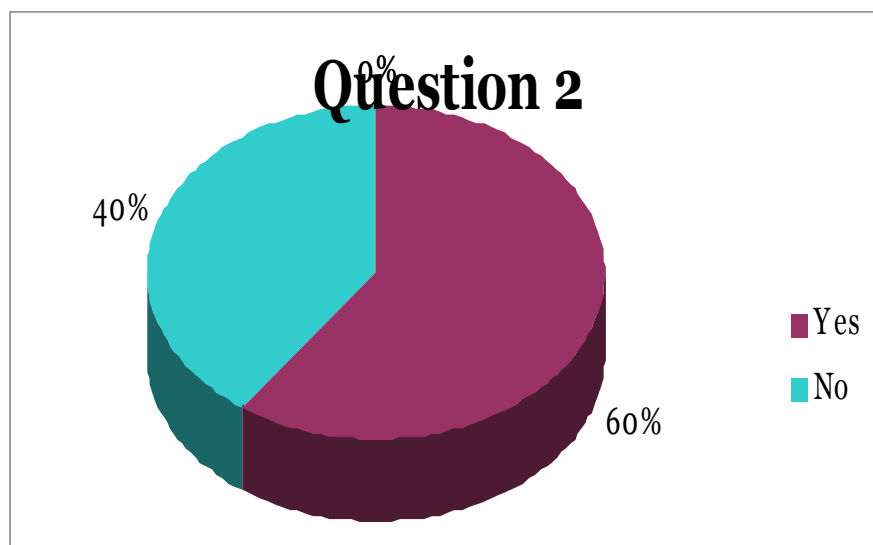


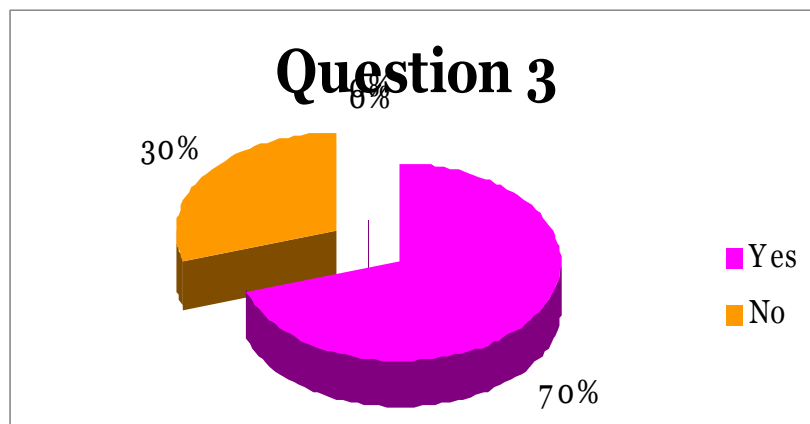
Figure 3. Do you have any strategy to express your ideas when writing?



To complement this question .Learners informed about the following strategies they tended to use most commonly:

1. Use of translation
2. Reads books in English
3. Forces himself/herself to think in English
4. Uses his memory in order to remember chunks learnt in an English course

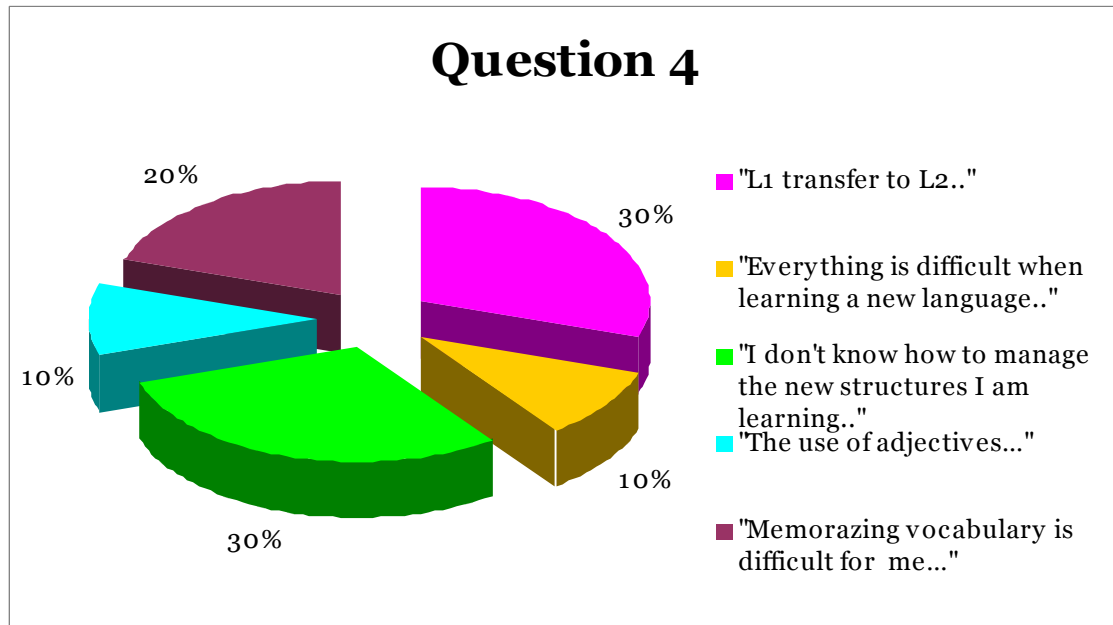
Figure 4. Are you aware of the fact that we tend to write as we do in our mother tongue when we write in English?



To complement this question, learners told us the following reasons for that tendency to write in L2 as in L2:

1. Attributes it to a normal stage on learning a second language
- 2 Attributes it to be a difficulty that all learners face up when learning a second language

Figure 5. According to you, what is your main problem when writing in English?



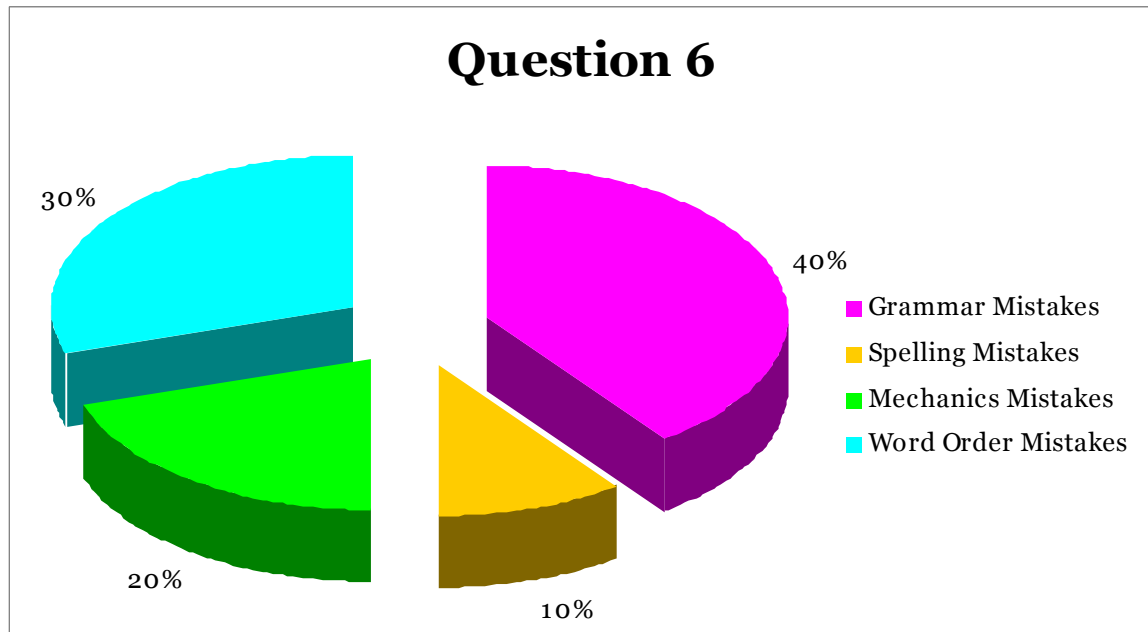
To complement this question, learners told us the following answers about what they thought the reasons were they had problems when writing:

1. "The English level I had when I entered the program was really poor..."
2. "The level of concentration I have in class..."
3. "The lack of practice..."
4. "The way I organize my ideas when writing in L2..."
5. "The lack of vocabulary in L2..."

5. Which aspects you think you have to improve when writing in English?

The most common answers for this question pointed out the need to work on increasing the amount of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.

Figure 6. What are some of the experiences you felt you had with common mistakes when writing in English?



7. Could you give us an example of one of them?

Grammar mistakes: what **do** you do if you were the richest woman in the world?

Spelling mistakes: **beter**

Mistakes in Mechanics: in the radio station **don't sound any song of them**

Word Order Mistakes: terrible occur so much **accidents**

Finally, a record of observations and notes were kept in an everyday journal so that it could show us more clues about the strategies to use for the implementation of the Autonomous Development of L2 Writing Proficiency

Instructional Design in beginner learners at the ELT program at UIS. (See Appendix List.3)

As a conclusion, it was found that although L1 transfer is considered a normal stage in developing L2 writing, it still affects learners' language proficiency when composing in L2. Besides, it was observed that L1 transfer would be reduced if learners at beginning level received appropriate instruction, as well as if they did an effort to improve and to overcome those problems mostly by working on their own. Regarding writing process and the use of connectors, it was found that a faulty application of the writing process led students basically to a lack of coherence.

5.1.2 On coherence in writing class project. Firstly, a first writing sample was collected without previously intervening with the population. The purpose of this sample was to identify the presence or absence of coherence by applying the following measuring criteria:

Table 4. Measuring criteria

Measuring criteria	Thesis	Supporting ideas	Conclusion
Excellent	Clear	Specific ideas relevant to the thesis.	Summarize and amplifies the main idea of the text.
Good	Clear	Not enough specific ideas relevant to the topic.	Just amplifies the main idea.
Acceptable	No clear thesis	Not enough specific ideas relevant to the topic.	Just amplifies the main idea.
Bad	Not found thesis	Poor supporting ideas.	Does not summaries nor amplifies the main idea of the text.

Secondly, the population answered an interview which portrayed the students' attitudes towards the task and assigned topics. Besides, this tool showed how they faced a pre-writing task and managed the knowledge of the topic. Thirdly, we presented the population steps to follow a pre-writing task. The teacher agreed to give us one class hour to introduce students given steps. The purpose of this intervention was to provide population with useful knowledge so that we could correlate first and second writing sample results. Finally, we collected the second writing sample.

Firstly, according to the measuring criteria rubric designed, the first collected writing samples showed that thirty percent (30%) of the samples were categorized bad, thirty percent (30%) were considered acceptable, twenty percent (20%) were good and the last twenty percent (20%) were excellent.

Table 5. First writing report

FIRST WRITING REPORT					
	Thesis	Supporting Ideas	Conclusion	Total	
S1	2	0,5	0,5	3	GOOD
S2	0	1	0	1	BAD
S3	2	1	1	4	EXCELLENT
S4	0	1	0	1	BAD
S5	2	1	0,5	3,5	GOOD
S6	2	0,5	0	2,5	ACCEPTABLE
S7	2	1	1	4	EXCELLENT
S8	0	1	0	1	BAD
S9	1	0,5	0,5	2	ACCEPTABLE
S10	1	0,5	0	1,5	ACCEPTABLE

Secondly, an initial survey was applied showed that:

- Fifty percent of the population considered that planning was boring.
- Fifty percent liked planning.
- Seventy percent considered that they had problems when thinking about what to write.
- Forty percent enjoy **a little** writing about the assigned topics.
- Fifty percent searched for **some** information about the assigned topics.
- Fifty percent considered themselves **a bit** of a planner.

This questionnaire was redesigned in order to avoid cheating and faking. The multiple answers were reduced from five to four making the population provide clearer answers. So that, the second survey showed that (see TABLE 6. Questionnaire analysis):

Table 6. Questionnaire analysis

QUESTION	N	not at all	A little	A lot	A whole lot	Percent not at all	Percent A little	Percent A lot	Percent A whole lot
I consider that Planning (Writing) is boring.	10	1	1	5	3	10%	10%	50%	30%
I like planning (writing).	10	3	5	2	0	30%	50%	20%	0%
I consider myself as a good planner (writer)	10	4	3	3	0	40%	30%	30%	0%
I have troubles thinking about what to write.	10	1	2	4	3	10%	20%	40%	30%
I enjoy writing about the assigned topics.	10	2	6	2	0	20%	60%	20%	0%

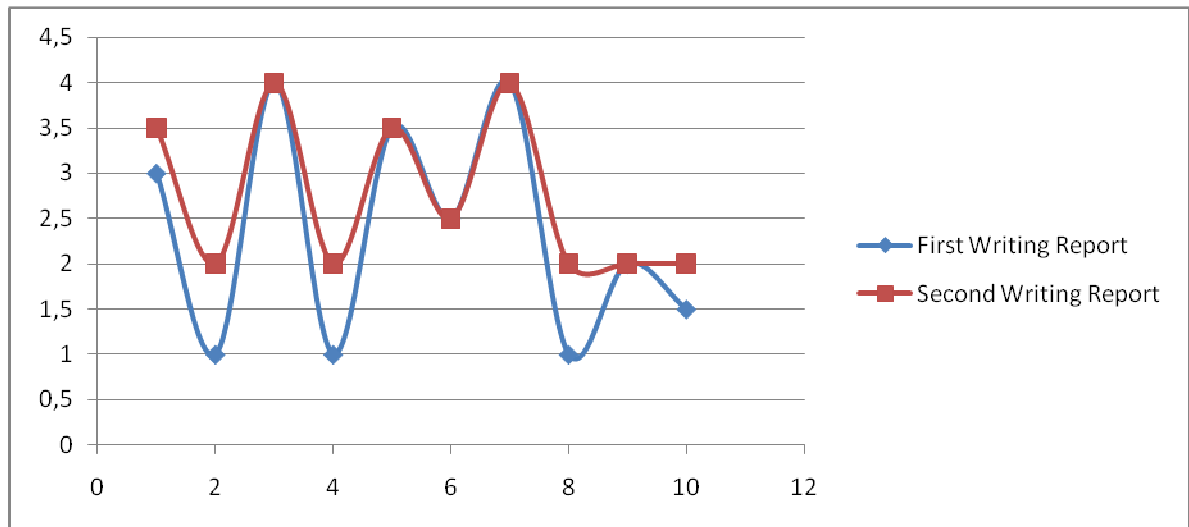
QUESTION	N	not at all	A little	A lot	A whole lot	Percent not at all	Percent A little	Percent A lot	Percent A whole lot
I search for information related to the assigned topics.	10	3	4	2	1	30%	40%	20%	10%
I like to make a list of ideas before I write.	10	1	7	2	0	10%	70%	20%	0%
I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.	10	6	3	1	0	60%	30%	10%	0%
Drawing a picture (chart, etc) helps me get ideas for writing.	10	4	5	1	0	40%	50%	10%	0%
I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, and then make changes.	10	0	0	6	4	0%	0%	60%	40%
My final version might be very different from my first version.	10	1	6	3	0	10%	60%	40%	0%

The second writing sample showed that sixty percent (60%) of the samples were categorized acceptable; ten percent (10%), good; and thirty percent (40%), excellent.

Table 7. Second written report

SECOND WRITTEN REPORT					
	Thesis	Supporting Ideas	Conclusion	Total	
S1	2	1	0,5	3,5	EXCELLENT
S2	1	1	0	2	ACCEPTABLE
S3	2	1	1	4	EXCELLENT
S4	1	1	0	2	ACCEPTABLE
S5	2	1	0,5	3,5	GOOD
S6	2	0,5	0	2,5	ACCEPTABLE
S7	2	1	1	4	EXCELLENT
S8	0	1	1	2	ACCEPTABLE
S9	1	0,5	0,5	2	ACCEPTABLE
S10	1	1	0	2	ACCEPTABLE

Figure 7. Correlation analysis



Y	STUDENTS	Correlation Coefficient
X	SCORE	
		0,54689106

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

1. Although the results showed that there existed a positive moderate correlation between a faulty pre-writing process and lack of coherence in the written output of the EFL adult learners in this specific group, we can not state that the former caused the latter.
2. As mentioned above, although the population was placed on an advanced level, their writing skills did not achieve the CEF indicators.
3. There existed a general apathy among students towards the writing process.
4. In spite of the shortage of the provided information, the population improved significantly. Furthermore, regarding to writing, we might state that, either the Language Institute focuses mainly on the final product rather than on the process itself; or the institute has not thought properly students to face this kind of tasks.
5. The population was likely to consider oral production more relevant than the written one.

6. INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

This instructional design takes into account not only the conclusions from the previous class projects but also the guidance of theoretical foundations from diverse authors on the writing process in second language acquisition. We strongly believe that the use of this instructional design can considerably reduce the most recurrent errors regarding sentence structure; besides, it can start freshmen in the L2 writing process providing elemental knowledge on writing taking into account the students' preferred method of learning (learning style). Given knowledge will facilitate the freshmen's performance when taking writing systems courses at the ELT program. Finally, this design can help freshmen to reach not only any course objectives but also to reach a high command of the written language.

6.1 OBJECTIVE

To assist beginner learners at the ELT program at UIS on the development of L2 writing academic proficiency by providing real life activities connected with metacognitive strategies and following the stages of the writing process.

6.2 AUDIENCE

First Level students at the ELT program at UIS, guided for the text Cutting Edge Pre-Intermediate who are having problems on the academic writing composition process in issues like:

1. Word Order (Syntax)

2. Connecting Ideas in a text (Use of connectors)
3. Writing Process Stages

6.3 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Some of the activities in this instructional design could have more than one answer. Learners can refer to their language tutors for advices . Also, the majority of the answers to some of the activities could be found on an answer key.

6.4 SELF-ACCESS WORKBOOK

6.4.1 Rationale. The Autonomous Development of L2 Writing Proficiency : An instructional Design aims to help learners by providing them with real life activities connected with metacognitive strategies and following the stages of the writing process. Besides, it encourages learners to develop autonomy by guiding them to the process of knowing their own learning style. Some activities already compiled on this design were already tried during the pedagogical interventions the authors applied during the first stage in the project.

Taking a learning style test is the first stage to start on writing. By knowing students leaning styles teachers can help them through the learning process due to the fact that every of us has an specific way of learning. The authors decided on including a learning style test on this instructional design in order to help students discover their preferred way of learning. Once they take the test they can refer to the task which switch best for them according to their previous answers: Visual , Auditory or Kinesthetic.

The use of metacognitive strategies are intended to help learners to develop real thinking and learning ,so that it is way the authors decided on combining the tasks along with metacognitive supporting tools like questioning the learner every time he/she would finish an activity on a task in order to make them aware of their own mistakes as well as the learning strategies that work best for them.

As stated above the use of appropriate language learning strategies often results in improved proficiency in specific skill areas. Regarding L2 writing skills, the learning strategies which this skill benefits from are planning and self-monitoring. That is why the Autonomous Development of L2 writing academic proficiency uses them as a resource to get through the learners L2 writing acquisition process. The authors include these two learning strategies on the design combining them along with the writing process stages

6.4.2 Structure

TASK ONE

DESCRIPTION OF A SUSPECT

THIS PRESENTS:

- **Writing Process Stages**
- **Use of adjectives in a physical descriptions**
- **Connectors Usage**
- **Punctuation and Capitalization**

This task is basically designed on the writing process stages and provides one individual activity for each learning style with a supportive metacognitive tool.

Concerning the writing process, it goes through modeling, planning, drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

Firstly, the modeling stage aims to provide the learner with a basic example of how the final task should be. It is expected from learners to highly outstand than the basic example. Secondly, in the planning stage learners are provided not only with common techniques on planning such as listing ideas but with a wide variety of vocabulary. It is expected from learners to either apply their memory strategies, if useful, or make up new ones according to their learning style. Thirdly, the drafting stage challenges learners to create their own pieces of writing. Finally, the revision, editing and publishing stages guide learners through the polishing of their final writing; they face punctuation, capitalization and word order.

The task is divided into three according to each learning style: Visual, Auditive and Kinesthetic. For visual learners the task is full of colors, images, symbols, etc which facilitate their learning process. On the contrary, for auditive and kinesthetic learners the task is designed, as stated above, according to the preferred method of learning; they will find listening, matching, associating, inserting and cutting-pasting activities among others.

Finally, as a crucial element of this design, the task will make learners more aware of their learning process by constantly asking questions based on the previous or the following activities. For example, “Do you feel satisfied with your writing? Why?”

TASK TWO

WRITING A COMPLAINT LETTER

THIS PRESENTS:

- **Writing Process Stages**
- **Connectors Usage**
- **Punctuation and Capitalization**

This task is basically designed on the writing process stages and provides one individual activity for each learning style with a supportive metacognitive tool.

Concerning the writing process, it goes through modeling, planning, drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

Firstly, the modeling stage aims to provide the learner with a basic example of how the final task should be. It is expected from learners to highly outstand than the basic example. Secondly, in the planning stage learners are provided not only with common techniques on planning such as listing ideas but with a wide variety of formal and informal phrases when writing a complaint letter. It is expected from learners to either apply their memory strategies, if useful, or make up new ones according to their learning style. Thirdly, the drafting stage challenges learners to create their own pieces of writing. Finally, the revision, editing and publishing stages guide learners through the polishing of their final writing; they face punctuation, capitalization and word order.

The task is divided into three according to each learning style: Visual, Auditive and Kinesthetic. For visual learners the task is full of colors, images, symbols, etc which facilitate their learning process. On the contrary, for auditive and kinesthetic learners the task is designed, as stated above,

according to the preferred method of learning; they will find listening, matching, associating, inserting and cutting-pasting activities among others.

Finally, as a crucial element of this design, the task will make learners more aware of their learning process by constantly asking questions based on the previous or the following activities. For example, “Do you feel satisfied with your writing? Why?”

TASK THREE

WRITING ABOUT A HOLIDAY TRIP

THIS PRESENTS:

- Writing Process Stages
- Use of adjectives and adverbs in narrative
- Connectors Usage
- Punctuation and Capitalization

This task is basically designed on the writing process stages and provides one individual activity for each learning style with a supportive metacognitive tool.

Concerning the writing process, it goes through modeling, planning, drafting, revision, editing and publishing.

Firstly, the modeling stage aims to provide the learner with a basic example of how the final task should be. It is expected from learners to highly outstand than the basic example. Secondly, in the planning stage learners are provided not only with common techniques on planning such as listing ideas but with a wide variety of phrases when writing about a holiday trip. It is expected from learners to either apply their memory strategies, if useful, or make up new

ones according to their learning style. Thirdly, the drafting stage challenges learners to create their own pieces of writing. Finally, the revision, editing and publishing stages guide learners through the polishing of their final writing; they face punctuation, capitalization and word order.

The task is divided into three according to each learning style: Visual, Auditive and Kinesthetic. For visual learners the task is full of colors, images, symbols, etc which facilitate their learning process. On the contrary, for auditive and kinesthetic learners the task is designed, as stated above, according to the preferred method of learning; they will find listening, matching, associating, inserting and cutting-pasting activities among others.

Finally, as a crucial element of this design, the task will make learners more aware of their learning process by constantly asking questions based on the previous or the following activities. For example, “Do you feel satisfied with your writing? Why?” (see annex A).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To start with, it was obvious from the beginning of the project that beginner learners at the ELT program at UIS are having problems with their proficiency in L2 writing. Besides, the research showed that the problems are due to L1 Transfer strongly affecting the general objective of the study program as stated before.

However, the improvements showed after the pedagogical interventions were significant and they also show us that these problems can be perfectly reduced if learners at the first levels receive appropriate instruction, as well as if they cooperate and make an effort to improve and to overcome those problems. It was also found that the learners' progress most of the time depends on their autonomy and independent work.

We highly recommend taking into account these findings and try to facilitate students with supporting tools that they can easily use. Also, we hope our instructional design could serve as one of these tools because as our project was considered as social practicum we expect it helps the community.

To sum up, we believe that we as language teachers have the commitment to help our students in the achievement of their goals. Since they came to us hoping we can teach them a second language and more than that: "Learn to learn, that is the duty."

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF CONSENT

STAGE 1: RESEARCH PROJECT

THE AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS : AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

LETTER OF CONSENT

- I agree to participate in a programme of research conducted through the School of Languages at UIS.
- The purpose of the study is to find out the major problems students at the Licenciatura en Ingles Program have at the time of composing in L2 in order to create an autonomous learning supporting tool that serves as a solution to the problems found and has been explained to my satisfaction
- The data that will be collected are writing samples. Additionally, the researchers will apply an ethnographic method :A Survey and keep a Journal with class observations.
- I understand that participants' names will be coded to maintain confidentiality
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences
- I can contact Nhora Lucia Reyes Navarro at (Phone Number) or Omar Camilo Lopez at (Phone Number) in case I have any question and they will be always willing to answer my questions

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS CONSENT FORMAT AND I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Signature of the Student: _____

Date:_____

Home phone or Cell Phone: _____

Lopez Suarez C. & Reyes Navarro N. “L1 transfer into L2” :A class study from Autonomous Learnings Model course. 2006

APPENDIX 2 :QUESTIONNAIRE

STAGE 1: RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN
BEGINNER LEARNERS AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS : AN
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES**

Name:

1) What do you do when you write in English?

2.Do you have any strategy to express your ideas when writing?

Yes_____ No _____

If yes, which one? _____

If no, could you explain why?

3.Are you aware of the fact that we tend to write as we do in our mother tongue when we write in English?

Yes_____ No _____

Why?

4. According to you what is your main problem when getting to write in English?

Why?

5. Which aspects do you think have to improve when writing in English?

6. What are some of the experiences you have had with common mistakes when writing in English?

7. Could you give us as example of one of them?

Lopez Suarez C. & Reyes Navarro N. “L1 transfer into L2” :A class study from Autonomous Learnings Model course. 2006

APPENDIX 3: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

STAGE 1: RESEARCH PROJECT

THE AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS : AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

School: _____ Time: _____
 Subject: _____ Grade: _____
 Number of students: _____ Males: _____ Females: _____

	TIME											
TL												
TQ												
TR												
PA												
PV												
PR												
PW												
PRA												
PSA												
PWA												
SWA												
TRP												
S												
U												

TL: teacher describes, narrates, explains, directs PRA: pre-reading activity
 TQ: teacher questions PSA: post-reading activity
 TR: teacher responds to pupil's respond PWA: pre-writing/planning activity
 PA: pupil responds to teacher's question SWA: post-writing/revising activity
 PV: pupil volunteers information, comments, or questions TRP: teacher revises pupil's work
 PR: pupil reads S: silence
 PW: pupil writes U: unclassifiable

Taken from Lopez, Mendoza Edgar. "Profile 6: Current State of the Teaching of Process Writing in EFL Classes.(2005)23-36"

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE

STAGE 1: CLASS PROJECT

THE AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT OF L2 WRITING PROFICIENCY IN BEGINNER LEARNERS AT THE ELT PROGRAM AT UIS: AN INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN BASED ON METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

SURVEY ON PLANNING A WRITING⁶

Generalities

1. I consider that Planning (Writing) is boring.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
2. I like planning (writing).
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
3. I consider myself as a good planner (writer)
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
4. I have troubles thinking about what to write.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
5. I enjoy writing about the assigned topics.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
6. I search for information related to the assigned topics.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all

Going deeper

1. I like to make a list of ideas before I write.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
2. I like to talk about my ideas with a friend before I write.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
3. Drawing a picture (chart, etc) helps me get ideas for writing.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
4. I write out my piece quickly from start to finish, and then make changes.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all
5. My final version might be very different from my first version.
a whole lot a lot a little not at all

⁶ Taken and adapted from
http://www.region15.org/curriculum/ATTITUDE_SURVEY-Portrait.pdf

Your straight answers

1. Is planning important to you? Why or why not?

2. What type of planning is your most favorite and why?

3. What type of planning is your least favorite and why?

4. What kinds of things do you write? (types, topics or titles)

5. What kinds of things do you enjoy writing about?

6. Where do you get your ideas from?
