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**TEACHING DISCOURSE CONNECTORS AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF WRITING PROFICIENCY**

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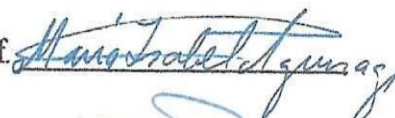
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## **DEDICATION**

To father God since he has given me the health and energy to finish my studies. To my lovely daughters Doménica and Anahi who have been patient and support me during those hard days. They have encouraged me to go on with this challenge.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Constant learning is the way to success in life. It allows us to be according to the new tendencies in education. That is why I decided to take this challenge. It has not been easy but the feeling to learn something new is great.

I appreciate my daughters' support which has been very vital to achieve my goals and objectives. Besides, I am gratified with my teachers who have made their best effort to transmit their knowledge. I am sure those have helped me to be a better professional in my career.

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## RESUMEN

El presente estudio investiga la relación existente entre los conectores del discurso y el mejoramiento de la competencia de escritura. Para tal efecto, se utilizó un enfoque mixto con un diseño experimental y la revisión literaria del tema. La población consto de 30 estudiantes de 20 y 24 años de edad, 12 mujeres y 18 hombres quienes cursaron el módulo de escritura en la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros. Para recoger la información se creó una encuesta la cual fue validada por dos especialistas, posteriormente aplicada a los estudiantes y docentes. Los resultados permitieron establecer los métodos, estrategias y actividades para enseñar los conectores del discurso. A los participantes también se les aplicó una pre-prueba de escritura independiente tomada de la Universidad de Cambridge y se evaluó con una rúbrica provista por la misma universidad. Posteriormente, con la información obtenida se elaboró una guía didáctica y los estudiantes tuvieron la oportunidad de aprender y practicar los conectores del discurso durante dos meses. Finalmente, se aplicó una pos-prueba de la misma universidad, para medir la relación de los conectores del discurso y el mejoramiento de la competencia de escritura, con la ayuda de la estadística se comparó el antes y el después de la escritura. El estudio demostró que la instrucción implícita y explícita contribuye a seleccionar el conector apropiado para unir ideas, el lugar correcto en la oración y su significado, mejorando de esta manera la competencia de escritura.

**Palabras clave:** CONECTORES DEL DISCURSO, COMPETENCIA DE ESCRITURA, INSTRUCCIÓN IMPLÍCITA Y EXPLÍCITA.

## ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between discourse connectors and the improvement of the writing competence. So, a mixed approach was used with an experimental design and a literary review of the subject. The population consisted of 30 students of 20 and 24 years old, 12 women and 18 men who studied the writing module in Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros. To collect the information, a survey was created which was validated by two specialists, and later applied to students and teachers. The results allowed to establish the methods, strategies and activities to teach discourse connectors. Participants were also given an independent writing pre-test taken from the University of Cambridge and assessed with a rubric provided by the same university. Then, with the information obtained, a didactic guide was developed and the students had the opportunity to learn and practice the discourse connectors for two months. Finally, a post-test from the same university was applied to measure the relationship of discourse connectors and the improvement of writing competence, with the help of the statistics a before and after writing was compared. The study showed that implicit and explicit instruction helps to select the appropriate connector to join ideas, the correct place in the sentence and to figure out its meaning, thus improving writing competence.

**Keywords:** discourse connectors, writing competence, implicit and explicit instruction.

## INDEX

### PRELIMINARY

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY AND RESPONSIBILITY..... iii

DEDICATION ..... iv

AKNOWLEDGEMENT..... v

SUMMARY..... vi

ABSTRACT..... vii

INTRODUCTION..... 1

**CHAPTER I. STATUS OF ART AND PRACTICE.....4**

1.1 The Studies Conducted on Discourse Connectors and Writing.....4

1.2 Discourse Connectors Overview, Approach, Characteristics and Classification.....8

1.3 Writing Proficiency.....19

1.4 Implicit and Explicit Teaching.....20

### **CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY**

2.1 Research Approach, population and data collection..... 22

2.2 Processing an Analysis of information..... 24

2.3 Research Proposal.....29

### **CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

CONCLUSIONS.....63

RECOMMENDATIONS.....63

REFERENCES.....65

ANNEXES.....78

## INTRODUCTION

One of the requirements for classifying a text as understandable, is that, it contains coherence and cohesion of ideas. And, the linguistic elements that help to achieve this fundamental characteristic of a text are discourse connectors. Dressler and Beaugrande (1997) affirmed that writers must embrace DCs to guide the readers.

According to these authors, DCs allow to improve comprehension in communication, avoiding misunderstandings, and they ensure an appropriate connection of ideas. For these reasons, it is necessary to investigate in-depth these syntactic elements to facilitate the understanding of a text.

The research work conducted by Novariana, Sumardi and Samiati, on academic writing problems, states that students have internal and external problems in writing. Internal ones are linked with grammatical, cognitive and sentence structure, word choice and vocabulary. The students' external problems come from lack of practice and it is due to students' laziness and lack of motivation to practice. It also mentioned that teachers do not provide good feedback on students' writing.

Base on the study case Spanish Interference in EFL Writing Skills in Senior High Schools of Ecuador by Cabrera et al, mentioned that the strategies that the students used when writing in English are the cause of students' writing problems too. The study shows that 76% of students think in Spanish first and then translate their ideas into English. The highest frequency of interference occurred in invented words, the position of adjectives and word order. Meanwhile, the lowest frequency occurred with false cognates, misuse of comparatives and superlatives and gender forms.

In order to avoid these problems researches recommend to encourage their students to read frequently, used bilingual dictionaries, expose learners to the English language and use the target language more often in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, Shastri in her book Communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language. Chapter 13, teaching writing states that the frequent problems students face when they write have to do with spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, punctuation, correct layout, coherence and cohesion, organization of content and sequencing

of ideas, sentences connectors, and the ability to communicate convincingly using different functions of writing.

Furthermore, Daif-Allah and Albeshir (2013) suggest that one important principle to improve students' academic writing is to teach them discourse connectors as a condition to improve their writing fluency, and that the teacher should provide supplementary materials to help students' practice of DCs. Finally, Sagedhi and Kargar (2014) added that the explicit instruction facilitates the learning of discourse connectors.

Students of the third semester of Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros at Universidad Técnica face similar academic writing problems. After analyzing their writings it was noticed that their writings contain grammar mistakes, wrong spelling, language interference, wrong layout, and misuse, underuse and overuse of discourse connectors. It is difficult to work on all these problems. Thus, this investigation concentrates on the reasons students misuse and underuse DCs. and how they influence on writing proficiency.

The general objective of this research study is to analyze the relationship between discourse connectors and the improvement of writing proficiency. And the specific ones: a) to provide scientific support about discourse connectors in academic writing. b) to determine the Dcs students misuse, overuse and under in academic writing. c) To investigate the reasons students have to misuse, overuse and under DCs. d) to propose a didactic guide regarding discourse connectors for the improvement of writing proficiency. e) To socialize the findings of the research work and the didactic guide to students as well as teachers.

The research is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches, since, it collects information about the DCs students' misuse, underuse, and misuse and their reason of this problem. And quantitative because the information collected is analyzed using descriptive statistics. Furthermore, the research is correlative with a experimental design. The information referring to the reasons why students misuse and underuse discourse connectors is collected with a closed-ended survey. Then, a pretest of writing skills is applied to the experimental group to evaluate their writing proficiency. Finally, a didactic guide is designed which contains activities to practice discourse connectors with the help of the Nearpod application. And, it is highly expected that the students improve their writing proficiency with the use of these elements.

It is important to teach and manage discourse connectors. Since, they allow flow of ideas, increase comprehension in communication, and ensure an appropriate connection of ideas. For these reasons, it is necessary to investigate in-depth about these syntactic elements to improve students' writing proficiency.

## **CHAPTER I. STATE OF ART AND PRACTICE**

### **1.1 The studies conducted on Discourse Connectors and writing**

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide support on discourse connectors and writing proficiency. To get information from those, academic papers and books were analyzed. Authors such as Schiffrin, Holliday, and Fraser among others support this research work since they have conducted studies in the field of textual coherence, the textual function of words, and speakers' intention in terms of communication.

Among the review of the academic papers there is the one called Teaching Discourse Connectors to Help 2nd Year Students to Develop Writing Proficiency conducted by Mateus in the year 2016. He attempts to investigate why students underuse, misuse, and overuse discourse connectors. The researcher used explicit instruction to teach discourse connectors on 30 Information Technology and Computer Science Engineering EFL students from Instituto Superior de Ciências de Educação da Huíla-Huíla.

There were 26 males and 3 females ranging from ages above 15 up to 30 years old. To assess students' previous knowledge a pre-test was taken, then discourse connectors were taught only to the experimental group and finally a post-test was applied to measure students' writing proficiency. After concluding the research, the results showed that the students in the experimental group made progress in writing. Meanwhile, the control group faced several problems. Thus, it is important to mention, that explicit instruction may be applied to teach discourse connectors to develop students' writing proficiency and to avoid lack of cohesion or coherence in their academic writings. This paper is related to the research being conducted since investigates the reasons students misuse, overuse, and underuse discourse connectors which is relevant to the research topic.

Additionally, the research work called The Use of Discourse Connectives in the Academic Writing of Professional Students carried out by Kondal (2016) states that the use of subordinated conjunctions in descriptive paragraphs allows developing writing proficiency. The research focuses on conjunctions, coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, linking words, and discourse connectives. For the study, 30 descriptive paragraphs were collected from an engineering school between the ages of 17 to 19 years

old. Eight women and twenty-two men formed part of the research study. The data was collected in the classrooms in the normal day class.

After analyzing the information it was concluded that students most of the time used coordinating conjunctions but in an inappropriate way and less often subordinate conjunctions. It is attributed to various circumstances, including the use of their language interferes with the learning of a second language and teacher's strategies to teach them. Finally, it can be concluded that students who used subordinating conjunctions produce better writings. This academic paper is very relevant to the research being conducted since investigates the type of discourse connectors mostly used by students and its influence on academic writing.

Furthermore, the research work *A Comparative Study of Discourse Connectors in Argumentative Compositions* carried out at Prince of Songkla University in Thailand by Prommas (2011) investigates how similar or different non-native and native speakers use discourse connectors in argumentative essays. It focuses on the frequency students use DCs, the similarities and differences in relation to the type of DCs they use, the purpose to use DCs, the syntactic distribution, and the problems Thai students face at the moment to use DCs. Concerning this, EFL students from the third year of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science at Thaksin University and from English native speakers at the University of Michigan were requested to write for or against composition about different topics.

For the research study the DCs taxonomy from Halliday and Hasan (1976), Biber et al. (1999), and Cowan (2008) were used. After concluding the study, it was observed that non-native and native speakers used similar DCs but with differences in the frequency of use. (and, but, because, and for example, were the most used by both groups to mark contrastive facts, contrastive stances, concession, and addition). It was also observed that in terms of semantic functions connectors of concession and contrast were mostly used by non-native speakers, but connectors of addition are most used by native speakers. Moreover, non-native and native speakers use conjunctive adverbial as connectors to modify independent clauses or verb phrases followed by coordinators and subordinators, most of the time in the initial position.

The only difference was that native speakers used these discourse connectors at the beginning, middle and end of the sentence. And about the problems non-native speakers face are related to grammar and function due to the interference of their L1. This academic paper is very relevant to the research being conducted since investigates the types of discourse connectors nonnative and native students mostly used. It also shows the discourse categories most frequently used by both groups, and the most preferable places in a sentence, and the problems non-native students face when using DCs.

Moreover, the academic paper *Discourse Connectors and Cohesion in Writing* carried out in the Department of English Language by Rezvani (2015) aims to show the relationship between discourse connectors and cohesion of writing. To conduct the investigation a correlational type of investigation was applied. Besides, it randomly selected a corpus of 90 argumentative writings from a total of 1 500 which came from different students' levels. The data was analyzed using Jacob's et al. (1981) rubric.

It was very interesting to know that the overuse and underuse of discourse connectors may affect the cohesion of academic writing. Then, the study *Senior High School Students' Problems in Writing* conducted at the University of Indonesia by Novariana and Samiati (2018) mentions that students have internal and external problems in writing. The former one is associated with grammatical, cognitive, and sentence structure problems, word choice and vocabulary, and lack of motivation. The students' external problems come from lack of practice and it is due to students' laziness and lack of motivation to practice. It also mentioned that teachers do not provide good feedback on students' writing. It means that teachers give a score without comments on students' writing mistakes.

Besides, the academic paper called *The Frequently Used Discourse Markers by Saudi EFL Learners* by Alsharif (2017) aims to examine why students have problems using discourse markers in writing essays. The researcher conducted a comparative study between non-native and native speakers and establish differences in both groups. It was used a corpus of 100 essays produced by the students of the fourth year. To analyze the data the software *Monoconc Pro 2.2* was used. It allowed seeing the frequency of use of DMs. It was observed that it was kind of difficult to deduce the number of DMs each group used because native speakers' writings were longer. So, it is important to decide on the length before the research.

It is important to mention that non-native speakers overuse discourse markers. And among the most frequent DMs used by natives and non-natives are also, so, however, for example, then and therefore. Additionally, it is observed that non-native speakers used certain discourse marks not to sound repetitive in their writings. Finally, it is mentioned that native speakers most of the time use DMs.

Furthermore, the investigation called *Discourse Markers in Academic and Non-academic Writing of Iranian ELF Learners* carried out by Ghanbari (2016) challenges to investigate the most common types of discourse markers used, and the difference between them on academic and non-academic writing. To conduct the research, sixty students participated. Thirty were requested to write an argumentative essay and the other thirty had to write about their interest in academic writing and the other 30 to write non-academic writing.

The discourse marks analysis by Cowan (2008) and Schiffrine (1981) taxonomy. Try to determine the difference in the use of discursive markers in academic and non-academic writing the chi-square was used. The analysis showed that students tend to use different types of discourse marks depending on the topic they are writing. For instance, in academic writing, they use elaborative and inferential discourse marks while in non-academic the elaborative ones. Finally, the results also reveal that discourse markers are mostly used in academic writing. This article helps to realize that it is important to teach elaborative and inferential discourse marks for academic writing.

Furthermore, the research study *Discourse Connectors: An Overview of the History, Definition, and Classification of the Term* by Rezvani (2012) attempts to provide a definition and a classification of discourse connectors in writing based on a literature review. The author mentions that during the decades Discourse Connectors have received different names like: linking words to discourse markers. Some other authors such as Cowan and Schiffrine have created their own taxonomy and classification. It is important to mention that the author of this study preferred to use the term discourse connectors because it joins portions of information. Meanwhile, discourse markers could be better used for speech.

Finally, the thesis work called *The Influence of Transition Words in the Development of Writing Skills* elaborated by Garcia and Veloz (2019) researched the relationship that

transition words have in the development of writing skills. It focused on a mixed approach since the researchers observed students' learning and teaching process. Additionally, it has a population of 41 participants who answered a survey and an interview to have a perception of the topic been researched. After analyzing the data it was found that students do not recognize transition words, so that, it is hard for them to connect ideas, teacher's strategies and methods for practicing transition words are not enough. Thus, the researchers elaborated a booklet of activities to facilitate the learning process.

After the analysis of these research studies, it is observed that a lot of research needs to be conducted in order to help students improve their grammar, increase their vocabulary, motivate them to write, and improve teachers' methodology. Improving these issues may help to improve students' writing proficiency. To continue with this research study, concepts related to discourse connectors are analyzed.

## **1.2 Overview of Discourse Connectors**

A lot of research it is conducted on the field of discourse connectors that is the reason they have gone under different names: cohesive devices, cohesive elements. (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Sadighi & Heydari, 2012). Conjunctive adverbials / adverbs, connecting, adverbs, connecting words and phrases, connectives (Axelrod & Cooper, 2001; Celle & Huart, 2007; Cottrell, 2005). Connective adjuncts, connective adverbs (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Connectors (Copage, 1999; Crystal, 2003). Conjuncts (Quirk et al. 1985: 631), connectives (Crystal, 2008: 102; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Discourse connectors (Cowan, 2008; Prommas & Sinwongsuwat, 2011). Words of connection, words of transition (Schütz, 2012). Logical connectors (Djuwari, 2013). And, metadiscourse markers (Gholami, Tajalli & Shokrpour, 2014).

This is just a short list from the many names DCs have got. But, for this research work the term discourse connectors will be used. The main function of a discourse connector is to signal the connection between passages. (Biber, Conrad & Leech, 2002). Additionally, Prommas & Sinwongsuwat (2011) mention that discourse connectors are words and phrases that connect information in one clause to that in a previous clause. They are also considered as linguistics clues because they help to signal the relationship between prior and subsequent segments to facilitate text interpretation.

### **Discourse Connectors' Approaches**

In this research DCs are studied under three main approaches: the coherence approach by Schiffrin (1987), the systemic functional linguistics approach by Fraser (1999), and the pragmatic approach by Holliday and Hasan (1976). Schiffrin mentioned that one function of discourse connectors is to provide coherence to the text. Additionally, Fraser added that the function of DCs is not just to provide coherence to the text but also to join the first utterance with the next one. And finally, Holliday and Hasan (1976) stated that the other function of DCs is to provide meaning construction. It means the speaker needs to be very careful at the moment to choose a DCs to provide cohesion to their writing.

It can be concluded that the three approaches help to facilitate the understanding of ideas of the listeners and the reader as well. On the other hand, the inappropriate use of DCs may lead to misunderstandings in communication. To be considered competent using the English language a person needs to manage DCs appropriately.

### **Characteristics of Discourse Connectors**

The main characteristic of DCs is flexibility. It means that they can be placed at the beginning, at the middle, or at end of the sentence (syntax,). But the most common position is at the beginning of the sentence to show that more information is coming. Referring to semantics, if they are removed from the discourse, they do not interfere in the meaning of ideas. And referring to the lexis, they are derived from verbs, prepositions, modal words among others.

### **Classification of Discourse Connectors**

There is an extensive classification of DCs, but only three are presented in this research work since it focuses on the pragmatic, semantic, and syntax features. The first was done by Fraser (1999), he preferred the term discourse markers, due to the fact, that DMs are a class of lexical words which belong to the class of conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositional phrases. Additionally, he added that DMs signal the relationship between the first and second sentences. Furthermore, he mentioned that DMs' main role is to provide a procedural guide and that their linguistic and concept meaning is negotiated taking into account the context of the sentence. Fraser introduced two types of DMs. The first one relates to some aspects of Sentence two to Sentence one, and the second one relates the topic of S1 to S2. It is important

to know about it, since, it helps to understand the function and use of DMs. The first type is called contrastive markers which shows a contrast of S2 with S1, and the second group is called topic change markers which show the relationship between Sentence1 and Sentence 2.

Let's provide an example of the first type of DMs. For instance: Mathew is 1.75 centimeters. In comparison, Andrew is 185 centimeters.

In this example, we can see that the DM, in comparison, shows a contrast between S2 and S1.

The above sentence is a model to show contrast, and the following DMs are used to show contrast.

Table 1

*Discourse markers to show contrast*

	<b>But</b>
<b>Contrastive markers</b>	However, (al) though.
	In contrast (with/ to this/ that), whereas.
	In comparison (with/ to this/ that).
	On the contrary; contrary to this/ that.
	<b>Conversely</b>
	Instead (of (doing) this/ that, in spite of (doing) this/ that nevertheless, nonetheless, still).

*Note:* Contrastive discourse markers classification by Fraser' to show contrast between S2 and S1.

The second sub-type of DMs are called Elaborative Markers and they are used to show the relationship between the messages of S2 to S1. It means they are used to show a quasi-parallel relationship.

Let's provide an example of this subtype. For instance: You ought to be always well-mannered. Above all, you shouldn't hiccup at the table.

This example, above all, shows that S2 is quasi-related to S1.

Table 2

*Discourse markers to show a quasi-parallel relationship*

<b>Elaborative markers</b>	<b>And</b>
	Above all, also, besides, better yet, for another thing, furthermore, in addition, moreover, more to the point, on top of it all, too, to cap it all off, what is more.
	I mean, in particular, namely, parenthetically, that is (to say).

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Analogously, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly.

Be that as it may, or, otherwise, that said, well

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*Note:* Elaborative discourse markers classification by Fraser' to show quasi-relationship between S2 to S1.

The third sub-type of DMs is called inferential markers and they are used to show that S2 is a conclusion from S1.

Let's provide an example of this subtype. For instance: My license plate number cannot circulate today. Thus, I cannot go shopping.

This example, thus, is used to show a conclusion of S1.

Table 3

*Discourse markers to show conclusion*

Inferential markers	So
	Of course
	Accordingly, as a consequence, as a logical conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, consequently, for this/that reason, hence, it can be concluded that, therefore, thus.
	In this/ that case, under these/those conditions, then.
	All this things considered

*Note:* Inferential markers classification by Fraser which allow to draw conclusion from S1.

As it can be seen contrastive markers, elaborative markers and inferential markers belong to the first classification. Meanwhile, the second type is Topic change Markers.

For instance, I am happy the discussion ends. To return to my point, I would like to continue talking about the low score you got in Math.

In this example, to return to my point intend to reintroduce the previous topic.

Table 4

*Topic change markers*

Topic change markers	Back to my original point, I forget, By the way, incidentally, just to update you, on a different note, speaking of x, that reminds me, to change the topic, to return to my point, while I think of it, with regards to.
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*Note:* Topic change markers classification by Fraser. They help to relate the topic of S1 to S2

Another important author in the field of discourse connectors is Schiffrin. He also decides to use the term DMs instead of DCs. He proposes DMs as deictic. It means that the meaning of DMs depends on the context they are used, so they have indexical functions. For instance, DMs help to point to or index features of the context. The context refers to different discourse

planes such as ideas and propositions, the way to react to speech acts, the turns in speech acts, management of knowledge and meta-knowledge and the relationship among the speaker and hearer.

According to Feng (2007), coherence and cohesion are another characteristic that a good writer needs to be aware of when writing. There must be a relation among sentences. The authors Halliday and Hasan (1976) also mentioned that a text or written discourse is not a simple string of sentences or an extended grammatical unit. Furthermore, they mentioned that exist 5 cohesive connectors in English discourse as reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunction. Conjunctions refer to the use of discourse connectors to relate sentences, clauses, or paragraphs to each other. Their main function is to relate what it was said to what is about to be said. The following table shows a classification of conjunctions according to Holliday and Hasan.

Table 5

*Conjunctions*

<b>Conjunctions (connective elements)</b>	Additive: and, also, in addition, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance.
	Adversative: but, yet, however, instead, on the other hand, nevertheless at any rate, as a matter of fact.
	Causal: so, consequently, it follows, for, because, under the circumstances, for this reason.
	Continuatives: now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all.

*Note:* Conjunction classification by Holiday and Hasan (1976).

Conjunction elements provide cohesion to the entire text and also coherence between sentences. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman studied Holiday and Hassan's classification and provided a simpler one which also included ones from their own.

Table 6

*Conjunctions*

<b>Conjunctions</b>	Additive (emphatic, appositional, comparative)
	Adversative: (proper adversative, contrastive, correction, dismissal)
	Causal (general causal, causal conditional)
	Sequential (next, then)

*Note:* Conjunction classification by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman

Besides, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman explain the usage of conjunctions. For instance: Coordinating conjunctions join together syntactically equal constituents and guide the listener and reader to the comprehension of the text. Adverbial subordinators and conjunctive adverbials most of the time are called logical connectors. As coordinating conjunctions they are also cohesive devices and lexical expressions that have no meaning at all but aid to show the relationships among oral or written discourse. And there are three main categories of conjunctions and it shows in the following table.

Table 7

*Types of Conjunctions*

Category	Concept	Words
<b>Coordinating conjunctions</b>	They link parts of constituents and clauses.	And, but, or
<b>Subordinating conjunctions</b>	They link two clauses of unequal importance	After, although, if, as if, as soon as, as long as.
<b>Discourse markers</b>	They are also call connectives elements which join sentences to indicate relationship and sequence.	Next, then

*Note:* Conjunction categories by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman

As it is seen until here DCs have got different definitions, and classifications. Although, the literature produced on those years is not very clear since it does not provide an exclusive terminology.

Biber (2006) conducted research in the field of discourse connectors recently and decides on the term DCs since they are used to connect between turns and sentences. They are also used as logical linkers to join the different parts of the discourse and because they give an interpretative framework for the listener and reader. Additionally, he mentions two types of DCs such as discourse markers and linking adverbials. DMs such as: ok, well, and now are used in spoken discourse and their specific meaning is difficult to deduce. On the contrary, linking adverbials like: however, thus, therefore, for example, and that is being used in spoken as well in written registers and their meaning is inherent.

Cowan (2008) added that DMs (well, I mean, you know, oh, okay, right, like) do not form part of an integral sentence or grammar and are used in oral discourse. By contrast, DCs connect a sentence to a bigger piece of discourse and have a restricted position within a sentence.

As it can be seen, the purpose of Biber and Cowan is to show that until now It is difficult to have just one name for DCs. Modern literature is using the term DCs, though. By using those, sentences and paragraphs can be joined together. Furthermore, selecting the appropriate one when writing and speaking facilitates the reader and listener's understanding of ideas. Additionally, they help the text to be coherent.

This bibliographic review about discourse connectors, shows the different classifications they have gone through, and still, they are not comprehensible at all. That is why Rezvani, Abdullah, Makundan, and Tannacito (2012) proposed a modern taxonomy to try to facilitate their comprehension and application.

Table 8

*Modern discourse connectors' taxonomy*

<b>1. Sequential DCs</b>	<b>a. Ordering</b>	<b>first, firstly, second, secondly, third, thirdly</b>
		a, b, c
		one, two, three
		in the first place, in the second place
		first of all, second of all
		for one thing, for another thing
		to begin with, to start with

	b. Timing	in the end, in the same time, in the meantime, meanwhile, meantime, simultaneously, initially, before, earlier, previously, formerly, recently, not long ago, at present, presently, currently, now, by now, until, today, immediately, at the same time, during, all the while, in the future yesterday, tomorrow, henceforth, after, after a short time, after a while, soon, later, later on, following, the following week, suddenly, all at once, instantly, immediately, quickly, directly, soon, as soon as, just then, when, sometimes, some of the time, occasionally, rarely, seldom, infrequently, temporarily, periodically, gradually, eventually, little by little, slowly, while, always, all of the time, without exception, at the same time, repeatedly, often, frequently, generally, usually, as long as, never, not at all, last, lastly, last of all, to conclude, as a final point, finally, at this point, from now on, henceforward, here, hitherto, up to now
	c. Transitionals	by the by, incidentally, now, eventually, meanwhile, originally, subsequently
<b>2. Additive DCs</b>	a. Equative	correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly, in the same way, by the same token, too, in (just) this way
	b. Reinforcing	again, also, further, furthermore, more, moreover, in particular, then, too, what is more, in addition, above all, on top of it all, to top it off, to cap it, on top of that, to crown it all, additionally, alternatively and, and also, besides, neither, nor, not...either, or, or else, as well
<b>3. Summation DCs</b>		altogether, overall, then, therefore, thus, (all) in all, in conclusion, in sum, to conclude, to sum up, to summarize, finally, in summary, anyway, briefly, in short, to get back to the point, to resume, in a word.
<b>4. Apposition DCs</b>		Namely (viz), thus, in other words, for example, as an example, for instance, that is (i.e.), that is to say, specifically, more precisely, what is to say, for one thing, to put it another way, to put it bluntly/mildly, what I am saying is, what I mean is, which is to say, in this case, to illustrate, such as, to demonstrate, as revealed by, to show, suppose that, specifically, to be exact, as illustrated by, indeed
<b>5. Resultive DCs</b>		accordingly, arising out of as a consequence, as a result, beside from this, because, consequently, due to, for, for this purpose, hence, for this reason, in consequence, in that case, in this respect, in such an event, on account of, on this basis, or(otherwise), otherwise, so, then, therefore, thus, under the

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circumstances, with regard to, with this in mind, with this intention, somehow, of course, to this end, arising out of this, lest

<b>6. Contrastive DCs</b>	a. Antithetic	contrariwise, conversely, instead, oppositely, then, on the contrary, in contrast, by contrast, by way of contrast, in comparison, by comparison, by way of comparison, on the one hand & on the other hand, although, albeit, notwithstanding, but
	b. Concessive	anyhow, anyway, anyways, besides, else, however, nevertheless, nonetheless (none the less), notwithstanding, only, still, though, yet, in any case, in any event, at any rate, at all event, for all that, in spite of that, in spite of it all, after all, at the same time, all the same, admittedly, still and all, that said, despite that, then again, whereas, while, whilst, in fact, actually, as a matter of fact,
	c. Reformulatory	better, more accurately, more precisely, alias, alternatively, in another words
	d. Replacive	again, alternatively, rather better, worse, on other hand, I mean, at least
<b>7. Comparison DCs</b>	as...as, more...than, less...than, as (like), as if, as though, unlike, in the same way, similarly, as well as, in much the same way, resembling, parallel to, same as, identically, of little difference, equally, matching, also, exactly, in relation to	
<b>8. Conditional DCs</b>	Whether...or not, if, only if, unless, even if, whether, provided (that), in case, in the event(that)	
<b>9. Generalization DCs</b>	On the whole, in general, generally, as a rule, in most cases, broadly speaking, to some extent, mostly, above all, chiefly, largely, primly, usually, essentially	
<b>10. Emphasizing DCs</b>	above all, after all, indeed, as a matter of fact, the main issue is, chiefly, especially, actually, the most significant, the chief characteristic, the major point, the most necessary, extremely, to	

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emphasize, to highlight, to stress, by all means, undoubtedly, more importantly, most important of all, most of all, moreover, furthermore, significantly, without a doubt, certainly, to be sure, surely, absolutely, obviously, more and more, of major interest, to culminate, in truth, the climax of, to add to that, without question, unquestionably, as a result, probability, basically

**11. Corroborative DCs** actually, as a matter of fact, in fact, as it happens, at any rate, in actual fact, in any case, in either case, in reality, to tell the truth, that is to say, of course, apparently, well, surely, frankly, honestly, I assume, I suppose, no doubt, I am afraid, to tell the truth, in my opinion, I believe, to be truthful, unfortunately

*Note: This table was taken from S. Rezvani et al, (2012) Discourse Connectors: An Overview of the History, Definition and Classification of the Term. World Applied Sciences Journal, 19, 1659-1669. doi: 10.5829/idosi.wasj.2012.19.11.1990*

The above table shows a classification of Discourse Connectors provides by Reznay et al, based on DCs' previous and recent literature research conducted by other authors and their own experience as users of those. Next, the concept and examples of DCs presented in the table shared above to make their use clearer.

### Concepts of Different Types of Discourse Connectors

1. Sequential DCs. This kind of DCs is used to list main points that the writer uses to indicate process and sequence. Three types of sequential DCs are listed as follow:

1. a Ordering: They are used to put a process or a sequence in chronological order.

Ex: First, decide on a topic then brainstorm ideas.

1. b Timing: These kinds of DCs are often used to add energy to the sequence of ideas and to mention the frequency of an activity.

Ex. My father was cooking. Meanwhile, I cleaned my room.

1. c Transitional: These discourse connectors are helpful to change the topic of a sentence. Most of the time, the shift is related with the first sentence.

Ex. We had spent some time in this conference. By the way, what was the topic about?

2. Additive DCs: These kinds of connectors add additional information to the preceding idea. In this research study, two are mentioned.

2. a Equative DCs: These are used to indicate that the after sentence has the same importance as the preceding one.

Ex. She can play the piano very well and the guitar, too.

2. b Reinforcing DCs: These types of connectors help to emphasize the information previously mentioned.

Ex. Throughout my professional life, I have always attempted to be competent, helpful, and, above all, to maintain my integrity.

3. Summation DCs: The main objective of these kinds of connectors is to summarize the information mentioned in the discourse.

Ex. In short, the main objective of discourse connectors is to add coherence to the text.

4. Appositions DCs: These types of connectors are used to give examples or restate the information explained.

Ex. Students who pretend to improve their English pronunciation have to listen and sing songs. To put it in another way, they have to use the language in every situation.

5. Resultive DCs: These are used to indicate the cause and result of the preceding information.

Ex. Because of the pandemic, unemployment has increased around the world.

6. Contrastive DCs: These types of DCs are used to introduce information which is opposite or involve surprise from previous info. Within this category, there are four sub-types.

6. a Antithetic DCs: These are used to contrast information with previous data.

Ex. My father promised to buy a new car. Although, we continued with the same old one.

6. b Concessive DCs: These types of connectors are used to show unexpected information.

Ex. She has worked very hard. Still, she did not get a promotion at her company.

6. c Reformulatory DCs: These types of DCs are used to show contrast by reformulating the idea.

Ex. He has called me many times, more precisely, twelve times.

6. d Replacive DCs: These ones let to change one idea for a more important one.

Ex. His registration to the army was opposed by his wife, or, rather, by his parents and wife.

7. Comparison DCs: These discourse connectors are used to emphasize or indicate similarities between objects.

Ex. I can speak Spanish as well as English.

8. Conditional DCs: These types of DCs are used to show a condition in order to fulfill an action.

Ex. You can stay at my house as long as you do not have covid.

9. Generalization DCs: These types of DCs are used to say that a statement is true in most situations.

Ex: In most cases, it is cold in Ambato at night.

10. Emphasizing DCs: These types of discourse connectors are used to add emphasis on something already mentioned.

Ex: I thought this jacket was \$20, actually, is \$40.

11. Corroborative DCs: These types of discourse connectors are used to strengthen an argument.

Ex: I believe, that the prison problem is not only a matter for the president, but it is also for all governments.

From this review, it is noticed that discourse connectors have received different names such as DMs, linking words, connectives, discourse operators, DCs among others. In this research work, they are studied as DCs since they join together information of a text. Moreover, they are flexible and they can provide the vocabulary to express: reason, addition, contrast, sequence, summation, apposition, result, comparison, condition, generalization, confirmation, and emphasize a text.

### **1.3 Writing Proficiency**

It is important that students manage the three aspects of writing: the mechanical, the linguistic, and communicative one to become a proficient writer. (Shastri, 2009). It is said that a good writer is the one who has a good sense of these three aspects of writing. Furthermore, he has to develop the following skills and subs-skills. The writing skills has to do with spelling, vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, punctuation, a correct layout, coherence and cohesion and the organization of content clearly and logically. And sub-skills of organization and sequencing of ideas, connecting of sentences, and the ability to communicate convincingly using different functions of writing. Finally, a good writer has to have a sense of the reader, purpose, and connection of ideas.

### **Cohesion and Coherence in the Writing Skill**

Additionally, DCs add cohesion to a written text, and it is achieved when sentences connect each other in a logical way and when the appropriate DCs are chosen to write the text. A logical relationship is displayed when there is the sense between clauses, sentences, and

paragraphs. Furthermore, Dulger (2007) mentions that DCs add coherence to a text since they allow sentences to flow to each other logically.

It is important to make use of DCs since they guide the reader through the text. Moreover, its correct use is required for English as Foreign Language Learner and as English as a Second Language Learner, especially in academic writing.

#### **1.4 Implicit and Explicit Instruction to Teaching DCs**

To teach discourse connectors, it is recommended to use the implicit and explicit teaching. Since, the implicit instruction permits to teach discourse connectors without translating its meaning or explaining its syntactic position within a sentences or function. The teacher's work is to prepare series of activities systematically and logically organized and students' work is to deduce some linguistic characteristics of DCs. It is also useful to use explicit instructions, as there are some discourse connectors which meaning is difficult to deduce. (Richards and Renandya. Thus, the teacher needs to provide the meaning of DCs to clarify its use.

#### **Strategies to Teach Discourse Connectors**

There are some recommended strategies that work well to teach discourse connectors. Some of them are consciousness raising, focus on form, focus on the environment, open-ended practice, and give a topic to be developed.

Consciousness Raising. - This type of strategy pretends to develop students' awareness of DCs. The professor can use activities that develop students' ability to infer, compare and observe differences among DCs.

Focus on form. - The main objective of this strategy is to develop students' grammar ability in communication.

Focus on the environment. – The teacher can use this strategy to make students realize that discourse connectors are used in a particular type of context.

Open-ended practice. – The objective of this strategy, is to make students link sentence with a discourse connector.

Given topic to be developed. - This strategy's main objective is to request students to write an essay with an introduction, body and a conclusion, and also use discourse connectors in their writing.

Focusing on functions. – The teacher can use this strategy to teach discourse connectors according to their semantic relationships, for instance, the teacher can teach the discourse connectors for cause and effect.

### **Factors Affecting Writing Proficiency**

Some of the frequent problems students face when writing proficiently are underuse, overuse, and misuse of discourse connectors in their writings. (Mateus, 2016). Besides, students have internal and external problems in writing. The former one is linked with grammar, cognitive, and sentence structure problems, word choice and vocabulary, and lack of motivation. The students' external problems come from lack of practice, and it is due to students' laziness, and lack of motivation to practice. It is also mentioned that teachers do not provide good feedback on students' writing

It means that teachers give a score without commenting on students' writing mistakes. (Novariana, Sumardi, and Samiati, 2018). It is also stated that the strategies that students used when writing in English were: 76% of students think in Spanish first and then translate their ideas into English.

These results demonstrated that L1 produced significant interference when students write in the target language. Moreover, there were diverse responses to the variables regarding the level of L1 interference. In this respect, the interviewed teachers stated that the highest frequency of interference occurred in invented words, the position of adjectives, and word order. On the other hand, the lowest frequency occurred with the following variables: false cognates, misuse of comparatives and superlatives, and gender forms.

## **CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter contributes to the organization of the process of collecting and analyzing information concerning the discourse connectors and writing proficiency. Kothary (2004)

stated that methodology refers to the methods to collect data, statistical techniques, and methods to evaluate the accuracy of results.

This research study was based on a mixed approach. It means qualitative and quantitative approaches. The former one allowed collecting information about the reasons students misuse, underuse and overuse discourse connectors. And quantitative because the information collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics. According to Kothary (2004), qualitative data collection is exploratory so deep analysis of the information can be done. He added that qualitative data cannot be measured and it is better to use data collection tools for small groups. Meanwhile, quantitative research can measure the information, and it is better used for big groups.

Additionally, this investigation is bibliographic documentary due to the fact that the information related to the investigation was searched from books, articles, magazines and previous research works which are relevant to support this work. Boon (2017), claims that a bibliographic research can be defined as the study which requires to gather information from published material.

Furthermore, the research is descriptive, and correlative with a pre-experiment design. Since, it describes the phenomena investigated systematically. Besides, this type of design allows analyzing the relationship between discourse connectors and the improvement of writing proficiency.

The information concerning with the misuse, and underuse of discourse connectors, and methods to teach and learn DCs was collected with an open ended survey. The survey was validated by two experts on the field of DCs, and then, it was applied to students as well as teachers of the third semester of Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros of Ambato Technical University. The population was made up of a total 30 students. Eighteen men and twelve women between the ages of 20 to 24 years old, and four teachers of the same major participated too. According to Kothary (2004), a research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data regarding the study. Those instruments can be tests, surveys, scales, questionnaires, or even checklists.

Then, a pretest of writing skills was applied to the experimental group in order to know the DCs students misuse and underuse. The evaluation was carried out through a Cambridge University Press Independent Writing Test, and a rubric provided by Cambridge to grade the writing was used too. Next, some activities related with the writing process, paragraph composition, structure of an essay, punctuation, capitalization and the use of discourse connectors were taught using the zoom platform, and with the help of the Nearpod website to provide discourse connectors practice.

In the Nearpod website a writing classroom was created to explain the writing process and to practice discourse connectors. The Nearpod website contains activities such as: matching activities, filling gaps, and videos. At the end of the training, a post test was applied to the experimental group to analyze if students made use of discourse connectors in an appropriate way.

The information provided by students' and teachers' survey facilitated the elaboration of the didactic guide based on implicit and explicit instruction. The implicit instruction permits to teach discourse connectors without translating its meaning or explaining its syntactic position within a sentences. But it would be helpful to use explicit instruction too, since there are some discourse connectors which meaning is difficult to figure out. (Richards and Renandya, 2010).

Universidad Técnica de Ambato is located in Ambato city on Chasquis Avenue, and it offers university studies in different educational areas. Among the careers that make up this prestigious institution is the career Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, which is responsible for training students to become English teachers. Students from this career have English Writing subject on third semester and it was a good opportunity for me to help students improve their writing proficiency with the help of technology.

### **Processing and Analysis of Information**

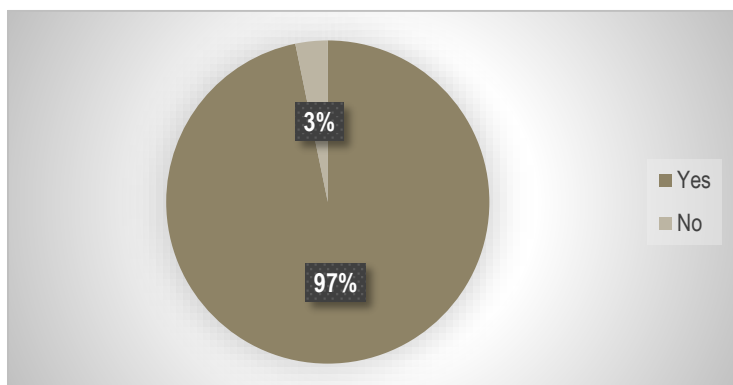
It was necessary to apply a survey to teachers as well as to students of the third semester of Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros to determine the reasons why

students misuse and underuse discourse connectors and to know the best strategies to teach and learn discourse connectors. Twenty questions were elaborated for the survey, but only the most related to use of discourse connectors in students' academic writings are analyzed and the results showed the following. The complete survey is attached in the annexes.

**Question 1:** Do you use discourse connectors (sentence connectors) in your writings?

**Figure 1**

*Students' use of discourse connectors in academic writing*



*Fig.1:* Students' use of discourse connectors in academic writing.

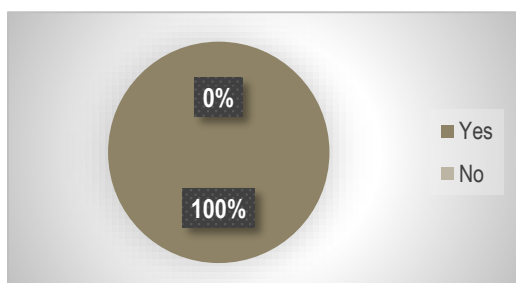
Figure 1, shows that most of the students (97%) use discourse connectors in their academic writing. This is essential, as students must be able to use DCs as they are part of the writing sub-skills.

It was also vital to inquire whether students are aware of the function of discourse connectors in academic writing, and they provided the following information.

**Question 2:** Do you think that discourse connectors help to show the relationship between the preceding and after ideas?

**Figure 2**

*Students' knowledge of discourse connectors' function*



*Fig. 2.* Students' knowledge of discourse connectors' function.

Figure 2, illustrates that all students (100%) know the main function of discourse connectors which is to join words, sentences and paragraphs in a written text.

It was also essential to ask a question to know which discourse connectors students underuse and overuse in their academic writing and they mentioned the following.

**Question 3:** Which of these discourse connectors have you use in your writings?

**Figure 3**

*Students' underused and overused of discourse connectors*

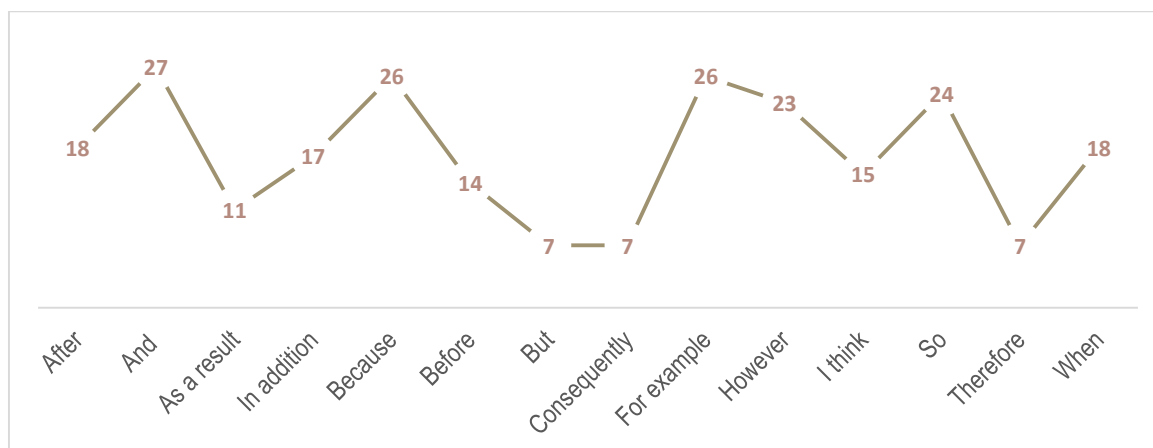


Fig.3. It shows the discourse connectors overuse and under used by students in their essays.

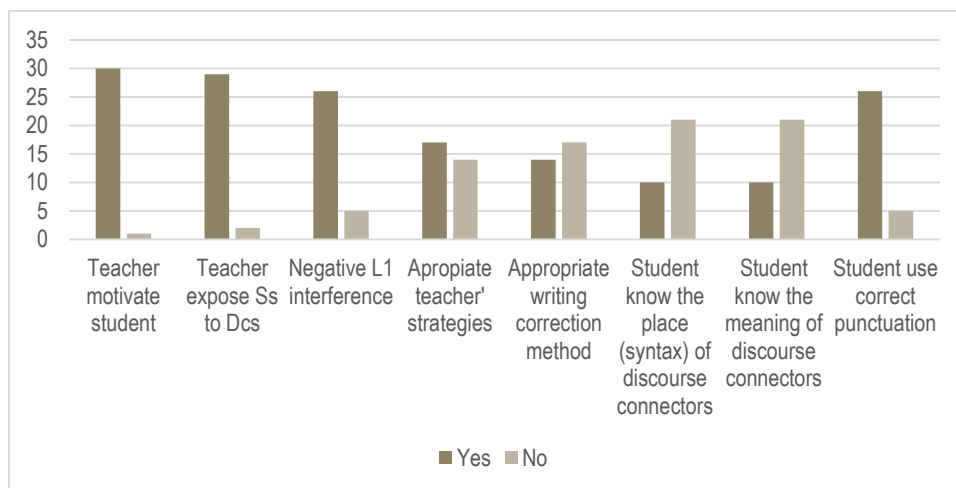
It is noticed in figure 3, that students from the third semester of PINE overuse five discourse connectors which are the following: and, because, for example, however, and so. Since the results go over the media (16). On the other hand, students underuse: as a result, before, but, consequently and therefore. These DCs are under the media (16), less than 16 students did not use them in their academic writing. So, it is important that teachers give more information about the underused ones, and find the corresponding situations to request students to practice them and reach a valance among all of DCs.

To know the reason why students misuse DCs when using them in their academic writing several questions were asked to figure out the problem and to provide a solution.

**Question 4:** Which is the most common mistake students have when using discourse connectors in their academic writings?

**Figure 4**

*Problems related to misuse and underuse of discourse connectors*



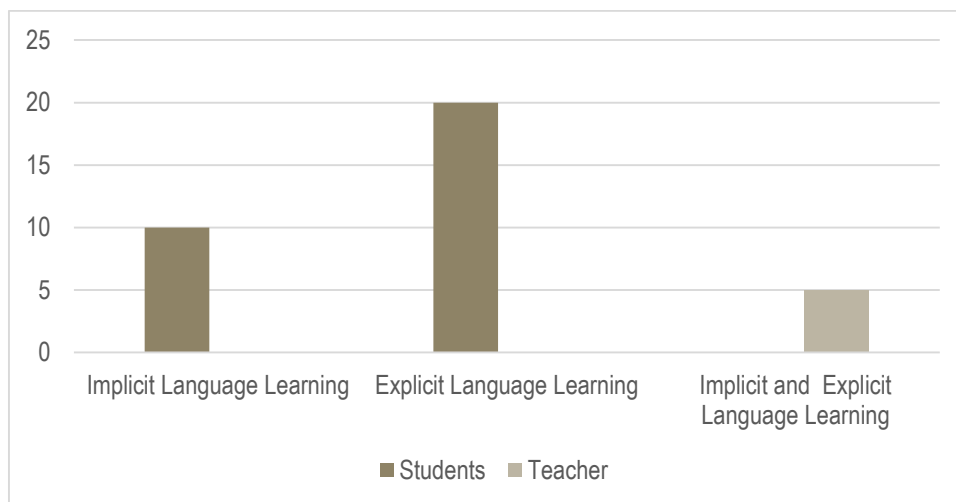
*Fig.4.* It shows the reasons why students misuse and underuse discourse connectors.

In figure 4, it can be analyzed that there are five main reasons why students misuse and underuse DCs. The main problem, according to the majority of students (84%) negative L1 interference in the learning of the target language. The second one, according to (68%) of students said that they do not know the position of discourse connectors. The third one, according to (68%) of students said that do not know the meaning of discourse connectors. The fourth reason, according to (55%) of students, the teachers' method to correct mistakes is not very helpful at the moment to provide feedback. The fifth one, according to (55 %) of students mentioned that teachers' strategies to teach DCs are not the appropriate ones.

It can be concluded that students get confused when using DCs because of spelling or similar pronunciation. Additionally, teachers' strategies to teach DCs need to be changed, to provide a better understanding of them. Teachers must explain why the chosen DC is the wrong one. The main objective is to train students to be able to choose the appropriate discourse for expressing addition, contrast, cause-effect, and other ideas.

It was also essential to investigate the methods to teach DCs to facilitate the teaching and learning process. The results obtained from teachers and students are presented in the following table.

**Question 5:** Which method do you use to teach discourse connectors?

**Figure 5***Methods to teach and learn DCs*

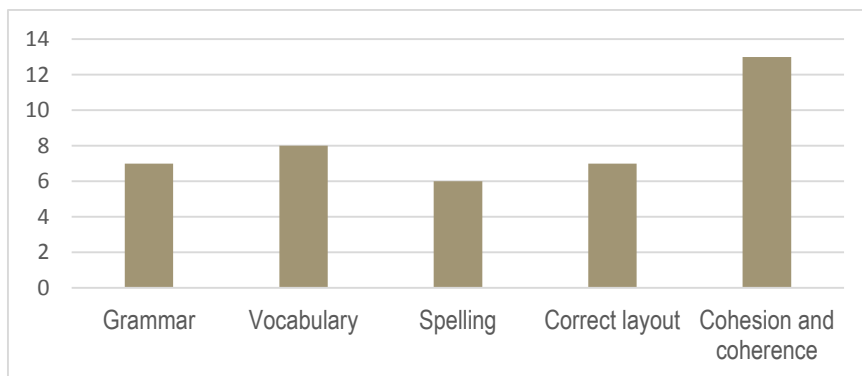
*Fig.5.* It shows the teaching methods to teach DCs.

As it is seen in figure 5, teachers as well as students, express their opinion about the teaching method of discourse connectors. Most of the students (64%) prefer Explicit Instruction to the Implicit one since they would like to have translations and explanations of DCs. Meanwhile, teachers suggest using the Implicit and Explicit method since the combination of both (with and without translation and explanation of DCs) facilitate the teaching and learning process.

It was also important to get information concerning the problems that students face in achieving writing proficiency. This information allows teachers to focus on the aspect students need to improve in terms of writing.

**Question 6:** Which method do you use to teach discourse connectors?

**Figure 6***Students' problems in proficient writing*



*Fig.6.* It shows students' problems in proficient writing

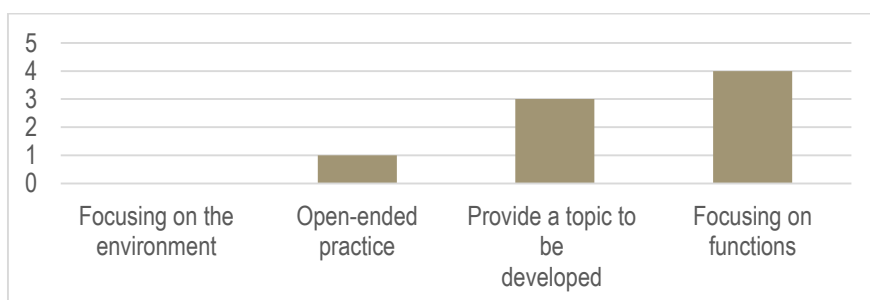
Figure 6, shows that students have deficiencies in grammar (27%), vocabulary (30%), spelling (23%), design (27), but the biggest problem has to do with cohesion and coherence (50%). Therefore, it is important to teach students how to write paragraphs. Establishing topic sentences, supporting ideas, and the concluding sentence allow students to analyze whether the different paragraphs are related to the topic or not. Furthermore, the practice of CDs is essential because they also add coherence and cohesion to a text.

Teachers were also asked about the strategies they use to teach discourse connectors in their class and the results are presented below.

### **Question 7:** Which strategies do you use to teach Discourse Connectors?

#### **Figure 7**

*Strategies to teach DCs.*



*Fig.7.* It shows strategies to teach DCs.

Figure 7 shows that the majority of teachers (80%) believe that one of the best strategies to teach CD is taking into account the different semantic categories of the same. This means teaching the connectors according to their semantic relationships. For example, compare, add, emphasize, contrast, express cause and effect, etc.

# TEACHING DISCOURSE CONNECTORS THROUGH NEARPOD

## **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### **Guide to Teach Discourse Connectors through Nearpod**

**Informative Information**

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### **Proposal Background**

Writing is one of the most difficult skills in the English language, as students need to develop some writing skills and sub-skills to become competent writers. They must have good knowledge of grammar, spelling, vocabulary, cohesion and coherence, punctuation and organization of content. In addition, students must be able to organize and sequence ideas, connect sentences, communicate convincingly using different writing functions, and have a sense of the reader, purpose, and direction.

According to the information obtained from the student and teacher' survey, writing is a difficult skill to master. For this reason, a didactic guide was designed. The purpose of this one is to guide teachers in the teaching of DCs, and in this way, facilitate the efficient and effective development of writing competence. It is vital to mention that becoming a competent writer takes time and is an ongoing process.

The teachers' job is to guide and facilitate the development of those skills and subskills by using active strategies to engage students in the continuous improvement of their academic writing. Today, technology plays a vital role in education because it allows students to practice theoretical knowledge at their own pace and at any time. It gives the opportunity to master knowledge. Therefore, The Nearpod website is used to create a writing class that contains videos on the writing process, pairing, filling in spaces, sentence completion and writing exercises, and paragraphs to provide an opportunity to practice speech connectors. The didactic guide is designed based on the information provided by the survey applied to the students and teachers of the third semester of the National and Foreign Languages Pedagogy Career. It allowed knowing some of the reasons students misuse and underuse the discourse connector and the teaching and learning strategies to facilitate their teaching and learning.

### **Justification**

The didactic guide is helpful because it would guide teachers to teach discourse connectors based on implicit and explicit instruction to facilitate the understanding of function, the position, and the meaning of discourse connectors. Additionally, the students would get motivated to improve their writings by using an active method and have a website where they can find theoretical information about the writing process and DCs and exercises to practice the skill and the linguistic elements.

## **Objectives**

### **General objective**

- To design a didactic guide to teach discourse connectors.

### **Specific objective**

- To propose a new method to teach discourse connectors.
- To create a writing class in Nearpod to practice discourse connectors.
- To improve students' writing proficiency.

### **Proposal feasibility**

The proposal is feasible since Carrera the PINE does not have a didactic guide to teach discourse connectors. So it would be a valuable guide to teach them. This one can be found in the library of the faculty and can be used by teachers and students to improve writing proficiency.

Furthermore, all the information about the writing process and DCs' practice exercises presented in the didactic guide are linked to the writing class at Nearpod.com. It gives the chance to have a different resource and bring a variety of activities to the classroom.

The elaboration of the didactic guide is possible since the researcher has the economic resources for its production and the approval of the authority of the institution to publish a copy as a collaboration to the community.

### **Proposal Topics**

Developing writing proficiency is convenient to work with skills and sub-skills. That is why the didactic guide reviews skill such as grammar, vocabulary, paragraph feature, recognize topic sentence, discourse connectors, punctuation, writing process, writing genres. All of these writing skills and sub-skills are teaching in context. The name of the units of this didactic guide is Study's dilemmas, Outstanding people, My favorite place of the world, and Humans and the earth. All of the topics are teaching implicitly and explicitly, and the website Nearpod.com is a resource for practicing the content.

### **Proposal Procedure**

Discourse connectors can be taught following the steps suggested below.

### **Implicit Teaching**

1. Professor starts the class by warming up or eliciting ideas about the unit topic.
2. Students read and discuss information.

### **Explicit Teaching**

3. Teacher explains about writing and language focus.

### **Practice**

4. Students do some exercises to practice the writing process and the discourse connectors.

### **Production**

5. Teacher guides the students' writings.
6. Students write using their ideas

### **Evaluation**

- Teacher evaluates sentences, paragraphs and essays per unit.
- Teacher evaluates students' Nearpod progress activities.
- Teacher evaluates students' writing journal.

### **Proposal Procedure Explanation' Steps**

Step 1. - The teacher reads the title of the unit aloud and brainstorm or elicit students' ideas about the topic of the unit. Then, he writes students' ideas on the virtual board or word document. This is a very significant activity to get students to engage with the topic.

Step 2. – Students read some questions related to the main topic and discuss them in pairs or groups. It allows students to get more information about the topic of the unit. It is important that students read the questions first. If students have any doubt about the questions; the teacher needs to clarify them. After that, students read the paragraph, and then the questions again. Additionally, before checking the students' answers, they have to compare their answers with a partner. If students get any different opinions; the teacher needs to encourage them to work out the correct answer. In this

step the teacher can provide extra information or summarize the topic in order to strengthen it. After that, the teacher can continue with the next activity.

Step 3. - The teacher needs to explain the writing focus and language focus (Discourse connectors' meaning, function, and place in a sentence and punctuation) to facilitate

students' understanding of the writing process and DCs. He can use videos, flashcards, or Powerpoint presentations.

Step 4 – Students practice exercises (multiple-choice, unscramble sentences, completion, and matching exercise) alone first, then check answers with a partner. The teacher needs to call out students or volunteers and write their answers on the virtual board or word document. Meanwhile, the teacher reviews the answers he can point out on any key information of the topic.

Step 5. - Teacher guides students' writing providing the vocabulary and the topics to discuss with their partners. After that, students can start writing. It is recommended, to request students to start writing sentences in the first and second units. From unit three and on they have to write paragraphs and finally complete essays.

Students need to follow the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, and editing), make use of DCs presented in each unit, check spelling, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, coherence and cohesion, and the layout.

Step 6. – As homework students have to finish their writing task using their ideas. After peer-reviewing, they can send the writing task to the teacher.

Step 7. - A writing rubric is used to evaluate students' writing tasks. It is important to mention that, it is only evaluated the writing and language focus covered in each unit.

The teacher can use a circle for errors that students can correct by themselves. Additionally, the teacher can write direct corrections. Moreover, the teacher can make a list of errors and review with the whole class or individually if time allows, but have at least one or two meetings with each student individually per term to discuss their errors. Students must have their grades before starting the new unit.

Additionally, students' participation in Nearpod activities is evaluated, as well as the word document where they develop the different activities requested by each class.

## Contents

Writing a complete sentences	
How to write the begining and end of a sentence	
Identifying features of a paragraph	
Reconizing the topic of a paragraph	
Identifying strong and weak paragraphs	
Writing topic sentences	
<b>Unit II: Outstanding People</b>	<b>52</b>
Recognizing strong and weak topic sentences	
Combining sentences using and - but	
Punctuation for and - but	
Capitalization	
Writing Supporting sentences adding opinions and examples	
Writing about your famous person	
<b>Unit III: My favorite place in the world.</b>	<b>57</b>
Using descriptive vocabulary in paragraphs	
Brainstorming using list of ideas	
Brainstorming using word maps	
Combining sentences containing adjectives	
Wrrting concluding sentences	
Writing about your favorite place to go on vacation	
<b>Unit IV: Humans and the Earth</b>	<b>72</b>
Giving explanations	
Combining sentences with so and because	
Brainstorming using freewriting and discussion.	
Peer reviewing	
Writing a cause and effect essay	
<b>Unit V: To tell or not to tell a secret</b>	<b>82</b>
Using therefore, consequently, as a result to express cause and effect relationship	
Write a paragraph about a difficult situation	
<b>Unit VI: Changes in life</b>	<b>85</b>
Using whereas and however to make comparisons	
Write a paragraph about the changes in your life	

### **Unit I: Study's Dilemmas**

Students will learn to .....

- Write complete sentences.
- Write the beginning and end a sentence.
- Determine the features of a paragraph.
- Identify the topic of a paragraph.
- Identify strong and weak paragraphs.
- Write a good topic sentence.

**1. Work together with a partner and share information. Ask and answers these questions about studying with a group or alone.**

- Do you prefer studying alone? Why/ why not
- Do you prefer studying with a group? Why/ why not

**2. Read the paragraph called Studying with a Group. After it, choose what the paragraph is about?**

**Studying with a Group**

<sup>1</sup> Studying in a group has some benefits for students. <sup>2</sup>It permits to exchange experience and share ideas with classmates. <sup>3</sup>When you work in a group you can divide the work, so you can finish the work faster. <sup>4</sup>Studying in a group also allow students to know how to interact with classmates. <sup>5</sup>Students learn to listen to others and respect their views. <sup>6</sup>This provides previous training for their future work. <sup>7</sup>Studying with a group contributes to develop communicative and social skills.

- a) It is better to study by yourself.
- b) Studying in a group is beneficial.
- c) Studying with a group permits to learn faster.

**3. Read the paragraph called Studying with a Group, and tick the topic sentence of the paragraph.**

1  2  3  4

**4. What sentences 4, 5 and 6 are about?**

- a) They are new ideas about the topic.
- b) They mention the benefit of studying with a group.
- c) They are benefits of studying alone.

**Writing focus: What a sentence is?**

**A sentence is.....**

- A sentence is a complete thought. It means it has a subject (a pronoun or noun) and a predicate (a verb). Ex: They go to school in the morning.
- The opposite of a sentence is a phrase. It means, it is an incomplete thought. It can lack a subject or predicate. Ex. The sunshine in the morning.
- In academic writing you have to write complete ideas.

**Language focus: Capital letters and sentence punctuation.**

A sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop (.), question mark (?), or exclamation mark (!).

**Examples**

- Studying in a group allows to share students' ideas.
- What do you do for a living?
- Good night!

**To remember:** Exclamation marks are very often used in informal writing but not in academic writing.

**5. Practice time. Unscramble the sentence below. Remember how to begin and end a sentence.**

- a) frank/ working/ with a group/ enjoys

\_\_\_\_\_

- b) she/ not/ does/ studying alone/ like
- c) \_\_\_\_\_  
learned /how to/ peter/ with people/ communicate

**6. Pair work. Read the following information and select the ones that are sentences. Remember about sentence punctuation to make your decision.**

- a) do sport on Sunday morning
- b) Charles has travelled to Canada twice this year.
- c) I love.
- d) Start working on May
- e) Is Katy a beautiful woman?

**Writing focus: What a paragraph is?**

<b>A paragraph is....</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A paragraph is a group of ideas which most of the time contains about 6 to 12 sentences about the same topic. If you want to write something different, you have to start a new paragraph. Of course, it has to be related to the main topic.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are different writing genres, so a paragraph can describe, tell a story or opinion, or even explain something. The sentence must join together logically to facilitate the reader's understanding.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic writing always contains a one paragraph topic sentence, and the rest of the sentences support this one. The supporting sentences provide specific details and explanations. Most of the time, topic sentences are placed at the beginning of the paragraph.</li> </ul>

**7. Work together with a partner. Read the following paragraphs and decide on the weak or strong one. After that, choose one or more reasons from the list to say why it is weak.**

- Not all the sentences are about the topic sentence.
- There are few supporting sentences.
- There is not a topic sentence.
- There are repeated ideas.

a. One of my favorite hobbies as a child was decorating my house. I used to do it when I got free time. My mother was a businesswoman and used to be very busy with her business. She didn't have enough time to clean or decorate the house, so I helped her. The work was very hard, but I was happy. The idea of seeing my house as a fairy tale castle motivated me.

- Example: It is a weak paragraph. There are few supporting sentences.

b. In summer the sun shines most part of the day, so people can go to the beach or the park. In winter, the weather can get a bit cold and rain during the week. Thus, people stay at home and drink a good cup of chocolate with some delicious bread. Sometimes, people have to wear warm clothes too. I do not like the hot weather in my city.

c. In my country, there are several holidays, but my favorite holiday is Easter for various reasons. Holy Week is a time to remember the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. I like it too because I can drink colada morada during this week. Also, I can visit the church and go to a relaxing place with my family. Day of the Death is the best holiday for me!

**Writing focus: Topic sentence**

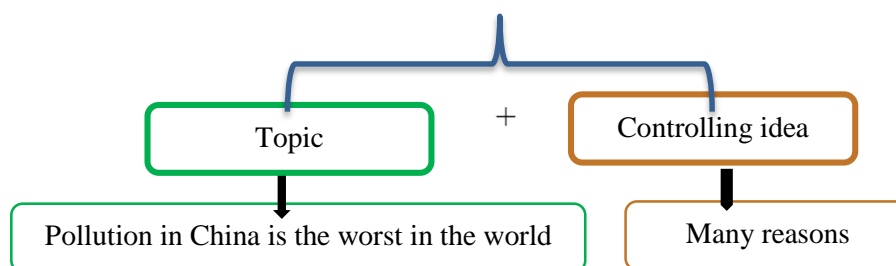
It is the most important sentence in a paragraph because it guides the writer. A topic sentences is formed with a topic and controlling idea (opinion or idea).		
A good topic sentence has either of the following:	One clear topic	<b>Weak:</b> Galapagos Island is the most beautiful place.
		<b>Strong:</b> If you want to experience an amazing vacation, then you definitely need to go to Galapagos Island.

	An opinion or idea about the topic.	<b>Weak:</b> I can practice fitness in the gym. <b>Strong:</b> Doing fitness helps me to keep strong and in shape.
A good topic sentence should not be:	Too broad (many ideas to write about).	<b>Weak:</b> Many people in Ecuador love cats. <b>Strong:</b> Cats are a good company for owners.
	Too narrow (It should not be a fact, it needs to have an idea to write about).	<b>Weak:</b> Parents do not need to spend money in order to show they love their children. <b>Strong:</b> There are many ways parents can express love to their children.

Example:

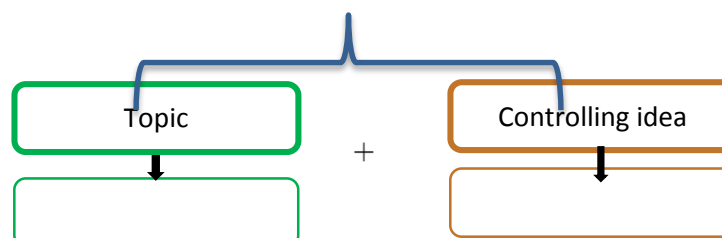
**Topic Sentence:**

There are many reasons why pollution in China is the worst in the world.



**8. Analyze the following topic sentences. Place the topic and controlling idea in the correct place.**

a) Swimming provides many healthful benefits.



**Gather your knowledge**

**9. Read the sentences for a paragraph about studying with a group or alone. Cross out the ones that are not related to the topic of the paragraph. Then, on a separate sheet of paper write a new paragraph using the sentences that are related to, and use the correct punctuation.**

<sup>1</sup> one of the benefits of studying with a group is that students can exchange experiences about learning strategies that really works to save time and effort <sup>2</sup>they live far away the city so the internet connection is not very good <sup>3</sup>they can also share knowledge with classmates <sup>4</sup>when students explain someone else what they learn in the class they are developing different skills such as analysis, synthesis, summary, reflection and collaborative learning <sup>5</sup>they do not get together well <sup>6</sup>studying with a group also allow students to know how to interact with classmates <sup>7</sup>for example, they learn to listen to others and respect their views this is essential training for their future work <sup>8</sup>they do like to speak with others because they are shy

**10. Before handing in the paragraph check the following.**

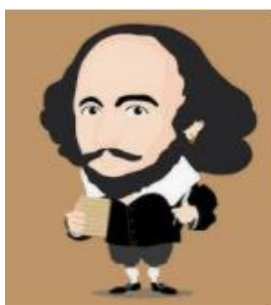
- The sentences start and finish with the correct punctuation.
- Did you add a topic sentence?
- Did you give a title to the paragraph?

**Unit II: Outstanding People**

Students will learn to .....

- Recognize strong and weak topic sentences.
- Combine sentences using and - but.
- Use commas in sentences with and - but.
- Use capitalization appropriately.

1. Look at the picture below. Describe it to a partner and tell what you know about him.



"To be or not to be,  
that is the question."

2. Tell a classmate about your famous person.
- What is his or her name?
  - What is his or her talent?
  - What is he or she famous for?
3. Read the paragraph about Shakespeare in love, then choose the topic of the paragraph?

#### Shakespeare in Love

<sup>1</sup>I believe Shakespeare in love is a very successful romantic comedy movie produced from the life and experiences of Shakespeare. <sup>2</sup>It collects the words and ideas expressed by Shakespeare in his written stories but especially Romeo and Juliet. <sup>3</sup>Shakespeare in Love stages his unfortunate love story from that time. <sup>4</sup>Viola de Lesseps and William fell in love, but it was an impossible romance. <sup>5</sup>Viola was supposed to marry Lord Wessen, and Shakespeare had already married. <sup>6</sup>Shakespeare mentioned that the world is a stage, and he lived a story that he did not expect. <sup>7</sup>They had a very passionate romance, but how it ended was never known.

- a) It is about Shakespeare's fortunate story.  
b) It is about Shakespeare's unfortunate love story.  
c) It is about a strange stage in Shakespeare's life.
4. Read the paragraph about Shakespeare in love again and choose the best topic sentence of the paragraph?

1  2  3

5. Read both sentences about famous people and circle the best topic sentence. Then, tell a partner why the other sentence is a weak one. Use one or more of the following reasons:
- It is too broad.
  - It is too narrow.
  - There is no controlling idea.
  - There is more than one controlling ideas.
- a) 1. Bon Jovi is a better singer than Rod Stewart for several reasons.  
2. They are both good singers.
- 
- b) 1. Communication is important.  
2. Communication may be a vital issue to save a relationship.
- 
- c) 1. To be an effective software requires some characteristics and be friendly.  
2. To be an effective software.
- 
- d) 1. Getting married is difficult.  
2. Getting married is difficult because of the changes you have to face in your life.

**Language focus: The use of and - but to join sentences**

6. Look at the following sentences and tell a partner the similarities and differences you can find among them.

Differences between and/but	
a)	1. The car was very modern. It was expensive. 2. The car was very modern but expensive.
b)	1. She worked hard. She made a lot of money. 2. She worked hard, and she made a lot of money.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the table above you can see that sentence a2 looks more natural.</li> <li>• You can use <b>but</b> to joint contrasting ideas. For instance: to join something positive with something negative.</li> <li>• You can use <b>and</b> to joint similar ideas.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To remember:</b> Never starts a sentence with but or and in academic writing. It is better to use In addition or However.</li> </ul>

7. Use and/ but to complete this paragraph.

Shakespeare in Love	
<p>Shakespeare in love is a romantic comedy which was created based on Shakespeare's life .....experiences. It collects his words .....ideas from Romeo and Juliet plays, specially. Shakespeare in love puts on stage his misfortune love story of that time. Viola de Lesseps ..... William fell in love,.....it was an impossible romance because Viola was supposed to marry to Lord Wessen,.....Shakespeare has already got married. Shakespeare mentioned, that the world is a stage ..... he lived a story he did not expect. They lived a very passionate romance, ..... it was never known how the romance between them Viola ended.</p>	

**Language Focus: Punctuation**

You can join two contrastive complete sentences (subject and predicate) with but, and always use a comma before but. Example:
<p>She was very poor. She never asked for help. She was very poor, but she never asked for help.</p>
You can join two similar complete sentences (subject and predicate) with and, and always use a comma before and. Example:
<p>He stopped talking. He lit a cigarette. He stopped talking, and he lit a cigarette.</p>
You can join two complete sentences and remove the subject of the second sentence. In this case, omit the comma. Example:
<p>I wanted to attend the meeting. I couldn't because I was very ill. I wanted to attend the meeting but couldn't because I was very ill.</p>

8. Choose and/but to join the following sentences. Remember to use a comma if you need it. Then, compare your answers with a partner and talk about the difference.

- a) She came on time. Her husband was late again.  
She came on time, but her husband was late again.
- 
- b) The team won the championship. They achieved the semi-final of the European Cup.
- 
- c) The bus stopped at the station. The passengers got off.
- 

**Language focus: Capitalisation**

Remember that you learned that the first word of a sentences is written with a capital letter.

Rule 1. Capitalize the title of the paragraph, essay or book. The title of a film, piece of music, etc.

Example:

- The effects of humanity on the earth.
- Angry Men is a famous film on the 60'

Rule 2. Capitalize names of people, places, things and groups.

Example:

- Peter climbed Mountain Everest.
- Rome is located in Europe.

Rule 3. Capitalize days of the week or months of the year, languages and nationalities.

Example:

- Rose's birthday is in October.
- My favorite day is Wednesday.
- My mother tongue is Spanish.
- Many Venezuelan people came to Ecuador.

**Remember:** Do not capitalize prepositions (of, in, to), articles (a, an, the), or conjunctions (and, but).

**9. Rewrite the following sentence. Use the correct capitalization for each one.**

a) The statue of liberty is huge.

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
daniel and doménica will be here in june.

c) \_\_\_\_\_  
last monday, we saw the movie premunition.

**Writing focus: Supporting sentences with opinions and examples**

Topic sentences and supporting ideas can contain opinions. You can support your opinions with examples. These examples must be facts or experiences.

**10. Pair work. Read the sentences below and decide if they are opinions (O) or examples (E).**

- ..O.. Pets should not be allowed in restaurants.
- ..... Pets are not allowed at La Casa Rosada restaurant.
- ..... I think India is the most polluted country in the world.
- ..... People prefer to travel to Canada where the air is cleaner.

**Gather your knowledge**

**11. Choose one famous person and write about him or her. The questions below can guide your paragraph. Remember to include in your paragraph a topic sentence and support ideas, check punctuation, and include sentences with and/but. Finally, give a title to the paragraph.**

- What is his or her name?
- When and where he or she was born?
- What is his or her talent?
- What is he or she famous for?
- Why did you choose this person?

**12. Before handing in your homework, exchange the paper with a partner.**

- Circle the topic sentence and underline the controlling idea.
- Circle the commas your partner used.

### Unit III: My favorite place in the world.

Students will learn to .....

- Develop paragraphs with descriptive details.
- Use brainstorming strategies: lists, word maps.

1. Look at the pictures. Choose one and describe it to a classmate. Have you been to any of these places before?

a) Cotopaxi national Park



Source: google images

b) Ingapirca Ruins



Source: google images

c) Pallatanga Resource



Source: google images

d) Middle of the World



Source: google images

2. Pair work. Read the following paragraph and answer the questions.

### An Exceptional Beach in Ecuador

<sup>1</sup>Los Frailes beach is an exceptional place to visit on your next vacation because of its touristic attractions. <sup>2</sup>This beach is located in the province of Manabi – Puerto Lopez city. <sup>3</sup>If you like sports, you can walk from Puerto Lopez to get to the beach. <sup>4</sup>On your way, you can enjoy the route through the viewpoints, <sup>5</sup>You can also see from the cliffs the turquoise water and the white sand of the beaches around the place. <sup>6</sup>This beach is a great place to swim or read a book. <sup>7</sup>You can also relax lying on the soft sand. <sup>8</sup>Los Frailes beach is a great silent beach to visit on your next vacation.

a) Select the topic sentence of the above paragraph.

1  2  3

b) Think what do sentences 3, 5 and 6 do?




1. Remark the activities you can do at the beach.
2. Mention how to live there.
3. Provide information about nightlife there.

#### Language focus: Descriptive vocabulary

- Remember that the objective of a topic sentence is to signal the main idea of a paragraph. You can find it at the beginning of an academic writing paragraph. It is important to bring to mind too, that supporting sentences give information related to the topic sentence.
- When you describe a situation or place you can use adjectives to develop the ideas of your paragraph.
- Adjectives can be used before a noun, after the verb to be (am – is – are), and after a verb like taste, sound, look, feel, smell and seem. For instance:

Before a noun	After to be verb	After certain verbs
Montañita is an <b>exciting</b> beach to go to with friends.	In Puyo city rains a lot so <b>is humid</b> .	Yosemite National Park <b>looks like</b> an exciting place.

3. Work in pairs. Match the picture with the corresponding adjective to describe pollution.

Picture and Adjective		
1.  Source: google images	2.  Source: google images	3.  Source: google images
a. Dry	b. Quiet	c. Humid

**Brainstorming: List of ideas**

Brainstorming is a prewriting process. It is done before to write your paper, summary or essay. It helps to organize your thoughts, plan your writing and clarify ideas.

**Tips for Brainstorming using a list**

1. Use a separate sheet of paper.
2. Write the topic at the top.
3. Write as many ideas focus on the topic.
4. Write keywords or phrases.
5. Write as many ideas as possible. Don't decide if your ideas are good or bad yet.

4. **Look at the example below. Make a list of ideas about your favorite place. Share your ideas with your partner and check how many adjectives he used.**



Source: google images

**Editing your list of ideas**

The next activity to do, is to review and cross out the bad ideas.

5. **Now edit your list by crossing out the ideas that are not related with the topic. Tell a partner why you crossed them out.**

**Writing focus: Combining sentences containing adjectives**

Remember that you have used the connecting words **and - but** to join similar ideas. You can also use **and** to combine adjectives. It helps to vary and make your paragraph more interesting.

Example:

Bora Bora is an exciting island. Bora Bora is a relaxing island.  
 Bora Bora is an exciting ~~island~~. Bora Bora is a ~~a~~ relaxing island.  
 Bora Bora is an exciting **and** a relaxing island.

Example:

The Grand Canyon is a majestic place. It is quiet place.  
 The Grand Canyon is a majestic ~~place~~. It is quiet place.  
 The Grand Canyon is a majestic **and** quiet place.

When you are combining three sentences, you have to remove the subjects and verbs from the second and third sentences. Notice a comma is used between the first and second adjective but not with the last adjective.

Example:

Montanita is a modern beach. It is an exciting beach. It is fresh beach.  
 Montanita is a modern ~~beach~~. It is an exciting ~~beach~~. It is fresh beach.  
 Montanita is a modern, exciting **and** fresh beach.

6. **Combine the following sentences using and - but. Discuss partners' similar and different sentence combinations.**

- a) Pillaro is an old place. It is mystical. It is a tourist place.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Los Failes is a cheap beach. It is a clean beach. It is silent beach.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Galapagos is a warm island. It is expensive. It is beautiful island.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Brainstorming: Word maps**

Word map is another strategy for brainstorming ideas. They show the connection of ideas to the topic sentence.

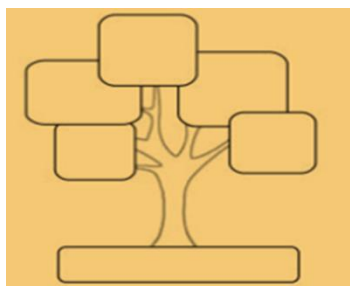
**Tips for Brainstorming using maps**

1. Use a separate sheet of paper.
2. Write the topic in the central part of the page and circle it.
3. Write ideas around the central topic and circle them.
4. Draw lines to connect the circles to the main topic.
5. Write as many ideas as possible. Don't decide if your ideas are good or bad yet.
6. When you finish, cross out any ideas you consider are not related to the main topic.

7. **Brainstorm ideas using word maps. Select one of the topics below. Choose one of the following templates or any other from your own to brainstorm ideas.**

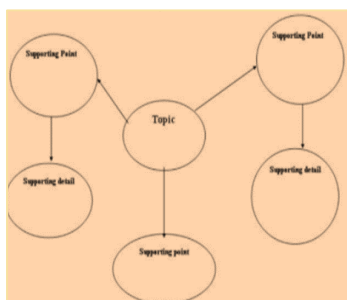
- The Grand Canyon.
- Los Frailes Beach.
- Bora Bora Island.

a)



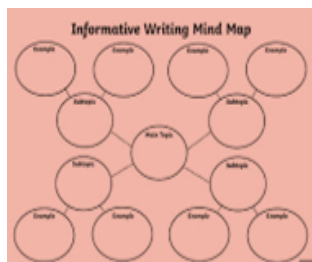
Source: google images

b)



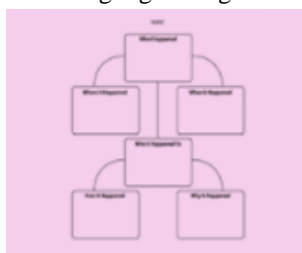
Source: google images

c)



Source: google images

d)



Source: google images

### Language focus: Concluding sentences

As mentioned before a good paragraph needs to have a topic sentence and supporting ideas. The paragraphs, very frequently have a concluding sentences too. This is place at the end of the paragraph

A concluding sentence can:

- Restate the topic sentence.
- Summaries the main idea of the paragraph.
- Make a prediction associated with the topic of the paragraph.
- Make a suggestion or give advice linked to the topic.

**To remember:** A concluding sentence does not add new information to the paragraph.

**8. Read the concluding sentence of the paragraph An Exceptional Beach in Ecuador. Decide if this one restates, summarize, predict or suggest.**

- a) .....Restate the topic sentence.
- b) .....Summarize the main idea of the paragraph.
- c) .....Make a prediction associated with the topic of the paragraph.
- d) .....Make a suggestion or give advice linked to the topic.

#### An Exceptional Beach in Ecuador

<sup>1</sup>Los Frailes beach is an exceptional place to visit on your next vacation because of its touristic attractions. <sup>2</sup>This beach is located in the province of Manabi – Puerto Lopez city. <sup>3</sup>If you like sports, you can walk from Puerto Lopez to get to the beach. <sup>4</sup>On your way, you can enjoy the route through the viewpoints, <sup>5</sup>You can also see from the cliffs the turquoise water and the white sand of the beaches around the place. <sup>6</sup>This beach is a great place to swim or read a book. <sup>7</sup>You can also relax lying on the soft sand. <sup>8</sup>Los Frailes beach is a great silent beach to visit on your next vacation.

### Gather your knowledge

**9. Choose one of the topics below and write a paragraph.**

- The Grand Canyon.
- Los Frailes Beach.
- Bora Bora Island.

**After you have chosen the topic, follow these steps to write a paragraph.**

- Brainstorm ideas.
- Write a topic sentence.
- Add supporting ideas.
- Use descriptive adjectives. Combine them with and – but.
- Add a concluding sentence.
- Review punctuation.
- Give the paragraph a title.

**10. When you finish writing your paragraph, send it to a friend. Discuss with your partner if all supporting ideas are related to the topic sentence.**

### Unit IV: Humans and the Earth

Students will learn to .....

- Give explanations.
- Combine sentences with so and because
- Use brainstorming strategies: freewriting and discussion.
- Develop peer feedback skills.
- Write paragraphs about explanations and excuses

1. Look at the picture and discuss with your classmate what the problem is? Tell your classmate your ideas.



Source: google images




2. Pair work. Read the paragraph. Was it the same problem discussed above?

#### Effects of Humanity on the Earth

<sup>1</sup>One of the most serious problems in the world is pollution. <sup>2</sup> Humans are the biggest cause of global pollution because of their bad habits. <sup>3</sup>One of the most dangerous habits of human beings is throwing industrial waste into the river. <sup>4</sup>This not only pollutes the water but also destroys marine life. <sup>5</sup>Fish become contaminated, so people get gastro-intestinal problems and of the skin. <sup>6</sup>In addition, due to industrial waste, marine species die or do not reproduce, so people who consume this product suffer from shortages. <sup>7</sup>In addition, industrial waste emits fumes and gases that pollute the air, so health problems appear. <sup>8</sup>For example India is one of the most polluted countries in the world. <sup>9</sup>Most of its inhabitants have respiratory problems because their lungs are affected by air pollution. <sup>10</sup>This is only one of the factors of humanity's negative effect on the earth.

3. Reread the paragraph and choose the correct answer. What is the cause of pollution?
  - a) Industrial Waste
  - b) Agricultural Activities
  - c) Indoor Air Pollution
4. What is one of the effects of pollution?
  - a) Good health.
  - b) Healthy problems.
  - c) Environment is in good condition.
5. Work in pairs. Match the picture with the corresponding adjective to describe pollution.

### Pollution adjectives

Pictures		
1.	2.	3.
		
Source:google images	Source:google images	Source:google images
a. Radioactive	b. Harmless	c. Poisonous

#### Language focus: Giving explanations

- Cause and effect/result

<b>So and because are used to connect two sentences.</b>
Examples: Humanity created industries. There are health problems. Humanity created industries, so there are health problems. There are health problems because humanity created industries.

<b>So and because have a similar function, and both are close in meaning.</b>
<b>So tells the result or effect of a certain situation:</b> Humanity created industries, so there are health problems.
<b>Because tells why something happens (the cause):</b> There are health problems why? because humanity created industries. There are health problems because humanity created industries.
<b>Starting with because</b>
I eat in this restaurant every day because the food is tasty and cheap. <b>Because the food is tasty and cheap,</b> I eat in this restaurant every day. As you can see, there is no difference in meaning in these two sentences, but there is a difference in punctuation. Do not use a comma when because is used in the middle of the sentence. Use a comma when you start your sentence with because at the end of it. It is recommended to use these two forms to vary and make your writing more interesting.
<b>To remember:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use so to express result or effect and because to express the cause.</li> </ul>

- Use a comma before so.
- Do not use a comma before because.

6. Read again the paragraph about Effects of Humanity on the Earth and underline the sentences that use so and because. Tell a partner which sentence tells the cause and which one the effect.

#### Effects of Humanity on the Earth

<sup>1</sup>One of the most serious problems in the world is pollution. <sup>2</sup> Humans are the biggest cause of global pollution because of their bad habits. <sup>3</sup>One of the most dangerous habits of human beings is throwing industrial waste into the river. <sup>4</sup>This not only pollutes the water but also destroys marine life. <sup>5</sup>Fish become contaminated, so people get gastro-intestinal and skin problem. <sup>6</sup>In addition, due to industrial waste, marine species die or do not reproduce, so people who consume this product suffer from shortages. <sup>7</sup>In addition, industrial waste emits fumes and gases that pollute the air, so health problems appear. <sup>8</sup>For example India is one of the most polluted countries in the world. <sup>9</sup>Most of its inhabitants have respiratory problems because their lungs are affected by air pollution. <sup>10</sup>This is only one of the factors of humanity's negative effect on the earth.

7. Look at the picture. Write one sentence using because (cause) and another using so (effect). Use because at the beginning and at the middle of a sentence.



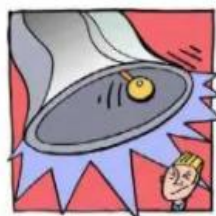
Source:google images

- a) Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Effect \_\_\_\_\_



Source:google images

- c) Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
d) Effect \_\_\_\_\_



Source:google images

- e) Cause \_\_\_\_\_  
f) Effect \_\_\_\_\_

**Brainstorming: freewriting and discussion.**

**Having a discussion with a classmate is a good strategy to brainstorm ideas for your writing.**

- A good way to discuss is to share opinions with different classmates.
- Another one is to ask questions to make the other person think deeply.
- Other form is to provide an example to your views to support them.
- It is ok to disagree with other people's opinions. However, you have to be very respectful.

**8. Group work. Give your opinions about the following topics.**

- Think of as many opinions as you can. It is not necessary you believe them.
  - A volunteer can take notes of the group's opinion.
- a) Air pollution
  - b) Water pollution
  - c) Noise pollution

**Brainstorming: freewriting**

**Freewriting is a good strategy to brainstorm ideas for your writing. This one consists of writing everything you think of quickly and without stopping.**

- Write as many sentences as you can for about five to ten minutes without stopping.
- Just write do not take care about grammar, spelling or punctuation.
- In the case, you made a mistake, just cross it out.

**Freewriting example:**

The world's pollution is worrying Human beings has had a negative effect on the earth. The man ~~in~~ ~~his~~ desire to improve his economic status created the industry, This has polluted the air and is one of the most important causes of the population's health problems for instance: India is one of the most polluted countries in the world ~~Its~~ ~~habitants~~ have respiratory problems due to lung disease. Industries ~~drop their~~ garbage on the river and it contaminates the water. Fish life is affected and lack of food can be the result of this bad activity.

**9. Select one of the topics below and freewrite for about 5 to 10 minutes. Write sentences and remember not to stop during this time.**

- a) Air pollution
- b) Water pollution
- c) Noise pollution

**Editing your freewriting**

**After you free write you need to edit it. How can you do it?**

- Underlined the good ideas.
- Cross out anything you consider is not related to the topic or you do not want to use.

**10. Go to your freewriting paragraph and edit it. Remember to underline good ideas and cross out the ones you do not need. After it, freewrite again but now uses the sentences you underlined.**

**Writing focus: Peer reviewing**

Peer reviewing is one of the steps in the process of writing. Its main objective is to exchange, read and make comments on your partner's paper.

When you review your partner's paper you can check:

- If the paper contains a topic sentence, supporting details and concluding sentence.
- Sign special vocabulary or grammar.
- Get different ways to do the same assignment.
- Tell the writer, the ideas you like best.
- Ask questions to help the writer think of more ideas.
- If you do not understand something, ask the writer to clarify it. So, maybe he can rewrite to make it clearer.
- Comment on ideas and organization.

**Remember:** When you review your partner's paper be polite, provide helpful and straightforward feedback.

**11. Group work. Look at the possible comments you can give to a writer. Put a tick on the good comments and a cross on the bad ones.**

- \_\_\_ I found the topic sentence interesting.
- \_\_\_ You need to add example to make ideas clearer. Because your paragraph is short it would be appropriate to add two examples.
- \_\_\_ Your paragraph is remarkable but there is not a paragraph title.
- \_\_\_ The concluding sentences is similar to the topic sentence, try to change one.
- \_\_\_ The vocabulary was the appropriate one. I could imagine the story.
- \_\_\_ Which one is the topic sentence? It would be nice if you tell me.

**Gather your knowledge**

**12. Choose one of the topics below and write a paragraph explaining the causes and effects.**

- Air pollution
- Water pollution
- Noise pollution

**After you have chosen the topic, follow these steps to write your paragraph.**

- Brainstorm ideas. Use free writing strategy. Do not forget to edit it. (underlined good ideas and cross out the unnecessary ones)
- Write a topic sentence. Remember it needs one controlling idea.
- Add supporting ideas. Include an example.
- Use descriptive adjectives. Combine them with so – because.
- Add a conclusion sentence.
- Give the paragraph a title.
- Review punctuation.
- Exchange paper with a classmate, include your free writing. Use the peer writing form.
- Edit your paragraph again.
- Finally hand it to your teacher.

**Unit V: To tell or not to tell a secret**

Students will learn to .....

- **Write about cause and effect relationships.**
- **Write a paragraph about a difficult**

**1. Discussion. Do you think, is it important to keep secrets? Do you tell secrets to your friends? Are you good at keeping secrets?**

**What a Secret!**

My friend Karla told our group of friends a secret and made us swear that we would never tell anyone. Karla was very excited about her crush because he was very courteous and treated her very well. They spent two weeks together, but he never kissed her and avoided being alone with her. Consequently, she asked him the reasons for his behavior. One day he invited her to a friends' party. She was very disappointed. However, she decided to go. After a short time of arriving at the party, he disappeared. It caught my friend's attention. She looked for him until she found him in the bathroom kissing a man. She couldn't believe her eyes. As a result, she started crying and slapped him. He apologized and explained why he could never kiss her.

**2. Read the paragraph above What a Secret! With a partner decide which of these events occurred first. Write 1 by the first and 2 by the second one.**

- \_\_\_ My friend made us swear. \_\_\_ She told our group of friends a secret.
- \_\_\_ He never kissed her. \_\_\_ She questioned the reasons for his behavior.
- \_\_\_ He disappeared from the party. \_\_\_ She looked for him.
- \_\_\_ He was kissing a man. \_\_\_ She slapped him.

**3. How is the paragraph developed?**

- a) There are a lot of examples.
- b) It is a narrative.
- c) It is a drama presentation.

#### Language focus: Cause and effect

Consequently, therefore and as a result are used to link two sentences. They have the same meaning. Their function is to show the effect or result of the first sentence. They are placed at the beginning of the second sentence. They can also join the two sentences with the word and before consequently, therefore and as a result.

<b>As a result</b>
Her boyfriend was kissing a man. <b>As a result</b> , she started crying and slapped him. Her boyfriend was kissing a man, and <b>as a result</b> she started crying and slapped him.
<b>Consequently</b>
He never kissed her and avoided being alone with her. <b>Consequently</b> , she asked him the reasons for his behavior. He never kissed her and avoided being alone with her, and <b>consequently</b> she asked him the reasons for his behavior.
<b>Therefore</b>
He never kissed her and avoided being alone with her. <b>Therefore</b> , she asked him the reasons for his behavior. He never kissed her and avoided being alone with her, and <b>therefore</b> she asked him the reasons for his behavior.

4. **Read and analyze the sentences in the above table.**
  - a) When consequently, therefore and as a result begin the second sentence, where is the comma placed?
  - b) When consequently, therefore and as a result join two sentences with and, where is the comma placed?
5. **Connect these sentences with consequently, therefore and as a result. Decide on the correct order of the sentence and punctuation.**
  - a) The landlord does not allow her to enter the house. She has not paid the rent on her house.
  - b) My nephews have not been vaccinated against covid yet. They cannot enter the airport to catch their flight.
  - c) She is not good at acting. She has not got any contract.

#### Gather your knowledge

6. **Choose one topic from the list to write about or make your own mind about a difficult situation.**
  - a) Invest money in Bitcoin
  - b) Travel to another country.
  - c) Buy a new car in the pandemic.
7. **Write your paragraph and then check your writing.**
  - Brainstorm ideas. Use freewriting strategy. Do not forget to edit it. (underlined good ideas and cross out the unnecessary ones).
  - Write a topic sentence. Remember it needs one controlling idea.
  - Add supporting ideas.
  - Join sentences with consequently, therefore and as a result.
  - Give the paragraph a title.
  - Review punctuation.
  - Exchange paper with a classmate, include your freewriting. Use the peer writing form.
  - Edit your paragraph again.
  - Finally hand it to your teacher.

#### Unit VI: Changes in life

Students will learn to .....

- Write comparisons using whereas and however.
- Organize a comparison paragraph
- Write a paragraph about the changes in your life.

1. **Group Work. Get together with your classmate and share information about any change in your life. For instance: Have you moved to another city or country? How did you feel? Was it a nice experience?**
2. **Read the paragraph about Moving on cities and noticed the changes in Maritza' life.**

#### Moving on cities

The most severe change in my life was when I got married. I used to live with my parents and brothers in an apartment downtown. And I was very happy because I knew my city very well, and had many friends. My husband came from another city and we decided to move there. At first, everything was fantastic, I felt like being on vacation. However, I missed my parents, friends, and my city. Soon after, my husband had to move to another city for work reasons. I started to feel lonely and depressed because I didn't know anyone and stayed home all the time. Whereas, in my city, I used to go out very often to work or meet my friends. After two years I decided to return to my city since I got a job opportunity. However, my husband had to travel a longer distance.

3. **Read again the paragraph about Moving on cities and answer the following question.**
  - a) **What are the differences Maritza experienced, moving from her city to the new one?**

**Language focus: However/ whereas**

**However and whereas** are used to connect two different or opposite sentences.

Examples:

Galo likes going swimming/ I like going hiking.

Galo likes going swimming. **However**, I like going hiking.

Galo likes going swimming, **whereas** I like going hiking.

**Whereas** I like going hiking, Galo likes going swimming.

Notice that whereas can be used in the middle of a sentence before a comma, and at the beginning of a sentence, with a comma at the end of this. However is used in the middle of a sentence follow by a comma.

4. **Put these sentences together, use however and whereas. Do not forget to add the correct punctuation.**
  - a) Guayaquil is a big metropolis/ People prefer to avoid heavy traffics. (Use however)
  - b) I might feel alone / Moving to a new city can be exciting. (Use whereas at the beginning of the sentence).
  - c) Living in a big house is comfortable/ It is hard to keep it clean. (Use whereas in the middle of the sentence).
  - d) (Use your own ideas to write one sentence with whereas and one with however).

#### **Writing Focus: Organization of a comparison paragraph**

When you write a comparison paragraph, it is helpful to write ideas about the first choice and then write ideas about the second one.

#### Moving on cities

The most severe change in my life was when I got married. I used to live with my parents and brothers in an apartment downtown. And I was very happy because I knew my city very well, and had many friends. My husband came from another city and we decided to move there. At first, everything was fantastic, I felt like being on vacation. However, I missed my parents, friends, and my city. Soon after, my husband had to move to another city for work reasons. I started to feel lonely and depressed because I didn't know anyone and stayed home all the time. Whereas, in my city, I used to go out very often to work or meet my friends. After two years I decided to return to my city since I got a job opportunity. However, my husband had to travel a longer distance.

The paragraph in brown refers to the situation in the first city and the paragraph in green refers to the second city.

#### **Gather your knowledge**

5. **Choose one topic from the list to write about changes in your life.**

- a) Move from secondary school to university.
- b) Move from the rural area to the urban one.
- c) Change from a public school to a private one.

#### 6. Write your paragraph and then check your writing.

- Brainstorm ideas. Use free writing strategy. Do not forget to edit it. (underline good ideas and cross out the unnecessary ones).
- Write a topic sentence. Remember it needs a controlling idea.
- Add supporting ideas.
- Join sentences with however and whereas.
- Give the paragraph a title.
- Review punctuation.
- Exchange paper with a classmate, include your free writing. Use the peer writing form.
- Edit your paragraph again.
- Finally hand it to your teacher.

### Answers

#### Unit I.

2. b. Studying in a group is beneficial.
3. 1. Studying in a group has some benefits for students.
4. b. They mention the benefit of studying with a group.
5. a. Frank enjoys working with a group.  
b. She does not like studying alone.  
c. Peter learned how to communicate with people.
6. b. Charles has travelled to Canada twice this year.  
e. Is Katty a beautiful woman?
7. b. it is a weak paragraph. There is not a topic sentence. There are few supporting sentences.  
c. Not all the sentences are about the topic sentence. There are few supporting sentences.
8. a. Topic: Swimming. Controlling idea: health benefits.  
b. Topic: greenhouse. Controlling ideas: factors.
- 9.

#### Skills students develop when studying with a group

<sup>1</sup>Studying with a group permits students to develop social and communicative skills. One of the benefits of studying with a group is that students can exchange experiences about learning strategies that really works to save time and effort. ~~2They live far away the city so the internet connection is not very good.~~ <sup>3</sup>They can also share knowledge with classmates. <sup>4</sup>When students explain someone else what they learn in the class they are developing different skills such as analysis, synthesis, summary, reflection and collaborative learning. ~~5they do not get together well~~ <sup>6</sup>Studying with a group also allow students to know how to interact with classmates. <sup>7</sup>For example, they learn to listen to others and respect their views. This is essential training for their future work ~~8They do like to speak with others because they are shy~~

#### Unit II

3. b. It is about Shakespeare's unfortunate love story.
4. 2. Shakespeare in Love is a very successful romantic comedy movie produced from the life and experiences of Shakespeare.
5. a. 1. Bon Jovi is a better singer than Rod Stewart for several reasons.  
b. 2. Communication may be a vital issue to save a relationship.  
c. 1. To be an effective software requires some characteristics and be friendly.  
d. 2. Getting married is difficult because of the changes you have to face in your life.
7. b. The team won the championship and achieved the semi-final of the European Cup. The team won the championship, and they achieved the semi-final of the European Cup.  
c. The bus stopped at the station, and the passengers got off.
8. a. The Statue of Liberty is huge.  
b. Daniel and Doménica will be here in June.  
c. Last Monday, we saw the movie Premunition.

9. b. Example
- c. Opinion
- d. Opinion

### Unit III

2. a. 1. Los Frailes beach is an exceptional place to visit on your next vacation because of its touristic attractions.  
b. 1. Remark the activities you can do at the beach.
3. 2a, 1c, 3d, 4b, 5e, 6j, 7i, 8f, 9g, 10h
6. a. Pillaro is an old, mystical and tourist place.  
b. Los Failes is a cheap, clean and silent beach.  
c. Galapagos is a warm, expensive nad beautiful island.
8. a. Restate the topic sentence.

### Unit IV

3. a. Industrial Waste
4. b. Healthy problems.
5. 2a, 1c, 3d, 4b, 5e, 6j, 7i, 8f, 9g, 10h
6. 2. because of their bad habits (cause)  
5. so people get gastro-intestinal problems and of the skin (effect).
7. a. There are many accidents because drivers speed the limit  
Drivers speed the limit, so there are many accidents.  
b. Because I have a lot of work, I feel depressed.  
I have a lot of work, so I feel depressed.  
c. People get stressed because of too much noise around.  
There is too much noise around, so People get stressed.
12. a. good comment  
b. good comment  
c. good comment  
d. good comment  
e. good comment  
f. good comment

### Unit V

2. a
  1. My friend made us swear.
  2. She told our group of friends a secret.
2. b
  1. He never kissed her.
    - i. She questioned the reasons for his behavior.
2. c
  1. He disappeared from the party.
  2. She looked for him.
2. d
  1. He was kissing a man.
  2. She slapped him.
  3. It is a narrative.
4. a) The comma is place after consequently, therefore and as a result  
b) The comma is place before and.
5.
  - d) She has not paid the rent on her house. Therefore, he landlord does not allow her to enter the house.
  - e) My nephews have not been vaccinated against covid yet, and consequently they cannot enter the airport to catch their flight.
  - f) She is not good at acting, and as a result she has not got any contract.

### Unit VI

3. She felt excited, then alone and depressed.
- Guayaquil is a big metropolis. However, people prefer to avoid heavy traffics.
  - Whereas, I might feel alone, moving to a new city can be exciting
  - Living in a big house is comfortable, whereas it is hard to keep it clean.

### CHAPTER III. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

After designing the didactic guide, it was applied to the students of the third semester of Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros of Universidad Técnica. The development of the different classes were carried out using the zoom platform of the institution. The process started with a pre-test to analyze the written competence of the students. The students were requested to write an essay about their last vacation. They had about 30 minutes in total to finish and turn in the assignment. After evaluating the essays, the results were the following.

**Table 15**

*Misuse, underuse and overuse of DCs in the Pre-test*

Discourse Connectors	Overuse <sup>a</sup>	Misuse <sup>b</sup>	Underuse <sup>c</sup>
And	66		
Also			2
But		5	
Do not use any DCs			10 <sup>d</sup>
Because	40	6	
For example			3
Or			1
So			0
Therefore			0
Consequently			0
As a result			0
However			0
Whereas			0

**Note:** The information was taken from the pre-test addressed to students from the third semester of PINE at Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

<sup>a</sup> Number of times, students use and in their writing text.

<sup>b</sup> Number of times, students misused but and because.

<sup>c</sup> Number of times students use also, for example, or and so, therefore, consequently, whereas, however .

<sup>d</sup> Number of students that did not used any DCs in their writing text.

### Figure 8

*Discourse connectors: mis, under and overuse*

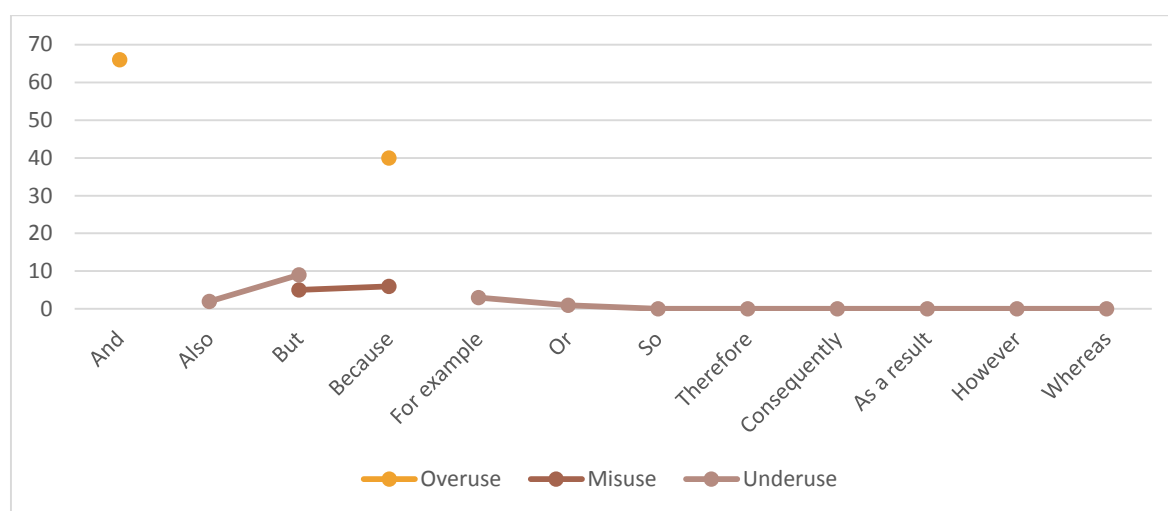


Fig.8. It shows the DCs *misused, underused and overused* by students in the *Pre-test*.

After analyzing the 32 students' essays, it was noticed that most of the students use discourse connectors such as: *and* and *because* to join sentences. It also show that few students misuse *but* and *because*, and that few students use other types of discourse connectors. And some students do not use any DCs in their writings.

The majority of students (63%) use the DCs *and* to join two similar sentences, and adjectives. However, most of them (90%) do not use the correct punctuation with this DC. It was also observed that *and* appears at least three times in each student's essay. According to Zemach and Islam (2005), a comma needs to be used when two independent sentences are joined. The comma is omitted when it joins an independent sentence with a dependent one.

Furthermore, when two adjectives are joined the comma is omitted, but when students join three adjectives, it is necessary to use a comma between the first and second adjective.

Concerning the correct use of *but*, students have average knowledge about it. Since not all of the students use *but* to join two contrastive ideas. Moreover, *but* is underuse because it was noticed that few students use this DC. Additionally, students do not use the correct punctuation. According to Zemach and Islam (2005), a comma needs to be used when two independent sentences are joined. The comma is omitted when it joins an independent sentence with a dependent one.

The results about the DCs because, shows that it is overused, and that, not all the students use it to explain causes. About punctuation, students do not use the correct one. According to Zemach and Islam (2005), it is necessary to use a comma when a sentence starts with because, at the end of the first sentence, and it is omitted when because is placed in the middle of the sentence.

Students also show grammar problems with sentence structure. The sentence structure is illogical which makes it difficult to understand their ideas. They also have spelling problems. It was noticed that it is due to language L1 interference. Besides, they do not use the correct punctuation, especially when they finish a sentence. They forget to put a period at the end of a sentence. They also write very long sentences. It is due to the L1 sentence pattern. In Spanish language, students use to write long sentences which are different in English. English sentences are not very long.

Additionally, not all the students add a topic sentence to the paragraph. Some topic sentences miss the controlling idea. Other students do not add a topic sentence in their paragraphs. Moreover, they miss supporting ideas and examples. The content is disorganized, and they also forget to include a concluding sentence at the end of the paragraph.

To conclude students overuse *and* and *because*. They misuse *but* and *because*, and underuse also, so, therefore, consequently, as a result, however, whereas and for example. Additionally, students need to improve the correct punctuation of these DCs, as well as, increase their vocabulary.

One of the movies that I love to watch is 'White chicks'. I like this movie because it is really funny and interesting. I'm always laughing at the things that happen in the story. Also it keeps me focus and interested in what is going to appear. The actors on the comedy are excellent and they do a great job. The movie was released in 2004, but I remember that I watched it the first time when I was 11 in my cousin's house. I had to ask my mom to buy me the movie and keep watching in my free time. I think I could watch this movie thousands of time and I won't get bored. I would like to see other movies where those actors work together to make a great movie like this.

Tattoos are a way of representing beliefs or life experiences. Many people represent every important aspect of their lives in one or more tattoos. There are many different types of tattoos, some very common and others very eccentric. Each person decides why to get a tattoo, many do it only for fashion and others really for passion. It is important to always keep in mind that making the decision to get a tattoo is a decision for life and you should know how to choose the art that you will capture in your body for life. A serious consequence about tattoos is that if at any point in our lives we regret, removing a tattoo is something extremely complicated and that will cause us a permanent sequel and it is possible that the tattoo will not be completely removed, for this reason we must be totally clear about what we want and be willing to wear them with complete security. Tattoos allow us to carry with us a moment that has marked our lives and that possibly defines us as a person.

Fig.9. Pre-test. Google (2021).

After the pre-test, some lessons were applied to help students to improve the error found in the test. Six lesson plans focus on sentence structure and sentence punctuation, topic sentence, supporting details, concluding sentences, DCs (and, but, because, so, therefore, consequently, however, whereas and as a result ), writing process, and some capitalization rules. Those lessons were applied using the didactic guide for four months. During this time students had the opportunity to practice the skills and sub-skills of writing. They also use Nearpod application, writeandimprove website, and a word document to practice writing at home and in class.

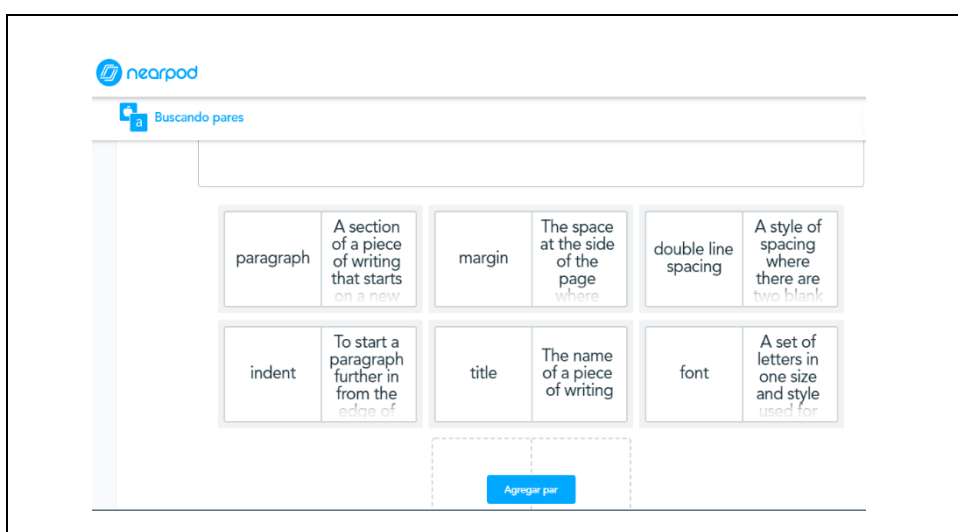


Fig.10. Matching exercise. Nearpod (2021).

Fig.11. Writing exercise. Writeandimprove (2021).

Tell a partner which concluding sentence you chose and why.

1. My best friend's grandfather is a wonderful storyteller.
2. My best friend's grandfather is a good example for me.
3. My best friend's grandfather never went to university.
4. I think all teenagers should listen to their grandparents' stories.

I choose this one because is general, in the paragraph talk about his grandfather and about some experiences that he tell .The other options are very specific.

1 3 Write a concluding sentence for the paragraph, A Popular Athlete, about David Beckham. Share your sentence with other students. Decide whether the sentences restate, summarize, predict, or suggest / advise.

**A Popular Athlete**

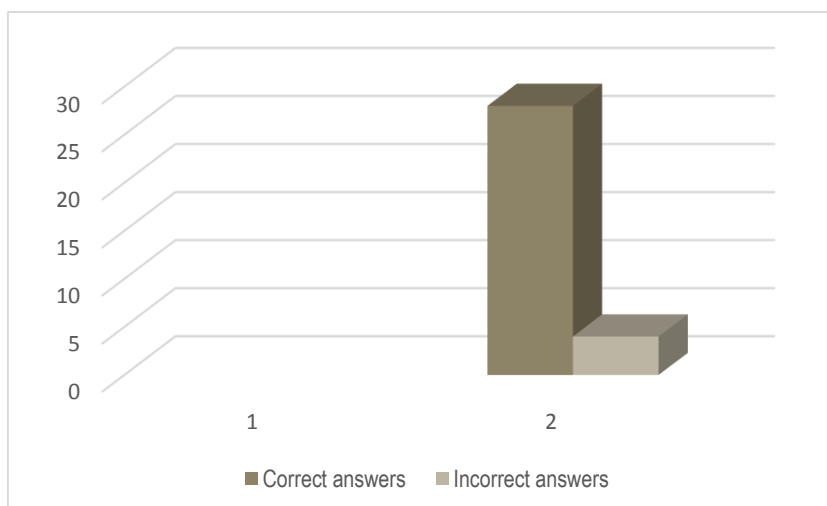
<sup>1</sup> David Beckham became a famous football player in the late 1990s, and by 2003 was the most recognisable athlete in the world. <sup>2</sup> He was a popular player first in England for

Fig.12. Class activity. Word (2021).

After the training, a post-test was applied to evaluate students' writing proficiency progress. The test contains different questions, to assess sentence structure and sentence punctuation, topic sentence, supporting details, concluding sentences, DCs (and, but, because and so), writing process, and some capitalization rules. It also contains a writing essay. They describe a custom from their country that they would like other people from other countries to adopt. It was done with the purpose to make students practice all the writing skills and sub-skills. The results are shown below.

## Figure 13

*Correct punctuation for DCs and –BUT*

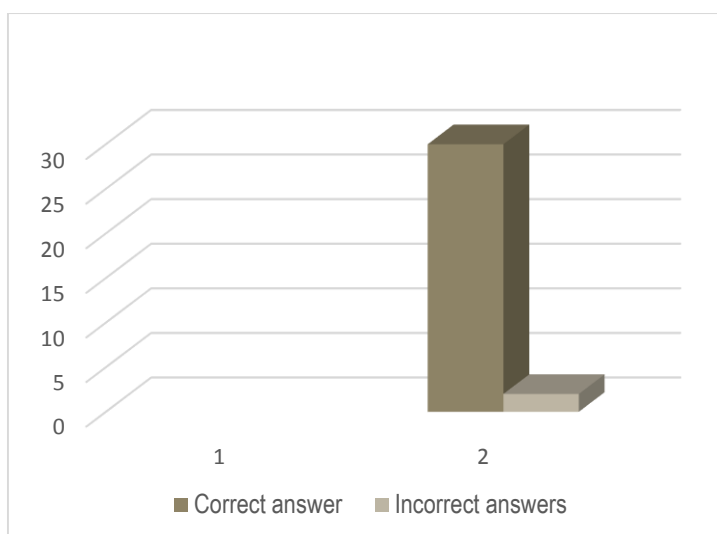


*Fig. 13. It shows students' mistakes in DCs and – but in the Post-test.*

The results show that the majority of students (87,5%) choose the correct punctuation for DCs and – but. Only four students need extra practice to improve this writing skill. It would be helpful to provide some extra worksheets to those students.

#### **Figure 14**

##### *Sentence Punctuation and Sentence Structure*



*Fig. 14. It shows students mistakes in sentence punctuation and sentence structure in the Post-test.*

It is noticed that most students (94%) improved sentence punctuation and sentence structure. It would be important to provide some extra activities such as scramble sentence and reading exercises to help students improve their grammar and punctuation.

#### **Figure 15**

##### *Choose the Best Topic Sentence*

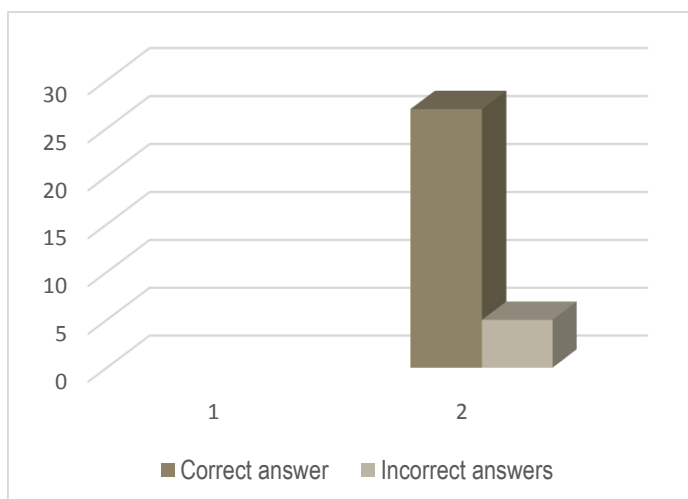


Fig. 15. It shows *students correct and incorrect answers in topic sentences formation, in the Post-test.*

It is noticed that most of the students (84,3%) selected the correct topic sentence, and only a few students need some extra exercises to improve it. A teacher can provide the topic, and students have to find out the topic and controlling idea.

### Figure 16

*Choose the Correct Conjunction (but, and, because or so) and punctuation*

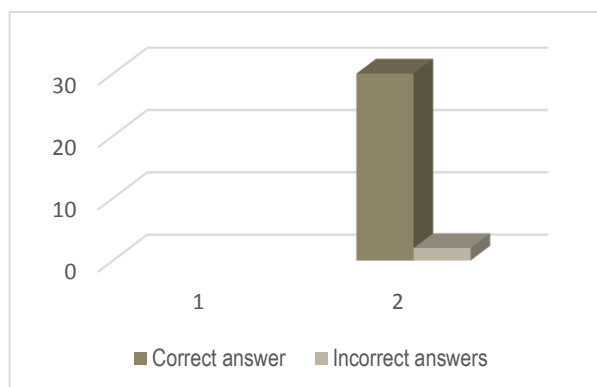
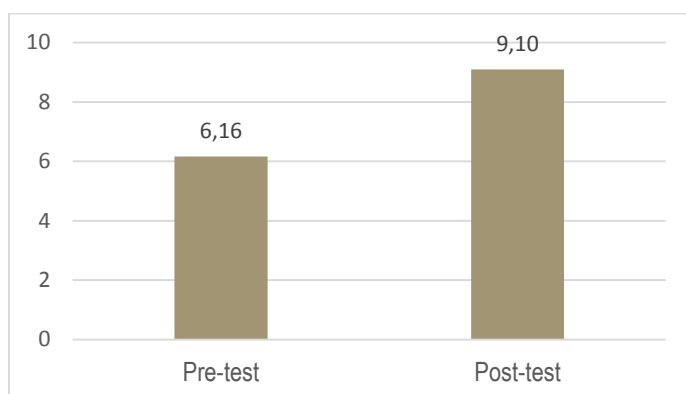


Fig. 16. It shows *students correct and incorrect answers when choosing the correct DCs and punctuation, in the Post-test.*

Results shows that most students (93,75%) chose the correct conjunction (and, but, because, so) to complete sentences and that they also used the correct punctuation with them. Nowadays, they use and to join similar sentences, but to show contrast, because to explain a cause and so for explaining the effect.

### Pre and Post-Test Comparison

To finish the analysis, it was necessary to compare the scores obtained by the students in the pre and post-test to evaluate if they make progress or not in their writing proficiency. The results were the following.

**Figure 17***Pre and Post-Test Comparison*

*Fig. 17. It shows students' pre and post-test results.*

According to the results, students in the pre-test got 6, 16/10, while in the post-test they got 9, 10/10. Thus, it is evident that students increased 2, 94/10 points on their writing proficiency. Besides, students' grammar and sentence structure improved. The sentences were organized logically, as well as, the paragraphs making it easier to understand their ideas. They also reduced spelling problems since they keep practicing writing on the website, in the application, in the word document, and writing paragraphs and essays at the end of each unit. In addition, most of the students used the correct word capitalization. They wrote complex sentences using the DCs.

Additionally, most of the students added a good topic sentence to the paragraph containing a controlling idea. Moreover, they added supporting ideas, examples, and a concluding idea. To conclude, students improved the use of DCs and the skills and sub-skill of writing.

According to the results the following conclusions can be given.

- Students learned DCs easily with the help of implicit and explicit teaching.
- Students had the opportunity to have extra practice exercises of DCs because some exercises and activities were created in nearpod.
- The students improved their knowledge of discourse connectors (and, but, so, because, therefore, consequently, as a result, however and whereas) which were introduced in the didactic guide.
- Most of the students got better scores in their essays, and it showed the impact of DCs in the improvement of writing proficiency.
- Students produced sentences with the correct grammar, improved coherence and cohesion, punctuation and communicated ideas effectively.

## CONCLUSIONS

- After working in the state of art, the methodology and the application of the didactic guide to students of the third semester of Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros. The following conclusions and recommendations can be given.
- Discourse connectors do have a relationship on the improvement of students' writing proficiency, since they allow the flow of ideas, increase comprehension in communication, and ensure an appropriate connection of ideas.
- Students overuse and, so and because in their writing. It was also analyzed that few students misuse but and because. Besides, students underuse therefore and consequently. Finally, it was also observed that many students do not use any type of CDs in their written text.
- Some of the reasons, students' misuse DCs are: they do not know the meaning of DCs. Furthermore, they are not sure about their place in a sentence, and they do not know their correct punctuation. Additionally, students' underuse DCs, since they are not obligated to use them and lack of knowledge of their existence. Finally, students overuse DCs because they are not persuaded to use different DCs of the same category.
- The application of the didactic guide Teaching Discourse Connectors Using Nearpod, based on implicit and explicit teaching can help students to improve their writing proficiency, since it facilitates their learning. They can produce sentences with the correct grammar, improve coherence and cohesion, punctuation, and communicate ideas effectively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended to teach the DCs progressively since there are a lot of them and can confuse students so focusing on the most useful DCs' semantic groups can be helpful.
- Students should be required to incorporate other CDs from the same semantic group to avoid overusing the same ones.
- It is also recommended, to teach other types of DCs such as transition, conclusion, apposition, contrast, comparison and condition according to the students' level of the English language.
- Moreover, it is recommended to use implicit and explicit instruction for teaching CDs as this makes easier to understand DCs' meaning, place and use.
- From my own experience as an English teacher, I can also recommend to improve the way to correct students' writing mistakes, so they might stop making the same ones. Using a rubric to assess writing skills and sub-skills is helpful, too. Alternatively, the teacher can circle students' mistakes and ask them to correct by themselves. Additionally, the teacher can write direct corrections or make a list of mistakes and review with the whole class or individually. Finally, the teacher can provide a tutorial academic hour per student to discuss their mistakes.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Student's Pre Survey

#### PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA

#### MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

**Theme:** Teaching Discourse Connector and the Improvement of Writing Proficiency.

#### Survey Aimed at Students

Dear students, the purpose of this survey to enquire your view about the use of discourse connectors in your academic writings. It is important, you answer the questions as thoughtfully and specifically as possible, please. All the information that is going to be collected will be treated in a confidential and respectful way.

**Instructions:** Select the option that you consider pertinent to each item (✓). When you finish do not forget to click on the send button.

1. Select your age, please

- a) 15-20 years        ( )
- b) 21-25 years        ( )
- c) 26-30 years        ( )
- d) More than 30 years ( )

2. Select your gender. Please

- a) Male        ( )
- b) Female     ( )

3. How long have you been studying English?

- a) 0-5 years        ( )
- b) 6-10 years       ( )
- c) 11-15 years      ( )
- d) 16-20 years      ( )
- e) More than 20 years ( )

4. Which English language skill is the most difficult to learn for you?

- a) Listening
- b) Reading
- c) Speaking
- d) Writing

5. Do you consider you are writing proficient in English language?

Yes

No

6. Do you consider to be good writing proficient in English is important?

Yes

No

7. If it is writing, what makes it difficult for you?

a) Grammar (sentence structure)

b) Vocabulary

c) Spelling

e) Correct layout

f) Coherence and cohesion

g) Sentence connectors

h) Others \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Do you use discourse connectors (sentence connectors) in your writings?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

9. Do you think that discourse connectors help to show the relationship between the preceding and after ideas?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

10. Which of this discourse connectors have you use in your writings?

a) After ( )

b) And ( )

c) As a result ( )

d) In addition ( )

e) Because ( )

f) Before ( )

g) But ( )

h) Consequently ( )

i) For example ( )

j) However ( )

k) I think ( )

l) In my opinion ( )

m) So ( )

n) Therefore ( )

o) When ( )

11. Does your teacher motivate you to use discourse connectors?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

12. Does your teacher expose you to discourse connectors?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

13. Do you think that your language one (Spanish) influences on the use of Dcs?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

14. Do you think that your teachers use the correct strategies to teach discourse connectors?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

15. Do you think that the writing correction method used by your teacher is the appropriate one?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

16. Do you know the place (syntax) of discourse connectors in a sentence?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

17. Do you know the correct punctuation when using discourse connectors in a sentence?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

18. What are other reasons students misuse and underuse discourse connectors?

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19. Do you think learning discourse connectors is worthy?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

20. What are some ways to learn discourse connectors?

a) Through explicit language learning (explanation, translation, etc.) ( )

b) Through implicit language learning (without any explanation) ( )

c) Other way?

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21. Which English language skill is the most challenging to learn for you?

- a) Listening
- b) Reading
- c) Speaking
- d) Writing

22. If it is writing, what makes it difficult to learn?

- a) Sentence structure
- b) Vocabulary
- c) Spelling
- d) Correct layout
- e) Coherence and cohesion
- f) Sentence connectors
- g) Others

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23. Do you consider you are writing proficient in English language?

- a) Yes
- b) No

24. Do you consider to be writing proficient in English language is important?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If you would you like to suggest anything else about this subject? Please write it down

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## Annex 2. teacher's Pre Survey

### PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA

#### MAESTRÍA EN PEDAGOGÍA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

**Theme:** Teaching Discourse Connector and the Improvement of Writing Proficiency.

#### Survey Aimed at teachers

Dear teacher, the purpose of this survey is to enquire your view about the use of discourse connectors in academic writing. It is important, you answer the questions as thoughtfully and specifically as possible. All the information that is going to be collected will be treated in a confidential and respectful way.

**Instructions:** Select the option that you consider pertinent to each item (✓). When you finish do not forget to click on the send button.

1. Select your age. Please

- a) 25-30 years
- b) 31-35 years
- c) 36-40 years
- d) 41-45 years
- e) More than 45 years

2. Select your gender. Please

- a) Male
- b) Female

3. Which English language skill do you consider is the most challenging for students to learn?

- a) Listening
- b) Reading
- c) Speaking
- d) Writing

4. Which of the following skills and sub-skills can help students to improve their writing proficiency?

- a) Teaching grammar
- b) Teaching vocabulary
- c) Teaching punctuation
- d) Teaching how to write coherent and cohesive way
- e) Teach the correct lay out
- f) Others \_\_\_\_\_

5. If you selected vocabulary. Do you think they should learn discourse connectors?

- a) Yes
- b) No

6. Which method do you use to teach discourse connectors?

- a) Through explicit language learning (explanation, translation, etc.)
- b) Through implicit language learning (without any explanation)
- c) Through implicit and explicit language learning
- d) Other method?

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7. Which strategies do you use to teach Discourse Connectors?

- a) Focusing on the environment (you teach DCs according to the contexts)
- b) Open-ended practice (you request students to produce sentences with a discourse connector to join sentences)
- c) Provide a topic to be developed (essays have to have an introduction, body, conclusion, and DCs)
- d) Functions (teaching connectors according to their semantic relationships, e.g. being tentative, comparing, emphasizing, introducing a topic, summarizing, etc.)
- e) Others.

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8. Which is the most common mistake students have when using discourse connectors in their academic writings? (Choose one most common mistake)

- a) False interchangeability
- b) L1 Negative transfer of connectors
- c) Lack of sensitivity to style or formality of discourse connectors
- d) Overuse of some connectors
- e) Underuse of some connectors
- f) Teaching-induced factors(using wrong teaching materials/techniques, or poor teaching)
- g) Word-for-word translation of discourse connectors
- h) Others.

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9. Do you consider students use the correct discourse connector when they link words or sentences or paragraphs together?

- a) Yes
- b) No

10. Can you please suggest some strategies that students can use to achieve cohesion and coherence in their academic writing texts?

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11. According to your experience, which discourse connectors are misused by students in their academic writings?

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12. According to your experience, which discourse connectors are underused by students in their academic writings?

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13. Do you expose your students to discourse connectors?

a) Yes ( )

b) No ( )

14. Do you consider that discourse connectors can help to facilitate understanding of ideas?

a) Strongly disagree ( )

b) Disagree ( )

c) Uncertain (Neither agree or disagree) ( )

d) Agree ( )

e) Strongly agree ( )

15. Do you consider that the lack of discourse connectors in academic writings do not affect cohesion and coherence?

a) Strongly disagree ( )

b) Disagree ( )

c) Uncertain (Neither agree or disagree) ( )

d) Agree ( )

e) Strongly agree ( )

16. Do you consider that discourse connectors can help to facilitate fluency of ideas?

a) Strongly disagree ( )

b) Disagree ( )

c) Uncertain (Neither agree or disagree) ( )

d) Agree ( )

e) Strongly agree ( )

17. Do you consider teaching discourse connectors for academic writing is important?

f) Strongly disagree ( )

- g) Disagree
- h) Uncertain (Neither agree or disagree)
- i) Agree
- j) Strongly agree

If you would you like to suggest anything else about this subject? Please write it down.

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### Annex 3. Lesson Plan for Teaching Discourse Connectors

**English Level:** Third

**Students Age:** 19 to 25

**Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time for the Activity:** 3 hours

**Resource:** Teaching Discourse Connectors through Nearpod Didactic Guide

<b>Objective:</b>		
<b>Topic:</b>		
<b>Stages</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
Warming up	5 to 10 minutes	The teacher reads the title of the unit aloud and ask some questions about the topic of the unit. Then, he writes students' ideas on the virtual board or word document.
Presentation	5 to 10 minutes	Teacher explains about writing and language focus.
Practice	20 minutes	Students perform some exercises to practice the writing process and the discourse connectors
Production	60 minutes	Teacher guides the students' writings.  Students write using their ideas
Evaluation	60 minutes	Teacher evaluates sentences, paragraphs and essays per unit.  Teacher evaluates students' Nearpod progress activities.  Teacher evaluates students' writing journal.

**Annex 4. Rubric to evaluate a paragraph**

**Student' name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Indicator	Observations	Grade
The paragraph contains a topic sentence and controlling idea.		
The paragraph contains supporting sentences (examples) and concluding sentences if is applicable		
Language use (adjectives, discourse connectors, and grammar)		
Formatting (spelling, punctuation)		