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Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing.

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In Fulfillment of Course Requirements for an English Degree.

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Managua, February 8th, 2021

¡A la libertad por la Universidad!

Acknowledgements

Our infinite gratitude to God who has been our strength and guides in these years of studies for giving us a blessed life and the ability to finish with this research. He has been the Almighty source that let each one of the group's member to be active, united, and disciplined in this research.

This research paper would not have been possible without the support and guidance from our Graduation Seminar Tutor Msc. Estela Hernández Cajina, her guidance at every stage of this research was important, we had the opportunity to ask for her support every time we needed it. Thank God for letting we have a tutor who demands quality and effort from her students. She trains undergraduates for life competencies. Then to Msc Wilber Salgado who has given his exceptional support, enthusiasm, knowledge and has contributed to the motivation that we need not give up and fulfill this dream.

Besides, Msc. Geraldine Abril López Darce, Ph.D. Albert Francisco Sanchez Alvarado, and Msc. Jaime Roberto Aleman Quintanilla from the English Department of UNAN-Managua. They validated the instruments used in this research, providing us some suggestions to improve. Furthermore, thanks and our respect for the principal National Institute of Boaco. Ba. Lucelia Franco and Ba. Tamara Cerda who was the teacher in charge of the 11th-grade students, and finally those students themselves without whom this research would not have had a real context.

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Abstract.

Previous studies provide insights into how writing as an activity has been treated. It was considered that writing was a natural skill and not actually taught; therefore the teaching of this has been neglected at schools. And though it is a complex process, it is something that one can learn through systematic practice. In Nicaraguan public schools that are of great concern in the educational field because there is a lack of stimulation from early education given that, the majority of English teachers present weaknesses in their basic training in both methodologies and their communicative competence.

In response, this paper critically explores student's writings, especially the paragraph to see how writing is approached, what problems there are, and what should be done in order to engage students into the process of writing. The results of the study highlights that students are not properly taught at schools and students are not enough motivated. As a result, they present weaknesses in their pieces of writing. Consequently, if this problem is not addressed it is a danger for them due to fact that they cannot write in English, which is a globalized language. This will prevent them from being competitive on a regional and global level. This leaves them stuck in their world and not being able to see the world from another perspective.

I. RESEARCH SCOPE.

1.1 Introduction

Most high school students nationwide show a lack of interest in the English class because, they see it as a requirement in the curriculum rather than a way to learning. As reference to that, this paper intends to find out how fifth year students at Boaco National Public High School write.

The results of the study highlights that students are not properly taught at schools and students are not enough motivated. As a result, they present weaknesses in their pieces of writing. So, this study will be useful to improve the teaching and learning of writing in public high schools. This will also help future graduates to have a better professional profile and to be able to face the challenges that are presented to them in this globalized world.

The research methodology for this study is a mix methods approach which is a procedure for collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem. Under the mix method approaches a phenomenological approach was used because, this is most closely aligned with the study's objectives. (Creswell 2013) emphasizes that phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group.

This research focused on paragraph structure the ability to write because it is an important skill in the process of teaching English language learning. Writing is fundamental to language acquisition and needs to be integrated with other skills to achieve effective learning as defined (Byrne 1993). The need to integrate language skills is essential for writing skills.

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This topic was selected because there are not many studies about writing and in the National Curriculum of English; there is no program with contents directed specifically to writing. Therefore, this skill in the classrooms is not taught adequately, being this a very important skill that helps students to think critically, as well as to improve their grammar, spelling and to express their ideas with more clarity when they communicate in a written way by (Walsh 2010) Writing is important because it is used extensively in higher education and the workplace.

The purpose of this research is to explore if eleventh-grade students at Boaco National Institute, in the second semester of 2020 can write a paragraph following its structure. And in this way to present the results obtained and to give contributions that improve the teaching of writing, so that the students can write a paragraph correctly.

During the development of this research, it applied the knowledge obtained during the graduate seminar and it took to make an analysis of the different instruments applied in the research which provided with information, to give suggestions to the teacher and the students on how to improve their writing skills.

1.2 Problem statements

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Nicaragua has been a great challenge, since the teaching programs, resources aimed for this, criteria for selecting the teachers, teacher training, and the amount of time for the class of this language are deficient in the country. Additionally, the teaching of this language has not been a priority in the national curriculum. For those reasons, English learning is far from reaching international standards. Yet, MINED (Ministry of Education) implemented a program of teaching English in primary schools three years ago to improve this problem. Despite this good intention, it is not possible to predict good results in the future because the program does not cover preschool or all grades of primary school, and not every school is included in the piloting. On the other hand, in our context the educational system does not prepare students to be self-taught; they do not see English as a fundamental source for the development of their professional life that will help them to face the challenges of this current globalized world where languages play a very important role in the progress of the human being. The need for research on this subject arises from the observation made of senior students at National Institute of Boaco who finds it difficult to master writing correctly and so they have problems writing a paragraph with its basic writing elements.

It is not natural that students write English as they do not do so even in their mother tongue. Writing is a skill that has been overlooked even at the university level and hence this is a reality that is being experienced in Nicaragua's public schools and that is of great concern in the educational field because the problem of English writing is a strong reflection of the lack of stimulation in early education. One of the causes of this deficiency is the lack of methodologies and new strategies for teaching English and knowledge of the theories of language teaching. Given that, the majority of English teachers present weaknesses in their

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basic training in both methodologies and their communicative competence. Also, there is a lot of demotivation on their part of teachers because of the situation of poverty and other problems that directly affect education and hence limit the expectations of teachers and students as good professionals in the future. On the other hand, it is assumed that writing skills are transferred from one language to another and in the country, it is known that there are serious writing problems in the mother tongue. In the university environment, this problem is evident when young people are asked to write paragraphs or documents such as essays and reports; they are not able to cope with these. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), that is the international standard that defines linguistic competence and it is used worldwide to define students' language skills on a scale of English levels from A1, representing the basic level of English, to C2, for those with an exceptional command of English. It is only then, that we realize that in terms of international standards still miss a lot. That is to say if the national curriculum is not improved according to the needs of the students and if the English language is not taught to them so as they can compete with a globalized market, we will unlikely get out of this problem.

The main purpose of this research is to explore how senior students at Boaco National Public institute write a classic paragraph in English, using its four basic elements; introductory sentence, topic sentence, evidence to prove reasons, and conclusion of the writing. The most significant difficulties will be displayed in students' written texts, observation of the English class, and interviews with the teacher. With this research, it hopes that students will improve their writing skills through the correct writing of a paragraph. It also provides strategies for teachers to stimulate writing skills in the classroom so that they can apply them in the process of teaching writing effectively.

1.2.1. Research questions.

- How do students employ the introductory sentence?
- How do students write the topic sentence?
- How do students provide evidence to prove reasons?
- How do students have to conclude a classic paragraph?

1.3 Rationale

1.3.1. Background.

Nowadays, more and more people are dedicating to study English as a foreign language and many countries include English in their school syllabus and children are starting to learn English at an early age, so it could be perceive the value of learning English. Whether it is looking for a new job or planning to travel the world study English can help to progress in life both personally and professionally, competing in the global job market, increase career skill and start to meet people around the world. Regarding paragraph structure, a study done by (Saima and BukharyFerheen 2016) in Saudi Arabia where English is studied as a second language found that the learners, who were taught through Mind maps, improved cohesion and coherence; content paragraph structure and length in writing. Other study done by (yu and Yan 2020) in China where English is taught as a foreign language, the researcher recommends exploring the construction rules of paragraph and explains its implementation techniques. The significance lies in that it is helpful to the teaching to focus on skills like reading comprehension, speaking and writing, and that help students to understand what the reading is about, give opinions, an essay correctly, a report, and do good paragraph applying rules and take as reference to the research.

Learning English has become an important strategic issue in Latin America. According to (Cronquist and Fiszbein 2017) countries have developed strategies, created programs, and made significant investments to expand access to English language teaching opportunities in public schools. However, English proficiency in Latin America is still low according to international standards that describe language ability on a six-point scale, from A1 for

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beginners, up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. In different areas, its strengths and weaknesses follow a similar pattern when compared to other parts of the world. In most Latin American nations, listening and speaking scores are higher than writing scores. This is because it is one of the skills that are not given the importance it requires for teaching. All these experts in writing combine in that to write a structured paragraph they use techniques, tools and strategies.

According to (EF 2020) "English Proficiency Index Central America reflects a poor level of English compared to other countries. However, the English language remains one of the most important competitive weaknesses of Central America. On the report of studies in the last year Costa Rica managed to improve significantly the level of English language proficiency, while the other Central American countries did not register significant progress. Regarding the levels of the proficiency of the language, Costa Rica reports a "Moderate" level, Guatemala and Panama register a "Low" level, and Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua have a "Very Low" level. This is because they do not have sufficient funds to implement strategies to improve public education and teacher training in the English language.

In Nicaragua, English is taught as a foreign language and it is a fundamental tool in the education of students, especially when it has to do with scholarships abroad, students are required to be proficient enough in order to take the international test and therefore be accepted by an international university. Historically English has been only taught in private schools from primary to secondary. On the other hand, in the last years, English has been taken into account as a requirement in the competitions for the best student of the year; only

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the writing and speaking skills are tested so the students must be pushed to be proficient in English and be more independent. In conformity with (Alvarez and Altamirano 2020) whom did a recent research about “ Analysis of the Influence of the Spanish in the Learning of the English related to the ability of Writing in the Students of Tenth grade in Miguel de Cervantes School in Managua during the Second Semester of the 2019 in the Morning Shift ” they found that the major problems of learners in term of L1 influence over L2 influence in the vocabulary collocation, omission of the subject, articles, word order to put other result to writing skill so they get some recommendation to the teachers and students.

To do other contribution in writing English skill, this research was carried out in the Institute National of Boaco that is located in the north of the Nicaragua, which was founded in the 1958, and there are 34 teachers including the principal and sub principals, and there are 620 students who are learning English as a foreign language according the program of the Ministry of Education in high school in this country, so the aim of this study is to explore how senior students' use the elements of the classic paragraph in writing. To do this research a test to students will be applied and analyzed although taking as a sample the 30% of the universe. Furthermore, an interview to the English teacher and a class observation will be applied and finally some recommendations will be given once the study is done.

1.3.2. Justification.

Other studies have been made in relation to this topic, for example, a study by (Saima and BukharyFerheen 2016) in Saudi Arabia, where English is studied as a second language, found that students taught through mind mapping improved cohesion and coherence, the structure of content paragraphs and the length of writings. This study proved to be a positive development in improving writing skills in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, it is aware that there are few researchers related to this writing problem and also that writing is not taught adequately in public schools in Nicaragua, are the main reasons that this research focused on writing skills, especially paragraph structure, in 11th grade students at the National Institute of Boaco.

This study provides important information that could be used by teachers interested in improving their students' writing skills and using the appropriate methods and techniques available to minimize students' difficulties with a paragraph, bearing in mind that correct writing is essential in professional and personal development, especially in school life since this provides a greater knowledge of the lexicon, critical thinking and helps to communicate clearly and consistently.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

1.4.1. General Objective:

The objective for this study is to explore how senior students' write an organized paragraph.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives:

It will accomplish this aim by meeting the following objectives.

- To determine if students employ the introductory sentence in a classic paragraph.
- To determine if students recognize the topic sentence.
- To define whether students provide evidence to prove reasons.
- To appraise if students conclude the classic paragraph.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following framework will present the importance of teaching writing skills furthermore the need to teach how to write a paragraph taking into account the structure, format, feedback, tasks to promote students to write, mechanics, cooperative writing, using the appropriate target language, the approaches teachers can use to teach, classroom management, and integrate other skills. This will help us to analyze the texts written by the students.

2.1 What is writing?

Writing is a method of representing language in visual form. Writing system use set of symbols to represent the sounds of speech and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation or numerals. It is supported by (Hogue 2014) writing is the expression of ideas the conveying of a message to the reader. So the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most aspect of the writing (Klimova 2013) support that according to (Walsh 2010) Writing is important because it's used extensively in higher education and the workplace. Both experts agree that writing is important to express ideas that become messages for readers in the field of education and employment.

2.2 Writing Process

(Harmer 2010) mentions when students are writing-for-writing, it will to involve them in the process of writing. In the real world ; this typical involves planning what write, drafting it, reviewing and editing what has been written and then producing a final (and satisfactory) version. Many people have thought that this is the linear process, but a closer examination of how writers of all different kinds are involved in writing process suggests that can do all of these things again and again, sometime in a chaotic order. Thus it may plan, draft, re-plan,

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draft, edit, re-edit, and re-plan, before produce a final version. Regarding this (Hogue 2014) claims that the process of writing involves four steps:

- 1- Prewrite to get ideas: get ideas to write about, and a way is free writing.
- 2- Write the first draft: also called rough form, worrying too much about errors.
- 3- Revise and edit the draft: when it is revised make changes to make ideas clearer and better organized.
- 4- Write a new draft: make a clean copy of a paragraph.

2.3. What is a Paragraph?

(Hogue and Oshima 2007) express that a paragraph is a group of related statements that a writer develops about a subject. The first sentence states a specific point, or idea of the topic. The rest of the sentences in the paragraph support that point. So that is possible to see that the paragraph has a structure.

2.4. Structure of a Paragraph.

(Hogue and Oshima 2007) agree that a paragraph is organized in three parts: The topic sentence, supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence.

1. The topic sentence tells what topic the paragraph is going to discuss and is the most important in the paragraph.
2. The supporting sentences give details about the topic or more information about the topic sentence.
3. The concluding sentence summarizes the main points or restates the topic sentence in different words. It signals like in summary, to conclude, to sum up follow by a comma; so is the end of the paragraph and reminds the reader of the main idea.

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For writing skills it is important to emphasize that it is not something natural but can be induced by an expert and provide activities that motivate the writer to learn about the processes and organization of a paragraph.

2.5. Paragraph format.

When teaching how to write paragraphs, it is important to teach students the format that the page should have because this makes it seem, that it is a visually formal and organized document. Based on (Hogue 2014), it is required the use of correct format for paragraphs to have a good ethic in and also it is important to teach pupils the two following paragraph formats.

2.5.1. Page Format for Work Done On a Computer

2.5.2 The paper.

Use 8 1/2 –inch-by-11-inch white paper

2.5.3. The Font

Use a standard font style and size, such as Times New Roman font, 12 point font size. Do not use underlining, italics, or bold type to emphasize words. It is not a correct style in academic writing.

2.5.4. The Heading

Type your full name in the upper left corner. On the next line type the course number. On the third line, type the course number. On The third line, type the date the assignment is due in the order month-day-year, with a comma after the day.

2.5.5. The Title

Skip one line. Type your title and then center it, using the centering icon on your word-processing program.

2.5.6. The Paragraph

Skip one line, and start typing on the next line. Indent the first word by using the TAB key, (Indent means to leave some space at the beginning of the line. You can set the tab for about 0.4 inches, which gives you an indent of about 5 spaces.) Type your paragraph without entering line breaks (returns) at the end of each line. The computer will do this automatically, only a line break (return) at the end of the paragraph.

2.5.7. Margins

Leave a 1-inch margin on the left and right margins.

2.5.8. Spacing

Double-space your paragraph.

2.6. Mechanic.

Punctuation may seem exceedingly trivial in a program of composition but it is necessary. Principles of punctuation differ from language, and students do not know how to punctuate in English. They need this knowledge for two reasons: one, to be able to write comprehensibly and two, for their reading (Paulston and Bruder 1982). Consequently, no matter how annoying they may seem, it is important to master the details of punctuation, mechanics, capitalization, and spelling. Even with the spell checker and grammar checker eternally activated, many small mistakes can be made that deeply affect the meaning of sentences.

Finally, small mechanical errors (such as incorrectly abbreviating a term or acronym) reflect general neglect and disregard for convention. Small things must be worked on. As well as trying to understand punctuation marks as units that affect grammar and meaning, and accepting that correct spelling, capitalization and mechanics are professional needs.

2.7. What is the feedback?

(Ur 2012) deduces the feedback as information given to learners about their performance of learning tasks to improve this performance. She also infers, that correction to language should be noted but else comments on content and organization. Thus, feedback is an essential part of formative evaluation. The power of formative evaluation is that it affects cognitive but also motivational factors at the same time.

Good feedback provides information that students need to understand where they are in their learning and what they need to do next to advance (the cognitive factor). But when it understands what it needs to do and why it needs to do it, he develops a feeling of being in control of his learning (the motivational factor). Precisely because feelings of self-worth and control are at the heart of the matter, well-meaning but misguided feedback can be destructive. To avoid a negative feeling when the teacher gives feedback, (Brookhart 2017)an independent educational consultant with a lot of knowledge on feedback, suggests different ways for effective feedback.

2.7.1. Formative feedback

- Usually ongoing and in-the-moment
- Designed to assist students in completion of a task

2.7.2. Summative feedback

- An evaluation of student work after completion and submission

2.7.3. The Do's and Do not of Effective Feedback

Do:

- Limit focus
- Encourage problem solving
- Focus on the task
- Be specific
- Provide timely, ongoing feedback

Do not:

- Identify everything to revise
- Solve the problem for them
- Focus on student ability
- Be vague
- Use one method

Students will not always know the solution to the problems they face on a given assignment, but providing the right kind of feedback can help nudge them toward a more fruitful and independent learning experience. By providing focused feedback, instructors can help students' chunk problems into manageable portions; by encouraging problem solving. Instructors can help students learn to be independent critical thinkers; by being specific and

providing feedback that is focused on a task. They should also give students clear vision and focus; by providing ongoing and timely feedback. Nonetheless, instructors can shepherd students through challenging assignments that push them to grow.

2.7.4. Challenges of Providing Feedback

Instructors face many challenges when providing students feedback on their writing. Common challenges include time management, remaining fresh and objective, and maximizing technological tools.

2.7.4.1. Feedback is most often provided in the following modes:

- Verbal (synchronous or asynchronous)
- Written (on drafts, within peer review discussions, and on final submissions)
- Work shopping (may include peer/student feedback)
- Rubrics

2.8. Tasks that promote writing.

(Ur 1996) highlights, that tasks such as: a book report, a book review, instruction sheet, narrative personal story, description of a place, people, answer letter, job application and others are vehicles for promoting writing skill. Another writing researcher, (Pourdana and Karimi 2013) poses the fact those communicative tasks such as, finds to publish learners' writing, on websites like Storybird. Students can also publish in blogs, in newspapers, and on posters. Publish a class magazine of previous writing work. Encourage learners to write with a clear purpose and for a clear audience, for example in letters to newspapers, pen friends, to teachers and other students. Find challenging and rewarding tasks which can

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support a variety of learning aims and integrate other skills and language systems, such as summarizing, project work, translation, writing up notes from interviews, and preparing a briefing or talk. Use relevant and realistic tasks such as writing notes, recipes, and e-mails, filling in forms and preparing signs for the class.

Respond to the content of the work that students to the teacher learners give you as well as correcting the errors they make, by adding your own comments to their homework or establishing a dialogue through e-mail and learner diaries. Make writing easier and more fun by doing group writing activities and group correction and mediating of work. Process writing includes elements of this. Support writing with reading, this not only helps learners develop the sub-skills they need but also helps them understand that good writing is a powerful and important communication tool.

All these communicative tasks in writing may be chosen and implemented so that particular pedagogical outcomes are achieved. Such tasks should carefully be designed to lead students to the intended objectives. The author also distinguishes among the factors that affect learning outcome, contribution of individual learner, the task performance, and the situation in which the task is performed. On the other hand, in a writing task, students are required to write free compositions on a carefully chosen realistic topic. Interesting writing tasks provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to organize language materials, using their own words and ideas to communicate.

2.9. Giving instructions.

If the students do not understand what is they are supposed to do, there are two general rules for giving instructions: they have to keep the writing as simple as possible and they must be logical (Harmer 2007). In brief, if the teacher gives good clear instructions, students will

always understand and be able to do the activity as it is expected and instructions can determine whether a lesson succeeds or fails. On other side, (Hewett 2015) expresses, that giving clear instructions can also help teachers address several common learning gaps.

The following is an example on how to give clear instructions.

2.9.1. WHAT – Explain What the Assignment or task is and what it is not

- Use straightforward language
- Avoid jargon, technical terms, side-comments, or digressions from the main point
- Be specific about the students' audience, context, and purpose (rhetorical situation)

2.9.2. WHY – Explain the Purpose of the Assignment

- Why are you asking the students to do it?
- What will they learn from it?
- How does it build on previous assignments or prepare them for future ones?

2.9.3. HOW – Explain What Approach the Students Should Take

- Provide resources to help students learn any skills they will need to have in order to complete the assignment (how to use any required technology, how to use the library, how to cite sources, etc.)
- Provide templates, models, or examples

2.9.4. DO – Explain the Steps Students Should Follow

- Provide step-by-step instructions wherever possible
- Break complex tasks down into simpler parts

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The suggested model ‘‘What, Why, How, Do’’, is a model developed by Beth Hewett as helpful way of thinking about assignment and tasks instructions and provide feedback on student writing. Since instructions are the feedback it provides students before they even begin writing, this model is also helpful for thinking about instructional text. This model is a rough guide for thinking about what professors can include when they give instructions.

2.10. Cooperative writing

Group work, it is a generic term that covers a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration. Group work activities can improve student's motivation and contribute to a feeling of cooperation in the classroom (Harmer 2007). According to this view, group working can make study more efficient and fun. Working with others enables to pool ideas and see problems from different perspectives because in a group students can attempt to do tasks that could not be accomplished by an individual if not by combining a variety of skills and expertise from other peers, so that they tackle more complex and larger scale problems. (Ur 1996) stresses the fact the cooperative writing works well with both process and genre-based approaches are implemented and two heads analyze genre and specific texts better than one head. As a result, a more successfully genre- text is created. So, writing in groups whether as part of a long process or as part of a short game-with communicative activity can be greatly motivating for students.

2.11. Classroom management.

From the viewpoint of (Harmer 2007) important factors like classroom management, methodology, lesson planning, student motivation, can contribute to classroom discipline. In other words, classroom management refers to the skills and techniques teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on academically productive task, and during

a class. It is considered important that teachers maintain classroom behavior when they are developing a writing class because it is a skill that takes a lot of time and students need to be focused on what they are doing. So, good behavior helps to develop good learning in students. Have a back-up plan if the lesson is not going well or runs short.

2.11.1. What does a well-managed classroom look like?

Peace corps volunteers like (Good and Brophy 2002) argue, students are deeply involved with their work. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented, but relaxed and pleasant. They recommend the following ideas to manage a classroom.

1. Establish classroom rules and procedures during the first days of school and consistently and fairly enforce them throughout the school year. Be consistent.
2. Establish a positive professional relationship with students—the teacher is both in charge and cooperative. Instructors will never have enough techniques to get students to behave and learn if you do not first create positive relationships.
3. Give understandable instructions so students know exactly what they are expected to do. (Cultural Hint: Do not ask, “Does everyone understand?” In many cultures, students would not dare say “No” because that would indicate the teacher did not do his or her job well.)
4. Use nonverbal signals rather than words. Silent cues are less disruptive.
5. Delegate, delegate, delegate! Students learn skills and responsibility, while saving the teacher time. But, teach students how to accomplish the delegated task or this time saver can turn into a time waster.
6. Move around the classroom. Move closer to problem spots in the classroom. This tactic tends to prevent or stop inappropriate behaviors.

2.12. Target language.

(Medgves 2001) states that any language teacher can set two kinds of models before the students: a language model and a learner model. While NESTs (native English-speaking teachers) make better language models, non-NESTs (non-native English-speaking teachers) can provide better learner models. However, (Hendrickson 2012) recommends that language educators and their students use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels. (Brands 2011) discloses that target language is used for communication between the teacher and the learner, and between their peers, this gives the learner opportunities for interaction, to reach (oral) proficiency in a foreign language:

Based on the definitions above, it is concluded that, despite non-native teachers of English are often discriminated their teaching strategies such as input, and output, interaction, and feedback are more effective as they apply the target language for communication, providing many conditions for foreign language acquisition to take place. Moreover, it is without a doubt that the target language needs to be used more than 90 percent in the classroom so that students can acquire it. Also, they could have opportunities to communicate with others in a spontaneous manner.

2.13. The TEFL manual and writing in high school.

“English teachers will find all the tools they need to guide themselves through the planning process so they can create successful daily lesson plans that incorporate different learning styles and dynamic activities”. (Abbot, Morris et al. 2012) . The TEFL manual (Teaching English as a Foreign Language – manual) is a helpful a resource that helps teachers to make a lesson plan taking into account the different methods and strategies to teach different topics to each grade in high school. Also, the TEFL manual presents the lesson in three parts: The

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presentation, practice and production. There one can find activities like warm-ups, vocabulary, and grammar structures. The practice; in this part, involves reading comprehension, discussion, and writing of complete sentences, students build their confidence in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. At the production stage; students use language skills in authentic situations; for example, reading comprehension according to the content related to the Nicaraguan culture. So this book is essential to teachers can construct the perfect lesson plan that meets your goal and your students' needs.

2.14. Approaches to teach writing.

Writing provides opportunities for students to develop clear thinking skills. When students are granted time to write and process their thoughts, they develop a way to analyze their thinking. Through writing, they discover the channels of logic; they begin to rely on cognitive reasoning instead of impromptu thought. (Hasan and Akhand 2010) define that nowadays, three common approaches are used to teach writing, product, process and genre. Also, (Hyland, 2003) quoted by (Hasan and Akhand 2010) define that product approach is a process in which students are typically provided with a model by the teacher and encouraged to mimic it to produce a similar product and the main focus in on the outcomes of the learning, while the process approach is mainly concerned with the process of learning on cyclical techniques through stages such as brainstorming, planning/structuring, mind mapping, writing the first draft, peer feedback, editing, final draft, evaluation and teachers' feedback. The genre approach, though it is similar to the product approach in that it provides students with a model it is concerned with the final product. Its main difference between the two lies in that the emphasis is on the reader rather than the writer self. In addition, it relies on the identification of features of certain genres in order to write. Yet, not much teaching and learning is possible

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without interesting, relevant and level appropriate texts as suggested by (Epstein and Ormiston 2010) who state that undoubtedly, well-planned and executed activities require motivational written texts to involve students and to promote active and experiential learning. For example, favorite novels or magazines, newspapers, storybooks, short stories, poetry, letters, business letters, memos, labels, essays, scholarly articles, lab reports, research papers, grants.

Therefore, connecting reading and writing is important as, students are exposed to correct language in context and acquire more vocabulary. When one reads it is important to understand what is being read and when one writes a connection should be built with the reader since this is identified with the message and life world of the writer. Reading and writing work best when one process fuels or informs the other. Writing and reading work together effectively in the classroom when a selection of the reading is appropriate for the level, time and the activities. According to (Harmer 2015) to get the maximum benefit from their reading. Students need to be involved in both intensive and extensive reading. It sounds reasonably clear because intensive reading is designed to enable the students to develop their ability to read, identifying phrases, or ideas. Finding the general idea, called skimming. Also finding specific details, sometimes called scanning or understanding what is behind the words. Besides, extensive reading is to get the students to read as much as possible, either inside or outside of the classroom, so they can improve their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Also reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. In which information from the text and the knowledge possessed by the reader act together to produce meaning. (Bojovic 2010) Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, and flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources

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to develop. Indeed, reading is a cognitive ability that a person is able to use when interacting with the written text. In addition, reading skill works together with grammar, vocabulary in context of words that help the students' knowledge.

Having mentioned the above approaches, there are other three ones to writing as: Accuracy, fluency and text. Accuracy approach for example focuses on mistakes control, so that these are eliminated from written work gradually. It takes students from control to semi- controlled and finally from semi- controlled to free activities. Then there is the fluency approach which focuses on writing for pleasure without worrying too much about making mistakes. Finally, the text approach "it is mainly concerned to teach students how to construct and organize paragraph" so that students do not state at as sentence level (Byrne 1993).

2.15. Integrating writing with other skills.

In real life we do not use language skills in any set order certainly not in the order that they often appear in textbooks; listening, Speaking, reading, and writing. (Byrne 1993).

There are several benefits of integrating -skills in language teaching. First, integrating language skills provides more purposeful and meaningful learning at all levels. Besides, it contributes to coherent teaching and to better communication. Teachers can enrich classroom instructions by integrating language skills such as reading, and writing with its sub skills like vocabulary and grammar. Also, students can transfer the acquired knowledge to the other areas. The integration of skills is important in a language classroom as it provides maximum learners opportunities for different students.

2.15.1. Speaking skill.

How is it possible to integrate speaking during the activity of writing? When the teacher incorporates speaking in writing students can infer and argument a text. In accordance with, (Harmer 2010) establishes that there are three main reasons for getting students to speak in the classroom. Firstly, speaking activities provide rehearsal opportunities - chances to practice real-life speaking in the safety of the classroom. Secondly, speaking tasks in which students try to use any or all of the languages they know provide feedback for both teacher and students. And finally, more students have opportunities to activate the various elements of the language they have stored in their brains, the more automatic their use of these elements become. As a result, students gradually become autonomous language users. This means that they will be able to use words and phrases fluently without very much conscious thought.

2.15.2 Vocabulary.

(Ur 2012) defined vocabulary as the words in the language. However, it may include items that are more than a single word. It can express a single concept as a “chunk”. Other elements in vocabulary include grammatical items: pronouns, determiners, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. There is a very important reason to believe that it is extremely important to have a varied vocabulary when teaching a language, everyone knows many words. Some master them perfectly and use them daily; others, however, hardly know or interpret them, either because they know the meaning, or because they decipher the meaning due to the context. But having vocabulary is not enough; what matters is using it in various situations or contexts in life or work.

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Regarding vocabulary (Susanto 2017) also states that the acquisition is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign. According to this view, vocabulary is a basic micro skill when one learns a foreign language. A student with insufficient vocabulary will not perform well in every aspect of language itself. The main reason that students cannot read comprehensively is that they have limited vocabulary. Vocabulary is considered as the head of the language but it is not always considered when English is taught in school or other formal classes.

2.15.3 Grammar.

Where should a teacher begin in deciding what kind of grammar focus is appropriate and relevant for students' needs in the writing classroom? For many years grammar has showed us about the written language so that a sentence needs at least a subject and verb, which can then be followed by an object, by complement, or by an or adverbial, etc. (Harmer 2015) claims that: Grammar teaching may grow directly from the tasks the students are performing or have just performed as part of a writing lesson. Other researchers as (Kolln and Funk 2012) consider that the grammar has three definitions the first is the system of rules in our heads, second is the formal description of the rules and the last is the social implications of usage, sometimes called "linguistic etiquette." However (Wilcox 2004) describes that grammar is inside Language because grammar involves the rules and relationships through which we construct meaningful sounds, words, and sentences.

Based on the definitions above, it was agreed that there is a consensus among researcher's grammar study to forms or structures in a language. Traditionally, grammar has been concerned almost exclusively with analysis at the level of the sentences. Also, grammar is the mental system of rules and categories that allows humans to form and interpret the words

and sentences of their language. Sometimes people describe grammar as the "rules" of a language, but in fact, what we call "grammar" is simply a reflection of a language at a particular time.

2.15.3.1. Coordinating Conjunctions.

(Robertson 2004) argues that conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) connects words or phrases that do not depend on each other to make sense, such as two nouns, two phrases, or two clauses. In writing skill conjunctions are necessary because, when the readers read they hope to understand the ideas the writer want to transmit.

The theoretical framework used in this research was based on the ability to write. The most relevant theories to teach how to write a well-structured paragraph take into account that where such research was conducted they have difficulty in recognizing how writing should be taught effectively.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN.

3.1 Research type.

The research methodology for this study is a mix methods approach which is a procedure for a collecting analyzing “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem. This was chosen as it provides a better picture of the topic under study. According to (Sandelowski 2003), quoted by (Dornyei 2007) argues that there are two main and somewhat conflicting purposes for combining methods (a). To achieve a fuller understanding of a target phenomenon and (b) to verify one set of findings against the other the objective of this research is to explore how senior students write a paragraph.

Under the mix method approaches a phenomenological approach was used because, this is most closely aligned with the study's objectives. (Creswell 2013) states that phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon. Other forms of data such as documents, observations and art may also be used. The data is then read and reread and called for like phrases and themes that are then grouped to form clusters of meaning. Through this process the researcher may construct the universal meaning of the event, situation or experience and arrive at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon.

3.2. Setting:

This study was carried out at the National Institute of Boaco, in the city of Boaco -Nicaragua. The school is a state school and has different facilities such as a library, a basketball court, an auditorium, a common room for teachers, a cafeteria, a kitchen, a sewing room, a welding

room, a science lab, a computer lab with 50 tablets, and 16 computers with internet, a vegetable garden, a park, gardens, bathrooms, and a warehouse. It has twelve large classrooms, each with windows, two doors, a white board, a desk, a seat.

3.3 Population and sample:

The population of this research was 30 students. . It was noticed that they are mostly females, 19 girls and 11 boys between the ages 16 and 17. Then a sample of 09 students was randomly selected. The informants come mostly from the urban area and some of them from rural areas, this makes them have different levels in the language. For example, the majority of them are at a low level, some of them at an intermediate level and just a few are at an advanced level. Those who live in the urban area have access to internet and different courses at academies that are in the city. Therefore, they better equipped in the language than those students who live in rural areas and study at the institute do not have the same opportunities. There is also a group of students who come from low- income families and they have to work part time to contribute to their household expenses, so they do not have enough time to study. This affects them in their learning and their performance. Regarding language proficiency, it was found that 50% of the students do not have the basics in the language, which makes it difficult for them to ask and answer questions orally and in written form. In addition, due to the covid 19, many students dropped, some others came back after two or three months, as a result, students have a learning gap. Considering that English is taught three days a week, each lesson of 45-minutes, students do not satisfactorily acquire the language.

The teacher who is in charge of the eleventh grade is qualified to teach English, she has a degree in English and has been teaching English for 4 years. She also has a desire and motivation to improve as well.

3.4 Data collection Methods.

The techniques for collecting data were interview, observation and a test. All of them were applied at the National institute of Boaco, in the second semester of the year 2020 in order to collect reliable information from the students and the teacher.

3.4 Instruments.

3.5.1 Teacher's interview

An interview is a research method to collect data which is used in qualitative research and mixed methods. (Bernal 2010) claims that an interview is the technique aimed at establishing direct contact with the people who are considered a source of information. Therefore the purpose of this interview was to obtain useful information from the informants that helped us explore how the teacher develops to writing skill so that the students write more and better in English. This interview was applied to the English teacher there. The interview consisted of thirteen open- ended. The questions were orally asked and recorded so as not to miss any detail.

The teacher was interviewed twice because she expressed that there were questions that she did not understand, before doing the second interview, the teacher was given feedback according to the topics that she was not familiar with and in this way obtain better results.

3.5.2 Observation.

(Kumar 2011) suggests that observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place. In this research the teacher was observed two times during a month. The lesson observed was video recorded. The objective of this observation was to analyze the teaching and learning process related to

writing which would help us to gather information about how students use the elements of the paragraph in writing.

3.5.3 Test.

(Delhi 2012) defined that test is an instrument for assessment also test is designed to measure a student's grasp or knowledge of his proficiency in certain skills. Tests provide important information at various points in the research cycle. At the project's beginning, for example, they offer information on the initial situation within the target group. Tests often employ quantitative methods, but qualitative and mixed methods are also possible. It was a diagnostic test to explore how students use the four elements of the paragraph in writing. So students had to write a paragraph based on the following subject. "My Favorite Hobby", to do it they had to answer the following questions:

1. What it is your favorite hobby?
2. Do you do it on own or with someone else?
3. What time of that day you do it? (In the morning, in the afternoon or night)
4. Where you do it?
5. What you like about it?

The test was applied and then with the help of other teachers it was checked. The corrected paragraph was handed to the students so they could see and correct their mistakes if they needed to improve.

3.6 Validation of the instruments

All the data collection methods used were validated by a jury of experts whether in the field of research or writing. The jury was composed of Msc. Geraldine Abril López Darce, PhD. Albert Francisco Sanchez Alvarado, and Msc. Jaime Roberto Aleman Quintanilla all from the English Department of UNAN-Managua.

3.7. Analysis (discussion)

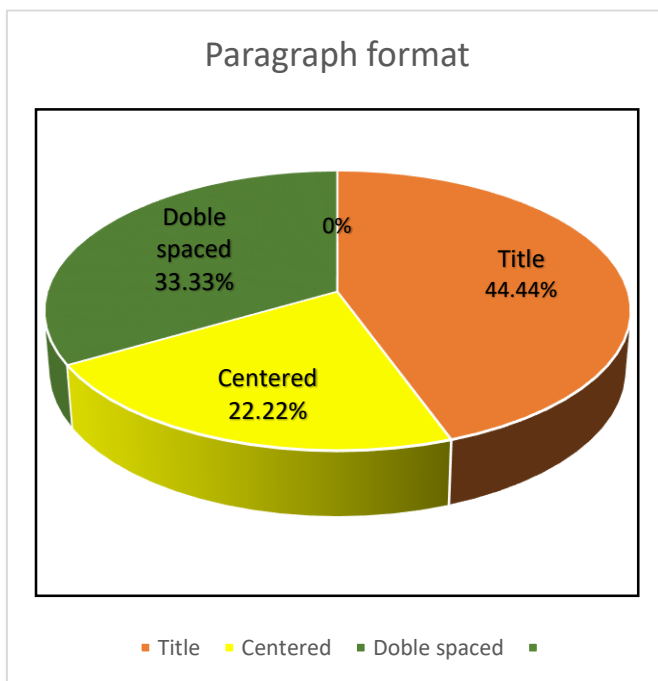
In the interview the teacher said she taught coordinating conjunctions when she was teaching grammar after that student worked with reading comprehension exercises where they underlined conjunctions. When she was asked about which tasks she used for students to identify the parts of a paragraph, she referred to integrating reading skills. But she did not explain more about it. So it was inferred that she did not have clear ideas on how to teach writing properly though she has certification from the university. Additionally, she mentioned, she used the TELF manual to make a lessons plan because she thinks that is useful to build a writing class as there are many techniques to apply in writing tasks. Regarding the time given to some activities, she gave students around twenty or twenty-five minutes for each activity. Hence, it is deemed that time allotted to each activity is not enough. Despite writing approaches was a term not familiar for her.

In the observation, it was observed that teacher applied the product and genre approach as she provided the students with a model, and students had to identify the features of a descriptive paragraph. However, she did not provide more material or techniques where the students could recognize and identify the structure of the paragraph and then imitate the example. Concerning the use of language, she used about 85 percent of English, which is a

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positive aspect because public school teachers have a bad reputation for not using English and overuse of the mother tongue. Another aspect to mention is that she kept control of the classroom so all students were attentive and focused. It was also observed that not all students participated only three of them. Can be inferred that this happened because students were shy, embarrassed, did not understand, and were not clear about the task.

In the test, the students wrote a descriptive paragraph following a prompt so that they could guidance. To evaluate the test it used a rubric with the four categories below:



1. Paragraph format.

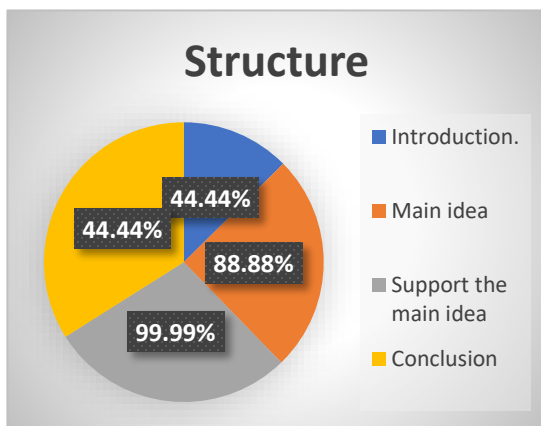
Four students wrote a title and five did not write a title to the text, only two students centered the paragraph and seven wrote it in a disorderly way. Three used double spacing and six did not use it. Therefore most of them do not use the correct format to write a paragraph and it can be stated that it was not taught to them.



2. Punctuation, Capitalization, and spelling.

The students presented problems in the punctuation when trying to finish a sentence. Only three of them structured and finished a sentence well and six of them did not know how to make it.

Therefore, if they present this kind of problems they will have difficulties in using the capital letters after punctuation. Four students used correctly, but five of them did not. On the other hand, there were seven pupils who did not have spelling problems, and other two who chose wrong words, for example; one student wrote (volleibol) instead of a volleyball. Perhaps this problem is because students are not exposed dictation, spelling activities, and reading comprehension.



3. Structure.

Regarding the analysis of the paragraph four students wrote their introductory idea, but five could not do it. Eight wrote the topic sentence correctly but one, unfortunately, did not. Nine of them supported the main idea with secondary ideas. But two of them did

not do it clearly and wrote ideas that were not according to the main idea. To conclude the paragraph, four did it correctly, but five of them were not able to write a conclusion. However, the main problems students had where that they did not introduce the topic and did not write a conclusion.



4. Conjunctions and Grammar.

Conjunctions are known as FANBOYS. Of the nine students, eight used them, but they did not use them all, in some cases one or two were repeated for instance; and or for. Because the students only know the most common ones and unknown the rest. The student who did not use the conjunctions probably had problems when expressing themselves in written form. Also

grammar is a sub-skill that is taught to them since the first years. For that reason, these students did not have much difficulty when using the verb tenses, adjectives, verbs, articles, etc. However, there were two students who had difficulty with the use of tenses.

After the review of the written texts, it was considered necessary to intervene with the students to explain a little bit how to write a paragraph taking into account the categories that were evaluated in the first text. A class was prepared to teach students to recognize and use conjunctions, the parts of a paragraph in a passage, the format, and mechanics. Only two students showed up unfortunately because the school year was already finished.

IV. FINDINGS (RESULTS)

Through the instruments applied in this research it was found that the teacher who teaches English has resources (a lab with a projector, computers, tables with internet, speaker, library, and photocopy) and the material (TEFL manual, textbooks, books and dictionaries) to make a productive writing lesson, and though she does not have a clear idea about the types of approaches she uses to teach writing, she somehow applies the product approach because she provided students with a model for them to write. However, there was neither understanding of the passage nor analysis, and she does not use properly what she has a hand. The text she used had too much information, was not interesting, not contextualized to the task, And the time given to each writing activity was too little. She did not planned well an interesting class because the students were not engaged in any activity that implied group work, they seemed to be focused but they were just there.

Students write unrelated ideas among each other, but not many problems were seen with the writing of the main idea. When it comes to supporting and concluding ideas students had problems it is indeed crucial to know how to give instructions and for what purpose teachers teach writing. Students just wrote ideas but did not support them with examples. More than that, it was interesting to read the students writing and observe there were a few mistakes with grammar, but ideas were not logical, unity, coherent and cohesive. They need to be taught to structure ideas within a paragraph, especially through reading. A reading allows for language in context, right structures, and proper use of compound sentences, mechanics and format.

V. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the objectives of this study it can be concluded that:

Most of the students write a paragraph and they can at least write the topic sentence. Nevertheless, they are neither able to support it nor restate it. Furthermore, they do not introduce the paragraph correctly.

Systematic handwriting, spelling, transcription, dictation, allow students to automatically acquire and apply the rules of the language. Thus, having students to write regularly make them write properly. However, writing does not come alone if reading is not present, students can only acquire varied vocabulary if they read to a lot. The students writing depends on good teaching practices and that students are strategic, self- motivated and knowledgeable when they write.

5.1. Recommendations

1. Teachers and students should make of writing a routine. As children learn by routines. For example: Students can make a class journal, newspaper, poetry fair, and write every day so the teacher can give feedback twice a week, the teacher can also use a social page, where phrases are posted and students can interact by writing different sentences every day and comment on what they understand from their classmates' sentences.
2. Students can write a story about an image they see, they also can illustrate their text with a drawing or an image.
3. Teachers should create an environment in which students learn through experience. Connecting the real life with the writing.
4. Teachers should develop activities in which they gradually increase free writing.
5. Teacher should stimulate students' knowledge with practice exercises before they structure a paragraph through reading. To students recognize the parts of a paragraph. For example professor could teach how students can identify the topic sentence and supporting sentence, asking the questions. What is the reading about? What is say about the subject of the text?
6. It is suggested that the principal promotes training courses for teachers about how to teach writing in the classroom.
7. The teacher must combine other abilities before teaching writing.
8. Students should have the opportunities to develop mental activities such as planning, monitoring, evaluating, revising, and summarizing as well as drafting processes, such as sentences and paragraph construction.

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9. Students should start combining simple sentences until they are able to combine complex sentences.
10. Teachers should involve the students in pre-writing activities such as reading so they obtain ideas for their writing or using a graphic organizer to help them generate and organize what they are ready know.
11. For future researchers of this topic, further studies are suggested on coherence and cohesion as not enough time was spent in the investigation on this topic, more observation needs to be done to analyze the behavior of the students and the methods of teaching that the teacher uses to identify where there are weaknesses. Applied other instruments to collect information like an interview and survey for students, they can also use different applications with and without the internet to gather information such as Skype, Zoom, Google meet, WhatsApp, quizzer, SurveyMonkey, among others. Moreover, they intervene to apply a pre-test and post-test to measure the knowledge of students.

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VII. ATTACHMENTS



National Institute of Boaco.

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Students while were taking their tests.

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Students writing

No title 3 60/100

my favorite hobby is play volleyball with my friends and participate in one league, the practices are generally a in the afternoon and at night. On the Juanita Court and many times at the Sentry box I like to share my favorite hobby with my friends, grabbing what we like it.

- No double-spaced.
- Proper names doesn't translate.
- there is a main idea is well!
- there is not a conclusion
- there is a limited the use of conjunction

My favorite hobby 3 625/100

My favorite hobby is soccer. I would like to enjoy it with my girlfriend in the morning, we enjoyed on to Sunday at National Institute. ~~and~~ what I like the most is playing with her.

I Love my my hobby.

- Do not - double-spaced.
- There is not clear ideas, support the main ideas and conclusion.
- Do not use conjunctions...

you use simple sentences.
; go ahead, you can do it better!!!

Title? 71/100

My favorite hobby is playing videogames, ~~and~~ ^{see watch} documentaries. I do it, to recreate myself and gain knowledge. I like to play video games in my free time in the afternoon and watch documentaries at night. I usually do it at home. I like video games because I am competitive and documentaries because they entertain me and acquire a lot of knowledge.

- Don't have a title
- Do not have double-spaced.
- Use limited of conjunctions

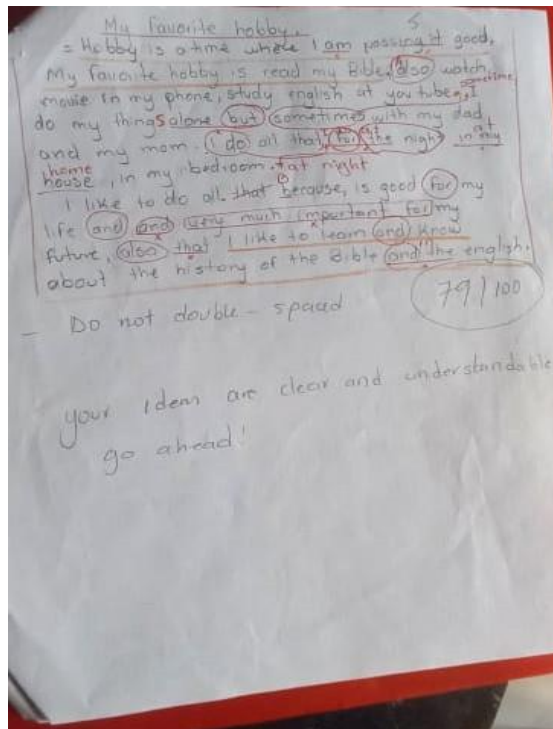
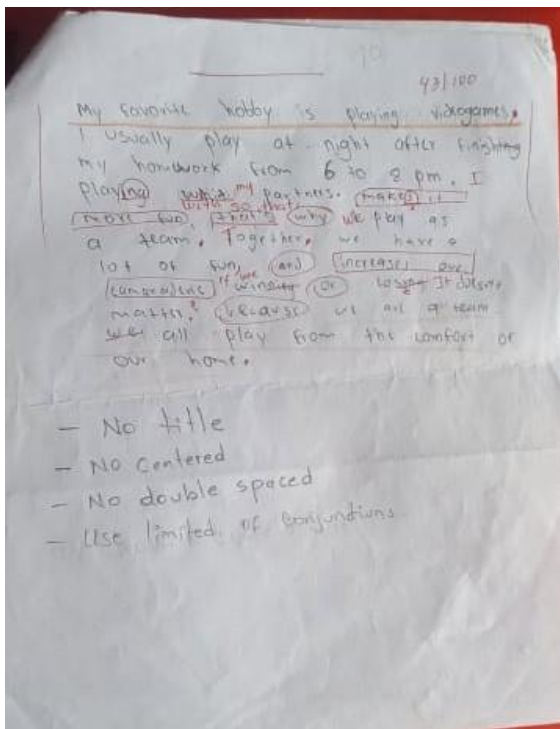
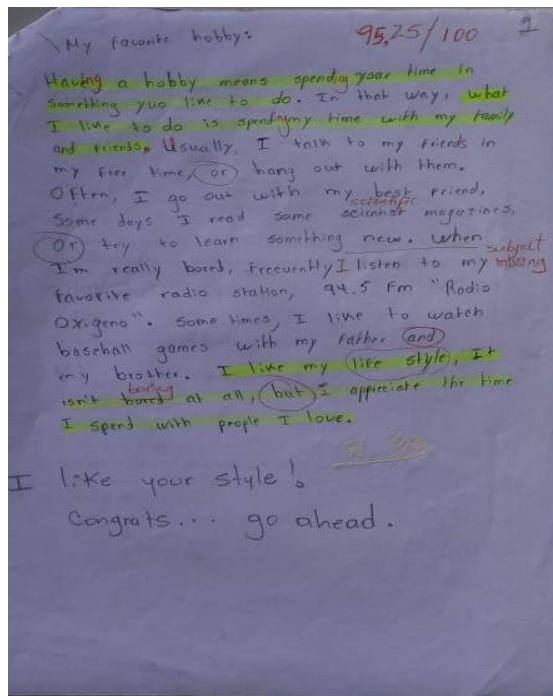
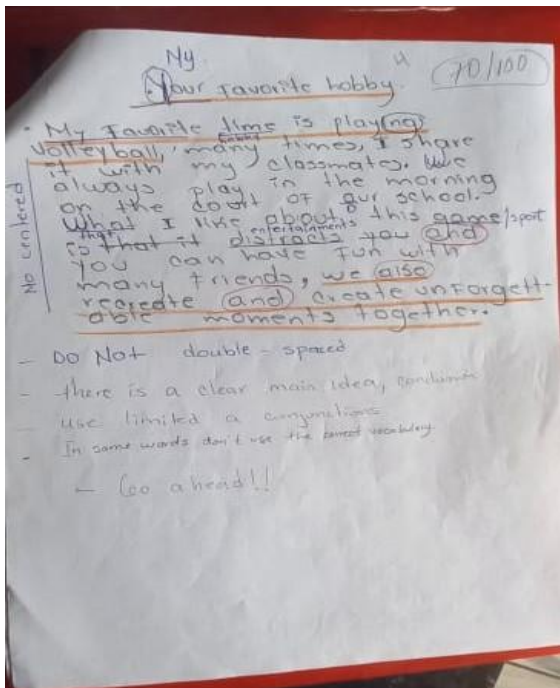
8 31/100

It's a hobby

My favorite hobby watch series and sleep to Relax myself, ~~and~~ ^{they are} (documentaries) and not worry about some personal things and distractions. I do my hobby after classes, I do my hobby at room's, work after helping and styling. I like to study, read, go to @ walk, listen to music and play, be communicative with other people.

- It's hard to understand, what do you want to say?
- Do not connect your ideas.
- there is not double-spaced
- there is not a period after every sentence
- Do not use capital letter.
- There is not clear main idea.
- There is not conclusion
- Is limited that use of conjunctions.

Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing.



Instruments.

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Teacher's Interview

Data collection method # 1

Topic: "Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing."

The main objective of this research is to explore how senior students' write an organized paragraph.

Objective of interview is to obtain information on how the teacher teaches Paragraph Structure in senior Students' Writing at institute national of Boaco, in the second semester 2020.

Grade: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's name: _____

1. What set of routines do you develop to teach coordinating conjunctions? Do students recognize and use them correctly? Provide the examples.
2. Which tasks help students identify the main ideas, supporting ideas and conclusion in simple texts?
3. Which tasks help students produce a structured paragraph? (the main ideas, supporting ideas and conclusion)
4. Which of the activities in the TEFL manual are helpful for you to teach paragraph writing?
5. How much time do you give to each of the activities?
6. Do you teach a format for students to follow?
7. How do you approach grammar?

Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing.

8. Which teaching approach do you use to develop the writing skill? Process or Product, in which they are, writing.
9. How do you make sure your students understand instructions?
10. How should feedback be provided?
11. Which other skills do you integrate when students write? Why
12. How do you group your students in your writing lesson? Which ways work best for your students? How?

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Observation

Data collection method # 2

Topic: "Paragraph Structure in senior Students' Writing."

The main objective of this research is to explore how senior students' write an organized paragraph.

Objective of Observation is to analyze the teaching and learning process related to writing that help us to gather information about how students use the elements of the classic paragraph in their Writing.

Grade: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's name: _____

Subject: _____ Time of class: _____

Number of students: _____

Announced YES / NO

The Teacher ...
1. Maintains discipline and has control of the class. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
2. Has mastery of topic and is able to clarify doubts. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
3. Uses target language appropriately. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
4. Uses appropriate teaching approaches to develop writing skill. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:

Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing.

5. Uses appropriate error correction techniques when providing feedback. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
Students...
6. Students are focused and motivated. (Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
The lesson...
7. Guide to students to identify the main idea, supporting ideas and conclusion. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
8. Develop coordinating conducting to write a paragraph Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
9. Appropriate time given to each activity. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
10. Grouping arrangement is appropriate for activity and level. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
11. More than one skill is integrated. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:
12. Grammar and mechanics teaching is aimed at writing. Yes _____ 2. No _____ comments:

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Student's written text

instrument: # 3

Topic: "Paragraph Structure in Senior Students' Writing."

The main objective of this research is to explore how senior students' write an organized paragraph.

Objective of student's written is examined how students' use the four elements of the classic paragraph in Writing.

Name _____ age _____ Man/Woman.

Write a descriptive paragraph of ten lines about your favorite hobby. Follow the questions below to write your paragraph.

My Favorite Hobby.

What it is your favorite hobby?

Do you do it on own or with someone else?

What time of that day you do it? (In the morning, in the afternoon or night)

Where you do it?

What you like about it?

Paragraph Writing Rubric.

	Yes	No
<p>Paragraph format</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The paragraph has a title 2. Centered 3. The paragraph is double – spaced <p>Punctuation, Capitalization, and spelling</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There's a period after every sentence 2. Use capital letter correctly 3. There are a few words misspelled. <p>Structure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of the topic 2. There is a clear main idea. 3. The rest of ideas support the main idea. 4. There's a conclusion (restatement of the main idea) <p>Conjunctions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of conjunctions to connect ideas. (FANBOYS. For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) <p>Grammar.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verb tense, articles, word order. 		