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MAESTRÍA EN LINGÜÍSTICA APLICADA A LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

The Impact of Metacognitive Strategies on Enhancing EFL A2 Level Students' Writing

Tesis previa a la obtención del Grado de Magíster en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

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Resumen

El uso de las estrategias metacognitivas permite desarrollar un proceso de aprendizaje reflexivo y consciente de como aprendemos. El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar el impacto de las estrategias metacognitivas en el mejoramiento de la escritura. La intervención se llevó a cabo con 24 estudiantes de inglés de tercer nivel de créditos, paralelo D3, en el Instituto Universitario de Lenguas de la Universidad de Cuenca, en Cuenca, Ecuador, durante 32 horas de instrucción. La intervención se realizó en el uso de estrategias metacognitivas aplicadas a la escritura de ensayos narrativos y de opinión. La investigación usó el método mixto paralelo convergente, integrando los datos cuantitativos y cualitativos para el análisis del impacto de las estrategias metacognitivas en el mejoramiento del rendimiento de la escritura. Los datos cuantitativos fueron recolectados a través de un diseño quasi-experimental, el cual utilizó un pre-test y post-test para medir el rendimiento de los estudiantes en la escritura antes y después de la intervención. De igual manera se usó una rúbrica para determinar las estrategias metacognitivas más usadas en el proceso de escritura antes y después de la intervención. Los datos cualitativos fueron recolectados a través de una encuesta semiestructurada, basada en la Escala de Likert para conocer las actitudes, reflexiones y percepciones de los estudiantes después de la intervención. Los resultados demostraron que el uso de las estrategias metacognitivas y de auto-regulación tuvo un impacto significativo en el nivel de escritura de los estudiantes, logrando alcanzar el Nivel B1 del Marco Común Europeo de Referencia para las Lenguas.

Palabras claves: Estrategias metacognitivas, Autoregulación, Escritura en Inglés como Segunda Lengua, Escritura en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, mediación en la escritura, instrucción estratégica.

Abstract

The use of metacognitive strategies has become an option to develop self-awareness of one's own learning process. Therefore, this research aimed at investigating the impact of metacognitive strategies to enhance students' writing. The intervention was carried out with 24 students of the third level English credit course-D3, at the Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca in Cuenca, Ecuador, during 32 hours. The intervention was on the use of metacognitive strategies applied to narrative and opinion essay writing. The research followed a convergent parallel mixed methods design which integrated quantitative and qualitative data to analyze the impact of metacognitive strategies on students' writing performance. Quantitative data were collected through a quasi-experimental design. A pre-test and a post-test were administered to a convenience group to measure students' writing performance before and after the intervention. Qualitative data were collected by an open-ended survey questionnaire, based on the Likert Scale to know about the students' attitudes, reflections, and perceptions after the training. The data results showed that metacognitive and self-regulation strategies use had a significant impact on students' writing level, to the point that they reached level B1 of the Common European Framework Reference for Languages.

Key words: Metacognitive strategies, self-regulation, ESL writing, EFL writing, scaffolding writing, strategic instruction.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband, Diego and my two children, David and Rafaela; who have always been by my side, giving me moral strength and happiness. I would not have been able to conclude my Master's studies or this thesis without their daily encouragement**.**

Introduction

The emerging global economic and social demands require of the availability of communications. The technological world is becoming increasingly more powerful and, so is the English language. English has come to be the world's lingua franca in the last few years establishing its worldwide popularity due to increasing relationships among individuals.

Thus, communication and interaction among individuals all over the world demand learning, understanding, and speaking English effectively since English is definitely the language that creates opportunities in today's globalized world.

Consequently, in non-English speaking countries, there is a strong demand for English speakers who can efficiently communicate in a variety of situations, either orally or by writing. So the English Foreign Language programs that are offered in elementary schools, high schools, and universities are constantly changing and improving to be able to stay abreast of the development of the country.

In the University of Cuenca (UC), in Ecuador, the University Institute of Languages (UIL) offers different types of English programs such as the free-choice intensive courses, the credit courses which are embedded in the curriculum for each career at the UC, and other English for Specific Purposes courses for professional development. At present, all of the students at the University of Cuenca must study mandatorily the three levels of English at the Credit Courses Program. The objective of these courses is to provide the students with language and communicative skills which allow them to reach a B1 level of English proficiency at the end of the Program. The B1 level is set up in accordance with the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

The writing outcomes and standards stated in the UIL syllabus for Third Level English Credit Courses (See Appendix 1) are higher than the ones stated in CEFR. This is so because English is considered to be an important instrument which should let the UIL students to use the language not only in communicative situations, but also in research and information processing during their studies, for later careers, and professional development. Thus, this research study has the attempt to find out whether metacognitive strategy explicit instruction enhances learners' writing level.

This study consists of six chapters. Chapter one presents the description of the problem, research questions, general and specific objectives, and the research context. Chapter two includes the underlying theories, concepts, categories, and principles to support

the study. Chapter three exposes the review of literature of studies in the area of second and foreign language writing, strategic instruction, metacognitive strategies, and students' writing performance. Chapter four is concerned about the research methodology. It includes demographics and a detailed description of the intervention as well as the instruments and the procedure. In chapter five, the data analysis of the results and the discussion are its main components. Finally, the conclusions and some recommendations as well as suggestions for further studies appear in chapter six.

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

1.1 Background and Justification

In recent years, there has been a significant shift in focus from the teacher to the learner in the language learning process reflected in evidence of teaching and learning effectiveness. In addition, English has established itself even more as an international language and has meant a step forward to whoever is proficient in it. Knowing how to communicate in English with proficiency can help a person succeed in life not only throughout their years of academic study, but also in the course of their professional development.

The higher education system in Ecuador has experienced important changes aimed at prioritizing students' equality and ensuring quality. English learning, in this context, has become an important part of students' successful academic achievement. To illustrate this matter, in a recent macro study entitled "English in Ecuador: An Examination of Policy, Perceptions and Influencing Factors", conducted by the British Council (2015), five hundred and two male and female English learners in the age range from 16 to 34 were asked to assess their English skills, choosing from Poor/basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Fluent.

It was found that the participants were more confident in their receptive skills (reading and listening) than in their production ones (writing and speaking). Only a small share of respondents (11%) considered themselves to be Advanced or Fluent in reading, writing, and speaking English. The respondents who evaluated their writing skill as Poor/basic or Intermediate felt that their lack of proficiency in writing was primarily because they did not write in English frequently enough during their education.

The British Council (2015) states that Secretaría de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SENESCYT) supports English as a tool for educational success and stresses that English is a means of opening professional doors while the lack of proficiency is an obstacle to personal development. It is important to mention the growth in Ecuadorian students' desire to obtain scholarships to study in international and national postgraduate programs and obtain scholarships. This aspiration has led students to an increased interest in becoming proficient English speakers and writers since the majority of these programs usually require or expect a certain level of English at the time of applying.

For example, international English language evaluations like Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) have been the measurements of English levels most commonly accepted by universities around the

world. Concerning the national assessment scores in these two international evaluations, the Ecuadorians who took these two examinations performed poorly on them (British Council, 2015). For instance, the Ecuadorian TOEFL examinees who took the exam in December 2012, obtained an average score of 79 out of 120, meaning that Ecuadorian students are classified as 'intermediate' for reading and listening, and 'fair' for speaking and writing. Similarly, Ecuadorians who took the academic and general training IELTS exams in 2014, performed poorly in writing. The average writing score obtained was of 6.0 in the academic test and 5.9 in the general training test (British Council, 2015). Therefore, these figures demonstrate the importance of enhancing the English writing skills of Ecuadorian university students. In conclusion, higher education English programs must consider that the achievement in writing constitutes an integral role in students' academic and professional success (Hammann, 2005).

Teachers and students in higher education in Ecuador must be engaged in reflective teaching and learning. Success in this regard does not only depend on the teachers' decisions and actions, but also on what the students themselves are prepared to do in order to improve their proficiency in English. Consequently, the teachers' role is to facilitate the students' learning. According to Oxford (1990), students often lack the awareness of the language learning process. Indeed, students, even mature ones, do not realize how much they learn when they complete a task or an activity. Often, they accomplish the task only for a passing grade. Moreover, students judge their progress and proficiency in their English language skills by the grades that they receive from the teacher rather than by what they are able to do during the process, namely, acquiring metacognitive strategies for independent learning such as paying attention, planning, organizing, self-monitoring and self-evaluating before, during, and after writing tasks.

Therefore, researching the ways in which language learners can gain proficiency in English as well as become independent and responsible for their learning is crucial to help students become more successful in English.

In conclusion, researching language learning strategies, in particular metacognitive strategies, is essential to determine if students' writing can be improved by making them more aware of their English learning process by providing appropriate training.

Therefore, this study proposes to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring the impact of metacognitive strategies on students' writing skill, using both quantitative and qualitative data in order to better understand the research problem.

1. 2 Statement of the problem

Ramos (2012) stresses that developing writing skills has always been a challenging task both for teachers and students; this is even more so when this skill has to be acquired in a second or foreign language like English.

The document entitled "The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Learning, teaching and assessment" (2003), sets up the 'can do' descriptors for learners' performance in writing. At A2 Level, the self-assessment grid describes the 'can do' capabilities as follows: "I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple, personal letter. For example, "thanking someone for something" (Common European Framework Reference of Languages [CEFR], 2003, p. 26).

However, the present learning outcomes in the syllabus (See Appendix 1) for the A2 students at the UIL establish a higher standard rather than the CEFR's.

Indeed, UIL students, at the end of their course, are expected to write descriptive, narrative, and explanatory paragraphs on familiar topics by using different sources (2016). This is due to the fact that international exams and scholarships require, among others, a high level of written proficiency in English.

The major challenge that teachers face is when students have difficulty in reaching the expected learning outcomes demanded by the syllabus. Achieving the goals requires the commitment of both the teachers and the students and entails reflection on the actions and decisions to be made. Therefore, an analysis of the students' written work, and the low grades A2 level students have obtained in some applied writing tasks over the past semesters made the author notice that students did not meet the writing requirements set for the level. Frequently, the paragraphs were imprecise and incomprehensible and poorly organized. Moreover, the notes taken by the author for about one month in a reflective journal on the students' writing tasks confirmed that the majority faced a lot of problems that have been identified by Oxford (2011, p. 16):

- paying attention, setting goals, and planning before writing;
- self-monitoring: reviewing and checking during and after writing;
- self-reflecting and evaluating the writing work at any stage of the writing process.

According to Chamot (2004) and Oxford (2011), the above-mentioned problems can be ameliorated when students go through a metacognitive process of reflection on their own learning, allowing them become more productive and independent.

Hence, providing students with a tool such as training in metacognitive strategies may assist them to become active participants in their writing development and, as a result, they may obtain strategies to operate independently and participate more fully in their writing tasks (Richard-Amato, 2003).

Therefore, this research study aims to evaluate if exposure to and practice of metacognitive strategies can enhance A2 students' writing performance. Additionally, it intends to contribute to the knowledge base by exploring the influence of those strategies on the development of students' writing skills.

In conclusion, researching the influence of metacognitive strategies on the English language learning process is essential in order to determine if one of the essential skills, namely, the writing skill can be enhanced by making students more aware of the learning process related to writing.

1.3 Research Questions

The proposed research is an attempt to contribute to an understanding of whether the use of metacognitive strategies can help A2 level students develop and improve their writing as well as raise awareness regarding their own written performance.

Accordingly, the research questions are formulated as follows:

- What are the most common metacognitive strategies used by the students before, during, and after the training?

- To what extent does the impact of metacognitive strategies enhance EFL A2 level students' writing?

- To what extent do students' perceptions and thoughts about the use of metacognitive strategies correlate with their improved written performance?

1.4 Objectives

General

-To enhance A2 students' writing skills by applying metacognitive strategies training.
Specific

 - To establish the most common metacognitive strategies that students use before, during, and after the intervention.

- To determine the influence of metacognitive strategies based on the Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) Model in enhancing A2 students' writing.

- To evaluate which metacognitive strategies help to enhance A2 level students' writing.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to present the theories, concepts, categories, and principles that have been reviewed in order to construct the theoretical framework that supports the study of the impact of metacognitive strategies on enhancing English Foreign Language (EFL) A2 level students' writing. First of all, acquiring proficiency in a second or foreign language always represents a desirable goal for every second or foreign language learner. Therefore, in the first place, it is essential to understand the most important notions of what language proficiency is and how it can be acquired. Additionally, a description of competence, performance, and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) B1 level writing descriptors are introduced in this chapter as they constitute the basis to develop students' communicative proficiency in a foreign language. The second aspect to be considered is related to the development of second and foreign language writing and their most relevant approaches that have been researched and implemented by diverse teachers and investigators. Thirdly, an overview of the most important elements that construct the theory on language learning strategies is necessary in order to establish a meaningful basis for this study. Finally, the concept of metacognition and its elements are fundamental to be reviewed since they are the key components to comprehend how learners can control and regulate their cognitive processes of writing. Figure 2.1 illustrates a guide of the concepts, categories and theories that have been selected for this research.

Figure 2. 1 Theoretical Framework Guideline
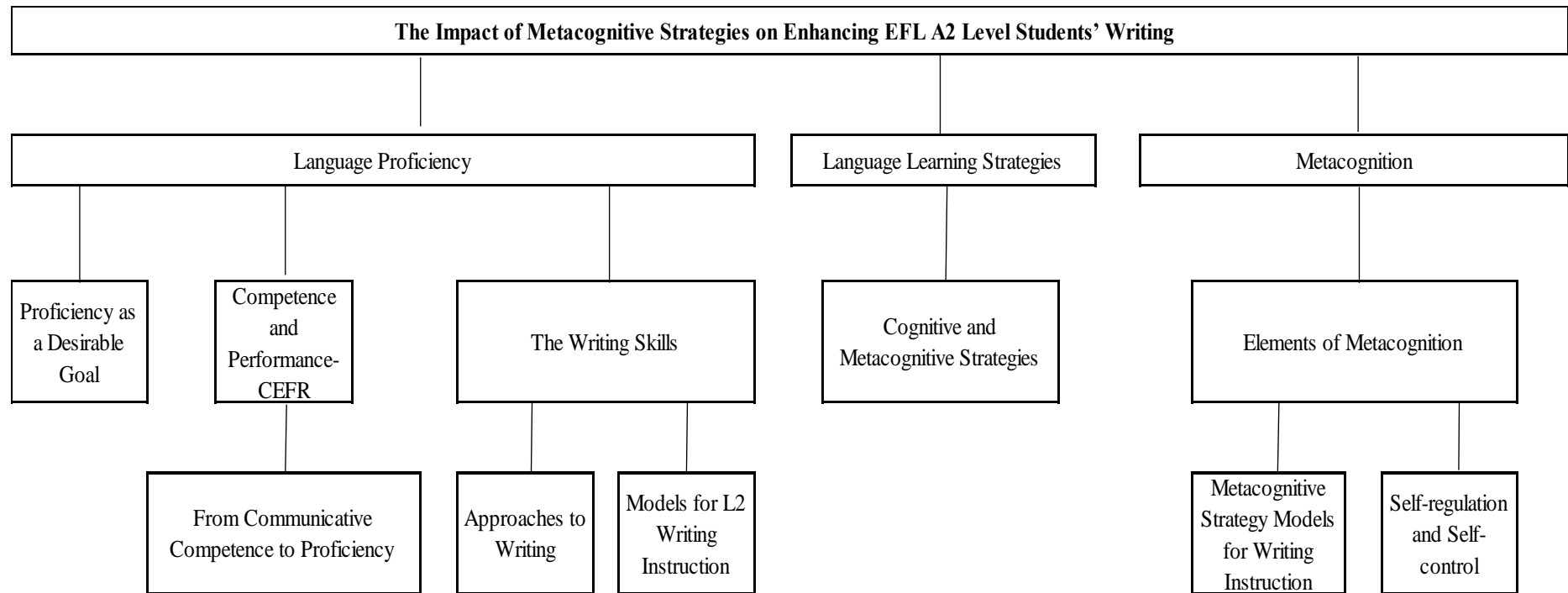
Source: C. Jaramillo

2.1 Language Proficiency

Nowadays, developing second or foreign language proficiency is a key aspect for second and foreign language learners and teachers since the learners' success to communicate effectively either orally or in the written form in a different language depends on the learners' level of knowledge and understanding of it.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, it is important to review the most influential theories that serve as a basis to understand the concept of language proficiency in the field of second and foreign language.

2.1.1 Proficiency as a desirable goal

The main objective of the individuals who are learning a language other than their own is to become proficient in that target language. A proficient English learner is someone who normally uses the language with greater formality and less familiarity than a native fluent speaker (Tedick, 2006). Therefore, according to this author, foreign language instruction must provide a balance between language as a whole and its parts because students need to understand how the parts work together within the language system. In other words, students must learn the language and acquire language use in order to achieve foreign language proficiency.

That is why it is a must for EFL teachers to keep in mind throughout the teaching process questions such as: How can teachers help second or foreign language learners become proficient in that language?; What does knowing a language involve?; What are the features of a proficiency-oriented approach?; What curriculum and materials should a teacher choose?, so learners can be able to attain their goals.

The term *proficient* is defined by The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (2004) as "expert in an art, vocation, or area of learning" (p. 671). Considering this definition and in referring to language, to be *proficient* would be someone with an idealized level of language competence and performance attained by extensive instruction. Thus, proficiency comprises three main aspects of language, such as the specifications about the levels of competence achieved according to the functions performed, the contexts in which the language learner interact, and the accuracy with which a learner uses the language as suggested by Omaggio (1986). However in order

to understand *proficiency*, it is essential to explain Chomsky´s terms of competence and performance. These are reviewed in the following section:

2.1.2 Competence and Performance

Omaggio (1986) pointed out that Chomsky made a clear distinction between the concepts *competence and performance*. *Competence,* on one hand, refers to knowledge of the linguistic elements of the language such as rules of grammar. P*erformance*, on the other hand, is described as the production of these linguistic elements into acceptable sentences. Moreover, the author (1986) explained that Chomsky believed in an ideal speaker, who could speak the language perfectly without any limitations, omissions, repetitions, etc., in a homogeneous speech community. However, as the time has gone by, Chomsky's concepts of competence and performance have been re-considered extensively by other researchers since their inception. These researchers and theorists have contributed progressively to explain these terms.

For instance in an attempt to response to Chomsky's explanations about competence, Hymes (1972) claimed that Chomsky ignored the fact that for effective communication in specific social contexts, an individual needs to know not only the linguistic aspect of the language, but also the appropriateness of the rules of language use in these social situations. In the same way, Campbell and Wales (1970) sustained that a person's production or comprehension of the language in the context in which it takes place is more important than its linguistic domain. So then Hymes (1972) as well as Campbell and Wales (1970) proposed *communicative competence* as the knowledge of the rules of language use, including sociolinguistic and contextual competence, in addition to grammatical competence. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is not enough for second language (L2) or foreign language (FL) learners to acquire the knowledge of linguistic structures, but they must also obtain the necessary schemata regarding the culture of the target language with the purpose of understanding the language to be able to communicate successfully in a specific social situation.

Additionally, Omaggio (1986) also cited Savignon, who defines *communicative competence* as "the ability to function in a truly communicative setting—that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adapt itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors" (p. 4). That is how successful communication takes place when individuals are willing to

take risks and express themselves in the foreign language controlling the use of words and structures. Moreover, Savignon (1972) emphasized on the negotiated nature of communication stating that "*Competence* is what one knows. *Performance* is what one does. Only performance is observable, however, it is only through performance that competence can be developed, maintained, and evaluated" (p. 9).

Indeed, this perspective on competence is an important factor that must be considered when assessing any sample of speech, writing, or performance of receptive or productive skills.

Furthermore, Savignon (1972) provides a useful characterization of communicative competence describing it as negotiation of meaning within a context or a specific situation. It entails both written and spoken language.

Canale (1983) stressed that communicative competence can be broken down to four components. *Linguistic competence* is the underlying knowledge about language, namely, knowledge of syntax, vocabulary, and semantic, morphological, phonetic, and orthographic rules. *Strategic competence* is defined as the strategies a person needs to apply in order to communicate a message orally or in written form. *Sociolinguistic knowledge* applies to how well an individual can perform with the help of one's knowledge in a real-life communication scenario. *Discourse competence* is described as the ability to master and combine the language to be able to produce meaningful unity of spoken or written texts in which cohesion is supported by form and coherence by meaning.

In fact, the use of cohesion devices, such as pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel structures, among others help to join individual utterances to a structured complete text. In the same way, coherence helps organize a text meaningfully through a logical relationship between the groups of sentences (Canale, 1983). This conceptualization of communicative competence is similar to the notion of proficiency because the latter encompasses levels of competence reached according to the functions performed, contexts in which the learner performs and the accuracy in the use of the language (Ommagio, 1986).

Widdowson (1978) distinguishes between cohesion and coherence, two aspects that he considers discourse essential factors of language proficiency. On the one hand, *cohesion* refers to how sentences are connected structurally within an oral or written

discourse. Some examples of cohesive elements are the use of pronouns, grammatical connectors, lexical cohesion, and the repetition of the same term when referring to the same object. On the other hand, *coherence* is understood as how the different ideas in a text are related. Writers, whether beginners or experts, must remember that coherence is an element of control of relevant ideas to the topic. Coherence is achieved by assembling sentences properly into one continuous unit (Widdowson, 1978). Omaggio (1986) underlines that Widdowson's theoretical distinction between the two discourse essential factors of language proficiency, namely, cohesion and coherence, is discussed further by Canale and Swain and is treated by them as comprising all four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Furthermore, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2003) provides a variety of dimensions to describe language proficiency which are a series of reference points and levels to evaluate progress in L2 or FL language learning. The CEFR uses dimensions such as linguistic, sociocultural, pragmatic, motivation, metacognition, etc.

2.1.2.1 From Communicative Competence to Proficiency

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2003) uses competences to characterize language learning. Competences are the sum of knowledge, skills, and characteristics which allow a person to perform actions.

Within this proposition, communicative language competence empowers a person to act using specific linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic means. Linguistic competence, independently of the sociolinguistic value and the pragmatic functions, includes lexical, phonological, and syntactical knowledge and skills as well as other dimensions of language as a system. Therefore, users need to develop several competences in order to communicate proficiently with language speakers, either orally or in written form.

a) *Language competence*

Cook (2001) citing Anderson claims that a competent language user is someone who builds up response strengths cutting down the amount of memory involved. The individual will combine this twofold division into one: a *declarative memory* or knowledge component, which refers to the individual pieces of information such as the knowledge of the world, everyday living, living conditions, interpersonal relations,

values, beliefs, attitudes, and the target culture; and a *procedural memory* or skill component, which is defined as the knowledge an individual has for doing things.

Second language acquisition research considers this distinction to explain that learning starts from controlled processes, which gradually become automatic over time. Thus, controlled processing is the solid base for automatic processing, as the learner moves to more and more difficult levels. In general terms, second or foreign language learners start acquiring the grammatical rules and then they try to use them in ordinary speech. However, providing students who start by communicating hesitantly and gradually with the opportunity to go from controlled to automatic processes can make them become more fluent. This model of information-processing underlies the work of learning strategies by O'Malley and Chamot (2010).

b) *Emotional competence*

Social psychologists have argued that the differences in learning outcomes are due to individual differences among learners. Research on learners of a second language suggests that affective factors such as attitude, motivation, values, beliefs, cognitive styles, and personality factors may all influence success or failure. The aforementioned constructs are rebuilt constantly through ongoing second-language learning experience and second-language interaction (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013).

c) *Language learning abilities*

Language learning abilities are developed and strengthened while learning. It involves practical skills and the know-how the learner will need or be expected to develop in order to communicate effectively in the area of concern (CEFR, 2003).

d) *Language and communication awareness*

Language and communication awareness refers to knowledge and understanding of the principles according to which languages are organized and used (CEFR, 2003).

e) *General phonetic awareness and skills*

General phonetic awareness and skills relate to the auditory discrimination and articulator skills the learner will need to produce the language (CEFR, 2003).

f) *Study skills*

Study skills refer to the ability to take advantage of various learning opportunities created by the educator. These include the following:

- To pay attention to the information presented.

- To understand the intention of the task.
- To participate actively in pair and group activities.
- To make active use of the language learned.
- To organize and use the available materials for self-directed learning.
- To be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses as a learner.
- To identify one's own needs and goals.
- To be able to create one's own strategies to pursue these goals in accordance with personal style and available resources (CEFR, 2003, p. 107).

g) Heuristic skills (Independent Learners)

These refer to the learners' experiences with the new language, new people, new ways of behaving, etc. and the utilization of other skills and abilities to become independent in their learning and use of language (CEFR, 2003).

Many students are committed with their own learning and develop independence inside and outside the classroom. As a result, they find their own strategies and ways that count for self-directed learning, which leads them to take responsibility for their own learning, and to be able to assess how well they are doing (CEFR, 2003).

It is also important to mention that an individual's overall language competences can be measured by levels. CEFR (2003) defines the levels as the criteria which allow the learner's progress to be measured at each stage of learning on a life-long basis. One of the main purposes of the criteria is to more accurately describe the student's language level already attained. These *Can Do* statements or guidelines have descriptions of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, ranging from the lowest to the most proficient levels. As students go up the scale, they must demonstrate progressively more language skills and abilities. For example, effective communication in many situations and contexts, knowledge related to language, etc. Therefore, when a student has moved from a low level to a higher level, it means that he has got to a point that has attained three broad goals, which are described as follows.

- Use English to communicate in social settings. The learner needs to know linguistic markers of social relations: politeness conventions, register differences, dialect and accent, etc.

– Use Academic English, it is a standardized, scholarly style. Therefore, the learner must know the relevant vocabulary, grammar, orthography, pronunciation, etc.

– Use English to transmit messages properly. The learner must produce coherent sentences. They must learn how to interact according to different formal or informal patterns of social interactions.

In the process of learning a foreign language, beginners usually start using single words, two-word phrases, or simple sentences. Eventually, as their language progresses, students use sentences of increasing length and complexity. When they reach advanced levels of proficiency, students are able to produce sentences in a meaningful sequence (CEFR, 2003).

To conclude this first part, the CEFR self- assessment grid for Writing for B1 students is presented in the figure below.

Figure 2. 2 CEFR Self-assessment grid for Level B1

B1	
WRITING	I can write very brief reports, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions. I can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in detail. I can describe basic details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident. I can describe hopes, dreams, and ambitions. I can take messages describing enquires, problems, etc. I can describe a plot of a book or film and describe my reactions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans, and actions.

A description of what the learner can do with the language at this level in the CEFR scale. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment, 2003, p.232.

2.1.3 The Writing skills

Learning to write in the mother tongue or in a foreign language is an important aspect of students' academic and professional success. In fact, it is an essential element of the four macro-skills that any language has, because it represents one of the two productive skills. However, the development of writing skills has been considered as a complex and challenging task for both teachers and students; this is even more when this skill has to be acquired in a second or foreign language like English (Ramos, 2012). Thus, this section will review some of the most important approaches that have been used by second and foreign language teachers to develop their students' writing skills.

2.1.3.1 Approaches to Teaching Writing to L2 Students

Since the emergence of ESL writing as an individual area of education, different orientations have guided ESL teachers' practices with the main objective of finding out what students require and what teachers should do to develop their students' writing skills. Each of these pedagogies has supported writing instruction over time, but with a different focus. Hyland (2003), in spite of diverse researchers' perspectives, stresses that teachers should see these pedagogies as complementary curriculum options to understand the complexity of teaching writing and not as a separated approach to guide their writing instruction. The overview below sums up the characteristics of these approaches with special regard to the perspectives that were found significant for the present study.

2.1.3.1.a The Product-oriented Approach

This approach is based on traditional second language acquisition theories, such as the structural and behavioral models. It sees writing as a product with a focus on grammar and correctness. In this approach, the writing product is created from the writers' linguistic knowledge of the second or foreign language. Indeed, texts are written relying on the students' good control of syntax, vocabulary, and cohesive devices. According to Hyland (2003), teachers who orient their writing practices with this approach, see it as a way of reinforcing students' grammatical patterns and lexical knowledge. Indeed, students reproduce written texts through imitation of pre-made models provided by the teacher, which serve them as examples to compose their texts (Nunan, 1996). Since there is a strong focus on formal text units and grammatical

features, the "finished product" is considered more important than the process; and students are considered as good writers if they meet good writing standards, which are measured by the lexical and syntactic forms they use in their texts (Hyland, 2003).

This approach supports students' writing because it helps them learn to link their ideas cohesively in their texts through a good control of a variety of lexical and grammatical items within the sentences. Indeed, students need to develop certain skills to produce cohesive texts because it constitutes the basis they need to be able to identify their errors when they have to self-evaluate their written texts.

2.1.3.1.b The Process-oriented Approach

Even though it is important for students to develop a good understanding of text structure, grammar and vocabulary, and their functions when writing in English, it is not enough for them to be able to write a good piece of text. The process-oriented approach appeared in the 1970s as a response to some difficulties of the product-oriented approach. Hyland (2003) emphasizes that the process approach sees learners as independent writers, who have to apply different cognitive processes such as planning, defining rhetorical problems, proposing, and evaluating solutions in order to produce written texts. In addition, Hyland (2003) cites Raimes, who underlines that teachers who base their writing teaching on this approach should give special emphasis to the steps that writing texts in this way involve; that is, proposing pre-writing activities, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and giving extensive feedback (Hyland, 2003).

In the same manner, Elbow (as cited in Brown, 2001) stresses that writing is the process of many attempts to compose a message. In regard, he states that,

> first you figure out your meaning, then you put it into language…. this idea of writing is backwards, that´s why it causes so much trouble. Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning-into-language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning
>
> — before you know your meaning at all—and encourage your words gradually to change and evolve (p. 336).

Brown (2001) supports Elbow´s view by stating that writing is a process; and that the final writing work is the result of it; this is especially true of the drafting and revising

phases, which require specialized skills that not every speaker develops naturally. Brown (2001) also states that many people struggle when they write, even in their native language. Therefore, it is essential for EFL students to learn to generate and organize ideas coherently; use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to create a cohesively written text; revise, and edit the text for appropriate grammar, and then produce the final product.

Thus, this approach emphasizes that teaching writing is much more than getting students to simply write a piece of accurate text. It helps students develop a cognitive process and acquire certain strategies, so that they can use the language to convey meaning and communicate their ideas and thoughts to the target audience in organized written texts.

Undoubtedly, this cognitive process has to go hand in hand with a metacognitive process. According to Hyland (2003), teachers who base their practices on this process-oriented approach should encourage students to develop their metacognitive awareness of their writing process, which is the students' ability to reflect and self-evaluate the steps and strategies they follow when they write.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) reflects on the best way to teach English language learners to write as creators of language. This refers to the design of a writing-oriented approach that allows the learner to focus on content and message and put their motives at the center of their learning. For the purposes of the present study, the following criteria have been followed:

1) EFL writing is a process that implies a set of procedures.
2) EFL writing is regulated by social codes and rules.
3) EFL writing must be taught.
4) EFL writing must be "real writing".

2.1.3.1.c The Functional Approach

This approach focuses on the importance of relating the forms taught in the product approach to communicative functions the students need to perform through their texts. In fact, according to Hyland (2003) functions "are the *means* for achieving the *ends* (or purposes) of writing" (p. 6). In this respect, one of the objectives of this model is to teach learners particular organizational patterns to write narrative, descriptive, and expository texts as well as composed structural units with Introduction, Body, and

Conclusion. In addition, teachers who follow this approach in their writing instruction can help students learn to write organized paragraphs with topic and supporting sentences, as well as the right use of transition words to connect their ideas within and in between paragraphs. Indeed, Hyland (2003) stresses that teachers can guide their students to produce sentences with prescribed writing formulas and tasks through [providing them] with sentence-level activities such as reordering sentences to unscramble texts, selecting appropriate sentences to complete gaps in a text, and write paragraphs from provided information (p. 6). Therefore, this approach gives special emphasis to text structure and language use, so students can develop certain writing abilities to communicate the target function of their writing. This approach also gives students the opportunity to develop an outline before writing their texts or reproduce similar texts, which is considered a good way of scaffolding students' writing.

What is important to notice is that structure and language forms are the main components of coherence, and coherent texts reflect the degree of students' competence and understanding of the language when writing paragraphs since they can be judged as more or less appropriate according to the schema expected for a specific genre.

2.1.3.1.d The Genre Approach

Firstly, genre pedagogy emerged as a response to the numerous changes that second language writing instruction went through because of the large -scale social and technological advances in education around the world. Nowadays, it is notable that language programs have been modified because of the increasing number of FL or L2 students entering universities all over the world, which has led to have a lot more socially, culturally, and linguistically diverse people in English classrooms than ever before. Under these circumstances, students bring with themselves different writing backgrounds, learning experiences, and needs such as the necessity to write different discourse texts in diverse settings; for instance, at work, at the university, or at home (Hyland, 2007).

Secondly, the Genre Approach started to be developed as an alternative to the decline of the process approach. In fact, second language researchers and practitioners from the 80s considered that the process approach did not pay attention to the new era writing situations that students faced in different academic settings (Ryu, 2003). For instance, Hyejeong (2012) stated that drafting, planning, and editing did not provide students

with clear guidelines or the opportunity to receive explicit instruction of the rhetorical and linguistic ways to compose the numerous types of texts to meet social writing demands.

In this regard, Hyland (2007) emphasized that people use language in different written forms to communicate a message to achieve social purposes in particular contexts. Thus, students should learn to produce meaningful texts not only by managing well the forms and functions of the language and the arrangement of certain elements in the text, but also with a purpose, a message for a specific audience, and within a particular context. It is to be noted that Atkinson (2003) and Hyland (2007) considered the Genre Approach as the most satisfying model for writing instruction since this approach perceives writing as a social and purposeful activity that is centered on the analysis of the contextual situation in which writing takes place.

Thus, Hyland (2007) highlights that genres are specific to particular cultures, a fact that FL or L2 students may not be aware of. Therefore, it is necessary for FL or L2 teachers to find methodologies which do not only teach students syntactic structures, vocabulary, and composing, but also, the tools that help them understand and appreciate how language is used in specific contexts. This author went on to say that the instruction that follows from the genre approach can support this point of view because students can feel free to use the expressive potential of society's discourse structures instead of following written models. The author stresses that it is important for teachers to support students' learning with appropriate practice to ensure their successful participation in contexts outside the EFL or ESL classroom. Notwithstanding, traditional writing methodologies cannot guarantee this as they pay more attention to the composition of the written message than addressing FL or L2 writing students' needs (Hyland, 2007).

Hyland (2007) also states that "providing writers with a knowledge of appropriate language forms shifts writing instruction from the implicit and exploratory to a conscious manipulation of language and choice" (p. 151). This is confirmed by Kay and Dudley-Evans as well as Paltridge (as cited in Hyejeong, 2012) who emphasize that teachers can empower students through the genre approach, which offers them tools to make sense of the world around them. It allows students to become aware of the particular language, features, and organization of the different written texts through manipulating and using them in order to fulfill the writing communicative aim, which is

specific to each genre text. Furthermore, Hyland (2007) stresses that students are given the opportunity to understand explicitly how the texts they aim to write are organized and written in such way. They can comprehend and combine the language, content, and contexts to write familiar texts effectively because they can select and use certain patterns of a particular genre.

However, some theorists, such as Freedman (1994) and Coe (2002) have argued that genre instruction can lead students to follow the specific patterns of a text strictly without any freedom. On the contrary, Hyland (2007) claims that, instead, it allows them to choose what they want to write in order to create a meaningful text. Paltridge (2007) points out that the genre- approach "provides a frame that enables learners to take part in and interpret particular communicative events [and that] making this genre knowledge explicit can provide learners with the knowledge and skills they need to communicate successfully in particular situations" (p. 938).

Genre pedagogy provides FL writing teachers with a clear foundation to set up learning objectives, as well as to design resources based on students' needs. Moreover, teachers are able to make these writing learning outcomes explicit for students, and provide them with detailed explanations on the ways a message can be told through writing. By doing so, teachers can raise students' awareness on the different texts and thereby facilitate a more accessible and equitable means to become successful writers (Hyejeong, 2012).

The following principles of the genre approach provided by Hyland (2007) underpin this study (p. 153).

1) Writing is a social activity. It always communicates something with a purpose, within a context, and to an intended audience.
2) Learning to write is needs-oriented. The kinds of writing that students need to develop in their target situations are identified and incorporated in the instruction.
3) Learning to write requires explicit outcomes and expectations. Learning is more effective if teachers are explicit about what students will study, why they will be studying it, and what they can expect at the end of the instruction.
4) Learning to write is a social activity. Writing is viewed as a developmental and scaffolded process in which teachers and peers play an important role.

5) Learning to write involves learning to use language. Grammar is not taught as an isolated component. Teachers integrate it in the students' exploration of texts and contexts which provide learners with the opportunity to understand the role of their vocabulary and grammar choices in their texts.

2.1.3.2 Models for L2 Writing Instruction

This section will review some of the most influential models of writing that have guided teachers in their practice over time, and which have been taken into consideration for the development of this research study.

2.1.3.2.a Models of the Writing Process

Delmastro and Di Pierro (2009) in their study called "Model for the Incorporation of Metacognitive Strategies into the Development of Foreign Language Learning Skills" suggest three models of the writing process which a teacher could pursue step by step.

A) McCrimmon's model consists of three phases for the writing process. It is not linear, but follows a recursive direction, in other words, the learner can go back and check their work at any time. The three phases are:

- Pre-writing: The learner organizes their ideas according to the content.
- Writing the first draft.
- Re-writing: It consists of the evaluation of the first draft by the learner in terms of going through grammar, spelling errors, and mistakes; revising coherence, and cohesion of ideas; and then comes the re-writing of the draft.

B) Hopkins divides the writing process into four phases.

- Pre-writing: It refers to the contextualization of the topic and organization of ideas.
- Writing: It consists of composing the first draft.
- Evaluation: It is the identification of any syntactic or spelling errors, sentence structure, and cohesion of ideas.
- Editing: It combines correction of ideas, mistakes and errors in order to write the final version of the text.

It is important to notice that in Hopkins' model, the identification of errors and mistakes precedes their correction in the writing process (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009).

C) White and Arndt have a model based on a constant revision of the writing process by the student. This model results in a more independent learner since

the teacher helps the learner less, which gives the learner more confidence throughout the course. The purpose is to discover strategies to help the student reach and go beyond the next level of comprehension. This is called scaffolding. (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009). The present model also includes metacognitive writing strategies that integrate the learner´s active participation in the process and the awareness of their learning.

These models are derived from the constructivist perspective to language learning. Constructivism assumes that if individuals are able to reconcile their previous knowledge with the new information, they are learning meaningfully. In other words, a person learns through the reconstruction of the reality that surrounds them, taking their previous experiences into account, and interacting with others (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009).

From the constructivist point of view, the process of learning a foreign language involves a process whereby learners construct their new language on the basis of their previous experiences, the elaboration and processing of new ones provided by the exposure to language, the interaction with their partners, and the scaffolding used by the teacher. Therefore, the EFL teacher should supply the students with appropriate learning strategies that will support the writing process, especially those metacognitive strategies that encourage reflection on the processes involved. In this way, the student will realize the pertinence of the activities and strategies serving the phases of the writing process (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009).

D) Cassany (2007) in his book, "Describir el escribir: cómo se aprende a escribir" cites Flower and Hayes's model as another useful perspective for writing instruction. It incorporates planning as an essential component in the process of writing. During the planning phase, the learner uses several metacognitive strategies. For instance, students self-evaluate continuously during the writing process. In addition, the model incorporates elements such as the coherence of ideas, the overall meaning of the text, and sufficient information. The model consists of four phases: Planning, Writing, Examining, and Monitoring.

1. *Planning*. It incorporates three sub-processes:
   - *Generate ideas*: this sub-process contributes to the search of knowledge that the writer has stored in their long-term memory.

- *Organize ideas*: Students structure the information or knowledge based on the needs of the communicative situation. The information is arranged and organized, adapted or modified according to the objectives of the text. Moreover, this sub-process plays a significant role in the creation of new ideas; students are responsible for grouping ideas or information based on certain criteria in order to fill gaps and use new terms. In addition, they must be mindful of developing and elaborating the characteristics of the written text as well as textual coherence. However, at this stage, students often feel they need to demonstrate their knowledge to the examiner; therefore, they tend to include irrelevant ideas and deviate from the topic. When this occurs throughout the whole text, the teacher can disentangle this confusion by using their students' work as samples; supposedly, students learn better when they see how corrections are made in their essays.

- *Formulate objectives*: This sub-process establishes objectives that guide the writing process. Flower and Hayes differentiated between two types of objectives for planning: procedural, which explains how the writer accomplishes the process, and content, which is responsible for transforming ideas into written text. This sub-process is characterized by the freedom that the writer has to control the writing process. Like the other elements of the process, the objectives must be generated, developed, and reviewed.

2. *Write*/Textualize. The process of textualization is how the writer transforms the contents into written language so that it is understood. In other words, this process transforms the writer's ideas into written language in a linear fashion. The aforementioned planning process is used when creating and organizing the wording of the text in different ways; it can contain graphics, or images.

3. *Examine*. Writers re-read many times during the writing process to both improve what has been written and to include new ideas that have come up after reading the text again. Additionally, this process has the purpose of evaluating or revising the text produced. During the evaluation process, the writer checks the text, verifies if it has reached its objectives and ensures that the text is appropriate for the audience. On the other hand, revision is the

process in which the writer improves the written text, peruses the content and corrects any errors, etc. It is important to clarify the similarities that both processes have, namely, both can interrupt prior processes and occur at any time during the writing process.

4. *Monitor.* The main function of the monitor is to control previous processes and sub-processes during the writing process. Moreover, the monitor specifies the time that the writer should take to generate ideas and determines the appropriate time to start the writing process. The monitor can also determine when a process ends, when to intervene to make a revision, formulate new objectives, etc. All these actions require a good writer's metacognitive capacity (Cassany, 2007).

2.1.3.2.b Models of Genre Pedagogy

Hyland (2007) and Hyejeong (2012) report that there are two significant pedagogical perspectives regarding the implementation of Genre Pedagogy for writing instruction in the classroom. These are Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP); the two follow distinct methodologies. The present study took into consideration only the perspectives of the SFL.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is based on the functional linguistic theory of Halliday (1994). Since this theory looks at language and learning from a social perspective, it focusses on writing as part of a particular cultural and historical context. Martin stated that,

> the notion of genre corresponds to the context of culture and is responsible for the schematic or the rhetorical structure of a text. The register of a genre corresponds to the context of situation and is responsible for the language features of a text (as cited in Paltridge, 2007, p. 933).

Consequently, genres that according to this perspective are exemplified in narratives, recounts, arguments, and expositions are analyzed through the identification of the organizational parts and the linguistic features that each one of them have. Teachers provide explicit explanations of the organization and distinctive linguistic features of the texts, and students are able to study the sample texts, recognize and become aware of such patterns. Focusing writing instruction under this method, students can gain systemically a meta-linguistic consciousness of the English language which allows them

to handle the information to achieve different communicative purposes through their texts (Hyland, 2007).

Thus, for the purpose of this study, this perspective provides firstly with a practical tool to be explicit about how the different genre texts, narrative and argumentative, are linguistically and cohesively structured; and secondly with a good understanding of how to raise the students' awareness of the different texts organization, and the resources used to create meaning in context.

2.2 Language Learning Strategies

Rebeca Oxford (1990) in her book, "Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know" uses an analogy between *strategia*, a Greek word, meaning actions to win a war and strategy for learning. The author explains that the word strategy infers an idea of control and goal-directedness that can be essential in self-learning processes.

The most clearly learner-centered approach must take the learner as the initiator of the act of learning. Therefore, Rodgers (2003) suggested that it is necessary to create a new force in language teaching methodology to teach the learner to learn, namely, to enable the learner to carry out the various steps which make up the learning process and to ensure that learning takes place. A new school of practice, *Strategopedia* has developed with the purpose of equipping learners with appropriate learning strategies so that they can take on responsibility for self-direction together with a teaching approach directed at achieving this goal and called learner training (Rodgers 2003).

Oxford (1990) referred to L2 learning strategies as specific behaviors or thought processes that students use to enhance their own L2 learning. These can be helpful for the learner when the strategy and the task are related, when the strategy, at some point, meets the student's learning style, and when the student uses the strategy efficiently in connection with other significant strategies.

According to Oxford (2003), strategies, that fulfill these conditions, allow students to have an easy and active L2 or FL process that could support self-directed learning. Therefore, teachers could help their students become more effective and more efficient if they taught positive strategy awareness.

The following figure presents the classification of learning strategies according to Oxford (1990); however, for the purposes of this study, only cognitive and metacognitive strategies will be reviewed.

Figure 2.2 Oxford's Learning Strategies Classification
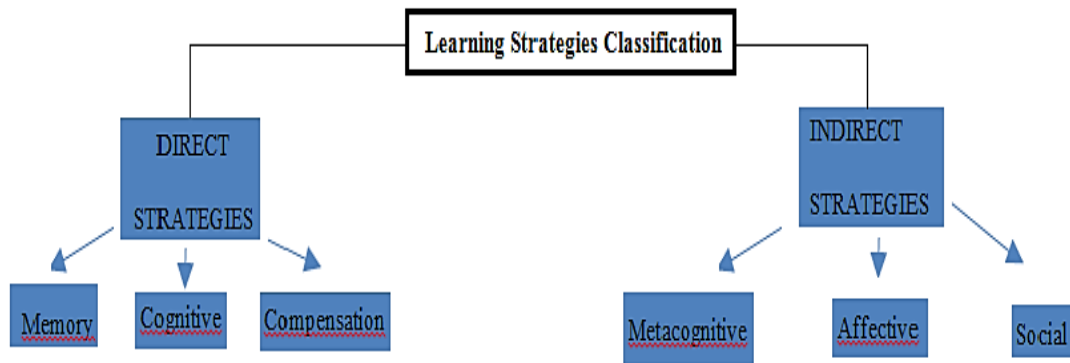
Note: Adapted from "Language Learning Strategies, What Every Teacher Should Know" by R. Oxford, 1990, p.16.

2.2.1 Cognitive Strategies

On one hand, *cognitive strategies* are defined as actions that involve direct manipulation of learning material (Oxford, 1990). They are the basic mental abilities people use to think, study, and learn. For example, students recall information from memory, analyze sounds and images, make associations, compare or contrast information, make inferences, interpret a text in order to learn.

These strategies help an individual achieve a particular goal, such as comprehending a text or solving a math problem.

2.2.2 Metacognitive Strategies

On the other hand, O'Malley and Chamot (2010) stated that *metacognitive strategies* are "higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity" (p. 44).

Oxford (2011) stressed that even if it is not done consciously, learners do use metacognitive strategies in order to coordinate, arrange, plan, control, and evaluate their cognitive learning. She also emphasized that metacognitive strategies can be used at task level as well as with situations that involve ordinary learning problems or circumstances marked by severe or crisis-like learning problems. Thus, metacognitive strategies encompass planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies that help students to be alert to their own learning processes. Therefore, examples of metacognitive activities include planning how to approach a learning task using appropriate skills and strategies, monitoring one's own comprehension of text, self-assessing and self-correcting in response, evaluating progress toward the completion of a task, and

becoming aware of distracting stimuli. Therefore, before starting any assignment, students must know how to improve and use their planning, monitoring, and evaluation skills. Metacognitive strategies are used to ensure that an overarching learning goal is reached (TEAL, 2012).

Oxford's typology of metacognitive strategies employed by Delmastro and Di Pierro (2009) in their study called "Model for the Incorporation of Metacognitive Strategies into the Development of Foreign Language Writing Skills" has shaped the present research study. The model incorporates six specific sub-groups of metacognitive strategies.

1. *Focus on individual task*: the student needs to concentrate and focus on the task to be carried out, without becoming distracted.
2. *Learning planning*: the student must plan and organize the whole process or the learning situation through procedures or schemas.
3. *Learning accommodation*: the strategy used for the analytical selection of the contents and strategies that will be used in the resolution of the task.
4. *Assessment of learning*: the student reviews all the stages through which he/she passed to decide if the approach to the task was the most appropriate.
5. *Self-monitoring*: refers to the constant verification that the student makes throughout the process.
6. *Self-evaluation*: the strategy that allows the student to determine, after completing the task or activity, whether the most suitable strategies have been adopted or reflect on how it was accomplished, namely, if the strategy chosen was the best way to solve the problem or not.

The following figure shows the relationship between the process of writing and the aforementioned metacognitive strategies.

Figure 2. 4 Relationship of the Writing Process and Metacognitive Strategies

Writing Process			Metacognitive Strategies	
Pre-Writing	Plan Generate ideas Organize ideas	Learning how to plan-focus on individual learning	Students get their ideas together: Talk over their ideas with peers or with the teacher. Draw pictures Brainstorming Close their eyes to visualize Use senses Use graphic organizers Create an outline.	Clarifying strategies Focusing on strategies
	Determine the purpose	Identify who the audience will be. Decide what the main idea will be and what supporting details they want to include.		
Drafting	Learning accommodation	Think of the consistency among content, purpose, and audience	Students focus on getting their ideas down on paper as quickly as possible. Students should not be worried about spelling or grammar mistakes	Accommodating strategies
Revising	Assessment of learning, self-monitoring	Students rewrite some sentences and move things around to better organize their arguments or supporting details.	Students meet in peer-response groups to read their drafts aloud and give feedback to each other, or they use checklists and rubrics to evaluate their work. They can also meet with the teacher to ask questions and receive suggestions. Check teachers' feedback.	Self-assessment of learning
Editing	Self-evaluating.	Students learn more when T underlines the errors, and they have to correct them on their own. Checklists and Rubrics are other forms of helping students evaluate their own writing. However, for rubrics and checklists, students must receive instruction, modeling and practice using them.	Students reflect on their own writing product and development. Students reflect on the strategies which best assist them in becoming more effective writers. Students establish a link between the task and its rationale. Reflect on the strategy of how to learn.	Self-evaluating Self-appraisal Self-regulation

Note: Adapted from "Modelo para la Integración de Estrategias Metacognitivas en el Proceso de Escritura en Lengua Extranjera" by A. Delmastro and J. Di Pierro, 2009, Laurus, p. 11-41; and "Foundations for teaching English language learners: research, theory, policy and practuce" by W. E. Wright, 2010, p. 223.

In conclusion, metacognitive strategies can optimize the writing processes and make problem solving and activity compliance more efficient. Every student, if guided and properly oriented, has the opportunity to develop metacognitive strategies, to take control of his own learning, and become a more independent and responsible learner. (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009).

2.3 Metacognition

Flavell (1976), who was the first to introduce the term of metacognition, defined metacognition as the awareness of one's own cognitive processes and products or everything else that is relevant, like those aspects of information related to the learning process. In addition, Flavell, Miller, and Miller (2002) stated that metacognition is a fundamental process that should be present in a number of areas, such as oral skills, reading, writing, language acquisition, attention, memory, and social interactions. It was also Flavell (1976) who explained that metacognition is a complex process in which the learner is actively and consistently monitoring, controlling, and arranging the cognitive processes in order to attain certain cognitive goals.

Moreover, Flavell (as cited in Fourés, 2011) underlined that human beings are capable of studying and analyzing the processes that they use to get to know things, learn, and solve problems. Thus, learners can acquire knowledge about their own cognitive processes and, in addition, control, and regulate the use of these processes.

2.3.1 Elements of Metacognition

Flavell (1979) as well as Schraw and Dennison, (1994) pointed out that metacognition has two elements: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation.

1. Metacognitive knowledge is what individuals know about themselves as cognitive processors, about different approaches that can be used for learning and problem solving, and about the demands of a particular learning task. It is divided into three sets of variables.

    a. *Personal variables*: Recognition of one's strengths and weaknesses when learning or processing information.

    b. *Task variables*: Previous knowledge or ability to figure out the nature of the task and the processing demands required to complete the task.

     c. *Strategy variables*: Strategies that a person applies in order to successfully accomplish a task.

2. Metacognitive regulation refers to the individual's knowledge to manipulate, regulate or control the resources and cognitive strategies in order to ensure the successful completion of a learning task or the solution of a problem. Thus, it is referred to as the adjustments individuals make to their processes in order to help control their learning. It includes some activities like planning, information management strategies, monitoring comprehension, de-bugging strategies, and evaluation of progress and goals (Flavell, 1979).

Since metacognition refers to the idea of an individual´s considering, being aware of, and understanding their own mental (cognitive) processes and ways of learning, it suggests that learners should use metacognitive strategies to promote their overall strategies. There are several ways for students to become aware of their strategies. For example, students might reflect on the use of certain strategies unconsciously accomplish a task or they could observe their friends' strategy use (Pritchard, 2008).

Therefore, according to Mateos (2001), learning processes that promote the development of metacognition and stimulate metacognitive abilities will progressively contribute to the students getting more reflective and aware of the mental processes. Students' reflection will serve as a means to facilitate their progress in the direction of self-regulating their own learning processes.

2.3.2 Self-Regulation and Self-Control

The concept of self-regulation derives from social learning theory. Bandura (as cited in Slavin, 2006) hypothesized that people observe their own behavior, judge it against their own standards, and reinforce or punish themselves. When self-regulation strategies are taught, they can become a habit. For example, students can set goals for the amount of time they need to study every day and record it whether or not they accomplished the goal or not. Encouraging self-regulated learning is a means of helping students to think about their own thinking. Self-regulated learning strategies enhance the accomplishment of the task that students are asked to do.

Slavin (2006) stated that another perspective of self-regulation can also be taken from the constructivist theories of learning, namely, the ideal student is a self-regulated learner. Self-regulated learners are ones who have sufficient knowledge of effective learning strategies and how and when to use them. For example, they know how to

break complex problems into simpler steps or to test out alternative solutions; they know how and when to skim and how and when to read for deep understanding; and they know how to write to persuade and how to write to inform. Further, self-regulated learners are motivated by learning itself, not only by their grades or others' approval, and they are able to stick to a long-term task until it is done. When students have both effective learning strategies and the motivation and persistence to apply these strategies until a job is done to their satisfaction, they are likely to be effective learners and have a lifelong motivation to learn. Programs that teach children self-regulated learning strategies have been found to increase students' achievement. Therefore, self-regulated learners are those who possess effective learning strategies and know how and when to use them (Slavin, 2006).

However, the concept of self-control implies that students themselves have to get to this stage. Not all of them will be able to reach the same level, and this will result in having high and low achievement students in the same class. The fact that students perform poorly does not necessarily mean that they are less skillful or intelligent than the high performing students. Perhaps, they have failed to develop the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that the most efficient students utilize, even unconsciously. Since metacognition does not occur naturally in students, metacognitive activity must be teacher-led. The work of the teacher of a foreign language focuses on scaffolding and the direct training of these strategies so that the students can develop and use them efficiently (Slavin, 2006).

2.3.3 Metacognitive Strategy Models for Writing Instruction

According to Graham and Harris (2005), strategy instruction aims to help learners to understand, acquire, and retain new knowledge and skills in a content area. However, it can be especially useful to teach learners how to become familiar and apply writing strategies such as planning, drafting, and revising; generally used by proficient writers.

Strategy instruction in writing consists of teaching explicitly and systematically the steps necessary for planning, revising, and editing a text in order to help students to attain quality in their written work. It may involve teaching strategies to generate ideas, such as brainstorming, or strategies in order to accomplish specific writing tasks, such as writing a story or a persuasive essay.

Simpson and Nist (2000) wrote that teachers should teach learners to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies explicitly because learners need to know that there are a

variety of strategy choices they can use in different situations, and that it is necessary for them to monitor their use and success. To do this, teachers need to encourage learners to think more in the ways they process information through self-questioning and reflection. For instance, teachers can elicit the application of questions, and they can encourage students to ask questions during the learning process. As suggested by Fogarty (as cited in Teaching English in Adult Literacy [TEAL], 2012), students can acquire excellent metacognitive strategies when they learn to follow the process outlined below (p. 32):

1. Develop a **plan** before approaching a learning task. Students can ask questions such as:
   - *What am I supposed to learn?*
   - *What prior knowledge will help me with this task?*
   - *What should I do first?*
   - *What should I look for in this reading?*
   - *How much time do I have to complete this?*
   - *In what direction do I want my thinking to take me?*

2. **Monitor** their understanding; use "fix-up" strategies. For example, the questions they can ask are
   - *How am I doing? Am I on the right track?*
   - *How should I proceed?*
   - *What information is important to remember?*
   - *Should I move in a different direction?*
   - *Should I adjust the pace because of the difficulty?*
   - *What can I do if I do not understand?*

3. **Evaluate** their thinking after completing the task. Students can ask questions like:
   - H*ow well did I do?*
   - *What did I learn?*
   - *Did I get the results I expected?*
   - *What could I have done differently?*
   - *Can I apply this way of thinking to other problems or situations?*
   - *Is there anything I don't understand—any gaps in my knowledge?*
   - *Do I need to go back through the task to fill in any gaps in understanding?*

- *How might I apply this line of thinking to other problems?*

In addition, through the use of metacognitive strategies, writing instructors can help students to learn pre-writing strategies in order to order their thoughts to write organized paragraphs, with the main idea at the top and the supporting details below it, through the use of brainstorming charts like word webs or graphic organizers (TEAL, 2012).

Thus, for the purposes of this study, two models of metacognitive strategies instruction for writing have been taken into account.

2.3.3.1 Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)

This model, pioneered by Karen Harris and Steve Graham (1996), can be used with students who struggle with writing because it helps them to monitor, evaluate, and revise their writing, and reinforces self-regulation skills and independent learning. SRSD has two main characteristics: explicit instruction of writing strategies and self-regulation procedures (e.g., self-assessment and goal setting), as well as individualized instruction and criterion-based learning. Instruction takes place in six stages:

1. *Develop background knowledge*. The teacher anticipates what kind of background knowledge the students might need to use the strategy successfully.
2. *Describe it*. The strategy needs to be described and discussed. Students and the teacher go over the purpose and the benefits of using the strategy.
3. *Model it.* The teacher shows how to use the strategy by modeling it.
4. *Memorize it*. The students memorize the steps of the strategy and the accompanying mnemonic.
5. *Support it*. The teacher scaffolds and supports students' mastery of the strategy.
6. *Independent use*: Students use the strategy with little or no support.

Students learn a number of self-regulation skills, including goal setting, self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement. These skills help them manage writing strategies, the writing process, and their attitudes. Students also remember strategies through mnemonics to increase their writing performance, for example the mnemonics "PLAN AND WRITE", "POW + WWW What = 2, H = 2", and the "POW-TREE" (TEAL, 2012, p. 39-41).

PLAN AND WRITE: This strategy consists of:

– PLAN: Pay attention to the prompt: define the main idea, add supporting ideas, number your ideas.

– WRITE: Work from your plan to develop your writing task. Remember your goals, include transition words for each paragraph. Try to use different kinds of sentences. Make it exciting and interesting. (TEAL, 2012, p. 41).

POW + WWW What = 2, H = 2. This strategy is useful for learners to help them write narrative texts, and have the opportunity to revise it if it meets the requirements of this specific genre. It is advisable to use graphic organizers containing prompts and spaces for answering all of the guiding questions the acronym represents. It consists of:

– **POW** represents the steps that students must follow when writing. It stands for **P**ick my idea; **O**rganize my notes; **W**rite and say more.

– **WWW** is an acronym that students can use to think about the type of information they need to include in their narrative text. It stands for **W**ho is the main character? **W**hen does the story take place? **W**here does the story take place? **W**hat does the main character do? **W**hat happens then? **H**ow does the story end? and **H**ow does the main character feel?

POW-TREE. This strategy is useful for learners to help them carry out an essay-writing task. It consists of:

– POW stands for **P**ick my idea and pay attention to prompt; **O**rganize; **W**rite and say more. This mnemonic represents and stresses the importance of the planning process.

– **TREE** is an acronym that learners can use as a tool to memorize and visualize the structure of their essay. It stands for: the ***T**opic* sentence is like the trunk of the tree that supports the whole argument; ***R**easons* (at least three) are like the roots of the argument; ***E**xplain* is a reminder to tell more about each reason; and finally, ***E**nding* is like the earth that wraps up the whole argument. This strategy can be developed by using think sheets or graphic organizers in the form of trees that learners can use to brainstorm and plan the essay. By doing this, students can internalize this strategy (TEAL, 2012, p. 41).

2.3.3.2 Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) Model for Strategy Instruction

This model recommended by Oxford (2011) suggests a sequence of three phases that the students can follow when developing a writing task. These phases are described as follows (p. 25):

- *Task-phase 1*. It is called "strategic forethought". In this phase, the students have to pay attention to the demands of the task, set goals, plan how to address these goals, and activate existing knowledge.

- *Task-phase 2*. It is called "strategic performance". In this phase, students implement the plan they have made in the first phase. While they write, they monitor or regulate how well their plan works. Students pay attention to the requirements described in their plan and decide whether to continue or stop the activity, or make changes to it.

- *Task-phase 3*. It is called "strategic reflection and evaluation". In this phase, the students make value judgments about their composition, the effectiveness of the strategy and carry out a self-evaluation process to check how far their goals have been achieved.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter summarizes useful data of the research in the context of second and foreign language writing instruction, language learning strategies, and metacognition in writing. A number of text books, articles, and journals have been reviewed in order to obtain suitable data which has served as the main basis for this thesis dissertation. A literature review matrix was used as a tool and guidance to organize the most relevant elements for the development of the literature review.

3.1 Research history

What makes a language student a successful second or foreign language learner? In the last few years, this question has been the major concern of many researchers in the field of second and foreign language acquisition (Chamot, 2004; Anderson, 2002; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 2003). However, at the end of the 20th century, the discussion was centered on the field of strategy instruction in order to raise L2 proficiency levels (Cook, 2008). With regard to this, on one hand, research on language learning strategies have turned out to be crucial in order to understand how language learners have been able to gain proficiency in a second or foreign language.

On the other hand, there has been a significant growth on many scholars' interest in researching second or foreign language writing skills. As a result, an extensive scope of articles and journals with approaches and methodologies have aimed to provide with useful implications for second or foreign language writing instruction.

Notwithstanding, there has not been much research regarding the effectiveness of metacognitive learning strategies training in foreign language writing skills in particular.

3.2 Research in Writing Instruction

Writing is considered as one of the most important skills students develop while learning a language. It is one of the principal means with which they demonstrate their knowledge and competence. Therefore, developing writing has always been a challenging task for both teachers and students; this is even more so when this skill has to be acquired in a second or foreign language like English (Ramos, 2012).

Teachers consider second language writing challenging because of the extensive variety of processes it involves. Matsuda (2003) indicated that teachers need to understand that not only one theory from a particular discipline can explain these processes. In respect, Hyland (2007) stated that teaching writing include knowledge, experience, and a number of decisions in terms of materials, methodologies, and tasks.

Second language writing research is relatively new since it emerged just a few decades ago with the purpose of proving with a number of theories and approaches to inform teachers' writing instruction (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009; Hyejeong, 2012; Hyland, 2007; Wright, 2010). However, the review of the literature has reported an extensive research in the field. For instance, scholars have drawn their attention to research methodological and pedagogical issues such as contrastive analysis, contrastive rhetoric, textual features and elements, controlled, guided, and free writing, writing assessment, reading and writing connections, writers' characteristics and variables, L2 writing proficiency, comparison of ESL and native English speakers writing, L1 interference, writing approaches, among others.

Respectively, Wright (2010) noted that second language learners face the challenge to write in the L2 language before acquiring speaking proficiency. He mentioned that researchers such as Ferris and Hedgcock (2004) have discussed about the differences that first and second language learning learners face when they write, saying that L2 students have the necessity of receiving more procedures, heuristics, content, practice, and feedback than native speakers. In addition, Ferris and Hedgcock cited in Wright (2010), have pointed out that L2 learners own specific writing characteristics. These are described in the figure below.

Figure 3. 1 Writing characteristics of L2 learners

Second language learners:
- Start with an integral first language (L1) and a developing knowledge of spoken and written English as a second language, however, are simultaneously acquiring language and composing skills.
- May produce sentence level errors influenced by their primary language.
- May have little or no experience with peer response.
- May have little or no experience using outside sources, paraphrasing, and quoting.

Note: Adapted from "Foundations for teaching English language learners: research, theory, policy, and practice by W. E. Wright, 2010, p. 204.

In the same way, Wright (2010) cited other experts on second language writing as Hadaway et al. Hudelson, Peregoy and Boyle, and Samway, who indicated the following findings which best explain the context of the problems that L2 learners might face in the process of writing in English.

1. The writing development process for English language learners is similar to the process for native English speakers. Both must learn word spelling and proper syntax for writing sentences and paragraphs and must be familiar with the writing of specific genres.

2. English oral language skills have little impact on English word-level writing skills.

3. English oral language skills have a strong impact on English text-level writing skills when large sections of the text are involved, such as sentences, paragraphs, and complete narratives.

4. Students' ability to express themselves in written English depends on their level of oral English proficiency. When the vocabulary is limited, the learner feels unconfident with the language. Researchers found a significant relationship between students' oral proficiency and their ability to express themselves in written English. This does not mean that teachers should delay teaching writing

until students are ready, since students can often benefit from writing instruction that focuses on topics they talk about in class.

5. Literacy skills in one language can be transferred into the other language. Students usually develop strategies to identify what does and what does not transfer from one language to the other. There is a strong relationship between the students´ writing ability in their native language and their writing ability in English. Students improve by learning the conventions, styles and other features specific to English writing.

6. Prior knowledge enhances the writing ability.

In addition, some approaches to teach writing have evolved and changed teachers' instruction over the time. For instance, in the 1970's, researchers were more interested in the product approach and its focus of the lexical and grammatical features of a text; then in the 1980's, the interest was deeper on the cognitive process approach of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Moreover, in the 1990's, the attention was given to the genre approach focused on the analysis of the contextual situation in which writing takes place (Delmastro & Di Pierro, 2009; Hyejeong, 2012).

Jun (2008) stated that the advantages and disadvantages of these approaches have been compared by some scholars in the field such as Han, Zhang & Zhou, Mei, Hasan & Akhand, Freitas, Yasuda, Hyejeong, among others.

Mei (2005) carried out a study to find out the effects of the "product approach" and "process approach" on 120 Chinese second year college students learning English. The students were divided in two sub-groups according to their high and low writing ability. Then the groups were assigned randomly one of the two teaching approaches. The results showed that participants with the high writing proficiency benefited more from the process approach than they did from the product approach; while the low writing ability participants benefited more from the product approach than they did from the process approach. Mei suggested that teachers should consider the students' level of proficiency when they have to choose the most suitable instruction approach.

A recent study on the field of English as a foreign language carried out by Villa Boas (2014) analyzed 16 EFL intermediate-level teenage students' performance and reactions to the application and effectiveness of the process-based writing pedagogy in an ELT Institute in Brazil. The study showed that students responded positively to the process-based writing pedagogy in spite of the lack of knowledge they had about the stages of

the process approach, namely planning, drafting, and revising. The study demonstrated that the students benefited more with the use of the process approach rather than with the product. The process-based writing instruction helped students in terms of their drawbacks of L1 writing.

On the other hand, Hasan and Akhand (2011) carried out an interventionist study which examined the effects of the product and process approaches to writing on Bangladeshi students' performance in the United International University. At first, one of the classes was taught with the product approach and the other with the process approach. Then, the researchers instructed both classes using the two approaches collaboratively. The findings suggested that the use of an eclectic approach, that is, the combination of the product and the process approach as a complement to each other helped students to write as well as develop their writing skills.

In the same way, Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) conducted a research study in which they explored process-oriented writing strategies and product-oriented writing strategies of 121 second-year undergraduate Saudi students who were studying English as a foreign language and for specific purposes in the Saudi industrial college, Jubail Industrial College (JIC). They concluded that teachers should not teach writing separately either as a process or a product activity. Teachers should implement various approaches in EFL writing instruction to provide students with a continual exposure to different types of writing strategies. Furthermore, they suggest that researchers on writing should address if students' writing strategies can reflect the knowledge learned during writing lessons.

Yasuda (2011) conducted a study which aimed to examine how 70 Japanese undergraduate novice foreign language students developed their genre awareness, linguistic knowledge, and writing competence in a fifteen week writing course. The study drew on the systemic functional linguistics genre approach and aimed to link genre to task by designing a genre-based syllabi and tasks such as emails. The results indicated that the students boosted their genre awareness and perceptions and were able to improve their knowledge of emails and their specific language choices. In addition, the results showed that students improved significantly their writing tasks in terms of task fulfillment and appropriacy, cohesion and organization, grammatical control, fluency, and language sophistication. Finally, the study suggested that combining genre and task can generate an important didactic connection between socially situated writing

performance and choices of language use, which can be the initial stage to create interfaces between writing and language development in FL contexts.

Moreover, Hyejeong (2012) carried out an action research study with the purpose of examining the effect of implementing two specific genres such as report and essay writing using a three-staged teaching and learning cycle (TLC) with the purpose of developing writing competency of Year 5 and 6 second language primary school students. She compared the students' writing samples, before and after the teaching intervention. The results showed that the teacher's active scaffolding processes at the early stage of the cycle helped students to become aware of the different ways the texts were organized for different communicative purposes. In addition, she found that confidence level increased and the genre approach encouraged a positive attitude towards writing.

To sum up, this section has looked over some important findings in second and foreign language writing instruction. So it can be concluded that since writing in a second or foreign language is not a simple process, educators should take into account the most important contributions in the existing literature in order to provide students with an integrative approach to ensure their writing skill development.

3.3 Research on Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

For many years, scholars and researchers in the field of second and foreign language learning have been concerned about the most suitable theories and methodologies to determine what makes a second language student a successful language learner (Chamot, 2004; Anderson, 2002; Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford, 2003). Researchers aimed to provide teachers with a useful basis for strategy instruction that helped students use learning strategies more effectively (Cook, 2001). Some of the most influential research studies throughout the history in the field are detailed in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3. 2 Most influential Strategy Instruction Research

Researcher / Year	Topic	FINDINGS FOR EFL LEARNING STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO:		
		Gender	Proficiency	Major/ Age/Motivation
Oxford and Ehrman, 1989	Gender differences in language learning	Girls used more language learning strategies.		
Oxford and Nyikos 1989	Gender differences in language learning	Girls used more language learning strategies.		Motivation influenced on the variables affecting strategy choice.
Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons, 1990	Goal orientation and academic achievement			A direct and meaningful relationship between goal orientation and self-regulation with academic achievement.
Green and Oxford, 1995	Language learning strategies in a large- scale study of university students		A group of 23 strategies, 'bedrock strategies', used equally frequently by students across proficiency levels.	
Oxford and Ehrman, 1995	End-of-course proficiency and language learning strategies	.	Cognitive strategies and reading for pleasure had a positive relationship with success in language learning.	
Dreyer & Oxford, 1996	Language proficiency and strategy use		English proficiency scores were significantly correlated with strategy use.	
Park, 1999	Language strategies preference in relation with age/major			Students majoring in humanities used more and a wide range of strategies than those majoring in

				science/engineering.
Lee and Oh, 2001	Strategy use and language proficiency		Strong correlation between strategy use and language proficiency.	
Macaro, 2011	Explicit Instruction on a variety of writing strategies that included the metacognitive strategies of *advance preparation, monitoring,* and *evaluating*		Students change in their approach to writing, becoming less reliant on the teacher, more selective in their use of the dictionary, and more careful about their written work	
Lan and Oxford, 2003	Language strategies use in relation to proficiency		More proficient learners employ a wider range of strategies more efficiently than less proficient learners.	
Paris and Paris 2007	Explicit strategy instruction in reading comprehension		Young students with both high and low decoding skills benefited of direct comprehension instruction.	

Source: C. Jaramillo

Additionally, the literature on the field has shown that language learning strategies have turned out to be crucial in order to understand how language learners can gain proficiency in a second or foreign language. Indeed, it has aimed to explore if there is any relationship between training students to use specific strategies and the improvement of the students' English learning process (Ellis, 2008).

Regarding this issue, some scholars have found that learning strategies are tools which provide language learners the opportunity to enhance their learning in an easier, faster, and more effective way (Oxford, 2011; Chamot, 2004; Dragemark Oscarson, 2009). Oxford (2011) states that language learners can use language strategies for an active and self-directed involvement in their language learning tasks in order to perform them more effectively. For instance, a number of studies have looked at the influence of language learning strategies, such as cognitive and metacognitive strategies in reading and listening skills (Huang and Nisbet, 2012; Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal & Tafaghodtari, 2006; Movahed, 2014).

Accordingly, Graham and Macaro (2008) carried out a research study in which they measured the effects of strategy instruction on listening performance and self-efficacy of 68 English lower-intermediate students learning French in England. They conducted this study using both an experimental group, who received the strategy training, and a control group. The researchers compared the results of the post-tests and the effects of high- and low-scaffolded interventions. The results reported that learners' listening proficiency improved as well as their confidence about listening which increased after the intervention.

In the same way, the results of a study carried out by Mohammadi, Birjandi, and Maftoon (2015) showed that instructing students in language learning strategies improved the reading comprehension ability of 78 university freshman learners who were studying English language teaching, translation, and literature at the moment of the interventionist study. Furthermore, this study found out that students changed their beliefs about language learning after the treatment. For this study, the researchers used an experimental group who were taught a number of learning strategies. In addition, they administered The Language Learners' Beliefs Scale to identify the learners' shifts in beliefs about language and three reading comprehension tests from the Cambridge

Preliminary English Test (PET) to measure the participants' reading comprehension ability.

Furthermore, there have been numerous research studies that have demonstrated that teachers can use strategy instruction effectively to help learners improve the product writing quality by enhancing their writing skills such as planning, revising, and/or editing. For instance, research carried out by Graham and Perin (2007), reported that writing strategy instruction has been a powerful technique that teachers have used for students, especially for adolescents, who show difficulty when writing in their L1.

In the field of second or foreign language, a more recent research study conducted by Sabria (2016) reported that there was a significant difference in students' paragraphs before and after the strategy intervention. This research studied the impact of implementing strategy instruction on English students' writing achievement at an Intensive Language Teaching Center of Mostaganem University in Algeria. The study also aimed to increase the students' awareness of the strategies they used. The researchers analyzed the scores of the students' paragraphs of the pre-test and a post-test based on five checklist assessment rubrics which measured the focus, content, organization, style, and conventions of the compositions.

Research carried out by Ellis (2008) suggests that strategies based on students' language interests and goals work well, and that training students to make use of these strategies affects their language proficiency. However, other studies have shown that there can be considerable problems when trying to establish if there is actually a relationship between these two variables, namely, language learning strategies and language acquisition.

For example, a study carried out by Chand (2014), which researched the impact of language learning strategies and the students' academic writing skills of tertiary students in Fiji, demonstrated that there was a positive, but weak correlation between the use of strategies and the learners' academic writing proficiency. In addition, it was found that the majority of students used language learning strategies with medium frequency. However, the metacognitive and cognitive strategies were used most frequently than the social, compensation, memory, and affective strategies.

The findings related to the statement above underline the necessity to research the effectiveness of language learning strategies training in foreign language acquisition in general, and writing skills in particular.

3.4 Research on Metacognitive Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (2010), together with Rebecca Oxford (2011), are supporters of applying metacognitive learning strategies to language learning. They emphasize that the use of those strategies may ensure that students obtain higher levels of performance in a second or foreign language.

Students' self-awareness studies have revealed that students are not always conscious when and which strategies they use to take control of their learning. These studies have been carried out with the purpose of demonstrating that training students under the principles of metacognitive learning strategies can improve such problems (Oxford, 1990). Additionally, the author stresses that even if it is not done consciously, learners do use metacognitive strategies in order to coordinate, arrange, plan, control, and evaluate their cognitive learning. Oxford (2011) also emphasizes that "metacognitive strategies are usable at task level and with situations involving ordinary learning problems or circumstances marked by severe or crisis-like learning problems" (p. 45).

An investigation held in the area of self-awareness is the study conducted by Miceli and Murray (2005) on language learning strategies (LLS) by training first-year university students of Italian. They used strategy instruction to expose students to LLS to help them deal with specific language learning difficulties while increasing their awareness of strategies to enhance their language study ability. The results of this study showed that some students attributed their learning improvement to their greater use of metacognitive strategies of 'preparation', 'revision', and 'organisation' of study materials. Other students commented that the LLS training provided them with opportunities to reflect on themselves as learners, and expand their strategy repertoire in order to deal with their language learning.

Coskun (2010) carried out a research study to investigate the effect of metacognitive listening strategy training on the listening performance of a group of beginners taking a preparatory course at the Abant İzzet Baysal University, in Bolu, Turkey. The researcher used quantitative instruments such as two comprehension pre-tests and post-tests to collect the data. The training was embedded in the listening activities that were

selected from the teacher's manual and test booklet of the listening course book. In this study, the author found that the strategy instruction increased the students' listening performance. In addition, the author confirmed that the use of metacognitive strategies facilitated L2 students' listening comprehension and proved to be useful for L2 listening improvement.

Even though more updated research into the use of metacognitive strategy training in L2 or FL writing is limited, early studies have set up an important basis with explicit implications for ESL or EFL writing instruction. In fact, they have shown that L2 writers use metacognitive knowledge when they write. This contributes to their cognitive learning to become more successful writers. Moreover, some of these studies have determined a strong relationship between metacognitive knowledge and ESL learners' writing performance (Devine et al. 1993; Kasper, 1997; Delmastro and Di Pierro, 2009).

Magogwe (2013) explored the relationship between L2 learners' metacognitive knowledge and their writing performance. The research study was carried out with 30 students taking an advance English writing course at the University of Botswana. After the data was collected and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively, the findings reported that the students had moderate metacognitive knowledge of their writing process and were likely to focus more on the linguistic aspect of writing rather than on communicating with the audience. Thus, the researcher concluded that they were not effective writers and determined the clear relationship between metacognitive knowledge and successful writing performance.

According to Graham (2006), research on metacognitive strategies has strong implications in the process of writing since the ultimate goal is to teach students to use these strategies independently.

For instance, Lv and Chen (2010) conducted an empirical study to research the effect of metacognitive strategies training on students' writing performance of 86 first- year students who were taking English as a foreign language at Laiwu Vocational College in China. The researchers used a pre-test and two post-tests as well as writing journals and an interview to collect the data from the experimental and control group. A comparison between the pre-test and post-tests after the writing approach training proved that the intervention helped students improve their writing performance.

In the same way, Dörnyei stresses that research in language learning strategies must seek to find out how self-regulation helps students become active participants in creating their knowledge (as cited in Ellis, 2008). In this regard, there are a large number of instructional self-regulation models that can be used for strategy training in foreign language acquisition. They provide teachers and researchers with a guide to train learners to use language strategies actively and constructively in order to manage their own learning (Cohen, 2003).

Finally, the literature stresses the need to conduct research in order to explore if specific language strategies, for example, metacognitive strategies, can encourage and enhance students to become more aware of their learning process and skills development.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND INTERVENTION

4.1 Research context

This study was carried out with the students of the Third Level English Credit Course-D3 at the University Institute of Languages (UIL) at the University of Cuenca, a public university located in Cuenca, the capital city of the Azuay province, Ecuador. The UIL operates in the University campus. Its mission is to provide college students with foreign language skills for their careers and future professional development. The UIL offers three types of English programs: the online program, the intensive program, and the credits program. The credits program offers three levels of English for the students who need English classes to fulfill graduation requirements.

This study was held during the academic semester, which started in September of 2016 and ended in February of 2017. However, the study only ran between October and January of that semester.

4.2 Research design

The research study is based on a convergent parallel mixed methods design. As suggested by Creswell (2014), the method would integrate quantitative and qualitative data in order to better understand the impact of metacognitive strategies on students' writing performance. Quantitative data was collected through a quasi-experimental design. A pre-test and a post-test (See Appendix 2) were administered to the convenience group. Qualitative data of the students´ perceptions was collected through an open-ended survey questionnaire (See Appendix 3).

4.3 Participants

A convenience sample was selected to carry out this study. For the purpose of this investigation, the researcher had to use a naturally formed group (Creswell, 2014). The class was composed of a group of 24 adult students, 7 female and 17 male, registered in the Third Level English Credit Course D-3 at the University Institute of Languages at the University of Cuenca. Their ages ranged from 20 to 25 years old.

4.4 UIL Permission and Students' Consent

The University Institute of Languages authorized the permission of the development of the present study in the third level English credit course in July of 2016 (See Appendix 4). In addition, the participants consented to take part in the study by signing an informed consent form in October, 2016 (See Appendix 5). To avoid misunderstandings, the consent form was written in Spanish, the students' native language. The informed consent form aimed to provide students with the information and procedures concerning the research and intervention. It was stated clearly that the students were free to participate in the study and that the research results would not affect their grades. It was explained to the students that all of the data collected was confidential and only would be used for the purposes of the present study. Finally, the students' identity was confidentially guaranteed by assigning each student a code.

Even though 27 students were registered in the academic semester, only 24 consented to participate in the research and signed the document.

4.5 Procedure

A pre-test and a post-test were administered to the students who were conveniently selected in order to measure their level of writing proficiency before and after the intervention. A quasi-experimental design was used since this type of design makes it possible to study the effect of the independent variable (metacognitive strategies training) on the dependent variable (students' writing improvement). It is also useful for intact or naturally formed groups (Creswell, 2014). In addition, a metacognitive writing strategies checklist was given to the students after the administration of each test in order to determine the most common metacognitive strategies that the students used as they wrote.

After the pre-test, an intervention was carried out. It had the purpose to instruct students on the use of metacognitive strategies to develop their writing skills. The metacognitive strategies were based on two models for metacognitive strategy writing instruction: the S2R Model and Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). The intervention was embedded in 36 hours of regular classes (60 minutes each).

To triangulate the data, an open-ended survey questionnaire was also applied to identify the students' attitudes and perceptions regarding the extent of the influence of the metacognitive strategies based on the models for writing instruction, Strategic Self-

regulation (S2R) and the Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) in their writing performance.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments

4.6.1 Pre-test and Post-test

In order to measure the students' writing proficiency before the intervention, a pre-test was applied to the convenience sample of participants (See Appendix 2). After the intervention, a post-test was given to the same sample of students in order to determine to what extent the intervention improved the students' writing proficiency. The same instrument was used for both tests. The instruments were adapted from the standardized International Cambridge Exam-FCE (First Certificate) taken from the websites "Exam English" (Exam English Ltd, 2014), and the "Cambridge English Language Assessment" (Cambridge Assessment English, 2016). They were piloted with a similar class and revised by three colleagues and the director of this research study for reliability and validity purposes.

It is important to explain that even though the FCE exam is a higher level test (B2), it was necessary to use it as the model for the pre-test and post-test because it is the only one among others which measures the texts (narrative and opinion essays) described in the syllabus for Credits Level 3 courses at the UIL (See Appendix 1).

In addition, the Cambridge Writing Assessment Scale (See Appendix 6), taken from the "Cambridge English Language Assessment" (English & English, 2017) was also used for the assessment of the students' essays. This scale contains a range of scores that measures the students' writing texts in terms of content, communicative achievement, organization, and language. Since the scale is clearly aligned with CEFR levels of proficiency, it allowed the researcher to compare the scores obtained by the students in the pre-test and the post-test with the CEFR levels and determine the students' writing proficiency level before and after the intervention.

Additionally, the Self-Assessment of Writing Strategies Checklist (See Appendix 7) suggested by Delmastro and Di Pierro (2009) was given to the students immediately after they finished the pre-test and the post-test. It helped to establish the most common metacognitive strategies that the students used in the process of writing, that is, before, during, and after writing the texts as well as before and after the intervention.

4.6.2 Intervention Description

The intervention was embedded in the students' regular classes during the semester of September 2016- February 2017 in a period of 2 hours per day, two days per week for 9 weeks. Two metacognitive strategy models for writing instruction, the Self-regulated Strategy Development (Graham and Harris, 2005), and the S2R Model for strategy instruction (Oxford, 2011) were used for the intervention.

A booklet (See Appendix 8) with a variety of writing tasks adapted from various B1 English learning books was designed by the researcher, considering the writing approaches described in the theoretical framework of this study. The tasks had the purpose of both teaching students the use of metacognitive strategies and giving them requirements of narrative and opinion essays. These two genre texts were selected because they were already prescribed by the syllabus. Finally, all of the tasks were revised by the course instructor and had the corresponding approval for their application.

As mentioned above, the intervention followed the phases suggested by the S2R Model and Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). Metacognitive Strategy Worksheets (See Appendices 9, 11, 13) and Self-evaluation Writing Narrative and Opinion Checklists (See Appendices 10, 12, 14) were used for each phase of both combined models so that students could reflect on their metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation strategies as well as the requirements for each genre essay. As seen in the chart the researcher had to combine the two models to sufficiently explain the strategies. Figure 4.1 below shows how the phases of the SRSD model were embedded in the SR2 model.

Figure 4. 1 SRSD Model and SR2 Model Embedded Phases
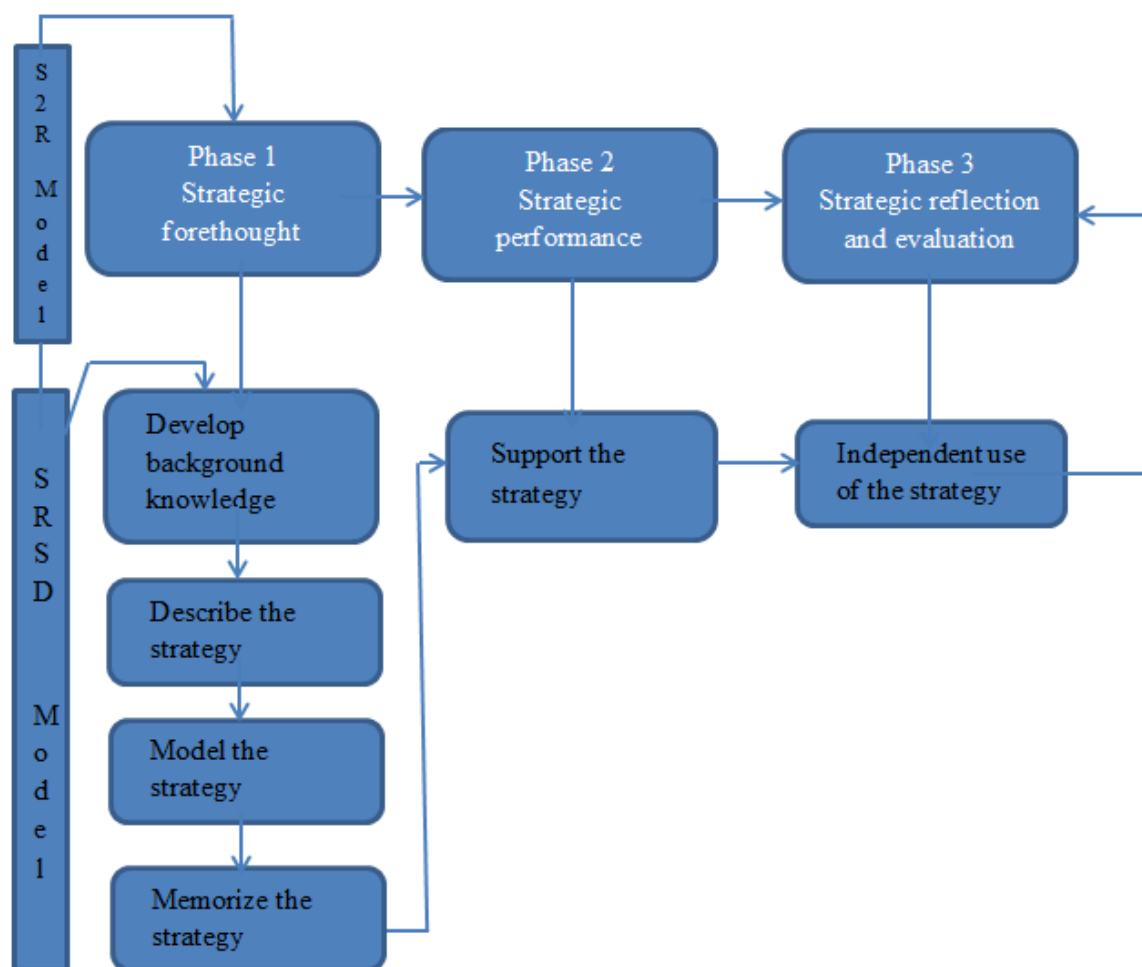
Note: Adapted from "Just Write Guide," by Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy [TEAL], 2012, p.40-42 and "Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies," by R. L. Oxford, 2011, p. 25.

Task-Phase 1 "Strategic forethought": In this phase, the instructor developed students' background knowledge and interest in narrative and opinion essays (See Appendix 8). The students learned to set their goals for the task, and to plan how to address their writing goals. This was done through the use of a metacognitive strategy worksheet (See Appendix 9) which asked the students to generate individual and positive self-statements before starting to plan their compositions. In the same way, the instructor presented, described, and modeled writing and self-regulation strategies such as "PLAN AND WRITE", "POW + WWW What = 2, H = 2", and the "POW-TREE". The students memorized the steps and the accompanying mnemonic. At this point, the students learned to use a graphic organizer to identify the components of sample writing. The students were given sample texts which contained the components of a well-written essay, such as a strong introduction, main body, and conclusion. The

students reflected on the text requirements such as content, organization, and language; and analyzed whether the texts met them or not. They were also asked to pay attention to the content in the beginning and end of the texts. The students had to answer questions, order the sequence of events of the main body of the narrative texts, do exercises to identify facts, opinions, examples, and reasons contained in the main body of the opinion texts, do exercises to learn the use of time words, adverbs, adjectives to describe the weather and people's feelings, identify words describing the mood of the story, identify phrases or sentences that create mystery, discriminate between tenses and any other required language used in narrative and opinion essays. The students received the Self-Evaluation Narrative/Opinion Writing Checklists (See Appendix 10). This checklist was designed to help the students become aware of the parameters, particular language, features and organization of the narrative and opinion essay models.

Task-Phase 2 "Strategic performance": In this phase, the instructor supported the students as they practiced the strategies presented in phase 1. First, the instructor asked the students to use the metacognitive strategy worksheet mentioned in phase 1 to set goals for their writing. Then the instructor provided them with cue words and phrases of a sample essay, narrative and opinion; and a graphic organizer. The students used these to plan and organize their writing. After that, students recalled the requirements of the texts such as length, linguistic and communicative elements, and the ideas to be included. Once the students completed their planning, they implemented the plan (following the layout) and wrote their essays. While writing, they used a checklist to monitor the implementation of their plan (See Appendix 12). Students paid attention to the requirements described in the checklist as well as the outline they made, and then decided whether to continue, stop, or make changes to their writing. In addition, students used a second metacognitive strategy worksheet to reflect on their metacognitive knowledge (See Appendix 11). Finally, the students received the instructor's feedback. The instructor collaborated with the students to ensure that the students followed the stated processes.

Task-Phase 3 "Strategic reflection and evaluation": In this phase, the participants used the strategies taught in the previous phases, with little or no support from the instructor, in addition to learning strategies for this phase. The participants were taught to self-evaluate their essays. For this purpose, the researcher provided them with a third writing checklist that forced the students to evaluate whether their written texts met the

requirements and goals (See Appendix 14). Additionally, students learned to self-evaluate how well they performed the task under the criteria of a third metacognitive strategy worksheet (See Appendix 13). After the self-evaluation phase, the students handed in their written work to the trainer for feedback.

4.6.3 Open-Ended Survey Questionnaire

After the intervention, an open-ended survey questionnaire was administered to the participants. It aimed to recollect data through the students' attitudes, reflections, and perceptions about their experience with learning and using metacognitive strategies based on the models for writing instruction. The survey was also used to establish how the students' metacognitive and self-regulation strategies changed after the intervention, as well as which strategies had greater influence on the students' levels of writing improvement. This survey was adapted from Escorcia (2011), Oxford (2011) and Graham and Perin (2007) and it was elaborated based on the Likert scale. It included 11 open-ended questions. The instrument was piloted with a similar class and revised by three colleagues and the director of this research study with the purpose of validating it.

4.7 Data Analysis

The objective of this research was to establish the impact of metacognitive strategies on the improvement of EFL A2 level students' writing. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect reliable data. The quantitative data obtained from the metacognitive writing strategies checklist, pre-test, and post-test was tested with a statistical descriptive and inferential analysis through parametric and non-parametric tests, the matched t-test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The qualitative data taken from the students' open-ended survey questionnaire was verified through a descriptive analysis as well as with the Chi-squared test, a test of character independence contrast. The data triangulation was carried out through the triangulation within methods. The data interpretation and analysis established a relationship between the independent variable, the metacognitive strategies training, the dependent variable, and the improvement of the students' writing.

In the following chapter, the results from the data analysis are presented, analyzed, and interpreted in order to establish to what extent they answer the study objectives and research questions.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Data Analysis Interpretation and Discussion

The first purpose of this chapter is to interpret the statistical analysis regarding both the objectives and the research questions formulated in the proposal. The data was collected by means of quantitative and qualitative methods and was then analyzed with descriptive and inferential analyses. The statistical system IBM SPSSS Statistic 21 was used. The chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis of the metacognitive writing strategies checklist, the pre-test and the post-test, and a descriptive and qualitative analysis of the open-ended survey questionnaire.

The second purpose is to discuss the findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis regarding the research questions posed in the project design. This section also compares the data analysis from the present study to results from previous studies held by researchers in the field.

The third purpose is to triangulate the quantitative data from the pre-test and the post-test and the qualitative data of the open-ended survey questionnaire in order to establish a relationship between them and strengthen the validity of the results.

Finally, determining the impact of metacognitive strategies on A2 level students' writing was important throughout the study. The impact assessment is generally related to qualitative factors and based on quantitative elements. It measures characteristics or variables that can take numerical values and results are obtained through a statistical analysis (Moscoso & Calle, 2011). In order to deal with the quantitative issue of the impact of the intervention on the students who participated in the research, both in improving their writing and in the use of metacognitive strategies, it was necessary to start from a pre - test situation and a later situation (post - test) .

Figure 5. 1 Situation of the Impact

Baseline or situation without the intervention		Situation with the intervention
Pre – test		Post – test
(Y_0)	IMPACT	(Y_1)
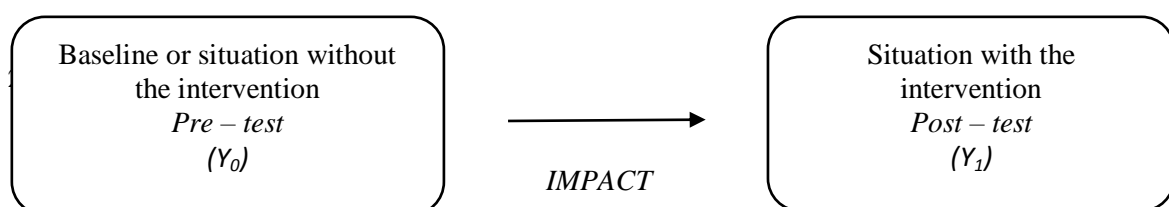
Initially, we can observe that the change in any variable (Y), before and after the intervention, could be accepted as a measure of the impact in the improvement of the writing in the target language of the students (English).

This calculation can be represented in the following equation:

$$K = Y_t - Y_0$$

- K is the impact.
- Y_0 is the variable of the result before the intervention.
- Y_t is the result after the intervention.

5.1.1 Pre-test and Post-test Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion

In order to increase the reliability of the research findings, two types of statistical tests were used, the *matched t-test* which is only applicable for data that are normally distributed in the underlying population (parametric), (See Appendix 15) and the *Wilcoxon signed-rank test* which is designed to be used with nonparametric data, (See Appendix 16). Whether the matched t-test or Wilcoxon test is more appropriate depends on the results of the Shapiro Wilk test, which tests for Normality.

It is important to make clear that for the purpose of this study, the pre-test and post-test were prepared under the same parameters and administered to the same sample, $n < 30$. The data from both samples are paired samples because they are from the same sample group: a test before and a test after the intervention with the same students.

5.1.1.1 Analyzing the most common metacognitive strategies used by the students and the impact of the intervention before, during, and after the writing process

As far as research question one was concerned (What are the most common metacognitive strategies used by the students before, during, and after the training?), first, a descriptive statistical analysis of the frequency and of the main measures of central tendency of the metacognitive writing strategies checklist was made. This aimed to determine the students´ most common used metacognitive strategies in each phase of writing: before, during, and after; each in two different times, pre - test and post – test. On the second place, the analysis was verified by the changes found in the use of

metacognitive strategies in each phase of the writing process on the pre-test and the post-test to determine the impact of the intervention.

5.1.1.1.1.a Before-Writing Phase: Pre-Test And Post-Test Results

Table 5.1 displays the results of the analysis of the most common metacognitive strategies used by the students in the before-writing phase. It sugests that 71% of the students used the strategy "I discussed possible topics with a partner or a friend".

Table 5. 1 Metacognitive strategies used in the before-writing phase

Metacognitive strategies	PRE–TEST		POST-TEST		% of Variation
	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	
I made a list of ideas on the topic	12	50.00%	24	100%	100%
I discussed possible topics with a partner or a friend	17	70.83%	9	38%	-47%
I made an outline or a semantic map	3	12.50%	9	38%	200%
I used a concept map or a mind map to organize my ideas	3	12.50%	15	63%	400%
I made a vocabulary list or a vocabulary web	4	16.67%	5	21%	25%
I thought about the purpose of the text and the audience	3	12.50%	20	83%	567%

In the pre-test, the strategies used the least by the students, at 13% frequency, are "I made an outline or a semantic map", "I used a concept map or a mind map to organize my ideas", and "I thought about the purpose of the text and the audience". On the other hand, in the post-test, the most common strategies are "I made a list of ideas on the topic" used by a 100% of the students and "I thought about the purpose of the text and the audience" used by an 83% of the students. The strategies that were used the least by the students are "I made a vocabulary list or a vocabulary web", "I discussed possible topics with a partner or a friend", and "I made an outline or a semantic map".

Table 5.1 also shows that after the intervention, the percentage of students who used metacognitive strategies in the before-writing phase improved from a rank of 25% (I made a vocabulary list or a vocabulary web) to 400% (I used a concept map or a mind map to organize my ideas). Only one strategy lowered to 47%, even though, it was the most common in the pre-test, the strategy "I discussed possible topics with a partner or a friend" after the intervention. In the post-test, this result turned out to be positive since the students became self-confident and talking to a partner was not necessary. It is

important to notice that the most common strategies are related to planning. For example, "I made a list of ideas on the topic" was used by a 100% of the students and "I thought about the purpose of the text and the audience" used by an 83% of the students. As it is recommended by Fogarty (as cited in TEAL, 2012) before starting any written assignment, students must know how to plan and approach a learning task using appropriate skills and strategies.

5.1.1.1.1.b Impact of the Intervention in the Before-Writing Phase

The difference of the variables in the Shapiro-Wilk determined that the adequate test for this case was the *Wilcoxon test* that states.

H_0: *the intervention did not improve the use of metacognitive strategies*

by the students before writing the essays.

H_1: *the intervention did improve the use of metacognitive strategies*

by the students before writing the essays.

The results were the following:

Table 5. 2 Ranks

		N	Average Rank	Sum of ranks
	Negative Ranks	2[a]	6,00	12,00
BW_Post-test - BW_Pre-test	Positive Ranks	18[b]	11,00	198,00
	Ties	4[c]		
	Total	24		

Note: BW= Before writing post-test; BW= Before writing pre-test

Table 5. 3 Parameters of contrast

	BW_Post-test - BW_Pre-test
Z	-3,550[b]
Asymptotic significance (2-sided)	,000

Note: BW= Before writing post-test; BW= Before writing pre-test

Tables 5.2 and 5.3, show that within an error of 0,000385, the intervention increased the frequency that the students used metacognitive strategies before writing the essays (p=.000). This means that students became more skilled when using metacognitive strategies.

According to the pre-test, all of the students used two metacognitive strategies before writing the essays, an indicator that in the post-test increased to three metacognitive strategies. In the pre-test, all of the students used at least one strategy, while in the post-test, they used at least two. Finally, in the pre-test there were students who used a maximum of four metacognitive strategies. In the post-test there were students who used up to five metacognitive strategies. This demonstrates that explicit instruction on the use of metacognitive strategies could increase the options that students have before starting a writing task. This finding is corroborated by Miceli and Murray (2005) who declared in their study that explicit training provided students with more opportunities to reflect on their use of the metacognitive strategies of 'preparation'.

5.1.1.1.2.a While-Writing Phase: Pre-test and Post-test Results

Table 5. 4 Metacognitive strategies used in the while- writing phase

Metacognitive strategies	PRE – TEST		POST – TEST		% of Variation
	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	
I avoided words or structures I didn't know well	13	54%	12	50%	-8%
I used drawings or pictures in my writing	0	0%	0	0%	0%
I translated words or sentences from my native language	16	67%	12	50%	-25%
I used a dictionary and/or a grammar book	14	58%	22	92%	57%
I asked for help from my teacher and/or friends	19	79%	19	79%	0%
I wrote a first draft without paying attention to mistakes	7	29%	8	33%	14%
I made frequent revisions to correct mistakes	2	8%	17	71%	750%

Table 5.4 shows that in the pre-test, during the development of the tests, 79% of students picked "I asked for help to teachers or friends", and the strategy least frequently chosen was "I used drawings or pictures in my writing". On the other hand, in the post-test, the strategy most selected was "I used a dictionary or a grammar text", by 92% of students, and the least frequent was "I used drawings or pictures".

After the intervention, the percentage of students who applied metacognitive strategies while writing their essays increased from 14% "I wrote a first draft without

paying attention to mistakes" to 750%, "I made frequent revisions to correct mistakes". These results indicated that students significantly developed their awareness of using metacognitive strategies for monitoring their texts while writing. In other words, students checked if their planning strategies were being used. In reference to this process, Cassany (2007) says that when students transform their ideas into written language, they use the before-writing phase metacognitive strategies for textualization.

With the intervention, students increased their use of metacognitive strategies as a means of improving on language skills required for writing. From the total number of students who translated words or sentences in the pre-test, a 25% less selected this strategy in the post-test. Similarly, there was an 8% in the number of students who marked, "I avoided complicated words or structures I did not know well", as their choice. In fact, students were taught to become strategic thinkers and to focus on the ways they processed information. For example, if they faced difficulties they could ask themselves questions such as, "Should I move in a different direction?, Should I adjust the pace because of the difficulty?, What can I do if I do not understand?" Therefore, the results after the intervention showed that the students were monitoring their own comprehension of the texts (TEAL, 2012).

5.1.1.1.2.b Impact of the Intervention in the While-Writing Phase

The difference of the variables in the Shapiro-Wilk determined that the *Wilcoxon test* had to be used. The Wilcoxon test states,

H_0: *the intervention did not improve the use of metacognitive strategies by the students during the writing of the essays.*

H_1: *the intervention did improve the use of metacognitive strategies by the students during the writing of the essays.*

The results can be seen in Tables 5.5 and 5.6.

Table 5. 5 Ranks

		N	Average Rank	Sum of ranks
DW_Post-test - DW_Pre-test	Negative Ranks	2[a]	6,50	13,00
	Positive Ranks	15[b]	9,33	140,00
	Ties	7[c]		
	Total	24		

Note: DW=During writing

Table 5. 6 Parameters of contrast

	DW_Post-test - DW_Pre-test
Z	-3,139[b]
Asymptotic significance (2-sided)	,002

Tables 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6 show that the intervention improved and changed the use of metacognitive strategies by the students during the writing of the essays (p=.002). In the pre - test, 50% of students applied more than three metacognitive strategies and the other 50% used less than two strategies, an indicator that in the post- test increased to four. Giving explicit instruction in different metacognitive writing strategies enabled students to reflect on the knowledge learned during the writing of essays. This is also reported in the research study conducted by Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) in which they concluded that by continual exposure to different types of writing strategies, students could develop metacognitive knowledge, and thus metacognitive strategy use.

5.1.1.1.3.a After-Writing Phase: Pre-test and Post-test Results

Table 5. 7 Metacognitive strategies used in the after-writing phase

Strategies	PRE - TEST		POST TEST		% of Variation
	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	
I reread my piece to see if it made sense	5	21%	24	100%	380%
I added, reorganized, or deleted information	3	13%	20	83%	567%
I edited for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization	15	63%	15	63%	0%
I edited my piece focusing on grammar mistakes	13	54%	17	71%	31%
I edited my piece focusing on meaning and ideas	0	0%	17	71%	
I checked my text to see if it met my purpose	0	0%	22	92%	
I checked my text to see if I included an introduction, the main body, and a conclusion.	3	13%	20	83%	567%

As shown in Table 5.7, in the pre-test, in the after-writing phase, 63% of the students paid attention to editing the spelling, punctuation and capitalization of their writing. In contrast, in the post-test, it became the least frequent strategy because it was not used any more frequently. On the other hand, in the post - test, a 100% of students used the rereading strategy to verify that the text made sense. The other strategies, as seen, were also used more frequently. Fogarty (as cited in TEAL, 2012) recommends that students must learn to monitor and edit their written texts frequently and use "fix up" strategies when meaning is affected. It was evident in the comparison between the pre-and post-tests in the after writing phase that students became aware of using editing strategies as the ones selected in the post-test. However, they still needed to strengthen "editing for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization".

As observed in Table 5.7, after the intervention, in the after-writing phase, the percentage of students who applied metacognitive strategies increased in a range up to 567%, (I added, re-organized, or deleted information). The strategies whose frequency of use increased more were those that were less likely to be used in the pre-test, such as "I checked my text to see if it met my purpose and I checked my text to see if I included an introduction, the main body, and a conclusion", going from 0% to 71% and 92% respectively. These results confirmed the effectiveness of an explicit training on metacognitive strategies use throughout the writing process. Therefore, students became aware of self-evaluating their own comprehension of writing a text. It was also Flavell who explained that metacognition is a complex process in which the learner is actively

and consistently monitoring, controlling, and arranging the cognitive processes in order to attain certain cognitive goals (as cited in Mohaved, 2014).

5.1.1.1.3.b Impact of the Intervention in the After-Writing Phase

The difference of the variables in the Shapiro-Wilk determined that the Wilcoxon test should be used. The Wilcoxon test states,

> H_0: the intervention did not improve the use of metacognitive strategies
>
> by the students after the writing of the essays.
>
> H_1: the intervention did improve the use of metacognitive strategies
>
> by the students after the writing of the essays.

The results are presented on Tables 5.8 and 5.9.

Table 5. 8 Ranks

		N	Average Rank	Sum of ranks
AW_Post-test - AW_Pre-test	Negative Ranks	0[a]	,00	,00
	Positive Ranks	24[b]	12,50	300,00
	Ties	0[c]		
	Total	24		

Note: AW=After writing

Table 5. 9 Parameters of contrast

	AW_Post-test - AW_Pre-test
Z	-4,310[b]
Asymptotic significance	,000

Note: AW=After writing; Z= Z value

With an error of 0,000016, the intervention increased and improved the number of metacognitive strategies used by the students after the writing of the essays. The data

showed the number of metacognitive strategies used in the after-writing phase. In the pre - test, at least 50% of the students used two metacognitive strategies after the elaboration of the essays and the other 50% used less than two; this frequency of use in the post - test changed to six. In the pre - test, there were students who did not use any of the strategies; in contrast, in the post - test every student employed at least three. Finally, in the pre - test, students employed a maximum of three metacognitive strategies, while in the post - test, all students employed all strategies. This is evidence for a substantial difference between the results of the pre - test and post - test in the after-writing phase. The intervention did indeed, based on the data shown, increase the number of metacognitive strategies used in this phase.

The fact that students increased the number of metacognitive strategies in the study was positive because this increase helped them learn to control their writing process. To highlight this, Pitenoee, Modaberi, and Ardestani (2017), in their study, "The Effect of Cognitive and Metacognitive Writing Strategies on Content of the Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing", concluded that metacognitive writing strategies helped students become more autonomous, improve their learning, and thus write meaningfully.

The first section concludes that there was an improvement on the students' metacognitive strategy use when comparing the pre-test and post-test results. The pre-test demonstrated that students did use metacognitive strategies, but unconsciously which ratifies what Oxford (2011) states in her studies. Conversely, the results of the post-test confirmed that when students received explicit metacognitive strategy instruction, they developed and increased their use. This finding aligns with Oxford (2011) since the students were able to improve their metacognitive strategy awareness to take control of their own learning and become more independent.

5.1.1.2 Determining the impact of the intervention on using metacognitive strategies for the improvement in A2 students' writing level

This section presents statistical analysis that answers whether the intervention in A2 students had an impact on improving the writing of narrative and opinion essays, and if so, to what extent.

It should be noted that the results of the global pre-test and post-test scores obtained by the students and presented below, determined the impact of the intervention in the

narrative and opinion essays. The components that were taken into account for scoring the essays were content, communicative achievement, organization, and language according to the Cambridge Writing Assessment Scale. A statistical analysis per component was made to establish the impact of the intervention in detail (See Appendix 17).

The following are the global score results of the pre - test and post - test analysis of the narrative and opinion essays:

5.1.1.2.1 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative Essays Global Score Results

The difference of the variables in the Shapiro-Wilk determined that the proper test for this case was the *matched t-test* that states,

H_0: *there is no significant difference in the means of global writing scores*

of narrative essays of the students, before and after the intervention.

H_A: **there** *is a significant difference in the means of global writing scores of*

narrative essays of the students, before and after the intervention.

Table 5. 10 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative Essays Global Score Results: Mean

		Mean	N	Standard Deviation	T Error Mean
Par 1	PreT_NS_global	2,29	24	1,122	,229
	PosT_NS_global	9,33	24	1,579	,322

Note: PreT=Pre-test; Pos T= Post-test; NS = Narrative Essays; N=sample

Table 5. 11 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative Essays Global Score Results: Related differences

	Related Differences					T	DF	Significance (2-sided)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	T Error of the mean	95% confidence interval for the difference				
				Inferior	Superior			
Par 1 PreT_NS_global - PosT_NS_global	-7,042	1,781	,364	-7,794	-6,290	-19,369	23	,000

Note: PreT=Pre-test; Pos T= Post-test; Gl=degrees of freedom

From the results shown, H_0 is rejected (p=.000) and it is seen that there is a significant difference in the means of the students' scores between the pre - test and the post – test. The average score increased from 2.29 to 9.33 points which means students improved their score in 307.42% in writing narrative essays. Therefore, the intervention in using metacognitive strategies did improve writing in terms of content, communicative achievement, organization, and language in narrative essays.

Table 5. 12 Descriptive Statistics Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative Essays Global Score Results

PreT_NS_global			PosT_NS global		
N	Valids	24	N	Valids	24
	Lost	0		Lost	0
Mean		2.3	Mean		9.3
Median		2	Median		9
Standard Deviation		1.1	Standard Deviation		1.6
Rank		3	Rank		5
Minimum		1	Minimum		7
Maximum		4	Maximum		12

Note: PreT =Pre-test; PosT=Post-test; NS=Narrative essays; N=sample

The descriptive analysis presented in Table 5.12 indicates that in the pre - test, at least 50% of the students obtained a score of two points out of 20 for their narrative essays. With the intervention, at least 50% of them obtained nine points.

Table 5. 13 Pre-test and Post-test Narrative Essay Scores Range Results

PreT_NS_global					PosT_NS_global				
		Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage			Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
	1	7	29.2	29.2		7	3	12.5	12.5
	2	8	33.3	62.5		8	6	25.0	37.5
Valids	3	4	16.7	79.2		9	4	16.7	54.2
	4	5	20.8	100.0	Valids	10	4	16.7	70.8
	Total	**24**	**100.0**			11	5	20.8	91.7
						12	2	8.3	100.0
						Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Note: PreT =Pre-test; PosT=Post-test; NS=Narrative essays

Table 5.13 compares the students' scores range in the pre-test and the post-test. For narrative texts, the scores in the pre-test had a range from 1 to 4 points whereas in the post-test, the scores improved to a range from 7 to 12 points. In the pre – test, the majority of students, 33.3%, obtained two points of the overall writing score of narrative stories, while in the post - test, the majority increased their score to eight. A 100% of students improved their scores from 7 points to get 12 out of 20 for narrative essays.

The results demonstrated that when students used metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and self-evaluating, they reflected on the steps and strategies required for writing narrative essays. This metacognitive awareness helped the students to improve their writing.

5.1.1.2.2 Pre-Test And Post-Test Opinion Essays Global Score Results

The difference between the variables in the Shapiro-Wilk determined that the proper test for this case was the *matched t* test that states.

H_0: *There is no significant difference in the means of global writing scores*

of student opinion essays, before and after the intervention.

H_A: *There is a significant difference in the means of global writing scores*

of student opinion essays, before and after the intervention.

These are the results of the analysis.

Table 5. 14 Pre-test and Post-Test Opinion Essays Global Score Results: Mean

		Mean	N	Standard Deviation	T Error mean
Part 1	PreT_OE_global	2,67	24	1,239	,253
	PosT_OE_global	9,79	24	2,167	,442

Note: PreT =Pre-test; OE= opinion essay; PosT=Post-test; N=sample

Table 5. 15 Pre-test and Post-Test Opinion Essays Global Score Results

		Related Differences					T	Gl	Significance (bilateral)
		Mean	Standard Deviation	T Error mean	95% Reliable interval for the difference				
					Inferior	Superior			
Par 1	PreT_OE_global - PosT_OE_global	-7,125	2,092	,427	-8,008	-6,242	-16,688	23	,000

Note: PreT =Pre-test; PosT=Post-test; OE=opinion essay

Regarding opinion essays, the table indicates that with an error of 0.0000 there is a significant difference in the means of the students' scores between the pre - test and the post – test. Therefore, instruction on the use of metacognitive strategies improved the students' writing scores. This was the result of their improvement obtained in the four essay components evaluated: content, communicative achievement, organization, and language (p=.000). The pre-test average score of the group was 2.7. This increased to 9.79 in the post-test.

Table 5. 16 Descriptive Statistics Pre-test and Post-Test Opinion Essays Global Score Results

PreT_OE_global			PosT_OE_global		
N	Valids	24	N	Valids	24
	Lost	0		Lost	0
Mean		2.7	Mean		9.8
Median		2.5	Median		9
Standard Deviation		1.2	Standard Deviation		2.2
Rank		4	Rank		9
Minimum		1	Minimum		6
Maximum		5	Maximum		15

Note: PreT =Pre-test; PosT=Post-test; OE=opinion essays; N=sample

According to Table 5.16, the data indicates that for writing opinion essays in the pre - test, at least 50% of the students had 2.5 points. The group average score was 2.7. In contrast, in the post-test, the group average score increased to 9.8 and at least 50% of them obtained 9 points out of 20 points. This means that students increased their score in a 266.67% in writing opinion essays.

Table 5. 17 Pre-test and Post-test Opinion Essays Scores Range Results

PreT_OE_global					PosT_OE_global			
		Frequency	Percentaje	Accumuulated Percentage			Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentag
Valids	1	4	16.7	16.7		6	1	4.2	4.2
	2	8	33.3	50.0		7	2	8.3	12.5
	3	7	29.2	79.2		8	4	16.7	29.2
	4	2	8.3	87.5		9	6	25.0	54.2
	5	3	12.5	100.0	Valids	10	2	8.3	62.5
	Total	**24**	**100.0**			11	3	12.5	75.0
						12	4	16.7	91.7
						13	1	4.2	95.8
						15	1	4.2	100.0
						Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Note: PreT =Pre-test; PosT=Post-test; OE=Opinion essays

Table 5.17 shows the scores range in the pre-test and the post-test in the opinion essays. In the pre – test, the range was from one to five while in the post - test, this range increased from six to fifteen. In the pre-test for writing opinion essays, the majority of students, 33.3%, obtained two points in the overall opinion test, while in the post-test, the majority, 25%, increased their score to nine points. There were also students who improved their score to 15 points out of 20 points.

The data of Tables 5.16 and 5.17 show a significant correlation between the intervention and the improvement of students' scores in the opinion texts. This finding indicates that students became aware of the variety of strategies they could use to approach writing of opinion texts proficiently at their level.

5.1.1.2.3 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative/Opinion Essays Total Score Results

The analysis of the total score results of writing is obtained as follows.

$$TWS_i = TWS_{OE_i} + TWS_{NS_i}$$

$TWS_i =$ total students' writing score having a range from zero to 40 points.

$TWS_{OE_i} =$ total students' writing score in the opinion texts. It includes scores for

content, communicative achievement, organization, and language, and having

a range from zero to 20 points.

TWS_{NS_i} =total students' writing score in narrative essays. It includes scores for

content, communicative achievement, organization, and language, and

having a range from zero to 20 points.

It was first determined whether there was a statistically significant difference in the students' scores between the pre - test and the post - test, in order to measure the impact of the metacognitive strategies intervention. Using the Shapiro - Wilk test of the difference of the variables, it was determined that the appropriate test for this case was the *matched t- test*.

H_0: *There is no significant difference in the means of the total scores*

of A2 students before and after the intervention.

H_A: *there is a significant difference in the means of the total scores*

of A2 students before and after the intervention.

Table 5. 18 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative/Opinion Essays Total Score Results: Mean

		Mean	N	Standard Deviation	T Error mean
Par 1	Total_Score_Pre-test	4,96	24	1,944	,397
	Total_Score_Post-test	19,13	24	3,111	,635

Note: N=sample

Table 5. 19 Pre-test and Post-Test Narrative/Opinion Essays Total Score Results

		Related Differences					t	DF	Significance. (bilateral)
		Mean	Standard Deviation.	T Error mean	95% Confidence Interval for the difference				
					Inferior	Superior			
Par 1	Total_Score_Pre-Test - Total_Score_Post-Test	-14,167	2,869	,586	-15,378	-12,955	-24,189	23	,000

Based on the above results, H_0 is rejected with an error of 0,0000 (p=.000).

Table 5. 20 Descriptive Statistics Pre-test and Post-test Narrative/Opinion Essays Total Scores

Total_Score_Pre-test			Total_Score_Post-test		
N	Valids	24	N	Valids	24
	Lost	0		Lost	0
Mean		5	Mean		19
Median		4	Median		19
Standard Deviation		1.9	Standard Deviation		3.1
Rank		6	Rank		10
Minimum		3	Minimum		14
Maximum		9	Maximum		24

Note: N=sample

It is seen in Table 5.20 that there is a significant difference between the participants' mean total scores in the pre-test and the post-test. The average score increased from 4.96 to 19.13. The maximum score was 40 points divided in 20 for the narrative and 20 for the opinion. Table 20 also exhibits the pre-test and the post-test narrative/opinion essays total scores. At least 50% of the students obtained 4 out of 40 points in the pre-test. With the intervention, the average number of students increased their scores to 19 points out of 40. Total scores in the pre - test ranged between three and nine, whereas in the post - test, this range increased from 14 to 24 points.

Table 5. 21 Pre-test and Post-test Narrative/Opinion Essays Total Scores

		Total_Score_Pre-Test					Total_Score_Post-Test		
		Frequency	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*			*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Valids	3	7	29.2	29.2		14	1	4.2	4.2
	4	6	25.0	54.2		15	1	4.2	8.3
	5	3	12.5	66.7		16	3	12.5	20.8
	6	2	8.3	75.0		17	6	25.0	45.8
	7	2	8.3	83.3		18	1	4.2	50.0
	8	3	12.5	95.8	Valids	19	1	4.2	54.2
	9	1	4.2	100.0		20	2	8.3	62.5
	Total	**24**	**100.0**			21	3	12.5	75.0
						22	1	4.2	79.2
						23	2	8.3	87.5
						24	3	12.5	100.0
						Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Table 5.21 illustrates that in the pre-test, a 29% of students obtained three points in the total writing score encompassing the narrative and opinion essays, while in the post-test, the majority increased their score to 17 points. A significant finding shown in the table was that a 100 % of students improved their score between 14 and 24 points in the post- test.

Table 5. 22 Cambridge Converting Table for Writing Assessment

Practice test score	Cambridge English Scale score	CEFR Level
34	180	Level C1
24	160	Level B2
16	140	Level B1
10	122*	-

*minimum score reported for First

Source: The Cambridge English Scale explained. A guide to converting practice test scores to Cambridge English Scale scores

Table 5.23 was generated based on the Cambridge Converting Table for Writing Assessment, Table 5.22, and the frequencies of the post-test students' global scores.

Thus, students' total writing scores results were compared in scales in order to determine if the participants advanced from level A2 to B1.

Table 5. 23 Post-test Student's Total Score Rank Frequencies Scale

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Level A	5	20.8	20.8
Level B1	16	66.7	87.5
Level B2	3	12.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

In addition, measures of central tendency were computed to summarize the data and rank the students' scores with the frequencies of the post-test total scores. Therefore, the data of Table 5.23 demonstrates a significant relationship between the metacognitive strategies intervention and the students' level of writing improvement. The results showed that in general, the 79.2% of students increased their writing levels. The 66.7% of students reached the B1 level while 12.5% reached the B2 level.

There were positive findings regarding the second research question of the study, which was to determine the impact of the intervention of using metacognitive strategies for the improvement in writing in A2 students' language level. As a result of the intervention, the change (pre-test and post-test) in the students' scores was due to their metacognitive awareness of text requirements such as particular language, features, and organization which according to Hyejeong (2012) is an effective way to fulfill the writing communicative aims specific to each genre text. The participants could plan, select, organize their ideas to write and review, monitor their texts, and self-evaluate their written product. This is similar to the study by Graham and Perin (2007) which found that writing strategy instruction was a powerful technique for L1 students to overcome difficulties when writing. Therefore, the study results demonstrated that explicit instruction on metacognitive strategies in writing helped the students to perform more effectively and reduced the difficulties that are often faced throughout the writing process.

The data also shows that another impact of the metacognitive strategies was that the trainer and the students had a common goal. This was reflected in the increase of the students' scores due to developmental and scaffolding processes suggested by Hyland (2007). Indeed, the treatment was grounded in a continuous scaffolding of writing texts through the strong support students received regarding the explicit understanding of

self-assessment and self-regulation strategies. On the other hand, the use of an eclectic approach, that is, the combination of various writing approaches (Hyland, 2003; 2007) was a methodological orientation that served to provide the participants with a metacognitive knowledge of the parameters of the written text. Therefore, the students through the use of metacognitive strategies moved to a more sophisticated level of thinking that helped them improve their writing performance level.

5.1.1.3 Determining the influence of the metacognitive strategies based on the models for writing instruction, Strategic Self-Regulation (S2R) and the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)

The purpose of this section is to present the findings of the students' survey on the impact of the metacognitive instruction on students' writing performance, by considering their perceptions, reflections, and attitudes. The survey was designed based on the Likert Scale and consisted of 11 open-ended questions (See Appendix 3).

The first part of the questionnaire aimed to analyze how the students' strategies, metacognitive knowledge, and self-regulation, were modified after the intervention.

Table 5. 24 Questions 1 and 2: Metacognitive knowledge: Frequency comparison table before and after the intervention

	Total_BR_MK_				Total AR MK		
Scale	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*		*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Never	7	29.2	29.2	Never	7	29.2	29.2
Often	14	58.3	87.5	Often	12	50.0	79.2
Always	3	12.5	100.0	Always	5	20.8	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**		**Total**	**24**	**100.0**	

Note: AR MK= After Metacognitive knowledge

Note: BR MK before Metacognitive knowledge

Table 5.24 compares the results obtained from the students' reflection on their metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation strategies before and after receiving the intervention. Most of the students affirmed that they often managed and applied the metacognitive knowledge strategies before receiving the intervention. Comparing both tables, it becomes clear that this percentage (70.8%) did not change with the

intervention; however, the results show an increase of students who affirmed that after receiving the training of strategies, they always handled and applied the metacognitive knowledge strategies. In other words, from the students who often used the strategies before the intervention (14), there were two that after the intervention began to use them every time they wrote. On the other hand, 29.2% of the participants never used the metacognitive knowledge strategies neither before the intervention nor after it. As it is mentioned by Devine et al. (1993); Kasper (1997); and Delmastro and Di Pierro (2009), some studies in the field of ESL and EFL writing instruction have established a strong relationship between metacognitive knowledge and the writing performance of ESL learners. Nevertheless, Magogwe's research (2013) found out that students with a moderate metacognitive knowledge of their writing process were not effective writers. This study aligns with Devine et al. who supports metacognitive knowledge as the basis for writing proficiency. During the intervention, learners were guided to be able to assume responsibility for clarifying writing goals and monitoring progress through the use of metacognitive knowledge. Moreover, the present study agrees with Kasper about the training that students must have in order to develop, control, and assess their own writing actions. During the training, students used metacognitive instruction resources which guided them to make decisions and to correct mistakes. Similarly, this research study is based on an understanding of students' metacognitive knowledge as a tool to help them complete writing tasks successfully as it is supported by Delmastro and Di Pierro. This study found that metacognitive knowledge helped students to develop the writing task and its requirements and to employ metacognitive strategies to deal with problems they encountered when writing.

Table 5. 25 Questions 1 and 2: Self-regulation: Frequency comparison table before and after the intervention

TOTAL_BR_SRS			
	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Never	9	37.5	37.5
Often	15	62.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

TOTAL_AR_SRS			
	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Never	6	25.0	25.0
Often	9	37.5	62.5
Always	9	37.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Note BR=before the intervention; SRS = Self-regulated strategies; AR=after the intervention

Table 5.25 displays a comparison of frequencies of metacognitive strategy use before and after the intervention. Before the intervention, 62.5% of the students said that they often used self-regulation strategies. After the intervention, there was a significant change in this percentage since 75.5% of the students reported that they always (37.5%) or often (37.5%) managed and applied self-regulation strategies. It is also important to highlight the change in 37.5% of students who never used self-regulation strategies, it lowered to 25% with the treatment.

Table 5. 26 Question 3: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me improve my English writing essays

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Disagree	1	4.2	4.2
Neutral	1	4.2	8.3
Agree	9	37.5	45.8
Strongly Agree	13	54.2	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Table 5.26 demonstrates that almost all of the students (37.5%) agreed that the use of metacognitive strategies improved their writing level in English.

Table 5. 27 Question 3: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me improve my English writing essays (students' perceptions)

Students' perceptions	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
To develop pre-writing activities, brainstorming, outlining	13	54.2	54.2
To follow the steps of the writing process	1	4.2	58.3
To learn the features and organizational patterns of the essays	7	29.2	87.5
To monitor the text while writing	1	4.2	91.7
To use metacognition in tasks is not necessary to write a good essay	1	4.2	95.8
To write coherent texts	1	4.2	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

As it can be seen in Table 5.27, most of the students indicated that learning how to use metacognitive strategies improved their level of writing in English because they could utilize pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, clustering, and outlining.

Students felt that those metacognitive strategies helped them think of how to develop a plan and organize their thoughts in order to write a text. This fact agrees with Graham and Harris (2005) who stated that students should be taught how to become familiar and apply metacognitive strategies before starting a writing task. Similar strategies are generally used by proficient writers.

Table 5. 28 Question 4: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me increase my awareness of the importance of monitoring and self-evaluating my English writing texts

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Disagree	1	4.2	4.2
Neutral	1	4.2	8.3
Agree	7	29.2	37.5
Strongly Agree	15	62.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

The results of the above table show that almost all of the students (62.5%) reported using metacognitive strategies to increase their awareness of monitoring and self-evaluating written work in English.

Table 5. 29 Question 4: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me increase my awareness of the importance of monitoring and self-evaluating my English writing texts (students' perceptions)

Reason	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Do not always have the time to monitor the essay	1	4.2	4.2
Not to be able to identify errors of textual coherence	1	4.2	8.3
To check the connection of the ideas with the topic	10	41.7	50.0
To check the organizational patterns of the essay	1	4.2	54.2
To identify errors of textual coherence and make corrections	11	45.8	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Table 5.29 explains students' reasons for considering that the use of metacognitive strategies improved their awareness of monitoring and self-assessing their essays in English. They said that they were able to identify errors of textual coherence and then make appropriate corrections. Additionally, students mentioned that they could cross-

check the organization of the essay with the ideas within the topic. Some of the comments made while students were checking their essays demonstrated this, "it is important to remember the structure of the essay and check if the ideas are connected, then I re-read my essay in order to correct my mistakes"; "I am writing my ideas sequentially, but I am not using a variety of connectors, I should solve my mistakes." This awareness practiced by the students aligns with Hyland's (2003) premise on self-evaluation. The author declares that students need to develop certain strategies to write cohesively, since it is necessary to be able to identify errors when monitoring and self-evaluating.

Table 5. 30 Question 5: The use of metacognitive strategies provided me with self-confidence to write English texts

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Strongly disagree	1	4.2	4.2
Neutral	2	8.3	12.5
Agree	7	29.2	41.7
Strongly Agree	14	58.3	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

The majority of students (58.3%) agreed that the use of metacognitive strategies gave them confidence to write texts in English.

Table 5. 31 Question 5: The use of metacognitive strategies provided me with self-confidence to write English texts (students' perceptions)

Reason	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Not sure	2	8.3	8.3
To be able to revise the writing process constantly	6	25.0	33.3
To be able to write an essay effectively	8	33.3	66.7
To learn the features and organizational patterns of the essays	1	4.2	70.8
To learn to organize ideas coherently	5	20.8	91.7
To lose freedom to write	1	4.2	95.8
To think about the purpose and audience of the essay	1	4.2	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Table 5.31 shows that students felt that using metacognitive writing strategies gave them confidence to write an essay effectively. They reported that they paid attention to the *checklists* and *corrected mistakes* in order to write coherent paragraphs. They could face the difficulties they encountered in the process. As one student said, 'I could face some difficulties like not being able to write correct sentences in an organized way. I did not understand what a sequence of ideas was'. Another student said, 'I am doing this task well because I am checking my story every moment'.

This is substantiated by Hyejeong (2012) who mentioned that the teacher's active scaffolding process helped students to become aware of the different ways the texts were organized which increased the students' confidence level and encouraged a positive attitude towards writing. Similarly, in this study, teachers' scaffolding helped the students have a better attitude towards writing.

Table 5. 32 Question 6: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me develop the English writing texts in a more coherent and organized way

	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Agree	8	33.3	33.3
Strongly Agree	16	66.7	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

All of the students agreed that using metacognitive strategies helped them to write English essays in a more coherent and organized manner.

Table 5. 33 Question 6: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me develop the English writing texts in a more coherent and organized way (students' perceptions)

Reason	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
To evaluate and revise the text	6	25.0	25.0
To follow steps of the writing process	1	4.2	29.2
To plan the ideas to write the essay	9	37.5	66.7
To transform the plan into written language	8	33.3	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

As shown in Tables 5.32 and 5.33, the students believed that using metacognitive strategies allowed them to write in a more coherent and organized manner. This reason might be because the metacognitive strategies forced them to map out their ideas prior to writing the essays. The students also indicated that the strategies aided them with transforming their plans into written language, and with evaluating and revising their essays. According to Cassany (2007), planning is an essential component of the writing process because learners employ several metacognitive strategies throughout the brainstorming of new ideas, grouping them, fitting in the ideas with the requirements of the essay, and ensuring that the essay is coherent. One student said, 'it is important to organize the information and develop ideas with the plan to write my paragraphs'.

Table 5. 34 Question 7: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me plan my writing texts

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Neutral	2	8.3	8.3
Agree	11	45.8	54.2
Strongly Agree	11	45.8	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

As the table illustrates, a high percentage of students (91.6%) agreed that using metacognitive strategies assisted them with planning their ideas prior to writing the essays.

Table 5. 35 Question 7: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me plan my writing texts (students' perceptions)

Reason	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Not always necessary	2	8.3	8.3
To be aware of the linguistic features and organization of the essays	13	54.2	62.5
To create a meaningful text	9	37.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

According to Table 5.35, students indicated that using metacognitive strategies made them aware of the linguistic features and organization of a successful essay, which was useful for planning ideas prior to writing. The students also mentioned that they could consider the requirements of the essay and then create a plan to meet these requirements. For example, one student wrote 'the objective of this task is to write a story. I need to read the instructions to make a plan to write'. Another student answered, 'the objective of this task is to write an opinion essay. First, I need to apply a strategy to write about the specific topic and then make an outline'. As suggested by Graham and Harris (as cited in TEAL, 2012), metacognitive strategies can help students to learn pre-writing strategies. Students learn to organize their thoughts through mnemonics in order to write an organized paragraph. Micelli and Murray (2005) confirm this as they found that students felt that their increased learning was due to their greater use of metacognitive strategies, particularly of preparation and organization.

Table 5. 36 Question 8: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me control and monitor my writing work

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Neutral	1	4.2	4.2
Agree	10	41.7	45.8
Strongly Agree	13	54.2	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Almost all of the students strongly (95.9%) agreed that using metacognitive strategies allowed them to control and monitor the progress of their essays while writing.

Table 5. 37 Question 8: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me control and monitor my writing work (students' perceptions)

Reason	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Not sure	1	4.2	4.2
To be aware of the particular language, features, and organization of the essays	14	58.3	62.5
To evaluate and make adjustments to the essay	6	25.0	87.5
To reflect on the importance of having a plan before writing	3	12.5	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

The students stated that using metacognitive strategies made them aware of the particular language, features, and organization of the essays while writing. The students also indicated that the metacognitive strategies helped them to adjust their essays as necessary. For example, one student reflected "I think I am doing my task well, however, I need to correct grammar, vocabulary and punctuation". Another student said "I am doing well because I am reading my outline constantly using text structure".

During the intervention, the students were given two assessment checklists for the narrative and opinion essays, which the students could use to monitor their essays. The checklists aided the students in developing metacognitive strategy awareness as reported by Sabria (2016), who concluded that using five assessment rubrics increased the students' awareness of the strategies they used.

Table 5. 38 Question 9: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me self-evaluate the writing texts and do the necessary changes in the process

	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Neutral	1	4.2	4.2
Agree	7	29.2	33.3
Strongly Agree	16	66.7	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

According to table 5.38, it can be inferred that almost all of the students (95.9%) agreed that using metacognitive strategies helped them self-assess their written texts and then make the necessary changes in the process.

Table 5. 39 Question 9: The use of metacognitive strategies helped me self-evaluate the writing texts and do the necessary changes in the process (students' perceptions)

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Not to be able to make adjustments to the essay	1	4.2	4.2
To become aware of the variety of strategies to write	7	29.2	33.3
To reflect if the writing product meets the demands and make adjustments to it	14	58.3	91.7
To reflect on the difficulties to write the essays	1	4.2	95.8
To reflect on the writing process	1	4.2	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Students realized that using metacognitive strategies allowed them to self-assess their essays and make any necessary changes. During this process, they could reflect on whether the essay met the requirements of the task and then make any necessary adjustments. The data indicates that the students became more autonomous writers. Delmastro and Di Pierro (2009) agreed that using metacognitive strategies helped students reflect on and evaluate their essays, thus taking control of their own learning and strategy development.

Table 5. 40 Question 10: Rank the strategies listed below from 1-5 according to the ones you used the most or the least when you developed the writing tasks

N°	Metacognitive Strategies	%
1st	Plan the writing task and make an outline.	37.5
2nd	Pay attention to the demands of the task.	25.0
3rd	Set goals to develop the task.	12.5
4th	Pay attention to the rubrics to control and monitor the writing task.	12.5
5th	Pay attention to the rubrics to self-evaluate the writing task and make changes if necessary.	12.5
		100.0%

According to the students' perceptions, Table 5.40 shows that p*lanning the writing task and making an outline* was the most frequently used strategy. The second most frequently used strategy was *paying attention to the demands of the task*. The third, fourth, and fifth strategies were used equally frequently. Some students expressed that planning and outlining helped them organize their ideas coherently in order to write a meaningful essay. Other students said that they could identify the demands of the assignment such as the objective, audience, text requirements, and the writing process.

Finally, students indicated that they continuously checked whether their product was meeting the language features and organizational requirements of the assignment.

Table 5. 41   Question 11: Which of the two types of essays was the easiest/the most difficult to write for you?

Student_Survey Narrative Essay				Student_Survey Opinion Essay			
	Frequency	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*		*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
Very easy	1	4.2	4.2	Very easy	1	4.2	4.2
Easy	15	62.5	66.7	Easy	15	62.5	66.7
Neutral	2	8.3	75.0	Neutral	2	8.3	75.0
Difficult	5	20.8	95.8	Difficult	6	25.0	100.0
Very difficult	1	4.2	100.0	**Total**	**24**	**100.0**	
Total	**24**	**100.0**					

Table 5.41 shows that more than half of the students considered both narrative and opinion essays easy to write.

Table 5. 42 Question 11: Which of the two types of essays was the easiest/the most difficult to write for you? (students' perceptions - narrative essays)

Reasons	*Frequency*	*Percentage*	*Accumulated Percentage*
A lot of creativity is needed	1	4.2	4.2
Difficult language, features and organizational patterns	5	20.8	25.0
Easy language, features and organizational patterns	2	8.3	33.3
The awareness of the linguistic features and organization of the essays facilitates its monitoring	4	16.7	50.0
The awareness of the self-evaluation strategies facilitates its composition	4	16.7	66.7
The use of planning strategies is the key to succeed	8	33.4	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

According to Table 5.42, students (33.4%) considered the use of planning strategies as a key to successfully developing the narrative essays. Even though students (20.8%) faced difficult language features and organizational patterns, the metacognitive strategies allowed them to overcome these difficulties. Other students (16.7%) believed

that their awareness of the linguistic features and organization of the essays facilitated the monitoring of their essays. Finally, students' awareness of self-evaluation strategies helped them compose their essays.

Table 5. 43 Question 11: Which of the two types of essays was the easiest/the most difficult to write for you? (students' perceptions - opinion essays)

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Difficult language, features, and organizational patterns	6	25.0	25.0
Easy language, features, and organizational patterns	3	12.5	37.5
The awareness of the linguistic features and organization of the essays facilitate its monitoring	6	25.0	62.5
The awareness of the self-evaluation strategies facilities its composition	3	12.5	75.0
The use of planning strategies is the key to succeed	6	25.0	100.0
Total	**24**	**100.0**	

Similarly, the participants indicated that it was necessary to use metacognitive strategies in order to write a successful opinion essay. However, the students struggled with understanding the language, characteristics, and organizational patterns of opinion essays. Nevertheless, they indicated that they overcame this difficulty by becoming more aware of the aforementioned elements, which allowed them to more effectively monitor their writing.

According to Tables 5.40, 5.41, and 5.42, students found that writing narrative and opinion essays was easier after the intervention because they developed a greater understanding of the ways their message could be expressed through writing. Similarly, Yasuda (2011) found that the participants in her study increased their knowledge of various genres and were then able to improve their knowledge of e-mails and their specific language choices. Yasuda's study concluded that combining genre and task illustrated an important didactic connection between situated writing performance and choices of language use. The present study observed that after the intervention, the combination of explicit metacognitive instruction and the use of genre approach for writing created a link between personalized writing and foreign language learning.

5. 1.1.4 Evaluating the metacognitive strategies that helped for the enhancement of A2 level students´ writing.

In order to determine which metacognitive strategies helped learners improve their writing level, it was necessary a statistical analysis of the data of question two of the survey, by applying a chi - square test.

By means of the chi - square test, which is a very powerful alternative to measure relationships among categorical variables, it was determined the dependence or independence between two factors as it is suggested by Gorgas, Cardiel, and Zamorano (2011). These two factors were "the improvement of the A2 student's writing level to a level B1 or B2" and "the metacognitive and self-regulation strategies used". It was important to find out which strategies specifically helped the students improve their writing level.

Monge and Perez (n.d) explain in their non - parametric statistics study the chi - square test as "if two elements X and Y are observed in n elements of a population, it is possible a simple two - dimensional random sample $(X_1, Y_1), (X_2, Y_2) \ldots (X_n, Y_n)$" (p.11). Based on these observations, it was necessary to test whether the population characteristics X and Y were independent or not. For this, the set of possible values of X were divided in k disjoint sets: $A_1, A_2, \ldots, A_k$; while the set of possible Y values were decomposed into r disjoint sets: $B_1, B_2, \ldots, B_r$. When classifying the elements of the sample, a number of them would appear, n_{ij} in each of the $k \times r$ constituted classes, giving rise to a contingency table of the form.

Table 5. 44 Evaluating which metacognitive strategies helped to enhance A2 level students´ writing: Chi -Square Test

	A_1	A_2	...	$A_{k.}$	Total
B_1	n_{11}	n_{12}		n_{1k}	$n_{1.}$
B_2	n_{21}	n_{22}		n_{2k}	$n_{2.}$
...					
B_r	n_{r1}	n_{r2}		n_{rk}	$n_{r.}$
Total	$n_{.1}$	$n_{.2}$		$n_{.k}$	n

The statistics of contrast was:

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{r} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \frac{(n_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \ con \ (k-1)(r-1) degrees \ of \ freedom$$

Whereas: $e_{ij} = n_i * n_j / n$

$$H_\theta : X \ and \ Y \ were \ independent$$
$$H_A : X \ and \ Y \ were \ not \ independent$$

Results:

$$p < 0.10 \ is \ rejected \ H_\theta$$

$$p > 0.10 \ is \ not \ rejected \ H_\theta$$

Taking into account the explained statistical theoretical elements, the obtained results showed that the improvement in EFL writing of the student of level A2 to a level B1 or B2 is dependent of the metacognitive strategies: *I take into account the objectives of the writing task* and *I am motivated to develop the writing task*. Therefore, it was inferred that these two strategies helped to improve the students' writing to the point that the majority of them (66.7) reached a B1 level and some others (12.5) B2, according to the Cambridge Scale. On the other hand, all other metacognitive and self-regulation strategies were independent from the participants' improvement in writing. Both of the aforementioned metacognitive strategies require a high degree of motivation and persistence. In the review of the literature on self-regulated learning, motivation is related to the beliefs and attitudes that affect the use of development of metacognitive skills. Although, the data results indicated that only two metacognitive strategies influenced on the writing level improvement, students' perceptions demonstrated that more than one strategy was used for writing texts coherently. This idea agrees with Micely and Murray´s research (2005) in which the authors concluded that some of the participants improved their language ability because they were given the opportunity to reflect on themselves as learners and expand their strategy repertoire.

The final part of this discussion has the purpose to better explain the impact of metacognitive strategies on the improvement of students' EFL writing level A2. In this attempt, the data from the pre-test and the post-test and the open-ended survey questionnaire was triangulated. Arias (2000) defines triangulation within methods as the combination of two or more data collection methods in a study with similar approximations in order to measure the same variable.

First, the collection of information through a metacognitive writing strategies checklist administered to students on the use of metacognitive strategies in the writing process in the pre - test and post - test determined that the intervention between the pre - test and the post - test had an impact on learners´ use of strategies before, during, and after the writing of the essays. The data results confirmed that after the intervention, the number of strategies used by the students increased a fifty percent (50%) before and during the writing of the essays, while the number of strategies used by students after writing increased a three hundred percent (300%). Thus, this finding supports the statements of current trends toward strategy instruction. Indeed, strategic learning benefits learners who wish to improve their writing skills since they receive assistance from mentors and strategic instruction tools. As confirmed by Lv and Chen (2010), the explicit metacognitive strategy training had effectiveness on students' writing performance. Moreover, learners usually internalize strategies and draw them for support when these have been explicitly taught and reinforced in class (TEAL, 2012).

Second, by means of the pre - test and the post - test, this study obtained numerical data concerning the students' scores in the writing of narrative and opinion essays. The impact of the intervention with the metacognitive and self - regulation strategies illustrated that there were significant differences between the pre - test and the post – test writing scores as students increased their score to 266.67% in writing opinion essays, 307.42% in writing narrative essays, and 285.68% as the weighted average writing of both narrative and opinion essays. Relevant implications for metacognitive and self-regulation strategies could also be made on the basis of the findings of this study. According to Miceli and Murray (2005), an articulatory procedure that incorporates *product*, *process*, *function*, and *genre* writing approaches can affect the learners' development of metacognitive strategies in writing. This agrees with the results of this study since it was possible to obtain continuous thinking and a reflecting process by the participants. Indeed, the use of metacognitive strategy tools such as self-evaluation writing checklists and metacognitive strategy worksheets provided a more valid reflection on the interaction of product, process, function, and genre in order to write narrative and opinion essays. Additionally, Hasan and Akhand (2011) claimed that the combination of product and process approach as a complement to each other was beneficious for improving and enhancing students' writing proficiency. Likewise, Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) supported that teachers should implement an eclectic approach in EFL writing instruction. The conclusions of these two studies led the

researcher to confirm that by using process-product-function and genre approaches, as an eclectic method, along with the metacognitive strategy training, had a positive effect on the development of students' metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation strategies as well as on their writing performance. Making students familiar with different types of written genres, formats, styles, tones, sentence structures, vocabulary, etc. can support students with new ideas, frames, and words for their writing (TEAL, 2012).

Third, the resulting data from the survey administered to the students with the purpose of determining the students' attitudes and perceptions about their experience with learning metacognitive strategies, showed that students improved and increased the frequency in using metacognitive and self-regulation strategies. This survey also determined that the two most used strategies that contributed to their improvement and confidence in the writing of the narrative and opinion essays were "Plan the writing task and make an outline" and "Pay attention to the demands of the task". Students said that their learning experience had been positive, and they felt engaged with it; therefore, they developed and increased their level of confidence in terms that they believed they were able to carry out the essays writing. From the students' perspective, it can be deduced that the role of metacognitive reflections made them experience success and develop self-efficacy as it is declared by Knospe (2017).

Finally, through a test of independence of characters, it was possible to determine that there was dependence between the improvement of students´ writing to a B1 or B2 level and the metacognitive strategies: "I take into account the objectives of the writing task" and "I am motivated to develop the writing task". From this interesting finding, it can be assumed that the intervention increased the number of strategies used and frequency of students´ use of metacognitive strategies, causing a significant increment in the students´ total writing scores of narrative and opinion essays. In other words, the dependence of these two strategies and the students´ level of improvement in writing caused their writing level, according to the Cambridge Scale, to go up. Ellis (2008) stated that previous studies illustrated difficulties in establishing whether there was a relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency. Notwithstanding, the results of this study showed clearly that there was a strong relationship between both metacognitive and self-regulation strategies and students' writing proficiency at their level.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study led to three central conclusions:

The first conclusion is that teaching metacognitive and self-regulation strategies to students increased the number of strategies that the students used and the frequency at which the strategies were used. The researcher found that the use of metacognitive strategies raised learners' awareness in their written performance. The data results of this study found that students changed significantly the number and the frequency of strategies used after the intervention in the three phases: before, while, and after writing essays. Students used fewer strategies before the intervention than after it. The study also found that the most frequently used metacognitive strategies were the planning and organization strategies, which were utilized prior to writing. An important fact was that the students acquired more metacognitive strategies and kept them accordingly with the three phases of writing. This finding suggested that metacognitive strategy use exists within a framework of a continuously developing dynamic sequence construction.

Many factors were involved with the intervention on the use of metacognitive and self-regulation strategies, such as methodological classroom implications, roles of the instructor and students, resource use, time limitations, among others. Explicit instruction on the use of metacognitive writing strategies was student-centered. Learning took place through reflection and development of both metacognitive writing strategies and self-regulation strategies. The instructor supported students' EFL writing through the use of scaffolding resources, which made the learners think of their own essay writing by applying metacognitive strategies. Resources such as models, worksheets, and checklists allowed students to generate positive or negative individual self-statements, which then became stepping-stones for the awareness of metacognitive strategies.

The second conclusion is that explicit instruction on the use of metacognitive strategies, as well as an eclectic approach to EFL writing, improved the students' ability to write narrative and opinion essays. This conclusion refers to the interaction between metacognitive strategy instruction and an articulated approach to EFL writing, seen as one-folded instruction. The product, process, genre, and function approaches in the intervention were merged into a single one. Through metacognitive strategy instruction,

students learned to apply the main aspects of each approach to their essay writing. For example, the study found that after the intervention, the most frequently used metacognitive strategies were the planning and organization ones. Thus, students used these two metacognitive strategies to create and group ideas before writing the essays, which allowed them to produce a more coherent final draft. In other words, the students' metacognitive knowledge and writing performance interacted to the point that metacognitive knowledge had a causative relationship with writing performance.

The three phases of metacognitive strategy instruction were: "*Strategic forethought for background knowledge*", "*Strategic Performance*" and "*Strategic Reflection and Evaluation*". These phases were crucial because they allowed the students to proceed one step at a time, thus becoming aware of the writing process as well as the structural and mechanical requirements of narrative and opinion essays. Each strategic phase prompted the students to systematize their ideas regarding writing an essay. In other words, students' metacognitive strategic thinking led them to not only write the essays, but also significantly improve proficiency levels. A2 students' writing improved to level B1 or B2 according to the Cambridge Scale. The metacognitive strategies, *I take into account the objectives of the writing task* and *I am motivated to develop the writing task*, which belonged to the "Task-Phase 1, *Strategic forethought*", provoked a significant increase in the students' total writing scores of narrative and opinion essays. In summary, the use of metacognitive strategies use depended on the students actively application and continuing development of strategic thinking to best approach a writing assignment.

The students' dependence on the strategies *I take into account the objectives of the writing task* and *I am motivated to develop the writing task* and their corresponding improvement in writing could be the basis for further studies. One limitation of the current study was time, which was a permanent constraint since the intervention lasted only 16 weeks. Moreover, the class in which the intervention took place was an EFL course and not solely a writing class. The class weighted the four language skills equally and there was not enough time for the intervention. As such, the intervention had to be limited to two essay genres: narrative and opinion. Another limitation was the sample size. This experiment should be replicated with experimental as well as control groups to corroborate the results of the present study.

The resources used for the explicit instruction of metacognitive strategy came from an adapted and embedded model of the strategic models for writing instruction, Self-

Regulation (S2R) and the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). The purpose was to provide the students with sufficient resources to help them become familiar with, develop, and utilize metacognitive and self-regulation writing strategies for planning, drafting, and revising essays. Mnemonic devices, prompts for remembering strategies, were also found to be useful in increasing awareness of metacognitive writing strategies and thus improve writing performance.

The sessions of the intervention were conducted with the intact group of students. They conveyed their reasoning to the instructor while responding to reflection questions. Strategic instruction worksheets, checklists, and feedback from the instructor allowed students to continuously monitor the progress of their essays in terms of content, organization, language, and communication.

The essays were metacognitive-strategy oriented. By completing the various writing tasks, students were able to experience directed writing at the beginning of the strategy training. As the metacognitive-strategy instruction progressed, they became more independent. Students were encouraged to utilize metacognitive tasks as aids for self-assessing when writing. The use of them helped learners improve this skill. However, a limitation with this was that according to a few students' perceptions, their self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies did not boost their writing performance. Future research could apply case studies to assess the impact of using metacognitive strategies on individuals, and then correlate the findings with the results of the present study.

The third conclusion is that using metacognitive strategies increased students' confidence levels and motivation to write narrative and opinion essays at their level of English proficiency. According to students' perceptions and reflections regarding their experiences with metacognitive strategies, the most frequently used strategies were *Plan the writing task and make an outline* and *Pay attention to the demands of the task*. These strategies also had a significant impact on the extent to which the students' writing levels improved. This likely encouraged students' self-confidence in regards to writing narrative and opinion essays.

After the completion of the study, some recommendations have arisen as follows:

First, it is crucial to scaffold EFL students when writing. EFL writing should be regarded as an activity that requires commitment from both students and instructors, especially at beginning levels. Explicit instruction of metacognitive writing strategies should be utilized for improving writing. A common theme in this study was the

students' fears and lack of knowledge in the early sessions, and the subsequent expectation of help from the instructor. These misgivings were overcome as the intervention advanced.

Another recommendation is encouraging students to get accustomed to constantly self-monitoring and self-assessing their writing, considering the instructor's feedback, and other strategic resources. This habit is vital for improving students' writing performance, especially before they have developed a sense of independence in regards to their writing.

Finally, instructors must approach EFL writing through an eclectic writing approach blended with metacognitive strategies for planning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating. This allows students to reflect on the requirements that the different types of essays have and develop metacognitive and self-strategic knowledge for writing.

Regarding the current research, applied statistical tests were useful to analyze and evaluate the different objectives and research questions of the design. For a deeper analysis in future research, classical methods of statistical inference could be applied as models of binary logistic regression for qualitative variables. Future studies could continue with the triangulation of the investigation and corroborate the results of the present study.

To conclude, since the development of writing skills in FL or L2 learning has gone through radical changes over time due to different methodological trends in teaching, writing instructors should approach them closely in order to find the most suitable metacognitive strategies to help students become more active, competent, and independent writers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 University Institute of Languages Syllabus Inglés III Creditos

Appendix 2 Pre-test/Post-test

Appendix 3 Open-Ended Survey Questionnaire

Appendix 4 University Institute of Languages Permission

Appendix 5 Students' Informed Consent

Appendix 6 Cambridge Writing Assessment Scale

Appendix 7 Self-Assessment of Writing Strategies Checklist

Appendix 8 Booklet

Appendix 9 Metacognitive Strategies Worksheet One. Phase 1. Strategic Forethought

Appendix 10 Self-Evaluation narrative/opinion writing Checklists. Phase 1. Strategic
Forethought

Appendix 11 Metacognitive Strategies Worksheet Two. Phase 2. Strategic Performance

Appendix 12 Self-Evaluation narrative/opinion writing Checklists. Phase 2. Strategic
Performance

Appendix 13 Metacognitive Strategies Worksheet Three. Phase 3. Strategic Reflection
and Evaluation

Appendix 14 Self-Evaluation narrative/opinion writing Checklists. Phase 3. Strategic
Reflection and Evaluation

Appendix 15 Matched t test

Appendix 16 Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Appendix 17 Data analysis per component for narrative and opinion essays.