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TITULO	Using Online Thesis Generators to Write Persuasive Essays in EFL with Secondary School Students
SUBTITULO	
AUTOR(ES) Apellidos, Nombres (Completos) del autor(es) del trabajo	**Tinoco Restrepo, Katya Bibiana**

PALABRAS CLAVE (Mínimo 3 y máximo 6)	**Planteamientos de tésis**		**Reacciones de estudiantes**
	Composición		**Auto-reflexión**
	Retroalimentación		

RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO
(Mínimo 80 máximo 120 palabras)

Fomentar estrategias de escritura en EFL / ESL ha ocasionado que los programas institucionales reconozcan su importancia. En secundaria, los procesos de escritura con énfasis en productos finales tienen limitaciones de tiempo, poca retroalimentación significativa y falta de claridad y cohesión. Este estudio propone usar generadores de tesis en línea para ayudar a estudiantes de secundaria a escribir declaraciones de tesis claras para ensayos persuasivos más cohesivos y coherentes. También propone una metodología concreta de auto-reflexión durante la etapa de pre-escritura acompañada de retroalimentación. Los resultados revelaron que aunque la precisión lingüística obstaculizó usar los generadores de tesis en línea, estos fueron bien acogidos para producir y organizar ideas. Además, la retroalimentación fue útil para mejorar la competencia lingüística

Using Online Thesis Generators to Write Persuasive Essays in EFL with Secondary School

Students

Katya Bibiana Tinoco Restrepo

Master in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de la Sabana

Chía, 2012

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Using Online Thesis Generators to Write Persuasive Essays in EFL with Secondary School

Students

By: Katya Bibiana Tinoco Restrepo

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in English Language

Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments

Directed by: David Shepherd

Master in ELT – Autonomous Learning Environments

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de la Sabana

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USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Abstract

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the teaching of writing strategies in the EFL/ESL high school classrooms. This is reflected in how institutional programs and textbook series regard writing management as crucial in the L2 learning environment. In this sense, nonetheless, high school classrooms have become spaces for product writing processes in which time constraints have made writing as process and implementation of feedback very difficult tasks to achieve. This has resulted in lack of clarity and cohesion in essays of different types, not to mention the scarce provision of meaningful feedback to aid students accomplish better products. This study focuses on the use of online thesis generators to help 16 students in year 10 in an international school in Bogota (following the National Curriculum of England and Wales) write clearer thesis statements to achieve more cohesive and coherent persuasive essays. The study proposes a concrete methodology to create self-awareness of the pre-writing stage and the use of feedback to improve final products. Findings revealed that although the use of online thesis generators posed some problems to students in terms of accuracy, they were well-accepted because of the advantages to generate and organize ideas. Also, the provision of feedback was very much appreciated because of the possibility to improve linguistic competence despite the fact that it not always ensured students' better performance in writing.

Key Words: thesis statements, writing, feedback, learner reactions, self-awareness

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Resumen

En los últimos años, ha habido un creciente interés en la enseñanza de estrategias de escritura en secundaria en donde el inglés se enseña como lengua extranjera o como segunda lengua (EFL / ESL). Esto se refleja en la visión que los programas académicos de los colegios y los libros de texto tienen con respecto a al manejo del proceso de escritura de ensayos como aspecto importante en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Sin embargo, las aulas de la escuela secundaria se han convertido en espacios en los que el proceso de escritura se basa sólo en los ensayos finales ya terminados debido a que las limitaciones de tiempo han hecho del proceso de preparación y escritura de ensayos y la retroalimentación del mismo algo muy difícil de lograr. Como resultado tenemos que la mayoría de los ensayos finales carece de claridad y cohesión por no hablar de escasez de retroalimentación significativa y útil para ayudar a los estudiantes a escribir mejor. Este estudio se centra en el uso de una herramienta en línea que ayudaría a que 16 estudiantes de año 10 de un colegio internacional en Bogotá (que se rige por el Currículum Nacional de Inglaterra) generen enunciados de tesis más claros para así poder escribir ensayos persuasivos más integrados y coherentes. El estudio propone una metodología concreta para crear conciencia de la etapa de preparación y planeación así como del uso de las tecnologías de la comunicación y la información para mejorar los productos finales. Los resultados revelaron que aunque el uso de generadores de tesis en línea planteó algunos problemas a los estudiantes en términos de precisión gramatical, éstos fueron bien aceptados por las ventajas para generar y organizar ideas. Además, la retroalimentación fue muy bien recibida debido a la posibilidad que

los estudiantes tenía para mejorar la competencia lingüística a pesar de que no siempre dicha retroalimentación garantizó un mejor desempeño en la parte escrita.

Palabras Clave: planteamientos de tésis, composición, retroalimentación, reacciones de estudiantes, conocimiento de uno mismo

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Table of Contents

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Introduction

The aim of most of the work carried out in Foreign Language (FL) classrooms is to improve learners' linguistic and communicative competences. In many language teaching and learning environments students are expected to learn the language and use it for communicative purposes in the four language skills. In addition, there is a considerable emphasis on the use of language as a means to convey ideas through writing and how those ideas should match form in order to ensure there is a clear intended meaning conveyed to an intended reader. In many English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, writing is undoubtedly a required task so as to help students refine their thinking and planning skills. Nevertheless, writing tasks have become stressful practices because learners experience difficulties generating ideas and usually do not have sufficient time to organize their thoughts within a given period of time. Similarly, English language teachers can consider writing tasks as time-consuming due to the fact that there is usually not enough time to provide customized and content-based feedback regularly. Despite these drawbacks, several authors and researchers have confirmed the importance that substantial amounts of time will have to be devoted to the teaching of writing because of the influence this skill has on formal education. A research study done by Arndt (1987) suggested that learners have little awareness of the nature of writing; thus, the demand it poses to its production ought to be taken into consideration and included within instruction. Similarly, Fidalgo et al. (2010) recognize the fact that writing is a very complex activity in which a combination of several cognitive and self-regulation strategies is required as well as the application of various mental processes. Therefore, in their studies, strategy focused instruction has proven to have a

beneficial effect in the knowledge and understanding of writing strategies to improve students'

writing processes. As far as writing approaches are concerned Fidalgo et al. (2010) consider that

the shift from a product-oriented approach to a process approach to writing has brought forth not

only conceptual changes in writing instruction but also a development of methods and techniques

to facilitate and improve the writing processes. When teaching writing, it is important to clarify

if whether what is expected from writing is no more than a finished product, or whether the

process that underlies such production. On the one hand, a product approach (Badger & White,

2000) usually controls what happens in an FL classroom and its main focus is on linguistic

knowledge i.e. appropriate use of lexicon, syntax and cohesion. On the other hand, a process

approach, which according to Olive (2010) is a real-time or on-line method to track the writing

process by coming back to the text as many times as necessary to improve it, emphasizes

activities that involve generation of ideas and collection of data, and much more emphasis is

made on linguistic skills such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing to reach a finished

product (Tribble, 1996 as cited in Badger, 2000).

This study focuses on the use of online thesis generators to help 16 EFL/ESL students in

year 10 in an international school in Bogota (following the National Curriculum of England and

Wales) to write clearer thesis statements, which this teacher-researcher considers of special

importance in attempting to achieve more cohesive and coherent persuasive essays. According to

Muller and Lan (2010, p. 8) a thesis statement is vital to be successful in persuasive writing due

to the fact that it focuses and announces a writer's argument and helps the writer "think through

the issues and decide which points are relevant". The study proposes a concrete methodology to

create self-awareness of the pre-writing stages and the use of feedback throughout the writing

process to improve final products.

Statement of the Problem

Foreign language teachers and learners around the globe greatly focus their attention on

writing in a foreign or second language due to the social value that society places on this activity

and which is a clear sign of well-rounded education, self-reflection abilities, originality and even

creativity. In view of the fact that the teaching of writing in the ELT world is recognized as a

way to facilitate the development of language proficiency, school programs in which English is

not a dominant language have started to introduce L2 writing in a variety of contexts and

situations. In a study by Rinnert and Kobayashi (2009), it was identified that L2 writing is

mainly characterized by explicit instruction on rhetorical features (organization, coherence and

cohesion) of the texts produced by students. The study made evident the fact that after following

a process writing approach, high-quality products were achieved by most students. Additionally,

in a local research done by Edgar Mendoza (2005), it was found that writing instruction in most

of Colombian schools follow a product oriented approach. As opposed to these findings, Viáfara

(2008) reports that there have been local studies, which conclude that writing skills in our

country support learner's expressions and creativity at the same time as they develop knowledge

and communicative skills.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Specifically at Gran Bretaña School (henceforth CGB), in Bogota, all subjects are taught in English and followed the syllabi defined by the National Curriculum of England and Wales. The main characteristics of this curriculum are English as the language of instruction and the introduction to global perspectives and social studies. At the secondary level, students follow the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in years 10 and 11 (see Appendix 1) while in years 12 and 13 they follow the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program.

As an English Language Support (ELS) teacher for secondary at CGB, the teacher-researcher has had the opportunity to work hand in hand with the English literature teachers. During the first year in those classes, the researcher witnessed that secondary students are asked to write persuasive essays on a regular basis for their literature classes as part of the text analysis tasks. These written tasks are usually the product of reading and analyzing fragments extracted from literary texts or they can also be related to the provision of an answer to a question given by the teacher. This, one might be tempted to say, is a common practice seen in high school settings; however, the writing processes undertaken at CGB are much more product oriented basically because there is little time to devote to the whole process of continually guiding the various written tasks. This approach is adopted because schemata for writing is taken for granted at this stage of students' learning process. Moreover, year 10 is the first year in secondary in which students are exposed to the IGCSE-type writing examinations, which students have to sit for in year 11. Such examinations require a highly specialized type of communicative competence in writing persuasive, informative, analytical, imaginative, descriptive and narrative texts.

Nevertheless, after working with the same 16 students in year 9 and having applied a pre-writing test (see Appendix 2) the researcher was able to observe that, although these students made an attempt to write essays, they failed in writing a well-structured paper in which there was evidence of a planning stage followed by an introductory paragraph presenting their thesis statement, in addition to content paragraphs, which provided evidence to support their opinion provided in the thesis statement. Also, papers lacked clearer conclusions to summarize the main points and re-state their thesis. These failures not only affected students' results in writing assignments but also tended to create a sense of insecurity and little motivation to write, as the results of the preliminary survey (see Appendix 3) highlighted. in this survey, generally speaking, most participants claimed that writing assignments were not motivating due the fact that they did not feel skilled at them or because they did not know how to write a thesis statement.

The need, therefore, was to find a tool that could possibly help students create sound thesis statements so as to make sure that essays would be developed around a core idea. With this in mind, the teacher-researcher states that through the use of an online tool called "online thesis generators" such as the ones found in Tom March Thesis Generator site c<u>http://www.mpcfaculty.net/molly_may/thesis_generator.html</u>, students could possibly receive better guidance and help to generate thesis statements and outlines that would allow them to write and concentrate on the opinions and opposition to the essay topics. Online thesis Generators take students through a series of steps to assist them in producing a thesis statement that can be used as model to write persuasive or argumentative essays. In fact, with a good thesis

statement, students are very likely to convince readers about a logical point of view as well as being able to inform the audience about the reasons or evidence that support their claim as a preview of the entire essay. As stated by Pennington (2001, p.26), the most important part of a multi-paragraph essay is a well-worded thesis statement that states the point to be proved or the purpose.

Additionally, on-going, formative and useful feedback which, in turn, will create awareness of the writing process as a whole, might avoid learners having a lack of desire to write in class and being afraid of making mistakes; this is because when feedback is planned and specific, it is much more likely to influence students' performance. Good quality feedback allows teachers to not only to correct students' writing but also encourage them to apply good writing practices and adopt appropriate learner behaviors (Paltridge, et al., 2009).

Research Questions

When teachers of literature at CGB marked students-generated essays, students' effort was usually acknowledged. However, although the content may be praiseworthy, essays did not always receive very high grades for they may be seen as lacking in either grammatical or lexical cohesion or in discourse coherence at times. Subsequently, they would well give general recommendations on how to improve their papers in efforts to achieve a passing grade. However, appropriate guidance in the writing process as follow-up to make improvements was rarely provided. The way the assessment process for writing was done at CGB made the teacher-

researcher believe that explicitly training students' on how to prepare persuasive essays by planning, creating thesis statements, generating outlines, drafting and revising and editing would allow them to better structure essays, upgrade their writing skills and feel more confident with their writing abilities.

The following question guided the inquiry:

Main Question

Do online thesis generators help EFL secondary students when writing persuasive essay thesis statements and do students think they help?

Sub-question

What is the effect of feedback in the writing process?

Research Objectives

To determine how year-10 students' persuasive essays are influenced by the use of online thesis generators to help them write thesis statements.

Rationale

It has been shown that the L1 and L2 writing processes can be very similar despite the linguistic difficulties learners might have (Arndt, 1987, p. 258). Similarly, discourse types pose problems for students to write in L2, which makes the introduction of genre approaches (Badger & White, 2000, p. 156) a potentially crucial component of FL curricula to develop language-related skills, especially for writing, at the same time as content is delivered. The genre approach may be

considered as very similar to the product approach in the sense that both consider writing as

linguistic knowledge, the genre approach, however, takes also into account the social context in

which writing will be produced.

Most students at the secondary level CGB, as well as most of the student community, come from

different cultural settings and speak languages other than English. Therefore, their writing skills

are not fully standardized, and in some cases writing is not very well-developed, which often

provokes lack of motivation. As argued by Hyland (2007, p. 149), "students bring different

identities, understandings, and habits of meaning-making to their learning, and teachers cannot

assume that students' previous learning experiences will provide them with appropriate writing

schemata."

Therefore, the idea of developing writing skills within the curriculum was intended to

engage them directly with content and enhance motivation. Thus, by making this connection,

learners would be led to explore, oppose and make connections between ideas; processes which

in turn could well lead to learning, which, when applied to curriculum and other subjects, would

encourage the development of other content-related skills (Boughey, 1997, p. 126). By

providing learners with the necessary tools, which enable them to express themselves in writing

and achieve specific outcomes, certain of the learners may well feel confident enough to opt for

more than writing very simple and maybe off-topic texts, which, in turn, may lead to improved

writing in terms of a better structured essay.

The idea that "students naturally learn to write by writing and that the more they write,

the better writers they become" (Dyer, 1996, p.313) seemed to be the guiding principle at CGB.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

While the researcher was providing English Language Support (ELS) to students in Key Stage 3 and 4 (see Appendix 1) during their English literature classes, she was never able to observe a process approach to writing in which students had the possibility to brainstorm, plan, draft and revise and edit their writing tasks. This definitely was due to the fact that by the time students started their secondary education, they had already been exposed to the different writing stages during their primary education. Therefore, the process writing approach was taken for granted and students were expected to apply it in an autonomous way for each and every writing task assigned. Therefore, literature teachers would assign writing tasks on a weekly basis so that students would have enough writing practice and of various types; which at the end, would help students be ready for their final or international examinations. Thus, one may be tempted to say that the fact that these writing tasks lacked the concept that writing needs to be geared to achieving specific purposes directed to a target reader, there should be a focus on a product/process approach with emphasis on genre in order to facilitate and narrow the communication process through writing. However, only a product approach to writing was clearly observed for all the writing tasks.

To provide students with the necessary tools to facilitate written expression and the achievement of specific objectives would not be possible through only a process approach to writing. Innovative technology in the L2 writing classroom so as to make the writing process easier and more appealing to students is also a way of being up-to-date with the influence technologies such as computers and word processors as well as the Internet and the World Wide Web. By using new technologies in writing instruction such as Online Writing Labs (OWLs)

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

(Hyland, 2003), practitioners have tried to remedy some of the difficulties students have during academic writing. One of these difficulties, which was identified in the preliminary test (see Appendix 2) is the generation of a clear thesis statement as an initial stage to write any kind of essay. A possible solution to this problem has been attempted by employing online thesis generators, which guide learners through the writing process by means of questioning them about the topic they want to write about, ensuring the creation of a positive thesis statement, and generating an outline which might well help students to achieve improved essay structures at a later stage. It may also be argued that coming to terms with the actual content and organization of texts is of paramount importance to facilitate clear communication and successful compositions. Therefore, if students can make use of tools contained in OWLs such as the thesis Generators/generators, this could be a way of writing better thesis statements and actually imitating models to better learn how a thesis statement is worded.

In reference to writing genres, there is enough information about persuasive writing both on paper and online, though it seems CGB students did not conduct prior research on how to write a persuasive essay despite the fact that at CGB, access to the Internet is unlimited and everyone has the possibility to manipulate their own laptop computers. Therefore, digital resources could be accessed through electronic networks or even downloaded into the learners' own computers and stored for later use. Similarly, all the Internet-based activities could be incorporated into the regular face-to-face classes at CGB so as to have mixed-mode classes (Bates, 2005, p. 21), which could provide teachers with the opportunity to combine traditional teaching with online instruction. According to Bates (2005), mixed-mode classes have proven to

improve quality of learning outcomes; thus, in this particular study, such a method of teaching, in which process approach to writing, e use of thesis generators, together with the provision of continuous teacher feedback, may result in having a favorable effect in students writing processes, skills and products.

Attempts to understand the influence of online thesis generators to overcome failure in form and content of persuasive essays in an EFL/ESL class at an international IB school ought to bring about important theoretical and practical outcomes. Theoretically speaking, this study provided the research community interested in the influence of online thesis generators on persuasive writing with a different understanding of the writing process that learners need to go through when writing persuasive essays. From a practical perspective, this study also attempted to contribute with students' learning and development of writing skills. Given that it had a practical intervention component, this study allowed the teacher-researcher to devise teaching practices that eventually would help students create and consolidate tools to prepare and actually carry out persuasive writing when taking their IGCSE English practice tests as well as when preparing for other kinds of written discourse types for the different academic subjects year-10 students take at CGB.

One final line of justification for carrying out this study was related to the growth as a teacher-researcher. In my seventeen-year experience of teaching English the researcher has seen how her colleagues (and also herself) constantly complain about students' written products. In these casual conversations, students' faulty written products are usually accounted for by referring to their carelessness for writing or even their lack of aptitude to write in L2. As a result,

the teacher-researcher hoped she would be more aware of the needs students have when facing new and more challenging writing tasks at CGB school. She expected that by the implementation of online thesis generators and the provision of continuous feedback, both as part of the writing process approach, students could improve their written products by producing better structured and more coherent and cohesive essays.

To understand the process year-10 students need to go through in order to write a persuasive essay could open interesting lines of research in the Colombian EFL classroom. A better understanding of the effect of online thesis Generators on writing might eventually allow English language teachers to fine-tune their own writing sessions, which might be enhanced by a solid theoretical comprehension of students' writing process and by a growing tolerance and fascination for the processes that the development of their communicative competence undergoes.

This project attempted to study the extent to which the use of online thesis generators could have some influence on persuasive essays written by year-10 students from CGB when preparing for the IGCSE English tests. This proposal is organized in six chapters. This first chapter is the introduction which presents the statement of the problem, the research question and objective, and the rationale to carry out the study. The second chapter discusses theoretical framework, which includes theoretical principles related to the constructs and the state of the art of other similar projects made locally and internationally. The third chapter presents the research design, which includes the type of study that will be carried out as well as the researcher's role, the context, the participants, and the data collection instruments and procedures. Immediately

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

afterwards, the fourth chapter presents the pedagogical intervention and implementation in which

the steps and processes to solve the problem will be described. Data analysis and findings will be

both presented in chapter five, which will have detailed explanations on how the analysis was

conducted: categories, sample data, interpretation of data, comparison with theory and other

research projects. Finally chapter six will draw conclusions based on the analysis and will

describe how the research questions were responded and the extent to which objectives were

achieved. This final chapter will also include limitations the action research teacher had as well

as giving recommendations that maybe other teachers could consider if there were a possible

replication of this study. Moreover, possible issues for further investigation based on the findings

will also be included in this final last chapter.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Theoretical Framework

The actions that language learners perform when they attempt to write a certain type of text can be examined by analyzing the implications of different theoretical constructs that refer to various approaches to writing and the use of Internet as a massive online database that gives users access to various writing tools. This literature review presents an account on the theories and literature found on the process approach to writing and the use of technology as a learning tool to improve writing. It also explores the concept of feedback as a possible determining factor that may affect quality of writing products. The framework will be organized as follows: First, the researcher presents a historical account of the different approaches there have been to writing and she includes the roles that teachers and students have had throughout time. She also explores the benefits that have been allocated to process writing and a proposal to make the approaches to writing complement each other. Second, the researcher briefly reviews the importance of using technology as a learning tool and reviews certain new technologies such as computers, the Internet and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Third, the teacher-researcher discusses the concept of feedback as a possible mechanism to help students improve the quality of their writing products. In the different sections of this literature review, the researcher makes reference to theories and research processes in which these concepts have been studied.

Approaches to Teaching L2 Writing

According to Peregoy and Boyle (2001), when our parents went to school, writing was taught by just giving students topics to write about and this might explain why the teaching of writing to L1 students was, and in many Colombian settings, still is considered to be a parallel process to the teaching of writing in L2. However, principles, perspectives and models of writing definitely need to be clarified and differentiated in both languages so that learners can master both writing processes and become knowledgeable and understanding of writing differences, which in turn are cultural differences to which eventually learners might become tolerant. More specifically and in tandem with this clarification and differentiation of writing models and perspectives, persuasive writing skills both in L1 and L2 also need to be emphasized because, according to Lee (2008, p. 43), undergraduate students present a lack of critical stance when arguing a case.

In respect of L2 writing instruction, there have been a succession of orientations which have become dominant during certain periods of time to later be replaced by new ones, which by no means have eradicated their predecessors. In fact, during the present times several of the beliefs to these approaches to writing are drawn upon increasingly as the teaching of writing proceeds. The following section focusses on the process approaches to writing.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Process Approach to Writing

In the 1970's researchers found themselves quite unsatisfied with product approaches to writing because, according to Paltridge et al. (2009), controlled composition and current-traditional rhetoric "ignored individual thought and expression" (p. 66). Consequently, Emig (1994) decided to compare what students and professional writers used to do when they started to write and found out that good writers would focus on ideas first rather than on correctness. Thus, the idea of guiding rather than controlling gained relevance and a new proposal came to surface: To let content, ideas and the need to communicate determine form instead of focusing on form first (Paltridge et al, 2009, p. 66). This plea for focusing on linguistic skills such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing intended to release so much importance on linguistic knowledge.

Amongst the first attempts to achieve this focus on linguistic skills we can find Jacobs' (1986) quickwriting (free/loop/speed/flash writing) as a technique for invention used to generate ideas, concentrate on content without worrying about form so as to achieve writing without stopping (p. 282). Clearly, he could also be appointed as one of the pioneers of process writing since he asserts that breaking the writing process down into stages reduces the cognitive load and facilitates that writing projects can be undertaken more easily and successfully provided that things are done one at a time (p.283). Similarly, according to Jacobs (1986) Hilgers' research (1980) showed that learners exposed to quickwriting produced pieces of writing richer in ideas and better as a whole (p. 283). Furthermore, Arndt (1887) affirms that research findings show that teaching L2 writing as a process centered approach helps inefficient writers become more

efficient and enriches knowledge of linguistic resources and how they can be utilized to meet

writing demands such as coherence, discourse and formality (p. 265). Similarly, Hamp Lyons

(1986) argues that process writing helps writers understand writing strategies and how to use

them effectively (p. 316). Additionally, Rogers (2008), also acknowledges the benefits of process

writing by claiming that process writing and metacognition are very much interrelated. Thus,

during the stages of writing, it is necessary to have moments of planning, editing, and revision,

which are all directly related to the metacognitive learning strategies suggested by Chamot and

O'Malley (1994, p. 61) i.e. planning, directed attention, selective attention, self-management,

self-monitoring, problem identification and self-evaluation. Therefore, this process approach to

writing allows learners to choose, reject and revise their own content and help them create the

belief that, according to Robinson (1991), it is feasible to empower students and eventually foster

autonomy. According to Dyer (1996, p. 313), in process writing, teachers are facilitators who

neither assign specific topics or give evaluative criteria nor demonstrate good writing with

models or assign grammatical exercises. These teachers believe that students naturally learn to

write and the more they write the better writers they become.

The process approach to writing places the writer as an independent producer of texts and

it goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing

task. This writing teaching perspective recognizes the following basic cognitive processes of

paramount importance in the writing activity so as to help learners develop abilities to plan,

define, propose and evaluate their writing performance: Prewriting, drafting, revising, editing

and publishing. Hyland (2003, p. 11) avers that the process approach considers writing as a "non-

linear, exploratory and generative process through which writers discover and reformulate ideas until achieving the desired meaning.

Prewriting. This stage allows learners to get started. The teacher's role is to aid students in finding topics, generating ideas, focusing, and planning the structure and procedure. Students try to decide what they are going to say by brainstorming, collecting data, note taking and outlining. In short, as Sundem describes it (2006, p. 43), writers generate ideas and put their thoughts is order by means of using techniques such as bubbling or outlining.

On the one hand, Sundem (2006, p. 44) explains that bubbling implies using mind webs in which all ideas are related to a central topic. These ideas, in turn, would correspond to each one of the paragraphs of the main written text. Sundem affirms that bubbling is the easiest of the prewriting techniques because it lacks strictness and students do not need to have much clarity on how bubbles can correspond to paragraphs.

Unlike bubbling, outlining is much more guided and specific for functions and contents of each paragraph need to be described by means of including topic sentences and supporting details. Sundem asserts that once students have been able to organize their ideas in an outline form, they are more likely to produce a functional draft because paragraphing will be really well-managed. Nevertheless, he also argues that one of the flaws that derive from outlines is that drafts may sound like "shopping lists" because of the lack of flow in them (p.46). Berger (2008, p. 37) claims that even though outlines set the logical structure of the text, writers might find the need to move ideas from one place to another; which in turn, may save up some time when

drafting. However, when drafting starts, some sections of the outlines might need to be eliminated or changed especially because in writing some ideas from the outline do not blend well together.

Whether mentally or physically, this part of the planning stage requires that writers consider the purpose of and the audience for their writing as well as the content structure (Harmer, 2004, p. 5), which directly influences the type of text to write, the information to include and the choice of language. When writing essays, part of the prewriting process is to focus the essay subject through the creation of a thesis statement, which clearly identifies the writer's topic and clarity of thought. According to an article from Pasadena City College issued by the Writing Center (n.d.), a good thesis statement aids readers in understanding and creates an expectation about what will follow in the rest of the essay.

Drafting. During this stage of writing, rewriting is an ongoing process (Berger, 2008, p. the assumption that they will be later amended (Harmer, 2007, p. 113). For this reason, Sundem (2006, p.53) asserts that drafting need not be perfect due to the fact that words can be misspelled, some ideas can be better expressed, punctuation might be unelaborated; aspects which by no means indicate lack of writing ability. Sundem also identifies another feature of the drafting process which is its cyclical process. This means that writers cannot be bound by the outline or bubble they have previously designed. During the writing process, new ideas can arise, these should be inserted and the plan needs to be reorganized. Similarly, former ideas can be crossed out or maybe rewritten until writers feel satisfied with their own products. Similarly, according

to Woodward-Kron (2005, p. 38), during the drafting process arguments are organized into paragraphs with each paragraph containing an argument in support of the thesis statement.

Sundem (2006, p. 54) suggests that during the process of writing, teachers act as encouragers by providing help, positive and formative feedback as well as by giving students the possibility to share what they have produced with their peers. Drafting, in short, could allow writers to feel successful and motivated with their writing skills.

Revising and Editing. After producing a draft, both teachers and learners respond to the ideas and seek for ways to refine them so as to produce clearer information, better paragraphing, and more appropriate words and/or grammatical accuracy (Harmer, 2004, p. 5). This refinement process might be neglected by the majority of writers because of the belief that the writing task has already been finished. However, Sundem (2006, p. 55) asserts that "the greatest potential for learning lies in revising" since writers can develop several techniques to improve their writing, which later on they can replicate in other drafting experiences. Sundem avers that revising implies knowing the mechanics of revision such as having direct annotation on drafts, recopying onto new pages, adding or deleting information and modifying large-scale organizations.

Additionally, Sundem (op.cit., p. 56) suggests that writers be trained on identifying specific elements to be revised such as word choices or verb forms under the condition that this specific revision be done one at a time moving from ideas to organization, word choice, voice and sentence fluency.

Even though Berger (2008) does not make a distinction between revising and editing, Sandem (2006), clarifies that revising should not be confused with editing (proofreading) because the former is related to content, whereas the latter is focused on spelling, punctuation and grammar conventions. With this in mind, it is suggested that writers do their own editing before texts are given to a third party on account of the learning opportunity it offers to them.

Publishing. This final stage implies the production of a final version, which may look considerably different from the original plan and the first draft, but which is ready to be sent to the intended audience especially because its neatness and presentation will ensure that it is taken seriously. Publishing may have the form of written products shared with peers, oral presentations reporting what has been written or even having the written task published in a magazine of journal.

The process described above may present the process approach to writing as a linear one; however, throughout the process, writers continuously discover and reformulate their ideas again and again, sometimes in a chaotic order before actually producing a final version (Hyland, 1996).

On balance, product and process approaches to writing allowed teachers tackle writing from a different perspective which could also be complemented with the genre approach to writing, which is considered by Badger and White (2000) as an extension of the product approach. In the genre approach to writing, linguistic skills predominate but much more emphasis is placed on the social context of writing and its purpose, which influences the subject matter, the relationship between writer and audience, and the structure of the text (Badger and White, 2000, p.155). With this said, Badger and White propose three (3) stages to follow during

genre approaches: a) model, b) exercises to manipulate language forms according to the purpose

of the text, and c) production of a text. Clearly, the genre approach to writing is similar to the

product approach to writing inasmuch as language is tied to social purposes and writing is the

product of imitation and analysis of input provided by teachers. Distinctly, since writing involves

knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in

which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and

the skills in using language (as in process approaches), Badger and White (2000) propose that the

three approaches to writing be synthesized so as to have a more thorough concept of writing and

thus, facilitate the teaching of it.

Genre Approach to Writing

Applications of genre approaches are the product of communicative approaches which

stress the role that language plays to achieve a particular purpose in context. Hyland (2007) thus

claims that writing varies according to the context, which clearly means that a set of abstract,

cognitive and technical abilities cannot produce a specific text type.

Genre approaches have strong similarities with process approaches due to the fact that

they also make emphasis on a planning-writing-reviewing methodology. However, unlike

process approaches, genre approaches go beyond by emphasizing that writing processes vary

according to the social contexts in which it is produced (Badger, 2000). The central aspects of

each writing situation are purpose, subject matter, writer-audience relationship and writing

structure.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Genre pedagogies have proved to be a real benefit for learners since they enable them to put together language, content and context to communicate an intended message (Hyland, 2007). More specifically, persuasive writing is considered to be one of the types of writing that can be taught following a genre approach. During the planning stage, writers require to apply skills that reflect the ability to think critically and to persuade readers towards a position regarding a given issue. Therefore, Wu (2008) argues that critical analysis is one of the most desirable characteristics of undergraduate writing usually assessed through persuasive essays in which careful rationalization, justification and persuasion techniques need to be foreseen by writers. In a study carried out by Kongpetch (2006) it was clearly demonstrated that process writing and the genre approach had a significant impact on students' writing due to the fact that clear thesis statements made part of the generic structure of their persuasive essays. Tapscott (2010) has also acknowledged the fact that in persuasive writing thesis statements represent the strongest support for a position and clearly present the conviction of a writer. Thus, in genre approaches to writing, and more specifically in persuasive writing, the claim used for an argument will be more credible if the syntax of the thesis statement is error free.

Technology as a writing learning tool

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA) technology is at the students' and teachers' fingertips; hence, both teachers and students currently come to the classroom with their own laptops and USB flash drives in order to access theirs or someone else's written tasks which

have been composed on computers, shared electronically and are maybe awaiting for some electronic feedback as well.

According to Pennington (1996), the writing skill is "a form of expertise requiring the development of cognitive structures and routines for high-level management and coordination of many different types of physical and mental activity, toward the ultimate goal of expressing the writer's intended meaning." (p. 125). For the coordination of the physical and mental activities to take place, it has always been necessary to have certain application of technology, e.g., quills, pencils, typewriters, printing press (Hyland, 2003, p. 144) and obviously computers and the Internet. Consequently, each innovation involves new skills applied in new ways which means that writing is not fixed but constantly evolving and that teachers have seen the need to come to grips with what professionally this means for them. In other words, writing teachers are constantly facing demands to integrate Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into their classes and this has influenced the way we teach and write and the forms finished writing products take (Hyland, 2003).

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

By the end of the 1980s, the use of computers for L2 acquisition began to look for ways in which computers could be integrated into task- or project-based approaches through the use of the Internet, which gave birth to the integrative CALL. Integrative CALL allowed students to "communicate directly, inexpensively and conveniently with other L2 speakers" (Warschauer,

1996). As a result, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and the use of the Wide World

Web (WWW) have since then facilitated an integrative approach to learning a second language

through the use of technology.

Hyland (2003) also suggests that theory and technology interact with language teaching

and this reflects definite trends in computer-mediated learning (CML) and CALL towards the

view that learning depends on the exposure to authentic language and using language for

communication (p.166). Pennington (1996) argues that writing on computer and its novelty can

produce better attitudes towards writing, less apprehension and anxiety about mistakes, revising,

and rewriting and more involvement in psychological and physical terms (p. 125). Similarly, a

study by Sun and Chang (2011) revealed that any Web technology with its interactive and

collaborative features comes in handy in the process of reconstructing academic writing

knowledge. They emphasize the fact that human and computer interaction by itself does not

guarantee better education or make students learn unless they are used as platforms to encourage

and extend students' learning along with instructors' "constant monitoring and timely

intervention" (p. 58). Similarly, Ahluwalia, Gupta & Aggarwal (2011) and Rojas (2011) agree in

arguing that cutting-edge technologies in language teaching increase effective communication

especially by improving writing skills. Additionally, their studies affirm that ICTs instill a high

degree of motivation into students because of the transformation of the existing traditional

education into a more active and engaging type in which knowledge is applied, analyzed,

synthesized, and evaluated. In their study, Ahluwalia, Gupta & Aggarwal (2011) concluded that

the use of technology was an attractive and powerful curriculum component which indeed helped

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

students refine and develop their writing skills besides motivating students to have meaningful language learning interactions. In the same manner, Rojas (2011) found that teachers could encourage students to improve their writing skills through the use of technology due to the fact that students tried to write more than they used to when they had no technology available.

Graham, S., McArthur, C., and Fitzgerald, J., (2007) suggest that when planning to make of the Internet an integral component of any writing curriculum, several guiding principles need to be taken into consideration. In the first place, Internet writing practices can be as simple or as complex as the teacher chooses and should be modified to meet the students' needs. Secondly, Internet writing practices should support required curriculum standards and encourage students to think about the social implications of their work. Finally, Internet writing practices should promote deeper understandings of the multicultural community through technology-based social interactions besides helping students learn the literacy skills necessary to be successful in the 21st century (p. 240). Additionally to the guidelines proposed by Graham et al (2007), Hyland (2003) also offers for consideration that Internet, in tandem with any other learning and teaching material is only effective when it is integrated into a sustained, coherent program that offers learners some control and guidance from teachers (p.172), which brings solace to the fear that computers will eventually replace teachers.

According to Hyland (2003) in addition to the benefits mentioned above, computers have also brought forth the Internet as a vast source of information which has changed several aspects of the teaching of writing by facilitating not only Computer-Mediated Communication but also providing information, tasks, and materials for various writing assignments as well as advice on

writing. For example, Hyland suggests some key teaching and learning possibilities like the utilization of online resources for writing such as online writing workshops and Online Writing Labs (OWLs) both offering help for students to focus on academic writing besides including links to other sites. More specifically, and through the Internet students can have access to online thesis generators that seek to aid in creating comprehensive thesis statements by following the basic principles of thesis writing. In other words, online thesis generators facilitate the process of inclusion of supporting details that help the writer construct his/her own idea and provide the scope of their intent.

Feedback

According to Boughey, (1997, P. 127) current practice in English Language Teaching (ELT) and first language pedagogy make much more emphasis on what good pieces of writing are rather on the characteristics these good pieces of writing should have; namely, a process of writing, revising, and rewriting. In order for this process of writing to be successfully achieved, on-going and constructive feedback is desirable as well as. Similary, Cresswell (2000, p. 235) alleges that feedback, either as informed correction or positive feedback, enhances self-monitoring and autonomy in the learning of writing and should be directed to students' (p. 235). Therefore, process writing is effective when feedback focuses on content, organization, coherence, cohesion, argumentation, and audience awareness (p.236) because learners need to be more aware of the importance of global factors during reviewing.

Hyland & Hyland (2006) believe that feedback has been widely seen in education as crucial for both encouraging and consolidating learning, especially in the field of second language

writing. Undeniably, feedback is a key element of the learners' growing control over composing

skills and as Keh (1990, p.294) claims, feedback is the drive which steers the writer through the

process of writing on to the product. She suggests that reader feedback throughout the process

pushes the writer to the end-product, which makes of feedback a fundamental element to process

approach in which input from a reader to a writer provide information for revision to produce

reader-based prose (Flower, 1979 as cited by Keh, p. 294).

Keh (1990) identifies three (3) major areas of feedback as revision in writing: peer feedback,

conferences feedback and teachers' comments all of which have also been identified by Paltridge

et al. (2009) as teacher feedback, dialogue in teacher feedback, and peer feedback, which aim at

providing information about students' performance in different types of writing.

Teacher corrective feedback or comments can be direct or indirect. Direct feedback is

characterized by direct corrections, such as providing more appropriate verb forms or words,

while indirect feedback deals with identification of an error type which encourages students to

make specific changes. In their study, Beuningen, Jong & Kuiken (2008) argued that students

would benefit more from indirect corrective feedback because of the more profound engagement

in language processing while editing. Nevertheless, their hypothesis cannot yet be confirmed due

to the fact that results from other studies remain inconclusive.

Conference feedback (dialogue in teacher feedback) is feedback that occurs during a

communicative act between the teacher and the student. This type of feedback implies "sitting

together with a draft version of the student's writing, with the teacher asking questions to

develop new understandings of the written work" (Keh, 1990, pp. 124-125).

Peer feedback, on the other hand, is not considered by Paltridge et al. (2009) a replacement for teacher feedback but an essential part of learning. It is assumed that this type of feedback can be more informal, less threatening; thus, more motivating for students due to the fact that they are based on the notion of collaborative learning in which learning is constructed socially (p. 128).

However, Hyland and Hyland's surveys of students' feedback preferences (2006, p. 3) have indicated that ESL students greatly value teacher written feedback and consistently rate it more highly than the other forms of feedback. This being this the case, Keh (1990, p. 301) has observed that teacher's written comments could cause frustration and take lots of time; these might not be read or understood or might not even produce the desired results. As a result, she suggests that comments be limited to fundamental or higher-order problems while reducing the comments for lower-order concerns. In this same research Keh (1990, p. 301) showed that learners find one-word comments less helpful than comments with more information (p. 301) pointing out specific problems and providing suggestions, giving overall strengths and weaknesses. She also advises that it is very important to praise learner achievements first followed by identification of target areas. Moreover, it was found that question comments were very useful as well because they forced students to think. Even though feedback has been greatly acknowledged as a beneficial tool during the learning process, Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.102) have also asserted that its impact can also be negative because of the way feedback is given to learners. Hattie and Timperley (p. 102) suggest that for feedback to be effective, it needs to be immersed in a learning context to which feedback can be addressed more effectively. In

their study, Hattie and Timperley concluded that contextualized feedback increases effort,

motivation as well as engagement and similarly, it empowers students to attend self-regulation en

enhances learning.

Additionally, Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990) affirm that teacher feedback is most effective if it

is focused and if it is followed by immediate student revision if a strong effect in student's

writing is desired. Thus, if effective interactive feedback procedures are put in operation by

means of balancing the number, the nature and the quality of comments made on the different

pieces of writing as well as by providing more positive reinforcement than criticism, teachers

may be able to observe improvement in students' writing skills and their attitudes towards SLA.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Research Design

In its pedagogical component, this project sought to promote the acquisition of English writing skills such as pre-writing stages of the process approach to writing with a group of **16** ESL/EAL high-intermediate teenage students at the Colegio Gran Bretaña in Bogotá. A series of Awareness-Appropriation-Automaticity (Thornbury, 2005) tasks were proposed as part of the class instruction in the implementation of writing strategies. This proposal set the stage for the occurrence of a considerable number of writing tasks among students, in which students were expected to display their linguistic and pragmatic competences (Council of Europe, 2011). A question the researcher would be immediately tempted to answer would be related to the extent to which the use of online thesis generators helps students in year 10 to write thesis statements for persuasive essays. More specifically, one would also like to know what the effect of feedback is during the writing process.

This chapter presents the procedures that were implemented to answer the questions that guided the project. First, it makes a description of the type of study that was implemented in this study: Qualitative analysis. Second, it presents a discussion of the type of research in which the study was set. Third, it outlines the techniques and procedures this type of study presupposes. Fourth, it makes a description of the setting in which the study was carried out. Finally, it describes the instruments that were used to collect data and the piloting and validation strategies that were implemented.

The following study is framed under the umbrella category of qualitative research, whose practice is based on a combination of practical skill and theory. Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 1)

describe qualitative research as "a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge" Keegan (2009) explains that qualitative research explores questions such as what, why and how, which implies that the main concern is meaning. When doing qualitative analysis, it is the research question which dictates the methodological approach used to conduct the research study. Therefore, researchers obtain personal experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12) from participants so as to determine why individuals and groups think and behave as they do. In this way meanings are formed, rather than the practice of taking measurements and testing variables as it would usually happen in most quantitative methods of research.

Unlike the rigid and structured frames of quantitative research, qualitative work implies focusing on "the world of the individuals" (Keegan, 2008, p. 12) and moving in direction to the ongoing events individuals are involved in as well as in direction to their dynamic nature to be able to make discoveries by playing with words, making bizarre relationships, and making order out of semi-order (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.13). Hence, in qualitative analysis, a well-developed sense of intuition is required to be able to discern what is happening with the data which is not composed by facts or statistics but rather of behaviour, thought, opinions, and meaning (Keegan, p.13).

There has been a degree of suspicion as to whether qualitative studies can be reliable (repeatable data) and valid (meaningful data). Keegan (2008) reports that while quantitative studies are considered objective, more scientific and having a sounder basis for decision making, qualitative studies are thought to be subjective, overly influenced by the researcher's views and

weak on reliability and validity to inspire confidence when making decisions. Nonetheless, Keegan affirms that both types of study play a different role and operate in different paradigms. Thus, qualitative research can be seen as a type of scientific research in which paradigms to grounded theory are applied in order to form theory from the data obtained. Hence, by means of a systematic set of procedures, content from data is analyzed to be able to generate a theory that directly emerges from this analysis and which legitimizes not only the findings but also the elaboration of knowledge.

Action research implies the process of identifying problems and striving to find solutions focusing on the way teaching and learning tasks or problems are handled. Action research is a systematic and self-critical process in which a focus is developed, information is gathered in order to analyze it and make sense of it, and actions are implemented based on the findings.

The current research design will be organized as follows: First, I will clarify the educational context of Colegio Gran Bretaña (CGB), where my research project will take place, including a description of the First Language English IGCSE test, as well as the role of the ELS Department, in aiding students achieve the academic program objectives. Second, I will briefly mention the profile of the participants and their needs analysis for year 10. Third, I will make a detailed description of the data collection instruments which will lead to meaningful, accurate and appropriate conclusions regarding the research questions proposed above. Finally, I will present a timeline which shows how long the research project took, how the implementation was held including specific activities carried out by the teacher and the students during the 21-hour intervention.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The action research that will be described in this paper will follow the systematic process described above and will be based on ongoing reflection from the students and the teacher's part in the teaching and learning context of Colegio Gran Bretaña in Bogota.

The Educational Context at Colegio Gran Bretaña

My research project took place at the Colegio Gran Bretaña (CGB) in Bogota, a co-educational international school, where the medium of instruction is English as a first language. The central pillar of the curriculum for early childhood, primary and secondary students up to year 11 (see Appendix 1) is the National Curriculum of England, with adaptations to meet the requirements of the Colombian National Curriculum. When students progress from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4, they follow the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) curriculum from the University of Cambridge. The core subjects that CGB offers within this program are First Language English, First Language Spanish or Spanish as a Second Language, Mathematics, History, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. At the end of the academic program, CGB offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB) to students in years 12 and 13.

According to the University of Cambridge International Examinations webpage, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) for First Language English (2012) has been designed to help students develop the ability to communicate clearly, accurately and effectively when writing and speaking. This, in addition, allows students to use a wide range of vocabulary as well as correct grammar spelling and punctuation besides giving students the possibility to develop a personal style and an awareness of the target audiences. Furthermore,

this test enhances general analysis and communication skills by means of synthesizing, inferring and ordering facts to present ideas in a more effective way. Besides the aforementioned objectives, the assessment objectives also include measuring the students' ability to articulate in their written texts experience and express what is thought, felt and imagined.

The IGCSE First Language English test requires candidates to take Paper 1 (Reading passage-core), Paper 2 (Reading Passages–extended), Paper 3 (Directed Writing and composition-both core and extended) and 3 Components: Component 4 (Coursework Portfolio-both core and extended), Component 5 (Speaking and Listening), and Component 6 (Speaking and Listening Coursework).

At CGB students are expected to take Paper 1, which is a reading passage and answers to two questions on it. Moreover, students are expected to take Component 4, which is a coursework portfolio with three written assignments of 500-800 words. Hence, for Assignment 1, students can write an informative and an analytical and/or argumentative essays. For Assignment 2, the options are to write an imaginative and a descriptive and/or a narrative essays while for Assignment 3, students should write a response to a text or texts by selecting, analyzing and evaluating points from the selected reading material. The texts selected by the Center should contain facts, opinions and arguments. The fact that teaching in the school is geared towards this test has, at times, detrimental effect including short-term and long-term motivation due to the fact that students have reported that coursework is not fully appealing to them because of the little relevance it has for their lives . However, the test appears, from the surveys conducted, to act as a spur for greater achievement by the majority of year 10 students.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

It could be argued that since at CGB the language of instruction is English, students could be surrounded by English as a Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language environment (EFL), which may seem contradictory when having students sit the IGCSE First Language English. Nevertheless, much more than a bilingual school, CGB is an international school, whose objective is to provide students with high quality international standards such as IGCSE and International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB). Therefore, some of the families that are moved to Colombia (and even various Colombian families) take their children to CGB to pursue several of their school years. However, not all of these learners are first or second language English speakers. Rather, they can have learned English as a foreign language or they may not have learnt English at all. Consequently, CGB identified the necessity of creating a department that could target the language needs of the latter students who would need English as an additional language (EAL). The department responsible for overseeing the language program described is the English Language Support (ELS) department.

The ELS department is responsible for developing English language processes and support for almost all learners at school. In order to help these students attain the required English level, they are withdrawn from classes like Spanish, French and Social Sciences/History to enhance several English language skills by providing them with a supported English immersion program (SEI). Throughout this program students learn discrete English grammar skills until they become proficient and are ready to take part of the entire National Curriculum of England. There are some other students, however, who already have a higher English level and require no more than external tutoring. In this case, they take classes with the ELS teacher and

the English literature teacher, who work together in the classroom and follow an integrated curriculum designed in conjunction with the English Department for no more than years 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 in secondary. As a result, the ELS teacher offers one input class per week during the literature lesson for each year group so as to focus on various language skills such as language development and range of expression and structure. As an ELS teacher, it is exactly in these input classes in which I developed my research project, more precisely with the students in Year 10.

Students' profile

Students in Year 10 at CGB are between 14 and 15 years old, whose educational background might be somehow dissimilar because of the educational systems they might have brought from other countries. The group worked with composed of 16 students whose English level has not met standard requirements yet. Therefore, these 16 students arrived in this ELS group after thorough examination of their results during the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) during year 9, which are exams that show students' progress compared to other children of the same age besides helping students make decisions upon appropriate course to follow leading to the IGCSE tests and vocational qualifications.

Despite some of the students' higher linguistic skills, students placed in ELS for year 10 used little or no writing strategies, and they resorted to Spanish when trying to expand on ideas and ask for help or clarification. The group conversational skills were really high in terms of getting involved and expressing agreement or disagreement. However, when transferring these

skills into their writing tasks, sentence structure, word order, and vocabulary were characterized mainly by low vocabulary range and repertoire. When asked to write answers to specific questions, all members of the group needed further work on improving their writing skills to a paragraph level including the use of connectives to improve coherence and cohesion. These students lacked paragraph organization and had difficulties focusing on single ideas so as to support them in a paragraph form. Therefore, not only the range of structure needed to be solidified. Most of all, and based on the results from the pre-test, they needed guidance and input on the writing of specific thesis statements in efforts to ensure that students restricted their discussions to no more than relevant content, which they had failed to do previously. These learners also needed more listening and reading input related to world and personal issues so that they had real, passive, but challenging exposure to these topics in order to critically write and discuss them in essays with more confidence and authority.

My observations of learner reactions to the various written tasks indicates that they have little sense of achievement when writing essays. This was confirmed when they voiced their negative feelings towards writing during in-class and out-of class conversations; factor which may result in their motivation diminishing to the point of feeling aversion to writing.

Finally, learners placed in ELS for year 10 did not expect to have a traditional English class, because they had already learnt English and/or had been used to living and studying in English speaking environments before. However, all learners conceived the idea of English as a tool to develop interpersonal and intercultural skills because of the multicultural and international nature of CGB.

Some of these learners needed to lower their inhibitions about their self-confidence so that they could take the plunge and show their classmates more of what they were thinking about and what they were doing to cope with writing difficulties. These learners needed higher shots of motivation to help them feel at ease and self-confident by making them see that who they were, what they had lived, and what they thought were important for the rest of the class and were worth sharing.

Role of the Researcher

The classroom role of the teacher-researcher of the current research study claims that her role in the classroom was that of an involver, an enabler (Scrivener, 1994, p. 6) and a participant observant (Burns, 1999, p. 82).

As an involver, the teacher-researcher was not only familiar with the subject matter (in this case persuasive writing, thesis statements and the writing process) but also knowledgeable about English language teaching methodologies to enhance writing skills. Therefore, this meant being actively involving students in the whole writing process as helping students implement changes in their writing samples based on the feedback provided. Moreover, students' reflections were guided so as to help them become more aware of their learning process. Additionally, as an involver, the teacher-researcher facilitated the process writing approach by helping students become familiar with the online thesis generator, to be used in an effort to produce sounder and

stronger thesis statements, which would hopefully have, in turn a positive impact on the writing of their persuasive essays.

As an enabler, the teacher-researcher was fully aware of how learners think and feel regarding their writing skills. Consequently, the teacher-researcher's lesson planning and methodology were developed as a process-oriented writing sequence which actively responded to her learners' emotional needs in order to build effective working relationships through a friendly-learning atmosphere in which decisions were shared and negotiated in order to enable students to learn from themselves, i.e., their mistakes. Additionally, part of the role as an enabler implied the provision of feedback to facilitate self-correction. Therefore, direct corrective feedback was provided to students in order to promote language analysis and self-correction.

In addition to being an involver and an enabler, the teacher-researcher was a participant observer. The teacher-researcher became a member of the teaching context and participated in it by not imparting traditional instruction. Rather, by becoming a participant observer as a guide and a facilitator, a counselor and a resource of information in order to promote autonomous learning and let her learners work well under their own steam.

Involvement in action research enabled the teacher-researcher to engage more closely with her classroom practice and explore realities she faced regarding the process of curriculum change. Therefore, the teacher-researcher was able to evaluate what was happening in her classes and made an attempt to become more methodical in the way writing tasks were approached and explanation of how these could be undertaken. Additionally, action research allowed the teacher-

researcher to reflect on the decisions underlying her teaching practice so as to have a more solid

foundation to implement further development of the ELS curriculum at the CGB.

Data Collection Instruments

Measuring behaviour, attitudes, needs and emotions in people deals with how these

become energized and directed towards specific ends (Reeve, 1992). In order to look for those

preceding conditions, how they are maintained throughout time, why they vary their intensity,

and why those conditions might eventually stop, the researcher used observational note-making

through a journal, surveys, and students' logs. A collection of all students' artifacts produced

during the implementation process, were also analyzed. This procedure aimed at determining

whether or not there had been some improvement when bringing forth thesis statements and

putting into effect the writing process taking into account the feedback provided by the teacher-

researcher.

Surveys

Surveys allowed the researcher to make certain inferences about her group of students

regarding what they thought about writing in English the benefits of being able to write better in

English. The latter would include the personal satisfaction they would experience if they could

write thesis statements and persuasive essays with less trouble, and the difficulties they had

experienced through the writing awareness process (Gardner, 1972)

When writing skills and insights about writing are assessed through surveys or questionnaires, interviewees are asked to self-report on their level of involvement (Reeve, 1992, p. 36) forcing them to think retrospectively and provide honest answers (if done properly). Surveys and interviews helped the researcher find points of convergence in order to obtain more reliable responses.

Teacher's Reflective Journal

The teacher-researcher found very useful to observe students' behaviour and writing awareness in class during different in-class activities. Through the reflective journal, the researcher kept a record of her feelings, thoughts, reflections and insights regarding the various activities developed in class. In addition, recording and analyzing students' reactions to the writing tasks and the writing process as a whole were included, as well as the results after the implementation of the online thesis generator.

One of the reasons why the researcher wanted to motivate students more through the implementation of this project was that every time they were assigned writing tasks to be started and maybe finished in class, students openly complained, moaned, and had little or none production of ideas. Most of them expended valuable class time thoughtlessly showing great difficulties to start doing the tasks. When they managed to write something, this was usually of very poor quality which forced them to do everything over at home without much or any teacher's monitoring.

Consequently, the researcher hoped to have a more comprehensive and clearer picture of her participants and their writing process by documenting her journal with the most relevant and evident reactions and approaches to the writing tasks proposed in class.

Keeping this journal was an on-going activity during each one of the writing tasks activities and reflection instruments. In order for the researcher's notes to be differentiated, she used a Microsoft Word™ document in which she would label each and every entry dates, room and time of the class and total implementation time.

Students' Structured Logs

As student-generated data, students' logs helped to record feelings and emotions, difficulties, successes, etc., (Hendricks, 2006, p. 75).

The researcher chose to use structured logs in order for all students to reflect on their performance following a specific format to provide detailed and accurate information (see Appendix 4). The purpose of the structured logs was to gather impressions on the use of online thesis generators to create thesis statements when writing persuasive essays, find out how effective feedback was for their writing process and how aware of this process they had become. Also, she wanted to know if they had felt better motivated to write persuasive essays after the implementation of her research study.

Additionally, logs served as additional evidence of students' process and progress. Logs were used twice during the process in order to gather students' insights in the middle and at the end of the implementation process.

Classroom Documents (Artifacts in Portfolios)

Collecting students' work and keeping it in a portfolio can be a very efficient way of tracking their skills and competences besides giving students the possibility of seeing their own improvement and deciding on areas of improvement. Therefore, by using students' generated documents helped the teacher-researcher shed some light on each student's writing process as well as helping her plan deliberate interventions in order to facilitate it more.

These portfolios were composed of students' writing tasks from the brainstorming and outlining phases to drafting and writing the final version of each persuasive essay. Also, portfolios had the pre- test (see Appendix 1) and answers to the surveys and their journals so that all the data could be in only one place so as to have easy access to it.

Data Collection Procedures

Preliminary Survey

Surveys (see Appendixes 1 and 3) had ranked responses so that learners could choose from a number of fixed options to have a clearest overall picture of students' preferences. Also, because of time limitations, the teacher-researcher decided to provide students with a tool that would be easy and fast to administer so that class time would not be greatly disturbed.

The Preliminary Survey (see Appendix 3) was administered in the second session of the implementation of the research study. Through this survey, it was intended to get information about students' initial views about their English writing skills so as to confirm certain aspects

such as students' motivation, feelings and awareness about the writing process, thesis statements, online tools to aid the writing process and the value given to feedback from the teacher.

Students' Structured Logs

There were two structured logs, which were administered in the middle and at the end of the process immediately after students had submitted their final essays of each writing task. The purpose of the structured logs was to find out if the use of online Generators had somehow helped students have clearer thesis statements to better structure their persuasive essays and if throughout the writing process feedback had been useful to improve the quality of their written products. Also, students were expected to reflect on advantages and disadvantages of following a process approach to writing as well as of the possibility to replicate this approach in subjects different from English literature classes.

Final Survey

The final survey was administered at the end of the process when students had already received feedback from the last writing task. The purpose of the final survey was to determine whether students had become more aware of the writing process as a whole and if online thesis generators had in some way effected in the writing of thesis statements so as to write better structured essays. Also, the final survey allowed the teacher-researcher to determine whether students considered feedback as a significant factor to help them improve the quality of the

written products. Additionally, through the final survey the teacher-researcher intended to collect

opinions on the level of awareness from students towards the process approach to writing.

Classroom Documents

Each of the two writing tasks was composed of a pre-writing process, a draft and a final

essay. The pre-writing process had brainstorming and outlining of ideas, as well as the

generation of thesis statements using the online thesis generators and topic sentences for the

body paragraphs. Drafts and final essays were handwritten and kept in the students' portfolios

along with the pre-writing products so as to have step-by-step evidence of students work and

development throughout the process. Additionally, these documents were all accompanied by the

teacher-researcher's feedback at the end of each written product. Feedback was in the form of

strengths to maintain and targets to focus on such as linguistic aspects using self-correction codes

(see Appendix 7) and rhetoric functions.

Design and Validation of the Instruments and Procedures

Surveys and Structured Logs

The surveys administered before and after the implementation as well as the students'

structured logs were designed based on the reactions and comments students had had towards the

act and the process of writing. Furthermore, several of the questions and statements included

were the result of the students' performance observed by the teacher-researcher, which mainly

brought about the present research study. Once the surveys and logs had been finished, they were

submitted to the action research teacher who was in charge of the process at the moment of the

present study started. All the necessary adjustments were made before surveys and logs were

administered following the recommendations and suggestions provided by the action research

instructor.

The proposed data collection instruments sought to guarantee that a good "picture" of the

students' writing skills was taken. This facilitated the analysis of the effect that online thesis

generators had on writing thesis statements to achieve persuasive essays of good quality.

Similarly, the analysis of the effect of feedback was also possible because all the tasks put into

practice to address the research questions were made "visible" and were subject to examination.

Getting to discover the principles that govern the CGB students' writing approach implied going

through the five steps proposed in the process approach to writing.

Ethical Considerations involved in Data Collection and Analysis

According to Hendricks (2006, p. 110) all individuals who engage in academic

educational research are bound by ethical guidelines that protect the right of the participants.

Therefore, the three (3) key principles in the ethical conduct of action research; namely,

responsibility, confidentiality and negotiation (Burns, 1999, p. 71) were taken into consideration

in the present research study during the collection and analysis of data in the following way:

Responsibility and Negotiation: Due to the fact that the data collected would be

disseminated, the teacher-researcher obtained permission before starting to implement the

research study. As a result of this, the director of the Colegio Gran Bretaña and the participants' parents were given a consent letter (see Appendixes 9 and 10) to be signed in order to certify that the research study could take place. Participants were also asked to sign a consent letter (see Appendix 10) in which they committed themselves to comply with all activities and tasks involved in the implementation process.

Confidentiality: Participants' identities were not made public at any moment so as to prevent that they were judged negatively by those who would have access to this research study. Therefore, participants' names were protected by only using number assigned to them in the Microsoft Office Excel™ document in the moment of disclosing information about their performance of answers given to the questions from surveys and structured logs. In this way, anonymity of participants was ensured.

Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

Methodology

The method that was developed in the present research study implied three kinds of activities, a) Awareness raising, b) Appropriation activities and c) an Autonomy activity (Thornbury 2005, p. 41). According to Thornbury, *awareness raising activities* aim at helping learners uncover gaps in their knowledge. For awareness to happen, students have to go through three stages: *attention, noticing* and *understanding*.

Attention activities imply focusing one's attention, and interested attention.

Noticing activities assume a conscious register of the occurrence of events.

For *Understanding activities*, Thornbury proposes, the recognition of a general rule or pattern. Examples of these activities are:

Attention
- Examples of several persuasive essays (to identify among others background knowledge, gist, register, and details)
- Examples of online thesis generators

Noticing

- identify, connect compare, contrast persuasive techniques
- Identify each step of the writing process
- Identify process to follow to use online thesis generators

Understanding

Discovering

– techniques for persuasive writing

– writing effects and strategies through feedback

– the benefits of following a writing process

These are the three big steps students took to be aware of persuasive writing before carrying out their first writing task. This research study also attempted at helping students use online thesis generators for them to write better thesis statements. This is when the other two kinds of activities were required to complete the proposed picture: appropriation and autonomy activities.

Appropriation activities in developing writing ability, according to Thornbury, imply moving from the stage of "other regulation" (awareness raising activities) to "self regulation". They suppose taking ownership of something or making something our own. Thornbury uses another term to refer to them: *practiced control activities.* These activities involve the demonstration of progressive control of a skill where mistakes can be made and support and feedback are always at hand.

Examples of these activities are:

- Brainstorming

- Outlining/researching

- Using the online thesis Generator chosen

- Drafting

- Assisted performance/ Scaffolding (Mediation of a better other)

- Revising using feedback

- Editing

During the first writing task, learners were expected to implement the aforementioned appropriation activities besides closely following the feedback given to improve the target areas identified.

Autonomy activities imply no longer needing others assistance. This, in Thornbury's words, can be partly due to the development of *automaticity.* Automaticity implies the idea of mastering a skill without consciously monitoring its occurrence. This could lead to freeing mental space for focusing one's attention to other mental operations (e.g. in the case of writing, using the thesis statement to structure an essay). Thornbury proposes some conditions for these mental operations to actually bring about automaticity and autonomy: productivity, purposefulness, interactivity, challenge, safety and authenticity. Students should also be given feedback and correction.

Finally, automaticity was what actually was expected for the second writing task where students were to submit their final persuasive essay and show evidence of the use of the online thesis generator to have a clear thesis, as the baseline of their essay structure, and of the whole writing process.

Students might become more comfortable with the persuasive writing process by becoming more aware of the stages underpinning it and the relationship there must be among them. Therefore, by using certain specific online thesis generators to self-regulate performance and by becoming acquainted with the way they work, might allow students to improve their

persuasive writing skills, as well as help them obtain better results in their IGCSE First Language English tests. In order for students to do achieve this, they needed to a) have a clearer idea about what persuasive writing is and what it implies; b) be familiar with online thesis Generators they could use to plan their persuasive essays; c) self-evaluate their performance and the usefulness of the online thesis generators after manipulating them; d) use the feedback given throughout the whole intervention process to improve their written products.

The four needs described above represent the pedagogical intervention proposed for this research; which, in turn, aimed at empowering these learners to feel at ease and motivated when writing argumentative essays and feel ready to meet the writing standards of the IGCSE First Language English test. The problem from which the teacher's questions arose was the fact that it was very common to find certain learners who strongly disliked having to write essays in English because they were forced to do so with little or no guidance during the persuasive writing process before taking the IGCSE First Language English tests. Others simply continued with the writing process but obtained very low scores due to inaccuracies and problems with cohesion and coherence. However, most students demonstrated their having a knack for English, which really motivated them to upgrade their writing skills provided that they bore in mind feedback received to focus on target areas. These students would greatly benefit from a change of attitude and a more intrinsic motivation so that they could be successful in their persuasive writing process. This was another aspect that justified my decision to work on persuasive writing as a factor that could help students change class behaviours and motivation.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The innovative character of this intervention lay in the fact that in the context where the teacher-researcher teaches, the lessons in which there was some emphasis on the persuasive writing process were those in the last years of primary school, that is, Key Stage 2. However, in secondary, literature classes students' work rarely met the persuasive writing expected objectives because of the lack of emphasis made on problematic features.

Other constraints, which were observed in lessons, at the secondary level, where persuasive writing was addressed, included a) the lack of systematic approach to the teaching of writing and b) the lack of knowledge about process writing technological tools, how to use them and assess performance.

This pedagogical intervention considered the above-mentioned elements and attempted to propose a methodology for students to improve their writing of persuasive essays and feel more comfortable when doing so. I hoped that this research project could shed some light on what more to do in order to effectively help students use the feedback provided to write more cohesive and coherent essays as well as to feel more comfortable with their writing skills.

The teacher-researcher decided to use the lesson plan format used for the In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT) due to the fact that it was the standardized format used throughout the master's program and in preparation for the teaching certificate. The format proved to be not only very useful but thoroughly designed in terms of the pre-teaching, teaching and post-teaching requirements.

In the following pages I will present a preliminary lesson plan describing the participants and objectives on the entire implementation. First of all, the lesson plan introduces general

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

information about the participants of the present study in terms of age, numbers of years of

English studies, and English level following the criteria underpinned in the Common European

Framework for Languages (CEF). The format also outlines the main aims of the pedagogical

intervention as well as the subsidiary and personal aims.

Research Implementation Preliminary Lesson Plan

Table 1: Research Implementation Lesson Plan

Name of teacher: KATYA TINOCO	
Institution: THE BRITISH SCHOOL	
Class/grade: Year 10	**Room: 29**
Number of students: 16	**Average age of Students: 15-16 years old**

Number of years of English study:
          8 years aprox.
	Level of students
	
	          High - Intermediate

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Main Aim(s):

By the end of the lessons students will be better able to…
- **Identify the main characteristics of persuasive essays.**
- **Carry out a thorough writing process before submitting their final persuasive essay.**
- **Use online thesis Generators to obtain clear thesis statements.**
- **Make effective use of feedback to improve target areas and maintain adequate writing practices.**

Subsidiary Aims:
- **Develop writing skills to help learners cope with the writing tasks from IGCSE examinations.**

Personal aims:
(please include at least one aim related to the development of autonomous learning environments**)**

- **Provide students with enough thinking time about the importance of feedback to improve the learning process.**
- **Get lower-level students more involved in the writing process**
- **Provide students with immediate feedback after completion of each writing stage.**

The second part of the lesson plan (see Appendix 15) describes the activities developed in each one of the implementation sessions as well as the objectives of each session and the materials used. The core materials were the aforementioned data collection instruments (see Appendixes 4,5, and 6) and described as well as Microsoft Office PowerPoint™ presentations designed by the teacher-researcher so as to introduce students to the five stages of the process approach to writing. In this section of the lesson plan, the researcher implemented various activities in order to facilitate the writing process by implementing the principles of the process approach (Paltridge et al, 2009) by making emphasis on linguistic skills such as pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. In this way, the researcher intended to make explicit what needed to be learned to provide a coherent framework for writing and make of the genre writing approach an effective writing approach (Hyland, 2007).

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The initial activity, with which the implementation process started, corresponded to the identification of students' needs and strengths through the use of the pre-test (see Appendix 2). During this first stage, students were expected to show evidence of outlining and paragraphing skills, using a thesis statement to organize and present ideas.

Once needs and strengths had been identified, students were given feedback on their performance as well as introduced to the correction codes to be used throughout the entire feedback process. Through the use of correction codes, the researcher expected to encourage students to identify the specific areas to focus on and provide appropriate corrections to them. These areas were mainly centered on aspects such as task response (register and word limit), coherence and cohesion (use of connective devices and paragraphing), lexical resource (word choice according to the context and spelling) and grammatical range accuracy (sentence type and appropriateness of verb tenses).

Subsequently, students were given the preliminary survey (see Appendix 3) to find out more about their insights into their own writing skills. During the following sessions, students were introduced to various concepts about writing, including persuasive writing and its requirements and techniques; topics which were directly connected to the use of online thesis generators. At this phase, learners were encouraged to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of using that technological tool when preparing to write a persuasive essay. Consequently, it was expected that students had more clarity regarding what persuasive writing was as well as on what it means to prepare that kind of essay.

After this introduction, learners embarked on their first writing task by researching about the topic assigned, preparing the essay and ending up with the first draft. In order to help students prepare this writing assignment, pre-writing stages including outlining, topic sentences and supporting ideas were clarified so as to help learners have a more solid ground to start writing. Finally, drafts were revised and students received feedback on aspects to improve for the final essay.

At the end of the first writing task, students were not only given feedback but also the mid-term structured log (see Appendix 4) for them to reflect on the outcomes of the first part of the implementation process and evaluate their performance on it.

The second part of the implementation process was characterized by a second writing task about a topic chosen by students, in which it was expected that learners followed the same procedure introduced in the first part (researching, outlining, drafting and editing). This second writing task was followed by the final structured log (see Appendix 5) and the end of implementation survey (see Appendix 6) in which students were expected to evaluate the entire implementation process and express their feelings about their writing skills and the use of online thesis generators. The following pages will focus on the results obtained as a result of the aforementioned implementation process.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Results and Data Analysis

Throughout the preceding chapters, readers have been able to be acquainted with all the practical stages this researcher has undergone and which have led to the data analysis process pertaining to this research inquiry. In this chapter, a detailed description of how raw data were coded and taken to a conceptual level will be presented aiming at generating findings that would contribute to knowledge development in the English Language Teaching (ELT) environment.

Data Analysis Methods

In terms of qualitative data analysis, the teacher-researcher relied on a mixture of content analysis and grounded theory so as to reduce the copious amounts of written data to manageable and comprehensible proportions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007/8, p. 475) and be able to build a valid theory from the examination and interpretation of the data obtained.

On the one hand, content analysis entails a systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007/8, p. 475). Starting with a sample of texts, units of analysis are defined (words, phrases or sentences), coded and organized into meaningful categories.

On another hand, grounded theory was used to generate theory due to the fact that it is a more inductive process than content analysis; this is because theories emerge from the data systematically gathered and analyzed and their patterns and theories are implicit within the data waiting to be discovered. Hence, theory generation is the result of a process of making natural connections which formulate a systematic methodology of theoretical sampling, coding, constant

comparison and the identification of a core variable (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007/8, p. 491).

Data Management

The teacher-researcher established the domains of the analysis from which all the units of text were to be sampled. This involved specifically, the feedback given to students during the pre-test and the draft of the two writing tasks, the classroom documents produced by students while following the writing process, the students' structured logs and the teacher's journal. All the samples included were generated by the students in year 10 during the class sessions in which the teacher was always present. As a result of the great amount of data obtained, the researcher transcribed all the participants' responses into a Microsoft Excel Office (MSExcel™) file (see Appendix 12) to have easy access to, and retrieval of, the information. Additionally, with the object of maintaining participants' anonymity, each participant was assigned a number corresponding to the one found in the MSExcel™ chart found in Appendix 12.

Data Reduction

The data having been gathered, it was necessary to start implementing the Grounded Theory principles (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) in which data is selected, simplified and transformed to tackle the subject of study. Corbin and Straus (2008, p.195) propose a theoretical sampling process in which data are collected in order to be able to detect what is happening in the situation under study. Once data is collected, it is essential to reorganize all data into smaller units including lines, paragraphs or sections by coding them so as to produce a different understanding

of the situation in which similarities and differences are identified. Thus, Grounded Theory comprises three kinds of coding processes: open, axial and selective coding.

Open Coding

During this phase, data is explored and units of analysis are coded for meanings, feelings, actions or events, that is, in terms of their properties and dimensions. In order to achieve this, the researcher focused on language and linguistic features collected with the aforementioned research tools so that later on data could be coded into key areas to identify frequencies in which items were mentioned. As a matter of fact, all key areas were colour coded to facilitate the identification of patterns and the creation of wider categories (see Appendix 13). During this analysis phase, the teacher-researcher initially made a direct relationship between the research questions to be addressed and the responses given by participants.

Main Question

Do online thesis generators help EFL secondary students when writing persuasive essay thesis statements and do students think they help?

Subquestion

What is the effect of feedback in the writing process?

The following chart shows the relationship among the research questions and the categories and subcategories obtained after the open coding process:

Table 2: Categories and Subcategories emerged after Open Coding

Research Question	Categories	Subcategories
Do online thesis generators help EFL secondary students when writing persuasive essay thesis statements and do students think they help?	Generation, organization and production of ideas	• Helpfulness of Online thesis Generators • Structure of thesis statements • Usefulness of Online Thesis Generators • Having a better idea of what to write/generation of ideas • Structure/Plan • Clarity • Different Ideas/Improvisation • Quantity of Information • Usefulness of Online Thesis Generator • Usefulness of writing process • Researching • Novelty of the writing process • Replication of the writing process • Results of Outline
	Essay Topic	• Prior knowledge about the topic • Helpfulness to understand the topic • Knowing more about the topic

What is the effect of feedback in the writing process?	Influence on Writing Products	• Better results • Easier to write essays • Improve final essay • Audience awareness • Faster to write • Quality of feedback • Feedback from pre-test • Feedback from draft • How feedback was used • Improve final essay • Improve writing process • Solve writing problems
	Influence on Linguistic Competence	• Identification of errors • Correction of Errors • Identify mistakes • Correct/Improve grammar, spelling, connectors
	Influence on Grading	• Improve grades •
	Influence on Time	• Waste of time • Additional/extra work • Re-doing

Axial Coding

The objective of this phase is to make connections between the codes and categories

already identified and integrate them into more central categories with the aim of reducing data

as much as possible. In other words, data is compared and triangulated in order to find a focus and be able to provide validity and reliability to the research study. With the aim of achieving this, the teacher-researcher found interrelationships between categories and subcategories to achieve more concrete categories and subcategories as well as to address content validity and reliability. The information contained in the following chart was obtained after exhaustively finding connections and patterns that would indicate students' insights and feelings about the use of Online Thesis Generators to facilitate the writing process of persuasive essays.

Table 3: *Categories and Subcategories emerged after Axial Coding*

Research Question	Categories	Subcategories
Do online thesis generators help EFL secondary students when writing persuasive essay thesis statements and do students think they help?	Developing awareness of the pre-writing Stage (generation and organization of ideas using Online thesis Generator)	• Helpfulness and usefulness of Online thesis Generators • Structure of thesis statements • Having a better idea of what to write • Clarity of ideas • Quantity of Information • Researching

What is the effect of feedback in the writing process?	Encouraging the use of feedback during the writing process	• How feedback was used • Improve final essays • Improve writing process • Solve writing problems • Identify mistakes • Correct/Improve grammar, spelling, connectors • Get better grades

A comparison of the open and axial coding, clearly illustrates that there is a difference in the amount and wording of the categories due to the fact that there was too much raw data and they were overlapping in several situations. After analyzing the categories that emerged during open coding, the researcher to decided to group them more logically so that data could be reduced and be more manageable, reliable and valid throughout the analysis process. As a result, the following are the two main categories were obtained:

1. Developing awareness of the pre-writing Stage (generation and organization of ideas using online thesis Generator).

2. Encouraging the use of feedback during the writing process

Selective Coding

In this last stage of coding, a core code or category is identified and its relationship with the other codes is clarified so as to form a more compact concept or model, that is, a theory

characterized by richer amount of data. In order for the researcher to bring forth a theory that

would explain the current research inquiry, a process of blending together similar aspects around

which the majority of the data are found is put into effect accompanied by constant comparison

of existing data with categories until a closer match amongst them is made. Thus, during this

selective coding phase, the researcher pursued constant and explicit comparison and coding of

data and categories, as well as thorough analytic procedures to determine the model in which all

data could be accounted for. The following is an illustration which shows how the core category

was obtained:

Figure 1: *Core category emerged from Selective Coding*
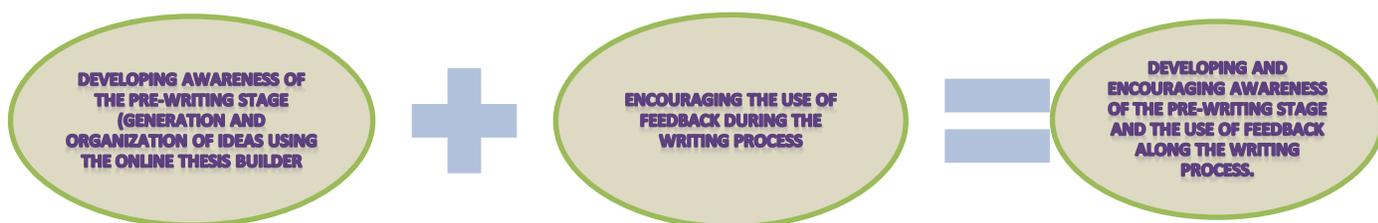
Core Category

To come to this core category, the process started from a specific situation the teacher-

researcher wanted to explore. Provided that the participants in the present study showed

difficulty to write sound and clear persuasive essays, the researcher decided to investigate to

what extent the use of online thesis generators would help students in year 10 write thesis statements for persuasive essays as well as the effect of feedback in the writing process.

The researcher proposed that awareness of the prewriting phase and encouraging the use of feedback during the writing process were appropriate strategies as they were directly linked to the development of writing skills, more specifically to the production of essays. Therefore, the external categories show how through developing awareness of the pre-writing stage, and the use of feedback during the writing process, influenced the learners' insights, reactions and feelings about the writing process of persuasive essays. The research design and pedagogical intervention were in line with the with the theory regarding the main constructs for this study as well as with similar studies in the field of writing skills and the use of CALL.

This core category also made the teacher -researcher aware of the fact that a process approach to writing including the use of online thesis generators shed light on the impact it had on learners as well as on the effect of feedback in the writing process of 16 ESL students in year 10.

Categories

The emerging categories and subcategories derived from the procedures described above will be fully explained in the forthcoming sections of this chapter.

Category 1: Developing awareness of the pre-writing stage (generation and organization of ideas using the Online Thesis Generator)

When Jacobs (1986) presented quickwriting as a technique to generate ideas, he asserted that breaking the writing process into phases would facilitate writing projects by making them become easier to do so as to obtain more successful products (p. 282). Therefore, from the very beginning of the first writing task, students were asked to brainstorm ideas about the topic assigned and use them in the generation of the thesis statement through the Online Thesis Generator. This pre-writing stage had a number of weaknesses and strengths.

On the one hand, I observed, and students reported, that the technological tool used had been very helpful and useful because it had allowed them to clarify how to write a thesis statement:

"I appreciate the online thesis Generator as a tool to help me create a thesis statement." *(Student No. 1, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)*

"The thesis Generator helped me understand a little bit more how to write a thesis." (Student No. 6, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

"I think the thesis Generator helped a lot and I felt good using it, it helped me create one of my best essays." (Student No. 16, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

However, and as the researcher wrote in her journal, manipulating the online thesis generators caused accuracy problems in students because they did not follow the instructions provided to use them. Therefore, the thesis statements obtained after the process were grammatically incorrect, which forced this researcher to intervene in order to help students fix them or even convince other students to do all the process again because of the difficulty to discern their main ideas.

September 22, 2011 (11:35 am-12:30 pm ICT Room)
Total Implementation Time: 6 hours
We started brainstorming and outlining today. I also introduced the Online Thesis Generator to the class. They had no idea that there was a tool they could use to create clearer thesis statements. I believe I made a huge mistake, though. I took for granted that the simplicity of the instructions of use the Online Thesis Generator was going to facilitate the process of using it. However, though using only short phrases and avoiding punctuation and capitalization were the only instructions to follow, students did not do so. Students used full and too long sentences including punctuation, which made that the thesis obtained be too long and not clear. I had to start helping students to fix them and since they showed to have grammar problems, I had to monitor around too much and make everyone aware of the fact that thesis were going to need edition.

Despite the fact that there was some polishing throughout the initial pre-writing process, the majority of the thesis statements generated clearly gave students a head start in their outlining process because most of them were able to prepare their outlines and introductory paragraphs in a coherent manner.

On the other hand, the need to do some polishing to the thesis statements obtained meant that some other students considered that the Online Thesis Generator only provided basic information which needed to be corrected:

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

"I don`t like it, it's not good in my opinion it gives you a headstart (sic) but it's not the best."
(Student No. 4, End of Implementation Survey, December 9 , 2011)

"It was useful to have an idea of how to write your own thesis but it wasn't precise…" (Student
No.82, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

"…it places everything wrong and confusing." (Student No. 4, Final Structured Log, December 2,
2011)

Outlining

When the outlining process started, the researcher expected students to actively use the thesis statements generated to structure the organization of the essay. However, what this researcher found out after reading students' outlines was that students had difficulties completing a point-by point description perhaps because of lack of research on the topic or because the outlining process was considered by learners as not necessary before writing. Berger (2008) suggests that writers need ideas because this is the secret for writing. Therefore, after finding a topic, it is important to brainstorm ideas and make relationships amongst them to be able to select the ones that will be used in the piece of writing. In addition, Sundem (2006, p. 45) affirms that outlining is a very strict process, which makes this researcher think that students considered this activity daunting because of the hard work it implies.

September 29, 2011 (11:35 am-12:30 pm Room 29)
Total Implementation Time: 8 hours
Students were given their outlines back. In general terms, some outlines were incomplete and had no evidence of specific information to include (research). Others were too general basically using the information given in the PPT, but nothing related to the essay topic, which made me think that there had not been enough research on the topic and neither had there been clarity on their thesis. However, there were also really well-elaborated outlines which had a lot of information and clearly showed purpose and structure. I noticed that several students did not use the thesis obtained from the thesis Generator, which showed me that students were not following a process but rather making last minute decisions, maybe to just comply with a class requirement.

Surprisingly enough, reading what students wrote about the outlining process made the

researcher think that what students prepared as an outline was enough for them to have clarity on

what to include, how, and where, despite the fact that this clarity was not physically evident on

paper. Berger (2008, p.37) asserts that "different writers approach outlining in different ways,

but finding a method of outlining that works for you is important".

> *"Having an idea of what you are going to start and research about." (Student No. 1, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)*

> *"…it helps you clear out your thoughts and when you come to your writing you have your ideas clear". (Student No. 14, End of Implementation Survey, December 9, 2011)*

> *"… don't repeat, don't miss important details and tactics you may use" (Student No. 14, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)*

This contradiction of opinions makes me believe that students do not need to have a fully

annotated outline to have more clarity on what they want to express in their essays because at the

moment of writing, outlines that are incomplete or that lack information are enough to help

students produce ideas at the moment of writing through improvisation. Brown (2007, p.119)

claims that the way people learn and the way they attack a problem seem to be related to personality traits and cognition, which in turn delineate each person's learning style. Maybe the fact of not describing a point-by-point outline might mean that this type of student is much more right-brain dominant for they rely more on their intuition and prefer elusive or uncertain information (Brown, 2007, p. 125).

However, Sundem (2006, p.53) clarifies that "if students spend time on their prewriting, they will gain it back while drafting; if they rush through the prewrite, they may take longer to draft". This clearly shows that outlines done hastily will cause that drafts need to be revised several times.

Needless to say, there were also students who reported that the outlining process was not very useful because it lacked clarity and information which forced them to generate newer ideas:

"…at the end you will change your ideas while you are writing the essay so it becomes an essay you can write." (Student No. 3, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

"Sometimes you see that the things you brainstormed are really bad after you have already started the essay and you have to start all over again." (Student No. 3, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

"…it distracts me a little and my essay doesn`t come out that good." (Student No. 7,

Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

Berger (2008, p. 37) affirms that outlines allow writers to see the logical structure of the text, but writers sometimes find that at the moment of writing it makes more sense to change the

position of some material in the text. Then, this could imply that outlines were useful for students because the information contained in them allowed them to be more critical and gauge their validity and usefulness.

Additionally, another student felt restricted by the already created outline because she considered that it would not be possible to add information once she started her drafting process:

"I want to add things and I can`t because of the outline." (Student No. 7, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

This last example may stress the importance of clarifying to students what the purpose of outlines are and what their creation implies so that students do not take them as tools that hinder the writing process. Thus, direct writing instruction gains major importance because even though students are not asked to "reinvent the wheel of writing, they would surely benefit from learning the skills that have shown to be successful over the years" (Sundem, 2006, p. 24).

Finally, two students reported that generating a thesis statement and outlining would not be activities that would help them prepare for exams because in exam conditions, students would not have the possibility and the advantage to carry out a pre-writing process. Sundem (2006, p.41) argues that the writing process is the method to generate, choose and organize ideas. This process at the end will enable writers to discover for themselves the mechanics of composition. With this in mind, believing that the pre-writing process is not helpful in preparation for exams might be an erroneous affirmation. This researcher states that ongoing exposure to the writing process would make of it a mechanical and indispensable practice so that later on students can write for their own purposes and without the teacher's guidance. The researcher also insists that

continuous exposure to the writing process would allow a progressive reduced scaffolding of the writing process on account of the mastery of several of the stages that are contained in the product process approach.

Harmer (2007) suggests that encouraging students to plan, draft and edit, even though this may be time-consuming and may meet, initially, with some resistance on students' part, will help them to be better writers both in exams and in various writing tasks (p. 113). However, as sensible as this assertion may be, students did not seem to be very interested in becoming better writers by following a thorough writing process.

Category 2: The use of feedback during the writing process

Teacher written response continues to be a central role in L2 writing classes despite the emphasis of oral response and the use of peer-assessment (Hyland, 1996). Several teachers and students at CGB do not feel that justice has been done to the written papers unless there are substantial comments which justify the grades obtained. Consequently, feedback was an area this researcher personally expected to be greatly appreciated by learners as well as wisely used to improve the final products. After reading the mid-term and final structured logs answers and those from the end of implementation survey, the researcher was pleased to find that feedback was the most appreciated and useful practice throughout the writing tasks.

"I used it to improve the essay by improve(sic) language and spelling; I used it to use connectors and better vocabulary" (Student Number 5, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

"I found the feedback useful to write the final essay" (Student Number 6, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

Students also reported that feedback also helped them be more aware of their linguistic competence by identifying mistakes and being able to self-correct afterwards:

"…it helps you see your mistakes and recognize them" (Student Number 14, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

"… it makes it better to correct the mistakes because it is a good way to improve mistakes and spelling errors." (Student Number 9,End of Implementation Survey ,December 9, 2011)

According to Lewis (2008, p. 263) "well-designed and guided self-correction can help to increase students' confidence in their own judgment and deepen their understanding of the learning process". This researcher alleges that self-correction paves the path to self-management and direction in which students will assume responsibility for planning, monitoring and evaluating their own performance in writing tasks.

The researcher found out that the stage in which student perceived more benefits was feedback after drafting:

"The feedback provided during the writing proces(sic) was really beneficial because I knew everything I did wrong and what I was suppose to write about." (Student Number 2, Midterm Structured Log, October 28, 2011)

"After the first draft the feedback that was provided to me was actually very usefull (sic) because I got what the reader was understanding and what wasn`t clear enough and needed improvement." (Student Number, 7, End of Implementation Survey, December 9, 2011)

"I used the feedback provided by making sure I didn't make the same mistakes I did last time and by editing the essay before doing the last or final essay." (Student Number, 13,Final Structured Log, December 2 , 2011)

Feedback on students' written work needs to be useful and straightforward with the aim of helping students improve their writing abilities and their learning skills (Paltridge et al., 2009, p. 119). This researcher affirms that students' perception about feedback was positive because of the correction codes (see Appendix 7) previously shared and constantly reviewed with students. Also, the fact that during implementation there were entire sessions devoted to individual consultation, made that students could work on the editing and revision processes more confidently.

Surprisingly, no one in the group had a negative response towards the usefulness of feedback to improve the final results. However, the researcher's observations during the drafting and subsequent processes made her think differently because she was not certain about responses from students who did not go through a drafting process in order to write their final essays. Additionally, there were unfinished drafts to which feedback could not be fully provided, which again may be due to students' learning styles because these students might rely on random experimentation when performing different tasks.

October 6, 2011 (11:35 am-12:30 pm Room 29)
Total Implementation Time: 10 hours
Class completely dedicated to finishing their first drafts especially because tomorrow there will be no class because of Dia de La Raza celebration. Even though the entire

class period was for drafting, some people did not finish. Many students consider the draft as just the beginning of the final essay which is OK to a certain extent because unfinished drafts will not get the chance to be fully revised to improve the final essays. There were still people who did not have anything to resort to and were writing drafts out of the top of their heads. I feel I have been wasting my time during the previous classes.

November 3, 2011 (11:35 am-12:30 pm Room 29)
Total Implementation Time: 14 hours
I handed out the final essays for students to get to know how they did. Paragraphing, topic sentences, and supporting details were the aspects students improved the most in. There is still work to be done on the use of connectives, contracted forms, spelling and verb forms. In the meantime, my interest is in improving cohesion, now that it seems the online thesis Generator helped to have more clarity on the thesis to develop.

The teacher-researcher claims that drafting is not considered a thorough process by many students because writing a draft without having planned ideas to be included would very likely lead to a lack of coherence and cohesion. In fact, this is exactly what several students did while others did not even have the possibility to finish drafting because of lack of preparation. However, feedback provided during the drafting process proved to be so successful because final products had just few samples with faulty cohesion and coherence.

This researcher felt very pleased with work students did with the feedback that she provided because linguistically speaking, the majority of the mistakes were self-corrected, which she considered a significant step forward in their own language development because of the fact that it enhanced self-monitoring and autonomy in the form of choosing learning strategies to improve the act of writing besides being directed to students' needs (Cresswell, 2000, p. 235).

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

However, in her journal the researcher clearly identified an area in which feedback was

not very effective: cohesion.

October 20, 2011 (11:35 am-12:30 pm ICT Room)
Total Implementation Time: 11 hours
After reading the students' drafts, I realized that cohesion was an issue and I decided to prepare a class on cohesive devices, how to use them and what for.
*It was surprising how little students knew about other words different from **and, but, however, when,** and **also.** I had designed a handout which we went over in class, and I made emphasis on the fact that I wanted them to use different connectives so that the final essay will be richer in cohesion. Gladly, when students started typing their essays, several students started changing connectives and using new ones.*
As usual, typing of essays took longer and they had to be assigned as homework to hand in the following class. Actually, students will have a week to type their final essays since tomorrow all secondary will be going to the science fair so classes will be canceled until next week.

These findings made the researcher think of a series of activities so as to create awareness

on cohesive devices and help students do a better job in their final essays. Sundem (2006, p.24)

explains that "direct instruction is still a need in order to create an easily defined skill or pool of

knowledge for which the student will be accountable". Consequently, the results of the

implementation of these remedial sessions were recorded in her journal and were mainly divided

into two sections: First of all, the teacher-researcher identified the targets on which students

needed harder work such as paragraphing, topic sentences and supporting details as well as the

use of connectives and contracted forms, spelling and verb forms. The researcher emphasized

that her interest was to focus on cohesion taking advantage of the fact that the use of online

thesis generators had helped students have more clarity on how to write a thesis statement.

Secondly, the researcher describes her decision to review the entire writing process to

confirm understanding of it and in preparation of the final writing task. Gómez (2011) advocates

that a form of authentic writing implies allowing students to being context aware as part of teaching composition. This context awareness also includes understanding the presence of different discourses which would empower them, in turn, to have control over the form and the content of their writing and would make them more likely to perceive the assigned tasks as their own. Consequently, the researcher expected that by having learners choose their topics for the final essay would allow them to feel more confident and motivated during the process.

In summary, feedback was a determining factor which gave students the possibility of obtaining improved results despite the fact that not everyone became very fond of the writing process, as it was shown above. However, obtaining a better grade was a very strong motivational factor that surely helped those not liking the writing process to endure it until the end.

In this chapter data analysis methods and procedures have been fully described so as to justify findings from the analyzed data aforementioned. The following chapters will bring into focus the most salient conclusions that have emerged from this research study as well as the limitations that were encountered during the whole implementation process.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

The teaching of writing in FL environments such as at the CGB is not necessarily a simple endeavor to embark on. On the one hand, there is the need to prepare students for International certifications of English such as the IGCSE, in which students need to not only demonstrate a high level of proficiency in English, but also write coherent and cohesive essays with high levels of grammatical range accuracy and lexical resource. On the other hand, there are autonomy factors, such as self-correction through the use of feedback, that greatly affect students' writing proficiency and which need to be considered at the moment of asking them to put their ideas into writing.

Through this study, the teacher-researcher found out that online thesis generators can be really useful tools if used appropriately throughout and as part of the planning stage of the writing process. Teachers and institutions interested in helping students improve their persuasive writing skills and write sounder thesis statements will find online thesis generators the writing process.

Conclusions related to the main research question

Do online thesis generators help EFL secondary students when writing persuasive essay thesis statements and do students think they help?

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Online thesis generators were widely well-accepted because of the advantages they provided students, namely, to generate and organize ideas. Most students found them helpful to create their thesis statements and structure their outlines. Some other students thought the online thesis generators clarified how to create a thesis statement not only for an essay in their English class, but also for any other essay in a different subject. Additionally, online thesis generators allowed students to have more clarity on the essay topic in terms of what information to research and include which led to clarity about the opposing views to be addressed.

However, certain students found the online thesis generators somehow confusing to use because the theses statements produced had to be corrected in terms of their grammatical range accuracy. A study by Cotos (2011), revealed that automated feedback has the potential to trigger noticing and focus on discourse form (p.25). This in turn, clearly implies that the participants of the present study were able to identify inaccuracies in the thesis statements obtained after using the online thesis generators. However, it is important to remember that most students did not follow the basic instructions to be able to use the online thesis generators accurately, and this surely affected the helpfulness of this technological online tool.

The fact that students were able to identify inaccuracies in the thesis statements obtained from the manipulation of the online thesis generators was a positive finding in this research study. This is evidenced by the fact that learners had become highly grammar-aware, and this enabled them not only to identify mistakes but also to make the necessary corrections. Lewis (2008, p.262) argues that self-correction makes a virtue out of necessity because learners need to

accept their misfortune and constantly monitor their learning process to quickly develop the ability to self-correct.

Conclusions related to the sub-question:

What is the effect of feedback in the writing process?

Provision of feedback was the category with which students showed much more agreement. Everyone expressed the usefulness of feedback in order to make changes and have a better final essay. Furthermore, feedback was much more appreciated regarding the possibility of improving their linguistic competence, namely in aspects such as spelling and grammar.

However, though feedback also included ways to make the paragraphs more cohesive, little improvement was seen on this matter, especially because of the lack of clarity that I identified regarding the use and usage of cohesive devices. Wang and Wu's study (2008) found that behavioral influences such as learning strategies and feedback behavior by no means predicted students' achievement; these results are clearly not consistent with the benefits of feedback previously discussed. Wang and Wu concluded that the effects of feedback on students' performance and achievement might be affected by other factors such as the lack of possibilities to carry out peer-assessment (p. 1596).

Outlining was a process in which learners also received feedback from the teacher-researcher. To a certain extent, feedback provided during this process was beneficial because of the effects it had on the final essays written by students.

However, feedback did not prove to be beneficial for students who had difficulties completing a thorough outline. Clearly, outlining is a stage that is greatly influenced by students learning styles, which in turn, may force students to receive detailed and more elaborated feedback after writing the first draft.

Additionally, through this research study it was confirmed that feedback needs to be a straightforward process in which students were familiarized with the conventions used so as to facilitate understanding of the various types of feedback and implementation of corrections. Once again, feedback proved to be a means by which students can become autonomous in the learning strategies they select to put into practice their own self-correction processes.

Needless to say, feedback was also helpful for students to obtain better grades, due to the fact that the entire writing process during the two writing tasks, including drafting, were graded during the different stages. As a result of this, learners had several opportunities to improve their grades so as to achieve very good grades at the end of the process.

In the last analysis, feedback also proved beneficial in allowing students accomplish linguistic self-correction, which is directly related with not only the ability students had to identify and correct mistakes from the thesis statements but also the ability to correct the mistakes meticulously signaled by the teacher-researcher.

Conclusions related to the research objective

To determine how year-10 students' persuasive essays are influenced by the use of online thesis generators to help them write thesis statements.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The development of a sound thesis statement was clearly one of the major aspects that participants in this study had major problems with in order to construct a critical voice when arguing a case in their written essays. The online tool aimed at helping students write better thesis statements was widely unknown by the students before the research project and appears to have been appreciated by a vast majority of the participants as seen in their reactive comments:

I think the online thesis builder is really good because it gives an idea of how you should do your work

and understand more. (Student No. 3, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

The majority of the students involved considered that the online thesis generator used was a very useful tool which guided them in creating clearer thesis statements, which they could subsequently revise and improve.

It is really good, help you get a thesis that will help your essay. *(Student No. 6, Final Structured Log,*

December 2, 2011)

Several students reported that the online tool had helped them put all ideas together, so that they did not have to think much of how to structure a thesis statement (as reported in the end of implementation survey (see Appendix 6)

Similarly, in the second writing task, the teacher-researcher observed that elements including coherence, cohesion and paragraphing were clearly and positively influenced by the

mere fact of having a well-constructed thesis statement because (due to the fact that) participants wrote more clearly when developing their ideas in each of their paragraphs. Nonetheless, during the end of implementation survey (see Appendix 6) and the midterm students' structured log (see Appendix 5) several participants claimed that the online thesis builders were not always an altogether helpful tool. They argued that they provided no more than a general idea, and not something more explicit to be developed in the persuasive essay.

No because as I said before, the results of the online thesis builder are not precise. (Student No. 9, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

Others were not very pleased with the grammatical inaccuracy of the thesis statements after inappropriately using the online thesis builder and this made them opt for writing their own thesis statements rather than using those suggested by the online tool.

"it places everything wrong and confusing". (Student No. 9, Final Structured Log, December 2, 2011)

Thus, despite the fact that inappropriate manipulation of the online tool prevented some students benefitting when writing a thesis statement, the advantages of using it clearly far outweigh the mishaps because of the focus and clarity provided at the moment of writing a persuasive essay.

Other Conclusions

Hoetker (1982, p. 380) suggests that the details of the wording of a topic must be related to writing performance due to the fact that it can affect students' interpretation of the topic and their levels of motivation. As a matter of fact, less than half of the students reported that they did not really like to write about topics previously assigned unless they were topics appealing to them. Once again, this brings forth the importance of authentic writing (Sundem, 2006, p.34) in the classroom so that learners feel empowered to follow the writing process.

This being said, it could be inferred that essay topics clearly have a strong influence on students' motivation to write and on the quality of information included in them. Moreover, while observing and documenting students' performance, I noticed that even though the topic is part of current issues in school environments (e.g. teenage pregnancy and sex education in schools), it provided little motivation. Thus, the information included in some essays was made much more impersonal, by relying mostly on background reading or their own research, rather than on each individual's insights.

Once again, in trying to explain the success or failure of any task, aspects including motivation and also everyday personal and professional life issues such as likes and dislikes, interests and preferences, wishes and desires and goals and expectations (Dörnyei, 2001) need to be taken into consideration. In fact, students' likes and dislikes as well as their opposing views towards the process writing approach gave birth to a myriad of feelings that were evident throughout the process.

First of all, there were students who felt no motivation to upgrade their writing skills for persuasive writing, mainly because they reported not being fond of writing. Along with motivation came other feelings that surely affected students' performance during the writing tasks, namely, self-confidence, boredom, stress, relaxation, nervousness, comfort, enjoyment, excitement and fun.

To sum up, even though learners showed a great deal of motivation so as to improve their grades, there was little or maybe no intrinsic motivation to carry out a process writing approach, mainly because writing does not seem to be an activity students enjoy doing so much.

Undoubtedly, students in Year 10 are much more accustomed to writing by following a product writing approach. Thus, out of the four stages mentioned in chapter 2, possibly only familiarization of text types and free writings (White, 2000) are the writing phases necessary to complete writing products. In fact, as one of the students said: time is limited and maybe this is the reason why being able to comply with writing tasks in a limited amount of time is what learners are more interested in, rather than in becoming better writers.

Recommendations and Limitations

Teacher-researchers interested in carrying out interventions and studies similar to that described in this report might consider several aspects that may prove useful in their endeavors to bring innovations to their FL classes. In the following paragraphs I will refer to aspects that facilitated the pedagogical intervention and the research analysis and also to some that limited it.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Part of the success of the pedagogical intervention was due to several important factors: First, students were completely informed about the kind of intervention that was going to take place. Consequently, most students showed willingness to collaborate and participate in all activities carried out.

Second, as part of the ethics of the intervention, I made sure that students' learning was always privileged and never ignored or diminished by the hindrances of data collection.

Third, the inclusion of new concepts (persuasive writing and techniques to achieve it), or somehow new activities (prewriting) was always done following concrete steps to assess each one of them before another one was followed.

Fourth, students were given constant feedback on their performance, which facilitated constant space for metacognition: planning, monitoring and analyzing own performance, and planning improvements based on it.

Sixth, I found it very useful to resort to sources such as Internet, computers, Ipads and smart boards which allowed them to have direct access to writing technology.

Seventh, the fact that the Colegio Gran Bretaña welcomes and promotes this kind of learning and also the implementation of research initiatives was also important in the execution of the project. The CGB not only helped by granting the authorization for the intervention to be conducted, but also by providing access to all the resources mentioned above.

However, there were a small number of elements which limited the pedagogical innovation I intended to bring about within this project. On the one hand, given the introduction of new topics, the training for the intervention required and the teaching to the exam approach, I

found it difficult to provide students with specific training on process writing and to comply with

the ELS curriculum for year 10.

On the other hand, students' sense of responsibility was not very high and this greatly

affected the deadlines of all the writing tasks and the implementation of the structured logs and

the surveys. However, I overcame this problem by assigning certain tasks as homework,

including outlining and finishing the drafts or final essays.

In addition, the amount of outside-of-class activities run by the CGB also affected the

continuity of the research study and this made it difficult to keep students on track on a regular

basis. However, the following strategies contributed for positive execution of the research plan:

First, the researcher maintained constant contact and communication with students inside school,

and through Internet so that everyone knew what was expected for the subsequent classes.

Second, I made sure students knew what the learning and language objectives were at the

beginning of each one of the classes, so as to facilitate achievement and assessment of these aims

either in or outside of class. Third, when collecting data, I made sure that all information was

kept on a safe excel document on my computer and online so that there would be no risk of

losing any data. I found it really useful to then, copy and paste students' comments onto the final

research document, avoiding so much typing at the end of the process.

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Pedagogical Implications and Further Research

Pedagogical Implications

Both the pedagogical and research components of this project yield important pedagogical implications and open possible new lines of inquiry.

Any L2 classroom that considers writing as a core activity in class, and that aims at fostering writing skills, should consider knowledge that has been produced in the realm of fields, such as product and process writing. Writing needs to be understood as a process which should not only involve familiarization and free writing but also the creation of spaces for prewriting, revising editing and publishing. This ought to help students become more aware of the ideas they want to include but also how those ideas are included as to achieve the desired writing objective.

Feedback and reflection were other important elements in the development of the methodology to raise students´ writing awareness. This project identified the importance of providing students with feedback to not only improve products but also to put into practice metacognitive strategies in order to self-assess performance.

The use of various writing technologies was also another important element to consider nowadays. The fact that students resort to computers nowadays to prepare any writing task makes it imperative for teachers and institutions to provide students with access to technology on a regular basis.

Further Research

A first line of inquiry that may emerge is the study of the use of Online Thesis Generators is how effective and accurate they can be when instructions are followed step by step and how much they can really help students create better thesis statements in the absence of them, namely, during exams.

Another line of enquiry would be how motivation may be increased when a general feeling towards writing is that one of rejection and dislike. It would be interesting to see how students' motivation may be altered so that writing becomes a more enjoyable and truly fruitful activity.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: CGB Academic Program

STRAGES	AGE	U.K YEAR	USA GRADE	COLOMB. SYS
FOUNDATION STAGE	3-4	Nursery	Preschool K3	Párvulos
	4-5	Reception	Preschool K4	Prekínder
KEY STAGE ONE	5-6	Year 1	Kindergarden K5	Kínder
	6-7	Year 2	Grade 1	Transición
KEY STAGE TWO	7-8	Year 3	Grade 2	Primero
	8-9	Year 4	Grade 3	Segundo
	9-10	Year 5	Grade 4	Tercero
	10-11	Year 6	Grade 5	Cuarto
KEY STAGE THREE	11-12	Year 7	Grade 6	Quinto
	12-13	Year 8	Grade 7	Sexto
	13-14	Year 9	Grade 8	Séptimo
KEY STAGE FOUR	14-15	Year 10	Grade 9	Octavo
	15-16	Year 11	Grade 10	Noveno
KEY STAGE FIVE (Post-16)	16-17	Year 12	Grade 11	Décimo
	17-18	Year 13	Grade 12	Undécimo

Appendix 2: Pre-Test

1. Read the article titled: *If bingeing on chocolate makes your trousers too tight, blame the genes.*
2. Read the additional information about *Gene Therapy.*
3. Read the task carefully and write a 250-essay (min.) answering the question given.

6 A drug has been developed with a means to... off sweet food.

IF BINGEING ON CHOCOLATE MAKES YOUR TROUSERS TOO TIGHT, BLAME THE GENES

CHOCOHOLICS no longer need to feel guilty about their craving. They are simply the victim of their genes, scientists have found.

The so-called 'sweet tooth gene' has been identified by separate teams of researchers and helps explain why some find it harder to resist chocolate bars and cream cakes.

It also raises the possibility of designing a drug which could 'switch off' the gene and help people resist sugary foods. Children, in particular, risk their health by eating too many sweets and chocolates.

To identify the gene, the research teams - based at Harvard Medical School in Boston and Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York - conducted almost identical experiments using mice which have differences in their ability to taste sweet foods. They compared the DNA of the two types of mice and noticed differences in the gene called T1R3.

Dr. Gopi Shanker, of the Mount Sinai team, said: 'It contains information which produces a protein called the sweet taste receptor.

'This recognises the sweet content of food and initiates a cascade of events which signal to the brain that a sweet food has been eaten.' Dr. Shanker added: 'Exactly the same gene exists in humans, so it means that if your parents have a sweet tooth then you probably will as well.'

Research by the Harvard team has come to the same conclusion. But Aubrey Sheiham, professor of dental public health at University College, London, said the results did not provide chocoholics with an excuse to give up dieting.

He said: 'We have always known that some people have a sweeter tooth than others. But it has also been proved that if you gradually expose people to less sugar, then the body becomes accustomed to it less. They will be satisfied with a lower level of sweetness.'

Mr. Sheiham warned against any form of gene therapy which sought to deactivate the sweet tooth gene.

'We have produced this gene through evolution because sweet foods in nature are not poisonous and also give us energy. We all need to have some sugar in our diet.'

The U.S. researchers are using their discovery to develop artificial sweeteners without an aftertaste.

Gene Therapy

Gene therapy is the insertion, alteration, or removal of genes within an individual's cells and biological tissues to treat disease. It is a technique for correcting defective genes that are responsible for disease development.[1] The most common form of gene therapy involves the insertion of functional genes into an unspecified genomic location in order to replace a mutated gene, but other forms involve directly correcting the mutation or modifying normal gene that enables a viral infection. Although the technology is still in its infancy, it has been used with some success.

(Retrieved form http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gene_therapy on August 28, 2011).

Gene therapy research is complex and has many variables. Though several clinical trials have shown promising results, much more research is needed to guarantee the safety and efficiency of gene therapy procedures. As gene therapy comes closer to becoming a medical treatment for genetic diseases, other ethical, legal, and social issues must be kept in mind.

Ethical, legal and social issues
There are several types of issues to consider as we think about gene therapy:

Ethical issues ask us to consider the potential moral outcomes of gene therapy research.

Legal issues require researchers and the public to help policymakers decide whether and how gene therapy research should be regulated by the government.

Social issues involve the impact of gene therapy research on society as a whole.

(Retrieved form http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/tech/genetherapy/gtissues/ on August 28,2011)

Writing Task (You have 40 minutes to answer this task)
There are several ethical, social and legal issues associated with gene therapy. What are your views on using *gene therapy* to cure people with addictions such as chocoholics?
Use the following space to plan your essay.

Appendix 3: Preliminary Survey

Beginning of Implementation

Following you will find some sentences with four (4) possible responses each. Read each one of the sentences and give to each response a number from **1 to 4,** being **1** the alternative with the highest degree and **4** with the lowest. Alternative **"e"** is for you to include your own response in case it has not been included before. If you include your own response, bear in mind that the numbers to be assigned are from **1 to 5**.

I write essays in English because:

_____*a. I believe someday it will be useful in my academic life*
_____*b. I believe it will help me understand English speakers better*
_____*c. I believe it will allow me to meet other people*
_____*d. I believe that knowing how to write will made me a more educated person*
_____*e.*_____
_____
_____*.*

Following you will find some sentences with three (3) possible responses each. Read each one of the sentences and mark with an **X** the response that best applies to you and write additional information if necessary. Alternative **"d"** is for you to include your own response in case it has not been included.

I feel comfortable writing in English in class:

_____*a. Sometimes*
_____*b. Almost never*
_____*c. Very often*
_____*d.* _____

I consider that my in-class performance when writing is:

_____*a. satisfactory but I need to improve*
_____*b. not satisfactory and I need to dedicate more time and effort to it.*
_____*c. very good though there are some aspects I need to improve. Explain which ones.*
_____
_____

_____*d.* _____

_____.

Whenever I am assigned to write an essay, I feel motivated to do so because I like this type of writing tasks. Explain why.

_____ *a. Always*
_____
_____

_____ *b. Very often*
_____
_____

_____ *c. Almost never*
_____
_____

_____ *d. Never*
_____
_____

_____ *e.*
_____
_____

As soon as I start thinking about my essays, I voluntarily research as much as possible about the subject matter.

_____ *a. Always*
_____
_____

_____ *b. Very often*
_____
_____

_____ *c. Almost never*
_____
_____

_____ *d. Never*

_____

_____

_____ *e.*_____

_____

_____

I know how to write thesis statements on which I base my essays.

_____ *a. Always*

_____

_____

_____ *b. Very often*

_____

_____

_____ *c. Almost never*

_____

_____

_____ *d. Never*

_____

_____

_____ *e.*_____

_____

_____

If I have problems writing my thesis statements, I use online thesis Generators to better focus the core ideas of my essays.

_____ *a. Always*

_____

_____

_____ *b. Very often*

_____

_____

_____ *c. Almost never*

_____

_____

_____ *d. Never*

_____
_____

_____ *e.*_____
_____
_____

Do I know how to implement the writing process before writing essays in English?

_____*a. Yes*
_____*b. No*
_____*c Some stages (please mention which ones)*

_____
_____*d.*_____

I believe that feedback provided on essays can be helpful to improve my writing skills.
_____ *a. Yes. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____ *b. No. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____ *c. Sometimes. Explain why?*
_____
_____

I edit my essays based on the feedback given.

_____*a. always. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____*b. Sometimes. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____*c. Never. Explain why?*
_____
_____
_____*d.* _____

Appendix 4: Midterm Students' Structured Log

1. *Do you see any advantages in brainstorming and outlining ideas before writing persuasive essays? Which ones? Please explain why.*
2. *Do you see any disadvantages in brainstorming and outlining ideas before writing persuasive essays? Which ones? Please explain why?*
3. *Have you felt motivated when writing essays after having brainstormed and outlined them beforehand? Why? Why not?*
4. *Do you see any advantages in drafting, revising and editing your persuasive essays? If so, which ones? If not, why not?*
5. *Do you see any disadvantages in drafting, revising and editing your persuasive essays? If so, which ones? If not, why not?*
6. *Has the implementation of the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and editing) helped you feel motivated to write persuasive essays?*
7. *Has the implementation of the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and editing) helped you feel self-confident to write persuasive essays?*
8. *Have you been applying the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and editing) when writing essays for other academic subjects (History, etc.)?*
9. *What is your opinion about the online thesis Generator you used to help you create your thesis statements?*
10. *Would you consider the Online Thesis Generator a tool that would help you create clearer thesis statements? Why? Why not?*
11. *How did you feel when using the Online Thesis Generator to generate the thesis statement of your persuasive essay?*
12. *Do you consider that the feedback provided during the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, and drafting) was beneficial to write the final essay? Why? Why not?*
13. *How did you use the feedback provided during the writing process (brainstorming, outlining, and drafting)?*
14. *Do you think your feelings towards writing persuasive essays have changed so far? Why? Why not?*
15. *Do you feel motivated to write when topics have been assigned to you?*
16. *When writing a persuasive essay, would you rather choose a topic or be told what to write about? Why?*

Appendix 5: Final Students' Structured Log

1. *Do you see any advantages in brainstorming and outlining essays using online thesis Generators?*
2. *What disadvantages do you see in brainstorming and outlining essays using online thesis Generators?*
3. *Have you felt some kind of personal satisfaction when using online thesis Generators to write your essays?*
4. *Do you think the online thesis Generator used gave you more clarity on how a thesis statement and an outline look like?*
5. *What is your opinion about the writing process carried throughout the first term. Explain.*

Appendix 6: Final Survey

End of the Implementation

Following you will find some sentences with three (3) possible responses each. Read each one of the sentences and mark with an **X** the one that best applies to you. Alternative **"d"** is for you to include your own response if it has not been included.

I am more aware now of the writing process before writing essays in English?

_____*a. Yes*
_____*b. No*
_____*c Some stages (please mention which ones)*
_____
_____*d._____*

While I am writing my essays, I use the brainstorming and outlining I have prepared using the online thesis Generators.
_____*a. Sometimes*
_____*b. Almost Never*
_____*c. Very often*
_____*d. _____*

Considering my performance in all the writing skills done in class during the first term, I could say that:

_____*a. Online thesis Generators have motivated me to write better persuasive essays from now*
      on. Explain why?
_____
_____
_____*b. Online thesis Generators have not motivated me to write better persuasive essays.*
_____
_____
_____*c. Online thesis Generators have somehow motivated me to write better persuasive*
essays.
_____
_____

After having used the online thesis Generators, I feel comfortable and more confident writing persuasive essays. Explain why?

_____*a. Sometimes*

_____
_____

_____*b. Almost never*

_____
_____

_____*c. Very often*

_____
_____

_____*d. _____*

_____
_____

Whenever I am assigned to write an essay, I would feel more motivated to do so because online thesis Generators helped me write better thesis statements.

_____ *a. Always*

_____
_____

_____ *b. Very often*

_____
_____

_____ *c. Almost never*

_____
_____

_____ *d. Never*

_____
_____

_____ *e.*

_____
_____

Comparing the end of the term to the beginning of it:

_____*a. I believe I would always use online thesis Generators to work on my writing skills outside*

of class.
_____*b. I believe I sometimes would use online thesis Generators to work on my writing skills*
      outside of class.
_____*c. I believe I would never use online thesis Generators to work on my writing skills*
outside
      of class.
_____*d. _____*
_____
_____.

If I had not been told about the existence of the online thesis Generators, I would probably:

_____*a. have not found about them by myself.*
_____*b. have been told about them by another teacher.*
_____*c. have brainstormed and outlined ideas by myself.*
_____*d. _____*
_____
_____.

I used the feedback from my previous persuasive essays to improve the following persuasive
writing tasks. Explain why?

_____*a. Always*
_____
_____

_____*b. Very often*
_____
_____

_____*c. Almost never*
_____
_____

_____*d. Never*
_____
_____

I believe that feedback provided on essays was helpful to improve my writing skills.

_____ *a. Yes. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____ *b. No. Explain why?*
_____
_____

_____ *c. Sometimes. Explain why?*
_____
_____

Appendix 7: Self-correction Codes

- ww= wrong word
- Wf= word form
- wo= word order
- vf= verb form
- vT= verb tense
- Sp= spelling
- nc= not clear
- ^ = missing information
- sing.= singular
- pl.= plural
- Conn= connective
- S-v agr.= subject-verb agreement
- r= register
- p= punctuation
- C= Capitalization

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Appendix 8: Letter of Consent to the Director

Bogota, October 27, 2011

Dear
Maureen Fleming de Perez
Director
The Colegio Gran Bretaña

I am currently pursuing a Master's Degree on English Language Teaching and Autonomous Learning Environments at La Sabana University. I am conducting a research study on the use of online thesis Generators for students to have clear thesis statements when writing persuasive essays. This research project is under the supervision of Mr. David Shepherd and Ms. Luz Dary Arias, both researchers at La Sabana University.

As an English Language Support (ELS) teacher for secondary at Gran Bretaña School (CGB) in Bogota, I have witnessed that secondary students are asked to write persuasive essays on a regular basis for their literature classes as part of the text analysis tasks underpinned by the National Curriculum of England. Nevertheless, after having worked with students in Year 9, I have been able to observe that though these students make an attempt to write essays, they fail in writing a well-structured paper in which a clear thesis statement is presented and developed.

The aims of the research are to find out how Year-10 students' persuasive essays are influenced by the use of thesis Generators and how feedback given on those essays affects their writing skills. I am involved in action research so I can continue to improve my teaching practices and provide students with sound writing practice to improve their writing skills.

I will be focusing my project on a targeted group of Year 10 students whom I will meet twice a week, 50 minutes each time to give them detailed instruction on writing strategies.

I will be collecting writing tasks samples, student surveys and student journals so as to gather data throughout the project. Students will remain anonymous in my written report and any work samples used will not include their names. Students will be referred to as a letter or a number in the report.

There will be no risk involved in this study except for the investment of valuable time on the writing process and the disclosure of writing tasks-related information. However, there will be benefits for students participating in the research since I hope that the information obtained from the study may help students create clearer thesis statements, follow a writing process and use feedback on writing tasks to improve their writing skills.

Students will be free to choose to participate in the study and will have benefits such as an overall performance grade as part of their evaluation in their English class. Furthermore, all students will be able to receive enough practice in preparation for their Assignment One of the IGCSE First Language English Test. Ms. Joanna Dench, the English teacher, will be supporting me during the whole process since we have made sure that this research fits the objectives and contents we have planned for the first term of the academic year. All students will receive

Appendix 9: Letter of Consent to Parents

Bogota, September 23, 2011

Dear Parents,

This semester I am doing an action research project on the use of online thesis Generators to write persuasive essays in Year 10. The aims of the research are to find out how Year-10 students' persuasive essays are influenced by the use of thesis Generators and how feedback given on those essays affects their writing skills.

I will be focusing my project on a targeted group of Year 10 students whom I will meet twice a week, 50 minutes each time to give them detailed instruction on writing strategies.

I will be collecting writing samples, student surveys and student journals so as to gather data throughout the project. Students will remain anonymous in my written report and any work samples used will not include their names. Students will be referred to as a letter or a number in the report.

There will be no risk involved in this study except for the investment of valuable time on the writing process and the disclosure of writing tasks-related information. However, there will be benefits for students participating in the research since I hope that the information obtained from the study may help students create clearer thesis statements and use feedback on writing tasks to improve their writing skills.

Students will be free to choose to participate in the study and will have no loss or benefit except for being able to receive enough practice in preparation for their Assignment One of the IGCSE First Language English Test. Ms. Joanna Dench, the English teacher, will be supporting me during the whole process since we have made sure that this research fits the objectives and contents we have planned for the first term of the academic year. All students will receive standard treatment and will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse effects.

If you have any questions regarding my action research project, feel free to contact me at (310-819-9503). If you do not wish for your child to be included in my research project, I will still assist them in their writing process so that they are better prepared for writing their Assignment 1 for the IGCSE course.

Sincerely,

Katya Tinoco
ELS Teacher and candidate to obtain a Master's Degree on English Language Teaching from Universidad de La Sabana

Please complete the bottom portion of this letter and return it to me by Thursday, September 29, 2011.

Student's name _____

Parent's signature _____

My child's signature _____

Appendix 10: Research Project Informed Consent to students

The Colegio Gran Bretaña

Title of Project: Using Online thesis Generators to write persuasive essays in Year 10

Katya Tinoco, ELS teacher from The Colegio Gran Bretaña is conducting research on the above topic. The aims of the research are to find out how Year-10 students' persuasive essays are influenced by the use of thesis Generators and how feedback given on those essays affects their writing skills. I am involved in action research so I can continue to improve my teaching practices and provide you with sound writing practice to improve your writing skills.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete two written surveys and journal entries besides submitting coursework so as to gather data throughout the project.

I will be focusing my project on you as the targeted group and I will meet you twice a week, 50 minutes each time to provide you with detailed instruction on writing strategies.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing from the research and there will be no negative consequences if you decide to withdraw. Before the final report for the project is prepared, I will share with you a summary of what I have written about the surveys, the journals and the writing assignments submitted and I will ask you to comment on any descriptions or interpretations that you believe are inaccurate or mistaken.

When I report on the research, I will ensure that you are not identified. No reference to personal names will be used. I am the only person who will have access to data collected for the project. Any data I use in reports or publications will be for illustration only. If you wish to have a copy of the final report, I will arrange for this to be done.

Participant Consent

The participant has been given a signed copy of this form to keep.
I agree to participate in this research.

Signed:_____ **Date:** _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by The Colegio Gran Bretaña. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the main researcher at k.tinoko@cgb.edu.co or at 310-819-9503. Any complaint will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

Name of Researcher:_____ **Date:**_____

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL

STUDENTS

Activity/Date	Month January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August				Month September				Month October				Month November				Month December			
	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Step 1: Initiation	▓	▓	▓	▓																
Step 2: Preliminary Investigation	▓	▓	▓	▓																
Step 3: Literature review	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓										
Step 4: Design of action plan	▓	▓	▓	▓																
Step 5: Implementation					▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Step 6: monitoring data collection					▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Step 7: Analysis and of data							▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Step 9: Sharing findings														▓	▓	▓				
Step 8: Reflection & decision making														▓	▓	▓				

Appendix 11: Research Project Timeline (Action Plan)

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Appendix 12: Transcription of Participants' Responses to Surveys and Structured Logs

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Appendix 13: Color Coding Categories Main Question
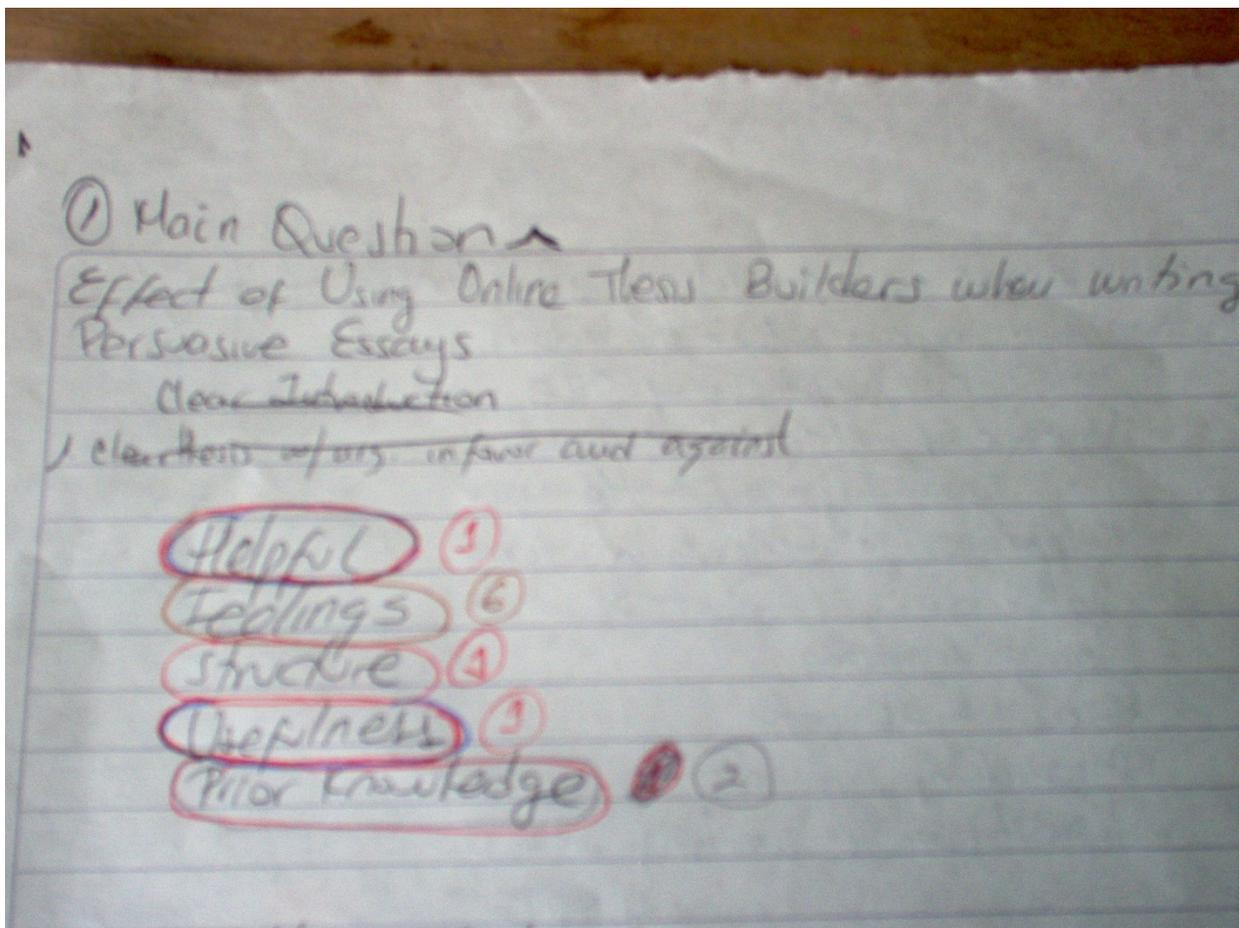
USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH

SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Appendix 14: Color Coding Categories Sub-Question

USING ONLINE THESIS GENERATORS TO WRITE PERSUASIVE ESSAYS IN EFL WITH
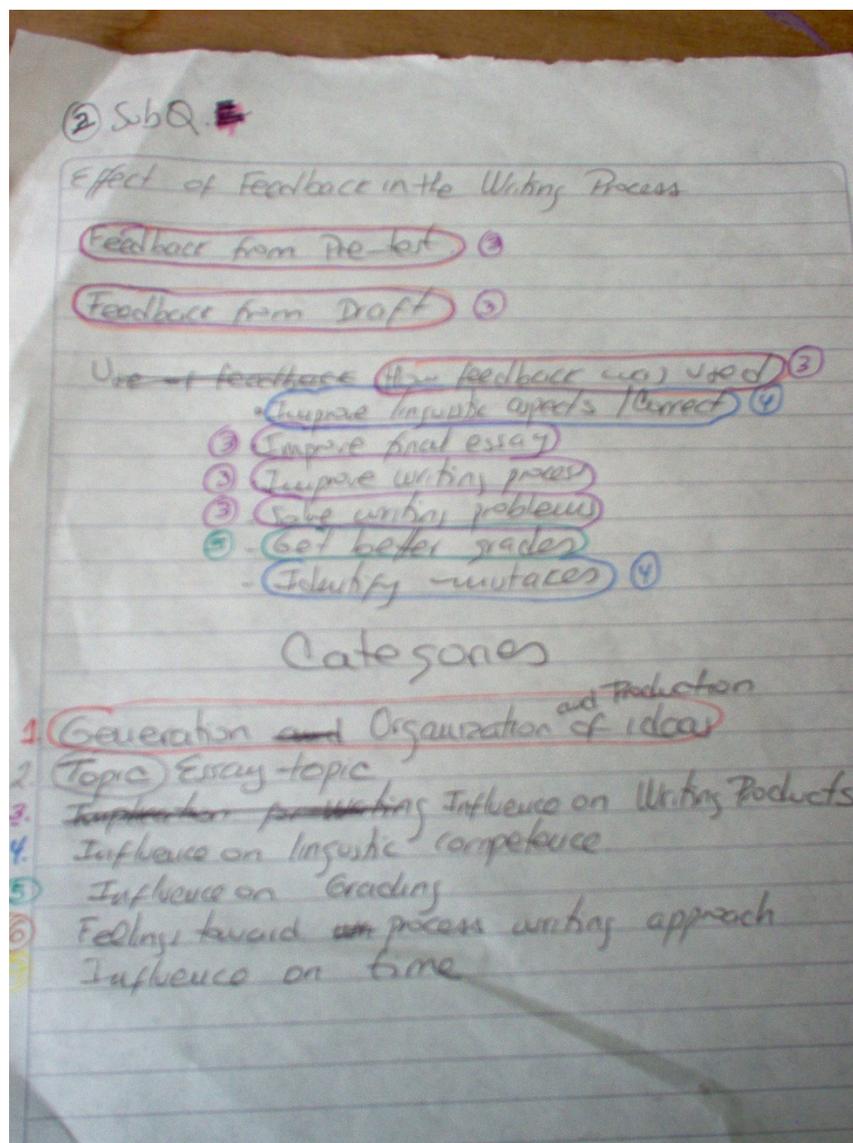
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Appendix 15: Research Implementation Lesson Plan

Lesson Number	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activities	Materials
1(Sept. 8)	To identify students' needs and strengths	Give Ss a pre-writing test Ss are expected to show evidence of outlining, paragraphing, using a thesis statement to organize and present ideas, and a concluding paragraph.	Pre-test
2 (Sept. 9)	Get students familiar with correction codes (see APPENDIX 6) To get information about students' initial views about English writing skills.	Provide students with feedback on results of pre-test. (Start identifying target areas to include in students self-assessment instrument). Give students the preliminary survey on writing skills.	Pre-test results Preliminary survey
3 (Sept. 15)	To familiarize students with persuasive writing.	Introduce Persuasive Writing: what it is, structure, and tips) Give out sample persuasive essays to students. Have them compare them to general information about persuasive essays and judge their effectiveness and appropriateness.	PPP Sample essays
4 (Sept. 16)	To make students aware of persuasive essays requirements.	Check revision of sample essays. Give students feedback on the accuracy of sample revision. Introduce persuasive techniques	PPP
5 (Sept. 22)	To familiarize students with Online Thesis Builders	Introduce Online Thesis Builders http://www.ozline.com/electraguide/	Website

		Have students brainstorm advantages and disadvantages of online thesis builders. Walk students through steps to use Online Thesis Builder.	
6 (Sept. 23)	To allow Ss to get familiar with essay topic.	Assign research on persuasive topic: Sex Education in Schools to prevent Teenage Pregnancy.	ICT Room
7 (Sept. 29)	To allow students to use Online Thesis Builder	Have students answer preliminary questions to create their thesis. Have students evaluate appropriateness of the thesis statement obtained from online thesis builder. Students print thesis and outline obtained from online thesis builder.	Online site
8 (Sept. 30)	To introduce students to outlining	Introduce outlining. Have students use information from research, and thesis obtained to organize their ideas in an outline form. Collect outlines	PPT
8 (Oct. 6)	To familiarize students with topic sentences and supporting details.	Give students feedback on outlines. Introduce writing topic sentences and supporting details based on thesis statements. Assign correction of outlines and writing topic sentences as homework.	PPT
10 (Oct. 7)	To allow students to draft their essays.	Students draft their essays (first draft).	
11 (Oct. 20)	To give feedback on essay drafts	Students will individually clarify with teacher the aspects that need to be improved for the final essay of task 1.	To give feedback on essay drafts

12 (Oct. 27)	To have Students write their final essays	Students write their final essays in class	Feedback from task 1
13 (Oct. 28)	To have students self-evaluate their writing process.	Give mid-term students' journal	Students' mid-term structured log
14 (Nov.3)	To give feedback on final essays	Start creating awareness on cohesive devices. Help Ss understand how grades will be managed. Have Ss choose topic for second writing task.	Final essays Handout with cohesive devices
15 (Nov. 4)	To have Ss carry out prewriting process	Ss will use Online Thesis Builder to create thesis statements, brainstorm ideas and do research on their topics.	Ipads or ICT room
16 (Nov.18)	To have Ss create their outlines	Ss will finish their prewriting process: thesis statements, outlines, research	None
17 (Nov.24	To allow students to draft their essays.	Ss will begin to write their first draft of the essays using thesis statement, information from outlines and information gathered on the topic.	Ss-generated materials
18 (Nov. 25)	To give feedback on essay drafts	Students will individually clarify with teacher the aspects that need to be improved for the final essay of task 2.	To give feedback on essay drafts
19 (Dec.1)	To have Students write their final essays	Students write their final essays in class	Feedback from task 2
20 (Dec.2)	To have students self-evaluate their performance during writing process . To give feedback on final essays	Give final students' journal Help Ss understand how feedback was managed.	Students' final structured log
21 (Dec.9)	To get information about students' final views about their English writing skills.	Give students the end of implementation survey on writing skills.	End of implementation survey