



THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTION, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING

Gloria Sánchez Muñoz

Supervised by: Dr. Patricia Salazar Campillo | September 2022



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The Role of Instruction, Language Proficiency and Motivation in Second Language Writing

**Memòria presentada per Gloria Sánchez Muñoz per a optar al grau de
doctora per la Universitat Jaume I**

Gloria Sánchez Muñoz

Patricia Salazar Campillo

GLORIA
SANCHEZ
MUÑOZ -
NIF:204637
59S

Firmado
digitalmente por
GLORIA SANCHEZ
MUÑOZ -
NIF:20463759S
Fecha: 2022.09.25
12:03:24 +02'00'

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLES	Association of Language Centres in Higher Education
AMI	Attitude Motivation Index
AMTB	Attitude Motivation Test Battery
ASTP	Army Specialized Training Programme
CF	Corrective Feedback
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLL	Community Language Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
FLs	Foreign Languages
H1	Hypothesis 1
H2	Hypothesis 2
H3	Hypothesis 3
H4	Hypothesis 4
H5	Hypothesis 5
INTMOT	Integrative Motivation
JSLW	Journal of Second Language Writing
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MMR	Mixed-Methods Research
RQ1	Research Question 1
RQ2	Research Question 2
RQ3	Research Question 3
RQ4	Research Question 4
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
T1	Time 1 (i.e., pre-test)
T2	Time 2 (i.e., post-test)
T3	Time 1 (i.e., delayed post-test)
TL	Target Language
TG	Target Group
TG1	Treatment Group 1
TG2	Treatment Group 2
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLT	Situational Language Teaching



INTRODUCTION

B

C

A

This dissertation aims to help English as a Foreign Language (EFL, henceforth) teachers in the task of instructing and assessing the writing skill in secondary education. The results obtained from the present study attempt to offer valuable pedagogical implications and insights to be applied in the language classroom.

This investigation is framed within the field of research of Second¹ Language Acquisition (SLA, henceforth). In particular, it focuses on the teaching of writing under a holistic communicative perspective. Despite the importance given to the written skill nowadays, it was not until the 1960s when it really gained momentum (Matsuda, 2001). These days, in all teaching programmes, writing is considered crucial; however, there is still no consensus regarding the best methodology to instruct this skill. In fact, according to Raimes (1993), there are three main approaches to teach writing: focus on form, focus on the writer, and focus on the reader. The most traditional, although obsolete approach is the one which centres on form, where errors must be corrected and eliminated. More popular methodologies are the ones which deal with the writing process focusing on writers and genres considering readers. Despite the different methods which exist in the literature, it is key to highlight that nowadays writing should be considered under a holistic communicative perspective where the presence of mistakes and errors should be something natural in the process of learning to write (Usó-Juan et al., 2006). Moreover, the context needs to be taken into consideration as Foreign Language (FL) writing is shaped by the social, cultural, and educational values surrounding it (Manchón, 2009).

Apart from the instructional treatment used, individual differences also play a crucial role in the development of the writing skill. Cognitive, affective, and personal traits are considered the most important variables to bear in mind (Gardner, 1985). In this regard, this dissertation aims to analyse how learners' initial proficiency level and motivation influence their second language (L2, henceforth) writing competence. We cannot forget that proficiency is one of the most important indicators of language

¹ Unless explicitly stated, in the present dissertation the terms 'second' and 'foreign' language acquisition will be used interchangeably.

achievement (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Pinto, 2005). Hence, considering that L2 writing is an exigent task, linguistic proficiency is viewed as a sign of willingness to succeed. In the same vein, motivation is one of the most decisive cognitive factors which has a direct and crucial effect on language learning success (Dörnyei, 2005). Motivation can predict L2 accomplishment at the same level as language proficiency (Gardner and Lambert, 1959; MacIntyre et al., 2009a). Therefore, apart from determining the impact of motivation on L2 writing, this dissertation goes a step further by also analysing the influence of the two main types of motivation which exist in the literature, i.e., integrative and instrumental motivation, on 2nd year Baccalaureate students.

In light of all the previous ideas, the aim of the current investigation is to explore learners' L2 writing development under a holistic communicative perspective at Baccalaureate level in Spain over an academic year. In particular, the objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate learners' L2 writing development from a holistic communicative perspective.
2. To explore the role of instruction and L2 writing competence.
3. To determine the influence of linguistic proficiency on L2 writing competence.
4. To analyse the relationship between motivation and L2 writing competence.

The present investigation contributes to the field of L2 writing in several crucial aspects. First, it offers a new perspective since the researcher who conducted the study is also the main teacher. This type of research is very valuable and almost non-existent (Lee, 2016). Secondly, it contains a longitudinal investigation over one academic year using a mixed research methodology to explore 2nd year Baccalaureate students' L2 writing development. Thirdly, it analyses L2 writing from a holistic communicative perspective in an attempt to enhance learners' communicative competence and to offer new pedagogical implications to other EFL secondary teachers who tend to assess L2

writing just focusing on linguistic aspects (Furneau et al., 2007; Lee, 2004, 2005) instead of focusing on the different competences of the communicative construct. In this regard, this dissertation operationalises L2 writing under the following five dimensions: (i) content, (ii) task requirement, (iii) coherence and cohesion, (iv) grammar, and (v) vocabulary. Fourthly, the role of context is fully considered in this research. Writing is shaped by the culture and traditions surrounding the context where it takes place, therefore it is not a decontextualised process (Hyland, 2002, 2007; Kern, 2000; Leki et al., 2008). In this regard, the present dissertation takes place in the Valencian Community, Spain, considering secondary education students. It is paramount to highlight the scarcity of research conducted in this context, a fact which points to a research gap in need of analysis. In addition, this dissertation considers the role of instruction on L2 writing development. Even though it is possible to find different methodologies to instruct writing, it is not clear which method is the best as educational, contextual, and social values seem to shape writing instruction (Manchón, 2009). In order to shed light on which the best method in our context is, this dissertation explicitly addresses the role of instruction on L2 writing development in secondary education in a Spanish context.

The role exerted by learners' proficiency level on L2 writing is also tackled in this investigation as mixed results can be found in the field (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2003). Finally, the influence of motivation on L2 writing is explored in this investigation in terms of the two main types of motivation, i.e., integrative and instrumental motivation. This research aims at exploring which type of motivation may have a stronger effect on L2 writing in Spanish secondary educational centres as mixed results can be found in the literature depending on the context where research has taken place (e.g., Gardner, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Lukmani, 1972; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000; Svanes, 1987).

In sum, the present study aims at furthering our understanding of how L2 writing competence is acquired over one academic year at 2nd year of Baccalaureate level in Spain. What is more, it strengthens the existing literature in the field of L2 writing by dealing with the aforementioned research gaps.

This dissertation contains a total of 8 chapters divided into two main parts. Part I (Chapters 1 and 2) embodies the theoretical background that guides our investigation. Part II (Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) constitutes the investigation carried out including the methodology used, the results obtained, the discussion of findings, and the conclusions, limitations, future lines of research, and pedagogical implications.

Chapter 1 contains the theoretical framework to understand L2 writing from a communicative perspective. Section 1.1 offers a review of language teaching methods focusing on current communicative approaches. In Section 1.2 the definition of the term communicative competence and its different models are analysed. Section 1.3 centres on the writing skill under the communicative approach perspective. It explores diverse methodologies for teaching writing (Subsection 1.3.1) and how teachers can respond to student's writing (Subsection 1.3.2) through feedback (Subsection 1.3.2.1) and assessment (Subsection 1.3.2.2). In turn, Section 1.4 presents a description of the current research on L2 writing in school contexts. Finally, Section 1.5 includes a summary of the main ideas considered throughout the first chapter.

Chapter 2 centres on the different factors which affect L2 writing competence. More specifically, it explores the influence caused by instruction, students' language proficiency, and motivation. First, a general overview on students' individual differences is provided (Section 2.1). Section 2.2 presents the role played by instruction in L2 writing competence and Section 2.3 offers an analysis of learners' proficiency level as a crucial factor in L2 writing development. Following this, Section 2.4 examines the affective variable of motivation, including the main theories which exist in the literature (Subsection 2.4.1), the principal instruments to measure it (Subsection 2.4.2), and a

summary of current research on motivation in L2 writing (Subsection 2.4.3). Finally, Section 2.5 closes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas.

Chapter 3 deals with the rationale for the present investigation. Section 3.1 presents the motivation, the objectives, and the research gaps addressed in the current study. Section 3.2 focuses on the research questions and hypotheses guiding this investigation.

Chapter 4 explains the methodology used to conduct the present study. It starts by describing the setting where the study took place (Section 4.1) and the participants who took part in the investigation (Section 4.2). A description of the data collection instruments is offered in Section 4.3, including the way quantitative (Subsection 4.3.1) and qualitative (Subsection on 4.3.2) tools were designed and piloted. The data collection procedure is detailed in Section 4.4, together with the design of the rating scales (Subsection 4.4.1) and the way data were coded and analysed (Subsection 4.4.2). Finally, Section 4.5 closes the chapter with a summary of the main ideas offered.

Chapter 5 describes the results and discussion of Research Question 1 (RQ1), which explores the type of instruction which benefits L2 writing development more at Baccalaureate level in Spain over one academic year. First, the quantitative results with reference to RQ1 and its hypotheses are shown in Section 5.1. Qualitative results obtained from the semi-structured interviews are explained in Section 5.2 to complement the quantitative findings. Finally, Section 5.3 offers the discussion of findings.

Chapter 6 addresses the results and discussion of Research Question 2 (RQ2), which aims at exploring whether the initial level of proficiency in English influences overall L2 writing competence. First of all, Section 6.1 analyses participants' opinion essays and the results obtained from the Quick Placement Test (QPT) to provide quantitative results. Next, Section 6.2 illustrates qualitative information obtained from the semi-structured interviews to explain the reasons behind the participants' trajectories and finally, Section 6.3 offers the discussion of findings.

Chapter 7 presents the results and discussion of both Research Question 3 (RQ3) and Research Question 4 (RQ4), which deal with the influence of motivation on overall L2 writing proficiency and the type of motivation that has a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency. First, quantitative data is examined. More specifically, Section 7.1 analyses data from the motivation questionnaires and the opinion essays to examine the existing correlation between motivation and L2 writing performance at the pre-test (Subsection 7.1.1) and at the delayed post-test (Subsection 7.1.2). Section 7.2 explores the influence of integrative and instrumental motivation on L2 writing proficiency. The qualitative findings by means of the individual trajectories of the learners who participated in the case study are explored in Section 7.3. Finally, Section 7.4 offers the discussion of findings.

The investigation concludes with Chapter 8, which offers a summary of the main results in relation to the 4 research questions. In Section 8.1, a review of the principal contributions of this dissertation is outlined together with a synopsis of its main findings. Section 8.2 offers the limitations and directions for further research. Finally, the pedagogical implications of this dissertation are introduced to be considered in secondary education (Section 8.3).

PARIT



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1 TOWARDS A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH
IN L2 WRITING

2 FACTORS INFLUENCING L2 WRITING

CHAPTER



Towards a communicative approach in L2 writing

Chapter 1 is devoted to describing the theoretical framework for current teaching approaches to understand L2 writing from a communicative perspective. Section 1.1 presents an overview of language teaching methods focusing on the origins and evolution of the myriad of methodologies used to teach and learn foreign languages (FLs) since the 16th century to current communicative approaches. In Section 1.2, we deal with the definition of the term “communicative competence” and the diverse models proposed giving special emphasis to its components. Section 1.3 focuses on the writing skill considering the main principles of the communicative approach. It explores the various processes for teaching writing (Subsection 1.3.1) and how teachers may respond to student’s writing (Subsection 1.3.2) through feedback (Subsection 1.3.2.1) and assessment (Subsection 1.3.2.2). In Section 1.4 a thorough description of current research on L2 writing in school contexts can be found. Finally, Section 1.5 includes a summary of the main ideas considered throughout the present chapter.

1.1. Historical evolution of language teaching methods

The issue of learning and teaching FLs is not a current concern. Throughout history, many researchers, linguists, and teachers have tried to find the most appropriate method to teach English according to the evolution of the different linguistic paradigms and theories of language learning.

Over the years, methods such as the *Grammar-Translation Method*, the *Direct Method*, *Situational Language Teaching*, the *Audio-lingual Method*, *Total Physical Response*, the *Silent Way*, *Community Language Learning*, or current *Communicative Approaches* have emerged to accomplish the difficult task of teaching FLs. These methods did not appear by chance; in fact, they were a response to speakers' needs. As claimed by Richards and Rodgers (2001), "changes in language teaching methods throughout history have reflected recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners need" (p. 3).

By the beginning of the 20th century, language teaching was considered an important area within the educational world. It was at that time when the main approaches and methods to language teaching appeared following developments in linguistics and psychology (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, throughout history, the learning of FLs has constantly been a main concern, but it was in the 16th century when the roots of FL teaching were to be established. Actually, at that time, Latin was considered the most important FL. This language was used not only in religious contexts, but also as the governmental language as well as in commercial and educational fields. Lists of vocabulary, abstract grammar rules and the translation of sentences were used to teach Latin. In this teaching process, students' oral practice consisted only in reading their translations aloud. When other modern FLs started to be incorporated within the educational curriculum in schools throughout Europe during the 18th century, the main principles used to teach Latin were applied, which resulted in the *Grammar-Translation Method*.

Following the main tenets of the *Grammar-Translation Method*, FL learners were given lists of vocabulary and abstract sentences to translate and learn by heart. It was thought that the translation of texts was the best way to learn a language. Oral communication was not the goal, and the only oral practice for students was to read out the translated sentences, which were used to illustrate grammar. By the 19th century, this method was the standard way of learning FLs. Lessons were constructed around grammar points, which were explained by sample sentences. These frozen rules were learnt with the help of a handful of randomly chosen written exercises. The *Grammar-Translation Method* dominated the teaching panorama up to the 1940s; however, as the century went by, several factors showed a decline for this methodology. Europeans needed to be able to be proficient in oral communication and this method did not answer their demand. Moreover, at that time, the Reform Movement established the basis for a fundamental language teaching approach, thus reflecting the origins of *Applied Linguistics*. Together with the birth of this scientific approach, natural methods, which focused on naturalistic principles of language learning, seemed to be the mainstream. It was time for the *Direct Method*.

Taking the way the first language (L1) is learnt into consideration, the main principles of the *Direct Method* were established. Believers in this method argued that neither translation nor the use of learners' mother tongue were necessary to teach a FL as meaning could be transmitted through action or demonstration. The target language (TL, henceforth) had to be actively used in the language classroom, and teachers had to encourage its spontaneous use by teaching vocabulary through demonstration, pictures or even mime. However, despite its initial success, the *Direct Method* soon received criticism. Many teachers had limited skills and they were many times frustrated and exhausted (Brown, 1973), as their lessons sometimes became theatre plays. Moreover, although the students' mother tongue was not explicitly used, it was impossible for learners to avoid using it in their minds. What is more, time was also an important drawback, as this method was extremely slow and its implementation in public secondary school education was very difficult. In addition, members of the Reform Movement criticised its lack of linguistic basis.

However, despite all this criticism, this method can be considered the beginning of a new era in language teaching methodology (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

With the coming of the new century, innovations in the teaching of FLs appeared. Language specialists and linguists started focusing their attention on aspects such as the nature of language, principles of language learning, or favourable conditions to promote language acquisition. In other words, they were developing approaches to language learning. Thus, fostering the emergence of many methods seeking a practical implementation of the different approaches from the 1950s to the 1980s.

With the outbreak of the Great War, linguistic movements were becoming more patent in the educational world. Their interest and studies of the theory of language would now be applied into the theory of learning. The influence of Saussure's (1916) *Course on General Linguistics* and the development of Structuralism were making inroads into the pedagogical world.

It was in Great Britain where a group of British linguists developed a scientific foundation for an oral approach to teaching English giving emphasis to oral practice, grammar, vocabulary, and sentence patterns. This oral approach, also known as *Situational Language Teaching (SLT)*, was considered a kind of British structuralism as speech was seen as the basis of language and mastering structures was necessary to develop the oral skill. This group of British linguists focused on the selection, grading, and presentation of vocabulary and grammatical items as they believed this content was necessary for students to master speaking. One of the specific characteristics of this approach focused on the fact that structures were learnt to be used to achieve goals in specific real-world situations or contexts. SLT provided the methodology for most textbooks at that time, and these days syllabus based on grammatical aspects also continue using it. However, in the mid-1960s, SLT was questioned due to the emergence of communicative approaches.

In the United States of America, an urge to learn other languages arose with the coming of World War II. It was necessary to train soldiers in FLs in a short period of time. However, the conventional teaching methods were both slow and inappropriate. A group of linguists led by

Leonard Bloomfield was called to design a special programme for the army based on repetition, imitation, and memorisation. The method, termed *Army Specialized Training Programme* (ASTP), was firstly considered revolutionary. The teaching, directed by linguists, was very intense. This method was based on behaviourism and structuralism, and learning a language involved mastering a series of structures on phonemic, morphological, and syntactic levels, and using drills to shape a specific behaviour, that is, fostering learning through repetition. In the ASTP, emphasis was on listening, speaking and fluency, which were promoted by an accurate manipulation of structures. The ASTP only lasted a couple of years, but it was extraordinarily popular. Obviously, the intensity of exposure was key for the success of this method. After the war, the United States became an important international form of power and English became very popular; therefore, many foreign students wanted to attend American colleges.

In 1964, Professor Nelson Brooks used the term *Audiolingualism* to describe the main principles underpinning the ASTP. This method was used in many American colleges, and it combined structural linguistics, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures, and the ideas of behaviourism (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, Audiolingualism started its decline at the end of the 1960s when developments on psychology and linguistics offered new perspectives towards the teaching of languages.

It was the linguist Noam Chomsky who rejected the structural approach and the behaviourist theory for language learning. According to this scholar, language involved innovation, and it was not a habit structure (Chomsky, 1966). At that time, he developed his theory of transformational grammar to show that mental properties are essential in the process of language learning. What is more, he showed that language is neither imitation nor repetition; on the contrary, it is a creative process in which each learner acquires new learning.

The period from the 1970s to the 1980s was characterised by the appearance of alternative approaches and methods to language teaching and learning. Communicative approaches began to be the main mainstream at that time. However, other innovative methods emerged. These

methods were not based on any language or linguistic theory, instead they focused on ideas or theories of learning. The most popular ones were the *Total Physical Response*, the *Silent Way*, *Community Language Learning* or *Suggestopedia*, among others.

Total Physical Response, developed by James Asher, was built around the combination of coordination of speech and action. Asher compared L2 learning with L1 acquisition, where parents usually offer commands and children answer with physical responses. This method was popular for some years as students were not forced to speak until they were ready, and consequently their levels of anxiety and stress were low (Krashen, 1981).

On the one hand, the *Silent Way*, created by Caleb Gattegno, subordinated teaching to learning. In this method, teachers had to remain as silent as possible in the classroom and students had to speak as much as they could. Physical objects and colour charts were used to support the learning process. It was believed that learning was facilitated if learners discovered rather than remembered or repeated. Therefore, problem-solving was central to learning.

Charles Curran developed *Community Language Learning* (CLL), also known as Counselling-Learning. This method is an example of a humanistic approach (Moskowitz, 1978) and derives its primary insights from counselling. CLL used all the insights from Counselling-Learning to teach languages. In this method, students had to learn how to use the language communicatively and to reflect on their own learning process. Reflection was key in the approach, and teachers were considered to be counsellors who guided all students' learning process.

Suggestopedia, conceived by Georgi Lozanov, focused on the study of Suggestology. This method was based on the power that suggestion produces on learning. Thus, it was thought that positive suggestions increased the chances of learning. In order to achieve this positive suggestion, the use of music, a relaxing and comfortable learning environment, and a good relationship between student and teacher were paramount.

As can be observed, the decade of the 1970s can be considered a period of innovation regarding teaching methodologies. Many alternative ways to teach FLs, which had their origins in

different fields such as psychology or neurology, appeared. In the 1980s, however, there was a great change in language teaching methods with the appearance of *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT). This method appeared with the goal of fostering students' communicative competence (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

The origins of CLT can be found in the 1960s. According to Howatt (1984), it was necessary to look for a method that focused on the study of the language itself and returned to the traditional concept of utterances carrying meaning in themselves, i.e., utterances containing sense and expressing speakers' or writers' intention. Together with this idea, Chomsky (1957) also showed the lack of previous structural linguistic theory in his book *Syntactic Structures*. As Chomsky showed, structural linguistics was not considering "the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 153). In those days, British Applied Linguistics also saw the need to look for a method to foster the communicative potential of the learner as it was more important for learners to master their communicative proficiency than mastering a set of structures. All this also coincided with changes in education in Europe. The European Common Market was a reality and Europeans needed to learn the major languages. The Council of Europe analysed this situation and promoted International Associations of Applied Linguistics with the aim of developing new methods for language teaching. It was a British linguist, Wilkins (1976), who proposed a communicative definition of language. This scholar distinguished between two types of meanings: notional categories (including concepts such as location, quantity, or time) and categories of communicative functions (offers, complaints, denials, or requests). This distinction was used as a basis for developing communicative syllabus for language teaching and had an important impact on the flourishing of CLT. Soon, textbook writers also applied all these ideas in the design of their teaching materials. Although all these new ideas started in the United Kingdom, they rapidly expanded and CLT was soon internationally accepted. CLT combined functional teaching and grammar (Littlewood, 1981), and three principles were at its core: the communicative principle, the task principle, and the meaningfulness principle (Johnson, 1982).

In other words, for language learning to be effective, activities had to involve real communication to perform specific tasks and language would support all this process. Thus, language learning was promoted by using it when communicating in authentic and meaningful situations integrating all the language skills and acquiring fluency.

These days, two new versions of CLT exist: *Task-Based Language Teaching* (TBLT) and *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL). TBLT is currently considered a popular approach to teach FLs as students are engaged in real communication through the performance of tasks (Ellis & Shintani, 2014). TBLT offers students an authentic and meaningful educational process in which learners can use what they learn beyond the classroom, as in TBLT, lessons are envisaged as social events where learners play an active role (Breen, 2001).

Despite the fact that the term CLIL appeared in the 1990s, it is not a new idea because this approach developed from other types of instruction such as immersion programmes or bilingual education. Within the literature, many definitions of CLIL can be found. One of the most comprehensive is the one provided by Coyle et al. (2010). According to these scholars, “Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1). Taking this definition into account, CLIL offers the possibility of teaching any subject through the medium of instruction of an additional language. However, English has become the most popular language to use in a CLIL setting (Cenoz et al., 2013).

Assuming that the final aim of any current Communicative Approach is to develop learners’ communicative competence, it is essential to clearly define this term. In the following section, a definition of communicative competence and the main constructs found in the literature to illustrate this concept and its components are offered.

1.2. Defining communicative competence

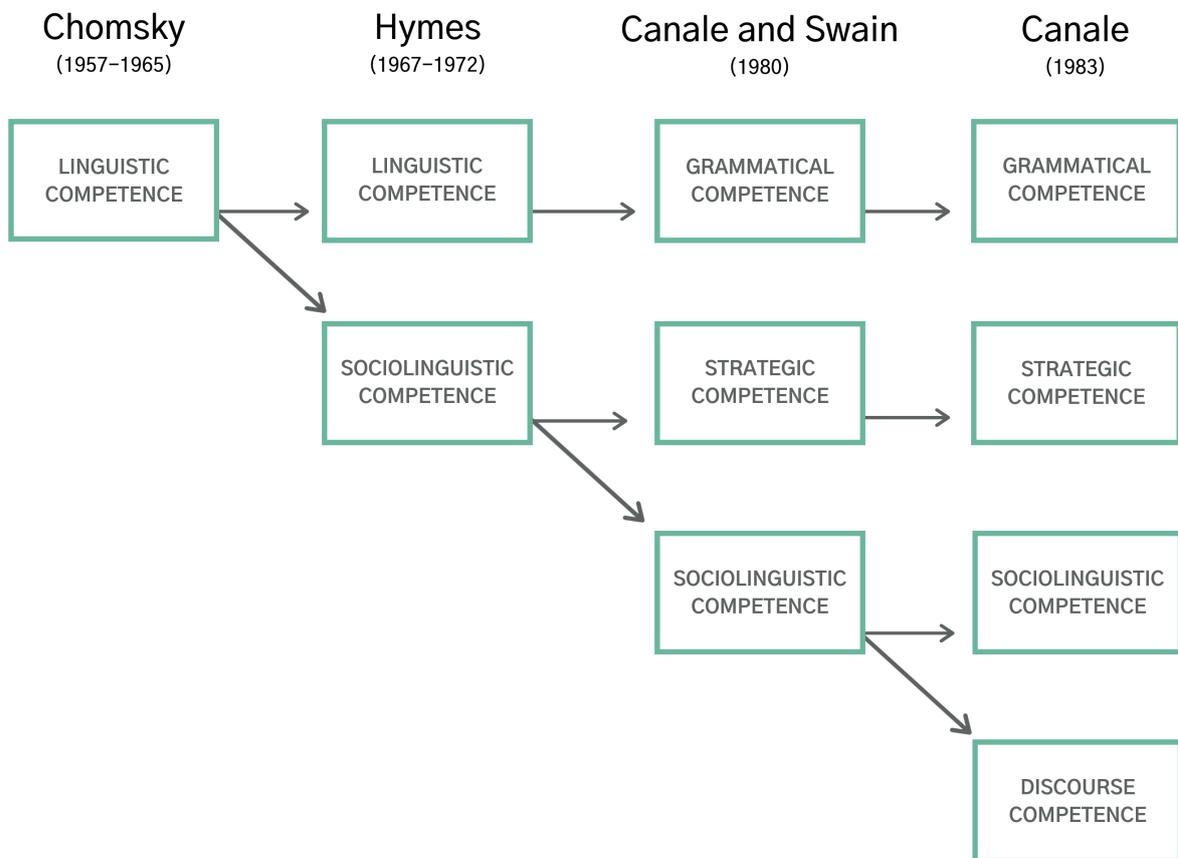
As stated in the previous section, within any Communicative Approach language is seen as a tool for communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop learners' communicative competence, i.e., “developing procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 155).

The notion of communicative competence can be defined as the ability to communicate properly in a given language in different situations. This term was first coined by Dell Hymes (1967) as a reaction to the theories proposed by Chomsky, who only focused on linguistic competence (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Chomsky (1957, 1965) claimed that for any learner to be competent, linguistic competence alone was enough without considering social factors. However, Hymes (1972) argued that apart from linguistic competence, it was necessary for learners to acquire the rules for using the language appropriately according to the context, i.e., sociolinguistic competence. Hymes' interpretation and understanding of the concept communicative competence soon became the theoretical justification for any communicative approach, and many other linguists started proposing different models trying to incorporate new components into the notion of communicative competence (e.g., Alcón, 2000; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, 2007; Celce-Murcia et al. 1995; Savignon, 1983; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006).

As can be observed in Figure 1, Canale and Swain (1980), with an expanded model by Canale (1983), were the ones who offered the first model of communicative competence taking the previous ideas developed by Chomsky (1957, 1965) and Hymes (1967, 1972), and the theoretical foundations of communicative approaches to teach languages into consideration. These scholars understood communicative competence as the knowledge system speakers need to use language in the different conversational events.

Figure 1

Chronological evolution of “communicative competence”



Note. Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 43)

The first model proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) only contained three main components or competences: grammatical, strategic, and sociolinguistic. The first component, *grammatical competence*, refers to the knowledge of the language code, and it includes aspects such as vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence structures, spelling, or word formation. *Strategic competence* deals with the ability to use diverse verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to solve possible breakdowns in communicative processes. Finally, *sociolinguistic competence* involves the knowledge of sociocultural rules in each particular context. These three competences refer to the learner’s knowledge of how to use language in diverse social situations.

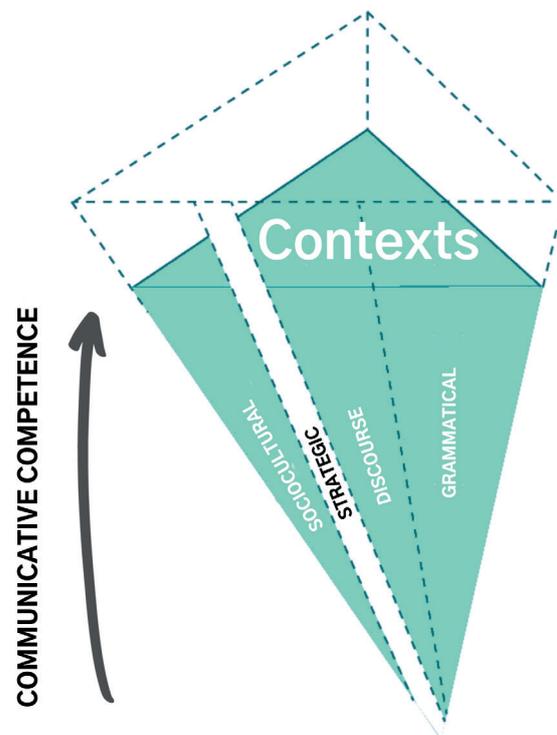
In the expanded version of the model, Canale (1983, 1984) added *discourse competence*, described as the capacity to achieve coherence and cohesion in oral or written texts to produce

meaningful units. Thus, discourse competence focuses on the need to produce cohesive and coherent texts for the enhancement of L2 communicative competence, which are dimensions analysed in the present study as categories of L2 writing proficiency in secondary education.

Savignon (1983), trying to offer a description of the relationship of the previous four competences, presented a new model with the shape of an inverted pyramid, to show how a rise in just one competence produces an overall improvement in the learner's communicative competence, due to the connection of all components within the model. This scholar also compared communicative competence to language proficiency, claiming that *strategic competence* is part of the learner's repertoire, and it cannot be learnt independently from the rest of competences. Thus, an interaction-based approach is used to explain the dependence of the four competences as it happens in real life conversations. This dependence is represented by placing the context at the core of the model, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Model of communicative competence proposed by Savignon (1983)



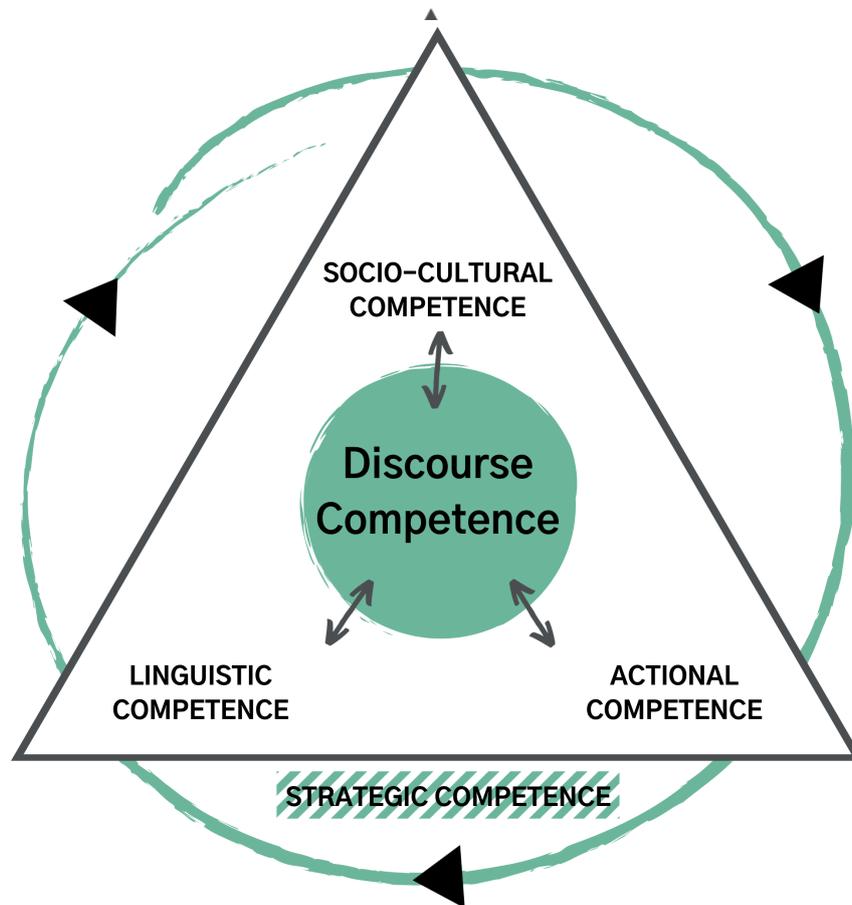
Note. Savignon (1983, p. 49)

Although the models analysed tried to define the communicative competence construct, they received some criticism, since the pragmatic component was not taken into consideration explicitly. It was in the late 1980s when Bachman (1987) took pragmatic aspects into account by developing a new model where language competence, strategic competence, and psychomotor skills were included. As a result, Bachman (1987) and Bachman and Palmer (1996) considered previous definitions of communicative competence and language proficiency and proposed the term communicative language ability to substitute the expression communicative competence. Bachman (1990) included pragmatic competence within language ability covering illocutionary competence, i.e., the knowledge to perform appropriate language functions, and sociolinguistic competence.

However, although this scholar was the first to consider pragmatic aspects explicitly, the model proposed did not establish any relationship among the main components. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) were the ones who established a precise model of communicative competence including pragmatic aspects as *actional competence* and offering a relationship between the five components of their construct: *actional, discourse, linguistic, sociocultural, and strategic* (see Figure 3). As can be observed, these scholars made some changes in terminology regarding Canale and Swain's (1980) model. *Sociocultural competence* replaced sociolinguistic competence and *linguistic competence* was the term used to refer to grammatical competence. In their model, the different components are interrelated, and the nature of these relationships is described to completely understand the essence of communicative competence.

Figure 3

Representation of communicative competence proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)



Note. Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 44)

As can be observed in Figure 3, the key element of this pyramid is *discourse competence*, which is the central competence. *Discourse competence* is related to three more competences: *sociocultural*, *linguistic* and *actional competence*, which are always interacting among them and with the core of the model. What is more, *strategic competence* surrounds the pyramid being responsible for allowing speakers to negotiate messages and resolve problems in any of the other competences.

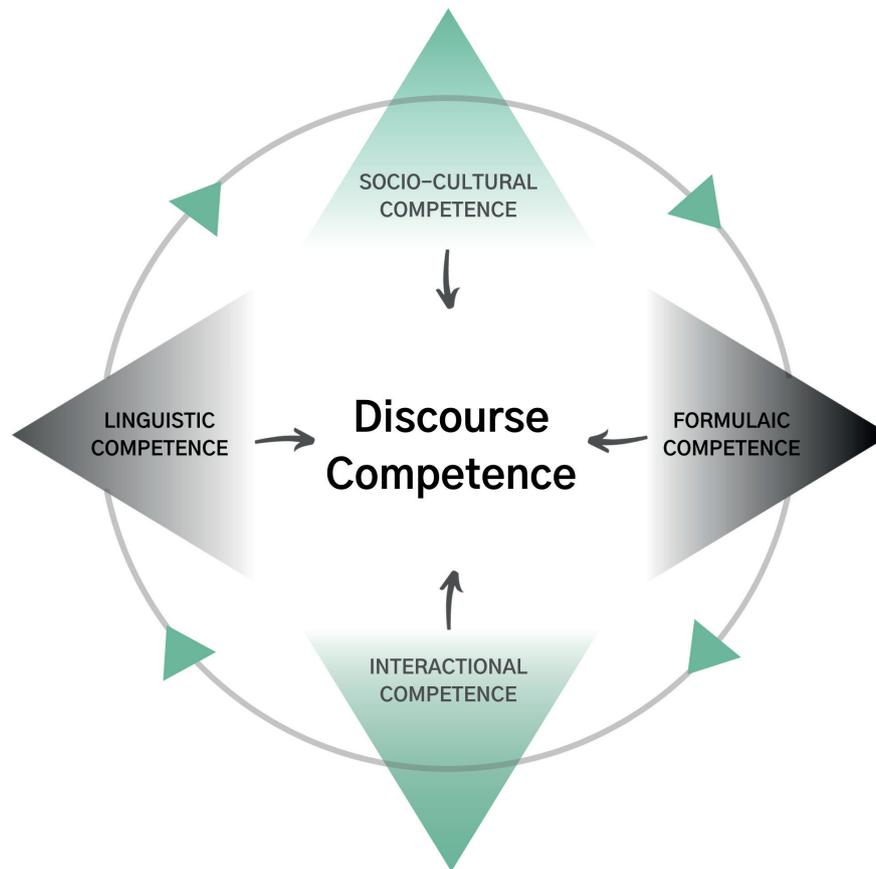
At the beginning of the 21st century, Alcón (2000) proposed a new construct, which can be considered a combination of Bachman's (1990) and Celce-Murcia et al.'s (1995) models. In her construct, *discourse competence* is also at the core, and it is interrelated with psychomotor skills

and strategic competence. Discourse competence is made up of pragmatic, textual and linguistic components, and it shapes the mastery of the four skills: writing, speaking, listening, and reading, giving an explicit function to them.

Some years later, Celce-Murcia (2007) proposed a new model “in an attempt to give a more central role to formulaic language and to the paralinguistic aspects of face-to-face oral communication” (p. 45) and to describe communicative competence to language teachers. As can be seen in Figure 4, Celce-Murcia’s (2007) new model keeps *discourse competence* at the core of the construct. According to this scholar, “discourse competence refers to the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a unified spoken message” (Celce-Murcia, 2007, p. 46). Although cohesion, deixis, coherence, and generic structures are the four main sub-areas of discourse competence, the rest of the competences in the model play a paramount role in shaping communicative competence. *Sociocultural competence* is related to pragmatic knowledge, and therefore it focuses on the ability to convey messages properly according to the cultural and social context where communication takes place. *Formulaic competence* involves the ability of using learnt expressions such as fixed phrases, collocations, idioms, or lexical frames in daily interactions. Regarding *linguistic competence*, it includes four diverse kinds of knowledge: lexical, phonological, syntactic, and morphological. *Interactional competence* covers three important sub-components: conversational competence, actional competence, and paralinguistic or non-verbal competence. This knowledge is very important as it provides learners with essential information to perform speech acts in the different languages studied. Finally, *strategic competence* deals with learners’ specific behaviour to improve their L2 learning. Learners can choose to use cognitive, metacognitive, and memory-related strategies to enhance their learning.

Figure 4

Revised representation of communicative competence



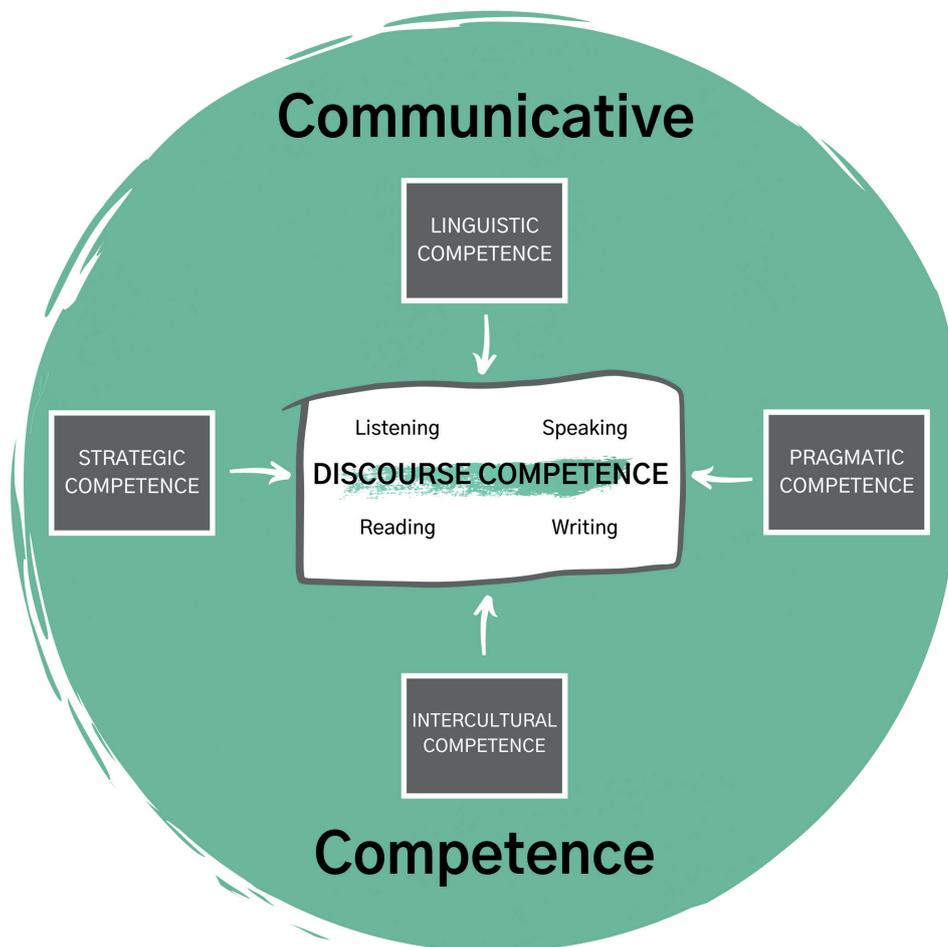
Note. Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 45)

According to Celce-Murcia (2007), this model is extremely useful for language pedagogy, as it offers the main tenets for designing and implementing language syllabus to offer students the necessary skills and knowledge to be culturally and linguistically proficient in the language studied.

Taking the previous models of communicative competence analysed into consideration, Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) proposed their own model maintaining *discourse competence* at the core and giving emphasis to the four skills in the communicative process, as Bachman (1987, 1990) and Alcón (2000) had previously done. Figure 5 shows a representation of their communicative competence construct.

Figure 5

Representation of communicative competence integrating the four skills



Note. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006, p. 16)

As can be observed, *discourse competence* is the central element of the construct together with the four language skills. The rest of the elements: *linguistic*, *pragmatic*, *strategic* and *intercultural* competences help develop *discourse competence*. According to Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006), *discourse competence* refers to the choice and arrangement of sentences or utterances to get a coherent and cohesive text according to context and purpose. As they claim, the integration of the four skills is achieved in an explicit way within the core of the model. In order to achieve successful communication, learners need “to interpret and produce a spoken or written piece of discourse” (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006, p. 17). Hence, and as has been

observed in the previous models, writing is an important part of communicative competence. In fact, it is the written manifestation of its central component, i.e., *discourse competence*, which focuses on the need to produce coherent and cohesive texts for the improvement of L2 communicative competence. These dimensions are analysed in the present study as categories of overall L2 writing proficiency in secondary education.

In the following section, an analysis of the writing skill under the communicative competence perspective is discussed.

1.3. Acquiring communicative competence through writing

As stated in the previous section, writing is embedded within discourse competence; and therefore, it is not a decontextualised process. On the contrary, each piece of writing should be shaped by the institutional and cultural context where it is produced (Hyland, 2002; Kern, 2000). In the writing act, three basic elements, i.e., the text, the writer, and the reader, play a crucial role giving importance to contextual and social factors (Usó-Juan et al., 2006).

Over time, writing has been influenced by language learning approaches and methodologies. Before the 1960s, writing had no place in language learning. At that time, structuralism and behaviourism, which were considered the mainstream, focused on speech, and writing was just seen as “its orthographic representation” (Usó-Juan et al., 2006, p. 384). According to Silva and Matsuda (2002), learners needed to master the spoken language first and writing would come afterwards; otherwise, there could be interference with the learning of speech. In addition, writing was believed to be an ability to reinforce the learning of grammar and vocabulary to master speaking. At that time, many language programmes only gave emphasis to the correctness of students’ compositions. Instruction focused on imitation of accurate structures and errors were prevented.

It was at the end of the 1960s when the process of writing gained importance. It was thanks to Chomsky (1957, 1965) and his innatist theory that this shift was produced. According to this scholar, languages are learnt in an innate way by children at an early age. Hence, grammar instruction in writing was rejected, and the focus was put on the internal and cognitive processes which go on inside writers' minds. This led to the new writing orientation which moved from the conception of writing as a final product to a new one which envisaged writing as a process.

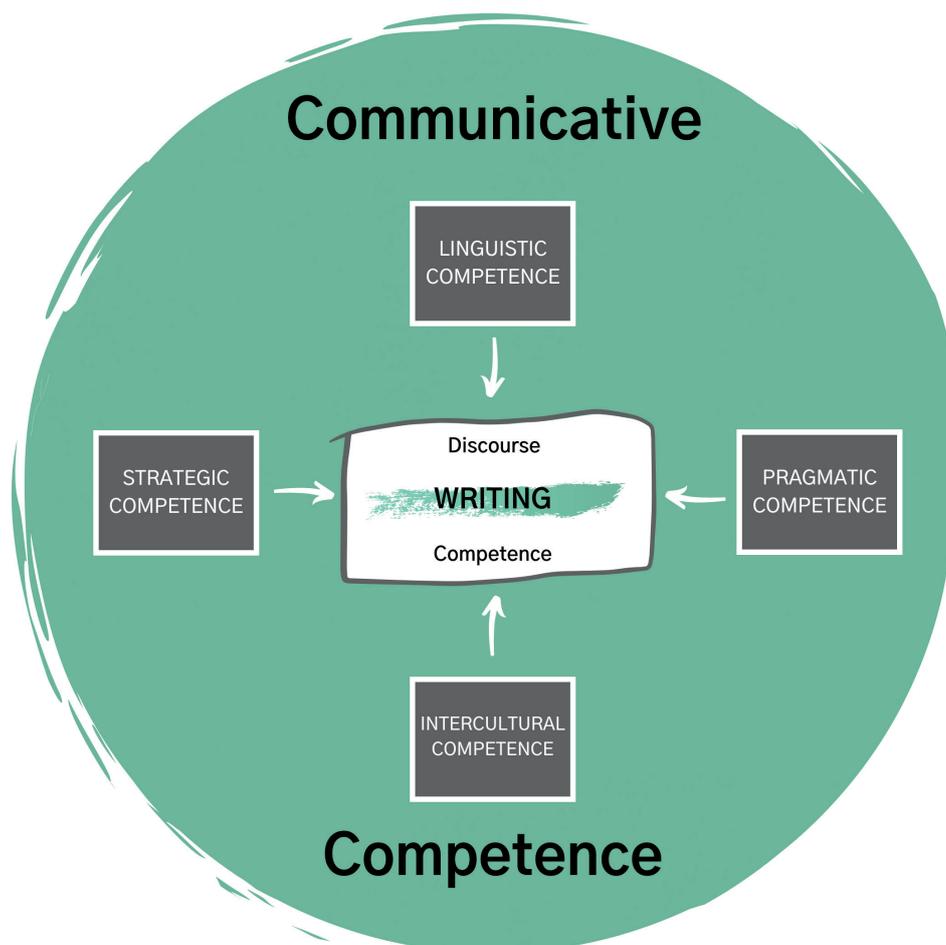
Emig (1971) claimed that writing is a creative and recursive process where cognitive models can be applied. One of the most important models was developed by Flower and Hayes (1981), which consisted in 3 stages: planning, translating, and reviewing. In the first phase, writers had to produce and organise ideas. Later, they had to write down these ideas and finally revise what had been written. This new approach of teaching writing as a process showed that writing became a new way to generate and explore thoughts (Kern, 2000). As a result, the generation of learners' ideas received great emphasis, and "writing was viewed as a complex, recursive and creative process which was essentially learned, not taught" (Usó-Juan et al., 2006, p. 386). Following the main tenets of this view, learners were seen as active writers who had to depart from their ideas to compose their pieces of writing in a creative way. Errors were considered something natural, and they were just corrected in the final phase of the process.

At the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, writing was considered from a sociocultural perspective under the interactionist approach, and discourse analysis was the theoretical principle of writing. Under this view, text linguistics, genre analysis or functional objectives were essential factors in the teaching and learning of writing. Aspects such as the knowledge of text patterns, the notion of register or genre, and cultural aspects were key within the process of teaching this skill. As Usó-Juan et al. (2006) claimed, "writing was considered a dynamic, creative and contextualised process of communication through texts" (p. 386) being the role played by context essential in all this process.

Thanks to the contributions of the interactionist approach, the tenets for the integration of writing within a communicative methodology were laid down. As has been analysed in Section 1.2, many models of communicative competence have placed discourse competence at its core giving importance to the four main skills (e.g., Alcón, 2000; Bachman, 1990; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). It is in Usó-Juan et al.'s (2006) model where it can be clearly seen how the diverse components of their construct, i.e., *linguistic, strategic, pragmatic, and intercultural competences*, influence the central component, i.e., *discourse competence*, to shape in this case the writing skill. A representation of their model can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Integrating writing within the communicative competence framework



Note. Usó-Juan et al. (2006, p. 390)

As can be observed, writing is at the core of this model, which shows the ability to produce written discourse by using the rest of competences. This idea is in line with Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), who claimed that *discourse competence* allows writers to create a well-formed written text depending on the context and communicative goal by using discourse characteristics. Elements such as cohesion, coherence, and the formal structure and conventions of written texts are included within these discourse features. In order to achieve this, writers have to plan what they want to write in advance considering the specific context and the communicative aims. They will play an active role, bearing context and purpose in mind, in which they will have to select their linguistic and pragmatic knowledge to produce coherent and cohesive texts. In other words, writers will have to activate their *linguistic, strategic, pragmatic, and intercultural competences* (Usó-Juan et al., 2006) and focus on elements such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, or spelling, as the mastery of these elements is paramount to achieve linguistically accurate utterances and sentences. Moreover, using an appropriate text layout and other linguistic and syntactic devices will be key to achieve a pragmatically correct text. The sociocultural context cannot be forgotten as writers will have to consider the norms of the particular culture they are addressing. And finally, *strategic competence* will be crucial for writers to solve any lack of knowledge they may have. As can be observed, from this conceptualisation, writing is seen from a holistic perspective, in which not only grammatical or lexical aspects are essential to produce well-written texts; on the contrary, to be proficient in L2 writing and therefore communicatively competent, learners also need to apply their pragmatic, strategic and intercultural knowledge. The present study understands the process of writing proficiency from a holistic communicative perspective, which is in line with Usó-Juan et al.'s (2006) framework.

1.3.1. The process of teaching writing

Despite the fact that writing issues began to catch L2 specialists' attention in the 1960s, L2 instruction did not really start until the early 1990s (Matsuda, 2001). In the mid-20th century, writing was neglected due to the dominance of audiolingualism and the application of scientific descriptive linguistics, which gave emphasis to the oral language (Matsuda, 2003). However, it is possible to claim that from a historical perspective, several attempts were made towards the process of teaching writing. In the late 1950s, the teachers of English to speakers of other languages organisation was created, focusing on writing issues and situating them in the area of teaching English as an L2. From the 1960s onwards, instruction on L2 writing became part of English as a Second Language (ESL) programmes, and several pedagogical approaches have appeared following the main trends of the theories of learning.

As we will see throughout this section, instruction has been essential in all the pedagogical approaches proposed for teaching writing. As claimed by Ellis (2009), "there is controversy as to whether any learning is possible without some degree of awareness" (p. 7). What is more, instruction fosters interlanguage development. This enhancement can be done in an implicit or an explicit way. Implicit instruction aims at facilitating learners to infer rules without awareness. In other words, it aims at providing learners with experience of multiple examples of the aspect to be learnt while they are not trying to learn it; therefore, they can acquire the rule without being aware of it. On the contrary, explicit instruction implies the teaching of a rule which requires learners' awareness. Explicit instruction can be done in a deductive or inductive way. The difference is that the description of the rule is offered in deductive instruction but there is no explanation in the inductive one.

In the literature, many studies can be found regarding the effects of implicit and explicit instruction in the learning of an L2 or FL (e.g., Abbuhl, 2012; Dastjerdi & Shirzad, 2010; DeKeyser, 2003; Doughty, 1991; Leow, 1997; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Tsai, 2020). However, it

seems that almost all the research carried out deals with the acquisition of grammatical aspects, and very few studies have focused on the effects of instruction on overall writing proficiency. Despite this scarcity of research, these investigations show the benefits of explicit instruction.

Doughty (1991) conducted a study in which participants were divided to receive four different types of instruction, i.e., Group 1 and 2 received implicit instruction, Group 3 direct explicit instruction, and Group 4 indirect explicit instruction. Group 3, which had received direct explicit instruction, outperformed the rest. In the same vein, Norris and Ortega (2000), in their meta-analysis of the findings of the investigations carried out between 1980 and 1998, emphasised that explicit types of instruction are more effective than implicit ones in L2 learning. The same conclusions were reached in Leow's (1997) and DeKeyser's (2003) studies.

These beneficial effects can also be found in specific studies of instruction in writing. For example, Tsai (2020) conducted research to check the effects of explicit instruction on L2 learners' acquisition of verb-noun collocations and concluded by emphasising the learning gains of the group of students who had explicit instruction. Abbuhl (2012) focused on the teaching of pronouns in writing and divided participants in two groups. The ones who received explicit instruction outperformed those who did not. Moreover, explicit instruction was claimed to be a better option despite level of proficiency. Dastjerdi and Shirzad (2010) analysed the impact of explicit instruction of markers in a group of 94 undergraduate students and found that explicit instruction benefited EFL learners' writing skills.

As stated by Celce-Murcia (2001), the ability to express coherent and accurate ideas in L2 writing is a difficult task; hence, formal and explicit instruction as well as much practice is necessary. In this sense, the teaching of writing is an important element in all language programmes. Several methodologies can be employed when dealing with explicit instruction in L2 writing. As has been analysed in Section 1.3, from the 1940s on, different approaches have appeared to solve the difficult task of teaching this skill; however, three are the main approaches

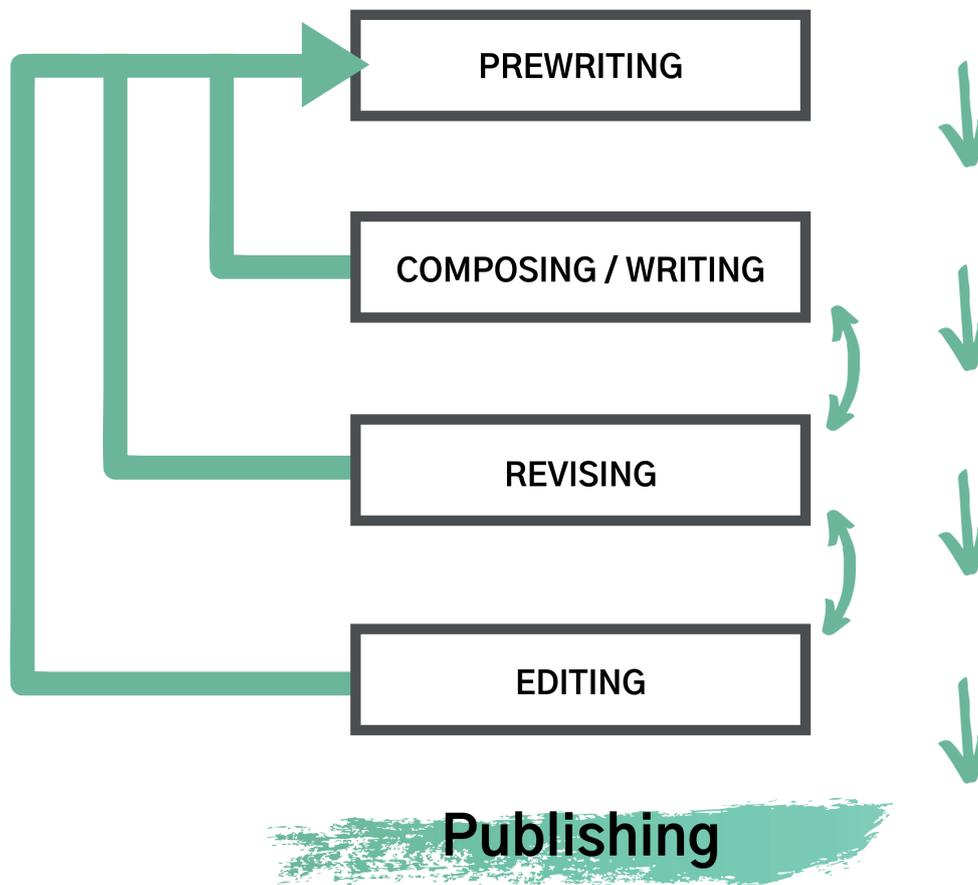
for the instruction of this skill: focus on form, focus on the writer, and focus on the reader (Raimes, 1993).

A traditional approach to writing is one which focuses on *form*. In this approach, teachers present authoritative texts which serve as models for students to imitate and adapt. Following this approach, errors are considered negative and must be corrected and eliminated. Correctness is a key issue within this methodology. However, with the appearance of communicative approaches, this way of focusing on writing seems to be obsolete. Nowadays, writing must be considered from a holistic perspective and the presence of errors is something natural in the process of learning to write, and they should not be the main focus. An approach which focuses on the writer, i.e., *process approach*, and another one which focuses on the reader, i.e., *genre approach*, are more popular. In this section, a description of both approaches will be considered.

Zamel (1976) introduced the concept of writing as a process. This scholar stated that high-level L2 writers are comparable to L1 writers and consequently they can benefit from instruction, which emphasises the writing process (Matsuda, 2003). In this process, both organisation and meaning are developed. In writing instruction, aspects such as the use of strategies, the elaboration of more than one draft or formative feedback are important. Teachers and educators who favour process approaches claim that this way of dealing with writing emphasises the writer's creativity and freedom (Tribble, 1996). This approach has influenced the teaching of writing all over the world (e.g., Raimes, 1985; White & Arndt, 1991; Zamel, 1983). Although in the literature diverse models of writing processes can be found (e.g., Harris, 1993; Hedge, 1988; Tribble, 1996; White & Arndt, 1991), it is possible to claim that all of them follow a general pattern (see Figure 7). According to Tribble (1996), this process is not a linear progression; on the contrary, during the writing process, writers can go backwards to rewrite some of their previous ideas.

Figure 7

Steps in the process of writing



Note. Tribble (1996, p. 39)

The first phase of this process, *prewriting*, occurs before learners put their pen on the paper (Hedge, 1988). First, writers must consider important aspects such as the purpose, content, or the audience the composition is addressed to. In this regard, something essential for the success of the task will be the mastery of the genre. According to Tribble (1996), the understanding of the features and limitations imposed by the genre will determine the success of the task. Experienced writers will not need to spend much time in this phase as just some background knowledge about the diverse types of genres will be enough to succeed. On the contrary, for non-experienced writers this phase will be essential. What is more, teachers can offer these groups of learners the possibility of working in a collaborative way. As stated by Hedge (1988), “collaborative writing in

the classroom generates discussions and activities which encourage an effective process of writing” (p. 12). In this stage, different types of tasks such as generating, focusing, or structuring activities can be designed for students to work with (White & Arndt, 1991). Generating activities are designed to help writers discover what they want to write about and offer them the necessary skills to overcome possible difficulties. Focusing activities aid learners to emphasise their most important ideas, and structuring activities help writers organise their texts.

As can be seen in Figure 7, the second phase in the writing process is *composing and writing*. As Harris (1993) claims, composing has to do with the moment when writers translate the different ideas they have in their minds into provisional pieces of writing. In order to help students in this process, multiple activities can be designed. For example, Brown and Hood (1989) believe that by making students answer focusing questions such as, who?, where?, when?, or what?, they can generate ideas to structure their compositions. Using mnemonic techniques to help students with their writing is another possibility. As White (1987) states, the use of mnemonics guides learners to generate ideas which can be employed in the final writing.

As Tribble (1996) suggests, *composition* is the moment when the writer’s pen touches the paper; but as previously stated, it should not be the moment when writing begins, as it is necessary for a writer to previously develop a range of writing skills and do some previous preparation to deal with the specific task in hand. Thanks to this preparation, writers can monitor and evaluate their writings.

The third and fourth steps, *revising and editing*, cope with the writer’s corrections of the text to ensure accuracy and clarity. Many writers often revise and edit more than once their pieces of writing. It is usually in this stage when writers tend to correct spelling mistakes, punctuation, and grammar, as they have previously focused more on content than on those aspects (Hedge, 1988). Something very useful is the use of editing checklists (e.g., Hedge, 1988; Hopkins & Tribble, 1989). These checklists usually include elements regarding cohesion, coherence, structure, spelling, punctuation, grammar, or vocabulary. Once this revision is finished, writers can proceed

to the last step of this process, i.e., *publishing*. As can be inferred, this step will only occur in academic writing or for professional reasons. In educational contexts, *publishing* may be a synonym of delivering the task to the teacher.

This *process approach* focuses on writers and gives special importance to the steps learners have to follow when writing. However, a methodology which is exclusively based on the writer may not cover the needs of all types of FL learners (Tribble, 1996). In the 21st century, the reality of classrooms has changed, since social, linguistic, and cultural differences may be present. As a result, “the old certainties of cognitive homogeneity which supported process writing models for so long are no longer sustainable” (Hyland, 2007, p. 149). Process-oriented methodologies were thought to be the perfect way to teach writing during many years, but over the last twenty years, the notion of genre and genre-based pedagogies have gained importance as a response to changing perspectives of discourse and the way writing is learnt, which includes a greater understanding of how language is structured to fulfil social purposes in specific contexts (Hyland, 2007). When writing, it is paramount for learners to know what is expected for the reader to find in the text produced. Thus, texts constructed just focusing on a series of steps will be meaningless. New methodologies, i.e., *genre approaches*, must centre on the reader, giving emphasis to the teaching of layout and content, as these are the features which must be recognised by readers when writers use a text to express social purposes.

Before dealing with this type of approach to teaching writing, it is necessary to define the term genre. Recently, this term has been used to refer to the social nature of written or oral discourse (Johns, 2003). In the literature, it is possible to find many definitions of this term (e.g., Bhatia, 1993; Halliday, 1989; Hoey, 2001; Hyland, 2004, 2007; Martin, 1989; Swales, 1990); however, a complete definition was provided by Swales (1990): “a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58). As can be inferred from this definition, genre refers to social recognised ways of communicating and using language (Hyland, 2007). Members of a community do not have great difficulty in

recognising the conventions of the different texts they usually read or write. As expectations and experience play an important role in writing, readers will understand the writer's aim when the text presents what the reader expects.

Hyland (2004) claims that the use of genre pedagogies derives from communicative approaches to language teaching, which emphasise the role of language to help learners achieve specific purposes bearing in mind the importance of context. Genre approaches are also connected to the new understanding of literacy which emphasises that both reading and writing varies with contexts and cannot be just summarised as a set of technical or cognitive abilities (Street, 1995). Thus, teaching writing through genres goes beyond the teaching of vocabulary, composing or syntactic structures; teachers need to teach the way language is used in different contexts. By using genre approaches, students will join context, content, and language to create meaningful texts.

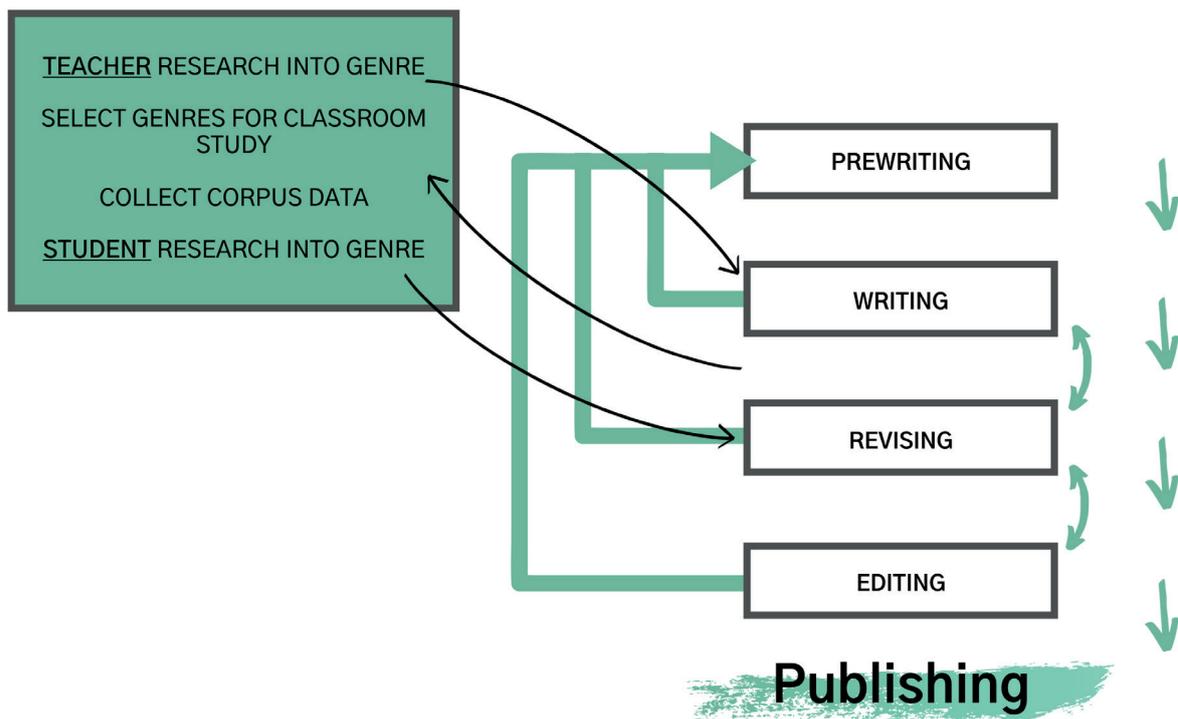
When planning learning, genre writing lessons can be constructed around themes or text types. Themes are better understood if taught as real-life activities, providing students' motivation and understanding into writing by using their prior knowledge and personal experiences (Feez, 1998). Depending on the topic selected, the teaching of different genres can be elicited. The second possibility for organising a genre-based course is doing it through the different text types students will need to deal with in a particular context. Genre methodologies have not been uncritically accepted in L2 writing lessons, but advocates to the genre approach argue that writing always has a goal and it cannot be learnt contextless (Hyland, 2007).

Both process and genre approaches present advantages and disadvantages. As previously stated, process approaches do not pay attention to the needs of learners who may want to write to an unknown reader in a specific context; therefore, if complemented with genre approaches this problem could be solved. As discussed by Flowerdew (1993), diverse types of activities can be included in the writing course for students to be familiar with multiple genres and thus combining process and genre approaches. Tribble (1996), taking the importance of combining both

approaches into consideration, suggests a modified version of the cycle of writing (see Figure 8) to show how process, context, content, and language connect with each other to help students produce meaningful pieces of writing.

Figure 8

Modified version of the cycle of writing



Note. Tribble (1996, p. 60)

In this model, learners deal with the understanding of the genre they are working with in depth instead of doing pre-writing activities only depending on their own knowledge of the world. Teachers must do some preliminary work on textual and contextual features of the selected genre. Authentic data must be offered to students, who can begin studying genres before they start writing or in the first stages of the writing process when they need information about the context or the text they aim to write. Thus, genre and process approaches perfectly fit to offer learners a

complete and accurate way to produce texts as these two techniques are interdependent (Bamforth, 1993). When writing, learners will be able to use their own experience of the world and the extra input offered about the distinct genres to “express their ideas in individually authentic voices and to make texts that are socially appropriate” (Tribble, 1996, p. 61).

An important factor which influences learner’s overall L2 writing proficiency is believed to be the way feedback and assessment is offered to them. Therefore, in the following section these two aspects are dealt with.

1.3.2. Responding to student writing

Providing feedback and assessment is considered one of the most important tasks for teachers so as to offer individualised attention to learners when responding to their pieces of writing. As stated by Hyland and Hyland (2006), teachers are aware of the potential both feedback and assessment have in order to enhance L2 writing proficiency.

1.3.2.1. Feedback

Feedback creates a supportive teaching environment in which ideas about good writing techniques, and discussions between teachers and students regarding writing practices can be established. Feedback can be offered in many different forms, such as traditional error correction, written commentaries, writing conferences, scaffolding techniques, or peer feedback, to mention but a few. As many scholars claim (e.g., Anderson, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978), feedback is seen in education as a key factor for both encouraging and consolidating learning. Feedback is important regardless of the teaching methodology used. For example, in process-based classrooms, it helps learners control the composing skills, and it is also valuable in genre-oriented lessons thanks to the use of scaffolding techniques and peer collaboration. In the past 30 years, feedback practices

have changed due to changes in research and writing pedagogy. Peer feedback, conferences, writing workshops and even online feedback have complemented traditional teachers' comments (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). What is more, summative feedback, which focuses on the final product, has been changed to formative feedback, which focuses on the writer's development.

The importance of feedback emerged during the 1970s with the development of learner-centred approaches. Those approaches, which focused on the process, fostered encounters between teacher and student, in which the former had to support the latter in their drafts by offering feedback and suggestions. At that time, feedback included oral interactions apart from the teacher's notes with the aim of promoting the "discovery of meaning through the experience of writing and rewriting" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 2). Due to the influence of interactionist theories, which focused on the dialogic nature of writing and the individual reader, there was a promotion of peer feedback and multiple feedback sources to offer a real audience. More recently, in genre approaches, feedback has been considered as an essential element for students to control the writing skill with the use of instructional scaffolding and learning as a social practice. Thanks to feedback, students can negotiate access to new knowledge. Although the issue of feedback has been considered over the last 50 years, it is true that it was not until the 1990s when research in L2 writing feedback, considering other aspects apart from error correction, emerged.

Regarding teacher feedback to L2 writers, research has shown that ESL students prefer written to oral feedback (Zhang, 1995). However, it is not clear how written feedback contributes to learners' writing development (e.g., Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997). Moreover, this written feedback usually takes the form of error correction, also known as grammar correction or corrective feedback (CF, henceforth). This type of feedback is the one which has received most researchers' attention despite the fact that other elements such as content, task requirements, coherence, cohesion, or vocabulary play a key role in writing (Ferris, 2010).

Due to the popularity of CF (see Truscott, 2007), a great deal of research has been carried out on this topic from two different academic disciplines: L2 writing and SLA (e.g., Ellis, 2010;

Ferris, 2010; Van Beuningen, 2010). Research in the field of L2 writing focuses on the issue of how CF can help learners become more autonomous writers (Ferris, 2006). In fact, most of the studies deal with the role of CF to develop writers' editing and revision skills. As Leki et al. (2008) state, this perspective refers to the *learning-to-write* dimension of L2 writing. These days, it seems that there is a move towards CF in developing writers' interlanguage, i.e., the new *writing-to-learn* dimension based on SLA insights (Manchón, 2009; Ortega, 2009). Many empirical investigations have been conducted in this area (e.g., Bitchener & Knoch, 2010; Sheen, 2007) to analyse how CF can lead to L2 learning.

Due to the importance of these two fields of study in recent years, the research conducted has crossed disciplinary boundaries (Ferris, 2010). L2 writing teachers and researchers have focused on real composition classes (e.g., Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006, 2010); whereas SLA researchers have conducted their studies in language classrooms to analyse the effects of written CF on SLA (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). Despite the differences in the instruments used, these two groups of researchers have examined the same topic. In L2 writing studies, the setting is usually the real writing classroom, there is not always a control group or a pre-test/post-test design, a number of investigations do not clearly define the key errors which will receive CF, and there is disparity with regards to how CF is offered to learners (Ferris, 2010). On the other hand, SLA studies are conducted with more controlled experimental requirements, including a pre-test, post-test and a delayed post-test, control and treatment groups, a selection of errors to be focused on, and the fact that feedback will be provided by the teacher or the researchers.

Ferris (2010) made a comparison of four L2 writing studies (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) and four SLA studies (Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007) and reported that the results obtained in the four L2 writing studies offered positive effects for written CF. In addition, the four SLA studies fostered L2 development and accuracy in writing at least in the conditions under study.

However, although both fields of study reported positive benefits when using written CF, there is still much controversy and criticism on the topic. L2 writing researchers criticise the narrow focus in which SLA researchers conduct their studies, as they believe their findings are difficult to transfer to real classroom conditions. On the contrary, SLA researchers criticise the lack of focus of L2 researchers. Despite these differences in the scope of study, both disciplines should be embedded. As Ferris (2010) claims, “through crossing these subdisciplinary bridges, the gaps between theory, research, and practice in this important area of language and writing instruction can also be narrowed – and perhaps closed together” (p. 198).

Finally, before moving to other types of feedback, it is noteworthy to mention that within CF different methods can be used. Error correction varies depending on many factors such as focus, explicitness, medium to provide feedback, or even the person who provides it. However, the two main dichotomies are the distinction between focused versus unfocused CF and direct versus indirect CF. Following an unfocused CF, all errors in a text are going to be corrected, whereas only specific linguistic features will be considered under a focused perspective. Ellis et al. (2008) believe that focused approaches are more positive to develop accuracy; besides, unfocused CF is not the most useful methodology for L2 writers as they “have a limited processing capacity” (Van Beuningen, 2010, p. 11). Ferris (2010) also believes that only focusing on specific errors may not be sufficient to improve general accuracy and students can be confused when realising that just some of their errors have been corrected. The second dichotomy deals with the distinction between direct and indirect CF. In direct CF, an error is identified and corrected; however, under an indirect CF approach, there is only an indication that an error has been committed and the learner must correct it. In indirect CF, errors can be underlined or coded, for example. Therefore, indirect CF is believed to benefit learners as it engages them in a deeper way of language processing and promotes reflection, thus fostering long-term acquisition (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). On the other hand, those who defend direct CF (e.g., Chandler, 2003) suggest that indirect CF does not offer learners enough information to solve complex errors, whereas direct CF permits

learners internalise the correct form. As has been seen, these different methodologies present advantages and disadvantages; therefore, factors such as the type of error, the teacher's objective, or the writer's L2 proficiency will determine the use and effectiveness of one over the other.

As has been examined, feedback has taken various forms in the last decades (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Lee, 2017), although the vast majority of research has been conducted on the traditional view of writing as a product with summative feedback, holistic scores and focused written CF (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2019). With the view of writing as a process, there was a great shift in feedback orientation where teachers supported and offered suggestions to writers through their multiple drafts. Thus, the main objective of feedback changed from linguistic accuracy to “the development of meaningful content with logical and generic structures through a recursive process of writing and rewriting” (Yu et al., 2020, p. 2). At the same time, peer feedback has also been considered a key support in the process of writing. However, not only does feedback have to come from a third person, self-evaluation is also considered a good practice to engage learners in their own critical evaluation to foster autonomy and meta-awareness (Lee, 2017; Lee et al., 2019). These days, due to the fact that new technologies surround us, even computer-generated feedback is a possibility (Hernández, 2022). In sum, L2 writing feedback methods have not evolved in a linear way, these methods have constantly been transformed and teachers can use different or combined forms of writing responses (Hyland & Hyland, 2019) since an “empirical valid and reliable instrument regarding L2 writing feedback is still missing in the literature” (Yu et al., 2020, p. 2). However, it is essential that the tools used to offer feedback motivate students and engage them in lifelong learning. Apart from feedback, another crucial aspect to consider when dealing with L2 writing is assessment. In the following section, the role played by assessment as well as the different rating scales used are examined.

1.3.2.2. Assessment

Assessing is vital to the academic growth of learners (White, 2009). Thus, teachers need a complete understanding of assessment practices or literacy (Crusan et al., 2016). Assessment literacy is fundamental for accomplishing and keeping the quality of learning and teaching. As Popham (2009) states, an absence of assessment awareness can weaken the essence of teaching. In the case of L2 or FL teachers, guidance in aspects such as scoring, grading, and giving feedback to students is paramount for them to become assessment literate (Taylor, 2010; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009). Instructors require training to be aware of how to design impartial assessment, and how to create assessment criteria and scoring rubrics, as inadequate assessment practices may involve negative consequences in students' confidence and motivation.

In spite of the importance of suitable assessment practices for teachers, there is a scarcity of FL teachers who present satisfactory assessment literacy (Malone, 2013; Taylor, 2013; White, 2009). Many teachers feel uncomfortable when assessing their students, as they are not properly trained (Mertler, 2009; Zhu, 2004). In the literature, research has shown the positive effects of the involvement of evaluation practices in instructor training (e.g., Crusan, 2010; Dempsey et al., 2009; Lee, 2010; Malone, 2013; Weigle, 2007). For example, Lee (2010), after interviewing L2 writing teachers who received proper training on writing assessment, reached the conclusion that they felt confident and empowered for the first time.

As has been stated, despite the benefits of training teachers in assessment, the teaching of writing assessment is not widespread (Crusan et al., 2016). In an attempt to offer assessment literacy, some scholars have suggested key ideas teachers need to know about assessment (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Malone, 2011; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009). According to Weigle (2007), L2 writing teachers need to master the necessary skills to develop, administer and score writing tasks. Moreover, this scholar believes that it is essential for teachers to identify appropriate assessment practices to apply them within the classroom to offer learners both formative and summative

assessment. Finally, it cannot be forgotten that assessment literacy includes how the new content teachers receive is involved in their beliefs, knowledge and practices constituting their cognition. As Borg (2003) suggests, factors such as the teaching context, teaching experience, teachers' prior knowledge, or teacher learning influence instructors' decisions about assessment practices.

After having discussed the importance of assessment literacy for writing teachers, we turn to consider the different scoring procedures for writing assessment. The final grade in a writing assessment is the result of a synergy, which involves not only the test and the test taker, but also other elements such as the task, the written text itself, the rater(s), and the rating scale (Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Kenyon, 1992; McNamara, 1996). However, two of these elements play a key role when scoring: "defining the rating scale and ensuring that raters use the scale appropriately and consistently" (Weigle, 2002, p. 108). Writing scales must focus on the diverse abilities being measured by the test (McNamara, 1996). Therefore, the process of developing a scale and the descriptors which will appear in each scale level are essential for the validity of the assessment. Primary trait, holistic, and analytic scales are the three main types of writing scales used (Weigle, 2002). These three scales are distinguished by two different characteristics: the first one refers to whether the scale can be used in only a specific writing task or in multiple tasks; and the second refers to whether single or multiple scores are offered.

Primary trait scales are generally connected to the work developed by Lloyd-Jones (1977) for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, where this scholar created a large-scale testing programme for schools in the USA. This type of scale is used to obtain results in a specific task, as the rating scales are specified according to that assignment. Thus, following this scoring system, for each writing task, a different scoring rubric must be created. According to Lloyd-Jones (1977), in the scoring rubric, multiple elements should be included, such as the writing assessment itself, the rhetorical trait, a hypothesis about the expected performance, the relationship between the task and the primary trait, the rating scale, scripts for each level, and an explanation of the score given to each script. As can be observed, the elaboration of primary trait scoring is laborious

and time-consuming, and as previously stated, for each individual task, a different scoring rubric must be created. For this reason, this type of writing assessment has not been widely used in L2 writing; holistic and analytic scales are used instead.

Holistic scoring implies offering a single score to a task based on a general impression. Raters who use this type of scale usually read each script quickly and offer a final score using a scoring rubric or rating scale. Rubrics contain benchmark scripts at each level to exemplify the criteria. In this sense, raters must be properly trained to be familiar with the rubric when scoring texts. This type of assessment has been widely used in the past years because of its rapidity to grade an assignment, as raters will just read the text once. Moreover, raters who follow this approach tend to focus on the strengths of the written tasks rather than on its limitations (White, 1984, 1985). It is also believed that holistic scales reflect the personal reaction of readers better as they offer their first impression. However, holistic scoring also has drawbacks, especially in L2 or FL contexts as it has come under criticism these days. One of the main limitations is connected to the information students receive. As just a single score is offered, learners do not know about their progress in the different aspects involved in writing, i.e., content, task requirements, coherence, cohesion, grammar, or vocabulary. This information is crucial for L2/FL learners to know which aspects they should improve. Another disadvantage about holistic scoring is that their interpretation may not be easy, since raters might use different criteria to reach the same scores. Moreover, it seems that aspects such as an excessive length or an untidy handwriting are penalised by raters in their overall impression (Sloan & McGinnis, 1982).

Analytic scoring includes an analysis of the different aspects involved in writing instead of offering just a single score. This type of scoring system provides more information about learners' performance in the diverse aspects of writing and that is why many writing specialists rely on analytic schemes to assess writings. One of the first examples of analytic scales can be found in Jacobs et al. (1981), who created one of the most used analytic scales focusing on content, organisation, mechanics, language use, and vocabulary. In addition, these scholars also created

training materials and sample writings for raters to learn how to use the scale quickly. Due to the relevance and importance of this scale, it has been adopted by many universities in their writing programmes (Weigle, 2002). Other important examples of analytic scales are the ones developed to assess the Test in English for Educational Purposes or the Michigan Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (Hamp-Lyons, 1990). All these scales share their understanding about the importance of using a detailed and explicit rubric to obtain results. However, analytical scales have also received criticism. If a rubric is not clearly defined, it can lead to subjective results. Therefore, clear criteria and levels for each scale need to be clearly defined (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Weir, 1990). If this is done properly, analytical scales present more advantages than holistic ones. For example, they are more useful for the training of raters, as it is easier for inexperienced raters to focus on separate scales to apply the criteria than in holistic scales (Adams, 1981). Finally, analytic scales are considered to be more reliable than holistic ones as multiple scores are given to each text (Huot, 1996). Obviously, scoring takes longer than in holistic processes because more than one reading is necessary, but the results obtained are more relevant for both learners and instructors.

After having discussed the role played by feedback and assessment in L2 writing, the following section offers an overview of the main investigations regarding L2 writing conducted in school contexts.

1.4. Research on L2 writing in school contexts

Research on L2 writing is considered a quite recent phenomenon as its roots can be found in the late 1950s with the first studies regarding international ESL writers in American colleges. In the 1990s, due to the importance of this field of study and “its conceptualization as a discipline” (Riazi et al., 2018, p. 41), the *Journal of Second Language Writing* (JSLW) and the Symposium on Second Language Writing originated to discuss methodologies, contents, and key topics about

L2 writing. Nowadays, “L2 writing is inherently multi-faceted, involving multiple issues and orientations that may not even be commensurable with each other” (Cumming, 2016, p. 65).

As claimed by Silva (2016), L2 writing research areas comprise the studies done in both L2 and FL contexts. However, the vast majority of studies conducted in the field have been carried out in American colleges analysing writing in English as an L2. Despite this historical trend, increasingly, nowadays L2 writing research is being conducted outside North America, in other contexts apart from higher education, and considering other FLs.

While FL writing research focusing on adults and university students has been expanding, a lack of research in secondary school contexts is still present (Harklau, 2011; Lee, 2016; Leki et al., 2008; Ortega, 2009; Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011). Due to the nature of the present investigation, research on L2 writing in secondary education is the one considered in this section.

According to Ortega (2009), from 1992 to 2007, only 6% of the studies published in the JSLW focused on school contexts. As a consequence, it may be claimed that there is little knowledge about the different factors affecting L2 writing in younger learners. Matsuda and DePew (2002) suggest that this scarcity of research may be explained by a number of reasons, including the scholars’ lack of familiarity with primary and secondary students’ learning environments, access to research participants in school contexts, the difficulty of combining researching and teaching at the same time, and obviously the economic constraints related to doing research in these contexts.

In spite of this shortage of studies, Lee (2016) believes it is crucial to conduct research on EFL students in secondary education as they spend a lot of time learning to write in schools to be ready for their university entrance exams and for the demands they will find in their university courses. At the same time, more light must be shed to understand how overall language proficiency can be developed through writing in this target group of students (Manchón, 2011; Ortega, 2012).

Considering the importance L2 writing has in school contexts, Lee (2016), following Ortega's (2009) steps, analysed all the publications and empirical studies of this area in the JSLW and other important journals until the year 2011. This scholar only found a total of 72 articles in the period between 1992 and 2011. Out of these 72 articles, 61 were published in the new century and just 11 were conducted in Spanish school contexts. As reminded by Leki et al. (2008), cultural factors play a paramount role in L2 writing research and context must be clearly considered when analysing writing. To continue with Ortega's (2009) and Lee's (2016) task, we have analysed research conducted in school contexts in the JSLW from the year 2012 until today, just finding a total of 21 articles in a 10-year period, showing a scarcity of research in the area.

Lee (2016) found that all research conducted on EFL writing in school contexts focused mainly on five different areas: students, texts, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, and teacher development. To start with, those studies which have been conducted focusing on *students* mainly deal with the composing process. Research in the field is mainly longitudinal and experimental and it is cognitive-oriented. Many of these studies have been carried out with secondary education students in Spain (e.g., Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2007; Roca de Larios et al., 2006, 2008) and in the Netherlands (e.g., Schoonen et al., 2011; Snellings, et al., 2004; Stevenson, et al. 2006).

All the research conducted in Spanish educational contexts has focused on problem-solving strategies during the composition process, paying special attention to the strategies used by students during the steps of planning, formulation, and revision. Findings of these investigations suggest that EFL learners, regardless of their proficiency level, spend more time on formulation than on planning or revision. However, as learners reach a good level of writing, they get a balance on planning, formulation, and revision. Moreover, the type of strategies used by students are different depending on their proficiency level. For example, less proficient learners are more concerned about the use of searching strategies to compensate for interlanguage shortages (Roca de Larios et al., 2006).

On the other hand, research has focused on the relevance of linguistic fluency and metacognitive knowledge in L1 and EFL writing in the Netherlands. As stated by Schoonen et al. (2011), linguistic processing has an important impact in EFL writing. When students are engaged in writing, one of their main preoccupations is to find the correct expression and consequently, they pay less attention to conceptual processes which focus on content and structure. These scholars also discovered that FL writing strongly correlates to linguistic fluency and knowledge. Despite these findings, it has not been proved that improving fluency on lexical retrieval has a positive impact on general writing quality (Snellings et al., 2004).

Within this first strand of research, i.e., students as writers, how age affects writing development has also been studied. For example, Torras and Celaya (2001) examined writing development in two groups of bilingual students in Catalonia who were beginning with the instruction of this skill at two different ages: 8 and 11. These researchers found that the group of older learners outperformed the younger ones as their cognitive maturity was superior, letting them use their L1 literacy skills and learning strategies. However, a positive factor about introducing EFL writing at an early age is that students' attitudes can positively change, thus facilitating the development of their writing skills in the long term (Chang et al., 2008).

Cognitive and individual factors have also been considered when dealing with writing performance and development in school contexts. For example, Michel et al. (2019) focused on the role of working memory in writing performance with a group of Hungarian young learners. In their investigation, students performed higher in familiar tasks such as writing emails than in non-academic versions of editing tasks. They also discovered that students with high working memory functions presented more consistent performance across different working tasks and genres than learners with low working memory. Regarding individual factors, aspects such as attitude, motivation, level of proficiency, gender, exposure to the TL, or cultural backgrounds need to be examined as considered crucial (e.g., Keller et al., 2020; Torras & Celaya, 2001). Keller et al. (2020) conducted an empirical study with German and Swiss upper secondary school

students to analyse their writing skills considering factors such as gender and language background. They concluded that although these two factors did not have significant influence on the development of writing skills, students' cognitive abilities significantly shaped writing development.

The second major issue regarding EFL writing in younger learners focuses on written *texts*, including discourse, lexical, and grammatical characteristics of different genres. Research shows the significant role played by discourse, vocabulary, and grammar in EFL students' writing. Regarding vocabulary, Navés et al. (2005) found that in multilingual contexts (e.g., Catalonia), more proficient and older EFL learners use fewer borrowings and inventions than less proficient and younger learners in FL writing. These findings suggest that when students improve their language proficiency, they are less dependent on their L1 in writing. Nevertheless, as genre plays an essential role and the texts produced in learners' L1 and L2 are different regarding lexical variety, range, and sophistication; it is also important to focus on vocabulary in EFL writing lessons even for proficient writers (Kormos, 2011).

Grammar also plays a role in EFL learners' writing development (e.g., Jiang et al., 2019; Olsen, 1999). Lower proficient EFL learners make more syntactical, grammatical, and orthographic errors in writing and they usually turn to their L1. Jiang et al. (2019) analysed syntactic complexity across 410 narrative writings produced by high school Chinese students divided into four different writing proficiency levels and reached the conclusion that students with higher proficiency levels included more noun phrases, more complex subordinate and coordinate clauses, and longer utterances in their writings. According to Lee (2016), not enough exposure to the TL can prevent FL writing improvement; thus, "exposing less proficient EFL learners to the TL (e.g., through extensive reading) can help them reduce their grammatical, orthographic, and syntactic errors in writing" (p. 124). Research has also suggested that proficiency in L2 grammar can facilitate transfer of discourse abilities, such as essay organisation skills from L1 to L2 (Berman, 1994). Peer collaboration can also have a positive impact on syntactic complexity. Kang

and Lee (2019) analysed the effects of collaborative and individual planning in a group of 40 Korean young learners. Students had to complete two written tasks, one using collaborative planning and the other an individual one. Results suggest that compositions written following collaborative planning were better in aspects such as fluency and syntactic complexity, as collaboration helped students produce writing beyond their own interlanguage system; however, improvements in accuracy were not present due to young learners' limited level of English proficiency.

The topic of discourse level has also gained attention among researchers. For example, Makinen (1992), after observing Finnish pre-university students, concluded that more proficient learners were superior at developing their ideas in writing and produced better structures and coherent pieces of written discourse. In the same line, Whittaker et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study in Spain about textual analysis of secondary students' compositions and noticed that the progress in writing was clearly shown in the improvement of coherence and cohesion in students' written tasks. These scholars attributed these results to the cognitive maturity of learners and their continued exposure to English. As concluded by Lee (2016), although an explicit focus on the improvement of topics in writing can aid EFL students to fulfil better coherence (Makinen, 1992), explicit teaching regarding writing textual characteristics (e.g., coherence and register) can offer considerable improvements in EFL students' writing (Whittaker et al., 2011). At the same time, explicit instruction can help students learn important discourse conventions and raise their awareness (Hyland & Milton, 1997).

The third important area of research deals with different aspects of *teaching and learning* within the EFL writing classroom. Aspects such as genre and process theories of writing, and sociocultural or collaborative theories of learning have been analysed.

Only a few studies have paid attention to the process of writing (e.g., Ho, 2006; Pennington & Cheung, 1995; Pennington, et al. 1996; Sengupta, 2000; Tsui & Ng, 2000). Pennington et al. (1996) showed mixed results of a process writing syllabus in enhancing learners'

writing abilities and attitudes towards writing with a group of secondary students in Hong Kong. Multiple factors including learners' proficiency level or teachers' attitude and expertise influenced participants' results. Chinese students had clear beliefs about both their role and their teacher's role within the writing classroom, but when researchers included peer evaluation in the writing process, their perception of the teacher's role as an evaluator was completely altered. It is essential for instructors to react to established options of learning when involving learners in peer revisions through the process of writing, considering the cultural norms where teaching is taking place. According to Lee (2016), the studies conducted on peer evaluation and process writing suggest that "applying Western methodologies to periphery communities can be problematic" (p. 126). In another investigation, Cheong et al. (2019) demonstrated the positive effects of including discourse synthesis strategies throughout the whole process of writing, offering a favourable effect on written understanding and production, and showing the benefits of transferring writing competence between L1 and L2.

In the literature, there is a scarcity of research regarding genre pedagogy in school contexts. Firkins et al. (2007) claim that in low proficient students, an approach based on genre may help learners write in an effective way. Quin and Uccelli (2016) examined Chinese high school EFL learners' writing performance in essays and narratives. Multiple syntactic, lexical and discourse characteristics were used as predictors for quality in each genre. Results could not reveal statistically significant differences in writing quality in argumentative and narrative compositions. However, more sophisticated lexico-syntactic features were found in argumentative essays. Han and Hiver (2018) analysed motivational factors in a group of 174 middle Asian school language learners with diverse initial profiles following a genre pedagogy. Findings suggest that all participants could consolidate their writing self-regulation, i.e., writer's degree of participation in their own learning, and self-efficacy, i.e., interindividual capability to perform a task or complete an activity. However, for many students of this culture, anxiety was present during the writing process.

In the 21st century, research on the use of Information and Communication Technologies to promote the learning and teaching of EFL writing has grown dramatically. The majority of studies focus on the use of wikis to foster writing development in a collaborative way in Asian countries. It is believed that by using wikis, authenticity and students' engagement are enhanced, and learners can write longer and more coherent texts (Mak & Coniam, 2008). Woo et al. (2011) also state that wikis help learners improve their writing by working with other classmates in a collaborative way. In Hwang et al.'s (2011) study, the positive effects of using technology to promote secondary students' writing performance can also be observed.

Shin et al. (2020), in an attempt to analyse multimodal communicative competence, focused on the development of metalanguage through multimedia texts. These scholars analysed the performance and development of a sixth grade L2 writer's composition of digital multimodal texts including language and images. Findings suggest that the participant was developing the metalanguage of multimodality, thus becoming an effective communicator for the 21st century. In the same vein, Unsworth and Mills (2020) also showed the positive effects of using multimodal composition to express attitudinal meanings.

Other important aspects considered in the area of teaching and learning deal with students' engagement and motivation. The main studies carried out on these topics are based on experimental writing programmes. Lo and Hyland (2007) conducted research on the grounds of a new writing programme for Chinese students in which their needs and interests were considered by involving learners in the pre-writing input, in classroom discussions and giving emphasis to post-writing activities. Results showed a positive, engaging, and meaningful experience for learners. Mok (2009), after observing Chinese students in writing classrooms, suggested that many teachers neither motivate their students nor create an adequate space for learning where critical thinking is promoted. Factors such as a lack of attention to the writing process, ineffective teaching techniques, or teacher-dominated product-centred approaches were considered as possible factors which do not foster motivation by this scholar. Research has shown that issues

such as critical thinking or self-reflection, learners' motivation, and engagement are crucial in the EFL writing classroom and more attention is needed (Lee, 2016).

The fourth line of research focuses on *assessment and feedback*. Experimental studies about error correction, as well as other techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and observation have been used to conduct research. In the literature, research conducted on EFL classroom assessment has mainly focused on language. According to Furneaux et al. (2007), most EFL secondary teachers in Spain, France, Cyprus, Thailand, or Korea pay more attention to language than content or ideas when they respond to their students' writing. They mainly focus on grammar mistakes, offering the right answer in corrections and specifying that they do not consider writing from a communicative perspective, but from a linguistic one. Lee (2004, 2005, 2008a, b) also reached those conclusions after conducting research in Hong Kong and analysing the role of secondary education EFL teachers. This scholar found that teachers mainly use direct error feedback by highlighting errors and offering the correct answer. Therefore, it can be claimed that students' expectations, preferences, and beliefs may be shaped by teachers' practices (Lee, 2005). The same conclusions can be extracted from Lee and Coniam's (2013) study, in which teachers tried to innovate in the implementation of a new type of assessment for learning in a secondary school in Hong Kong through a process and a genre methodology. Although apparently this new implementation of writing assessment had a positive impact on their teaching and students' learning, tension was found between teachers' attempts to implement the new methodology and conventional practices. Moreover, something crucial to consider in the area of feedback and assessment is awareness. Teachers must be aware of the corrections offered to their students, as wrong corrections can be harmful for students' writing development (Ferris, 1999). Therefore, instructors should receive some training in responding to students' writing and teachers should involve learners more in the error feedback process, offering a more active role to them (Lee, 2016).

A new perspective to L2 feedback was analysed by Santos et al. (2010). These scholars focused on the potential of writing to learn among secondary students in Spain. They compared the effects of correcting lexical, grammatical, and cohesive errors with other variables such as reformulation, i.e., rewriting student texts; noticing, i.e., number of errors found in the text; and uptake, i.e., accurate revisions. It seems that error correction benefits noticing and uptake and has a clear advantage over reformulation regarding students' uptake. What is more, Martínez-Esteban and Roca de Larios (2010) and Coyle and Roca de Larios (2014) showed that written feedback models can help Spanish learners notice their gaps and make their revision easier. All this Spanish research suggests that multiple forms of CF can benefit EFL students' interlanguage development, but more research is needed to shed light on this topic (Lee, 2016).

Research has also demonstrated the discrepancies and stress faced by EFL writing teachers when assessing and giving feedback (e.g., Lee, 2008a; 2009; 2011a, b). Although teachers feel they must help learners become independent writers, their practices show quite the opposite. For example, by signalling every single student's error, they are promoting a passive attitude among students. In addition, teachers' feedback practices are greatly shaped by their sociocultural context. Research has shown that teachers' attempts to implement assessment to promote learning and improve teaching have potential to enhance students' learning and motivation; however, assessment innovation can be shaped by the contextual and sociocultural context where the learning is taking place (Lee, 2011a, b). As claimed by Enright and Gilliland (2011), insights about EFL secondary education writing can be obtained from further research into the sociocultural and educational context that govern the writing instructors' work. We cannot forget that "each context comes with its own history and its own cultural and social values and constraints" (Ortega, 2009, p. 250). Good writing research needs to be fully contextualised. As stated in Section 1.3.1, writing is not just an individual process; on the contrary, it is a social activity shaped by the sociocultural context where it is taking place. Therefore, research must cover diversity and differences across educational and cultural contexts.

The last line of research deals with *teacher development*. As Lee (2016) states, this is considered an underdeveloped area and more studies are needed to know how instructors teach writing and what the needs of writing teachers are (Hirvela & Belcher, 2007). Hudson et al. (2009) found that mentoring and training for learning how to teach writing was not sufficient for Vietnamese preservice teachers. Following the same line, Lee (2010, 2011c) also found that even in-service teachers in Hong Kong felt they were not prepared to teach writing, but they presented positive attitudes towards learning. This way, “it is therefore important that teacher educators respond to the needs of teachers by helping them grapple with challenges arising from their work contexts” (Lee, 2016, p. 131).

After having analysed the investigations conducted in the area of L2 writing in school contexts in the last 30 years, there is still a massive gap to investigate this specific line of research. The studies reported above have examined how specific aspects of writing in isolation (e.g., issues related to students, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, and teacher development) influence writing improvement in particular school contexts. However, many studies have been conducted in Asian countries and the results obtained may be shaped by their cultural norms; therefore, it is necessary to replicate these investigations to validate the results obtained. Moreover, it seems that, to the best of our knowledge, there are no studies on the last year of secondary education in Spain which aim at analysing overall language proficiency in L2 writing from a holistic communicative perspective focusing on the role played by the type of instruction and by different crucial individual factors, such as motivation, and learners’ initial level of proficiency while using qualitative and quantitative instruments to obtain data. Research has shown that these factors need further investigation to obtain better insights in this field of research. Therefore, in the following chapter, these individual factors will be explored to analyse how they influence the five different categories used to operationalise L2 writing proficiency: content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary.

1.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, we have presented the theoretical framework for our research on L2 writing, which is considered as an essential tool in today's global community. Firstly, the evolution of language teaching methods has been analysed to reach current communicative approaches (Section 1.1). From them, the notion of communicative competence has been extracted focusing on the different models proposed and paying special attention to those constructs which present discourse competence and the four skills as their core. After narrowing our focus of interest to writing (Section 1.3) and pointing out the importance of this skill, three main methodologies to teach writing have been explained, focusing on the benefits and limitations of process and genre approaches (Subsection 1.3.1). The chapter continues with the methods teachers can use to respond to writing (Subsection 1.3.2), emphasising feedback (Subsection 1.3.2.1) and assessment (Subsection 1.3.2.2) as key elements for this learning process to be effective. In Section 1.4, an analysis of research on L2 writing in school contexts has been offered focusing on a historical evolution of the studies conducted in the area over the last 30 years.

CHAPTER



Factors influencing L2 writing

A key question in SLA research centres on the different levels of achievement and language competence success among students (Mallahi et al., 2017). Multiple factors are believed to have an impact on the development of language skills. Regarding L2 writing competence, variables such as type or intensity of instruction, the teacher's expertise, how feedback is provided, and obviously learners' affective and cognitive individual differences, including their language proficiency level or their motivation play a key role.

In this chapter, an analysis of the influence caused by instruction, learners' proficiency, and motivation in L2 writing development is offered in order to provide a basis for the current investigation. It begins with a general overview on students' individual differences (Section 2.1) before narrowing the scope to the three variables under study. In this sense, we deal with the role played by instruction in L2 writing competence (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 offers an analysis of learners' proficiency level as a key variable in L2 writing development. This section is followed by an examination of the affective variable of motivation (Section 2.4), including the main theories in the literature (Subsection 2.4.1), the major instruments to measure it (Subsection 2.4.2), and a synopsis of current research on motivation in L2 writing proficiency (Subsection 2.4.3). This chapter concludes with a summary of the main ideas provided (Section 2.5).

2.1. General overview on individual differences

An issue which often puzzles many teachers and educators is the reason why it is possible to find learners in the same FL classroom who can easily attain a native-like level without much effort while others struggle to progress in language development. The answer is probably related to individual differences. As each person is different, learners also differ from one another in terms of cognitive factors, motivational variables, personality and learning styles, among others. According to Dörnyei (2005), individual differences “refer to dimensions of enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree” (p. 4).

Human beings vary from each other because of multiple biological factors, past experiences, and conditioned elements, which are affected by nature (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Therefore, variables such as age, gender, aptitude, learning styles, learning strategies, motivation, or personality are considered essential in SLA (e.g., Brown, 2000; Gardner, 1985; Gass & Selinker, 1994; Krashen, 1985; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2000; Long, 1990; Oxford, 1993; Skehan, 1989). Moreover, regarding language learning, research has shown that individual factors can determine both the speed at which learners acquire a language and their level of achievement (Ehrman et al., 2003; Ellis, 2004).

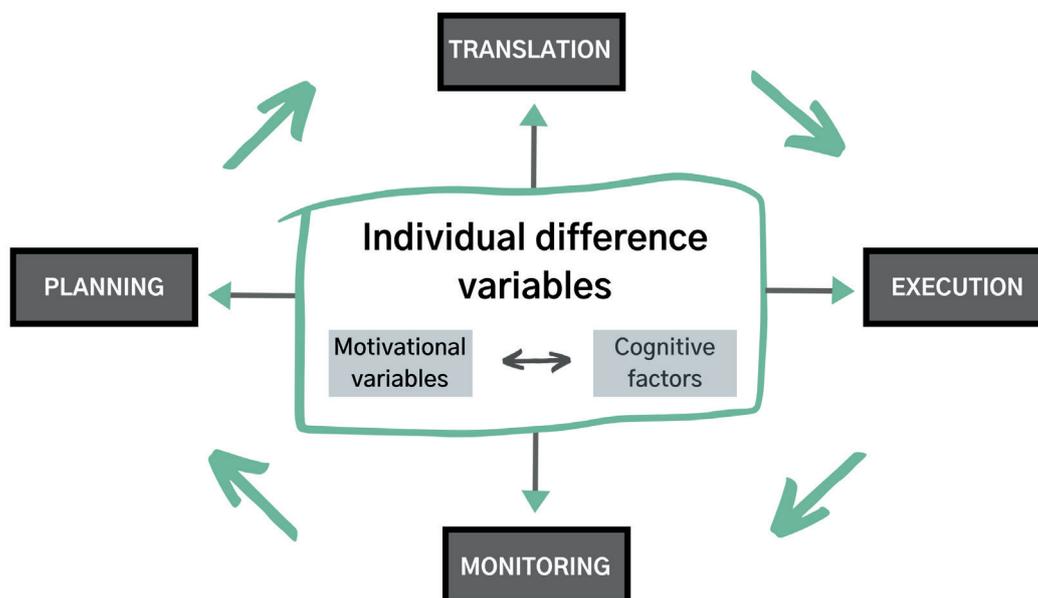
Whereas in L2 speech the effect of individual differences has been thoroughly analysed (e.g., Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Kormos & Trebits, 2012), it has not received as much attention in L2 writing (Kormos, 2012). Although it is possible to find studies which focus on the role played by motivation, beliefs, or working memory capacity in L1 writing (e.g., Pajares, 2003), very little is known about the way individual variables influence L2 writing processes or how L2 writing is acquired. The scarcity of attention to individual variables in L2 writing is surprising, as this complex skill demands the mastery of linguistic and cognitive resources and elements (Hayes, 1996). Thus, writers with varied cognitive skills may organise and perform these procedures with various

“degrees of efficiency and differ in how they learn to write in another language” (Kormos, 2012, p. 390). What is more, motivation will be key in all this process as learners’ determination will be crucial to succeed in L2 writing.

Research on L2 writing has been primarily considered from a cognitive perspective, where the writing process and the writer have been widely examined. Most of the studies conducted have followed Kellogg’s (1996) model, as it has been considered an influential construct including both cognitive and motivational factors in the writing process. The model includes three steps: formulation (which consists of planning and translation), execution, and monitoring (see Figure 9). According to Kellogg (1996), individual differences may play an essential function in each phase of writing development.

Figure 9

Kellogg’s (1996) model of individual difference variables in the writing process



Note. Kormos (2012, p. 392)

As can be observed in Figure 9, motivational and cognitive factors directly influence the several steps of the writing process and therefore the quality of L2 writing.

First, the complexity of thoughts and the manner of organising them will vary from one student to another while planning. Moreover, the translation of these ideas into language will also be different depending on the students' language level. Finally, variations regarding how learners control execution and monitoring processes can be seen among individuals. Consequently, both cognitive and motivational factors need to be analysed as they are "expected to affect how successfully students can orchestrate these writing processes" (Kormos, 2012, p. 392).

Despite the fact that many factors are included within individual differences, three are considered the most important variables: cognitive, affective, and personal traits (Gardner, 1985). Dörnyei (2010) claims that these three categories are connected, and they interact with each other. Within these variables, factors such as aptitude, working memory, and motivation are believed to be essential in L2 writing development. Although it is possible to find research on language aptitude (e.g., Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Grigorenko et al., 2000, Robinson, 2005; Skehan, 2002), the lack of studies in the field only allows for hypothetical assumptions (Kormos, 2012). Therefore, more research is required to know the real function of aptitude in L2 writing in foreign language settings.

Apart from individual differences, it is also interesting to examine the role played by other variables in L2 writing development. In the following section, the role of instruction in L2 writing will be analysed, as research has shown that key aspects such as writing strategies or genres are easily acquired through teaching (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth and Hayes, 2001; De Silva, 2015; Sasaki, 2002).

2.2. The role of instruction in L2 writing

In L2 writing, it has been claimed that the skills and knowledge which make a learner a good writer can be instructed, and obviously less skilled students can benefit from the teaching they receive (Archibald, 2001). However, it cannot be forgotten that

FL writing instruction is locally constrained and therefore shaped by educational and sociohistorical values (Manchón, 2009). In this regard, sociocultural factors influence the way instruction is provided and the teaching programme itself. So, what may work in a specific context, may not work in another one. Reichelt (2009) investigated writing teaching programmes in Germany, the USA, Poland, Japan, China, and Spain to analyse the multiple factors shaping writing instruction. This researcher found that in some contexts like the USA or Germany, local educational values have an enormous impact on FL writing instruction. In this sense, L1 writing pedagogies are also seen in FL writing methodologies fostering aspects like cultural literacy or critical thinking. On the contrary, in countries like Spain, Poland, or China, FL writing is mainly taught for instrumental reasons to enhance learners' overall FL proficiency. Moreover, according to Reichelt (2009), in these countries, writing is used as a way to reinforce vocabulary and grammar regardless of learners' specific needs in FL writing. In the case of Spain, most secondary EFL teachers have little or no training in teaching writing, which presents important challenges as many of them do not feel confident when teaching this skill.

A common assumption in L2/FL contexts is that learners' development in writing mostly correlates with L2 proficiency (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009). Obviously, students' language competence will help determine their degree of accuracy in texts (Cumming, 1989); however, proficiency may not be enough to be successful in L2 writing. In order to help learners succeed in this task, instruction should include the teaching of text forms, composing processes, strategies, sociocultural purposes, and writing functions (Cumming, 1995). Besides, research has shown that genre conventions are better understood if explicitly taught (e.g., Feez, 1998; Flowerdew, 2000; Swales, 1990).

Many investigations have shown the beneficial outcomes of instruction on particular aspects of learners' writing such as the use of strategies, the conscious attention paid throughout the whole writing process (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Shaw & Liu,

1998; Tsang & Wong, 2000), and the final quality of texts (e.g., Cresswell, 2000; Sengupta, 2000). According to Raimes (1998), instruction should pay special attention to learners' planning, revision, and editing as less skilled L2 writers fail when implementing writing strategies. In addition, instruction is claimed to help students establish long-term objectives to enhance their writing skills. L2 learners can establish, monitor, and achieve their personal objectives in a successful way while they are writing (Cumming, 1995; Sasaki, 2000). However, teaching programmes are not homogeneous as factors such as the learning context, the spoken discourse of teaching, instructors' beliefs, the manner interactions are produced, tutoring sessions, or the way feedback is offered shape instruction.

Although there are no explicit models to explain how instruction may influence the development of writing abilities (Cumming, 2001; Cumming & Riazi, 2000; Grabe, 2001; Silva, 1993), different theoretical orientations emphasise multiple features of L2 writing and focus on the teaching and learning of them (Barkaoui, 2007; Cumming, 2001; Hyland, 2002). In an attempt to build a homogenous construct for writing instruction, Cumming and Riazi (2000) analysed the main tenets of the existing L2 writing models with 108 ESL learners from multiple cultural backgrounds in an intensive course at a university in Canada. After analysing data, these researchers concluded that it was not possible to offer a unique process-product L2 writing model as learners have different preferences, styles, needs, motivations, past educational experiences, or present practices (Mohan & Lo, 1985). Despite the impossibility to find a unique model for L2 writing training, the main orientations when dealing with L2 writing instruction are as follows: *text modelling*, *process modelling*, and *sociocultural modelling*. While those approaches which focus on the process explicitly teach writing procedures; the other two approaches emphasise the value of shaping target texts. Moreover, sociocultural orientations pay special attention to the audience, purpose, and context each text is aimed at.

The first orientation, *text-focused*, deals with those aspects such as lexicon, grammar, morphology, orthography, rhetorical, and discourse features which are necessary in L2 writing. Hence, it is believed that thanks to instruction, learners will be able to produce lengthy texts with appropriate discourse markers and connectors, sophisticated vocabulary, and structures (e.g., Grant & Ginther, 2000), and they will also be able to employ multiple features of diverse text types. In this regard, Tsang and Wong (2000) analysed the impact on grammar instruction and found greater readiness and more elaborated syntax in participants' writings. Collins and Norris (2017) also observed an improvement in writers' grammar just after a short period of instruction. In his study, Archibald (1994) analysed the progress of 50 students from 21 countries on a summer course and found that participants increased the use of discourse markers offering more cohesive and coherent texts as the teaching programme progressed. Chenoweth and Hayes (2001) demonstrated that instruction also correlated positively with L2 writing fluency, i.e., the easiness with which writers get into grammatical structures and words while writing. Finally, a better understanding of norms surrounding academic writing was attributed to instruction in the research conducted by Shaw and Liu (1998).

In light of the above findings, it may be claimed that instruction benefits learners' understanding of the appropriate use of diverse grammatical or linguistic structures, and the norms behind particular genres regarding its structures or information choice.

The second orientation, *process-focused*, centres on the acquisition of writing strategies. According to Cumming (2001), learners must acquire both micro strategies, which focus on form and content, and macro strategies such as planning, drafting and revision. A mastery of these strategies will indicate improvement in L2 writing, as learners will be able to look for suitable grammar and vocabulary to express their thoughts in the FL. As stated by Roca De Larios et al. (2002), L2 learners need to achieve five behaviours when writing: they need to be able to manage complex mental representations, build organisational and rhetorical aims and keep them in mind while writing, efficiently use problem-solving approaches, distinguish between editing and

revision, and adopt a flexible attitude regarding rhetorical devices. In this regard, writers who possess knowledge of these L2 textual and linguistic aspects can plan, draft, and revise in a more effective way, and use their linguistic resources more fluently (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Sasaki, 2000).

Research has shown that it is possible to help learners develop their L2 writing competence by teaching strategies and processes, such as generating ideas, planning, drafting, or revising, which underpin effective writing (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Cumming, 2002; Hyland, 2002; Sengupta, 2000). Different studies have demonstrated the positive aspects of this strategy instruction in writing (e.g., Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2000; Sengupta, 2000), although strategy instruction can be context-dependent (Carrell, 1998).

In the literature, many investigations have analysed the effects of strategy training in L2 writing. In a longitudinal study, Olson and Land (2007) found the benefits of using metacognitive and cognitive strategies, such as goal setting, planning, monitoring, or evaluation in L2 writing. Sasaki (2000) focused on process writing to investigate the effects of strategy training in more and less skilled writers before and after 6 months of teaching. During the investigation, learners received 90-minute instruction once a week. This instruction included writing strategies such as planning and revising. However, after six months of instruction, the researcher found a decrease of strategy use. What is more, “the eight novice writers did not become either better or more fluent in L2 writing over two semesters” (Sasaki, 2009, p. 50). Although the reasons for these findings are not clear, the researchers claim that this decrease could be explained due to an increase of participants’ proficiency level, the application of learnt prescribed ways to face the task, the quality of the teaching programme, or learners’ motivation. However, in another study, Sasaki (2002) found that novice writers became significantly better and more fluent. In addition, even though more skilled writers used a higher number of strategies, novice writers also increased their strategy use and therefore they improved

the quality in their pieces of writing after instruction. This way, participants enhanced their L2 composition scores thanks to the instruction received (Sasaki, 2009).

Hassan et al. (2005) reviewed 25 published studies to analyse the effects of strategy instruction. The authors concluded that strategy teaching was effective when there was training in the implementation of writing strategies and learners were aware of strategy use. However, the effects of strategy instruction in the long term could not be demonstrated. Following this line of research, Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of writing instruction studies. Data were mainly collected in L1 contexts and using teenagers as participants, and results showed the positive effects of strategy training especially in planning, revising, and editing. A relevant study due to its contribution to the field of language learner strategy is the one developed by De Silva (2015) because of the scarcity of longitudinal studies. This researcher focused on a group of 72 undergraduate learners in the Open University of Sri Lanka to analyse the influence of writing strategy instruction in writing performance using a pre-test/post-test research design. Participants were divided into an experimental group, which was offered a complete writing strategy instruction teaching programme, and a control group, which obtained the same amount of writing instruction as the experimental group but without strategy training. Findings showed that strategy instruction highly correlated with writing performance. This way, the experimental group presented a statistically significant rise in strategy use as opposed to Sasaki (2000), discussed earlier. Improvements were seen especially in planning, formulation, and resourcing. A fact worth pointing out is that towards the end of the training, some students belonging to the experimental group became more autonomous and less dependent on the instructor. These findings show a positive impact of writing instruction in writing performance.

As several investigations have demonstrated (e.g., Devine, 1993; Kasper, 1997), instruction, training, and support with strategies have a beneficial impact on students' L2 writing motivation, learning and achievement, and aid the production of more appropriate and effective compositions. In this sense, Sengupta (2000) found positive

correlations between the use of revision strategies with the quality of EFL secondary learners' writings.

Finally, another improvement attributed to instruction deals with the way students reflect on their own pieces of writing. Teaching fosters positive effects on learners' ability to self-monitor their compositions and also awareness of the different steps in the process of writing and overall organisation (Connor & Farmer, 1990; Cresswell, 2000).

The last approach, i.e., *the sociocultural model*, envisages the teaching of writing as the teaching of "genres, values and practices of the target community" (Barkaoui, 2007, p. 36), taking the role played by the audience and context into consideration. As Hyland (2002) claims, skilled L2 writers can perform in new cultural contexts in an effective way. This scholar also believes that it is through instruction when students learn about the knowledge, expectation, values, and genres of the target community. Teaching is conducted through micro discursive actions such as formulating, negotiating, and mediating (Cumming, 2002), and macro-discursive characteristics related to the ability to adapt the interpersonal aspects and information of the message regarding the audience's knowledge and needs. As stated by Hyland (2007), "genre pedagogies enable teachers to ground their courses in the texts that students will have to write in their target contexts, thereby supporting learners to participate effectively in the world outside the ESL classroom" (p. 148).

In the literature, it is possible to find studies which demonstrate the positive effects of genre-based instruction on L2 writing performance. Uzun and Zehir-Topkaya (2020) found that thanks to the application of a genre-based pedagogy, participants improved in the mastery of the different genres studied. In the same vein, Bae (2012) demonstrated the effectiveness of genre pedagogy with a group of 595 middle school students in Korea. In this investigation, participants were split in a control group, which did not get any kind of training, and an experimental group, which received explicit genre instruction. The experimental group performed better than the control one in each

category in the post-test. Moreover, positive perceptions and attitudes were manifested by learners. Mixed results were found by Bi (2020), who examined the use of learners' linguistic features in L2 writing through the teaching of genres. After analysing 180 argumentative and 180 narrative texts, the researcher found that although a positive correlation between writers' linguistic use and genre instruction existed, the role played by students' previous genre experience greatly influenced their language use.

Although the above three teaching approaches can be independently used, it has been argued that process and text modelling are more effective when taught together (Hyland, 2002; Myles, 2002; Yeh, 1998). Combining text models with process training enables students to employ the L2 as a tool in the way of becoming self-regulatory by linking strategic effort and outcomes (Myles, 2002). Yeh (1998) showed that by integrating explicit instruction about text types and practice, L2 writers get the required skills to write and feel more empowered to face writing tasks.

Before concluding this section, it should be highlighted that most of the research on L2 writing instruction has focused on isolated composing tasks in multiple sociocultural contexts; therefore, mixed results are found with limited validity (Cumming & Riazi, 2000). Although considerable information exists about the features of texts or specific composition processes, it is not possible to generalise how FL writing is actually learnt and the real role instruction plays in this process. Hence, more research is needed to shed light on this topic in order to provide useful information to be included within educational programmes. In addition, more longitudinal studies are necessary as they explain the relationship of factors and L2 writing development better when learners are receiving L2 writing instruction (Asher, 1983; Sasaki, 2009).

After having examined how instruction shapes L2 writing development, we turn to the role played by learners' proficiency level. Hence, the following section offers a complete analysis of this individual factor.

2.3. The role of language proficiency in L2 writing

Language proficiency is one of the individual differences which has attracted most attention in language learning, since it is regarded as an important indicator of language achievement (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Cumming, 1989; Pinto, 2005). According to Hughes (2003), proficiency can be defined as learners' having enough control of the language to fulfil a certain objective. In this regard, language competence is considered a communicative linguistic ability through which learners are able to use their knowledge effectively in any given context (Bachman, 1990).

As claimed by Herraiz-Martínez (2018), the effect of English proficiency is cumulative. It can both encourage and frustrate the process of language learning. In language learning classrooms, one may find students with a good level of English who will feel confident, and students with a low level who will try to go unnoticed. Therefore, it is key for instructors to know their students' initial proficiency level to be able to make decisions about the teaching process.

According to Schoonen et al. (2003), writing in an L2 is a demanding task which involves the learner's use of multiple linguistic and cognitive abilities. For some students with limited L2 linguistic knowledge, the completion of this task can be even more complicated. Therefore, considering that language proficiency is regarded as an indicator of willingness to be successful in language learning, it is necessary to analyse its role in L2 writing to determine its influence in the development of this skill.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a number of models for writing have been developed. Many of them focus on the process of writing (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Hayes, 1996; Hayes & Flower, 1980; Kellogg, 1996) or on the progress of writing proficiency (e.g., Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), instead of focusing on the linguistic and cognitive abilities needed when writing (Schoonen et al., 2003). Hayes and Flower's (1980) writing approach was considered a pioneering cognitive model. These two scholars broke down the writing process into 3 cognitive steps: planning, translating, and revising. Writing is

believed to be more fluent when the transition between these three procedures is produced in an automatic and smooth way (Schmidt, 1992). Following the tenets of this first cognitive model, Chenoweth and Hayes (2001) identified three stages in the process of writing: the resource level, the process level, and the control level. The first step (i.e., the resource level), comprises the linguistic competence in the TL. This knowledge is necessary for learners to deal with process level procedures, such as translation and revision, to successfully complete the final written task in the control level. Hence, in all this process, diverse knowledge resources, such as writing strategies, vocabulary, grammar, discourse features, or pragmatic knowledge among others, are called upon.

Proficiency also plays a role in the strategies used by learners in L2 writing, as research has demonstrated that different techniques are used by writers based on their proficiency level (Zhang, 2008). For example, Akyel (1994), after analysing the performance of 78 students in a Turkish university while writing in English, concluded that proficiency level affected the way learners planned their compositions, and, as a result, their quality. Regarding the strategy of translation, Gosden (1996) discovered that novice writers tended to plan their writings in their L1 and then they translated them word-by-word, thus decreasing the quality of their final product. Similar conclusions were drawn by Sasaki (2000) after conducting research in a Japanese context. This scholar found that less skilled L2 writers had to translate their ideas from their mother tongue. However, more skilled students tried to polish the quality of their writings by using more refined English expressions.

As for restructuring, different techniques may be used depending on the students' competence. While message abandonment is used by less skilled learners when they realise that they are not going to be able to express what they had originally planned; message elaboration or reconceptualization is used by more skilled students (Zhang, 2008). As can be inferred, writers' initial L2 level is a crucial indicator of the choice of the necessary writing strategies which will allow students to complete their tasks successfully.

Apart from writing strategies, learners need various linguistic and knowledge resources to succeed in L2 writing. In other words, students need knowledge about vocabulary and grammar (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996), discourse features, pragmatic knowledge (Cumming, 2001), text organisation, and working memory capacity (Schoonen et al., 2003).

According to Schoonen et al. (2003), learners' lexical level is a significant indicator of quality in L2 writing. Results from different studies have shown that lexical richness in writing is a sign of higher holistic scores in those texts (e.g., Engber, 1995; Laufer & Nation, 1995). Moreover, in L2 writing, learners use a greater range of vocabulary as their L2 proficiency increases (Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Laufer & Nation, 1999; Sweedler-Brown, 1993). Therefore, we must consider that limited lexical knowledge decreases learners' likelihood to express their thoughts. Nonetheless, not only is vocabulary necessary to communicate in a written form, but grammar is also key to show relationships among constituents in clauses. Therefore, grammatical knowledge is paramount to succeed in L2 writing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). What is more, the spelling and the orthography of the target language must be also considered by learners (Abbott and Berninger, 1993). In this sense, Whalen and Ménard (1995) concluded that those students with a poor linguistic proficiency struggled with strategies such as planning, drafting, or evaluating in L2 writing.

Writers should also be aware of discourse features and the way to express communicative intentions, i.e., they need pragmatic and sociolinguistic knowledge (Cumming, 2001). At the macro-level of text structure, students learn how to relate ideas at the beginning, ending or all over the text (Connor, 1996; Kaldor et al., 1998; Tedick & Mathison, 1995) thanks to the use of cohesive, stylistic, or functional-semantic instruments (Allison, 1995; Jacobs, 1982). Gloppe and Schoonen (1996) demonstrated that more skilled writers have more declarative expertise, and they concentrate on aspects such as text organisation better. On the contrary, it seems that less proficient learners have more problems with the mechanics of the language. Victori (1999) also

proved that students' proficiency regarding cognitive, task and strategy knowledge was also an indicator of writing success.

In the literature, it has been argued that L2 writers are less fluent than L1 writers because they have fewer automatised lexical retrieval procedures (Lindgren et al., 2008; Schoonen et al., 2009). According to Schoonen et al. (2003), learners' metacognitive and linguistic knowledge is not enough for successful writing; a fluent access to all this knowledge is necessary when translating their thoughts onto paper (McCutchen, 2000). In order to do so, writers' working memory capacity plays a key role. Research has shown that more proficient learners will have a more fluent access to this knowledge, thus being able to handle all the orthographical, lexical, discourse and grammatical decisions at the same time and therefore improving the quality of their writings (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Cumming, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; McCutchen, 2000). Besides, this "fluency in writing will reduce the burdening of writers' working memory and thus free up cognitive space for higher order writing processes" (Schoonen, 2019, p. 515). Hence, less proficient learners will need to assign cognitive resources to aspects such as the revision of spelling instead of spending their time focusing on the audience, content, or style (Schoonen et al, 2003; Wengelin, 2002). As seen in the previous section, writing fluency could be achieved through instruction, offering learners knowledge about genres, writing strategies or language. Measures of fluency in L2 writing are typically connected with time, length, and speed of production. It is claimed that L2 learners write longer texts and more fluently as their proficiency increases (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). In this regard, more proficient writers are the ones who can retrieve linguistic chunks and vocabulary faster to transform their ideas into writing.

After having discussed the role played by proficiency in the different processes of the main writing cognitive models, we will next focus on the main research to shed further light on this topic.

Quality in L2 writing tends to positively correlate with writers' L2 proficiency (e.g., Pennington & So, 1993). Manchón et al. (2009) analysed the writing development

of 21 Spanish EFL learners divided into three groups to investigate their cognitive activity while writing. The first group was formed by 7 secondary students with a pre-intermediate level of English; the second group was made up of 7 university students with an intermediate level, and the last group contained 7 graduate students with an advanced level. Results showed that those learners with a higher proficiency spent less time reformulating and more time on planning and revision. However, less proficient students had to struggle trying to transform their ideas into language. As a consequence, they had to spend most of their time reformulating. According to Manchón et al (2009), “as proficiency grows, a more balanced allocation of attentional resources to different processes takes place” (p. 107). Roca de Larios et al. (2001) reached similar conclusions in their research. These scholars analysed the temporal allocation of formulation procedures with 3 groups of EFL Spanish learners with different proficiency levels. Their results concluded that the more skilled writers spent most of their time planning to construct high quality composition in all aspects, including pragmatic issues. Moreover, all participants, regardless of their level of English, reported that one of their main concerns was the topic they had to write about. However, while only layout was an issue for intermediate and advanced learners, the number of words was one of the aspects which worried the less proficient learners the most. What is more, more skilled writers were aware of the importance of cohesion and coherence mechanisms in their final tasks. On the contrary, less skilled writers spent their time struggling with compensatory problems. These results are also in line with the findings obtained by Roca de Larios et al. (2006), who concluded that textual and linguistic problems were the aspects which mostly preoccupied lower proficiency writers, while more proficient learners spent more time in the revision process, thus increasing quality to their pieces of writing.

Despite the importance attributed to learners’ L2 proficiency level in writing, some scholars claim that the relationship between L1 and L2 writing needs to be analysed as it is believed that L1 writing expertise can play a more significative role than the learners’ proficiency level in the TL (Schoonen et al., 2003). These authors conducted a

study in the Netherlands in which they collected data from 281 secondary learners with different levels of English in 8 schools during an academic year. Participants were asked to write three texts in English and three texts in Dutch, their mother tongue. Findings suggest that L2 writing development positively correlated with L1 writing expertise, much more than with L2 linguistic competence. However, a different scenario was found by Sasaki and Hirose (1996), who analysed the writing performance of Japanese students considering their L1 writing proficiency and their L2 linguistic level and found that learners' L2 proficiency was the main indicator of L2 writing accomplishment. Moreover, they showed that more fluent learners paid more attention to text organisation, could write longer texts, and were more fluent when showing clear expressions with a continuous flow of ideas going beyond the sentence level. Schoonen et al. (2003) claimed that the results obtained in Sasaki and Hirose's (1996) study could be the result of the way these two researchers operationalised writing development as it is believed that "metacognitive knowledge of texts and writing strategies may be applicable across languages" (p. 11). Apart from that, the different cultural context where these two studies were conducted could also explain these differences.

For adolescent learners, L2 writing is considered one of the most difficult tasks in a FL (Schoonen et al., 2009). Although they have a certain amount of metacognitive competence regarding writing and some L1 writing experience, their limited L2 linguistic expertise can impede the use of this knowledge. In addition, less skilled learners encounter many difficulties with the language, which makes them forget about essential processes in writing such as monitoring or planning (Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Whalen & Ménard, 1995). Even though research has shown that there are connections between L1 writing competence, L2 writing proficiency, and L1 linguistic knowledge, Schoonen et al. (2009), after conducting a large-scale study with nearly 400 secondary students in the Netherlands, concluded that "the relationship between L1 and FL writing proficiency is without doubt mediated by FL linguistic knowledge" (p. 82). As a result, L2 writing has

a greater dependence on fluency and the level of linguistic knowledge than L1 writing proficiency.

All these findings support the idea that as L2 proficiency increases, there is an automatization of language skills which triggers the necessary cognitive resources and the skilful selection of strategies to compensate for higher-level writing problems. As stated by Manchón et al. (2009), “the recursive nature of L2 composing is mediated by proficiency: increased command of the L2 brings with it the possibility of sharing attentional resources among various composing processes” (p. 115). In this regard, it seems that with increased L2 proficiency, learners can make strategic decisions and face linguistic, textual, ideational, and stylistic problems. In addition, increased language expertise offers writers the possibility to deal with a multidimensional mental model of writing in which writers go beyond text-length and language problems (Devine, 1993).

As can be observed, although there is some research dealing with L2 proficiency in writing, more research is needed, as most of the studies have been conducted under a cognitive perspective with high education learners in different countries (e.g., García-Vázquez et al., 1997; Yang & Meyen, 2003). What is more, mixed results are obtained from different investigations. Therefore, to the best of our knowledge, it is possible to claim that research analysing the role of proficiency in L2 writing development in a Spanish secondary educational context during a whole academic year is quite scarce and more studies are thus needed.

In the following section, an analysis of the affective variable motivation will be carried out to ascertain its influence in L2 writing proficiency. The different theories of motivation, the instruments to measure it, and the main research conducted on this discipline will be reviewed.

2.4. The role of motivation in language learning

Motivation is considered one of the most determining individual factors, with a direct effect on language learning success (Dörnyei, 2005). This variable offers students the first and most important driving force to begin with language learning, and then, it also allows them the possibility to progress in the language learning process. Therefore, it may be argued that without motivation, even learners with excellent skills cannot achieve long-term objectives. On the contrary, those highly motivated learners can compensate for important weaknesses in learning conditions. Gardner and Lambert (1959) demonstrated that motivation for language learning can predict L2 achievement at the same level as language aptitude (MacIntyre et al., 2009a), thus showing the key role motivation plays in L2 and FL learning.

According to Gardner (2010), multiple variables can determine learners' motivation. Aspects such as having an interest in the TL culture and people, having or having had a devoted and enthusiastic teacher, the need to learn an L2 or FL for practical reasons, or simply enjoying learning this new language can affect students' motivation. Therefore, due to the importance of motivation in language learning, it is essential to define this term and take this variable into consideration to analyse its effects on students' L2 writing proficiency in secondary education in Spain.

A simple definition of motivation is difficult, as it is considered a multi-faceted construct, which involves cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements (Gardner, 2010). In the literature, multiple attempts to describe this concept can be found (e.g., Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Elliot & Covington, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Keller, 1983; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). For example, Keller (1983) defines motivation as “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in this respect” (p. 389). Although this definition includes many of the factors which trigger motivation, it does not identify the components which constitute motivation. In an attempt to define these components,

Gardner (1985) depicts motivation as the combination of three elements: learners' positive attitude, their desire to achieve their objective, and the effort employed in achieving it. In this regard, Dörnyei (2001) describes motivation as what moves someone to the election of a concrete action, to the choice of resources, and the effort employed to fulfil the action.

Due to the importance of motivation in the field of SLA, several theories have emerged since the 1960s with the aim of explaining the role played by this affective variable in L2 or FL learning. In the next section, an overview of the main theories is provided.

2.4.1. Main theories of motivation

L2 motivational research emerged with the first studies conducted in the 1960s. Gardner and Lambert's (1959), *Motivational Variables in Second Language Acquisition*, offered a theoretical construct on L2 motivation and opened the door to modern scientific research on language learning motivation. As Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre (2020) claim, the impact of this article on the study of L2 motivation has been immeasurable. Since its publication, research on L2 motivation has evolved with new generations of researchers analysing the multiple directions in which the field has tried to move (Dörnyei, 2020). In this sense, three main periods must be described when focusing on the main theories developed in this discipline: *the social psychological period*, *the cognitive-situated period*, and *the process-oriented period*.

2.4.1.1. The social psychological period

The social psychological period embeds two different theories. The first one involves the work conducted by Robert Gardner and his associates in Canada, known as

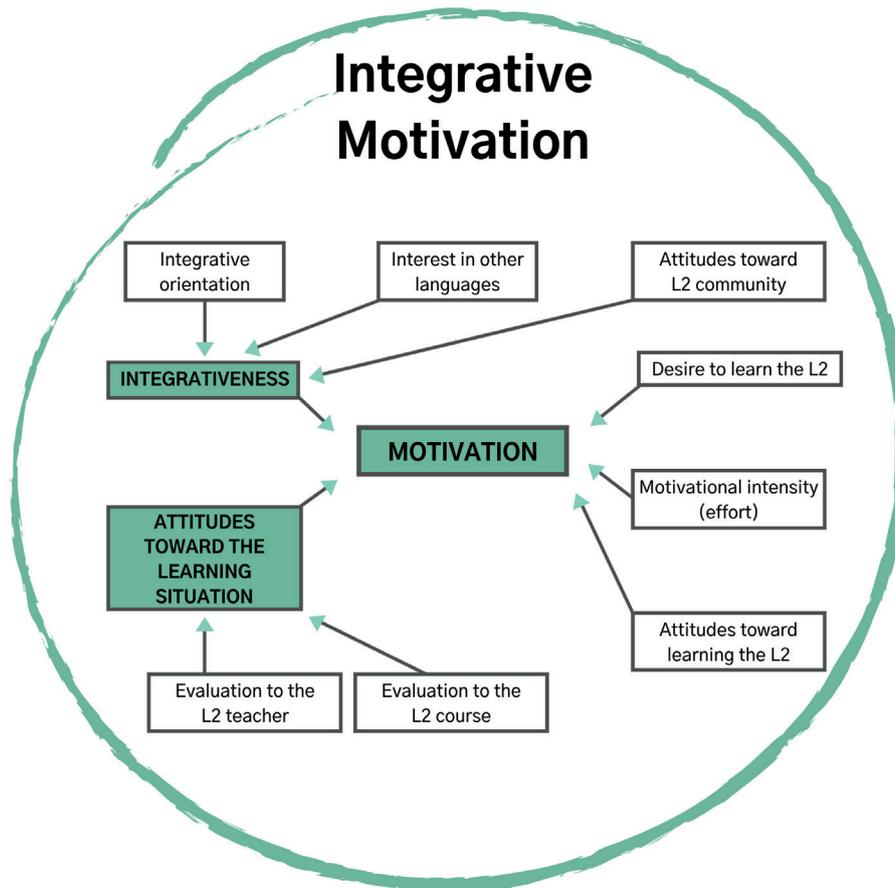
the socio-educational model, and the second one focuses on Clément's (1980) theory of *linguistic self-confidence*.

The socio-educational model emerged with the interest of Gardner and his colleagues in understanding the controversial coexistence of English and French speaking communities in Canada. In this context, Gardner and Lambert (1972) perceived motivation as the driving force to learn the language of the other community, thus increasing affiliation and intercultural communication. Gardner (1985) believed that learners' attitudes towards a particular group would inevitably have an influence over their learning of that language. Therefore, through a psychological approach, these scholars revolutionised the existing theory of L2 motivation research, which had focused exclusively on the individual leaving aside social factors. This innovative combination of social and individualistic psychology in L2 motivation research was completely new in the 1960s and "three decades ahead of its time" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 67). It was not until the 1990s when the major research of motivational psychology emerged.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), several sociocultural factors including political considerations, cultural stereotypes or language attitudes may shape L2 learning. As Williams (1994) states, learning a new language has an important effect on the social nature of the learner and involves the acceptance of new cultural and social behaviours and ways of thinking. In order to develop all these ideas, Gardner (1985) elaborated his first version of his motivation theory conceptualising what he called *Integrative Motivation*. As can be observed in Figure 10, in this construct, *Integrative Motivation* is made up of three main components: *integrativeness*, *attitudes toward the learning situation*, and *motivation*.

Figure 10

Representation of Gardner's (1985) Integrative Motivation



Note. Dörnyei (2005, p. 69)

Integrativeness refers to the interest and predisposition each individual has to interact with other group members (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Subcomponents such as attitudes toward the L2 community, general interest in FLs, and integrative orientation form this group. The second main constituent, *attitudes toward the learning situation*, includes learners' attitudes regarding the L2 teacher and course. Finally, the subcomponent *motivation* is defined around three elements: the learner's desire, effort, and attitude to learn the new language.

Gardner's theory of *Integrative Motivation* has been strongly accepted among L2 researchers, but it has also received criticism because of the terminology used. A clear example can be found in Dörnyei (1994, 2005), who claims that the term *integrative* is used in various components and subcomponents of the construct creating some

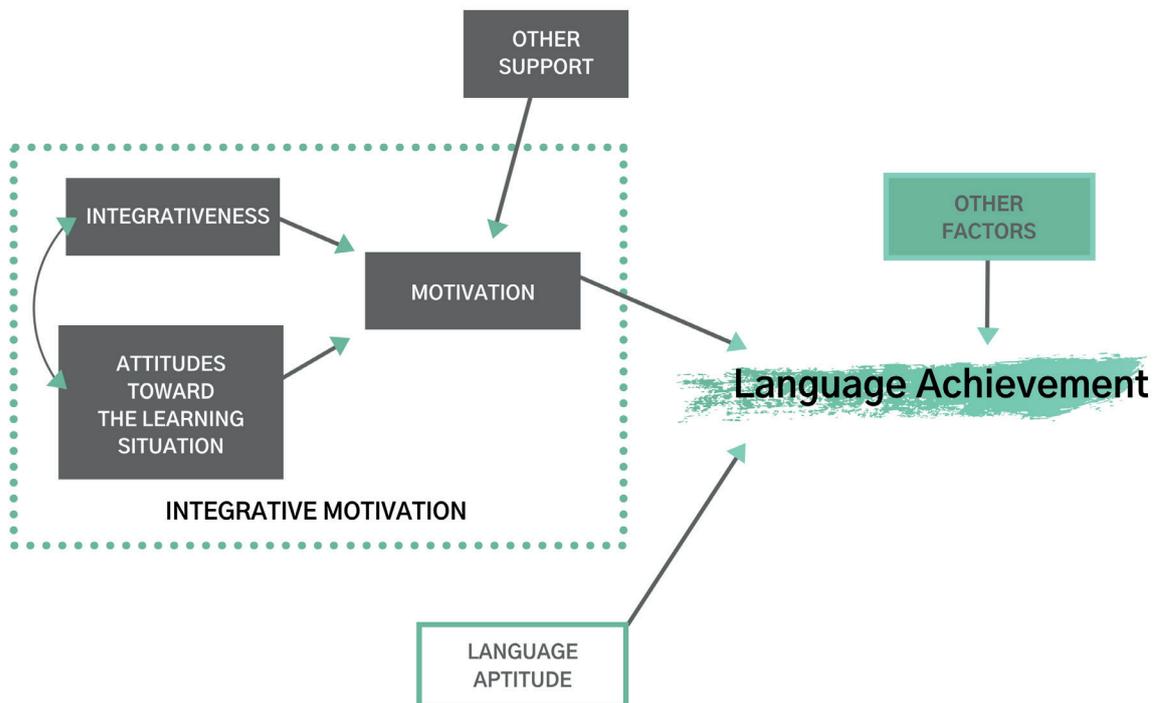
confusion. Moreover, Gardner sometimes uses the concept *Integrative Motive* to describe the model, but then he refers to it as *Integrative Motivation*, which is at the same time just one component of the whole construct, hence creating uncertainty.

L2 scholars tended to interpret Gardner's (1985) theory focusing on just two dimensions: the affective dimension and the practical one. This way, the affective or interpersonal dimension is the one connected to *integrative orientation*, and the utilitarian or practical dimension to *instrumental orientation*. This last dimension focuses on practical reasons for learning a language, such as better career opportunities, access to specific studies, or other useful motives for learning a new language. As can be seen in Figure 10, this *instrumental orientation* is not part of Gardner's initial theory, but due to its importance, it has been included in subsequent reinterpretations of the theory (Gardner, 2000, 2001, 2010). As this scholar claims, apart from *integrative motivation*, other instrumental factors may contribute to motivation. This combination of practical factors, which contribute to motivation, is known as *Instrumental motivation*.

In the most recent version of the model (Gardner, 2001) *motivation* is also influenced by the two main variables of *integrativeness* and *attitudes toward the learning situation*, forming *Integrative Motivation* (see Figure 11). However, apart from integrative reasons, instrumental factors (*other support*) also shape *motivation* in a direct way. At the same time, *language aptitude* and *other factors*, such as language anxiety or parental encouragement also have an effect on *language achievement*.

Figure 11

Representation of the role played by aptitude and motivation in L2 learning



Note. Gardner (2001, p. 5)

In this revised model, *integrative motivation* is constituted by *motivation*, which is directly shaped by *integrativeness* and *attitudes toward the learning situation*. As Gardner (2001) claims, “integrative motivation is a complex of attitudinal, goal-directed, and motivational attributes” (p. 6). In other words, the motivated student is the one who is willing to learn an L2 or FL, has the desire to be part of the other language community, and presents positive attitudes toward the learning situation. By observing Figure 11, one may claim that *attitudes toward the learning situation* and *integrativeness* provide support for *motivation*, but the real component responsible for L2 achievement is the variable *motivation*. This way, learners who are integrated and present positive attitudes toward the learning situation, but do not show effort, desire, and affect, will not present high results in achievement.

The variable *integrativeness* makes reference to the interest in learning an L2 to be accepted in the other language community. Aspects such as respect to the members

or culture of the other language, as well as the desire to be integrated within the other community are included within this variable. As can be inferred, *integrativeness* implies emotional bonds to the L2 community. This will be reflected in a positive attitude toward the culture and members of the other community, and in an integrative orientation toward L2 learning.

Regarding *attitudes toward the learning situation*, aspects such as school context, teacher and classmates, materials and resources used, or the course itself will be involved in shaping students' positive or negative attitudes.

The third main variable, *motivation* “refers to the driving force in any situation” (Gardner, 2001, p. 6). It is a complex concept shaped by three elements: effort, desire, and affect, which play a key role. First, learners must make an effort to learn the TL through doing homework, extra work or looking for more opportunities to practise the language. Second, those learners who are motivated will want to achieve their goal of mastering the L2. Finally, they will enjoy learning the language and they will define the task as enjoyable, challenging, fun, and enthusiastic. In this model, it is necessary for a learner to accomplish these three elements, as just one or even two of them will not be enough for a learner to be fully motivated. Moreover, the model also offers the possibility of including *other support for motivation* which are not directly linked to *integrative motivation*. These supports cover all the pragmatic or instrumental reasons for learning the language. According to Gardner (2001), this combination of motivation and instrumental factors receives the name of *Instrumental Motivation*. This relationship shows that motivation can be driven by other factors apart from integrative ones, which also have a direct and important effect on learners' *motivation*.

Apart from these variables, *other factors* which affect *motivation* and are not directly connected to *integrative motivation* are considered in the construct. Aspects such as anxiety, parental encouragement, learning strategies, or self-confidence may have an impact on L2 learning.

This last version of Gardner's (2001) theory on motivation has been widely accepted among scholars to understand the complex construct of motivation, as not only integrative reasons for learning an L2 appear, but also instrumental ones, which also have a direct impact on motivation. As Dörnyei (2020) claims, Gardner's work is still relevant these days. An important amount of empirical evidence exists which demonstrates the validity of *the socio-educational model* from its roots to the present day. Moreover, *Integrative Motivation* can be related to many other theories of L2 motivation as will be seen throughout this chapter.

The second main theory within *the social psychological period* is Clément's (1980) theory of *linguistic self-confidence*. Clément and his colleagues conducted research to examine the relationship between attitudinal or motivational factors, language identity, contextual elements, and L2 acquisition. These scholars focused their investigations on the *self-confidence* factor, which refers to "the belief that a person has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals, or perform tasks competently" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 73). In their investigations, it was proved that *linguistic self-confidence* is an essential variable in learning an L2 and determines the student's desire for identification and intercultural communication with the other group. In this regard, it can be inferred that *linguistic self-confidence* is mainly a social construct, but the term itself also depends on individual cognitive components as the perceived L2 proficiency. Clément et al. (1994) also showed the applicability of this theory in FL learning contexts. These scholars demonstrated the motivational effect of *self-confidence* in the learning of FLs when there is just indirect contact with the L2 culture through the media and little contact with members of the other community.

As has been seen, both Gardner's (1985, 2001) and Clément's (1980) theories of motivation are related to sociology. However, *the cognitive-situated period* that emerged in the 1990s focused on the role played by cognitive factors on motivation. This new trend is addressed in the following section.

2.4.1.2. The cognitive-situated period

In the early 1990s, a new line of research appeared in the field of motivation with the publication of an influential research article entitled *Reopening the motivation research agenda* (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Many researchers claimed for a change (e.g., Brown, 1990; Skehan, 1991), giving birth to *the cognitive-situated period*, which was characterised by two trends.

On the one hand, the first one dealt with the desire to combine the new ideas of motivational psychology with cognitive concepts. Psychologists at that time believed that the task to be performed as well as the way learners perceived their potential or limitations were key aspects in motivation (Dörnyei, 2005). On the other hand, the second mainstream tried to restrict the wide perspective used to analyse L2 motivation until that moment. Whereas the previous social psychological approach considered whole communities as its target, scholars in *the cognitive-situated period* paid attention to actual learning situations, such as individual language classrooms, thus moving from a macro perspective to a micro perspective.

With this new change of perspective, researchers soon started examining the impact of contextual factors, that is, teachers, classmates, or curriculum on L2 learners' motivation (e.g., Dörnyei, 1994). The multiple variables connected to the language course had to be examined, as it was believed that very useful results could be obtained by linking motivation to the contextual elements found in language learning (Kimura, 2003). Moreover, it was shown that the motivation that comes from the L2 classroom is dynamic, it changes over time, and it is shaped by the multiple contextual factors involved in the learning situation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

During this period, the findings obtained by Gardner and his associates were considered very valuable to understand and “compare the motivational patterns of whole learning communities and then draw inferences about important issues such as intercultural communication and affiliation, language contact, multiculturalism, and

language globalization” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 75). However, these results had to be combined with other motivational features to understand the students’ immediate learning situation.

In the 1990s, different research areas gained importance in the field of cognition within L2 motivation, giving birth to three important theories: *the Self-determination theory, the Attribution theory, and the study of Task motivation.*

The Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2009) is considered one of the most influential foundations in motivational studies (Dörnyei, 2005). This theory analyses the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the L2 classroom. Over the years, empirical research has been conducted to check the validity of this theory into L2 learning (e.g., Noels, 2001a, b, 2003, 2009; Noels et al., 1999, 2001).

The first objective of these researchers was to connect intrinsic and extrinsic factors established in motivational psychology to L2 research orientations. In this sense, it was found that Gardner’s (2001) integrative orientation was highly connected to intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. On the contrary, instrumental orientation was more connected to external regulation. What is more, Noels et al. (2000) found that there was a similar correlation between the instrumental and external regulation scales with the previous variables known as competence and perceived autonomy, and other variables such as anxiety and intention to continue studying the L2. All these findings made Noels (2003) offer a new construct including three levels: intrinsic, extrinsic, and integrative reasons for learning a language. In the model, intrinsic reasons cover innate motives in the L2 learning process, such as having fun or being engaged when learning the language. On the other hand, all those external reasons for learning the language are included within extrinsic reasons, which can be compared to Gardner’s instrumental orientation (Noels, 2003). Finally, integrative reasons involve identification and positive contact with the L2 group.

Researchers also analysed how classroom practices influenced students’ level of self-determination (autonomy). In this regard, Noels (2001a) found that those students

who perceived their teachers as controllers were not intrinsically motivated. On the contrary, those students whose teachers offered support presented higher levels of intrinsic motivation. An interesting finding focuses on the effect of motivation regarding the teacher's methodology or style employed, pointing to the fact that those students who were studying an L2 for instrumental or extrinsic reasons were less sensitive to the teacher's style, no matter if a communicative or an instructional style was used.

The second important theory within the cognitive-situated period is the *Attribution theory*. This theory connects people's past experiences with their future accomplishments through causal attributions. As Weiner (1992, 2010) states, those subjective motives used to determine past achievements or failures greatly condition the motivational tendency underlying future activities. In other words, what learners believe has been the reason for their achievement or failure will have an impact on their future attempts. For example, if failure is connected to a lack of ability in the past, the probabilities to try again this task will be low. On the contrary, if this failure is related to a lack of effort or the use of inappropriate learning strategies, the learner is more likely to try the completion of the task again.

In an attempt to provide an answer to L2 failure, Ushioda (1996, 2001) conducted several studies reaching to the conclusion that positive motivational thinking contained two patterns: attributing positive L2 results to internal aspects or personal ability, or attributing negative L2 results to temporary limitations, such as lack of effort, which could be overcome. Despite the fact that attributions play a key role in determining learners' motivation, research has found that the cultural context where learning takes place shapes the attributional categories used. For example, in their research, Williams et al. (2001) showed that the luck factor was never mentioned by Arab students as an attribute to shape their motivation.

An important contribution of the *Attribution theory* is that it opened "the door to qualitative inquiry into L2 motivation" (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, p. 83). Until then, the

main tools to analyse L2 motivation were quantitative questionnaires deriving from the Canadian social psychological approach.

Finally, the last theory which emerged in this period is *Task motivation*. According to Dörnyei (2002), due to the popularity of tasks in SLA, attention also started to be paid to tasks in language learning motivation. Tasks allowed researchers to narrow the scope moving towards a more situation-specific approach avoiding the previous macro perspective used to analyse motivation (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004). Moreover, by completing specific tasks, different motivations, which are connected to multiple contexts of action, were activated. Obviously, each context of action has a different motivation for each learner. As Dörnyei (2005) claimed, the motivational issues activated during the performance of the task “feed into a dynamic task processing system” (p. 81), which includes three mechanisms: task execution, appraisal, and actional control. This theory is connected with Dörnyei and Ottó’s (1998) *Model of L2 Motivation*, which will be analysed in the following section, as it belongs to the last period, *the process-oriented period*.

2.4.1.3. The process-oriented period

In this period, researchers focused on the fact that motivation is a dynamic construct which varies over time. According to Dörnyei (2005), when motivation is analysed in relation to classroom processes or specific behaviours, it is necessary to use a process-oriented approach to focus on the changes or phases of motivation throughout time. It is not necessary to focus on the long term, as motivation can also change throughout a single lesson showing its dynamic nature, which is considered the key feature in contemporary motivational psychology. Therefore, motivation cannot be considered a static factor; on the contrary, it is a dynamic attribute which continuously fluctuates to adapt to the changing context (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ryan & Dörnyei,

2013). Two main theories can be found in this period, Dörnyei and Ottó's (1998) *Process Model of L2 Motivation* and Dörnyei's (2005) *L2 Motivational Self-System*.

Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) were the first scholars who tried to embed a temporal dimension into an L2 motivation theory in their *Process Model of L2 Motivation*. This theory was designed to operationalise the process of motivation emphasising the evolutionary and complex component of this affective variable for most individuals (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). This initial model and its further expansions (Dörnyei 2000, 2001) divide the motivational process into temporal segments with the aim of explaining how initial desires are first transformed into goals and after that into intentions, which are performed leading to the achievement of the goal. The last segment includes an evaluation of all this process. Three different phases or stages are distinguished in the whole process: the *preactional stage*, *actional stage*, and *postactional stage*.

In the *preactional stage*, also known as choice motivation, the generation of the learner's motivation takes place. In this stage, goals must be established, and intentions are formed. In the *actional stage* or executive motivation, the previously generated motivation is maintained while performing the specific action or task. This stage is extremely relevant, especially when learning an L2 in classroom settings, as there are many distractions, restrictions or even episodes of anxiety that may cause difficulty in the completion of the task. Finally, the *postactional stage*, also known as motivational retrospection, deals with the learner's evaluation of all the process. Dörnyei (2005) argued that this reflection is crucial as "the way students process their past experiences in this retrospective phase will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future" (p. 84). As can be seen, this idea coincides with the main tenet of *the attribution theory* previously addressed in this section.

An important aspect to consider in this theory is that the three motivational steps are connected to different reasons. In this view, the set of factors which influence people to initiate an activity are different from the ones that influence them once the activity has started. Obviously, once the activity is over, new factors will become relevant when

evaluating the process. As Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) claim, the *Process Model of L2 Motivation* had diverse, parallel cause-effect connections, which were at the same time accompanied by circular feedback. However, since the theory emerged, no empirical studies have validated the whole model.

The second theory of this period is the *L2 Motivational Self-System* (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). This theory has its grounds in concepts taken from psychology. Dörnyei (2005) aimed to connect motivation with the idea of the self and identity, which according to MacIntyre et al. (2009a) is considered one of the most popular concepts in psychology. This theory also appeared as a reaction to Gardner and Lambert's (1959) understanding of the term *integrativeness* (Dörnyei, 2010).

Integrativeness may be considered one of the most important concepts in L2 motivation, and no other equivalents in other approaches are comparable (Gardner, 2005; Noels et al., 2000). However, it is paramount to take into account that Gardner and his associates analysed this concept in Canada, an L2 setting, where the need for learners to be part of the L2 community was a key aspect. In other contexts, especially in FL settings, it seems that other orientations sustain motivation better. For example, in order to reinterpret Gardner's (1985) theory, Dörnyei (2005) focuses on four orientations, i.e., travel, knowledge, friendship and instrumental reasons, which motivate students to learn a FL. On the other hand, McClelland (2000) also reinterpreted the concept considering the idea that nowadays English is a global and international language. In this regard, for this scholar, *integrativeness* means forming part of a global community instead of focusing on native speakers' communities. Other scholars have understood the concept as the blend of intercultural friendship and instrumental orientation (e.g., Yashmina, 2000).

In the literature, many different conceptualisations of the term can be found depending on the sociocultural context where research has been conducted. Despite the multiple interpretations of *integrativeness*, scholars coincide that an integrative motivational orientation involves "positive interpersonal/affective disposition toward

the L2 community and the desire for affiliation with its members” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 97). Thus, *integrativeness* implies tolerance and respect for the culture and people of the other community. In FL settings, *integrativeness* can include aspects such as interest in international or foreign affairs, disposition to go abroad to work or study, willingness to interact with people from other cultures and obviously acceptance toward foreign people and other cultures (Yashima, 2000). Apart from these orientations, instrumental aspects also play a key role in the new reinterpretation of Gardner’s theory. To show this amalgamation, Kimura et al. (2001) have coined the expression *Intrinsic-Instrumental-Integrative Motive*. As claimed by Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), scholars need to look for new interpretations of *integrativeness* without “contradicting the large body of relevant empirical data accumulated during the past four decades” (p. 456).

Apart from offering a new interpretation of *integrativeness*, a second crucial aspect in Dörnyei’s (2005) *L2 Motivational Self-System* is the belief that personality and the nature of the self-system play a key role in motivation. This scholar feels that possible selves represent learners’ ideas of “what they *might* become, what they *would* like to become, and what they are *afraid of* becoming” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 99). In other words, Dörnyei (2005) distinguishes three main components: the *ideal L2 self*, the *ought-to L2*, and the *L2 learning experience*.

The first component, *the ideal L2 self*, refers to the language speaker we would like to become. It is considered a powerful motivator to learn an L2 as it focuses on the differences between our current self and the one we would like to be. In this regard, learners’ willingness and desire will be key motivators to achieve the goal of becoming that desired person. *The ideal L2 self* can be compared to *integrative motivation*.

The ought-to L2 self is connected to the skills learners believe should have to achieve their goals and avoid failure. It represents the vision of what we should become to avoid undesirable results. This second component is related to *instrumental* or *extrinsic motivation*.

Finally, the last component, *the L2 learning experiences*, refers to the multiple aspects involved in the learning experience and environment. Aspects such as the teacher's expertise, the methodology used, classmates or resources can shape learners' motivation. This last component corresponds to *intrinsic motivation*.

As can be inferred, this theory is related to other theories of L2 motivation. As Dörnyei (2009) suggests, Gardner's (1985) theory of *Integrativeness* and the *L2 Motivational Self-System* are compatible and complementary. Both of them have their roots in a social psychological approach, and both theories focus on identification and identity. Moreover, as previously stated, Gardner's (2001) major motivational dimensions closely correspond with the ones the *L2 Motivational Self System* theory describes. However, the main difference deals with the idea that Gardner's theory focuses on external identification, while the ideal L2 self represents internal identification. Therefore, although these theories are complementary, "the ideal L2 self cannot replace integrativeness" (Claro, 2020, p. 51).

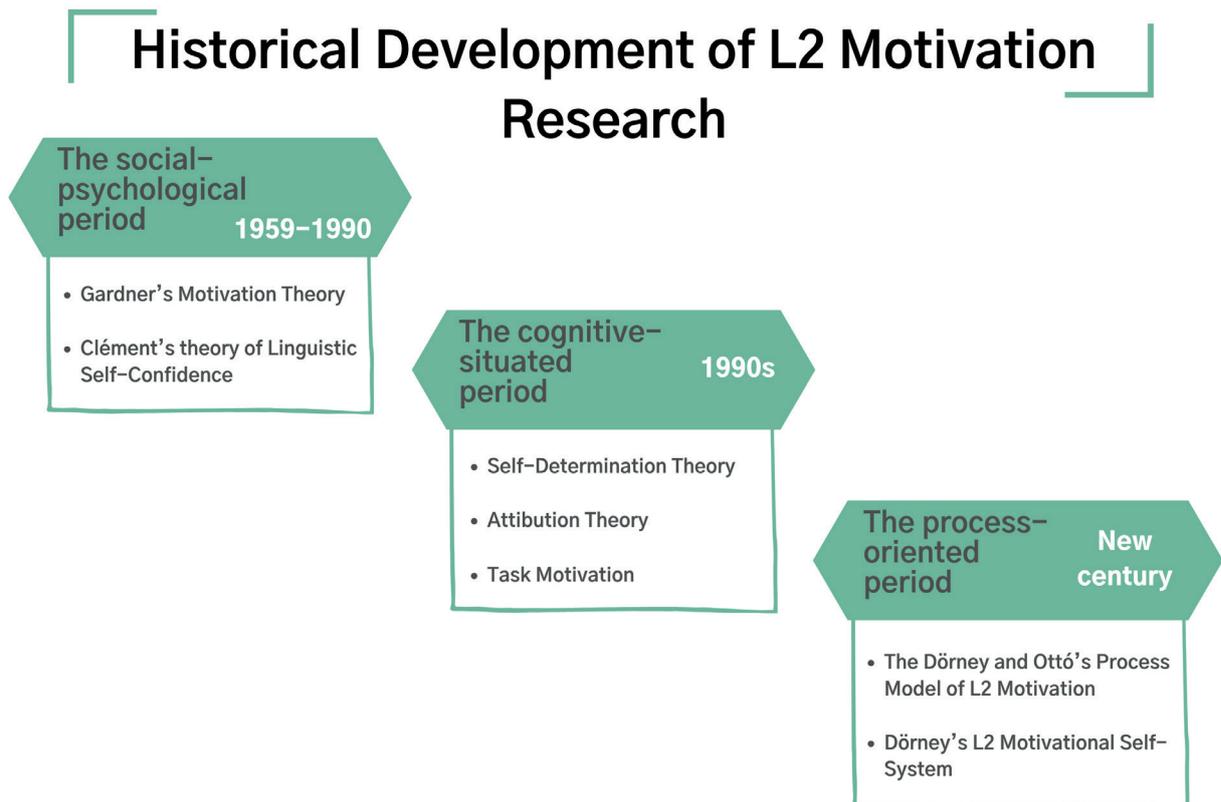
Gardner (2005) warns that just translating *integrative motivation* into the possible selves framework might prove problematic, as both theories could be misunderstood. Thus, making "communication about integrativeness difficult" (p. 8). However, Dörnyei argues that "possible selves offer the most powerful, and at the same time the most versatile, motivational self-mechanism" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 99). But, apart from this parallelism, Dörnyei's (2005) model also has similarities with other motivational theories. For example, Noel's (2003) motivation construct is formed by integrative, extrinsic, and intrinsic reasons for language learning which correspond to the Ideal L2 Self, the ought-to L2 self, and the L2 Learning Experience.

As has been seen throughout this section, many different theories related to L2 motivation have emerged in the last 60 years. These theories have been classified in three different periods depending on their principal focus (see Figure 12). However, despite their initial differences, i.e., terminology used or perspective taken, they have many aspects in common. In fact, it seems that even the most recent theories also take the

model developed by Gardner (1985) as their basis, which is considered the first and most relevant theory in L2 motivation. What is more, all the models analysed accept that motivation is essential when learning an L2 or FL (Gardner, 2020).

Figure 12

Evolution of L2 Motivation Theories



After having discussed the multiple theories of L2 motivation, we turn to consider the main instruments developed to measure motivation in language learning.

2.4.2. Instruments to measure L2 motivation

As has been explained in the previous section, a number of motivational theories, which emerged throughout three main periods, tried to measure motivation in the process of L2 learning. However, not all of them contained quantitative or qualitative instruments to do so. In fact, only three of these theories, i.e., the *Socio-Educational*

Model of SLA, the *Self-Determination Theory* and *L2 Motivational Self System*, offered different scales to measure motivation.

The most influential instrument to measure L2 motivation is the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB, henceforth) developed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). This questionnaire was created to measure the main variables of their socio-educational model of SLA: *Integrativeness*, *Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation*, *Motivation*, *Integrative Orientation*, and *Instrumental Orientation*. According to MacIntyre et al. (2009b), one of the advantages of Gardner's (1985, 2001) model in comparison to other theories is its connection to an excellent quality tool to measure L2 motivation. In the AMTB, both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of L2 learning are quantified.

More than 20 years of research were needed to develop this test. Its initial version was used to measure motivation in English-speaking Canadian students learning French as an L2 in school contexts. However, as Gardner (2005) suggested, the AMTB could be translated and adapted to measure motivation in different languages in multiple communities. As a result, the AMTB has been translated into many languages to be used in countries all over the world. What is more, an international version to measure motivational aspects when learning EFL has also been established, and many adaptations of this questionnaire have also been developed in different contexts such as in primary, secondary or higher education (e.g., Glikman, 1981; Lalonde, 1982).

In its international version, the AMTB offers two possibilities. The first option is the complete questionnaire constituted by 104 statements, which must be answered using a Likert six-response format, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Statements refer to the multiple categories of the socio-educational model, such as *Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation*, *Motivation*, *Integrativeness*, *Language Anxiety*, *Parental Encouragement*, or *Instrumental Orientation*. Three subscales are used to measure *Integrativeness*, i.e., *Attitudes Toward the Target Language Group*, *Integrative Orientation*, and *Interest in Foreign Languages*. Regarding the variable

Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation, the subscales Evaluation of the Course and Evaluation of the Teacher are used. *Motivation* is measured considering three aspects: Motivational Intensity, i.e., the learner's Effort; Desire to Learn the Target Language, and Attitudes Toward Learning the Target Language, i.e., the learner's affect. Gardner (2000) refers to *Integrative Motivation* as the total complex of the three previous variables.

In the AMTB, there are two variables which cover the motives for studying the language. The first one, *Integrative Orientation*, refers to reasons of identification with the target group (TG) community, while *Instrumental Orientation* deals with practical purposes. Although orientations may not reflect motivation, individuals who have any practical reason for learning the language can be more successful (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

The second possibility deals with the mini-AMTB (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993), in which there are 11 statements corresponding to the different scales of the AMTB. Each item must be answered using a Likert seven-response format to determine respondents' feelings on each variable.

In the multiple studies conducted to measure L2 motivation through the AMTB, several perspectives have been considered. While many studies have analysed every single variable in isolation, others have used aggregates to measure L2 motivation in language achievement. The first aggregate, Integrative Motivation (INTMOT), represents a general index of the motivational and attitudinal factors connected to language learning. The INTMOT is the sum of *Integrativeness*, *Motivation*, and *Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation*. The second aggregate, Attitude Motivation Index (AMI), is the result of the INTMOT index except for Language or Class *Anxiety*. According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), in the studies where INTMOT or AMI indexes have been used, results have also reported positive correlations with L2 achievement (e.g., Gardner & Smythe, 1981; Gardner et al., 1985). Moreover, when aggregates are used, correlations with achievement are more consistent and significant

than when using single variables (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). In this sense, when using the mini-AMTB, aggregates should be used to obtain more consistent results (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008).

The AMTB is believed to have set a standard for validity, reliability, and design (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Glikzman, 1982; Gardner & Macintyre, 1993; Gardner & Smythe, 1981). For this reason, adaptations of the questionnaire have been used worldwide in multiple studies to measure FL or L2 motivation (e.g., Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Gardner & Lysynchuk, 1990; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1976; Glikzman, 1981; Glikzman et al., 1982; Lalonde & Gardner, 1985; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Sawhney & Agnihitora, 1998; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). In all these studies, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been supported.

Masgoret and Gardner (2003), conducted a meta-analysis from 75 previous studies to correlate the different variables measured through the AMTB with language achievement in a sample of more than 10.000 students. These scholars reported that *Integrativeness*, *Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation*, *Motivation*, *Integrative Orientation*, and *Instrumental Orientation* presented positive correlations with language achievement. However, results showed that the correlation between *Motivation* and achievement was higher than between achievement and the rest of variables of the model. As Masgoret and Gardner (2003) suggest, these results are conclusive and show the positive effect of motivation, attitudes, and orientations towards language achievement. Moreover, these findings are in line with the theoretical tenets of the model.

Research has also reported that *Integrative Orientation* promotes language learning better than *Instrumental Orientation*, and correlations for integrative reasons are higher than for instrumental motives regarding students' results (e.g., Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000). However, it has to

be borne in mind that most of Gardner's studies were conducted in Canada, a country where two official languages and therefore two communities coexist, and Canadian learners wish to be accepted by the other language community. Nevertheless, and as Dörnyei (1990) claims, FL learners do not have direct contact with the target community, and they usually learn a FL for practical reasons. Therefore, instrumental reasons will play a more important role than integrative motives to learn the language (e.g., Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987). In her study, Lukmani (1972) analysed language proficiency and motivation in a group of Marathi-speaking high school students and found a positive correlation between achievement in English and instrumental reasons but not integrative ones. Svanes (1987) also found that for groups of Asian, European, African, and Middle Eastern students, scores correlated negatively with integrative motivation and positively with instrumental motivation. Despite these results, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) claimed that in both FL and L2 contexts correlations are higher for integrative motives than for instrumental ones. Therefore, more research is needed to shed light on which reasons induce and motivate students to learn a language.

Finally, it has to be pointed out that Gardner's model has resisted the test of time and still offers the rationale for multiple empirical studies. Due to the validity and reliability of this tool, the mini-AMTB has been selected for this study as an instrument to measure participants' attitudes and motivation regarding L2 writing proficiency.

The second instrument, the *Language Learning Orientations Scale*, designed by Noels and his colleagues in the year 2000, is a qualitative tool to measure motivation in language learning. This scale was created to assess the three main elements of the *Self-Determination Theory*, i.e., Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, and Amotivation. Within extrinsic motivation, these scholars aimed to measure three aspects: external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation. Elements such as knowledge, accomplishment and stimulation are measured within intrinsic motivation.

The third instrument emerged as a reaction of the multiple inconsistent qualitative methods used until that moment to measure the *L2 Motivational Self System*

theory. At the beginning, several open-ended surveys were used to ask participants to generate possible selves in a spontaneous way. Consequently, results varied widely from one survey to another, not offering any consistency or empirical validity. In this sense, MacIntyre et al. (2009b), in an attempt to offer a more quantitative tool to measure Dörnyei's (2005) theory, designed a new scale called *Possible Selves Questionnaire*. This tool was created to analyse the connections between the diverse selves offered by Dörnyei's (2005) theory and the main elements of Gardner's (2001) model. This scale consists of a series of possible selves items which focus on the present and future selves.

As MacIntyre et al. (2009b) claim, “one of the advantages of using a possible selves framework is looking at the integration of present and future selves and how various elements of those selves work together for an individual” (p. 209). In other words, learners who want to be part of the L2 community also envisage themselves being part of it in the future. This information can be extremely valuable to understand where language learning motivation comes from and specifically for language teachers to use the most adequate motivational strategies.

After having examined an array of tools to measure L2 motivation which exist in the literature, the last section of this chapter offers an analysis of current research on L2 writing taking the role of motivation into account.

2.4.3. Research on L2 writing motivation

As has been analysed in Subsection 2.4.1.1, Gardner and Lambert (1959) started L2 motivation research in Canada with their pioneering work. Their studies employed correlations to measure different variables with overall L2 proficiency. These scholars maintained a long-standing tradition of research on L2 motivation, which is considered especially relevant for the analysis of motivation in L2 writing (Kormos, 2012). It cannot be forgotten that for over 30 years, overall L2 proficiency remained the research target under the socio-educational perspective. It was in the 1990s when Clément et al. (1994)

introduced their self-confidence construct, offering a new perspective on L2 motivation research. Moreover, some qualitative studies started to investigate the changes produced on learners' motivation over time (e.g., Ushioda, 2001). From the period between 2005 and 2015, a large amount of research was published showing a growing interest in L2 motivation. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) found that in this 10-year period, around 130 journal articles and over 110 chapters in books related to L2 motivation had been published. Following Dörnyei's and Ryan's (2015) work, Boo et al. (2015) conducted a more exhaustive research and classification of the published material available in books and four databases, and obtained a total of 416 publications, doubling the initial classification made by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015). These numbers alone suggest that there has been a significant growth of research production in L2 motivation over the last years.

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) believe this urge of research emerged because L2 motivation “represents an attractive point of intersection between theory and practice in the psychology of language learning” (p. 89). In other words, motivation is believed to be the learner's feature in which theory and practice meet. Its analysis can offer solutions to the main problems found in the language classroom, thus offering practical implications to be applied in real learning settings. It also seems that over the last 15 years, the main research areas for the analysis of L2 motivation are teacher motivation, group dynamics, neurobiology of motivation, and demotivation (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

Apart from these research areas, some scholars have also made attempts to analyse L2 motivation as a variable affecting the learning of the four main skills. In this line, much research about the role played by affective factors on L2 speaking can be found (e.g., Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Kormos & Trebits, 2012) as well as on L2 reading (e.g., Grabe, 2009). However, when dealing with L2 writing, very little is known about how motivation or other individual differences affect this skill. In fact, the role of this affective variable has just been minimally explored (Grabe, 2009). As Kormos (2012) suggests, the lack of attention is surprising toward the effect of motivation in L2 writing, as mastering this skill is a complex process which requires the combination of multiple

linguistic and cognitive procedures (Hayes, 1996). Therefore, learners with different cognitive abilities are expected to deal with this process in a different way.

It is widely acknowledged that writing requires determination and concentration. While it takes around one minute to produce 100 oral words in an L2 or FL, half an hour is needed to write 100 words. Due to the complexity of this task, many students find difficulties when writing in a FL. It is believed that students' motivational features might play an essential role in determining if they will engage in writing or not, the level of attention and effort they will employ, the types of tasks they will handle or the way they will exploit the potential of each task.

In the literature, many studies which focus on L1 writing motivation can be found (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Hidi & Anderson, 1982; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2002). However, these studies have ignored the key role played by the cultural or social context where learning is taking place. As Kormos (2012) suggests, from the perspective of motivation to write, these studies are not considering the objectives learners wish to accomplish in L2 writing.

When analysing motivation within L2 writing, two complex constructs are believed to interact, i.e., motivation to learn the L2 and motivation to write in the L2. Therefore, learners' motivation is going to be shaped by diverse variables such as the context where learning is taking place, the task being performed, the importance given to L2 writing in the students' curriculum, the teacher, the feedback received, learners' attitudes and goals, or their self-efficacy beliefs among others.

First of all, social factors play a crucial role when dealing with L2 writing (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). The cultural, social or the educational context where learning is taking place will influence students' attitudes and motivation to writing (e.g., Durgunoglu & Verhoeven, 1998). Consequently, research conducted on L2 writing may not be applicable in FL writing as FL learners do not have the same goals "to survive in L2 learning situations" (Sasaki, 2009, p. 54).

Other variables which affect motivation deal with the importance given by learners to the writing task being performed, the type of feedback received (e.g., Bandura, 1986), the learners' curriculum and the teacher's expertise, the instructional setting, or the educational value L2 writing has for learners (Manchón, 2009). Moreover, not only can present experiences shape motivation, past experiences regarding writing activities also influence students' motivation (Hidi & Renninger, 2006).

Learners' attitudes are other of the main factors which might affect L2 writing. One way to improve students' writing skills is by eliminating their negative thinking and unfavourable attitudes (Hashemian & Heidari, 2013). Kear et al. (2000) claim that researchers should pay more attention to this research field, as positive writing attitudes are connected to writing success. Learner's attitudes become more positive when they realise the value written communication has for them and the benefits of being able to express their experiences through a written medium (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Gau et al., 2003). Negative past experiences are usually translated into negative attitudes and consequently a lack of motivation (Graham & Harris, 1989). Obviously, teachers' attitudes regarding L2 writing also influence learners' motivation (Gau et al., 2003), as well as a relaxing learning environment (Brindley & Schneider, 2002). Research suggests that learners who present positive attitudes towards writing will show more effort than their peers (e.g., McKenna et al., 1995). In their study, Hashemian and Heidari (2013) investigated the relationship between attitudes and success in L2 writing in a group of 30 students in a university of Iran. They used Gardner and Lambert's (1972) AMTB and a writing proficiency test and concluded that correlations existed between positive attitudes and success in L2 writing, but no relationship was found with negative attitudes.

The last motivational factor which is believed to affect L2 writing is self-efficacy beliefs. It is considered an important indicator of EFL writing performance (Chea & Shumow, 2017; Sabti et al., 2019). If learners have interest and a positive appreciation of their skills to be successful in the task, their motivation is likely to increase. Many studies

have found that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and writing achievement (e.g., Csizér & Piniel, 2013; McAllister, 2014; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013).

For example, Sahril and Weda (2018) analysed the role played by motivation and self-efficacy in FL writing with a group of 50 students enrolled in four different writing courses at an Indonesian university. A questionnaire with 25 items was used to measure learners' motivation and self-efficacy. These scholars concluded that there were significant correlations between both motivation and self-efficacy regarding FL writing. The same conclusions were obtained by Sabti et al. (2019), who analysed similar variables in a group of Iraqi EFL learners at university level. However, despite the positive correlations between motivation and positive self-efficacy beliefs found in many studies, it is not possible to generalise these results, as many variables may influence FL writing proficiency. As Bandura (1986) claims, the social and educational context or the feedback received also affect learners' self-efficacy beliefs.

Therefore, social, educational, and cultural factors shape learners' attitudes and motivation. However, at the individual level, instrumental reasons as well as the objectives learners aim to accomplish in language learning and L2 writing also play a role in their motivation. As illustrated in Subsection 2.4.1.1, instrumental orientation is a powerful indicator of L2 learning success, since it may shape learners' overall L2 writing proficiency.

Although individual differences have been widely analysed in L2 speech, it is possible to claim that “the process of second language writing and the written product has been a neglected area of research” (Kormos, 2012, p. 390). To the best of our knowledge, very few studies exist in which instrumental factors are considered to measure L2 writing success.

After having analysed a number of studies conducted on the role played by motivation in L2 writing, we may claim that there is a scarcity of research, especially at the individual level, which points to a massive gap to investigate. In the field of L2

motivation, there is a vast number of studies which deal with overall L2 proficiency. However, when analysing L2 writing, just a few studies which focus on how feedback or self-efficacy beliefs affect students' motivation can be found. However, when focusing on individual learners, almost no investigation has been conducted. Moreover, most of the research has been done in Asian countries with university students just using quantitative instruments. Therefore, they lack the interesting insights that can be obtained by means of interviews or other qualitative techniques. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, no study in the literature deals with the role played by motivation at the individual level when dealing with overall L2 writing proficiency whilst considering a group of Spanish secondary students and taking their instrumental reasons into consideration through a mixed-approach investigation. Therefore, in order to address this gap, these variables will be taken into account in the present study.

2.5. Chapter summary

In Chapter 2, a review of the potential factors shaping L2 writing has been provided. Firstly, the main individual differences which affect language learning were examined (Section 2.1). After narrowing our focus of interest to the main three variables which are considered in this study, an analysis of the role played by instruction in L2 writing development has been offered (Section 2.2). In Section 2.3, we considered the role of learners' L2 proficiency level. Finally, the role of motivation was addressed in Section 2.4 starting with the main theories of motivation (Subsection 2.4.1), the principal instruments to measure this affective variable (Subsection 2.4.2) and some current research on this discipline (Subsection 2.4.3).

Part I of this study, which is made up of the first two chapters, has consolidated our knowledge of the relevant research about L2 writing development in foreign language contexts. Part II will present the study itself, starting with an overview of the research questions and hypotheses which motivated this investigation.

PARITHI



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MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

4

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5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO
RESEARCH QUESTION 1

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RELATED TO
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8

CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER

5

Motivation for the study

The present longitudinal study focuses on students' overall L2 writing proficiency development from a holistic communicative perspective at Baccalaureate level in Spain. It examines the role played by instruction, linguistic proficiency, and motivation on learners' L2 writing competence over an academic year. In Chapter 1 and 2 we have presented previous research on how multiple factors influence L2 writing learning, paying special attention to the three variables under study. In Section 3.1, the motivation, the objectives, and the research gaps addressed in the present study will be presented. Section 3.2 deals with the research questions and hypotheses which will be explored in the current investigation.

3.1. Rationale and objectives of the study

Three main ideas inspired this PhD dissertation. Firstly, and most importantly, the researcher's interest to explore the factors which may affect Spanish students in the 2nd year of Baccalaureate when writing in English. At this stage, learners are trained to pass their university entrance exams which take place at the end of the academic year. In the case of the subject EFL, the exam consists of some reading comprehension questions and a writing task. The genre which usually appears in the writing section is an *opinion essay*, although students are also likely to write *for and against essays*. At the beginning of the academic year, learners usually report problems when facing the writing task because of their insufficient training in previous years and their lack of confidence when writing in English. However, throughout the school year, many of them improve because of the influence of different factors. Due to the researcher's background as an EFL teacher at Baccalaureate level for the last 6 years in Spain, it was necessary to identify those factors which may shape learners' development in L2 writing. Thanks to this knowledge, a number of pedagogical implications could be considered to help students succeed in this complex process of learning to write in English.

Secondly, this study has also been motivated by the necessity to envisage writing from a communicative perspective as the one offered by Usó-Juan et al. (2006). Under this viewpoint, not only are lexical or grammatical aspects key to producing well-written texts, since learners also need to apply their strategic, pragmatic, and intercultural knowledge to be proficient in L2 writing, and therefore, communicatively competent. In all this process, the presence of errors is natural and should not be the focus. However, the reality of today's EFL classrooms in Spain is that many teachers do not know how to instruct or assess writing due to their lack of training, which may result in negative consequences for their learners, as they receive inadequate teaching. Moreover, teachers tend to focus on students' mistakes and penalise them instead of assessing their holistic communicative competence (Furieux et al., 2007). Thanks to the researcher's training

as a linguistic advisor and examiner at a Spanish public university, this change of perspective is something necessary for EFL teachers in secondary education in Spain. Hence, this research project was also designed to gather theoretical and empirical data to change this way of understanding writing.

Thirdly, this dissertation also aims at contributing to the educational field with a number of pedagogical implications. In this regard, an analytical rubric to assess writing has been designed as being considered more reliable than holistic ones (Huot, 1996), and more useful for training teachers, especially novice ones (Adam, 1981). The devised rubric contains five sections in which L2 writing proficiency has been operationalised in the present investigation. These categories are (i) content, (ii) task requirement, (iii) coherence and cohesion, (iv) grammar, and (v) vocabulary. These variables have been chosen as a result of understanding writing from a communicative competence perspective and checking the rating scales of the most important language institutions such as Cambridge or the Association of Language Centres in Higher Education (ACLES) as well as the ones developed by the different departments of education in Spain. In this regard, the rubrics used to assess the university entrance exams in the Valencian Community, Madrid, Aragon, Galicia, or Catalonia, were revised and analysed.

After having explained the three main motivations which inspired this research project, we turn to focus on the principal objectives of the current study together with the research gaps we identified.

Our first objective is to explore L2 writing development from a holistic perspective, fostering learners' communicative competence. As previously mentioned, under this approach, L2 writing not only focuses on linguistic knowledge, but also on all the competences (i.e., strategic, pragmatic, and intercultural) which are essential and should be considered when assessing this skill (Usó-Juan et al., 2006). Nevertheless, most of the research has demonstrated that EFL secondary teachers pay more attention to language than other competences (e.g., Furneaux et al., 2007; Lee, 2004, 2005, 2008a, b), since they tend to stress grammatical and lexical mistakes. In the present

study, we analyse L2 writing proficiency from a holistic communicative perspective with the aim of changing this way of envisaging L2 writing.

Our second objective is to conduct longitudinal research to examine students' L2 writing proficiency over the academic year of 2nd of Baccalaureate. Despite the great importance attributed to longitudinal studies to measure L2 writing development, they are quite scarce. Most studies are cross-sectional, and they explore L2 writing progress by focusing on a specific writing task to compare groups of students while analysing the influence exerted by different factors such as the role of feedback, instruction or writing strategies (e.g., Bi, 2020; Jiang et al., 2019; Kang & Lee, 2019; Lee, 2016; Zhang, 2008). The present investigation aims at examining learners' L2 writing development over an academic year to offer new insights to this field of enquiry.

Our third objective is to use a mixed research methodology conducted by the secondary education teacher, who will also perform the role of researcher. By using quantitative and qualitative data, more reliable results can be obtained (Silva, 2016). Moreover, studies conducted by teachers are almost nonexistent (Lee, 2016). In this sense, and with the aim of contributing to this field of research, this investigation is conducted by the EFL teacher in order to provide a new perspective.

Our fourth objective is to consider the role played by context. In this regard, we aim at analysing L2 writing development in secondary education in Spain. It needs to be borne in mind that writing is not a decontextualised process, as it is shaped by the cultural norms and traditions where it is produced (Hyland, 2002, 2007; Kern, 2000; Leki et al., 2008) and thus contextual and social factors need to be fully considered (Usó-Juan et al., 2006). Although it is possible to find a large number of investigations on L2 or EFL writing, most studies have been conducted in American colleges and Asia (Silva, 2016). According to Ortega (2009), in a 20-year period, only 11 studies have been conducted in Spanish school contexts, a fact which points to a research gap in need of analysis.

Our fifth objective is to analyse the role of instruction on L2 writing development. FL writing instruction is shaped by educational and social values being locally constrained (Manchón, 2009). However, there is no consensus in the literature whether there is a better method to instruct writing. In fact, there are no explicit models of writing (Cumming, 2001; Grabe, 2001), but only some theoretical orientations which may work in some contexts but not in others (Barkaoui, 2007; Hyland, 2002). Due to the complexity of instruction in L2 writing, to the best of our knowledge, this factor has not been explicitly addressed in L2 writing development in secondary education in a Spanish context.

Our sixth objective is to explore the role played by learners' proficiency level on their overall L2 writing development. Despite the fact that some studies conclude that the level of proficiency positively correlates with L2 writing development (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009), mixed results can be obtained in the field (e.g., Schoonen et al., 2003). Moreover, the studies conducted considering the role of learners' linguistic proficiency have mainly focused on specific aspects of writing, such as the use of strategies (e.g., Akyel, 1994; Gosden, 1996; Zhang, 2008) or the language used (e.g., Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Engber, 1995; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Laufer & Nation, 1995, 1999; Sweedler-Brown, 1993). Therefore, more research is needed to analyse this variable from a holistic perspective.

Our seventh objective is to shed more light on the effect played by motivation on L2 writing proficiency in FL contexts. Although it seems that learners' motivation will influence their L2 writing performance (e.g., Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013), it is not clear the type of motivation which will exert more influence, as mixed results are found in the literature. On the one hand, most studies, mainly conducted in L2 settings, indicate that integrative motivation will have a stronger effect than instrumental motivation on L2

writing proficiency (e.g., Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000). In contrast, in FL contexts, some studies have indicated a stronger relationship between instrumental motivation and L2 writing proficiency (e.g., Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987).

To sum up, the research gaps that the present investigation aims to cover are as follows:

- 1) L2 writing needs to be envisaged from a holistic communicative perspective,
- 2) more longitudinal investigations on L2 writing must be conducted,
- 3) there is a need to use a mixed research methodology combining quantitative and qualitative tools and using teachers as main researchers,
- 4) more studies on L2 writing development should be conducted at secondary education in Spain,
- 5) further investigations on the variables which possibly affect L2 writing development such as instruction, linguistic proficiency, and motivation are necessary.

In short, the current investigation aims at furthering our comprehension of how L2 writing competence is developed over one academic year at 2nd year of Baccalaureate level in Spain.

3.2. Research questions and hypotheses

As previously stated, the purpose of this investigation is to examine the role played by instruction, linguistic proficiency, and motivation on learners' overall L2 writing competence. Taking the existing literature into consideration (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2), and the aforementioned research gaps, the present section aims at introducing the research questions and hypotheses which guided this investigation.

The first research question deals with the variable of instruction. As examined in Chapter 2, instruction is locally constrained (Manchón, 2009). Although no explicit

teaching models attributed to the development of the writing skill can be found (Cumming, 2001), the main orientations are *text-focused*, which deals with aspects such as grammar or lexicon, *process-focused*, which centres on strategy instruction, and *sociocultural models*, which focus on genre instruction in specific cultures. Due to the limited replicability of the last orientation because of cultural and social constraints, this investigation focuses on the first two models. On the one hand, research has shown that explicit grammar instruction focusing on aspects such as grammar, orthography, morphology, or lexicon positively correlates with L2 writing development. It is believed that this type of instruction helps learners produce more coherent and cohesive texts with sophisticated vocabulary and structures (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000). However, results from other investigations dealing with strategy instruction have also demonstrated the usefulness of this approach in L2 writing proficiency. It is claimed that by teaching strategies and processes, such as generating ideas, planning, drafting, or revising, learners will improve their L2 writing fluency (e.g., Cumming, 2002; De Silva, 2015; Hyland, 2002; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000). Nevertheless, it is also crucial to consider, as claimed by Carrell (1998), that strategy instruction is context dependent. Hence, in order to shed light on which type of instruction will correlate better with L2 writing proficiency in the specific context of this investigation, the following research question and hypotheses are formulated:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What type of instruction benefits more L2 writing development at Baccalaureate level in Spain over one academic year?

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The teaching of explicit grammar and vocabulary will benefit L2 writing development positively (Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Tsang & Wong, 2000).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Strategy instruction will benefit L2 writing performance positively (De Silva, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000).

The current study also aims at investigating whether learners' linguistic proficiency in English may influence overall L2 writing competence. Although most investigations have demonstrated the positive correlation between students' proficiency level and writing competence (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009), other studies suggest the opposite (e.g., Schoonen et al., 2003). Hence, further research is needed to analyse the effect of proficiency on L2 writing development. In addition, to the best of our knowledge, no investigation has examined the role of proficiency on L2 writing development in 2nd year Baccalaureate students in Spain. To shed more light on this field and considering previous research, the following research question and hypothesis are put forward:

Research Question 2 (RQ2): Does the initial level of proficiency in English influence overall L2 writing competence?

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Learners' proficiency level in English will have a significant influence on their FL writing proficiency (Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009).

In addition, the current study investigates the role played by motivation on L2 writing development. In this sense, research has demonstrated the importance of motivation to succeed in L2 writing (e.g., Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018). However, almost all studies have been conducted with undergraduate students at university level. To the best of our knowledge, no study has examined the effect of motivation on students' writing

proficiency at 2nd year of Baccalaureate in Spain. To shed light on how motivation influences learners' overall L2 writing competence, the following research question and its corresponding hypothesis are suggested:

Research Question 3 (RQ3): Does students' motivation have an effect on overall L2 writing proficiency?

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Level of motivation will influence learners' L2 writing proficiency (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013).

This dissertation considers the two main types of motivation, i.e., integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner, 2001), to analyse its effect on L2 writing proficiency. On the one hand, most studies have concluded that integrative motivation has a stronger effect than instrumental motivation (e.g., Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000). However, results obtained from these investigations may not be valid in our specific context as many of them investigated the influence of English as an L2. Results obtained from research with English as a FL have shown a very different scenario, that is, instrumental motivation had a stronger effect (e.g., Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987). In addition, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined which type of motivation has a stronger effect on L2 writing development in 2nd year Baccalaureate students in a foreign context like Spain. To contribute to this area of enquiry, and taking previous studies into consideration, the following research question and hypotheses are proposed:

Research Question 4 (RQ4): What type of motivation has a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency?

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Integrative motivation will have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000).

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Instrumental motivation will have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987).

After having analysed the rationale of the present study and the research questions and hypotheses, Chapter 4 centres on the research methodology of the current investigation.

CHAPTER



Method

In this chapter, the research methodology of the current investigation will be explained. In Section 4.1, the setting where this study took place is described, that is, the two educational centres where the investigation was carried out. Participants who took part in the research are presented in Section 4.2, and an analysis of the data collection instruments is offered in Section 4.3, including the way quantitative (Subsection 4.3.1) and qualitative (Subsection 4.3.2) tools were designed and piloted. Afterwards, the data collection procedure is described in Section 4.4, together with the design of the rating scales (Subsection 4.4.1) and the way data were coded and analysed (Subsection 4.4.2). Finally, Section 4.5 presents a summary of the chapter.

4.1. Setting

Data were gathered over the school year 2021/2022 from two secondary educational centres in the Valencian Community, Spain. This is a bilingual community, where Spanish and Catalan coexist. In secondary education and Baccalaureate, it is compulsory for learners to study three languages, i.e., Spanish, Catalan, and EFL. Most public centres use Catalan as the language of instruction and many primary educational centres have implemented CLIL programmes to offer learners more opportunities to practise English of late.

The two centres where data were gathered are in the city of Castelló de la Plana, and they are in close geographical proximity to facilitate data collection. One of the centres where information was collected was of public nature while the other one was private.

There were several reasons for selecting these two high schools. One first reason refers to accessibility of data. The teacher/researcher of this investigation was teaching in the public centre during the academic year when the data were collected, and she had also been working in the private one in the past. Secondly, due to the nature of this investigation, it was necessary to select two schools with different linguistic policies and educational projects. Although both centres operate under the Royal Decree 1105/2014, which sets the basic curriculum for Baccalaureate in Spain, and more specifically under the Decree 87/2015, which establishes the curriculum for Baccalaureate in the Valencian Community, some differences can be found. As established by law, Baccalaureate students must have at least three 55-minute lessons of English per week. However, the private centre offers four lessons in this stage as it follows a policy of multilingualism, giving special emphasis to the learning of English. In their educational project, they support the learning of languages in an attempt to offer students the necessary tools to succeed in a global world. Moreover, thanks to this multilingual education, they feel that learners will be more open-minded and tolerant towards other languages and cultures,

thus fostering key values. In this centre, all students, regardless of their age, are offered one extra lesson with English native instructors to prepare for Cambridge official exams. What is more, they celebrate an *English Day* on the 30th of October, providing students with a new cultural perspective on English speaking countries. Finally, immersion courses in the United Kingdom and Ireland are offered every summer to those students who want to continue learning English in a target-language environment.

On the contrary, quite a different scenario can be found in the public centre. First of all, only three 55-minute English lessons per week are offered to students at the Baccalaureate level. Secondly, although a plurilingual scheme is followed in compulsory secondary education, it does not exist in Baccalaureate. This plurilingual methodology consists of selecting the twenty-five most proficient students in English in their first year with the aim of offering them a more intensive training regime in this language. These learners are assigned to a different group during the four years of compulsory education and, despite having the same hours of instruction as the rest of students in the centre, the intensity of the programme differs, offering these learners a highly intensive training scheme.

4.2. Participants

The final sample consisted of 148 learners of second year of Baccalaureate from one state and one private high school in the Valencian Community, Spain. In the private centre, there were two groups of sciences and two groups of social sciences, while in the public one, there was one group of science and two groups of social sciences.

Students in the last year of Baccalaureate were asked to participate in this research. The main reason for selecting these learners was their exposure to L2 writing as at the end of the 2nd year of Baccalaureate, they have to sit for the university entrance exam, which consists of a reading and a writing in the case of EFL. In this regard, a great

amount of time is devoted to the teaching of these skills during this last stage of education.

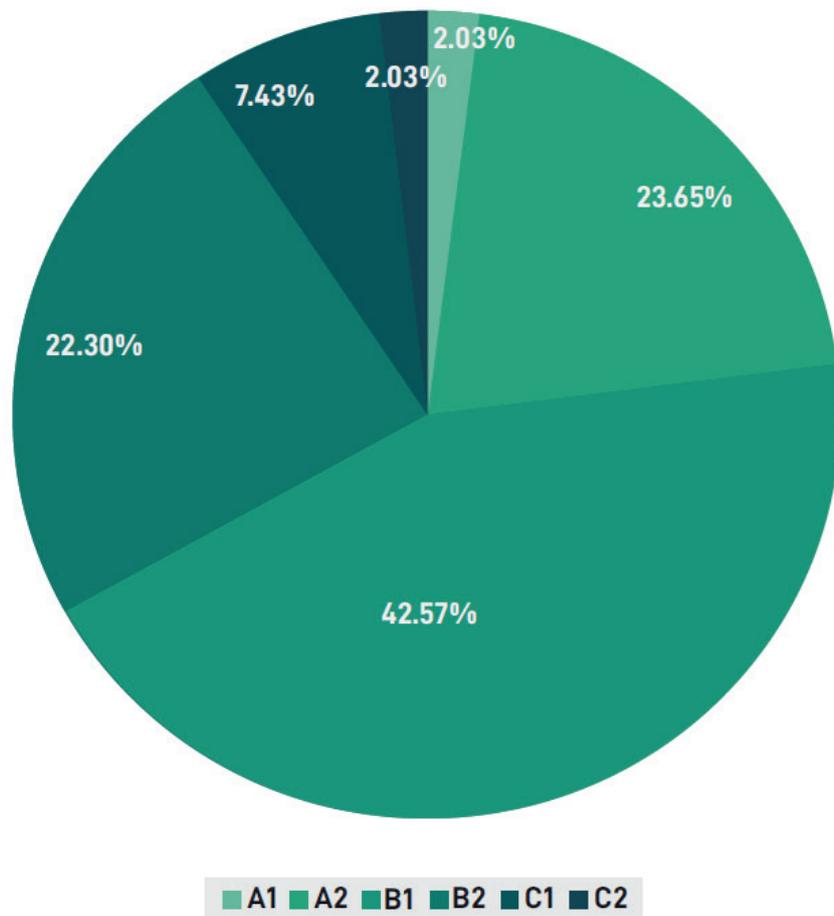
Although a total of 162 students were initially recruited, some participants dropped out during the time the investigation lasted due to the longitudinal nature of this research. Several reasons can be attributed to this loss. First of all, Baccalaureate is not a compulsory educational stage, as a consequence, some learners quitted their studies during the year ($n = 3$). Secondly, some participants did not attend the lessons where data were gathered ($n = 7$). Consequently, they did not complete all the compulsory tasks or questionnaires for this investigation, and they had to be discarded. Finally, some learners did not complete the questionnaire, or the writing tasks as required ($n = 4$). Some of them left crucial information blank or even did not write a single word in the writing. Hence, they also had to be dismissed from the final sample of this investigation.

Once these learners were discarded, the final sample contained 148 participants, as stated earlier. The group was made up of 77 males (52%) and 71 females (48%), and their mean age was 17.67, ranging from 16 to 19 years old.

Concerning the learners' language proficiency in English, it ranged from A1 to C2, as measured by the Oxford Quick Placement Test (QPT) at the beginning of the investigation. As depicted in Figure 13, most of the participants belonged to the A2, B1 and B2 levels.

Figure 13

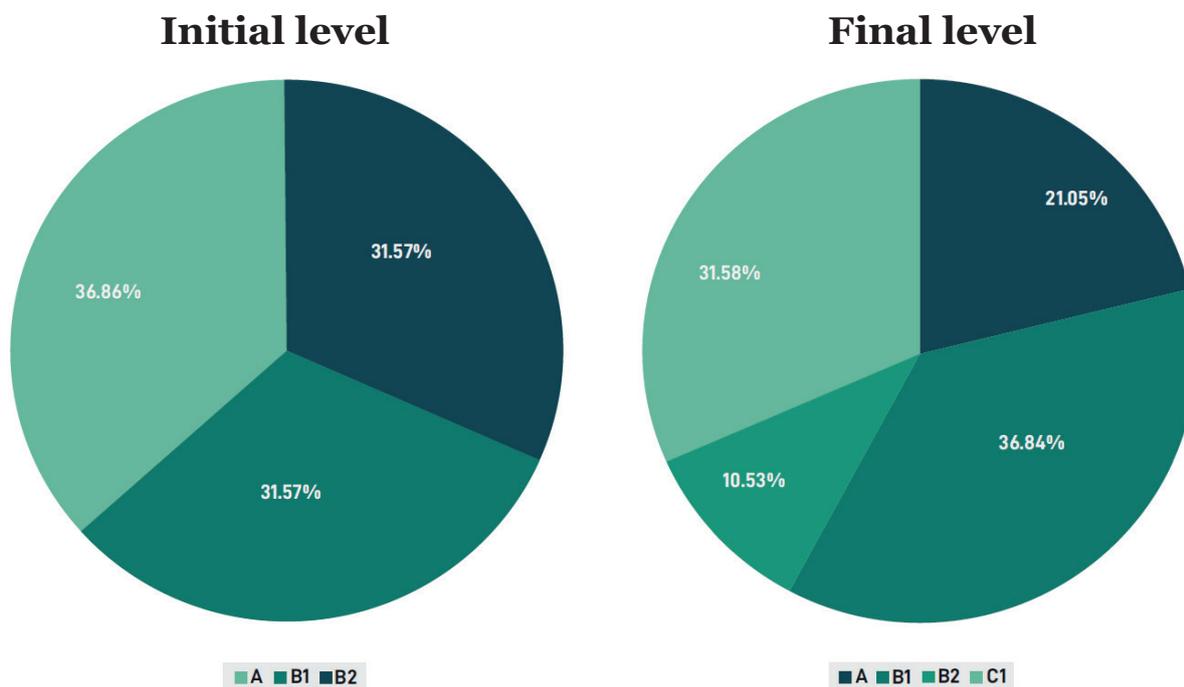
Participant's initial language proficiency in English



From the 148 respondents, a subsample of 19, portraying the 12.83% of the total number of participants, completed the QPT at the end of the study in an attempt to explore variations in participants' level of English proficiency after having received instruction during a whole academic year. These learners were selected on the basis of maximum variation sampling. They were also asked to collaborate in the interviewing process at the end of the school year. Figure 14 represents the percentages of proficiency level by learners of this subsample at the beginning and the end of the school year.

Figure 14

Initial and final level of English proficiency of the subsample



As can be observed, at the beginning of this investigation, from this subsample of 19 learners, 31.57% (n = 6) had an A level, 31.57% (n = 6) a B1, and 36.86% (n = 7) a B2. However, at the end of the school year, learners improved their proficiency in English as there were just 4 learners with an A level (21.05%), 36.84% (n = 7) showed a B1 level, 10.53% (n = 2) a B2, and 6 learners (31.58%) got a C level.

The second variable analysed affecting participants was instruction. The type of training received by learners also differed due to the fact that one high school was public and the other was private. While in the public secondary centre, an explicit approach giving emphasis to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary was used, the private school used writing strategy training instead.

In this regard, considering the longitudinal nature of this investigation and the educational stage to which participants belonged, it was not possible to include a control group in the present study. Participants were divided into two treatment groups, as

learners at this stage must have a specific type of instructional treatment. However, in the pilot study a control group was used to predict results.

Even though not having a control group can be regarded as a limitation, there are opinions claiming that employing two experimental or treatment groups without a control group is possible, and sometimes suitable. According to Kostoulas (2013), when researchers are just interested in comparisons as there is enough evidence in the literature that the treatments under analysis function, working with more than one experimental group without a control would be the ideal research design. What is more, it is very difficult to design a longitudinal study with a control group (e.g., Azizi et al. 2020; Sasaki, 2004). As claimed by Ferris (2004), “if an experimental study with a control group is done, it is criticized for not being longitudinal” (p. 54). Moreover, it seems unethical not to provide learners with an instructional treatment over one academic year, thus “using students as guinea pigs for research that could harm them” (Ferris, 2004, p. 56) and their academic results. Having qualitative case studies with participants receiving different treatments is also considered a good alternative to set up the limitations of not having a control group (Ferris, 2004).

Therefore, learners receiving explicit grammar and vocabulary treatment were grouped into Treatment Group 1 (TG1, $n = 56$ or 37.83%) and those receiving strategy instruction belonged to Treatment Group 2 (TG2, $n = 92$ or 62.17%). Those learners into TG1 received 3 hours of instruction per week, while those in the TG2 received 4 hours per week. This extra hour of instruction per week was used for students to work individually on past university entrance exams in class. This task was offered as homework for participants in the TG1 group. In this regard, there was not a difference regarding the number of hours of instruction received.

Finally, in order to measure the third variable of this study, i.e., the participants' level of motivation, the index AMI from Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB was used, where the possible scores range from -6 to 54. In the present investigation, the minimum score obtained by participants was 3 while the maximum was 51, being the average 34.15.

4.3. Research instruments

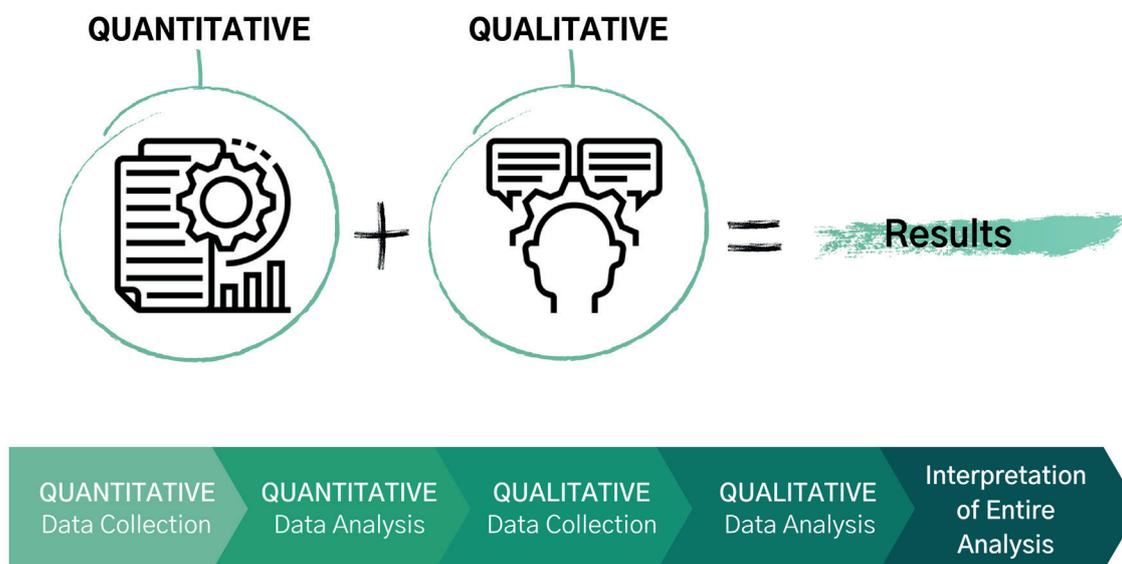
The current research used a mixed-methods research (MMR, henceforth) approach to overcome the limitations of a single design. It employs the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The use of MMR has been broadly employed in the last decade due to its acceptance in multiple research disciplines, including SLA. As stated by Bazeley (2003), three are the main advantages when using MMR. First of all, researchers will have a more ample comprehension of the bases of research. Secondly, they will have information on the outcomes of diverse sampling tools, and thirdly, they will be able to interpret and combine data in a meaningful way.

In the literature, it is possible to find a wide variety of mixed methods designs. An accepted classification, including three concurrent and three sequential designs, is the one offered by Creswell et al. (2003). Within this classification, it seems that one of the most popular typologies among researchers is the mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design. This implies the collection and analysis of quantitative data in a first phase and the examination of qualitative data in a second stage. By doing this, the qualitative data are extremely useful to refine and describe the statistical findings obtained in the investigation thanks to the analysis of participants' opinions, views, and experiences in more detail. Moreover, by adopting this sequential explanatory design, unexpected quantitative results can be analysed better. Due to the benefits of this approach, this research uses a mixed methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, as depicted in Figure 15.

In the current investigation, a background and an initial motivation questionnaire, a final motivation questionnaire, a QPT, and writing tasks are the tools used to collect quantitative data. On the other hand, a background questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are employed for the gathering of qualitative information.

Figure 15

Mixed methods sequential explanatory design



Note. Creswell et al. (2003, p. 180)

In the following section, an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative instruments used is offered.

4.3.1. Quantitative instruments

4.3.1.1. Background information and initial motivation questionnaire

The background information and initial motivation questionnaire was designed to gather data about participants' name, age, gender, school, mother tongue, nationality, and initial level of motivation (see Appendix A). Some extra information such as parents' language use, language preferences, number of years learning English, or knowledge of other languages was also included with the objective of controlling several factors which might affect the final results. The questionnaire was administered in Spanish in order to

help participants understand the questions and items better and feel more comfortable and confident when providing their answers.

In the background information questionnaire, there were open-ended and checklist items to broaden the possibility of analysing data both quantitatively and qualitatively. The initial motivation part contained a Spanish adaptation of Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB. As explained in Chapter 2, this survey is a reduced but consistent version of the original AMTB scale, which consists of 11 items (seven-point Likert scale) related to the five main components of the socio-educational model, i.e., *Integrativeness*, *Attitudes toward the learning situation*, *Motivation*, *Anxiety*, and *Instrumental orientation*. In fact, items 1, 2 and 3 referred to *Integrativeness*, items 6 and 10 to *Attitudes toward the learning situation*, items 4, 5 and 11 to *Motivation*, items 8 and 9 to *Anxiety*, and item 7 to *Instrumental orientation*. Aggregates were also used to measure learners' motivation as research has shown that more significant and consistent correlations are found when summing values rather than using variables in isolation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Therefore, the index AMI was calculated by adding the scores obtained in the variables *Integrativeness*, *Attitudes towards the learning situation*, and *Motivation*; and subtracting the score obtained by participants in the *Anxiety* component. Consequently, the possible scores in this scale ranged from -6 to 54, where higher values indicated higher levels of motivation.

4.3.1.2. Final motivation questionnaire

At the end of the investigation, a final motivation questionnaire (see Appendix B) was administered in Spanish containing 6 yes/no questions related to likes and dislikes about the English subject, about writing in that language, about the importance of learning English, and instrumental reasons for getting better grades during the 2nd year of Baccalaureate. The survey also contained a Spanish adaptation of Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB. This questionnaire was created with the aim of measuring participants'

level of motivation at the end of the school year to compare it with their initial motivation.

4.3.1.3. The Oxford Quick Placement Test

The QPT was used to determine participants' initial proficiency. This tool was employed with the aim of measuring participants' global language skills (Brown, 2005). The pen-and-paper version of the Oxford QPT used contained a total of 60 items including aspects related to vocabulary, pragmatics, grammar, and reading comprehension to test participants' language level. Participants were allowed 30 minutes to complete it.

Ideally, the whole sample of 148 participants should have completed the QPT at the end of the school year to analyse if there had been an improvement in participants' level of English during the academic year. Unfortunately, as learners were studying for the university entrance exams and teachers were mostly focused on the final assessment sessions, only a subsample of 19 participants completed the QPT during the last week of class to make up for this constraint.

4.3.1.4. Writing tasks

Three different writing tasks were created for students to complete during the pre-test, the post-test, and the delayed post-test to measure their L2 writing development (see Appendix C). Each writing task contained an opinion essay on a different topic. The main reason for selecting this genre was the high occurrence of argumentative essays in the university entrance exams in the Valencian Community of late. In fact, before deciding on this type of writing, it was found that 87.5% of exams over the last 10 years had included an opinion essay. What is more, in some recent exams, the two options

offered to students were opinion essays, thus reflecting the importance given to this genre in 2nd year of Baccalaureate.

The topics chosen for students to write in the designed activities were the ones that usually appear in their exams (e.g., education, travelling, health, jobs and employment, new technologies, or the environment, just to mention a few). In each data collection, a different topic was chosen as thanks to the pilot study, it was found that task repetition could bias the study.

In fact, the writing tasks were piloted with 56 learners in 2nd year of Baccalaureate to ascertain aspects such as time limit, guidelines about text type, and topic, among others. This pilot analysis was developed during the school year 2020/2021 in the public institution where the teacher/researcher of this investigation was working. Apart from piloting the writing task, the background information and initial motivation questionnaire were also tested to verify the clarity of the instructions and items. Three main steps were involved in this pilot investigation.

First of all, participants were asked to complete the background information and initial motivation questionnaire. The first version of this questionnaire contained 86 items extracted from the AMTB to measure motivation apart from the mini-AMTB. As many of the items in this longer battery offered the same information in a reversed way, some of the respondents showed confusion. Hence, it took more time than expected to answer it. In addition, there was not a balanced number of items in each category under analysis, i.e., *Integrativeness*, *Attitudes toward the learning situation*, *Motivation*, *Anxiety*, and *Instrumental orientation*. For these reasons and due to the reliability offered by the mini-AMTB (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993), it was believed to be a good option to use in the current investigation.

Secondly, the writing tasks were piloted with no time limit. While some learners took 15 minutes to complete the task, others could not finish it in the 55 minutes the lesson lasted. For this reason, it was decided to assign a time limit of 45 minutes in the real study. In this regard, learners would administer their time and would have an idea

about the time they had to devote to the writing task. The reason for assigning this time limit to the writing was that in the real university entrance exam, they have one and a half hours to complete it. The second aspect which was piloted in the task was the topic. In the pilot study, the three writing tasks were about new technologies, as it was believed that it was a topic in which learners could find expressions and lexical items to express their arguments and feel confident. However, after checking the three data collections, it was observed that some participants used exactly the same arguments and expressions in all their writing production. This way, and in order to avoid a biased study, it was decided to change the topic in each piece of writing. Hence, learners had to write about education in the pre-test (*What is your opinion about multilingual education?*), new technologies in the post-test (*Do social media contribute to people's happiness? Give reasons*), and the environment in the delayed post-test (*What can be done to protect the environment and reduce global warming? Give reasons*). Finally, guidelines about text type were also piloted. In the pilot study, learners were only given the question to write, without specifying the text type. However, most participants did not follow the structure of an opinion essay. Many of them completed a for and against essay instead. To avoid this in the investigation, in the heading of the tasks the phrase "Opinion Essay" was deliberately included (Appendix C). In the three data collections the same genre, i.e., opinion essay, was maintained.

Figure 16 shows a summary of the three aspects under analysis in the pilot study and how they changed in the real study.

Figure 16*Writing design implementation*

	1 Pilot Study	2 Main Study
 Time	No time limit	45 minutes
 Topic	Same topic	Different topics
 Guidelines	Only question	Opinion essay as heading and question

4.3.2. Qualitative instruments

4.3.2.1. Participants' semi-structured interviews

As stated earlier, a subsample of 19 students (12.83%) participated in semi-structured interviews at the end of the school year. Interviews mainly centred on two sections, i.e., aspects related to the instruction received during the academic year, and students' proficiency level and motivation. The information obtained in these interviews was used to complement the one extracted from the background and motivation questionnaires as well as the writing tasks. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, as it was believed that participants would feel more comfortable to elaborate their answers and views in their mother tongue.

The questions in the interview related to *instruction* paid attention to the five dimensions in which L2 writing proficiency had been operationalised in the present investigation plus overall impressions. The main aspects under analysis were the following ones:

1. Content:
 - Methodology to develop arguments
 - Writing process to look for arguments
 - Checking the coherence between arguments and overall opinion
2. Task requirement:
 - Genre
 - Register
 - Structure
3. Coherence and cohesion:
 - Connectors
 - Meaning
4. Grammar:
 - Use of tenses
 - Strategies to enrich the essays grammatically
5. Vocabulary:
 - Use of specific terms
 - Use of synonyms to avoid repetition
 - Strategies to enrich the essays lexically
6. General impressions:
 - Strategies
 - Overall impressions about the methodology used

Regarding the second main section in the interviews, i.e., *proficiency* and *motivation*, several questions belonging to the following 5 blocks were formulated to participants:

1. Likes and dislikes about the subject
2. Likes and dislikes about writing in English
3. Difficulty when expressing thoughts in a foreign language

4. Strategies applied while writing in English
5. External aid during the academic year

Appendix D includes all the questions used in the semi-structured interviews at the end of the academic year.

4.4. Data collection procedure and analysis

A pilot study was conducted in the academic year 2020/2021 to check the validity of the instruments used. In the pilot study, all the instruments were tested by 56 learners in a public institution of secondary education. As a result, several modifications were made before the real research took place, which consisted in a longitudinal investigation, including a pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test design to analyse learners' L2 writing proficiency over one school year.

Data were collected over the academic year 2021/2022 in two high schools in the city of Castelló de la Plana. Before starting the academic year, the teacher/researcher contacted the current teacher at the private school to ask for her collaboration. Once she agreed, in September 2021, participants in both educational centres were asked to participate in the investigation after being informed about the nature of the research as well as confidentiality issues. Once students agreed to take part in the project, they completed the background information and initial motivation questionnaire which contained a pool of questions about their past experiences learning English, their language use, preferences, attitudes, and Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB to determine their degree of motivation when dealing with language learning. In the following lesson, students devoted 30 minutes to complete the QPT. Then, three different days were established by both teachers over the academic year for participants to complete the pre-test, post-test, and the delayed post-test instruments to establish participants' L2 writing proficiency. Regarding the dates of data gathering, at the end of September 2021, when

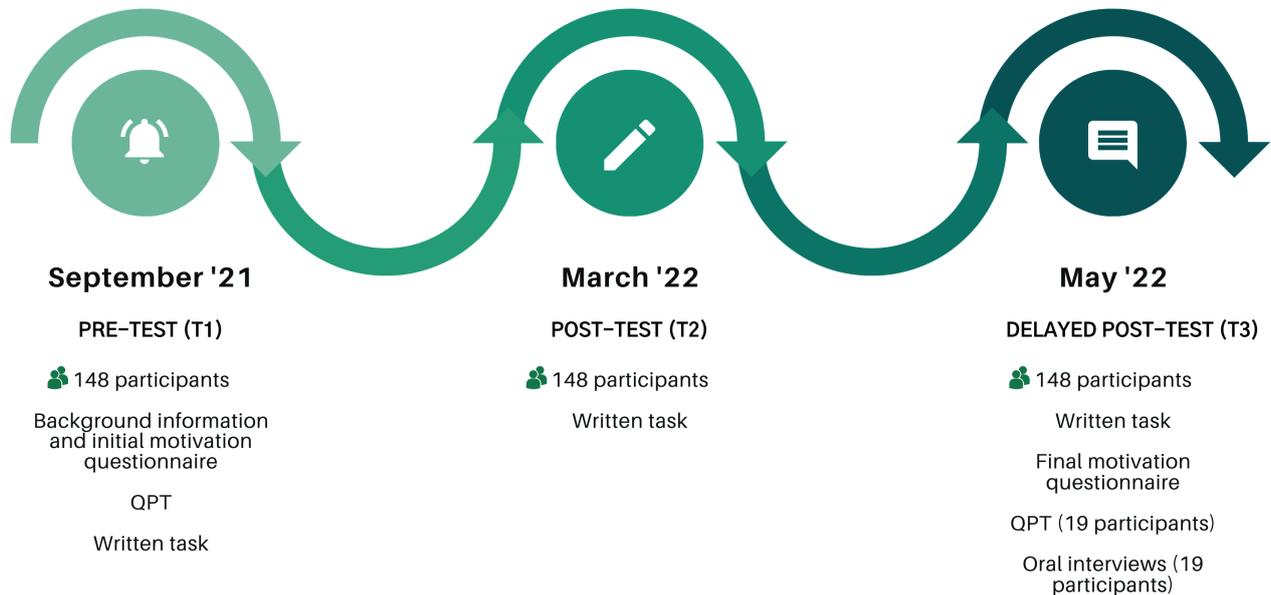
learners had not started receiving writing instruction, the pre-test (Time 1; henceforth T1) was carried out in both institutions. Later, in March 2022, participants performed the post-test (Time 2; henceforth T2) after receiving some writing instruction. Finally, in May 2022, coinciding with the end of the academic year for 2nd year Bacculaureate students, the delayed post-test (Time 3; henceforth T3) was carried out. At the end of the third term, (i.e., end of May), learners completed the final motivation questionnaire.

Finally, at the end of the school year, once participants had finished completing all the paper-format instruments, the researcher asked learners in both high schools to voluntarily participate in an oral semi-structured interview in an attempt to obtain qualitative information. This group of participants were also asked to complete the QPT at this time. As stated earlier, out of the 148 learners who had participated in the investigation, only 19 students agreed to do so. Therefore, the QPT and a semi-structured interview focusing on different aspects of writing as well as general impressions about the subject of English in 2nd year Bacculaureate was conducted in the last week of May.

Participants were not warned in advance about the exact days of data collection in an attempt to avoid anxiety, non-attendance issues, or preparation for the writing task. The teacher/researcher was present during each data collection to solve possible doubts and to control the procedure. Figure 17 illustrates the data collection procedure.

Figure 17

Data collection procedure



4.4.1. The rating scales

This investigation comprised a total of 444 opinion essays. Writing tasks were exactly transcribed as they were written, keeping any possible mistake to make further analyses easier. Students' writings were graded using the rating scale, i.e., a rubric, which had been designed for this investigation.

In order to evaluate participants' L2 writing proficiency, an analytical rubric was used for the following reasons: first, it provides an analysis of the variables involved in writing to offer extra insights regarding students' performance; second, when assessing this skill, there is not a single possible answer, so this type of rubric diminishes subjectivity and includes aspects raters may not even consider; thus fostering the evaluation of L2 writing from a communicative perspective.

The design of the rubric comprised the five categories in which L2 writing proficiency had been previously operationalised for this investigation, i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary.

A number of analytical rubrics were considered to design the rating scale for this investigation. The first rubric analysed was the one used in the university entrance exams in the Valencian Community (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

Rubric used to assess University Entrance Exams

1.- Aspectos de carácter estratégico:	2.- Corrección gramatical:	3.- Claridad de expresión y organización textual:	4.- Variedad, riqueza y precisión léxica:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentación clara y ordenada (márgenes, sangrados etc.) - Ortografía correcta. - Texto distribuido en párrafos. - Uso correcto de signos de puntuación. - Letra clara y comprensible. - Escrito en tinta. - ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orden correcto de los elementos frásticos (SVO...) - Concordancias correctas (S-V, Pronombres referentes...) - Formas pronominales correctas - Cuantificadores correctos - Estructuración negativa correcta - Tiempos y secuencias verbales adecuados y correctos - Partículas temporales adecuadas (FOR, SINCE, AGO, ALREADY) - Uso adecuado de artículos (genéricos, específicos...) - Uso correcto del posesivo - Conocimiento de los plurales irregulares - Uso correcto de modales y defectivos - Invariabilidad de los adjetivos (género y número) - Uso correcto de las preposiciones - ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secuenciación y organización del texto clara y lógica - No hay excesivas repeticiones - No es un texto confuso y oscuro - Uso adecuado de conectores para las diferentes ideas - Aproximación al tema coherente y original. - Estructuración de las ideas en párrafos. - ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No se usan palabras en español ni inexistentes - Elección de términos específicos y concretos para ese texto - No existe confusión entre elementos léxicos básicos - No hay confusión entre categorías gramaticales. - No existe un abuso desmesurado de expresiones idiomáticas - ...

Note. Extracted from <https://innova.gva.es/es/web/universidad/informacion-pau>

As can be seen in the figure above, the aspects considered in this rubric are quite vague. Even though they consider strategic aspects, grammar, coherence and cohesion, and vocabulary, there is not any single guideline regarding how to assess these categories. Moreover, scores are not even offered. In this regard, many novel teachers feel frustrated when using it for the first time as they do not know how to interpret it.

The second rubric examined was the one used by Cambridge English Qualifications to assess B1 level. This level was chosen as it is the one learners are supposed to acquire at 2nd year of Baccalaureate. Furthermore, Cambridge was selected as its exams are trustworthy and recognised throughout the world due to their reliability, fairness, and high-quality standards. In this rubric, aspects such as content, communicative achievement, organisation (i.e., coherence and cohesion), and language (i.e., grammar and vocabulary) are examined. In addition, scores range from 0 to 5, a fact which allows for intermediary results. In each score, raters are explicitly explained which aspects may be found in the writing productions.

Another rubric analysed is the one used by ACLES for B1 level due to its acceptance and reliability. This rubric, as the one used by Cambridge examiners, contains scores ranging from 0 to 5. However, the aspects analysed differ, since ACLES examiners focus on task achievement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and lexicon when assessing their candidates' writings. This rubric is more complete than the one used by Cambridge examiners. In each dimension, there are different aspects to measure writers' ability in the different scores proposed. Hence, examiners must pay attention to all the aspects which comprise each variable.

After considering all the previous rubrics, a new five-point Likert rubric ranging from 0 to 4 was suggested for this investigation. The maximum score writers can obtain with this rubric is 4 points as the one in the university entrance exams. This scale contains the 5 dimensions in which L2 writing proficiency had been previously operationalised for this investigation, i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary. Moreover, 2 versions were designed: a longer version containing detailed information for each category at each score (see Appendix E), and a shorter version designed for trained examiners once they have already mastered all the dimensions (see Appendix F).

If we analyse the longer rubric, content is the first dimension assessed. Content is understood as the degree of adaptation and relevance of the information provided in

the text according to the topic suggested. In this regard, arguments are analysed to observe how adequate they are regarding the topic and opinion provided. In Figure 19, scores attributed to the content dimension are presented. For each score, we can find an explanation with key information in bold together with an asterisk including more objective and sometimes numerical information to attain the mark.

Figure 19

Content dimension

CONTENT: Is the information provided in the text adequate and relevant regarding the topic suggested?				
4	3	2	1	0
The number of arguments is extremely adequate , and all of them are very consistent regarding topic and opinion. * All arguments are 100% relevant and related to the topic and opinion	The number of arguments is very adequate , and they are quite consistent regarding topic and opinion. * All arguments are quite relevant and related to the topic and opinion	The number of arguments is adequate , and some of them are consistent regarding topic and opinion. * Half the arguments are relevant and related to the topic and opinion	The number of arguments is scarcely adequate , and they are somewhat consistent regarding topic and opinion. * Some arguments are somewhat related to the topic and opinion	The number of arguments is not at all adequate and they are not consistent regarding topic and opinion. * No argument is related neither to the topic nor the opinion

As for the second dimension, i.e., task requirements, elements such as genre, length, or register are assessed (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Task Requirements dimension

TASK REQUIREMENTS: Have the tasks requirements been fulfilled successfully (e.g., length, genre, register)?				
4	3	2	1	0
<p><i>All</i> the requirements of the task have been answered.</p> <p>* Length, text type and register are completely adequate</p>	<p><i>Almost all</i> the requirements of the task have been answered.</p> <p>* Length and text type are adequate, and register is somewhat adequate (e.g., some contractions appear)</p>	<p><i>Half (more than half)</i> of the requirements of the task have been answered.</p> <p>* Length and text type are somewhat adequate, and register is adequate</p>	<p><i>Some (less than half)</i> of the requirements of the task have been answered.</p> <p>* Text type is not adequate, but length and register are somewhat adequate</p>	<p><i>None</i> of the requirements of the task have been answered.</p> <p>* Neither text type nor length or register are adequate</p>

In this dimension, raters must pay attention to genre, length and register to offer a final score. These aspects appear in green to emphasise their importance and adequacy for each mark.

In terms of coherence and cohesion, different aspects are examined. First of all, the structure, meaning and organisation regarding coherence, and secondly, linking words and cohesive devices as for cohesion (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Coherence and cohesion dimension

COHERENCE AND COHESION: Is the text coherent (e.g., organization, structure) and cohesive (e.g., linking words, conjunctions, anaphoric devices)?				
4	3	2	1	0
<p>The writer ensures extreme coherence and cohesion by using a clearly organised overall structure, many linking words and other cohesive devices to connect all the ideas thus creating a text with complete global sense</p> <p>* The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, and all the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion</p>	<p>The text is very coherent and cohesive. The writer usually introduces a new topic by using linking words. Repetitions are very infrequent. Anaphoric devices are numerous. There are no coherence breaks. Its global sense can easily be appreciated.</p> <p>* The essay contains 3/4 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half, or more of the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion OR All the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate</p>	<p>The text is coherent and cohesive. The writer uses some anaphoric devices, although sometimes relies on repetitions to achieve coherence. A good use of linking words is made. The text has a global sense.</p> <p>*The essay contains 2 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half of the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate OR The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are somewhat related to the support sentence and overall opinion</p>	<p>The text is scarcely coherent and not very cohesive. The text presents some coherence breaks and when coherence is achieved, it is often done through repetitions. Only a few anaphoric references and linking words are used. It is really difficult to reconstruct its global sense.</p> <p>*The essay contains only 1 linking word and very few cohesive devices. Moreover, topic sentences are not really related to the opinion and the support used is inadequate. OR The essay contains various linking words and cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are not related to the support sentence and overall opinion</p>	<p>The text is neither coherent nor cohesive. Coherence breaks are very common, cohesive devices are hardly ever used and ideas are unrelated.</p> <p>* The essay does not contain linking words, and no cohesive devices are used. Moreover, topic sentences are not related to the opinion and there is no support</p>

Under this dimension, different possibilities can be found for raters to offer writers a score. If we pay attention to the scores 1, 2 or 3, we can find two different options to attain the same mark.

In Figure 22, the grammar dimension is presented. Under this category, the mastery of diverse grammatical structures is assessed as well as writers' grammatical accuracy.

Figure 22

Grammar dimension

GRAMMAR: Are the grammatical structures (e.g. present, past, future tenses, modals, adverbials, comparatives and superlatives, and conditionals) adequate?				
4	3	2	1	0
The writer presents a very high degree of control of simple and complex grammatical structures * At least 5 different grammatical forms are used successfully without any other grammatical mistake	The writer presents a high degree of control of simple and complex grammatical structures. * At least 4 different grammatical forms are used successfully but 1 or 2 grammatical mistakes may appear	The writer presents a good degree of control of simple grammatical structures. * At least 3 different grammatical forms are used successfully; however, there are a few (3-5) grammatical mistakes	The writer presents a reasonably good degree of control of simple grammatical structures. * At least 2 different grammatical forms are used more or less successfully, but the text presents some (5-7) grammatical mistakes	The writer presents a poor degree of control of simple grammatical structures which lead to misunderstanding. * As a maximum 1 simple grammatical form is used successfully. There are a lot of (more than 7) grammatical mistakes

Finally, the last dimension analysed is vocabulary (see Figure 23), in which students' lexical richness is examined.

Figure 23*Vocabulary dimension*

VOCABULARY: Are the lexical terms chosen adequate to the content of the text?				
4	3	2	1	0
<p>The writer shows a very wide lexical range of vocabulary to express ideas with no avoidance strategies. There are no spelling mistakes.</p> <p>* The writer always uses specific vocabulary to the topic without spelling mistakes</p>	<p>The writer shows a wide lexical range of vocabulary to express ideas with some avoidance strategies. There are no spelling mistakes.</p> <p>* The writer generally uses specific vocabulary to the topic with a maximum of 1 or 2 spelling mistakes</p>	<p>The writer shows a varied range of vocabulary to express ideas, although avoidance strategies are evident at times. Some spelling mistakes and vocabulary choices are not accurate, but they do not cause misunderstanding.</p> <p>* The writer generally uses basic vocabulary with some specific terms. There is a bit of repetition. Spelling mistakes are present and there are 1 or 2 non-existent terms</p>	<p>The writer has limited vocabulary. Basic vocabulary is used with a good degree of success, but avoidance strategies are very evident causing repetition. Inadequate lexical choices may cause misunderstanding.</p> <p>* The writer always uses very basic vocabulary (e.g., thing, it, people), non-existent words and there are a lot of spelling mistakes</p>	<p>The writer has very limited vocabulary. Repetitions, spelling mistakes and avoidance strategies constantly appear causing misunderstanding.</p> <p>* The writer uses words from other languages and non-existent lexical items. Spelling mistakes constantly appear</p>

To get higher scores, learners need to use specific vocabulary regarding the topic they are writing about without spelling mistakes. Non-existent words or the use of very basic terms together with spelling mistakes will move students towards lower bands.

After having analysed all the dimensions, it must be noted that all the information which appears after the asterisks in the longest rubric is the one used in the shorter one for expert raters. In order to attain a final score for L2 writing, the scores obtained in each category have to be added and divided by the total number of dimensions analysed, i.e., 5.

4.4.2. Data coding and analysis

In this study, L2 writing competence was operationalised under 5 categories which were graded by using the scoring rubric designed for this investigation. In

addition, information was also obtained from participants' background and motivation questionnaires, as well as interviews.

Once participants were classified according to their proficiency level, L2 writing proficiency was coded under the five categories in which had been previously operationalised. In order to do this, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 was designed. Learners could get a score of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 in each category. For example, when assessing the grammar dimension, students could get 4 points if they mastered the use of at least 5 different grammatical forms; 3 points when using a minimum of 4 different tenses with 1 or 2 grammatical mistakes; 2 points when using 3 or more grammatical forms with a maximum of 3-5 mistakes; 1 point when employing at least 2 forms with 5-7 mistakes; and 0 points when just using 1 form with many grammatical mistakes. Therefore, to get a final and average result, the five scores obtained for each dimension had to be added and divided by 5. This system for codifying the writing tasks was used in the pilot study and in the three data collections, i.e., the pre-test, the post test, and the delayed post-test, with the 444 opinion essays. Afterwards, a database was created to examine participants' evolution in the five dimensions analysed, i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary, and their overall achievement throughout the school year 2021/2022. The 444 opinion essays were graded by both the main researcher and the English teacher in the private institution to avoid subjectivity and ambiguous interpretations, which may have compromised the validity and reliability of the scale. As their agreement rate was over 85% in each category, the average score obtained by the two raters was used for the analyses conducted.

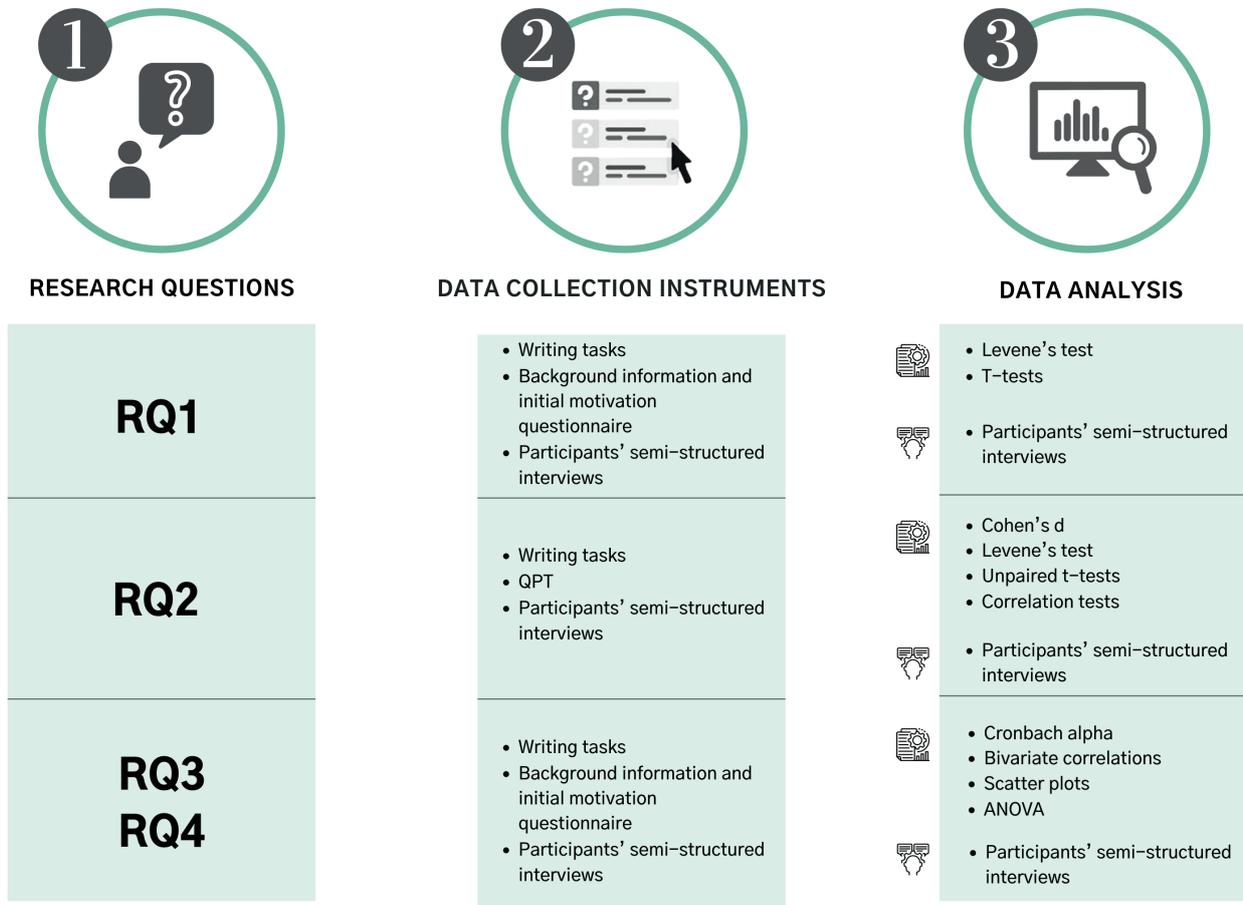
The next step was to conduct statistical analysis to examine the relationships among the diverse variables at stake. In this sense, Cohen's *d*, Levene's test, Cronbach alpha, t-tests, bivariate correlations, Scatter plots, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. A series of paired and unpaired t-tests were calculated to observe significant differences across time and between the two groups when dealing with the type of instruction received. In order to calculate the t-tests, the Levene's test was

previously calculated to assume and verify homoscedasticity. Moreover, a series of unpaired-samples t-tests were calculated for each dimension and for the overall performance to establish the difference in students' performance means regarding their proficiency level. In addition, effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's *d*. A test of correlation between learners' L2 writing achievement and proficiency level was conducted. Moreover, Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the mini-AMTB used. Bivariate correlations were performed to determine the relationship between motivation and each of the L2 writing components at T1 and T3. Scatter plots were also used to display average scores of each dimension and to establish the position of such relationships on the horizontal and vertical axes. ANOVA analyses were carried out to compare the difference in mean scores. These statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.

Figure 24 shows a summary of the data collection tools together with the data analysis regarding the hypotheses analysed in the current investigation.

Figure 24

Data collection instruments and analysis



In addition, qualitative data were coded from participants' semi-structured interviews, which mainly focused on proficiency level, type of instruction received, and motivation. This qualitative information was used to complement quantitative results and to shed further light about potential factors which might have exerted an influence on L2 writing development.

4.5. Chapter summary

Chapter 4 has presented the research methodology used in the current study. As explained, a longitudinal mixed-method investigation has been used in which 148 participants of 2nd year of Baccalaureate at one state and one private secondary education centre completed a background information and motivation questionnaire, a QPT, three writing tasks, and a final motivation questionnaire. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of this investigation with 19 respondents. The data obtained in these interviews were employed to complete quantitative data, hence using an exploratory sequential design. In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 the results of the current study will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER

5

Results and discussion related to RQ1

Chapter 5 presents the results and discussion of the first research question of the present investigation. Research has demonstrated that instruction is locally constrained (Manchón, 2009) and the three main teaching orientations when dealing with L2 writing are as follows: text-focused, which copes with aspects such as grammar or lexicon, process-focused, which centres on strategy instruction, and sociocultural models, which focus on genre instruction in specific cultures. This study concentrates on the two first models. On the one hand, a vast number of investigations have shown that explicit instruction focusing on aspects such as grammar, orthography, morphology, or lexicon positively correlates with L2 writing development as it helps students produce more coherent and cohesive texts with sophisticated vocabulary and structures (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000). However, results from other studies dealing with strategy instruction have also proved the utility of this approach to foster L2 writing fluency (e.g., Cumming, 2002; De Silva, 2015; Hyland, 2002; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000). Considering these insights, RQ1, and hypotheses 1 and 2 were devised in the following way:

RQ1: What type of instruction benefits more L2 writing development at Baccalaureate level in Spain over one academic year?

- **H1:** The teaching of explicit grammar and vocabulary will benefit L2 writing development positively (Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Tsang & Wong, 2000).
- **H2:** Strategy instruction will benefit L2 writing performance positively (De Silva, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000).

Chapter 5 is distributed into three major sections. First, Section 5.1 shows the quantitative findings with reference to RQ1 and its hypotheses. Consequently, a quantitative study of the opinion essays designed for the objective of this investigation is presented. Next, qualitative results are presented in Section 5.2 to complement the quantitative findings. In this regard, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subsample of 19 students at the end of the academic year to inquire about the effects of their instructional treatment regarding content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary. Finally, Section 5.3 offers the discussion of findings.

5.1. Quantitative results

The first step in order to carry out the quantitative analyses was to provide the descriptive statistics to examine data distributions and check homoscedasticity. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, as well as overall L2 writing performance, which is understood as the sum of the five previous dimensions, for both instructional groups, i.e., TG1, the treatment group receiving explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction, and TG2, the treatment group receiving strategy instruction. The performance of these dimensions is measured at three time points over the academic year: T1, T2, and T3.

Table 1*L2 writing performance according to instructional group*

		Instruction	Mean	SD
Content	T1	TG1	2.70	0.913
		TG2	2.53	0.825
	T2	TG1	2.83	0.859
		TG2	2.77	1.300
	T3	TG1	3.78	0.435
		TG2	3.34	0.794
Task Requirement	T1	TG1	2.58	1.065
		TG2	2.93	0.902
	T2	TG1	3.25	0.495
		TG2	3.60	0.652
	T3	TG1	3.76	0.356
		TG2	3.77	0.566
Coherence and Cohesion	T1	TG1	2.54	0.859
		TG2	2.60	0.802
	T2	TG1	2.81	0.717
		TG2	2.96	0.797
	T3	TG1	3.65	0.485
		TG2	3.33	0.723
Grammar	T1	TG1	1.86	0.891
		TG2	2.12	1.015
	T2	TG1	2.05	0.947
		TG2	2.02	1.244
	T3	TG1	2.26	0.972
		TG2	2.12	1.202
Vocabulary	T1	TG1	1.82	0.926
		TG2	2.22	0.943
	T2	TG1	2.19	1.021
		TG2	1.94	1.086
	T3	TG1	2.39	1.127
		TG2	2.63	3.597
Overall performance (sum)	T1	TG1	2.24	0.785
		TG2	2.48	0.751
	T2	TG1	2.62	0.961
		TG2	2.66	0.830
	T3	TG1	3.17	0.533
		TG2	2.99	0.742

As can be observed, the low standard deviation shows that variation in the performance of all dimensions was moderate. Considering the normal distribution of the

data ($n > 50$), parametric statistical tests were conducted to get more significant findings. Levene's test was employed for the 6 variables in the two groups. In addition, homoscedasticity ($p > .05$) was proved for all dimensions at T1, T2 and T3.

On the one hand, H1 predicted that the teaching of explicit grammar and vocabulary would benefit L2 writing development positively (Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Tsang & Wong, 2000). On the other hand, H2 predicted that strategy instruction would benefit L2 writing performance positively (De Silva, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000). The present study explored how two different groups with distinct instructional treatments progress in L2 writing.

In order to assess learners' progress in L2 writing performance, a sequence of unpaired-samples t-tests were calculated for each category and for the overall performance to determine the accomplishment of each group (i.e., TG1, TG2). As for the first dimension -content-, there are differences across the two treatment groups. TG1 outperformed TG2 in T1 ($M = 2.70$), T2 ($M = 2.83$), and T3 ($M = 3.78$). Despite this evolution, TG2 also showed a positive learning trajectory from T1 ($M = 2.53$) to T3 ($M = 3.34$), which seems to indicate that both groups improved their ability to provide more information units that are adequate and relevant to the writing task. In order to observe significant differences in each group across time and between the two groups, statistical analyses through t-tests were calculated (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2

Comparisons on content performance across time in TG1

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.12	.304	-0.36	0.11
T2-T3	-0.95	.000	-1.20	-0.70
T1-T3	-1.08	.000	-1.33	-0.82

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 3*Comparisons on content performance across time in TG2*

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.24	.015	-0.43	-0.04
T2-T3	-0.57	.000	-0.98	-0.64
T1-T3	0.81	.000	-0.74	-0.40

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

As illustrated in the above tables, the analyses reveal significant results in both groups in the content dimension across time. For TG1, significant differences are observed from T2 to T3 (MD = -0.95, $p = .000$), and also from T1 to T3 (MD = -1.08, $p = .000$). Regarding TG2, i.e., the group receiving strategy instruction, the analysis evidences significant differences in their performance at all times (MD T1-T2 = -0.24, $p = .015$; MD T2-T3 = -0.57, $p = .000$; MD T1-T3 = 0.81, $p = .000$). These results suggest that both groups developed the ability to accomplish the content dimension throughout the academic year.

Moving on to the second dimension, i.e., task requirement, we may claim that there is a tendency for improvement in both groups over time. While the scores obtained in T1 (TG1 M = 2.58; TG2 M = 2.93) and T2 (TG1 M = 3.25; TG2 M = 3.60) by TG1 and TG2 are slightly different, the means of the two groups are extremely similar at T3 (TG1 M = 3.76; TG2 M = 3.77). This suggests that the dimension of task requirement, despite the instructional treatment received, seems to increase in learners' L2 written performance over one academic year. Tables 4 and 5 illustrate comparisons among T1, T2, and T3 by group.

Table 4*Comparisons on task requirement performance across time in TG1*

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.66	.000	-0.99	-0.34
T2-T3	-0.51	.000	-0.66	-0.36
T1-T3	-1.18	.000	-1.50	-0.86

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 5*Comparisons on task requirement performance across time in TG2*

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.66	.000	-0.86	-0.46
T2-T3	-0.16	.000	-0.30	-0.03
T1-T3	-0.83	.016	-1.03	-0.63

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

The above statistical comparisons reveal that the performance of each group was different at the three points in time. As can be seen in Table 4, the performance of TG1 was statistically significant ($p = .000$) at T1, T2 and T3, which may suggest that the effectiveness of the explicit instructional treatment improved during the academic year. Regarding TG2, significant differences at all time points were equally observed, indicating that the other instructional treatment was equally valid.

Turning to the third dimension -coherence and cohesion-, changes at each data collection by every treatment group can be observed. In other words, gains in organisation, structure, and use of conjunction and verbal constructions are experienced by learners in TG1 and TG2 from T1 to T3. Although TG1 scored the highest in T3 ($M = 3.65$), TG2 scored the highest in T1 ($M = 2.60$) and T2 ($M = 2.96$). As in the previous dimensions analysed, these inferential results may indicate that both types of instruction seem to be beneficial in order to enhance the coherence and cohesion dimension over one academic year.

More specifically, statistical tests indicated significant differences in each group at all time points (see Tables 6 and 7). Although the significance value is .000 in most of the analyses, it can be observed that it is higher in TG1 from T1 to T2 ($p = .016$). This result may suggest the effectiveness of the instruction, as the mean improved from T1 to T2 in 0.27 while this difference was 0.84 from T2 to T3. As significant results were found at all time points in both groups, we can claim that both treatment groups improved their capacity to write more coherent and cohesive texts. However, further analyses are needed to check which instructional treatment is more effective.

Table 6

Comparisons on coherence and cohesion performance across time in TG1

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.26	.016	-0.48	-0.05
T2-T3	-0.83	.000	-1.02	-0.65
T1-T3	-1.10	.000	-1.33	-0.88

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 7

Comparisons on coherence and cohesion performance across time in TG2

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.36	.000	-0.49	-0.23
T2-T3	-0.36	.000	-0.50	-0.22
T1-T3	-0.72	.000	-0.88	-0.57

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

As for the grammar component, it increases for TG1 throughout the academic year, but it remains stable from T1 to T3 for TG2. In fact, the mean obtained by TG2 is exactly the same in these two periods of time ($M = 2.12$). On the contrary, TG1 performed at T3 ($M = 2.26$) better than at T1 ($M = 1.86$). These results show that the instructional

treatment in TG2, focused on strategies, was not effective in improving learners' ability to use adequate grammatical structures to the level required for each task.

The t-test analyses (see Tables 8 and 9) revealed that the performance of TG1 was statistically significant from T1 to T3 (MD = -0.40, $p = .003$), although no such difference is observed in the other group, which appears to have steady progress.

Table 8

Comparisons on grammar performance across time in TG1

Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.18	.058	-0.38	0.00
T2-T3	-0.21	.119	-0.48	-0.05
T1-T3	-0.40	.003	-0.65	-0.14

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 9

Comparisons on grammar performance across time in TG2

Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	0.10	0.305	-0.09	0.30
T2-T3	-0.19	.011	-0.33	-0.04
T1-T3	-0.08	.352	0.27	0.09

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Regarding the vocabulary dimension, the mean difference between T3 and T1 is recognizable for TG1 (MD = 0.57) and also for TG2 (MD = 0.41). Nevertheless, caution has to be taken with the evolution of the performance of vocabulary by TG2 since the mean obtained in T2 (M = 1.94) is lower than the one performed at the beginning of the academic year (M = 2.22). These findings suggest that the two treatment groups follow similar learning trajectories, although qualitative analyses may be needed to explain why the TG2 group experiences a decrease in L2 written performance at T2 in this dimension. This qualitative investigation will be presented in Section 5.2.

The analysis conducted on the vocabulary dimension revealed significant differences in vocabulary performance in both groups (see Tables 10 and 11). With regards to TG1, such differences are observed at all time points (T1-T2 MD = -0.37, $p = .001$; T2-T3 MD = -0.57, $p = .016$; T1-T3 MD = -0.19, $p = .000$). The performance on the lexical dimension was only statistically significant for TG2 at T1-T2 (MD = 0.28, $p = .001$), meaning that the treatment received by the TG1 students seems to be more beneficial.

Table 10

Comparisons on vocabulary performance across time in TG1

Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.37	.001	-0.59	-0.15
T2-T3	-0.57	.016	-0.47	0.08
T1-T3	-0.19	.000	-0.81	-0.32

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 11

Comparisons on vocabulary performance across time in TG2

Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	0.28	.001	-0.11	-0.45
T2-T3	-0.69	.060	-1.40	0.02
T1-T3	-0.40	.272	-1.13	0.32

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Finally, as for learners' overall L2 writing performance, TG2 scored the highest in T1 (M = 2.48) and T2 (M = 2.66); however, TG1 benefited the most from the instructional treatment received, since they scored the highest in T3 (M = 3.17). Moreover, the mean difference experienced in this group from T1 to T3 is higher (MD = 0.93) than the one for the TG2 group (MD = 0.51).

Despite the analysis of the means, findings revealed that both groups significantly improved their overall L2 writing performance across time (see Tables 12 and 13), thus suggesting that groups with different instructional treatment can improve in L2 writing.

Table 12

Comparisons on overall performance across time in TG1

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.35	.000	-0.52	-0.17
T2-T3	-0.54	.000	-0.70	-0.38
T1-T3	-0.89	.000	-1.08	-0.71

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Table 13

Comparisons on overall performance across time in TG2.

Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
			Lower limit	Upper limit
T1-T2	-0.18	.001	-0.29	-0.07
T2-T3	-0.32	.000	-0.41	-0.24
T1-T3	-0.51	.000	-0.61	-0.40

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

In light of our results, the effectiveness of both instructional treatments is observed. In fact, significant results are obtained for each group in every single period analysed, thus supporting both H1 and H2. Nevertheless, inconclusive results are obtained regarding the most efficient type of instruction to improve learners' L2 written performance. In order to see if statistically relevant differences are experienced between the two groups as regards the treatment received, the following section provides quantitative results by comparing both groups.

5.1.1. Influence of instructional treatments between groups

This section provides further statistical analyses to examine possible differences between the two groups in terms of instruction, i.e., explicit grammar and vocabulary (TG1) versus strategy instruction (TG2). As previous results supported both H1 and H2, we aim to shed more light on which instructional treatment may be more beneficial for L2 writing improvement.

As in Section 5.1, the first step was to conduct the descriptive analysis of the information (see Table 1) to examine students' performance and assume the normal distribution of the data. In this regard, Levene's test was used for the 6 variables under study in each of the groups across time. Homoscedasticity ($p > .05$) was verified for content at T1; task requirement at all time points; coherence and cohesion at T1 and T2; vocabulary at all time points; and overall performance at T1 and T2. For those dimensions where homoscedasticity could not be verified, variance was not assumed.

As presented in the previous section, statistical analyses corroborated that significant differences existed in the performance of certain dimensions throughout the academic year. In what follows, we will present the analyses conducted in order to observe statistically significant differences across groups in each of the dimensions in T1, T2, and T3. Table 14 shows the content performance at all time points by TG1 and TG2.

Table 14

Comparisons on content performance across time and group

Time	Comparison	MD	<i>p</i>	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	0.17	.232	-0.11	0.46
T2	TG1 – TG2	0.05	.722	-0.26	0.38
T3	TG1 – TG2	0.43	.000	0.23	0.63

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

As the above table illustrates, there is only a significant difference in favour of TG1 at the end of the school year (T3) when dealing with the content dimension (MD = 0.43, $p = .000$), thus indicating that there was a positive effect of the explicit treatment on L2 writing performance in T3 over the strategic one when dealing with the content provided by learners in their opinion essays.

Concerning the second dimension, task requirement, Table 15 shows participants' performance across time and group.

Table 15

Comparisons on task requirement performance across time and group

Time	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	-0.35	.031	-0.68	-0.03
T2	TG1 – TG2	-0.35	.001	-0.55	-0.15
T3	TG1 – TG2	-0.003	.963	-0.17	0.16

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

Significant differences are observed in the first and second written L2 performance in favour of TG2 (T1 MD = -0.35, $p = .031$; T2 MD = -0.35, $p = .001$). However, as these results indicate, we cannot assume the effect of this type of instruction, i.e., strategy, across time as in the T3 there are no significant differences showing this effect (MD = -0.03, $p = .963$).

Table 16 shows the comparison across groups regarding the coherence and cohesion dimension.

Table 16

Comparisons on coherence and cohesion performance across time and group

Time	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	-0.05	.676	-0.33	0.21
T2	TG1 – TG2	-0.15	.236	-0.41	0.10
T3	TG1 – TG2	0.32	.002	0.12	0.51

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

As can be seen, results show the effectiveness of explicit grammatical and vocabulary instruction in T3 in favour of TG1 (MD = 0.32, $p = .002$), which indicates that at the end of the school year, this instructional treatment seems to benefit the coherence and cohesion dimension.

Table 17 displays the comparison across groups regarding the grammar dimension.

Table 17

Comparisons on grammar performance across time and group

Time	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	-0.25	.107	-0.57	0.05
T2	TG1 – TG2	0.03	.861	-0.32	0.39
T3	TG1 – TG2	0.05	.757	-0.30	0.41

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

These results suggest that none of the two instructional treatments seems to benefit students when dealing with the grammar dimension, as there are no significant differences in any period analysed.

As for the vocabulary dimension, Table 18 shows the comparison across groups regarding this component.

Table 18*Comparisons on vocabulary performance across time and group*

Time	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	-0.40	.012	-0.71	-0.08
T2	TG1 – TG2	0.25	.157	-0.09	0.61
T3	TG1 – TG2	-0.23	.632	-1.21	0.74

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

These results demonstrate that there are only significant differences in T1 in favour of TG2 (MD = -0.40, $p = .012$) when analysing how the instructional treatment affects the vocabulary dimension. These findings indicate that none of the instructional treatments seem to benefit more than the other regarding the lexical factor. Despite having observed instructional benefits in favour of TG2 in T1, it was in T1 and learners had not received any instruction yet; therefore, these results need to be interpreted with caution.

Finally, Table 19 shows the comparison across groups regarding the overall performance dimension.

Table 19*Comparisons on overall performance across time and group*

Time	Comparison	MD	p	CI (95%) for MD	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
T1	TG1 – TG2	-0.20	.114	-0.46	0.05
T2	TG1 – TG2	-0.03	.768	-0.30	0.22
T3	TG1 – TG2	0.17	.090	-0.02	0.38

Note: CI: Confident Interval; MD: Mean

Values in bold are statistically significant at an alpha level of .05.

From Table 19, we may claim that there are no significant differences between these two types of instructional treatments in any of the periods analysed: T1 (MD = -0.20, $p = .114$), T2 (MD = -0.03, $p = .768$), T3 (MD = 0.17, $p = .090$). Therefore, it is

reasonable to suggest that both types of instruction benefit students in a similar way when dealing with overall L2 writing performance. In this regard, both H1 and H2 are supported by the results obtained in the analyses carried out.

5.2. Qualitative results

The previous section presented the quantitative analyses of the instructional treatment and L2 writing performance across time. Results show that both groups improved their performance in all dimensions from the beginning to the end of the academic year except TG2, whose progress remained steady in the grammar dimension. In addition to this, findings suggest that there are significant differences depending on the treatment received. Considering these results, this section provides qualitative insights into students' individual learning trajectories. The decision to conduct interviews in order to complement the quantitative analyses was based on the differences observed in their L2 writing performance over time.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out at the end of the school year with a subsample of 19 students. These learners were selected on the basis of maximum variation sampling in order to have a wide representation of instructional treatment levels and L2 writing performance. These interviews focused on the 6 dimensions in which L2 writing performance is operationalised in this investigation. The interview included a battery of 18 different questions (see Appendix D) that students were asked depending on their performance throughout the academic year (see Table 20). Out of the 18 situations, each category included three different items related to each dimension.

Table 20 shows the descriptive statistics of the performance of the 19 participants who took part in the interviewing process. Only the most relevant views will be considered for our qualitative understanding.

Table 20*Descriptive statistics of the 19 participants interviewed*

Participant	Type of Instruction	MD Content	MD Task requirement	MD Coherence & cohesion	MD Grammar	MD Vocabulary	MD Overall performance
1	TG1	3	1.5	2	0.5	0.5	1.50
2	TG2	1.9	2.6	1.5	-1.4	0	0.9
3	TG1	2.5	2.5	2	1.5	1	1.9
4	TG2	0.8	2.5	1.5	-0.9	-0.7	0.6
5	TG2	-1.1	1.5	0.1	-1.7	-1.9	-0.6
6	TG2	0	0	0	-1	-1	-0.4
7	TG1	2	2	2.5	0	-1	1.4
8	TG1	1	3	1.5	0	1	1.7
9	TG1	1.5	3.5	2	1.5	1.5	2
10	TG1	1.5	3	3	-0.5	1	1.8
11	TG2	0.5	1.8	1	-0.1	-0.6	-0.5
12	TG2	0.7	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.8
13	TG2	0.4	0.5	1	0.7	-0.2	0.5
14	TG2	0.5	0	0	0.5	0	0.1
15	TG2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	0.4
16	TG2	2	1.5	1	2	1.5	1.5
17	TG2	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8
18	TG1	2	3	1	-0.5	1	1.3
19	TG2	2	0	0.5	-0.5	-0.5	0.3

Note: TG1 (explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction); TG2 (strategy instruction)

As can be observed, with regards to the first dimension analysed, i.e., content, Participant 1 (MD = 3) and Participant 3 (MD = 2.5) outperformed the rest of learners. These two participants, who received explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction, belonged to TG1. Three participants also improved their performance considerably. These are Participant 16 (MD = 2), Participant 18 (MD = 2), and Participant 19 (MD = 2), belonging all three to TG2 (strategy instruction). In addition, Participant 6 (MD = 0) remained stable during the time this investigation took place and Participant 5 experienced a negative evolution (MD = -1.1) since the score obtained at T3 was lower than the one obtained at T1. These two learners also belonged to TG2. Despite these two individual cases, it seems that both types of instructional treatments benefit the remaining 17 students in the content dimension.

When asked about the usefulness of the teacher's methodology, a wide range of answers were obtained. Participant 1 reported that she followed the recommendations given by the teacher to develop her ideas. More specifically, she explicitly referred to some techniques such as writing and correcting essays all together in class. Thanks to that, this participant felt she had improved during the academic year because she realised what level was expected of her by both the teacher and with regards to the university entrance exams. In a similar vein, Participant 7 reflected upon the importance of looking for relevant arguments when writing. Consequently, she could comprehend the relevance of selecting the appropriate argument for providing suitable content to her writings. On the contrary, one of the most remarkable students' perspectives was the one provided by Participant 5 belonging to TG2, who did not experience any progress from the instructional treatment. This learner mentioned the difficulties he faced when pouring ideas and arguments into the writing. He stated:

Aunque veo útil hacer el brainstorming para conseguir ideas, me cuesta muchísimo sacar mis propios argumentos. Cuando trabajamos todos en clase, veo que mis compañeros tienen ideas muy variadas, pero yo siento que repito todo el rato la misma idea.

The reflection made by this student may explain the detrimental effect instruction had on his performance. The topic of the essay at T3 was more specific and complex than the previous ones. We may understand that if the topics are more complex, the student will have more difficulties coming up with the arguments despite using the strategies provided by the teacher. This provides further insights into the role that students' critical skills and literacy play when performing L2 writing.

Regarding the second dimension -task requirement-, the scenario changes since no student experienced a negative evolution. However, three students, i.e., Participants

6, 14 and 19, belonging to TG2, did not experience an improvement, thus remaining stable (MD = 0). On the contrary, as can be seen in Table 20, four participants benefited the most out of the two instructional treatments: Participant 3 (MD = 2.5) and Participant 9 (MD = 3.5) belonging to TG1, while Participant 2 (MD = 2.6) and Participant 4 (MD = 2.5) belonging to TG2.

Participant 6, who remained stable, mentioned:

Me ha costado mucho entender la estructura de las redacciones. La profesora nos ponía a trabajar en grupos y muchas veces no participaba porque me daba vergüenza hablar en inglés. Al final los mejores de la clase hacían la tarea y yo no me enteraba de nada.

Similarly, Participants 14 and 19 reported the negative attitudes towards the strategies implemented by the teacher. For example, Participant 14 stated that the activities done in class such as the dictogloss tasks in groups were very difficult and that an explicit template for each type of essay would have been more beneficial. On the other hand, it was interesting to observe that the use of templates was positively valued by participants from the other group. In fact, Participant 9 reported:

Me ha sido super útil que la profesora desde un primer momento nos diera la estructura a seguir para todos los tipos de redacciones que hemos visto este curso. Cuando tenía que hacer una redacción siempre sacaba los apuntes y seguía la misma estructura por lo que al final me la aprendí.

Some participants in TG2 seemed to progress thanks to the strategies applied. For example, Participant 2 emphasised the importance of looking carefully at the verbs given in the task wording. In his own words:

A principio de curso me resultaba muy difícil saber qué tipo de texto tenía que escribir. Sin embargo, gracias a algunos consejos de la profesora fui mejorando [...]. Por ejemplo, fijarme en los verbos de la pregunta me ayudó mucho. Si era feel, think, reckon, believe o algo parecido sabía que era un opinion essay.

As observed in students' reflections, it seems that the same strategy was beneficial for some of them but useless for others. This may indicate that other factors such as the level of proficiency or learning styles may play a role in L2 writing performance.

Moving to the third dimension, i.e., coherence and cohesion, two tendencies can be observed in Table 20: steady progress or improvement. The learners who experienced better improvement received the explicit treatment (TG1). These participants are 1 (MD = 2), 3 (MD = 2), 7 (MD = 2.5), and 10 (MD = 3). In contrast, those students who presented steady progress from T1 to T3 belonged to the other treatment group receiving strategy instruction (TG2). These participants are 6 (MD = 0) and 14 (MD = 0).

When answering the researcher's question on linking words, TG1 participants revealed that as the template offered by the teacher contained model connectors, for them it was very easy to write cohesive essays by using them. On this matter, Participant 10 explained:

Cuando tenía que poner una idea opuesta, sabía que tenía que usar however, nevertheless, on the other hand, o on the contrary. Para añadir ideas utilizaba siempre moreover, in addition, furthermore, besides y what it is more porque eran los que aparecían en el esquema que la profesora nos dio. De esta manera siempre acertaba con el uso de los conectores.

It is also noteworthy to point out that motivation played a role in L2 performance. It was Participant 6 who specially mentioned this factor when remarking that:

[...] es verdad que la profesora nos enseñaba a utilizar conectores, pero a mí me daba igual. Yo me aprendí los básicos para hacer la redacción y aprobar selectividad. Cómo no me gusta la asignatura y escribir en inglés no me esforcé más.

Hence, the impact of both instructional treatments seems to be positive as most participants improved their L2 written performance over the academic year. However, students' perceptions also indicate that their progress does not only depend on the treatment received but also on other variables such as motivation and attitudes towards the English language and the learning situation.

With regards to the grammar dimension, results differ. On the one hand, improvement is experienced by participants belonging to both groups. More specifically, three participants outperformed the rest: Participant 3 (MD = 1.5), Participant 9 (MD = 1.5), and Participant 16 (MD = 2). In the same vein, a negative evolution in performance can also be observed in both groups. However, Participant 2 (MD = -1.4), Participant 5 (MD = -1.7), and Participant 6 (MD = -1) belonging to TG2 obtained the worst results in this component.

Participants 13, 14 and 16 shared similar arguments about the use of strategies on their grammar performance. In fact, the three of them considered that the abbreviations provided by the teacher in order to enrich their essays in terms of grammatical structures were very useful. Participant 16 reported:

[...] por ejemplo la profesora nos dijo que siempre nos apuntáramos arriba del examen la palabra COPADEGECO, lo que significaba que teníamos que poner al menos un condicional, una pasiva, definiendo relative clauses, gerundios, y comparativos. Cuando acababa la redacción siempre revisaba que tenía todos esos tiempos gramaticales.

In the same way, participant 14 mentioned:

Me ayudó mucho para el orden de los adjetivos tener la palabra OPTAFOCO, así sabía que siempre iba primero el adjetivo de opinión, después tamaño, luego forma y por último el color antes de poner el sustantivo.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of the other treatment was observed in three participants of TG1 (Participants 1, 3 and 9). These learners emphasised the idea that working in each unit with a grammatical tense helped them review the main structures to be used in their essays. However, it is imperative to analyse the reasons behind the worse performance in grammar of two students under the explicit treatment. In this regard, Participant 10 stated:

Aunque la profesora ha explicado todos los tiempos gramaticales y hemos hecho un montón de ejercicios para practicar, me ha costado la vida entenderlos, ya que el año pasado con el profesor que teníamos no hicimos prácticamente nada en clase más que ver pelis y series y no nos explicaba nada de gramática, pero sí nos enviaba ejercicios y como no los entendía, no los hacía.

Students' views revealed again that other factors involved in the learning process, such as motivation or the role played by the teacher, may affect their attitudes towards the subject and consequently their L2 performance.

With regards to the vocabulary dimension, a tendency for improvement is observed in respondents belonging to TG1. Participant 3 (MD = 1), Participant 8 (MD = 1), Participant 9 (MD = 1.5), Participant 10 (MD = 1), and Participant 18 (MD = 1) did better in their third L2 written performance. Nevertheless, as in previous dimensions, some participants experienced a negative evolution in their performance, i.e., Participant

4 (MD = -0.7), Participant 5 (MD = -1.9), and Participant 6 (MD = -0.6). These students did not score higher despite receiving the strategic instruction over one year.

When analysing students' perspectives, it should be highlighted that the two students who progressed the most (Participants 9 and 16) received different treatments, which helped them improve. Regarding the explicit treatment, Participant 9 indicated that having vocabulary lists and working with specific lexical activities in each unit helped him enhance his lexical repertoire. Other strategies, such as the use of web spiders and the use of online platforms like thesaurus or word reference to look for synonyms or antonyms, were of great utility for Participant 16 in TG2. Although the vocabulary lists provided by the teacher to the TG1 group were extremely useful for some learners, others did not use them. This may explain why Participant 7 did not show any progress on this dimension. In her own words:

Aunque sabía que no tenía que usar palabras básicas como people, it or thing, al final siempre acababa usándolas porque era incapaz de aprenderme la lista que la profesora nos daba en cada tema con vocabulario específico. Esto hacía que siempre sacara una nota baja en las redacciones cuando tenía que hablar de temas que no controlaba.

These findings suggest that students' attitudes also have an important effect on this variable. For example, Participant 5 mentioned that looking for synonyms online was not useful at all because he did not write them down and consequently, he forgot these terms after a short period of time. This may demonstrate that learners' predisposition and willingness to learn may affect L2 writing performance at this stage.

Finally, the last dimension analysed, i.e., overall performance, follows a clear direction. The TG1 experienced notable progress, while the scores obtained by some participants in TG2 indicated a tendency towards performance deterioration. For example, Participant 1 (MD = 1.5), Participant 3 (MD = 1.9), Participant 8 (MD = 1.7),

Participant 10 (MD = 1.8) outperformed their own scores obtained at the beginning of the school year (T1). As for performance deterioration, Participant 5 (MD = -0.6), Participant 6 (MD = -0.4), and Participant 11 (MD = -0.5), belonging to TG2, did not benefit from the treatment received.

Explicit instruction seems to benefit all students in TG1. In this regard, participants mentioned that the template offered by the teacher was useful, as well as working in class with the process of editing and revising essays. It was highlighted that working with the different grammatical and lexical items helped them enhance their scores in these dimensions. The views offered by Participant 9 are revealing:

El primer día que la profesora me pidió hacer una redacción no sabía ni por dónde empezar. Fue un verdadero desastre. Cuando me dio la nota pensaba que jamás aprobaría inglés. Sin embargo, (name of the teacher) ha estado todo el año animándome y dándome apoyo y materiales para que mejorara. Para mí ha sido una satisfacción llegar al nivel que tengo ahora mismo. Pero no hubiera sido capaz sin su ayuda, motivación y dedicación.

Participants in TG2 were also satisfied with the teaching experience but they missed more explicit guidance while writing essays. This was specifically emphasised by those students who had a lower performance. Participant 11 mentioned:

La profesora nos ha hecho darnos cuenta de que hay una gran cantidad de recursos para mejorar las redacciones. Nos motivaba mucho para mejorar cada redacción y aunque nos ha hecho escribir muchísimo siento que me ha faltado que diera materiales más guiados para hacer las redacciones.

As has been examined, the subsample of 19 learners provides insightful comments regarding their progress, but, due to the small sample, it is extremely difficult to draw robust conclusions on which type of instructional treatment benefits learners more when dealing with L2 writing performance as it seems that a number of external variables may also play a role in this process.

Having analysed quantitative and qualitative findings, in the next section they are examined in the light of previous literature on the topic.

5.3. Discussion of findings

RQ1 addressed L2 writing development at Baccalaureate level across two groups with different instructional treatments. Previous research has shown that explicit instruction promotes students' written discourse performance by enhancing the structure, the use of linking words, and more appropriate vocabulary and grammatical forms (Grant & Ginther, 2000). On the other hand, other studies claim that by teaching different strategies, such as planning or drafting, L2 writing competence is fostered (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Cumming, 2002; Hyland, 2002). Accordingly, H1 predicted that the teaching of explicit grammar and vocabulary would positively benefit students' writing competence, whereas H2 stated that strategy instruction would be the one which would positively affect students' L2 writing performance.

Results from the inferential analyses showed that in overall writing proficiency: 1) both groups improved their writing competence regardless of their instructional treatment; 2) TG1, i.e., the group receiving explicit treatment, benefited more from the treatment received; and 3) both groups showed more progress in the third term. These results were complemented with qualitative insights about the learning experience and the motives behind their L2 writing experiences.

As discussed in Section 5.1, the two hypotheses deriving from RQ1 are confirmed, since findings presented significant differences in students' writing performance

throughout the academic year. Moreover, comparisons on overall performance across time and group revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the group receiving the explicit treatment and the one receiving strategy treatment. The current study complements existing studies on L2 writing competence with regards to explicit instruction (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000) and strategy instruction (e.g., Cumming, 2002; Hyland, 2002; Sengupta, 2000; Olson & Land, 2007) within the academic context of 2nd year Baccalaureate level in Spain.

As the present research operationalises L2 writing competence under 5 dimensions, the discussion is going to be focused on each of these categories.

Regarding the first dimension, i.e., content, findings conclude that both instructional groups improved their performance across time, being TG1 the one that benefited slightly more. Statistically significant differences were found at the end of the school year in favour of both groups. In an attempt to provide an explanation of these findings, it is key to emphasise the strategies used in the strategy group and the content provided in the explicit group. As for the group receiving strategy instruction, students were asked to brainstorm together and to set the main arguments of the writings before starting to write in order to determine the content of each essay. In addition, learners were given feedback on the arguments suggested to know if the number of information units were consistent and relevant to the topic of the essay. Thus, students' predisposition to write was higher since they already knew the arguments they would develop were accurate. In a similar vein, the effectiveness of the explicit treatment may be explained by taking two main features into consideration. First of all, from the very beginning, learners were given real opinion essays which had been previously developed by the teacher with suitable and appropriate arguments and topic sentences. In this regard, learners realised how to develop precise and detailed ideas according to the topic they were working on. The second factor that may have enhanced this learning process is the guidance provided by the teacher before each essay. A clear example was selecting

the arguments together after justifying the importance of each one. As revealed in the semi-structured interviews, students felt more confident if they chose the appropriate arguments in advance and as a group. The tendency towards improvement shown by the two groups confirms the effectiveness of both instructional treatments regarding the content dimension.

With respect to the second dimension, i.e., task requirement, the positive evolution of both groups may be justified by a wide range of factors. As in the previous dimension, statistically significant differences were found at each group from the beginning to the end of the academic year; hence showing that such improvement was greater in the second term. The assignment types that students faced were given a score of 0 if the topic or requirements of the task were not the expected ones. For this reason, learners were afraid of failing the requirements of each assignment and paid special attention to this dimension because of the pressure of not meeting the task requirements. Once they were familiarised with this dimension and the grading system, they did not have that pressure, so the progress was not too relevant. Some factors can be attributed to the increased performance of both groups in this category. Two different techniques were used by the strategic group to deal with the variable of length and genre. First, students were encouraged not to count word by word but to offer an estimation of 10 words per line so as not to waste time and focus on other variables such as content. The second one was to discriminate between genres based on the verbs given in the question statement. Just by highlighting the main verb given in the statement, students could distinguish from the type of text they were asked to write. These results are in line with Hassan et al. (2005), who claimed that strategy instruction is defined as “any intervention which focuses on the strategies to be regularly adopted and used by language learners to develop their proficiency, to improve particular task performance, or both” (p. 1). As for the other instructional treatment, learners followed the explicit templates designed by the teacher at the beginning of the academic year. Students in this group learned that if the personal pronoun *you* appeared in the question statement, this

was an unequivocal sign of an opinion essay. Therefore, they had to follow the opinion essay template. Otherwise, they focused on the other templates following the recommendations given by the teacher. The usefulness of these templates was made explicit by some participants in the interviews. In fact, they claimed that once they had identified the genre of the text, they simply employed the corresponding template and followed it in detail.

Findings in the third dimension, coherence and cohesion, revealed that students in both groups seem to benefit from the treatment received, either instructional or strategic. In fact, significant differences were observed by the explicit and strategy groups during the academic year. Despite these learning trajectories, it was the explicit group who progressed the most. Another important aspect is that the explicit group improved much more in the third term. A factor that may account for this improvement in performance by TG1 is that they were provided with different discourse markers to connect the ideas to get meaningful texts. For example, at the beginning of the academic year, in units 1 and 2 of the students' textbook, learners were given a list of basic connectors of addition and contrast. This list was expanded in the rest of the units. At the end of the school year, participants had a long list of linking words belonging to six categories, i.e., addition, contrast, emphasis, illustration, order, and summary. In this respect, these outcomes reinforce previous research on the short-term effects of explicit instruction on L2 writing performance (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Grant & Ginther, 2000). In addition, the present study proposes the tentative hypothesis that the explicit instruction has benefits in the long term too. However, the long-term effect is not observable in the strategic group. Despite this progression, the effects are steady throughout the academic year as the mean differences obtained in the second (MD = 0.36) and third term (MD = 0.37) are extremely similar. In contrast to the other group, learners receiving the strategic treatment were given different tools and followed some strategies from the very beginning of the academic year. For instance, these students decided when to apply the techniques given by the teacher. In this regard, one strategy

was to create spider webs in order to know how to use discourse markers to connect arguments and ideas. At the beginning of the academic year, the teacher collected the writings along with these diagrams, but she did not towards the end of the academic year. Those participants who were motivated and focused on obtaining a higher score continued doing it, while the rest just started pouring ideas into the text. This highlights the role played by other factors. As a consequence, it is challenging to claim the benefits of strategy instruction in the long-term as other variables such as motivation may be involved. As a matter of fact, some participants in the interviewing process also reported that they did not put an effort into applying the strategies learned because they were not motivated, and they only focused on passing the course and the university entrance exam.

The following dimension, i.e., grammar, evidences the fact that opting for different teaching practices may have a positive or negative impact on our students' L2 writing outcomes. For the first time in this analysis, we can observe a negative evolution in students' performance: participants receiving the strategic treatment did not progress on the grammar dimension, keeping a constant score. This situation can be explained by the fact that strategy instruction does not focus on the teaching of grammar per se, i.e., participants learn how to use different verb tenses or more complex grammatical structures implicitly. These conclusions are similar to Sasaki's (2000), who provided strategic instruction for 6 months and found that participants did not become better or more fluent in L2 writing after this period. For this reason, we may outline that strategic instruction does not seem to be beneficial for some dimensions when it comes to developing L2 writing competence. On the other hand, some studies proved that the explicit treatment improves learner's ability to get into grammar while writing (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000). The present study reports similar findings on the association between explicit instruction and the grammar category, as students significantly improved the structures and tenses used in their essays during one academic year. As with the

coherence and cohesion dimension, learners were explained a different grammatical structure in each unit. In class, the teacher explained the structure and then learners completed a series of drills to practice it. The importance of doing exercises to reflect upon the use of the grammatical aspects given was stated by some students in the interviews. Specifically, they claimed that although sometimes the grammatical structure was difficult, thanks to the continuous practice, their essays improved to a great extent. After that, they had to portray the aspect learned in their writings. In this regard, at the end of the academic year, they had covered present, past, future, conditional and passive tenses, modal verbs, defining and non-defining relative clauses, and reported speech.

Finally, concerning the last dimension, i.e., vocabulary, both groups performed better at the end of the school year. However, in terms of significance, it can be claimed that while only significant results were found in T2 in the case of the group receiving strategy instruction, relevant differences were found in the group receiving the explicit treatment in all data collections. A possible explanation of such progress lies in the methodology and the corresponding activities offered by the drills. As with other variables, each unit focused on a number of lexical items related to a different topic, such as new technologies, the environment, travelling, shopping, education, and employment. Learners were given a vocabulary bank in each unit, and then, a series of activities to work on these items were presented. In the end, the topic of the essay in each unit was related to the vocabulary given and learners had to apply the concepts learned during the unit. As in previous studies (e.g., Grant & Ginther, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000), it seems that explicit vocabulary instruction helps learners use more sophisticated terms, thus improving the quality in their essays. On the contrary, the strategy group followed two crucial paths. First, there was worsening in learner's scores regarding vocabulary from the beginning of the academic year to the second term (MD = -0.28). It is between these two periods when a specific strategy was applied: concept cube. The teacher used this strategy to employ word parts. Students received a piece of paper divided into 6 equal squares. On each part, they were asked to write the following: the vocabulary word, one

antonym, one synonym, the category it belongs to, essential characteristics, and an example. At the end of the second term, the teacher observed a decrease in learners' vocabulary scores. It was then decided to change the strategy used to broaden students' lexical repertoire. The new strategy was the self-creation of vocabulary banks related to several topics. Thus, each student created his/her own list which he/she felt comfortable with, depending on the learners' proficiency level. On checking the three data collections, improvement was observed at T3, suggesting that not all strategies may enhance vocabulary learning. In this regard, the use of an appropriate strategy may indicate an improvement in L2 writing as learners feel able to choose suitable lexical items to express their views. This is in line with results obtained by Cumming (2001).

After having discussed each dimension in relation to the instructional treatment, we can conclude that both H1 and H2 are supported. Consequently, the teaching of both explicit grammar and vocabulary, and strategy instruction have shown to benefit L2 writing performance. These results reinforce previous research in this field (e.g., Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; De Silva, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000; Tsang & Wong, 2000). Therefore, it cannot be ascertained what type of instruction benefits the most, as both instructional treatments seem to be effective for the dimensions under analysis. For this reason, a tentative hypothesis would be that the combination of both instructional treatments could be more beneficial for the development of L2 writing. This concern has previously been raised by several scholars who claimed that explicit and strategic teaching are more effective when taught together (Hyland, 2002; Myles, 2002; Yeh, 1998). By integrating strategies into explicit instruction, L2 writers get the necessary abilities to write. This issue was also raised by some participants in the present study during the interviewing process. Taking the strategy group as reference, some learners were really satisfied with the teaching experience, but they would have desired more explicit guidance in order to approach the writing process in a more effective way. For all these reasons, it would be thought-inspiring to conduct further research on this matter.

5.4. Chapter summary

RQ1 explored what type of instructional treatment, i.e., explicit or strategy instruction, benefited L2 writing performance more at Baccalaureate level in Spain over one academic year. Both quantitative and qualitative results from the study showed that students improved their L2 writing competence during the academic year regardless of the type of instruction received. In this regard, both H1 and H2 were confirmed.

As we are interested in knowing how L2 writing proficiency is influenced by level of proficiency in English, the next chapter explores this aspect, which is related to RQ2.

CHAPTER



Results and discussion related to RQ 2

After having examined in Chapter 5 the role that the instructional treatment plays in L2 writing competence, Chapter 6 shows findings with regards to the influence exerted by language proficiency. A vast number of investigations have shown the positive effect of students' proficiency level and writing competence (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009). However, some studies suggest the opposite (e.g., Schoonen et al., 2003). In this regard, further research is required to analyse the impact of proficiency on L2 writing competence. What is more, to the best of our knowledge, no investigation has examined the role of proficiency on L2 writing development in 2nd year Baccalaureate students in Spain. In order to address this issue and contribute to this field of research, Chapter 6 displays the findings of our second research question and its hypothesis:

RQ2: Does the initial level of proficiency in English influence overall L2 writing competence?

- **H3:** Learners' proficiency level in English will have a significant influence on their FL writing proficiency (Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009).

Data from both the opinion essays and the results obtained in participants' QPT are used in Section 6.1 to provide quantitative insights of English proficiency and L2 writing competence. Next, Section 6.2 exhibits qualitative information obtained from the semi-structured interviews to offer motives behind the participants' trajectories. Finally, Section 6.3 offers the discussion of findings.

6.1. Quantitative results

Table 21 provides a descriptive analysis of L2 writing development with regards to participants' level of English proficiency. For this examination, the variable of English proficiency was coded into 6 elements according to the results obtained by learners in the QPT: A1 (0-17 points), A2 (18-29 points), B1 (30-39 points), B2 (40-47 points), C1 (48-54 points), and C2 (55-60 points). Considering that three of these categories, A1 ($n = 3$, 2.03%), C1 ($n = 11$, 7.43%), and C2 ($n = 3$, 2.03%) were poorly represented, it was decided to fuse A1 and A2 into A group ($n = 38$, 25.68%) and C1 and C2 into C group ($n = 14$, 9.46%). Afterwards, it was determined to consider categories A, B1 and B2 as they accounted for almost 90% of the total sample. In this regard, learners belonging to category C were discarded from the investigation as their sample was not representative enough. This way, the final sample comprised 134 learners, classified into A group ($n = 38$), B1 group ($n = 63$), and B2 group ($n = 33$). Then, Levene's test was employed for the 6 variables in order to assess the quality of variances. Homoscedasticity ($p > .05$) was confirmed for every single dimension at every single point in time (i.e., T1, T2, and T3), thus accepting the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across all the groups (A, B1, and B2). In addition, a moderate variation was found in all dimensions, which was indicated by the low standard deviations.

Table 21*L2 writing and participants' English proficiency*

		English Proficiency	Mean	SD
Content	T1	A	1.99	0.792
		B1	2.49	0.750
		B2	3.24	0.651
	T2	A	2.02	0.845
		B1	2.78	1.018
		B2	3.33	0.826
	T3	A	3.01	0.889
		B1	3.55	0.642
		B2	3.84	0.318
Task Requirement	T1	A	2.33	0.888
		B1	2.58	0.922
		B2	3.34	0.779
	T2	A	3.14	0.743
		B1	3.48	0.574
		B2	3.66	0.462
	T3	A	3.59	0.635
		B1	3.75	0.522
		B2	3.90	0.232
Coherence and Cohesion	T1	A	1.91	0.616
		B1	2.44	0.710
		B2	3.30	0.466
	T2	A	2.26	0.554
		B1	2.94	0.746
		B2	3.28	0.612
	T3	A	2.92	0.712
		B1	3.50	0.605
		B2	3.78	0.375
Grammar	T1	A	1.25	0.682
		B1	1.92	0.818
		B2	2.71	0.682
	T2	A	1.00	0.797
		B1	2.03	0.991
		B2	2.78	0.820
	T3	A	1.27	0.905
		B1	2.15	0.869
		B2	2.98	0.870
Vocabulary	T1	A	1.23	0.638
		B1	1.97	0.792
		B2	2.85	0.595
	T2	A	1.19	0.758
		B1	1.89	0.963
		B2	2.90	0.689
	T3	A	1.31	0.873
		B1	2.73	4.244
		B2	3.21	0.685
Overall performance (sum)	T1	A	1.72	0.425
		B1	2.27	0.628
		B2	3.09	0.477
	T2	A	1.92	0.539
		B1	2.63	0.673
		B2	3.19	0.527
	T3	A	2.42	0.615
		B1	3.04	0.543
		B2	3.54	0.350

6.1.1. L2 writing and English proficiency over time

This section focuses on H3, which establishes that learners' proficiency level in English will have a significant influence over their L2 writing competence.

A series of unpaired-samples t-tests were calculated for each category and for the overall performance to establish the difference in students' performance means, and effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d, as illustrated in Table 22.

Table 22

Groups A and B1 means and differences in L2 writing at T1

	A			B1			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	1.99	0.792	63	2.49	0.750	0.50	-3.276**
Task requirement	38	2.33	0.888	63	2.58	0.922	0.25	-1.326
Coherence and cohesion	38	1.91	0.616	63	2.44	0.710	0.53	-3.835**
Grammar	38	1.25	0.682	63	1.92	0.818	0.67	-4.252**
Vocabulary	38	1.23	0.638	63	1.97	0.792	0.74	-4.897**
Overall performance	38	1.72	0.425	63	2.27	0.628	0.55	-4.766**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B1 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples *t*-test)

The contrast in L2 writing performance between Groups A and B1 was statistically significant in favour of Group B1 in 5 categories: content [$t(101) = -3.276$, $p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(101) = -3.835$, $p < .001$], grammar [$t(101) = -4.252$, $p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(101) = -4.897$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(101) = -4.766$, $p < .001$]. These findings suggest that participants' initial level of English proficiency is a variable which influences L2 writing performance.

In Table 23, we observe the number of participants, performance means, standard deviations, and differences for every single category in Groups A and B2 at T1.

Table 23*Groups A and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T1*

	A			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	1.99	0.792	33	3.24	0.651	1.25	-7.663**
Task requirement	38	2.33	0.888	33	3.34	0.779	1.01	-5.050**
Coherence and cohesion	38	1.91	0.616	33	3.30	0.466	1.39	-10.568**
Grammar	38	1.25	0.682	33	2.71	0.682	1.46	-9.027**
Vocabulary	38	1.23	0.638	33	2.85	0.595	1.62	-11.014**
Overall performance	38	1.72	0.425	33	3.09	0.477	1.37	-12.782**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B2 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The difference in L2 writing achievement between Groups A and B2 was statistically significant in favour of Group B2 in 6 categories: content [$t(71) = -7.663$, $p < .001$], task requirement [$t(71) = -5.050$, $p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(71) = -10.568$, $p < .001$], grammar [$t(71) = -9.027$, $p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(71) = -11.014$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(71) = -12.782$, $p < .001$]. These findings indicate that learners' initial level of English proficiency is a factor which affects L2 writing performance. Finally, the same analysis was carried out for Groups B1 and B2 at T1 (see Table 24).

Table 24*Groups B1 and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T1*

	B1			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	63	2.49	0.750	33	3.24	0.651	0.75	-4.863**
Task requirement	63	2.58	0.922	33	3.34	0.779	0.76	-4.044**
Coherence and cohesion	63	2.44	0.710	33	3.30	0.466	0.86	-6.226**
Grammar	63	1.92	0.818	33	2.71	0.682	0.79	-4.763**
Vocabulary	63	1.97	0.792	33	2.85	0.595	0.88	-5.599**
Overall performance	63	2.27	0.628	33	3.09	0.477	0.82	-6.564**

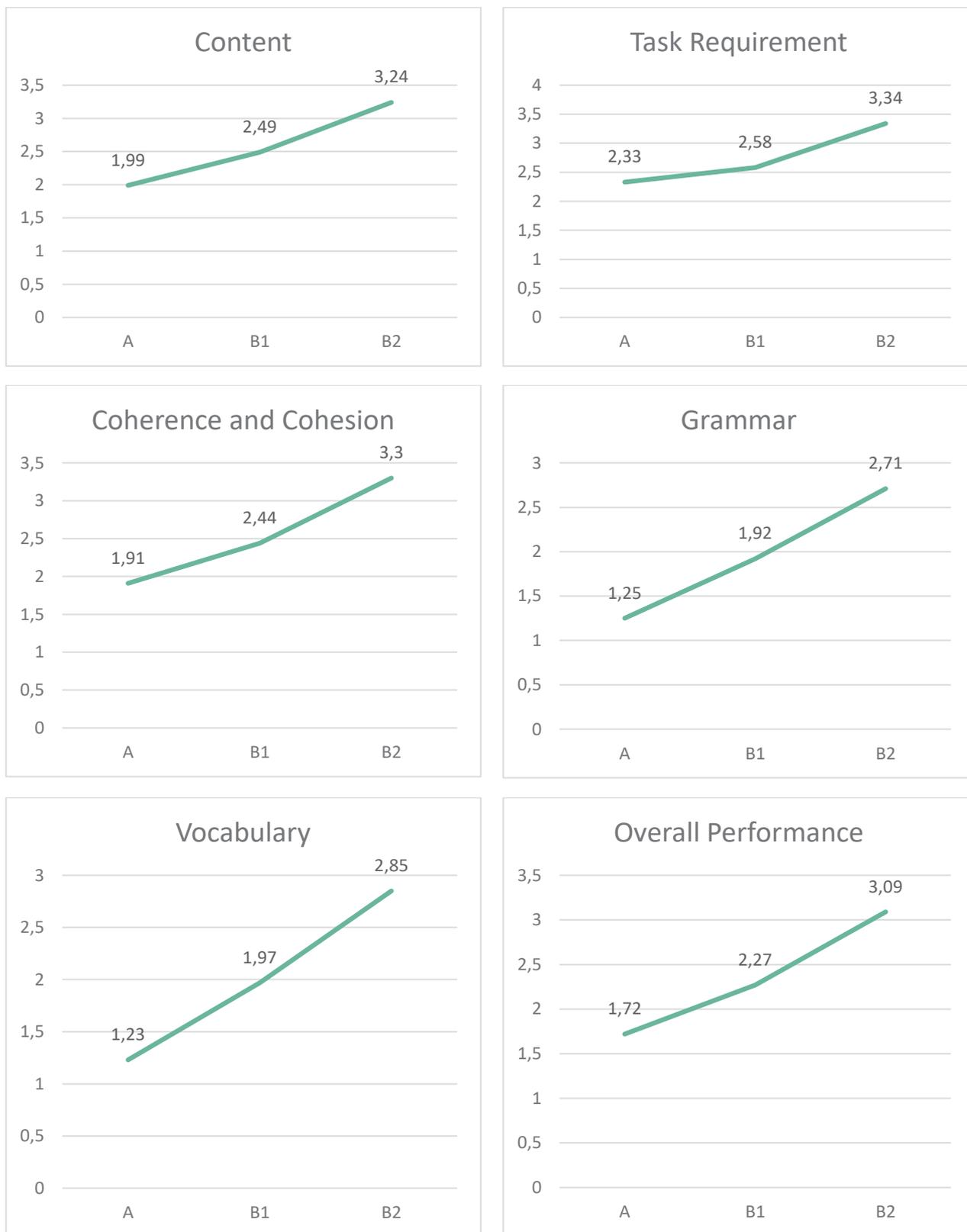
Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

There were statistically significant results in L2 writing performance between Groups B1 and B2 in favour of the latter in all categories: content [$t(96) = -4.863, p < .001$], task requirement [$t(96) = -4.044, p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(96) = -6.226, p < .001$], grammar [$t(96) = -4.763, p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(96) = -5.599, p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(96) = -6.564, p < .001$]. Again, these figures suggest that students' initial level of English proficiency is a variable which influences L2 writing performance.

In addition, a test of correlation between learners' L2 writing achievement and proficiency level was conducted. Findings show positive correlations between content [$r(134) = .535, p = .000$], task requirement [$r(134) = .379, p = .000$], coherence and cohesion [$r(136) = .622, p = .000$], grammar [$r(134) = .582, p = .000$], vocabulary [$r(134) = .644, p = .000$], and overall performance [$r(134) = .675, p = .000$]. These results indicate that students who presented a higher level of proficiency (B2) were inclined to perform in all dimensions better, and vice versa. Figure 25 depicts the findings between participants' achievement and their proficiency level regarding each of the six dimensions analysed at T1.

Figure 25

Average scores for L2 writing performance at T1



In Figure 25, it is possible to observe that the dimension in which all groups of participants performed higher was task requirement (group A: $M = 2.33$; group B1: $M = 2.58$; and group B2: $M = 3.34$). However, all the groups scored the lowest in grammar (group A: $M = 1.25$; group B1: $M = 1.92$; and group B2: $M = 2.71$) and vocabulary (group A: $M = 1.23$; group B1: $M = 1.97$; and group B2: $M = 2.85$). These findings illustrate that proficiency helps learners deal with the task requirements better. However, it seems that it does not enhance grammar and vocabulary to such a great extent.

After having analysed results at T1, findings will be presented for T2. Table 25 shows the number of participants, performance means, standard deviations, and differences for every single category in A and B1 groups at T2.

Table 25

A and B1 means and differences in L2 writing at T2

	A			B1			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	2.02	0.845	63	2.78	1.018	0.76	-3.860**
Task requirement	38	3.14	0.743	63	3.48	0.574	0.34	-2.570
Coherence and cohesion	38	2.26	0.554	63	2.94	0.746	0.68	-4.870**
Grammar	38	1.00	0.797	63	2.03	0.991	1.03	-5.439**
Vocabulary	38	1.19	0.758	63	1.89	0.963	0.70	-3.816**
Overall performance	38	1.92	0.539	63	2.63	0.673	0.71	-5.466**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B1 groups. * $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The contrast in L2 writing performance between A and B1 groups was statistically significant in favour of the B1 group in 5 categories: content [$t(101) = -3.860, p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(101) = -4.870, p < .001$], grammar [$t(101) = -5.439, p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(101) = -3.816, p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(101) = -5.466, p < .001$]. These results suggest that L2 writing performance may be influenced by participants' initial level of English proficiency.

In Table 26, the number of participants, performance means, standard deviations, and differences for every single category in A and B2 groups in T2 are illustrated.

Table 26

A and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T2

	A			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	2.02	0.845	33	3.33	0.826	1.31	-6.565**
Task requirement	38	3.14	0.743	33	3.66	0.462	0.52	-3.488**
Coherence and cohesion	38	2.26	0.554	33	3.28	0.612	1.02	-7.398**
Grammar	38	1.00	0.797	33	2.78	0.820	1.78	-9.303**
Vocabulary	38	1.19	0.758	33	2.90	0.689	1.71	-9.891**
Overall performance	38	1.92	0.539	33	3.19	0.527	1.27	-9.998**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B2 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The disparity in L2 writing performance between A and B2 groups was statistically significant in favour of the B2 group in 6 categories: content [$t(71) = -6.565$, $p < .001$], task requirement [$t(71) = -3.488$, $p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(71) = -7.398$, $p < .001$], grammar [$t(71) = -9.303$, $p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(71) = -9.891$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(71) = -9.998$, $p < .001$]. These findings illustrate that proficiency level is a factor influencing learners' L2 writing performance.

Finally, the same figures were obtained for B1 and B2 groups in T2 (see Table 27).

Table 27*B1 and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T2*

	B1			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	63	2.78	1.018	33	3.33	0.826	0.55	-2.611
Task requirement	63	3.48	0.574	33	3.66	0.462	0.18	-1.576
Coherence and cohesion	63	2.94	0.746	33	3.28	0.612	0.34	-2.271
Grammar	63	2.03	0.991	33	2.78	0.820	0.75	-3.757**
Vocabulary	63	1.89	0.963	33	2.90	0.689	1.01	-5.353**
Overall performance	63	2.63	0.673	33	3.19	0.527	0.56	-4.202**

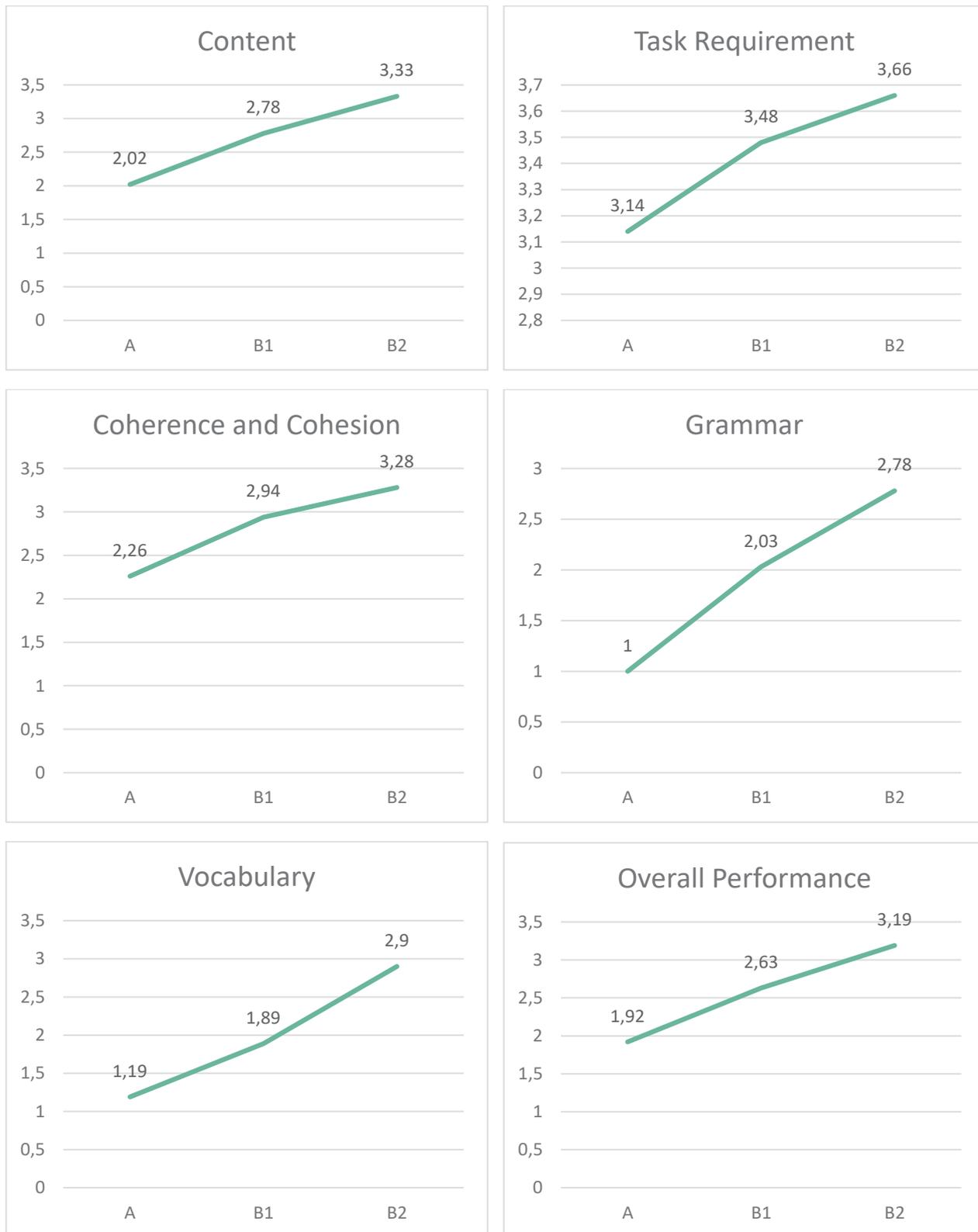
Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The variation in L2 writing performance between B1 and B2 groups was statistically significant in favour of the B2 group in 3 categories: grammar [$t(96) = -3.757$, $p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(96) = -5.353$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(96) = -4.202$, $p < .001$]. These findings may indicate that participants' initial English proficiency level is a variable which influences some dimensions of L2 writing performance.

Additionally, a correlation test between students' L2 writing achievement and level of proficiency was conducted. Findings demonstrate positive correlations between the level of proficiency and content [$r(134) = .461$, $p = .000$], task requirement [$r(134) = .305$, $p = .000$], coherence and cohesion [$r(134) = .494$, $p = .000$], grammar [$r(134) = .591$, $p = .000$], vocabulary [$r(134) = .592$, $p = .000$], and overall performance [$r(134) = .612$, $p = .000$], suggesting that advanced learners perform in all the dimensions in which L2 writing has been operationalised at this investigation better and vice versa. Figure 26 depicts the findings about the comparison between participants' performance and their English proficiency in each of the categories analysed at T2.

Figure 26

Average scores for L2 writing performance at T2



In Figure 26, we can observe that the dimension in which all groups of participants performed higher was task requirement (group A: $M = 3.14$; group B1: $M = 3.48$; and group B2: $M = 3.66$). However, all the groups scored the lowest in the grammar dimension (group A: $M = 1.00$; group B1: $M = 2.03$; and group B2: $M = 2.78$) and vocabulary dimension (group A: $M = 1.19$; group B1: $M = 1.89$; and group B2: $M = 2.90$). These findings suggest that proficiency helps learners perform task requirements better. Nevertheless, it seems that it does not enhance grammar and vocabulary to such a great extent.

Finally, after having analysed participants' performance at T2, we turn to examine T3. Table 28 shows the number of participants, performance means, standard deviations, and differences for every single category in A and B1 groups at T3.

Table 28

A and B1 means and differences in L2 writing at T3

	A			B1			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	3.01	0.889	63	3.55	0.642	0.54	-3.549**
Task requirement	38	3.59	0.635	63	3.75	0.522	0.16	-1.389
Coherence and cohesion	38	2.92	0.712	63	3.50	0.605	0.58	-4.413**
Grammar	38	1.27	0.905	63	2.15	0.869	0.88	-4.822**
Vocabulary	38	1.31	0.873	63	2.73	4.244	1.42	-2.025
Overall performance	38	2.42	0.615	63	3.04	0.543	0.62	-5.272**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B1 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The difference in L2 writing performance between A and B1 groups was statistically relevant in favour of the B1 group in 4 categories: content [$t(101) = -3.549$, $p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(101) = -4.413$, $p < .001$], grammar [$t(101) = -4.822$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(101) = -5.272$, $p < .001$]. These findings indicate that respondents' initial level of English proficiency is a variable which influences some dimensions of L2 writing performance.

Table 29 depicts the number of participants, performance means, standard deviations, and differences for every single category in A and B2 groups in T3.

Table 29

A and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T3

	A			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	38	3.01	0.889	33	3.84	0.318	0.83	-5.116**
Task requirement	38	3.59	0.635	33	3.90	0.232	0.31	-2.712
Coherence and cohesion	38	2.92	0.712	33	3.78	0.375	0.86	-6.272**
Grammar	38	1.27	0.905	33	2.98	0.870	1.71	-8.072**
Vocabulary	38	1.31	0.873	33	3.21	0.685	1.90	-10.069**
Overall performance	38	2.42	0.615	33	3.54	0.350	1.12	-9.248**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between A and B2 groups.
* $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The contrast in L2 writing achievement between A and B2 groups was statistically relevant in favour of the B2 group in 5 categories: content [$t(71) = -5.116$, $p < .001$], coherence and cohesion [$t(71) = -6.272$, $p < .001$], grammar [$t(71) = -8.072$, $p < .001$], vocabulary [$t(71) = -10.069$, $p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(71) = -9.248$, $p < .001$]. These findings may indicate that participants' initial English proficiency level is a variable which influences L2 writing performance.

Finally, the same figures were obtained for B1 and B2 groups at T3 (see Table 30).

Table 30*B1 and B2 means and differences in L2 writing at T3*

	B1			B2			Difference	t
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD		
Content	63	3.55	0.642	33	3.84	0.318	0.29	-2.463
Task requirement	63	3.75	0.522	33	3.90	0.232	0.15	-1.620
Coherence and cohesion	63	3.50	0.605	33	3.78	0.375	0.28	-2.419
Grammar	63	2.15	0.869	33	2.98	0.870	0.83	-4.464**
Vocabulary	63	2.73	4.244	33	3.21	0.685	0.48	-0.646
Overall performance	63	3.04	0.543	33	3.54	0.350	0.50	-4.812**

Note: the values for the difference column are the changes in performance between B1 and B2 groups.
 * $p < .005$, ** $p < .001$ (unpaired-samples t -test)

The variation in L2 writing achievement between B1 and B2 groups was statistically significant in favour of the B2 group in 2 categories: grammar [$t(96) = -4.464, p < .001$], and overall performance [$t(96) = -4.812, p < .001$]. These findings suggest that participants' initial level of English proficiency is a variable which seems to influence L2 writing performance.

Moreover, a correlation test between learners' L2 writing achievement and level of proficiency was conducted. Findings show positive correlations between level of proficiency and content [$r(134) = .421, p = .000$], task requirement [$r(134) = .224, p = .009$], coherence and cohesion [$r(134) = .475, p = .000$], grammar [$r(134) = .581, p = .000$], vocabulary [$r(134) = .231, p = .007$], and overall performance [$r(134) = .618, p = .000$], suggesting that advanced learners perform in all the dimensions in which L2 writing is operationalised better and vice versa. Figure 27 depicts the findings about the contrast between participants' achievement and their proficiency level regarding all the dimensions analysed at T3.

Figure 27

Average scores for L2 writing performance at T3



In Figure 27, a similar scenario as in T1 and T2 can be found. The dimension in which all groups of participants performed higher was task requirement (group A: M =3.59; group B1: M = 3.75; and group B2: M = 3.90), while it was in the grammar dimension (group A: M =1.27; group B1: M = 2.15; and group B2: M = 2.98) and vocabulary dimension (group A: M =1.31; group B1: M = 2.73; and group B2: M = 3.21) where all the groups scored the lowest. These findings may suggest that proficiency helps learners improve the task requirement better, but it does not enhance grammatical or lexical aspects to a great extent.

Figures 28 and 29 show how each proficiency group changed in L2 writing over time to have an overview on the impact played by proficiency on students' L2 writing achievement across the school year.

Figure 28

Participants' L2 writing development over time by proficiency group

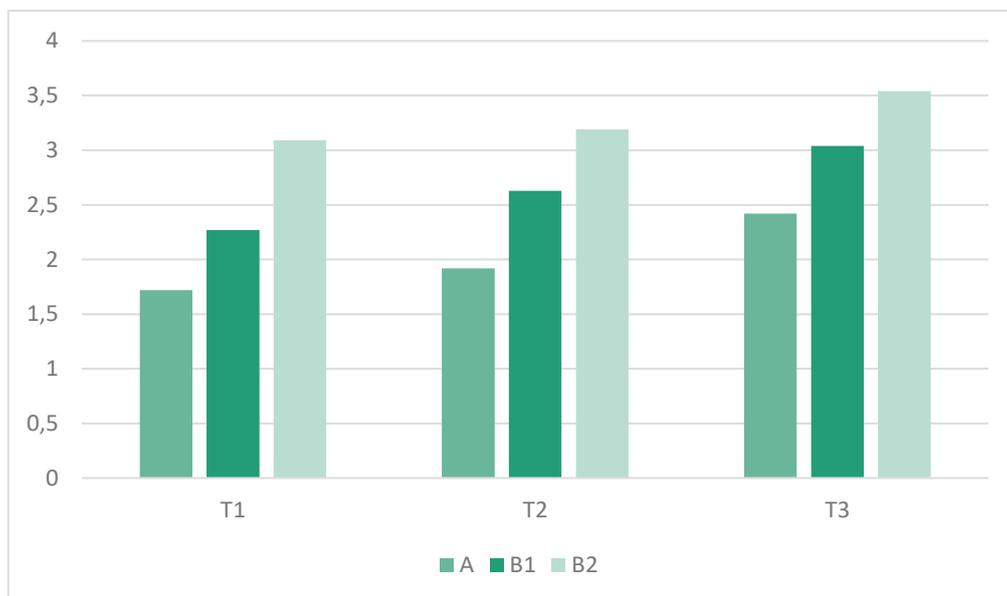


As shown in Figure 28, participants increased their scores in every single dimension from T1 to T3. Even though the results attained at T3 were better than the ones attained at T1 and T2, significant differences can only be found at the beginning of

the school year (T1) in every single dimension in favour of the most proficient groups of learners. Despite these findings, regarding overall performance, significant differences were identified for each group at every single point in time analysed. Moreover, positive correlations existed among all the categories and L2 writing development. In addition, more proficient students (B2 group) seem to get better results throughout the school year. This trend can be observed in Figure 29, which depicts the participants' overall achievement by proficiency group in the three periods examined, i.e., T1, T2 and T3.

Figure 29

Learners' overall performance over time by proficiency group



To sum up, the findings previously presented support H3 of the study, which anticipated that learners' proficiency level in English would have a significant impact on their L2 writing proficiency measured in terms of content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, and overall performance.

The following section offers qualitative information and learners' perceptions to further analyse the findings reported in Section 6.1.

6.2. Qualitative results

In Section 6.1 we argued that students' proficiency level in English seems to have a significant influence on L2 writing competence, and this section offers qualitative information to provide a further perspective on the quantitative results related to RQ2. In order to do so, we examined the views of the 19 informants who accepted to participate in the interviewing process at the end of the school year. This information helped to have a better understanding of the results obtained in the previous section.

Table 31 includes descriptive data about the 19 respondents' L2 writing performance and proficiency level over an academic year.

Table 31

Descriptive data of the subset

Subject	Type of treatment	Proficiency level T1	Proficiency level T3	T1 overall L2 writing scores	T2 overall L2 writing scores	T3 overall L2 writing scores	Overall gains
1	TG1	A	B1	1.40	2.20	2.90	37.5%
2	TG2	A	A	1.30	1.10	2.20	22.5%
3	TG1	A	B1	1.30	2.20	3.20	47.5%
4	TG2	A	A	1.50	1.30	2.10	15%
5	TG2	A	A	2.20	1.80	1.60	-15%
6	TG2	A	A	1.80	1.20	1.40	-10%
7	TG1	B1	B1	1.40	2.10	2.80	35%
8	TG1	B1	B1	1.80	2.80	3.40	40%
9	TG1	B1	B1	0.50	1.70	2.50	50%
10	TG1	B1	B1	1.20	3.00	3.00	45%
11	TG2	B1	B1	2.30	2.80	2.80	12.5%
12	TG2	B1	B2	2.40	3.60	3.30	22.5%
13	TG2	B2	C1	3.10	3.70	3.60	12.5%
14	TG2	B2	C1	3.90	3.60	4.00	2.5%
15	TG2	B2	C1	3.80	3.30	3.90	2.5%
16	TG2	B2	C1	2.30	3.60	4.00	42.5%
17	TG2	B2	C1	3.20	3.40	3.80	15%
18	TG1	B2	C1	2.40	3.30	3.70	32.5%
19	TG2	B2	B2	3.10	2.90	3.40	7.5%

As can be observed in Table 31, the informants were selected following maximum variation sampling to have a broad picture of proficiency levels and L2 writing achievement. With regards to overall L2 writing scores at T1, the highest scores were obtained by participants 14 (M = 3.90), 15 (M = 3.80), 17 (M = 3.20), 13 (M = 3.10) and 19 (M = 3.10), who belonged to the B2 proficiency level. As for the lowest scores, they were obtained by participants 9 (M = 0.50), 10 (M = 1.20), 2 (M = 1.30), 3 (M = 1.30), 7 (M = 1.40) and 1 (M = 1.40), who belonged to the A and B1 levels.

Moving on to T2, the highest score (M = 3.70) belongs to participant 13, followed by participants 12 (M = 3.60), 14 (M = 3.60), and 16 (M = 3.60). On the other hand, the lowest scores belong to participants 2 (M = 1.10), 6 (M = 1.20), 4 (M = 1.30), 9 (M = 1.70), and 5 (M = 1.80), who obtained less than 2 points in the writing task.

At the end of the school year (i.e., T3), we can see that there are both positive and negative evolutions on students' overall gains. On the one hand, Participant 9 gained 50% moving from 0.50 at T1 to 2.50 at T3. The second highest evolution belonged to participant 3 evolving 47.50% from the T1 score which was 1.30 to 3.20 at T3. On the contrary, two participants experienced a negative evolution. Student 5 obtained -15%, moving from 2.20 in T1 to 1.60 in T3, and student 6 had -10% overall gain moving from 1.80 to 1.40.

For a better understanding of the progress experienced by these participants, their answers in the interviewing process were examined. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the semi-structured interview focused on 6 different aspects, i.e., likes and dislikes about the subject, likes and dislikes about writing in English, difficulty when expressing thoughts in a foreign language, strategies applied while writing in English, and external aid during the academic year (see Appendix E). Regarding the first section (likes about the subject), Participants 5 and 6 reported negative predispositions towards the English subject, whereas the rest of informants claimed enjoying the English lessons and subject. In fact, Participants 9 and 3 revealed strong positive feelings towards the subject and the language. This may have been an important factor influencing L2 writing performance

since those students who performed the lowest stated not feeling comfortable with the subject. According to Participant 5, *“No me gusta nada el inglés, me cuesta mucho seguir las clases ya que tengo dificultades al entender el idioma. Siempre me ha costado mucho aprobar”*. As can be seen, the interviews also revealed interesting insights into the difficulty of the lessons. Similarly, Participant 6 mentioned, *“No me gusta nada escribir y mucho menos en inglés. Lo que más me ha costado ha sido expresar mi opinión y buscar argumentos. Además, creo que no he mejorado mucho durante el curso”*. On the contrary, Participant 9 claimed to have enjoyed the lessons and consequently having improved his ability in L2 writing.

Another aspect that seems to have affected learners' performance was the language barrier. Participants 14, 15 and 19 agreed that even though they liked the subject and writing in English, not having the necessary knowledge and skills in the language was an impediment for them to obtain a higher score. For example, Participant 14 reflected on the difficulty of finding specific vocabulary:

Uno de mis problemas principales era encontrar las palabras adecuadas para el tema del writing. Por ejemplo, recuerdo que en la última redacción que era sobre el cambio climático, me resultaba muy difícil expresar los problemas medioambientales en inglés ya que sólo sabía pollution y global warming. Esto hacía que repitiera las ideas y me bloqueara

Section 4 dealt with the writing strategies employed by learners. Even though Participants 2 and 12 were not two of the learners with the highest overall gains, the effectiveness of strategic instruction was made explicit in the interviews. In this line, Participant 2 reported that two main strategies made a difference in his writings: brainstorming and drafting. He explained that preparing basic ideas before writing was very useful in order to connect all the arguments and thoughts. In the same vein, he believed that writing a draft before handing in the final version made him more

comfortable because he could edit his previous ideas, find new vocabulary items, and check whether he had used a variety of grammatical structures. The effect of strategies may also have played a role for Participant 12, who reported that learning how to paraphrase and having a checklist when working in class made him study and understand the structure of different essays. In fact, when asked about the most important strategies, he explained:

Lo que más me ha servido para preparar mi examen de PAU fue aprender cómo explicar un concepto cuando no sabía la palabra y una vez acabada mi redacción, comprobar que tenía todos los conectores, número de párrafos y partes necesarias

Once the different interviews were analysed, it seems that the reasons behind students' trajectories coincide with the variables used to obtain quantitative data in the present study, i.e., learners' motivation, strategies, and language proficiency.

Having examined the motives behind the students' individual trajectories, the following section offers a discussion of both quantitative and qualitative results.

6.3. Discussion of findings

RQ2 inquired whether learners' initial level of proficiency in English would influence their overall writing competence. As previous research had reported inconclusive findings as regards as the role played by linguistic proficiency in L2 writing (e.g., Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2003, 2009), H3 advanced that learners' proficiency level in English would have a significant impact on their L2 writing proficiency.

The results related to H3 suggest that proficiency level clearly influences L2 writing performance. In this sense, students with a B2 level (the highest level analysed) showed significant differences all along the academic year with regards to the other levels, i.e., A and B1. Thus, H3 of this study was supported since B2 students outperformed intermediate and lower proficient learners in overall writing competence. These results are in line with previous investigations suggesting that more proficient students will have a more fluent access to orthographical, lexical, discourse and grammatical knowledge, thus improving the quality in their writings (e.g., Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Cumming, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; McCutchen, 2000).

As for the content dimension, different scenarios can be observed depending on the period analysed. At the beginning of the academic year, significant differences were already observed in favour of the most proficient groups. However, this difference was not maintained over time since no significant results were obtained when analysing the L2 writing performance of students having B1 and B2 levels. A possible explanation for such findings lies in the fact that those learners who already had a B2 level at the beginning of the school year were already prepared to meet the expectations of the course and the university entrance exams. In other words, as results showed, they improved but not to the same extent as those with lower levels (A or B1), as the windows of opportunity for learning are narrower. That may explain why no significant differences were observed between B1 and B2 levels at the two subsequent data collection procedures. B1 levels improved much more than the most proficient students. As for the lowest level (i.e., A), significant differences were found in favour of more proficient groups as this level is below the required level for learners in 2nd year of Baccalaureate. Moreover, the change from an A level to a B level is quite notorious when it comes to providing arguments and planning. In fact, if one student does not have a grammatical or lexical repertoire, it is very difficult to find the words to write appropriate arguments. The effect of proficiency regarding content and planning was also discussed by Akyel (1994), who claimed that

proficiency level affected both the way learners plan and the quality of their compositions.

Concerning task requirement, significant differences could be observed in the first and second terms in favour of the most proficient group (B2); however, no such difference appeared at the end of the school year. To approach this change in performance, we need to go back to define the task requirement category. This dimension mainly focuses on length, genre, and register, which are aspects that once learners understand and assimilate are elementary principles to apply in each essay. Thus, at the end of the school year and after months of practice, students with lower and intermediate levels (A and B1) were able to obtain similar results than more proficient learners as this dimension does not seem to depend on proficiency level. A clear example could be the use of contractions to meet the register, since any learner, regardless of their level, is able to meet this requirement.

As regards the coherence and cohesion dimension, results changed as the academic year developed. However, a clear pattern was observed at all data collection times: the lowest level was always outperformed by Group B. This may be explained by the fact that for learners with an A level, it is very difficult to use appropriate linking words and a clear structure; therefore, their essays do not contain a guiding thread and they are neither coherent nor cohesive. These results are in line with previous findings indicating that more skilled writers concentrate on aspects such as text organisation or discourse features (Connor, 1996; Glopper & Schoonen, 1996; Kaldor et al., 1998; Tedick & Mathison, 1995). This fact may also explain why no significant differences were found between the intermediate and the most proficient group in the second and third terms. Even though more proficient students tend to enrich their essays with complex linking words and more developed arguments, the level demanded at this stage is a B1. In other words, when their writings were assessed, even though the complexity of the connectors used by B2 learners was higher, this was not valued in a more positive way, as B1 learners also used suitable connectors according to the task requirements. The same phenomenon

applies to structure, since B2 learners seemed to master it from the very beginning; however, B1 students needed one term to acquire it, but once internalised, they did not show any difficulties with this dimension.

Moving to the grammar dimension, a clear pattern could be seen throughout the academic year. More proficient learners outperformed less proficient ones. Therefore, significant differences were found at all point times. As stated by Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998), more proficient learners are able to retrieve linguistic and grammatical aspects to transform their thoughts into writings faster. In this regard, findings from the current investigation are in accordance with the results obtained by Chenoweth and Hayes (2001), who after analysing the views of 13 university students suggested that more proficient learners could write more linguistically fluent pieces of writing. In the present study, it was observed that those learners with a B1 level tended to use basic grammatical structures, such as present simple, present continuous, repetitive modal verbs (e.g., can), and the first conditional. On the contrary, B2 learners attempted to use more complex structures such as passives, a variety of conditional sentences, defining and non-defining relative clauses, and perfect modals, just to mention a few, all along the academic year, which resulted in more elaborated essays. For lower levels, grammar was one of the most difficult aspects to deal with, as they had to struggle to convey their ideas into language. In fact, as suggested by Whalen and Ménard (1995), it is an impediment for those learners with a limited L2 linguistic knowledge to progress in L2 writing. This reality was also shared by learners in the interviews, who claimed that language was a barrier for them to achieve L2 writing progress. Indeed, some of them regretted having spent a lot of time revising grammar, so they could not provide their essays with more robust content and arguments.

Finally, regarding the last dimension analysed, i.e., vocabulary, more proficient learners outperformed less skilled ones. Thus, there were statistically significant differences in favour of the B1 group when compared with A level learners, and in favour of the B2 group when compared with A and B1 levels in the first and the second term.

These findings suggest a connection between the vocabulary studied in the units (e.g., education and new technologies in the first and second term) and their linguistic repertoire. This was observed by the two teachers when checking the essays as some students excelled in their writings with lexical items that were not included in the vocabulary banks or the students' book. This suggests that other variables affect L2 writing when dealing with vocabulary, as learners also acquire lexical terms from contexts other than the formal or the educative one. A clear example of this influence is observed in the following lines (Example 1) which belong to an excerpt extracted from a participant's essay related to the topic of new technologies (mistakes have not been corrected).

Example 1

First of all, social media is normally related to adiction. As a consequence, users are obsessed with getting a high engagement rate and being a famous twitterati. For instance, people tend to create more than one account in their social media to get more and more followers. (#22/B2/POST#)

The lexical level of high-level students was superior to less skilled learners (see Example 2), the words underlined in Example 1 are complex items for 2nd Baccalaureate students to know as they are not part of vocabulary banks provided by teachers. However, several essays were given this personal touch based on the linguistic knowledge acquired in other contexts.

Example 2

Firstly, social media is people's happiness. For example, you can communicate with your family and friends that live in another parts of the world. All the people uses facebook, Instagram or twitter networks. (#74/A/POST#)

As shown in Example 2, even though the topic of the essay was exactly the same as in Example 1, the level of vocabulary is quite different. This student did not consider including more lexical items from the vocabulary bank or the book. Moreover, he did not show mastery of the lexical terms used even though the topic should have appealed to him.

As the academic year progressed, the differences in the performance of vocabulary deteriorated, and only relevant differences were found in favour of Group B2 when compared with learners belonging to Group A. In the same vein, the scores obtained by B1 and B2 learners at the end of the school year in the vocabulary dimension were quite similar, and the explanation relies on the difficulty of the topics covered. While in the first and the second term the topics were not really demanding for them (e.g., education and new technologies), the topic in the last data collection was related to environmental issues. Specifically, learners were asked to provide reasons about ways to protect the environment and reduce global warming. Specific terminology was expected to obtain the maximum score in this dimension according to the rubric used. Most learners, regardless of their proficiency level, did not master this lexical repertoire, so more basic words were included in this complex topic instead. The difficulty to convey meaning through the correct terms was addressed by some participants in the interviewing process. In fact, they reinforced the idea that their essays sounded a bit redundant as they did not have the necessary vocabulary to deal with the topic given in an accurate way. These insights provide evidence on the importance of the relationship

between lexical richness and high competence in L2 writing (Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Schoonen et al., 2003).

In summary, RQ2 examined if the initial level of English proficiency had an effect on L2 writing competence. Accordingly, H3 predicted that the influence of proficiency level would be significant. Results from this chapter support the hypothesis, as notable differences across three proficiency groups in favour of the highest ones were observed in learners' overall L2 writing performance and in almost all dimensions under analysis. When discussing the findings, it was observed that individual differences also interfere with the learning process in the educational context. Due to the fact that motivation is one of most determining factors when learning an L2, the following chapter explores the effect that this individual difference may have on learners' L2 writing proficiency.

6.4. Chapter summary

RQ2 centred on the influence of proficiency in English on L2 writing competence. After analysing the L2 writing performance of participants divided into 3 proficiency levels, i.e., A, B1 and B2, H3 was supported as the level of proficiency had a direct and significant effect on L2 writing development during an academic year. In this regard, participants with a B2 level outperformed intermediate and lower proficient learners in overall writing competence.

In the present investigation, we are concerned about the role that motivation may play when it comes to writing proficiency in L2 learners. The following chapter addresses this variable.

CHAPTER



Results and discussion related to RQs 3 and 4

This section addresses RQ3 and RQ4 dealing with motivation and its hypotheses. According to Gardner (2020), motivation is a crucial aspect when learning an L2 or FL. In the present study, we analysed the effect of this variable on learners' L2 writing proficiency. First, H4 was formulated predicting that the level of motivation would influence learners' L2 writing proficiency. Then, in an attempt to investigate which type of motivation, i.e., integrative or instrumental, had a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency, H5 and H6 were devised as follows:

RQ3: Does students' motivation have an effect on overall L2 writing proficiency?

- **H4:** Level of motivation will influence learners' L2 writing proficiency (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013).

RQ4: What type of motivation has a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency?

- **H5:** Integrative motivation will have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000).
- **H6:** Instrumental motivation will have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987).

In this chapter, RQ3, H4, RQ4, H5, and H6 are answered using quantitative and qualitative methods. Data from both the opinion essays and the motivation questionnaires are used in Section 7.1 to examine the correlational effects on motivation and L2 writing performance at T1 (Subsection 7.1.1) and at T3 (Subsection 7.1.2). Then, Section 7.2 offers an analysis about the influence of integrative and instrumental motivation on L2 writing proficiency. Next, Section 7.3 explores qualitative findings by means of the individual trajectories of 19 participants in the initial and final motivation questionnaires and their answers in the semi-structured interviews. Finally, Section 7.4 offers the discussion of findings.

7.1. Quantitative results

As explained in Chapter 4, a Spanish adaptation of Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB was used to determine the level of each learner's motivation. This scale is a reduced version of Gardner's (1985) original AMTB scale consisting of 11 items (seven-point Likert scale) which focus on the main dimensions of the socio-educational model, i.e., *Integrativeness* (items 1, 2 and 3), *Attitudes toward the learning situation* (6 and 10), *Motivation* (4, 5 and 11), *Anxiety* (8 and 9), and *Instrumental orientation* (7).

Once learners completed the survey, it was decided to use aggregates. As research has demonstrated, when using aggregates, correlations with achievement are more consistent and significant than when using single variables (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). What is more, more constant and reliable results are obtained using the mini-AMTB (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008). Therefore, the index AMI was calculated by adding scores from items 1, 2, and 3 to obtain a value for *integrativeness*; from items 6 and 10 to obtain a score for *attitudes towards the learning situation*; from items 4, 5 and 6 to get a mark for *motivation*; and from items 8 and 9 to get a final score for *anxiety*. After that, a final value for AMI was obtained by adding the final scores in the dimensions of *integrativeness*, *attitudes toward the learning situation* and *motivation*, and subtracting the final score for *anxiety*. Accordingly, the possible scores in this scale ranged from -6 to 54, where a higher score on the scale indicated a greater level of motivation.

Before conducting the final data collection procedure for RQ3, the internal consistency for Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB of 11 items (seven-point Likert scale) was verified through Cronbach's alpha. The minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) and below this value, the internal consistency of the scale would be low and compromised. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha value obtained was $\alpha = 0.761$, demonstrating the consistency, validity and reliability of the scale used.

In the current investigation, the scale was completed by 103 informants. Even though the initial sample was 148, 45 questionnaires could not be included in the analyses because some surveys were incomplete, some students did not fill out the questionnaires, or some students were absent at the moment of data collection.

7.1.1. Correlational effects on motivation and L2 writing performance at T1

Table 32 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables analysed in this section, which are motivation and the dimensions in which L2 writing has been operationalised in the present study at T1.

Table 32

L2 writing performance and motivation at T1

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Motivation	3	51	34.15	11.92
Content	0.00	4.00	2.55	0.888
Task Requirement	0.50	4.00	2.56	0.975
Coherence and Cohesion	0.80	4.00	2.51	0.862
Grammar	0.00	4.00	2.12	0.901
Vocabulary	0.00	4.00	2.12	0.929
Overall performance (sum)	0.50	3.92	2.35	0.790

Regarding the variable of motivation, the minimum score obtained was 3, while the maximum was 51. As can be seen, the average score was 34.15, being the SD = 11.92. The rest of the dimensions obtained an average score higher than 2 points, and the maximum score, except for overall performance, was 4 points. The lowest score in the categories of content, grammar, and vocabulary was 0, while it was 0.5 in task requirement and overall performance, and 0.8 in coherence and cohesion.

We turn to analyse the correlational effects on motivation and each of the L2 writing components at T1. To determine such relationships, i.e., if they move in tandem,

bivariate correlations were performed. Scatter plots were used to display average scores of each dimension and to establish the position of such relationships.

The first component analysed is the content dimension (see Table 33 and Figure 30).

Table 33

Correlation of content and motivation at T1

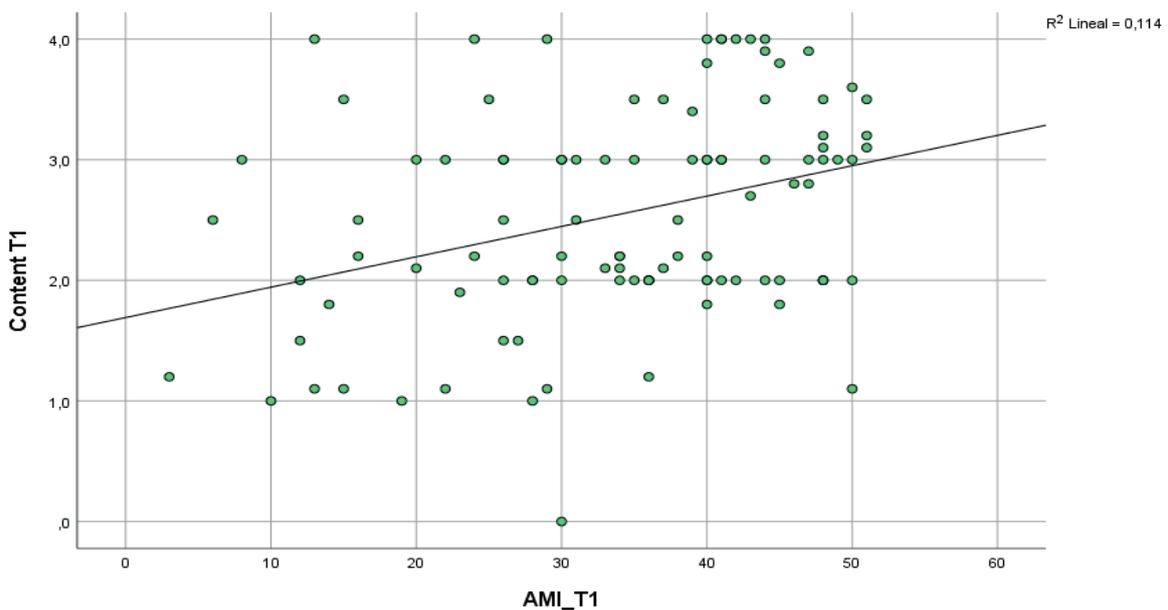
Motivation T1	Content T1	
	r	.338**
	Sig.	.000
	N	103

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

As can be seen in Table 33, the content dimension and the level of motivation at T1 present a positive correlation, which means that both aspects seem to move in tandem. The significant value was $p = .000$, which indicates that robust results were obtained in this analysis. We may conclude that students' motivation level and their performance on the content dimension are significantly connected. Figure 30 displays such relationship.

Figure 30

Relationship between motivation and content at T1



As can be observed, most of them tend to aggregate when participants' level of motivation and content performance move towards higher scores. On the contrary, those participants with low levels of motivation do not depict a clear pattern since some of them have low or high scores on content. These results support H4 of the present study, which assumed that L2 writing performance would move in accordance with learners' level of motivation.

The following Table shows the test of correlation between learners' performance on task requirement and motivation at T1.

Table 34

Correlation of task requirement and motivation at T1

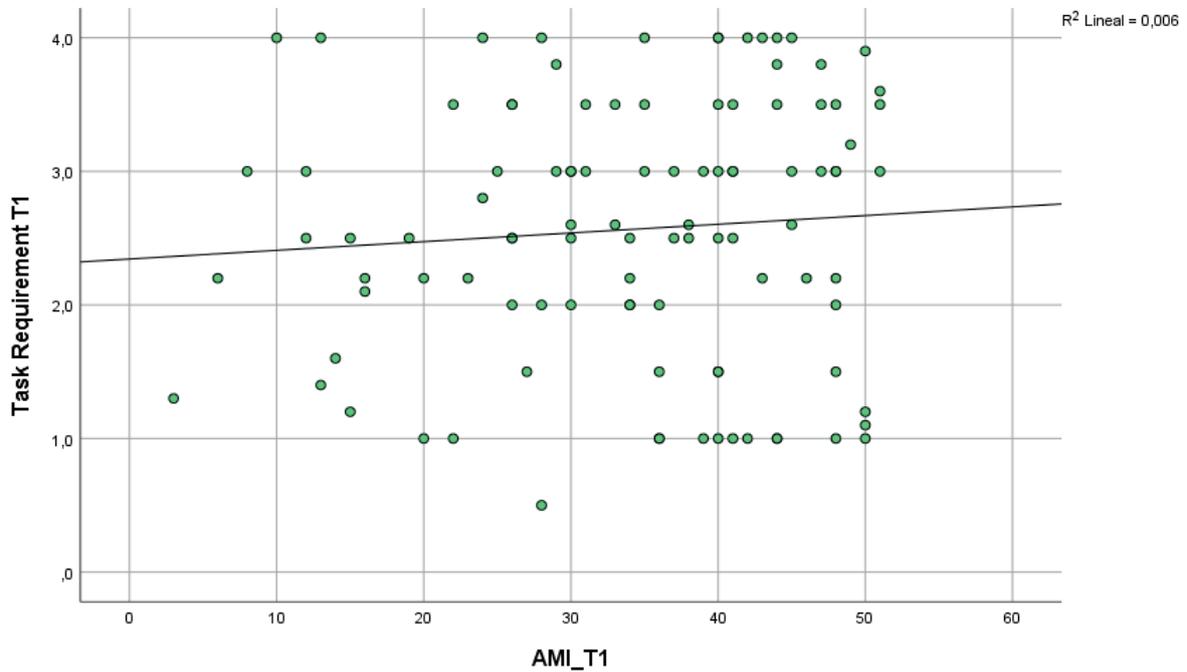
Motivation T1	Task Requirement T1	
	r	.080
Sig.	.425	
N	103	

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

Results indicate low levels of correlations between motivation and task requirement [$r(103) = 0.80, p = .425$]. The correlational level is close to 0, which indicates that those learners who had high levels of motivation did not tend to perform in the task requirement dimension better, and vice versa. In fact, there were no significant results for this set of variables ($p > .005$). These findings are displayed in Figure 31.

Figure 31

Relationship between motivation and task requirements at T1



We observe that there is no tendency for average scores to be grouped in relation to task requirement performance and motivation, thus suggesting that the level of motivation does not seem to enhance the performance of students on aspects such as genre and register. In this regard, the results presented on this dimension may partially support H4, which predicted differences in learners’ motivational levels in accordance with their L2 writing performance because of the low correlational effect observed.

Moving to the coherence and cohesion dimension at T1, Table 35 presents the results obtained.

Table 35

Correlation of coherence and cohesion and motivation at T1

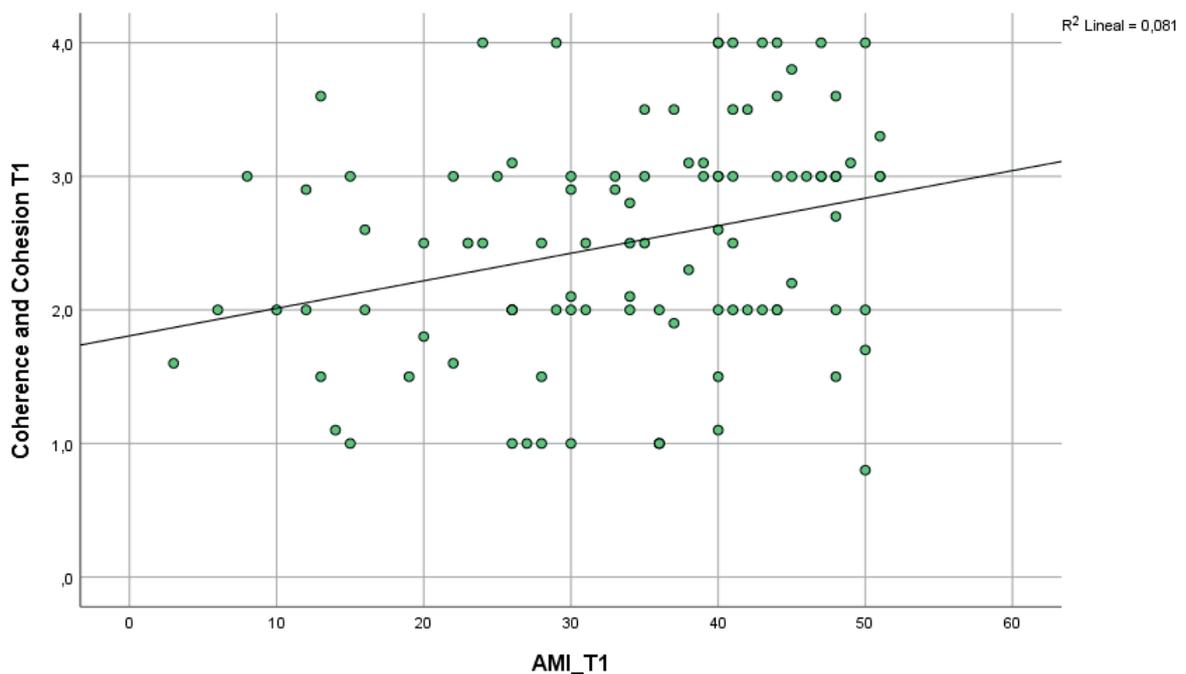
Motivation T1	Coherence and Cohesion T1	
	r	.285**
	Sig.	.004
N	103	

Note:** p < .01 (correlations)

The performance of coherence and cohesion seems to be influenced by motivational levels at T1. Table 35 shows that there exists a positive correlation between these two variables [$r(103) = .285, p = .004$]. As a matter of fact, the level of significance is very remarkable ($p < .01$). This may be understood as a positive connection between favourable attitudes towards the learning of English and participants' meaningful pieces of writing, including a clear organisation and structure, linking words and conjunctions in their essays. As Figure 32 below shows, those students who scored the highest in the coherence and cohesion dimension were found to have the highest motivational level. In addition, a tendency can be observed in the upper part of the diagram, since most of participants' scores in both dimensions tend to group together at T1.

Figure 32

Relationship between motivation and coherence and cohesion at T1



Concerning the grammar component, the similarity between students' performance on grammar and their predisposition to learn English is observed in Table 36.

Table 36

Correlation of grammar and motivation at T1

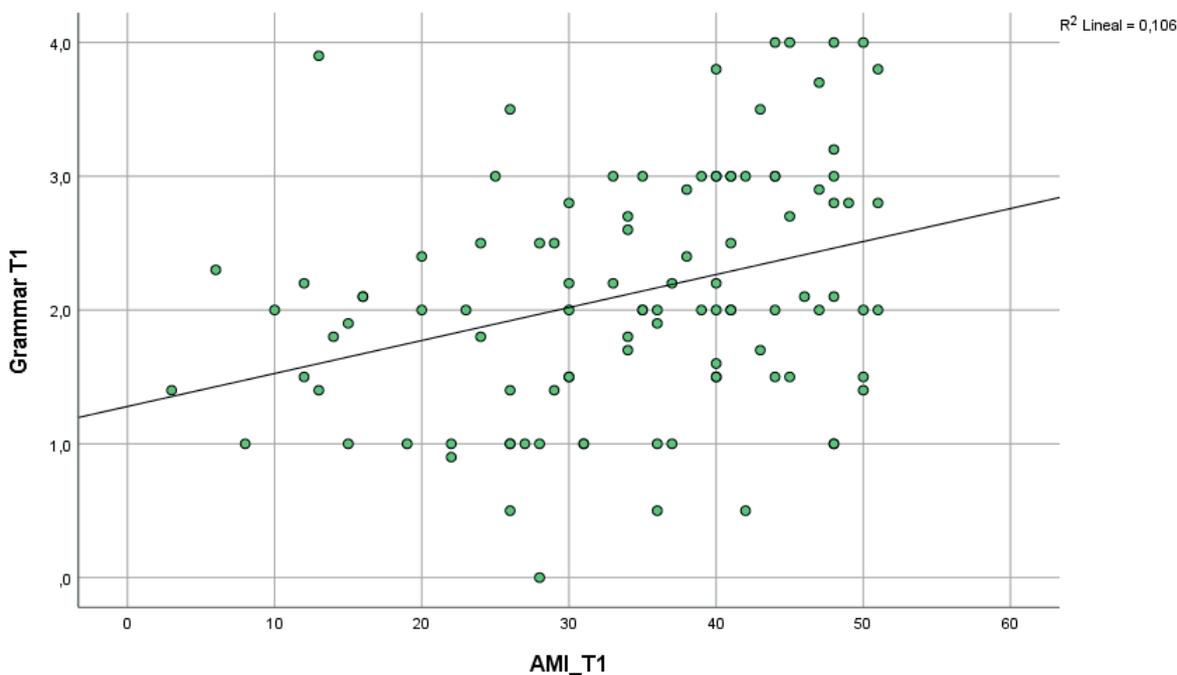
Motivation T1	Grammar T1	
	r	.326**
	Sig.	.001
N	103	

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

The use of different grammatical structures by learners is positively affected by their desire to be involved with the language. This is corroborated by the r and the significance value obtained in this analysis [$r(103) = .326, p = .001$]. These results reveal that H4 can be supported once more as the two variables seem to promote each other. A visual representation of these findings can be seen in Figure 33.

Figure 33

Relationship between motivation and grammar at T1



The scatter plot suggests that there are two main scenarios: students with low performance in the two dimensions and students with higher scores. For example, the

four participants who scored the lowest on the grammar dimension also reported being demotivated. On the contrary, the eight students who used the greatest number of grammatical structures were utterly motivated at T1. However, it is also important to mention that there is one student who scored really high on the grammar dimension but reported low scores on the motivation scale. This isolated case will be further analysed in the qualitative analysis (Section 7.3).

Considering the vocabulary dimension, Table 37 shows the relationship between students' use of lexical terms and their level of motivation.

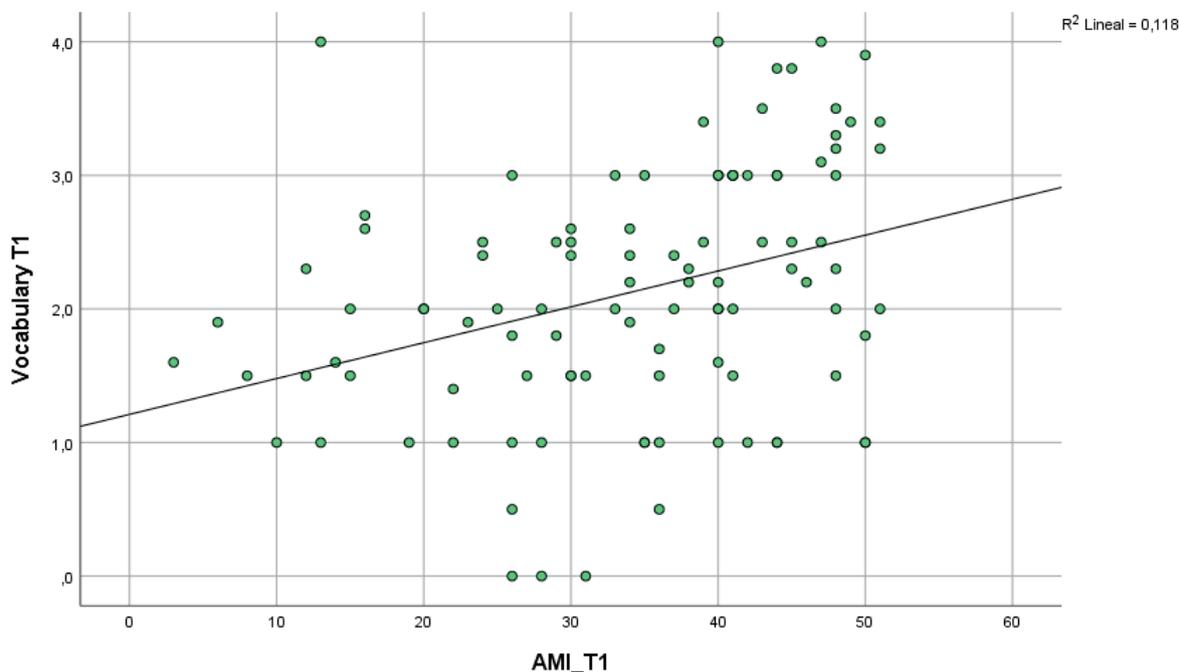
Table 37

Correlation of vocabulary and motivation at T1

Motivation T1	Vocabulary T1	
	R	.344**
Sig.	.000	
N	103	

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

Once again, correlation results imply that those participants who chose the most adequate lexical terms reported having high scores on the motivation scale. As can be observed in Table 37, the r value is .344 with a significance level of .000, which revealed that these two variables move forward, supporting H4 (see Figure 34).

Figure 34*Relationship between motivation and vocabulary at T1*

By examining Figure 34, it is possible to observe similar learning outcomes and four noticeable cases. On the one hand, we can observe those learners who obtained high scores on both performances. A total of 19 participants scored between 40 and 50 on the motivation scale and between 3 and 4 on the vocabulary dimension. It seems plausible to say that there may be a positive effect on the complexity of the vocabulary used and learners' effort to acquire the language. On the other hand, 6 students obtained low scores on both variables: a score between 1 and 2 points in vocabulary and a value between 0 and 15 in motivation. As with the other group, we may argue that those students who reported being demotivated did not put that effort or did not have that desire to perform in L2 writing better. As with previous dimensions, noteworthy cases are observed. First of all, three students had average levels on the motivation scale ($M = 34.15$) but with poor performance on this dimension. On the contrary, one participant scored the highest in the vocabulary dimension but scored below the average on the motivation scale. Despite these individual cases, H4, which indicated that the level of motivation would influence learners' L2 writing proficiency, is supported.

Concerning overall performance and motivational results, Table 38 displays the findings obtained.

Table 38

Correlation of overall performance and motivation at T1

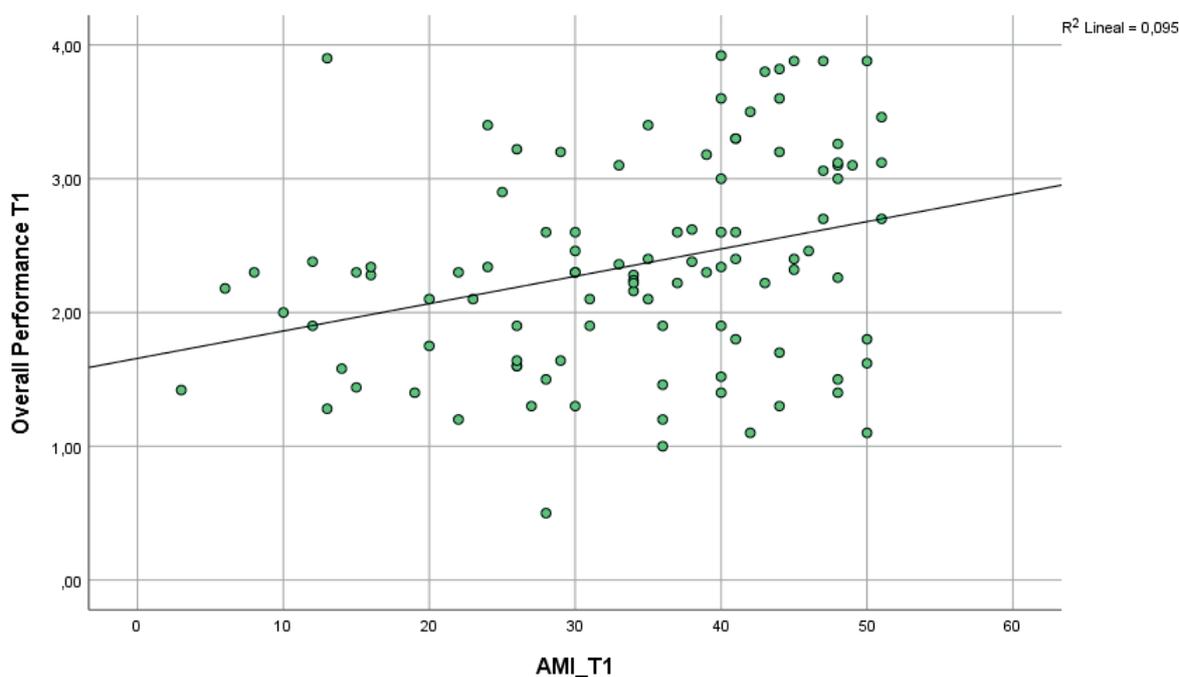
Motivation T1	Overall performance T1	
	r	.308**
	Sig.	.002
	N	103

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

With respect to the general score obtained considering the previous categories (overall performance) and motivation, a positive impact on these two aspects is revealed [$r(103) = .308, p = .002$]. These data help us demonstrate the validity of H4 as there exists a far-reaching effect on 2nd Baccalaureate students' L2 writing performance and their willingness to learn how to write in the English language (see Figure 35).

Figure 35

Relationship between motivation and overall performance at T1



The complete picture on the effect of motivation on learners' L2 writing performance and vice versa displays appealing findings. As can be observed, only one participant scored between 0 and 1 in overall performance while the rest of learners showed a tendency to higher scores on both dimensions. Almost half of participants seemed to have benefited from the positive relationship between these two variables. They obtained a score between 20 and 50 on the motivation scale and a score between 2.5 and 4 on the overall performance. On the contrary, the other half reported high scores on motivation but overall scores below the average ($M = 2.35$). These results suggest that other variables may be at play, since those students who experienced high levels of motivation performed poorly in their L2 writings.

Therefore, our previous findings seem to support H4 at T1. While the dimensions of content, coherence and cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, and overall performance firmly support H4, the results obtained for task requirement only allow us to accept this hypothesis partially.

In the following section, the correlational effects on motivation and the different dimensions of L2 writing performance are analysed for T3.

7.1.2. Correlational effects on motivation and L2 writing performance at T3

This section complements the previous findings by analysing the effect of motivation and L2 writing proficiency at the end of the academic year (T3). Even though Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB reliability was tested by Cronbach's alpha test and results at T1 were presented, it was decided to measure the same dimensions in order to draw more robust conclusions. To achieve this, the present section addresses H4 of the study with the perspective of time, i.e., at the end of the academic year (T3).

In Table 39, the descriptive statistics of the seven variables under analysis, i.e., motivation, content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, and overall performance, are depicted at T3.

Table 39

L2 writing performance and motivation at T3

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Motivation	0	54	37.19	12.824
Content	1.00	4.00	3.52	0.763
Task Requirement	1.00	4.00	3.80	0.449
Coherence and Cohesion	1.00	4.00	3.52	0.635
Grammar	0.00	4.00	2.30	1.039
Vocabulary	0.50	4.00	2.43	1.101
Overall performance (sum)	1.38	4.00	3.12	0.626

Taking the L2 writing dimensions into consideration, it is interesting to see that the average scores improved since the beginning of the academic year in all dimensions. As regards the variable of motivation, the minimum score obtained was 0 and the highest 54, being the mean ($M = 37.19$) slightly higher than at T1 ($M = 34.15$). The lowest scores obtained in content, task requirement, and coherence and cohesion was 1 point; in the vocabulary component was 0.5, while in grammar was 0. On the other hand, the highest score in all dimensions was 4. The following tables and scatter plots show the effect of motivation on L2 writing performance at T3.

First of all, the content dimension is examined regarding the influence played by motivation on learners' L2 writing performance (see Table 40). Data confirm the positive and significant correlation between these 2 components [$r(103) = .394, p = .000$]. In the same vein as in T1, H4 can be accepted for the content dimension. Figure 36 shows the visual representation of these results.

Table 40

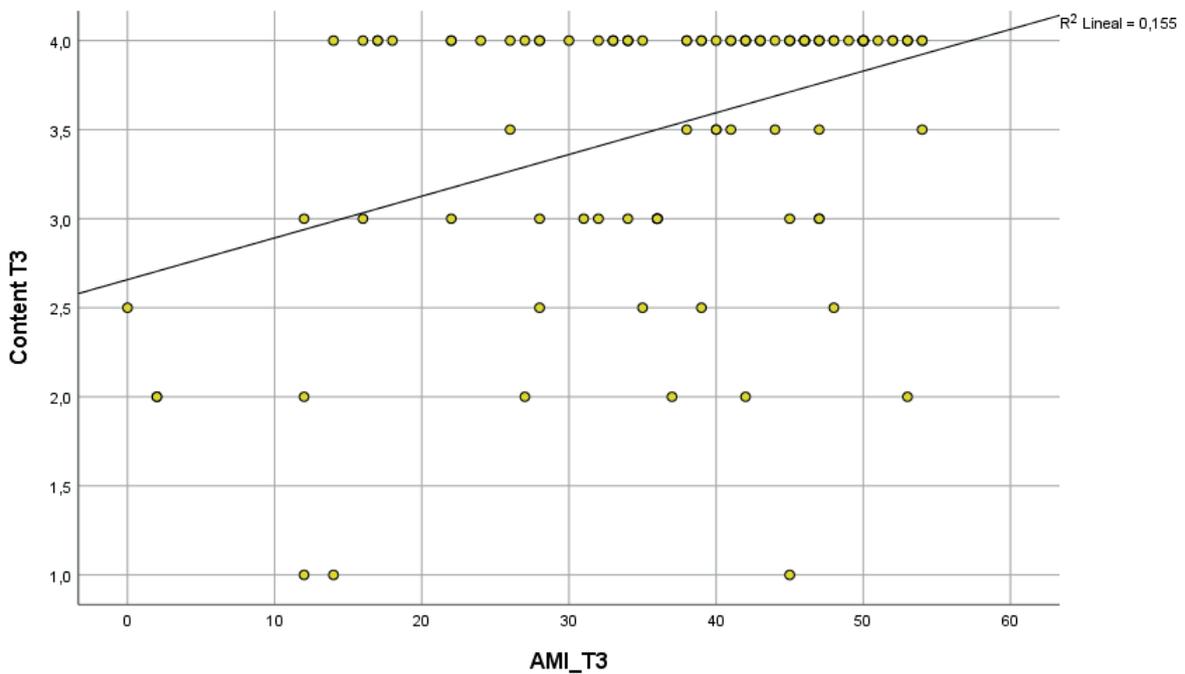
Correlation of content and motivation at T3

Motivation T3	Content T3	
	r	.394**
	Sig.	.000
	N	103

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

Figure 36

Relationship between motivation and content at T3



As the above figure shows, those students who obtained the highest score on content obtained a wide range of results on the motivation scale: four of them scored between 10 and 20; 5 between 20 and 30; 6 between 30 and 40; and 14 obtained more than 40 points. As for the lowest scores on content, 14 participants scored below the mean ($M = 3.52$) but reported again a variety of scores regarding the motivation scale (moving from 0 to 52). In view of our findings, we may claim that H4 is confirmed regarding this dimension.

The second dimension, task requirement, presents different results (see Table 41).

Table 41

Correlation of task requirement and motivation at T3

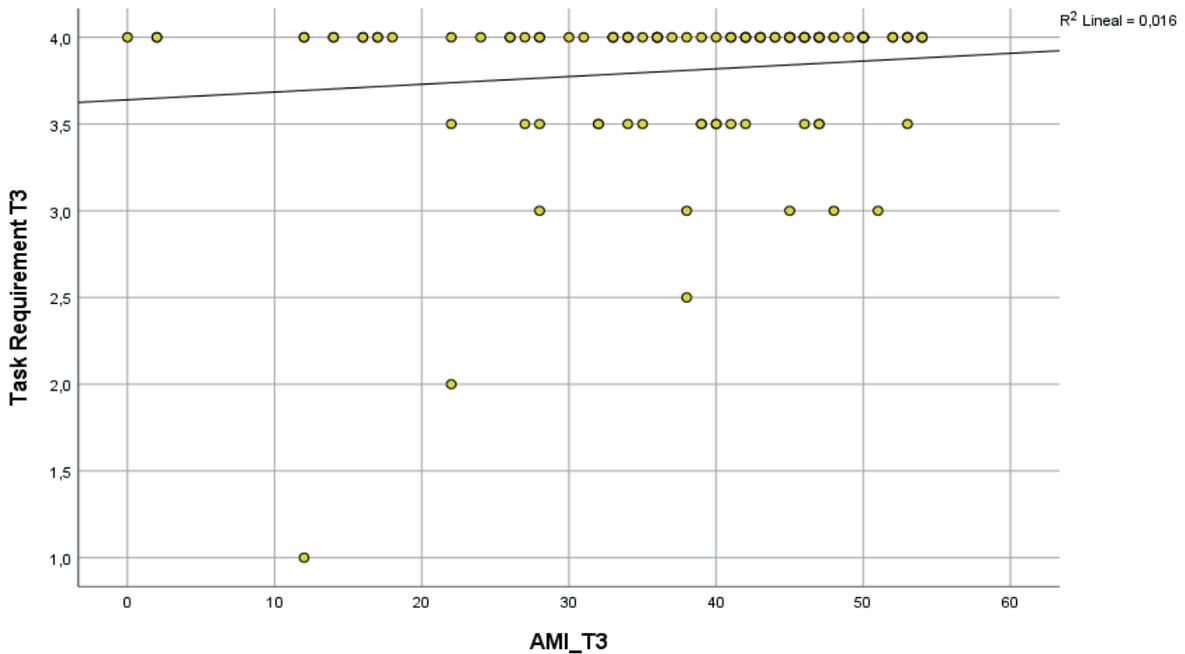
Motivation T3	Task Requirement T3	
	r	.127
	Sig.	.200
N	103	

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

As data reveal, no strong correlation effect of motivation on this category is found [$r(103) = .127, p = .200$]. As it happened in T1, a similar pattern is also obtained in T3: those participants who fulfilled task requirements did not always obtain higher scores on Gardner’s (2010) motivation scale. For this reason, we suggest that H4 of the present study must be partially confirmed as far as task requirement is concerned. In order to further understand these results, we can see such distribution of data in Figure 37.

Figure 37

Relationship between motivation and task requirement at T3



Interestingly, most participants scored the highest on task requirement although their performance on the motivation scale showed some variation. Accordingly, two

participants with scores below the mean on this dimension ($M = 3.80$) reported being not really predisposed to be engaged with the language.

As for the coherence and cohesion category (see Table 42), results indicate a quite strong correlation effect with the motivation variable [$r(103) = .423, p = .000$]. In other words, those students who wrote coherent and cohesive essays showed a positive willingness towards the English language and vice versa.

Table 42

Correlation of coherence and cohesion and motivation at T3

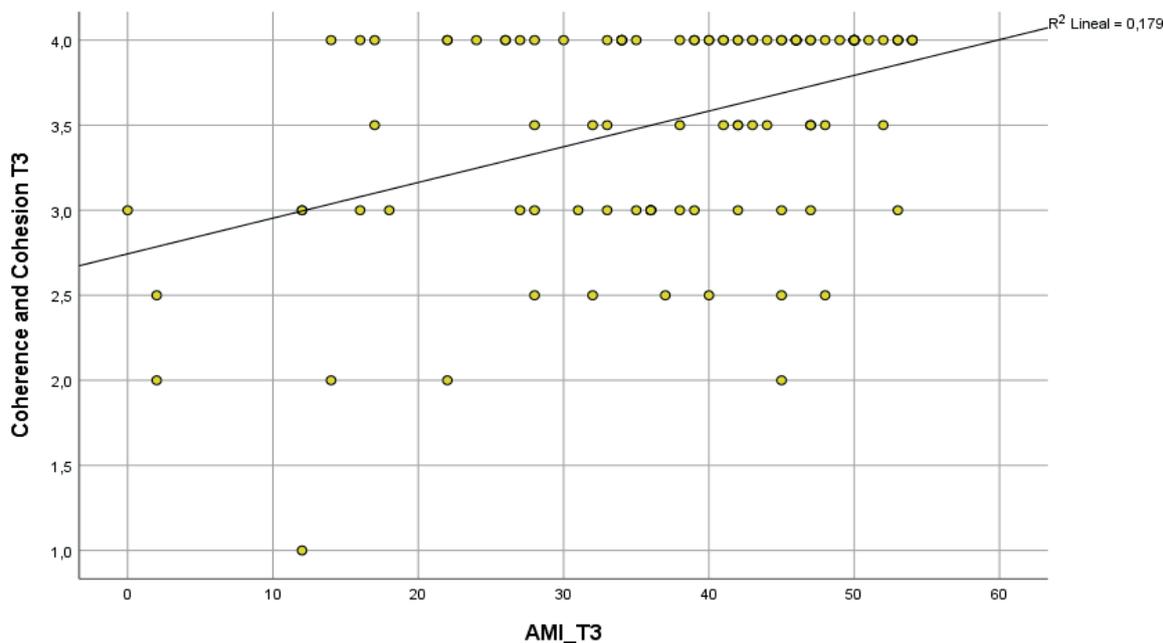
Motivation T3	Coherence and Cohesion T3	
	r	.423**
	Sig.	.000
	N	103

Note:** $p < .01$ (correlations)

By having a closer look at the scatter plot (see Figure 38), we can observe a clear relationship between these two variables. We can find students using a wide range of linking words, conjunctions, and anaphoric devices, as well as a good organisation in their pieces of writing, despite their scores on the motivation scales. However, most of them tend to move towards the highest scores which range from 35 to 54. Based on the findings obtained, we can claim that H4 is confirmed regarding this dimension.

Figure 38

Relationship between motivation and coherence and cohesion at T3



Referring to the use of grammatical structures, correlation results are depicted in Table 43.

Table 43

Correlation of grammar and motivation at T3

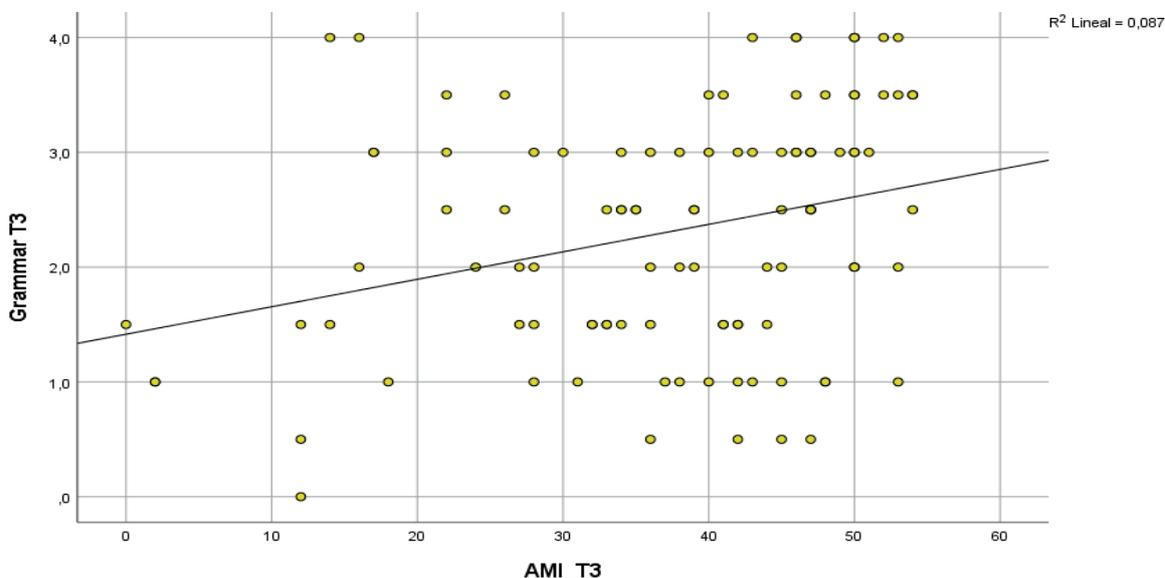
Motivation T3	Grammar T3	
	r	.295**
Sig.	.002	
N	103	

Note:** p < .01 (correlations)

Once more, strong and significant correlation effects are seen in this variable regarding motivation [$r(103) = .295, p = .002$], thus supporting H4 at T3. In general, most participants scored averaged in the two variables under analysis. In fact, 22 of them scored between 3 and 4 on the grammar dimension and between 40 and 54 on the motivation scale. On the contrary, 7 students reported poor performance on both dimensions (see Figure 39).

Figure 39

Relationship between motivation and grammar at T3



Moving to the lexical dimension, the following Table shows the correlation effect on motivation and vice versa.

Table 44

Correlation of vocabulary and motivation at T3

Motivation T3	Vocabulary T3	
	R	.082
Sig.	.409	
N	103	

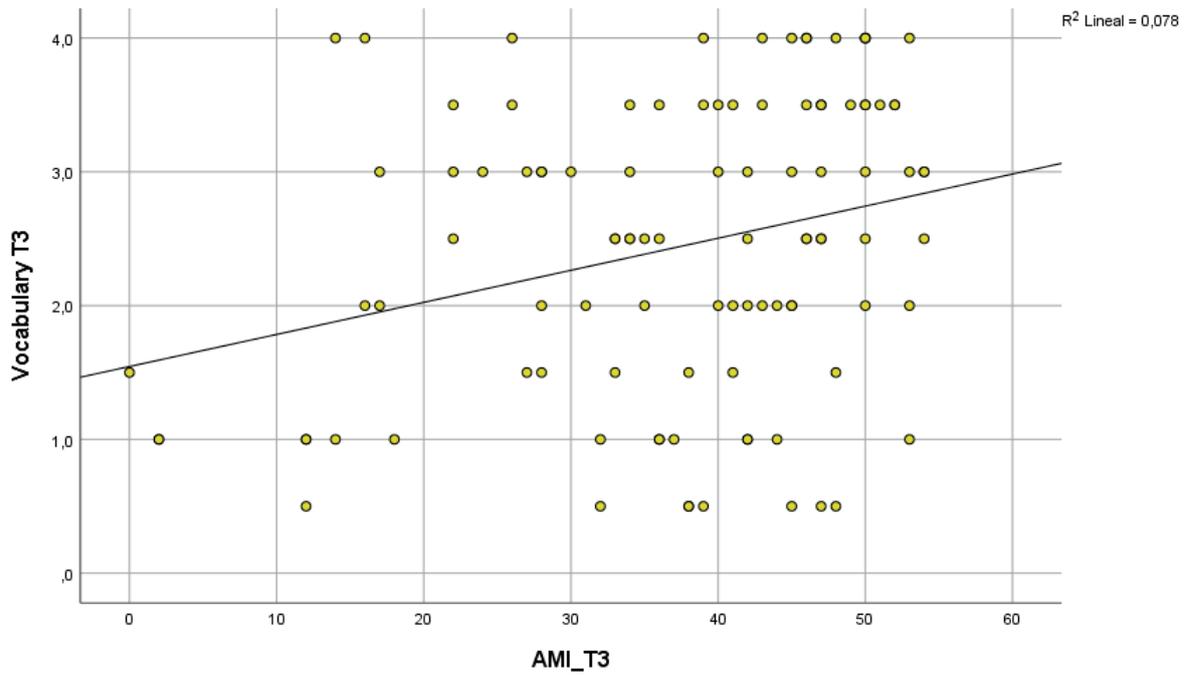
Note:** p< .01 (correlations)

These two dimensions do not correlate to a great extent. In fact, this correlation is not significant [$r(103) = .082, p = .409$] since the pattern of correlation between vocabulary and effort and desire to learn the language is comparable to task requirement and motivation in T1, in which the correlational levels are close to 0. This movement can be observed visually in Figure 40. While the average mean of the vocabulary dimension was 2.49, 28 students scored below this mean but reported high scores on the motivation scales (from 30 to 45). In the same vein, 12 students scored above the mean on the lexical

dimension but reported low levels of motivation (between 10 and 29). Whereas there exists some correlation between these two variables, these results are to be interpreted with caution as the highest scores in both dimensions do not always move in tandem.

Figure 40

Relationship between motivation and vocabulary at T3



Finally, the overall performance and motivation correlational data can be observed in Table 45.

Table 45

Correlation of overall performance and motivation at T3

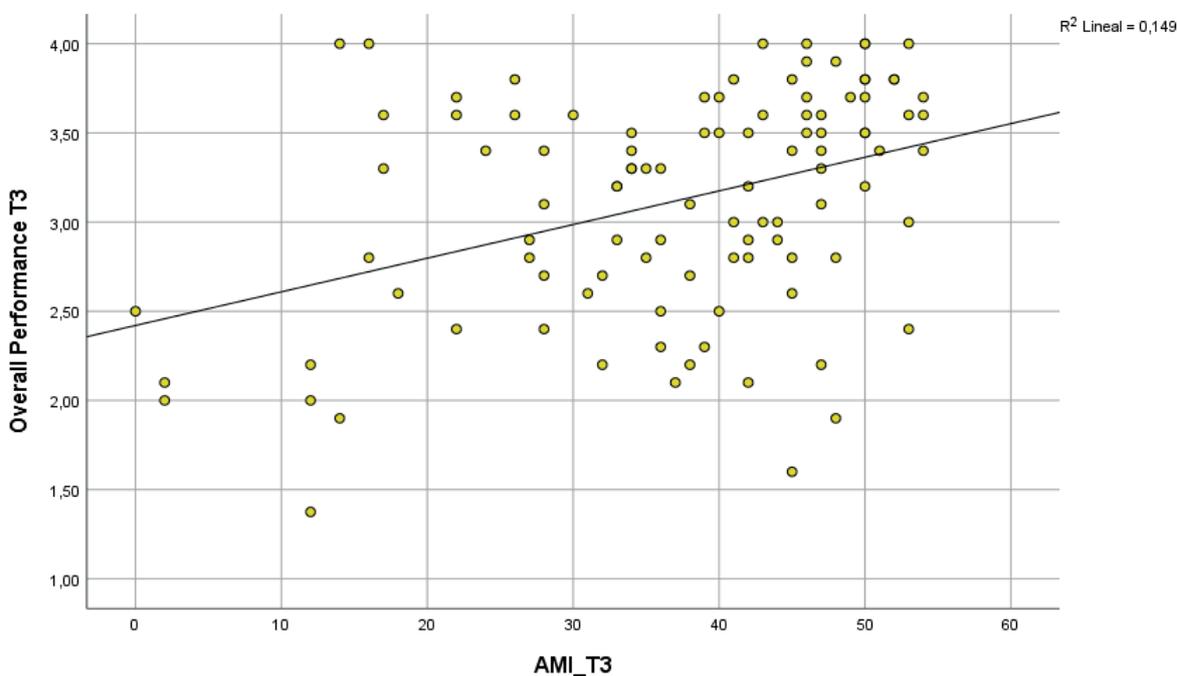
Motivation T3	Overall performance T3	
	r	.386**
	Sig.	.000
	N	103

Note:** p < .01 (correlations)

The interpretation of findings suggests that there is a positive and significant [$r(103) = .386, p = .000$] influence between these variables. In other words, it can be concluded that those students who were more motivated performed in their essays better, and vice versa. This pattern can be easily observed in the scatter plot below (Figure 41).

Figure 41

Relationship between motivation and overall performance at T3



For the first time at T3, we do not have linear results regarding the two variables under analysis. In fact, the vast majority of participants scored high in both measures, which may explain why there exists such strong correlation effect. In the same vein, the 8 participants who scored the lowest on both dimensions can be spotted in the low left side of the figure. Consequently, the acceptance of H4 when dealing with learners' overall L2 writing performance at the end of the academic year seems plausible.

In order to conclude this section, H4 is also supported in T3 despite the two dimensions, i.e., task requirement and vocabulary, in which data only allow for partial

support. Therefore, it can be claimed that the level of motivation will influence learners' L2 writing proficiency.

In the following section, an analysis to determine which type of motivation has a stronger effect on learners' L2 writing proficiency is offered.

7.2. Influence of integrative and instrumental motivation on L2 writing proficiency

The effect of motivation on L2 writing proficiency has not received much attention despite the fact that this affective variable is considered crucial when learning a L2 or FL (see Section 2.4). Section 7.1 of this chapter has provided insights into the quantitative analysis on the relationship between the L2 writing components and motivation. Findings revealed that L2 writing performance and motivation are significantly related in most of the variables under study showing positive correlations in all cases. In addition, results seem to suggest that other variables may play a role in students' performance. Hence, the aim of the present section is to discern whether instrumental or integrative motivation affects the L2 writing process.

Instrumental motivation is defined by Gardner (2001) as the combination of practical or pragmatic reasons which motivate learners to learn a FL. On the other hand, integrative motivation is considered an affective or interpersonal dimension (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). In this regard, it implies tolerance and respect for the culture and people of the other community, and willingness to interact with group members. Within integrative motivation, it is possible to find aspects such as attitudes toward the L2 community and culture, or general interest in FLs.

This section aims at answering RQ4 which examines what type of motivation has a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency. H5 supports that integrative motivation will play a more important role than instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997;

Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000), while H6 depicts the opposite scenario (Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987).

Data for this analysis were obtained through four items in Gardner's' (2010) mini-AMTB scale. More specifically, items 1, 2 and 3 referred to integrative motivation and item 7 to instrumental motivation. To get more comparable results, the average of integrative orientation was calculated using the results of the 3 items which belong to this category. In this regard, a final score between 0 and 7 was given to each type of orientation.

The following Table shows the descriptive data of the 103 participants who completed both questionnaires on motivation, out of the initial pool of 148 participants. Table 46 includes the average scores of overall performance at T1 and T3 along with the motivation scores obtained in both questionnaires related to integrative and instrumental motivation.

Table 46

Average scores of participants' overall performance

		Motivation	Mean	SD
Overall performance (sum)	T1	Integrative	5.39	0.973
		Instrumental	6.06	1.029
	T3	Integrative	5.45	1.027
		Instrumental	6.24	0.970

As can be seen, students showed higher levels of instrumental motivation at both periods of data collection (T1 = 6.06; T3 = 6.24). As for the integrative component, lower levels were displayed during the academic year (T1 = 5.39; T3 = 5.45). Even though participants took the same test with an 8-month difference, we can observe that the levels of motivation depicted at the end of the academic year were not much higher than those obtained at the beginning. In fact, when analysing mean differences, it can be seen that

variations between both types of motivation are not so notable (MD integrative = 0.06; MD instrumental = 0.18).

To further explore the effect of integrative and instrumental motivation on L2 writing, ANOVA analyses were conducted. It has to be noted that only overall L2 writing proficiency was analysed as a variable, due to the fact that in the previous section, the specific components of L2 writing were correlated with motivation. Thus, this section only focuses on the effect of instrumental and integrative motivation considering overall L2 writing results to shed light on the importance these variables may have when approaching them independently.

Table 47 shows the results acquired when examining overall means at T1. As can be observed, the root mean square (rms) obtained at T1 is higher for overall and integrative variables (rms = .843).

Table 47

ANOVA analysis for motivation at T1

	gl	Root mean square (rms)	F	Sig.
Overall performance T1 Integrative T1	1	.843	2.227	.156
Overall performance T1 Instrumental T1	1	.428	1.052	.321

Neither integrative nor instrumental motivation have a significant effect on L2 writing proficiency at T1. ANOVA findings revealed that the significant values obtained in both categories are far from being significant (sig. integrative = .156; sig. instrumental = .321). These results provide compelling insights into the effect of motivation on L2 writing. As observed in previous analyses (see Section 7.1), motivation was highly correlated with all dimensions in which L2 writing had been operationalised in this study, i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, vocabulary, and overall performance. However, when separating motivation into two different

categories, i.e., integrative and instrumental, no such effect is observed. Therefore, H5 of the present study, which predicted that integrative motivation would have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency, has to be rejected at T1. In the same vein, H6, which envisioned such an effect on behalf of instrumental motivation, cannot be accepted at T1.

Due to time constraints, the levels of instrumental and integrative motivation could not be registered at the end of the second term, i.e., T2. For that reason, the following table shows the results obtained when analysing these categories at the end of the academic year, i.e., T3.

Table 48

ANOVA analysis for motivation at T3

	gl	Root mean square (rms)	F	Sig.
Overall performance T3 Integrative T3	1	0.45	.189	.670
Overall performance T3 Instrumental T3	1	0.42	.180	.677

In a similar vein as at the beginning of the academic year (T1), results conclude that there seems to be no significant effects regarding integrative and instrumental motivation on L2 writing proficiency. ANOVA findings revealed that the significant values obtained in both categories are far from being significant (sig. integrative = .670; sig. instrumental = .677). Based on these findings, H5 and H6 of the present study must be rejected, since no effect when comparing integrative or instrumental motivation was found on L2 writing proficiency at T3. These results seem to indicate that other variables apart from motivation have an impact on L2 writing performance, as concluded in previous sections.

Due to the difficulty to draw robust conclusions about the effect of both types of motivation on L2 writing proficiency, qualitative results are provided in the following

section through a case study of 19 samples. Even though we acknowledge that this sample of respondents may not account for generalisable results, it may help us understand how integrative and instrumental motivation affect at the individual level.

7.3. Qualitative results

This section examines the responses of 19 learners to complement the data obtained in Section 7.2 of the present chapter. Data for this qualitative analysis were obtained through the semi-structured interviews and the learners' questionnaires together with the 4 items in Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB scale described in the previous section to obtain values for integrative and instrumental motivation.

In what follows, the descriptive statistics of the 19 participants in the case study and an analysis of students' integrative and instrumental scores are reported (see Tables 49 and 50).

Table 49

L2 writing performance and motivation

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Integrative motivation T1	3.33	7	5.52	0.995
Instrumental motivation T1	4	7	6.26	0.933
Integrative motivation T3	4	7	5.59	1.003
Instrumental motivation T3	4	7	6.42	0.837
Overall performance T1	0.50	3.00	1.69	0.619
Overall performance T3	1.70	3.90	2.78	0.636

As can be observed, regarding integrative motivation at T1, the lowest value obtained is 3.33, while the maximum is 7, being the average 5.52. When dealing with the

instrumental one, similar minimum and maximum scores are obtained but the average is higher (M = 6.26). Results in overall performance indicate the lowest value at 0.50 and a maximum of 3, being the average 1.69. Moving to T3, analogous findings are obtained. Instrumental factors seem to have a stronger effect on learners' overall performance, being the minimum value 4 and the maximum 7 in both data collections. Finally, a notable increase can be seen in the overall performance mean.

In the following Table, a detailed analysis of each participant of this subsample can be seen.

Table 50

L2 writing performance and motivation of all the 19 participants

Participant	Integrative T1	Instrumental T1	Overall Performance T1	Integrative T3	Instrumental T3	Overall Performance T3
1	6.33	7	1.30	6.33	7	2.30
2	6.33	6	1.10	7.00	7	1.90
3	5.00	7	1.70	5.33	7	2.80
4	5.33	4	1.90	4.66	4	3.40
5	5.33	6	1.00	5.33	7	1.90
6	3.33	6	1.75	4.00	6	2.80
7	7.00	6	2.70	6.66	6	3.30
8	6.33	7	1.50	7.00	7	2.80
9	6.33	7	3.00	6.66	7	3.90
10	5.66	6	1.20	6.33	5	3.00
11	4.00	6	0.50	5.33	6	1.70
12	6.00	7	1.30	4.33	7	2.90
13	5.33	4	2.30	4.00	7	3.00
14	4.66	7	1.70	4.66	6	3.10
15	5.66	7	1.80	5.33	7	3.40
16	4.00	7	1.40	5.00	7	1.80
17	5.66	6	2.30	5.33	6	3.30
18	5.66	7	1.40	6.33	7	2.30
19	7.00	6	2.30	6.66	6	3.40
M	5.52	6.26	1.69	5.59	6.42	2.78

Learners reported a greater willingness towards L2 writing at the end of the academic year (T3) in both integrative motivation (M = 5.59) and instrumental motivation (M = 6.42). In general, the instrumental orientation presents superior average scores over time. As for the students' overall performance in T1 and T3, they experience remarkable progress as there is a mean difference of 1.09 from T1 to T3. These findings provide an account of how the instrumental variable may exert an undeniable effect on L2 writing proficiency, thus implying that not only integrative motivation is related to students' performance on the 5 dimensions under analysis.

From Table 50, it is possible to find several patterns. There are students who seem to improve their levels of motivation in one or both dimensions analysed from T1 to T3, others present stable levels, while there are others who show a decline in integrative or instrumental motivation. These patterns in participants' scores are gathered in Table 51.

Table 51

Participants' patterns for motivation and overall performance

Pattern	Participants	Integrative T1 – T3	Instrumental T1 – T3	Overall T1-T3
1	3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18	Improve	Neutral	Improve
2	2	Improve	Improve	Improve
3	4, 7, 12, 15, 17, 19	Decline	Neutral	improve
4	5	Neutral	Improve	Improve
5	14	Neutral	Decline	Improve
6	10	Improve	Decline	Improve
7	13	Decline	Improve	Improve
8	1	Neutral	Neutral	Improve

Qualitative findings reveal 8 different patterns. While both integrative and instrumental motivation show improvement, decline, or steady progress, overall scores improve in all cases under study. Accordingly, only one participant (Participant 2) clearly

shows the effect that the improvement of instrumental and integrative motivational scores had on her overall performance. A second group of students did not score higher on integrative values after the whole academic year (Participants 1, 5 and 14) and even some experienced a decline on this variable (4, 7, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 19). This decline was also observed in the instrumental dimension in Participants 10 and 14, although some students improved in this dimension (Participants 2, 5 and 13). The reasons behind these individual trajectories may be explained with the information drawn from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. However, as stated above, these results must be interpreted with caution, as the sample is not representative enough to draw robust conclusions.

Taking pattern 2 as reference, the participant who improved her scores on the three dimensions under analysis, it seems that several reasons from the questionnaire and interview may explain why motivation exerted an influence in her overall improvement. As for the instrumental variable, Participant 2 reported that she wanted to obtain an official certificate in the English language in order to have a better job in the future; she also felt that the English language was very useful when travelling, and that the English mark in 2nd of Baccalaureate was of utmost importance for accessing her desired degree. Her reasons suggest a strong instrumental motivation for this learner to give her best in L2 writing. However, she also reflected upon the importance of having native friends and an energetic interest towards the language; arguments that disclose why she also improved in the integrative variable.

Moving now to pattern 1, in which there exists improvement in overall L2 writing performance together with an enhancement in the levels of integrative motivation with stable levels of instrumental factors, similar responses are found in students' questionnaires. On the one hand, this group of learners (3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, and 18) reported at the beginning of the academic year the necessity to obtain a high mark in the English subject to access their university degree. These findings were also obtained in the questionnaires provided at the end of the academic year, which may explain why there

was no improvement in this variable, as they were so focused on achieving a high score from the very beginning. An interesting fact is their improvement in integrative motivation from T1 to T3. A possible factor which may enhance such progress is the motivation provided by the teacher to these participants. In their replies, they all agreed that thanks to the teacher and the instruction received, they realised how useful the English language was. In addition, the teacher instilled in them a desire to learn more cultural and social aspects about the English language. All this evidence shows the role that other factors, apart from integrative or instrumental motivation, may play in L2 writing proficiency.

In contrast, Participants 4, 7, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 19 experienced a decline in integrative motivation. When analysing the average mean obtained by these participants, it was observed that the decline was almost non-existent in most respondents. For this reason, bearing in mind that the questionnaire consisted of 7 Likert items, answering in one item one number above or below is not considered relevant. Nevertheless, a case that must be examined cautiously is Participant 12, who moved from an average mean of 6 at T1 to 4.33 at T3. In his answers, no clear understanding can be reached as to the reasons behind his decline. We may claim that this student might not have understood some items in the survey correctly or he was not focused when providing the responses.

In patterns 4, 5, and 8 participants show neutral answers over time regarding integrative orientation. In particular, students present positive attitudes towards the English language, culture and people from the beginning of the investigation to the end. However, while Participant 5 improves her levels of instrumental orientation, Participant 14 experiences a decline, and participant 1 remains stable. A clear explanation can be offered to justify these individual cases. First, Participant 5 realises in the month of December (end of the first term) that she wants to study Psychology, but her marks are not high enough to access this degree. Consequently, she starts studying hard to improve her scores in L2 writing. The opposite occurred in the case of Participant 14, since at the beginning of the academic year, this student reported a high predisposition to study

Medicine. Although she knew the difficulty of accessing this degree, she tried her best during the first and the second term. However, the results in her case were not as good as expected, resulting in a negative effect, as her motivation decreased as she believed it was impossible to access this degree. In the case of participant 1, it was clear from the very beginning to the end what she wanted to study; therefore, she was focused on achieving her goals during the whole academic year. In this regard, her levels of instrumental motivation did not vary.

Finally, the last two patterns seem to follow opposite directions. While Participant 10 experiences improvement in integrative motivation and decline in instrumental one, the contrary is seen in Participant 13. In the case of the former, she did not have a clear idea of the degree she wanted to study. Therefore, depending on the moment of the year and the degree she had in mind at that time, her instrumental motivation varied. In this investigation, it seems that she had a clear idea at T1, and this was shown in the effort she put into writing in English. However, in T3 she hesitated about her future, and this was reflected in the score obtained in this variable. In the case of Participant 13, this learner is so involved in Japanese culture that he neglected the English culture and people over time, a fact which explains why he experienced such a decline in integrative motivation.

In sum, two different conclusions can be drawn. First of all, similarly to the results obtained in Section 7.1, motivation, when measured from a general perspective, seems to have an impact on students' L2 writing ability. Indeed, the findings obtained in the analysis of the subsample coincide with the quantitative results in confirming that motivation exerts an influence on L2 writing. Therefore, H4 is also supported from a qualitative perspective.

However, when approaching the motivational variable from 2 different dimensions, i.e., integrative versus instrumental, no stronger effect on any of these two components can be observed. In fact, in the case of the 19 participants, all of them improved their overall performance in L2 writing from T1 to T3 regardless of their

performance on integrative or instrumental motivation. Hence, H5 and H6 must be rejected as results do not indicate a stronger effect on any type of motivation.

The following section discusses the quantitative and qualitative findings related to RQ3 and RQ4.

7.4. Discussion of findings

RQ3 and RQ4 of the present study attempted to investigate the role played by motivation on L2 writing proficiency. As for RQ3, results revealed that the level of motivation influences L2 writing performance in all categories analysed. Thus, Accepting H4 and reinforcing the existing literature about the influence of motivation on L2 writing competence (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013). In order to provide more detailed results, and to answer RQ4, motivation was split into integrative and instrumental categories to explore whether any of them had a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency. Our findings concluded that L2 writing seems not to be strongly influenced by any type of motivation when examined separately.

A possible explanation as to why motivation seems to have a significant effect on students' L2 writing performance is the role played by the several factors involved in learners' motivation. In the present investigation, different aspects to measure motivational levels were considered in the mini-AMTB, such as attitudes towards the learning situation, integrativeness, motivation, anxiety, and instrumental factors. Therefore, when measuring integrative and instrumental motivation, no significant effect was found; such a difference was noticeable when testing motivation from a general perspective. One may conclude that this is because the rest of items included in the scale may have more importance for students at this stage when it comes to their motivation to write in English.

Our participants, 2nd Baccalaureate students, had 3 or 4 lessons of English per week. However, once they are out of the educational context, contact with the target language may disappear if not fostered by themselves. This is linked to the context where we measured motivational rates, i.e., an EFL context. As this setting does not provide many opportunities for students to engage with the FL, integrative motivation is usually low. This kind of motivation includes aspects such as engaging with native speakers or attitudes towards different foreign languages. Thus, a regular student from 2nd Baccalaureate in this context may find difficulty being motivated by those factors, as they are not part of their daily life. This goes in line with the levels obtained when analysing instrumental motivation. In the scale used in the present study, this variable was measured by only one item, which referred to the importance of learning the language for practical aspects such as travelling, and getting higher marks, among others. As with integrative motivation, students may not even consider these practical issues due to their negative attitudes towards the language or even their teacher. It is interesting to see that although this variable was expected to be influential, not all students considered that the English subject or getting excellent marks in the writing process was so crucial.

Actually, students' poor performance may be related to the variable of anxiety. Indeed, 2 items of the scale approached the anxiety levels that learners may experience. As observed in the qualitative data, anxiety played an important role in some students because they were nervous when facing a writing task. This reinforces the idea that in our context, motivation should not be approached from the dichotomy of integrative or instrumental, as it does not seem to be realistic. For this reason, one may conclude that specific scales to measure motivation should be designed taking the context and participants' background into account. In this regard, the scale should consider features learners are familiar with and crucial aspects in the learning process such as rapport with language teachers, and a safe environment in order not to feel anxiety. Even though out-of-school factors may influence students' performance when learning a language, English

teachers need to encourage students to do their best in order to foster the L2 writing process.

Although H5 and H6 were rejected, the important role motivation plays in learners' L2 writing proficiency in the present investigation has been evidenced, which leads us to accept H4.

7.5. Chapter summary

Chapter 7 focused on RQ3, which centred on the impact exerted by motivation on L2 writing proficiency and RQ4, which aimed at discovering which type of motivation, i.e., integrative or instrumental, had a stronger impact on L2 writing.

H4 was supported by both quantitatively and qualitatively analyses; thus, concluding that the level of motivation effectively influences students' L2 writing proficiency. Nevertheless, H5 and H6 were disconfirmed since no stronger effect was observed in any type of motivation when examined separately.

The following chapter presents the final conclusions of the present investigation, including a summary of the main results, some pedagogical implications, the different limitations faced and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER



Conclusions

In this chapter, the main results and conclusions of the current investigation are reported. First of all, a revision of the main contributions of this dissertation is presented together with a summary of its principal results (Section 8.1). After that, in Section 8.2, the limitations and directions for further research are specified. Finally, the pedagogical implications of this research are presented to be considered in secondary education (Section 8.3).

8.1. Summary of the main results

The main aim of the present dissertation was to analyse students' overall L2 writing proficiency from a holistic communicative perspective at Baccalaureate level in Spain. In particular, this longitudinal study has examined the role played by instruction, linguistic proficiency and motivation on learners' L2 writing competence over an academic year.

The investigation was initially motivated by the teacher/researcher's interest to analyse whether variables such as the type of instructional treatment used, initial proficiency level, or motivation, had an impact on students' L2 writing development in 2nd year Baccalaureate in Spain. Moreover, we explored L2 writing development from a holistic communicative perspective, thus operationalising this skill under five different dimensions: content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar and vocabulary. The perspective adopted was considered crucial as most of the research has shown that EFL secondary teachers pay more attention to grammatical and lexical mistakes than other factors (Furieux et al., 2007; Lee, 2004, 2005, 2008a, b). In addition, a longitudinal study was considered in order to offer new insights to this field of enquiry as they are scarce when focusing on L2 writing development. In the literature, most investigations are cross-sectional, comparing groups of students while analysing the influence exerted by different factors such as the role of instruction, writing strategies or feedback on a specific writing task (e.g., Bi, 2020; Jiang et al., 2019; Kang & Lee, 2019; Lee, 2016; Zhang, 2008).

This research illustrates, to the best of our knowledge, the first longitudinal study analysing L2 writing development at 2nd year Baccalaureate level in Spain over an academic year through a mixed research methodology. Taking into consideration that writing is not a decontextualised process, contextual and social factors need to be fully considered (Usó-Juan et al., 2006), more investigations need to be conducted in Spanish

school contexts, as most of the existing research comes from America and Asia (Silva, 2016).

The present study also illustrates the first investigation analysing the role of instruction on L2 writing development at Baccalaureate level in Spain. It is believed that the instructional treatment used in FL writing is locally constrained (Manchón, 2009) and some instructional treatments may work in a specific context but not in others (Barkaoui, 2007; Hyland, 2002). Due to the complexity of instruction in L2 writing, this study explored the influence of two instructional treatments, i.e., explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction versus strategy instruction, in learners' L2 writing development over an academic year.

The present investigation also considers the role played by learners' initial proficiency level on their overall L2 writing development. Previous research has addressed positive correlations between proficiency level and L2 writing development (Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009), although mixed results can also be obtained (Schoonen et al., 2003). What is more, the investigations conducted considering the role of students' linguistic proficiency have mainly focused on specific aspects of writing, such as the use of strategies (e.g., Akyel, 1994; Gosden, 1996; Zhang, 2008) or the language used (e.g., Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Engber, 1995; Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Laufer & Nation, 1995, 1999; Sweedler-Brown, 1993). In order to fill this research gap, the present investigation analysed whether students' initial proficiency level had an impact on their overall L2 writing development over an academic year.

Finally, the current investigation represents, to the best of our knowledge, the first study considering the role of motivation on L2 writing at 2nd year Baccalaureate level. Research has demonstrated the influence motivation has on L2 writing performance (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013). However, there is not a consensus regarding which

type of motivation, i.e., integrative versus instructional motivation, has a stronger effect, as mixed results can be obtained in the literature depending on the context where the investigation took place (e.g., Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Lukmani, 1972; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000; Svanes, 1987). To offer new insights, this dissertation analysed the role played by overall motivation, integrative motivation, and instructional motivation on learners' L2 writing development throughout a whole academic year.

Considering the rationale and specific objectives set out above, the current investigation has explored L2 writing development in 148 2nd year Baccalaureate students of EFL in Spain over one academic year. A total of 444 opinion essays were analysed during the academic year 2021/2022 in three different data collections, i.e., September 2021 (T1), March 2022 (T2), May 2022 (T3). Their L2 writing performance was operationalised in terms of content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary, to envisage writing from a holistic communicative perspective (Usó-Juan et al., 2006). An analytic rubric was designed for this investigation following the current one used in the Valencian Community university entrance exams, as well as the one used by Cambridge English Qualifications and ACLES due to their reliability and acceptance. Then, using a mixed-method approach, findings were triangulated with the qualitative information obtained from participants' semi-structured interviews in an attempt to obtain deeper insights into the process of L2 writing development. Taking the previous information into consideration, the main results of each hypothesis will be summarised in what follows.

The first part of the investigation explored the role the instructional treatment plays regarding L2 writing development. RQ1 aimed at knowing the type of instruction that benefits L2 writing development more at Baccalaureate level in Spain over one academic year. Development of two different groups of EFL learners with a distinct instructional treatment in L2 writing was examined. In this regard, H1 predicted that the

teaching of explicit grammar and vocabulary would benefit L2 writing development (Archibald, 1994; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017; Tsang & Wong, 2000). On the contrary, H2 predicted that strategy instruction is the type of teaching which would positively benefit L2 writing performance (De Silva, 2015; Olson & Land, 2007; Sasaki, 2002; Sengupta, 2000). In order to evaluate participants' progress, a sequence of unpaired-samples t-tests were calculated for each group considering each dimension used to operationalise L2 writing proficiency in this dissertation as well as overall performance. Then, significant differences were observed between both groups.

After considering the results obtained, both H1 and H2 are supported, since findings presented significant differences in students' L2 writing performance throughout the academic year regardless of the treatment group they belonged to. What is more, comparisons on overall performance across time and group revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between both treatment groups, which means that both methodologies have shown to benefit L2 writing performance. When analysing the participants' views, the impact of both approaches seemed to be positive. In this regard, these results support previous investigations in which positive correlations existed between L2 writing development and explicit instruction (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Collins & Norris, 2017) and strategy instruction (De Silva, 2015; Hyland, 2002; Sasaki, 2002). Consequently, regarding RQ1, we cannot ascertain what type of instruction benefits the most, as both instructional treatments seem to be effective for the dimensions under analysis.

The second part of the investigation addressed RQ2, which aimed at exploring whether learners' initial level of proficiency in English influences overall L2 writing competence. After completing the Oxford QPT, participants were divided into groups A, B1, and B2. Those students initially grouped into C1 and C2 were discarded as their number was not representative enough. Moreover, groups A1 and A2 were fused into group A to get a stronger representation. Thus, the total sample comprised 134 participants with three proficiency levels. In this regard, H3 predicted that learners'

proficiency level in English would have a significant influence over their FL writing proficiency (Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009). In an attempt to explore this hypothesis, a series of unpaired-samples t-tests and tests of correlations were calculated at each data collection for each group considering each dimension used to operationalise L2 writing proficiency.

Results showed that participants increased their scores in every single dimension from the beginning to the end of the academic year, pointing to a positive evolution. However, the most proficient participants, i.e., those belonging to the B2 group, outperformed the rest of participants (A and B1 groups) during the whole school year. It is noteworthy to mention that significant differences were found all along the academic year for this group of learners when compared to the other two levels. In addition, positive correlations existed between learners' L2 writing achievement and their level of proficiency in all the dimensions explored, thus suggesting that advanced learners perform better in all dimensions than intermediate or lower participants.

The qualitative analyses have also offered additional evidence after exploring learners' individual trajectories. Findings seem to indicate that most proficient students outperformed the rest in their overall writing scores at T1, T2, and T3. Moreover, participants in more proficient groups reported positive attitudes towards the subject and L2 writing, a better predisposition to use writing strategies, and a good command of grammar and vocabulary. All these factors seem to support a positive connection between proficiency level and L2 writing competence.

Hence, after analysing all the findings obtained, H3 is supported, as it seems that students' proficiency level has a significant role on their L2 writing performance. These results reinforce previous investigations claiming the positive impact of proficiency level and writing competence (Manchón et al., 2009; Pennington & So, 1993; Roca de Larios et al., 2001, 2006; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996; Schoonen et al., 2009) and offer new insights into the context of 2nd year Baccalaureate students in Spain. Finally, regarding RQ2, it

can be confirmed that the initial level of proficiency in English influences overall L2 writing competence.

Finally, in the last part of this study, RQ3 and RQ4 addressed the issue of motivation. First, RQ3 aimed to analyse whether students' motivation influenced overall L2 writing proficiency. In this regard, H4 predicted that students' level of motivation would influence their L2 writing proficiency (Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013). In order to test this hypothesis, an adaptation of Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB was used to measure participants' motivation. The index AMI was estimated, and correlations were calculated among this index and each dimension used to operationalise L2 writing. This analysis was conducted at T1 and T3. In the first period analysed, positive correlations were found among motivation and all the dimensions, i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary, and overall performance. Significant differences were found in all categories except for the task requirement dimension. A very similar pattern was found at T3, where positive correlations were found once more, but significant differences were found in just four categories: content, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and overall performance. These findings consolidate previous investigations underpinning the influence of motivation on L2 writing proficiency (e.g., Csizér & Piniel, 2013; Hidi & Renninger, 2006; Kear et al., 2000; Kormos, 2012; Manchón, 2009; McAllister, 2014; McKenna et al., 1995; Sabti et al., 2019; Sahril & Weda, 2018; Zhang & Guo, 2013), thus supporting H4. Therefore, regarding RQ3, it can be claimed that students' motivation has an effect on overall L2 writing proficiency.

Due to the positive impact of motivation on L2 writing proficiency, this research also attempted to go a step further by discovering the type of motivation which had a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency. In this regard, RQ4 was formulated, and two different hypotheses were stated. H5 predicted that integrative motivation would have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Gardner, 1973, 1979, 1985, 2000; Gardner &

Lambert, 1972; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, 1993; Gardner et al., 1997; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003, Sadighi & Maghsudi, 2000), whereas H6 predicted that instrumental motivation would have a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency (Lukmani, 1972; Svanes, 1987). After analysing four items in Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB scale to calculate the values for integrative and instrumental motivation, ANOVA analyses were conducted with these two variables and overall L2 writing proficiency at both T1 and T3. Findings showed that neither integrative nor instrumental motivation have a significant effect on L2 writing proficiency in any of the periods analysed. Hence, none of these two hypotheses can be confirmed since no effect when comparing integrative or instrumental motivation was found on L2 writing proficiency.

In an attempt to fully understand these results, qualitative results were examined by means of the individual trajectories of the 19 learners. Thanks to the results of participants' integrative motivation, instrumental motivation and overall performance at T1 and T3, it is possible to claim that there is not a stronger effect on any of these two types of motivation. In fact, the 19 participants improved their overall performance at T3 regardless of the scores obtained in any type of motivation. Hence, results from the qualitative analysis also reject H5 and H6. Consequently, regarding RQ4, it can be stated that none of the two types of motivation analysed has a stronger effect on L2 writing proficiency.

Having mentioned the main results of this investigation, the following section focuses on the limitations and lines for further research.

8.2. Limitations of the investigation and lines for further research

The current investigation has presented some limitations that need to be stated, which may serve as guidelines for future work in this field of research.

The first limitation which needs to be acknowledged deals with the context where the study took place. Only participants from two different educational centres, both of them in the Valencian Community, were considered in this investigation. Although our findings seem to be in line with previous research in other contexts, caution must be taken when generalising these results. Future research conducted in other Spanish contexts may shed light on this issue.

Secondly, an important limitation dealt with the measuring of Gardner's (2010) mini-AMTB scale. Despite all the available literature regarding the use of this scale, the boundary which distinguishes a motivated learner from a demotivated one, and the different degrees of motivation attained according to the scores obtained on the scale were not clear enough. In order to solve this problem, the same criteria used in most reliable studies was applied (e.g., Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Another constraint related to this scale was the unbalanced number of items used to measure integrative and instrumental motivation. While there were 3 items which referred to integrative motivation, only 1 item was used for instrumental motivation. To get more comparable results, the average of integrative motivation was obtained using the results of the 3 items which belonged to this category. In this regard, a final score between 0 and 7 was given to each type of orientation. In order to solve this limitation, specific scales to measure motivation should be designed taking the context and participants' background into account.

Thirdly, the fact that the researcher was just one of the two teachers involved in this study made it impossible to get the same degree of information derived from observation in both groups. However, the main researcher was present in all data collections of both groups and maintained regular meetings with the other teacher in order to obtain all the necessary information.

Time constraints were another crucial limitation. In this longitudinal study, the level of language proficiency could not be calculated for all participants at the end of the academic year. Only the 19 participants who took part in the qualitative analyses

completed the QPT at T3. While this dissertation aimed at determining the role played by language proficiency on students' L2 writing development and not language gains at the end of the academic year, this is a new area to be addressed in future research to get a clearer perspective on 2nd year Baccalaureate students' linguistic development.

In addition to the previous drawback, the fact that only 19 participants were involved in the case studies was another disadvantage, as qualitative information was obtained from just 12.83% of students from the total sample. Future research should include the views of more participants in the qualitative analyses to get a broader perspective and more robust conclusions.

Another limitation dealt with the design of the analytic rubric used to evaluate participants' L2 writing proficiency. Despite considering a number of reliable analytical rubrics, it was not an easy task to delimit the bands and the criteria to include in each band. However, the rubric was tested by different EFL teachers and expert raters before piloting it. After the pilot study, modifications were made.

Furthermore, the fact that only two types of instructional treatments, i.e., explicit grammar and vocabulary, and strategy instruction, were used in this investigation could be considered another limitation. After analysing our results, the type of instruction which benefited the most could not be ascertained, as both seemed to be beneficial at this stage and context. A tentative hypothesis would be that the combination of both instructional treatments could be more beneficial for the development of L2 writing. This concern has previously been raised by several scholars who claimed that explicit and strategic teaching are more effective when taught together (e.g., Hyland, 2002; Myles, 2002; Yeh, 1998). Hence, future research should combine both instructional treatments to determine learners' L2 writing development.

In summary, despite the previous constraints, the current investigation has offered new insights into the understanding of L2 writing development. It is, to the best of our knowledge, the first longitudinal research examining the role of instruction, linguistic proficiency, and motivation on learners' L2 writing proficiency at

Baccalaureate level in Spain under a holistic communicative perspective. Therefore, the present dissertation reinforces previous research on L2 writing in secondary education in Spain (e.g., Manchón & Roca de Larios, 2007; Roca de Larios et al., 2006, 2008), and offers several pedagogical implications which are examined in the following section.

8.3. Pedagogical implications

Despite the limitations mentioned in the previous section, the current investigation has contributed to widen the body of research on L2 writing. The first and most important implication from the results obtained in this investigation, and in line with Archibald (2001), is that L2 writing can be instructed, and learners can benefit from the instruction received. Different methodologies can be valid depending on the learner's aims and the context where instruction is taking place (Manchón, 2009). However, combining and complementing some of them can help learners benefit from the affordances offered by these different approaches (Hyland, 2002; Myles, 2002; Yeh, 1998). After analysing students' perceptions, it is also paramount to consider that their progress does not only depend on the instructional treatment received but also on other external variables such as their motivation, their attitudes towards the English language or the learning situation, their anxiety levels, their language proficiency level, or the role played by the teacher, to mention but a few.

Secondly, level of language proficiency seems to be an indicator of success. More proficient learners can attain better scores at L2 writing. However, other individual differences may interfere with the learning process in the educational context.

Another important finding is that overall learners' motivation has an impact on students' L2 writing ability. However, in our specific context, neither integrative motivation nor instrumental motivation had a stronger effect on learners' L2 writing development. Learners at this stage in an EFL context may have different motivations apart from engaging with native speakers or learning the language for practical purposes.

Sometimes, their negative attitudes towards the subject, the language, or the teacher override their initial instrumental motivations. Therefore, this is an important pedagogical implication, as the variable of instrumental motivation was expected to be very influential at this stage.

A main pedagogical contribution of this dissertation is the analytic rubric designed to assess learners' L2 writing at this stage. Despite having a rubric to be used in 2nd year of Baccalaureate, this scale is extremely vague, and it does not contain guidelines regarding how to assess the different dimensions assessed, i.e., strategic aspects, grammar, coherence and cohesion, and vocabulary. In this regard, it is difficult to interpret, and many teachers feel frustrated when initially using it. In an attempt to solve this, the new five-point Likert analytic rubric designed contains 5 dimensions i.e., content, task requirement, coherence and cohesion, grammar, and vocabulary, to assess L2 writing from a holistic communicative perspective, and detailed information in each band. Moreover, two versions exist: a longer version with detailed information for each category at each score, and a shorter version for trained examiners.

In conclusion, this investigation offers evidence underpinning the fact that students can benefit from different instructional treatments to foster L2 writing development. However, different external variables and individual differences can interfere with this process. As we have analysed, language proficiency and motivation are two key variables which can shape learners' L2 writing development at this stage.

A large teal gear graphic is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the white background. The gear has a white semi-circle cutout in the center. The word 'REFERENCES' is written vertically in a bold, dark blue font, centered over the gear's cutout.

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A large teal gear graphic is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the text. The gear has a white center and a white outline. The text 'APPENDICES' is written vertically in a bold, dark blue font, centered horizontally across the gear's teeth.

APPENDICES

B

C

A

APPENDIX A: BACKGROUND AND INITIAL MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A continuación, se presentan una serie de preguntas para conocer vuestro interés por la asignatura de inglés. Tardareis unos 15 minutos en responderlas. Rogamos máxima sinceridad.

INFORMACIÓN PERSONAL

<u>Nombre:</u>
<u>Instituto:</u>
<u>Edad:</u>
<u>País de origen:</u>
<u>Lengua materna:</u>
<u>Nacionalidad de la madre:</u>
<u>Nacionalidad del padre:</u>
<u>Idiomas que utilizo en casa:</u>

1. **¿Cuánto años has estado aprendiendo inglés en contextos formales (escuela, instituto, academias, EOI, etc.)?**
 _____ (años)

2. **¿Durante este curso académico, cuantas horas a la semana de inglés tienes en tu instituto?**
 _____ (horas/semana)

3. **¿Durante este curso, vas a alguna academia de inglés o tienes algún profesor particular?**
 Sí _____ No _____
 Si es así, ¿Cuántas horas a la semana? _____
 ¿Hace cuantos años que vas a la academia o tienes profesor particular? _____
 ¿Cuál fue el motivo de comenzar? (Repaso, obtención de algún título, motivación personal...)

4. **¿Has estudiado algún curso académico en un colegio/instituto de inmersión lingüística en inglés (por ejemplo, en un colegio británico)?**
 Sí _____ No _____
 Si es así, ¿durante cuánto tiempo? _____ ¿Qué escuela/colegio era? _____

5. **¿Has estudiado alguna vez alguna asignatura en inglés?**
 Sí _____ No _____
 Si es así, por favor especifica:
 Mates _____ Geografía _____ Biología _____ Química _____
 Historia _____ Música _____ Gimnasia _____
 Otras, _____

6. **¿Tienes algún título oficial de inglés (Cambridge, EOI...)?**
 Sí _____ No _____
 Si es así, ¿Cuál y qué nivel? _____

7. **¿En general dirías que te gusta el inglés?**
 Sí _____ No _____

8. **¿Más específicamente, te está gustando la asignatura de inglés de 2 de bachillerato?**
 Sí _____ No _____

9. **¿Te gusta hacer writings?**
 Sí _____ No _____

10. **¿Consideras que escribir bien en inglés es importante a la hora de aprender/comunicarse en inglés?**
 Sí _____ No _____

11. ¿Cuál de estas destrezas consideras más importante a la hora de aprender/comunicarte en inglés? Puntúa de 1 a 4, poniendo **1 a las más importante** y **4 a la menos importante**.

___ Reading

___ Writing

___ Listening

___ Speaking

12. Si te hubieran dado la oportunidad de contestar este cuestionario en castellano o en inglés, ¿Cuál habrías elegido?

Castellano _____ Inglés _____

13. ¿Es importante para ti obtener una nota alta en la asignatura de inglés para acceder a la universidad?

Sí _____ No _____

14. ¿Crees que te esfuerzas más este año en inglés que otros años?

Sí _____ No _____

Si es así, ¿Cuál crees que es el motivo? _____

15. ¿Cuántos idiomas hablas? _____

Por favor, especifica el idioma y el nivel que crees que tienes (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 o C2).

Yo _____ hablo _____, _____, _____,

16. ¿En qué contextos utilizas el inglés en España?

___ En el instituto

___ En el trabajo

___ En clases particulares/EOI/academias

___ No utilizo nunca el inglés

___ Otros (especifica) _____

17. Específicamente, ¿llevas a cabo alguna de las siguientes actividades en inglés?

___ Ver TV/videos/series

___ Estudiar de apuntes

___ Buscar información

___ Hablar con amigos

___ Hablar con profesores

___ Conocer gente nueva

___ Escuchar radio/ música

___ Leer libros/ revistas

___ Otras (especifica) _____

**18. Para concluir, rodea la opción con la que te sientas más identificado/a.
Marca un número del 1 al 7.**

1. Mi motivación para aprender inglés y así poder comunicarme con personas nativas es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

2. Mi actitud hacia la gente inglesa es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

3. Mi interés en los idiomas extranjeros es:

MUY BAJO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUY ALTO**

4. Mi deseo de aprender inglés es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

5. Mi actitud hacia el aprendizaje del inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

6. Mi actitud hacia el profesor/a de inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

7. Mi motivación para aprender inglés para usos prácticos (conseguir un buen trabajo, viajar...) es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

8. Me produce ansiedad hablar inglés fuera de clase:

MUY POCO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUCHO**

9. Me produce ansiedad hablar inglés en clase:

MUY POCO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUCHO**

10. Mi actitud hacia la asignatura de inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

11. Mi motivación para aprender inglés es:

MUY BAJA 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUY ALTA**

APPENDIX B: FINAL MOTIVATION QUESTIONNAIRE

A continuación, se presentan una serie de preguntas para conocer vuestro interés por la asignatura de inglés. Tardareis unos 15 minutos en responderlas. Rogamos máxima sinceridad.

Nombre: _____

1. ¿En general dirías que te gusta el inglés?
Sí _____ No _____
2. ¿Más específicamente, te ha gustado la asignatura de inglés de 2 de bachillerato?
Sí _____ No _____
3. ¿Te ha gustado hacer writings?
Sí _____ No _____
4. ¿Consideras que escribir bien en inglés es importante a la hora de aprender/comunicarse en inglés?
Sí _____ No _____
5. ¿Es importante para ti obtener una nota alta en la asignatura de inglés para acceder a la universidad?
Sí _____ No _____
6. ¿Crees que te has esforzado más este año en inglés que otros años?
Sí _____ No _____
Si es así, ¿Cuál crees que es el motivo? _____

7. Para concluir, rodea la opción con la que te sientas más identificado/a.
Marca un número del 1 al 7.

1. Mi motivación para aprender inglés y así poder comunicarme con personas nativas es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

2. Mi actitud hacia la gente inglesa es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

3. Mi interés en los idiomas extranjeros es:

MUY BAJO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUY ALTO**

4. Mi deseo de aprender inglés es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

5. Mi actitud hacia el aprendizaje del inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

6. Mi actitud hacia el profesor/a de inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

7. Mi motivación para aprender inglés para usos prácticos (conseguir un buen trabajo, viajar...) es:

DÉBIL 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FUERTE**

8. Me produce ansiedad hablar inglés fuera de clase:

MUY POCO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUCHO**

9. Me produce ansiedad hablar inglés en clase:

MUY POCO 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUCHO**

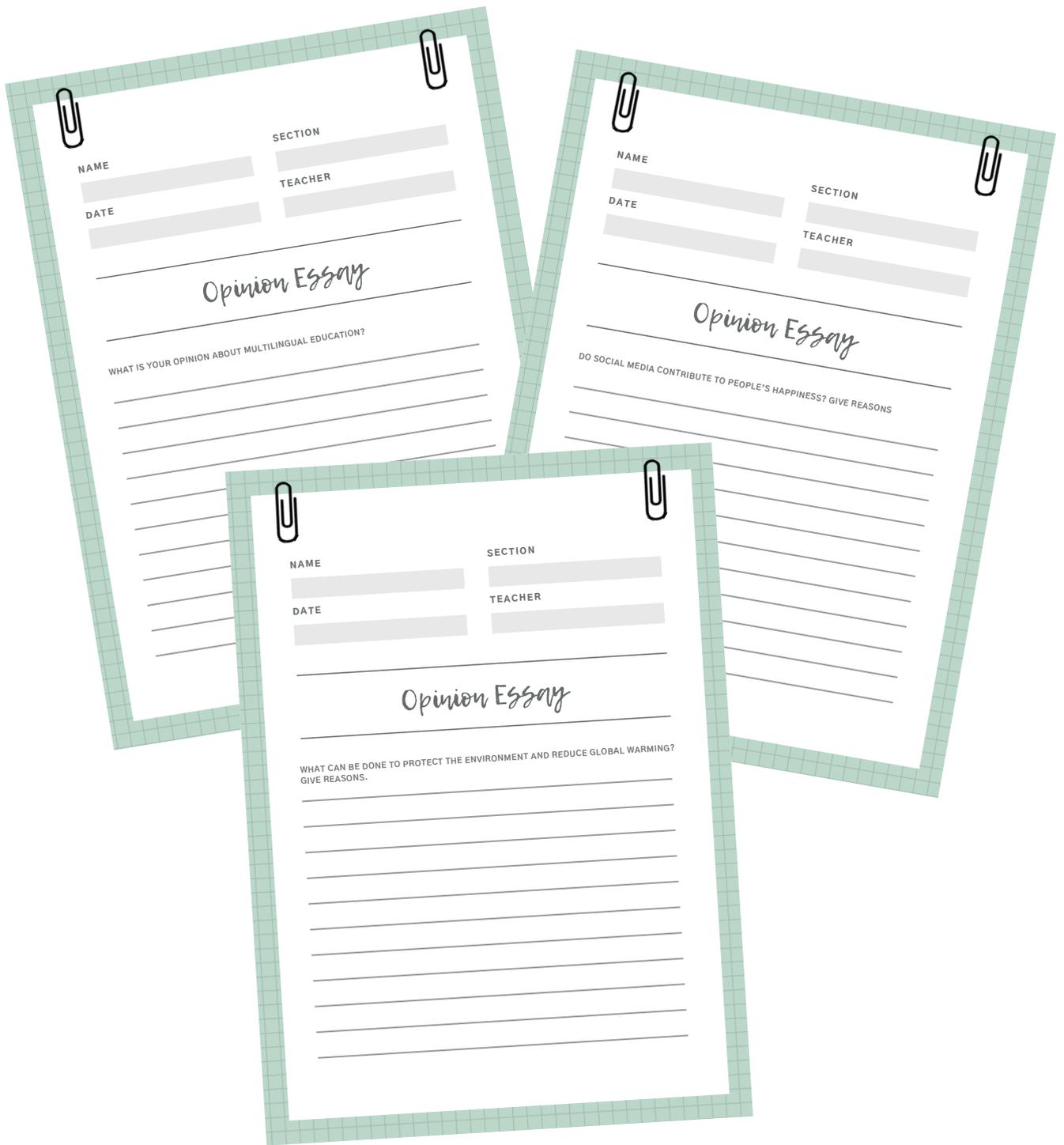
10. Mi actitud hacia la asignatura de inglés es:

DESFAVORABLE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **FAVORABLE**

11. Mi motivación para aprender inglés es:

MUY BAJA 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **MUY ALTA**

APPENDIX C: WRITING TASKS



APPENDIX D: GUIDELINES FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

INSTRUCTION

1. **Content**

- ¿Te ha servido la metodología utilizada por el profesor a la hora de desarrollar un pensamiento crítico que te ayudara a buscar argumentos en las redacciones? ¿Cómo?
- ¿Cuál es el proceso que sigues a la hora de buscar los argumentos de las redacciones?
- Una vez has acabado la redacción, ¿compruebas que todos los argumentos y explicaciones van relacionadas con el tema y tu opinión? ¿Cómo lo haces?

2. **Task requirement**

- ¿Te han ayudado las clases a saber qué tipo de redacción tienes que escribir cuando lees el enunciado, es decir, opinión, ventajas e inconvenientes, descripciones, una historia...? ¿En qué te fijas para saberlo?
- ¿Qué proceso sigues para asegurarte que utilizas el registro adecuado en cada tipo de redacción?
- ¿Cómo has aprendido a hacer las estructuras adecuadas para cada tipo de redacción?

3. **Coherence and cohesión**

- ¿Cómo sabes que conectores utilizar en cada situación?
- ¿Qué proceso utilizas para comprobar que todo tiene sentido? ¿O no lo compruebas?
- ¿Te centras en el sentido de cada párrafo o a nivel global?

4. **Gramática**

- ¿Utilizas los tiempos verbales estudiados en clase a la hora de escribir?
- ¿Sigues alguna estrategia para enriquecer a nivel gramatical las redacciones?
- ¿Intentas incluir estructuras simples y complejas? ¿Cuáles y como lo haces?

5. **Vocabulario**

- ¿Utilizas los términos específicos estudiados en clase en tus redacciones?
- ¿Usas sinónimos para evitar repeticiones?
- ¿Qué proceso sigues para enriquecer a nivel léxico la redacción?

6. A nivel general

- ¿Crees que lo que has aprendido en clase te ha servido para mejorar tu competencia escrita?
- ¿Qué proceso has utilizado durante el curso académico para mejorar?
- ¿Qué cambiarías de las clases de inglés para mejorar en todas las dimensiones en las que eres evaluado?

PROFICIENCY & MOTIVATION

1- ¿Te ha gustado la asignatura de inglés en 2 de bachillerato? ¿Qué es lo que más te ha gustado y lo que menos? ¿Eras capaz de seguir las explicaciones de la profesora en las clases? ¿Crees que dar las clases en lengua extranjera ha impedido tu mejora?

2- ¿Te ha gustado hacer redacciones en inglés? ¿Crees que has mejorado? ¿Qué es lo que más te ha costado y lo que menos? ¿Crees que escribes mejores redacciones ahora que al principio de curso?

3- ¿Ha sido una dificultad expresar tus ideas en un idioma extranjero? ¿O consideras que el idioma no ha sido una barrera a la hora de conseguir argumentos para tus redacciones, es decir, serías capaz de escribir la misma redacción con los mismos argumentos en tu lengua materna que en inglés?

4- ¿Aplicas todos los recursos y estrategias dadas en clase a la hora de realizar tus redacciones? En caso de no hacerlo, ¿cuál crees que es el motivo?

5- ¿Has tenido ayuda externa (academia, EOI, profe particular...) durante este curso académico para la asignatura de inglés? ¿Crees que has mejorado gracias a esta ayuda externa?

APPENDIX E: LONG RUBRIC

	CONTENT: Is the information provided in the text adequate and relevant regarding the topic suggested?	TASK REQUIREMENTS: Have the tasks requirements been fulfilled successfully (e.g., length, genre, register)?	COHERENCE AND COHESION: Is the text coherent (e.g., organization, structure) and cohesive (e.g., linking words, conjunctions, anaphoric devices)?	GRAMMAR: Are the grammatical structures (e.g. present, past, future tenses, modals, adverbials, comparatives and superlatives, and conditionals) adequate?	VOCABULARY: Are the lexical terms chosen adequate to the content of the text?
4	The number of arguments is extremely adequate , and all of them are very consistent regarding topic and opinion. * All arguments are 100% relevant and related to the topic and opinion	All the requirements of the task have been answered. * Length, text type and register are completely adequate	The writer ensures extreme coherence and cohesion by using a clearly organized overall structure, many linking words and other cohesive devices to connect all the ideas thus creating a text with complete global sense * The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, and all the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion	The writer presents a very high degree of control of simple and complex grammatical structures * At least 5 different grammatical forms are used successfully without any other grammatical mistake	The writer shows a very wide lexical range of vocabulary to express ideas with no avoidance strategies. There are no spelling mistakes. * The writer always uses specific vocabulary to the topic without spelling mistakes
3	The number of arguments is very adequate , and they are quite consistent regarding topic and opinion. * All arguments are quite relevant and related to the topic and opinion	Almost all the requirements of the task have been answered. * Length and text type are adequate , and register is somewhat adequate (e.g., some contractions appear)	The text is very coherent and cohesive . The writer usually introduces a new topic by using linking words. Repetitions are very infrequent. Anaphoric devices are numerous. There are no coherence breaks. Its global sense can easily be appreciated. * The essay contains 3/4 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half, or more of the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion OR all the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate	The writer presents a high degree of control of simple and complex grammatical structures. * At least 4 different grammatical forms are used successfully but 1 or 2 grammatical mistakes may appear	The writer shows a wide lexical range of vocabulary to express ideas with some avoidance strategies. There are no spelling mistakes. * The writer generally uses specific vocabulary to the topic with a maximum of 1 or 2 spelling mistakes
2	The number of arguments is adequate , and some of them are consistent regarding topic and opinion. * Half arguments are relevant and related to the topic and opinion	Half (more than half) of the requirements of the task have been answered. * Length and text type are somewhat adequate , and register is adequate	The text is coherent and cohesive . The writer uses some anaphoric devices, although sometimes relies on repetitions to achieve coherence. A good use of linking words is made. The text has global sense. * The essay contains 2 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half of the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate OR The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are somewhat related to the support sentence and overall opinion	The writer presents a good degree of control of simple grammatical structures. * At least 3 different grammatical forms are used successfully; however, there are a few (3-5) grammatical mistakes	The writer shows a varied range of vocabulary to express ideas, although avoidance strategies are evident at times. Some spelling mistakes and vocabulary choices are not accurate, but they do not cause misunderstanding. * The writer generally uses basic vocabulary with some specific terms. There is a bit of repetition. Spelling mistakes are present and there are 1 or 2 non-existent terms
1	The number of arguments is scarcely adequate , and they are somewhat consistent regarding topic and opinion. * Some arguments are somewhat related to the topic and opinion	Some (less than half) of the requirements of the task have been answered. * Text type is not adequate , but length and register are somewhat adequate	The text is scarcely coherent and not very cohesive . The text presents some coherence breaks and when coherence is achieved, it is often done through repetitions. Only a few anaphoric references and linking words are used. It is really difficult to reconstruct its global sense. * The essay contains only 1 linking word and very few cohesive devices. Moreover, topic sentences are not really related to the opinion and the support used is inadequate . OR The essay contains various linking words and cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are not related to the support sentence and overall opinion	The writer presents a reasonably good degree of control of simple grammatical structures. * At least 2 different grammatical forms are used more or less successfully, but the text presents some (5-7) grammatical mistakes	The writer has limited vocabulary. Basic vocabulary is used with a good degree of success, but avoidance strategies are very evident causing repetition. Inadequate lexical choices may cause misunderstanding. * The writer always uses very basic vocabulary (e.g., thing, it, people), non-existent words and there are a lot of spelling mistakes
0	The number of arguments is not at all adequate and they are not consistent to the topic and opinion. * Any argument is related neither to the topic nor the opinion	None of the requirements of the task have been answered. * Neither text type nor length or register are adequate	The text is neither coherent nor cohesive . Coherence breaks are very common, cohesive devices are hardly ever used and ideas are unrelated. * The essay does not contain linking words , and no cohesive devices are used. Moreover, topic sentences are not related to the opinion and there is no support	The writer presents a poor degree of control of simple grammatical structures which lead to misunderstanding. * As a maximum 1 simple grammatical form is used successfully. There are a lot of (more than 7) grammatical mistakes	The writer has very limited vocabulary. Repetitions, spelling mistakes and avoidance strategies constantly appear causing misunderstanding. * The writer uses words from other languages and non-existent lexical items. Spelling mistakes constantly appear

APPENDIX F: SHORT RUBRIC

	CONTENT	TASK REQUIREMENTS	COHERENCE AND COHESION	GRAMMAR	VOCABULARY
4	All arguments are 100% relevant and related regarding topic and opinion	Length, text type and register are completely adequate	The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, and all the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion	At least 5 different grammatical forms are used successfully without any other grammatical mistake.	The writer always uses specific vocabulary to the topic without spelling mistakes.
3	All arguments are quite relevant and related regarding topic and opinion	Length and text type are adequate, and register is somewhat adequate (e.g., some contractions appear)	The essay contains 3/4 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half, or more of the topic sentences are 100% related to the support sentence and overall opinion OR all the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate.	At least 4 different grammatical forms are used successfully but 1 or 2 grammatical mistakes may appear.	The writer generally uses specific vocabulary to the topic with a maximum of 1 or 2 spelling mistakes.
2	Half arguments are relevant and related regarding topic and opinion	Length and text type are somewhat adequate, and register is adequate	The essay contains 2 linking words and other cohesive devices. Moreover, half of the topic sentences are 100% related to the overall opinion but the support used is somewhat inadequate OR The essay contains a minimum of 4/5 linking words and other cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are somewhat related to the support sentence and overall opinion	At least 3 different grammatical forms are used successfully; however, there are a few (3-5) grammatical mistakes.	The writer generally uses basic vocabulary with some specific terms. There is a bit of repetition. Spelling mistakes are present and there are 1 or 2 non-existent terms.
1	Some arguments are somewhat related regarding topic and opinion	Text type is not adequate, but length and register are somewhat adequate	The essay contains only 1 linking word and very few cohesive devices. Moreover, topic sentences are not really related to the opinion and the support used is inadequate. OR The essay contains various linking words and cohesive devices, but the topic sentences are not related to the support sentence and overall opinion	At least 2 different grammatical forms are used more or less successfully, but the text presents some (5-7) grammatical mistakes.	The writer always uses very basic vocabulary (e.g., thing, it, people), non-existent words and there are a lot of spelling mistakes.
0	Any argument is related neither to the topic nor the opinion.	Neither text type nor length or register are adequate	The essay does not contain linking words, and no cohesive devices are used. Moreover, topic sentences are not related to the opinion and there is no support.	As a maximum 1 simple grammatical form is used successfully. There are a lot of (more than 7) grammatical mistakes.	The writer uses words from other languages and non-existent lexical items. Spelling mistakes constantly appear.

