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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS TO DEVELOP ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF EIGHTH-YEAR "A", AFTERNOON SESSION AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF LOJA DURING 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

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The present research work entitled **SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS TO DEVELOP ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF EIGHTH-YEAR "A", AFTERNOON SESSION AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF LOJA DURING 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**, under the responsibility of the undergraduate student **LARRY BRYAN PALACIO ARMIJOS** has been thoroughly revised and fully analyzed; therefore, I authorize its presentation for the pertinent legal aims.

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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

This thesis work is dedicated to my beloved mother, Margarita Armijos, for teaching me to work hard to achieve my goals in life. It is also dedicated to my sister, Lizette Toledo, who encouraged me to overcome my challenges. To my friend, Juan Carlos, who supported me since the first day of classes. Finally, I dedicate my work to the rest of my family and my friends who have been part of my life.

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a. TITLE

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b. RESUMEN

Este trabajo de investigación estuvo dirigido a mejorar la escritura en inglés a través de las técnicas de estructura de oraciones y de palabras de secuencia entre estudiantes de octavo año "A", sección vespertina del Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero" durante el año lectivo 2019-2020. Los métodos científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético y estadístico ayudaron a recopilar información teórica, describir las etapas de la investigación, analizar, procesar e interpretar los datos obtenidos. Se aplicaron pruebas y cuestionarios a treinta y dos estudiantes para diagnosticar y evaluar su progreso en escritura en inglés y las actitudes hacia las técnicas aplicadas. Las hojas de observación y los diarios contribuyeron a registrar el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en inglés y su actitud frente a la aplicación de la técnica. Los resultados mostraron una mejora significativa en la escritura, específicamente en el orden de las palabras, la puntuación y los tiempos verbales. Se concluye que la aplicación de estas técnicas fue efectiva para desarrollar sus habilidades de escritura. También los ayudó a trabajar colaborativamente con sus compañeros.

ABSTRACT

This research work was addressed to improve the English writing skills through sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. The scientific, descriptive, analytic-synthetic and statistical method assisted to compile theoretical information, describe the stages of the research, analyze, process and interpret the data gathered. Tests and questionnaires were applied to thirty-two students to diagnose and assess their progress on writing skills, and attitudes towards the applied techniques. The observation sheets and reflective journals were beneficial to register students' development of writing skills as well as their attitude towards the techniques. The results showed a significant improvement in students' writing skills, specifically in word order, punctuation and tense. To conclude, the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques assisted students to improve significantly their writing skills. It also enabled them to work collaboratively with their classmates.

c. INTRODUCTION

English writing skills are concerned with tasks where the learners need to draft or set outlines of what to be written and arranged correspondingly to the purpose of effective communication. Writing is complicated because of the significant challenges it places on the cognitive systems of thinking and memory (Kellogg, 2008). Many foreign language learners have faced a large number of problems in writing, according to Barra (2001), who identified that mistakes often found in English writing are spelling, punctuation, content and redundancy, failing to distinguish between facts and opinions, and failing to effectively communicate as expected.

However, an observation undertaken at 27 de Febrero High School, with students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session during 2019-2020 school year revealed that these students had difficulties when writing, specifically with punctuation, in structuring sentences, and on recognizing the tense in which sentences are written and where words should be placed in the sentences. These issues motivated the researcher to wonder how the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills.

The previous mentioned difficulties were the reasons why sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques were chosen to keep students working constantly on their writing, which also make them active members in their learning, these techniques are focused on identifying the basic

structure of a sentence and the words that connect them to form a complete paragraph. Likewise, sentence skeleton and signpost words are versatile so, teachers can use them in different ways.

The specific objectives for this research were: to research the theoretical and methodological references about sentence skeleton and signpost words and their implication in the development of writing skills; to diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English writing skills; to design an intervention plan based on sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve writing skills; to apply the most suitable techniques of sentence skeleton and signpost and to validate the effectiveness of sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve writing skills.

Multiple methods were used in this research. ***The scientific method*** facilitated the study of how sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques intended to improve writing skills, it helped in the observations done both before and during the intervention. ***The descriptive method*** was used to describe the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. ***The analytic-synthetic method*** was employed to make interpretations and the logical analysis of the data to draw up the conclusions. ***The statistical method*** assisted on making both the quantitative and statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and questionnaires and the qualitative analysis of the data obtained during the observations.

The present research is structured as follows: it begins with **the abstract**, which mentions the general objective, principal methods, techniques and materials, results obtained from the data and conclusions. Then, **the introduction** encloses the contextualization of the problem, the reasons why the theme was chosen, the specific objectives of the research, the methodology applied and the content of the thesis. The **literature review** refers to detailed information about the two variables; sentence skeleton and signpost words, and English writing skills. **The materials and methods** contain the design of the research, material, methods and instruments that were used to collect the information, the population and the description of the intervention plan. Then, **the results** are shown through tables and figures with their corresponding interpretation and logical analysis. Next, **the discussion** includes a general analysis of the results obtained, and finally there are **the conclusions and recommendations.**

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS

This research considers the effective outcomes that sentence skeleton and signpost words have on the development of the English writing skills. This section presents information related to sentence skeleton and signpost words, such as definitions and steps to be followed during the application of the techniques.

Sentence Skeleton

Thipatdee (2019) states that sentence skeleton is focused on identifying the basic structure of a sentence which is at least to identify the subject and the principal verb to comprehend a sentence. The author presents two types of sentences that learners may find; simple and complex sentences, which are developed differently when applying this technique.

For a simple sentence, learners have to identify the verb, the subject, and the complement. Nevertheless, for a complex sentence, learners need to spot the principal verb, find the principal noun, look for adjectives and then the direct object, the indirect object or both.

The author exemplified this: "The pollution of our environment by industrial waste, pesticides, solid wastes and oil spills, all of which have serious and lasting effects, is worrying many scientists". The verb is "is worrying", so if a question is, "What is worrying many scientists?" the answer will be pollution, therefore the subject of the sentence is "pollution" (p. 2).

If a sentence does not have the proper structure, which is the skeleton, it will be an amorphous mass of words; this is why learners must learn how to diagram a sentence.

Diagramming a sentence.

Huffpost (2017) affirms that diagramming a sentence guide the learners to reveal the structure of the English language because it places every word in a sentence in its own position. The ability to diagram helps learners visualize the ways parts of speech work in a sentence and see grammar rules, which encourage them to improve their writing skills.

Steps to diagram a sentence.

Step 1: Locate the subject and verb.

James	plays	music.
SUBJECT	VERB	COMPLEMENT

First, start with the key elements, the subject and verb. Every sentence must have a subject and verb, an action and someone or something performing the action. The subject will take the first position on the diagram and the verb will take the second position.

Step 2: Determine the kind of verb.

James | plays | music.

ACTION VERB

James | is | a | musician.

LINKING VERB

Verbs can either be categorized as action verbs or linking verbs. Action verbs are used when the subject is doing something, such as *running, singing,* or *thinking.* Linking verbs are most commonly "be" verbs, such as *am, is, are, was,* or *were.*

Step 3: Check for direct and indirect objects.

John | told | Peter | a story.

INDIRECT OBJECT

DIRECT OBJECT

The indirect object identifies the person/thing for whom/what the action of the verb is performed; similarly, the direct object is the receiver of the action mentioned in the sentence.

Helpful hints for diagramming a sentence.

- Always write the main sentence line first and then fill in the modifiers.

- Do not use punctuation, but do use capitalization and apostrophes.

- Multiple-word proper nouns (names and titles) and hyphenated words are kept together as a single word.

- When two different adjectives or adverbs modify the same word on the main sentence line, put them in the same left-to-right order as in the original sentence.

Signpost Words

In accordance with University of East Anglia (2009), signpost words are words or phrases that express a connection between two ideas and make the transition from one point to the next in writing. They can link ideas within a sentence, link two sentences, two paragraphs, or even two parts of the essay together.

Signpost words specify how two ideas are related: for example, whether they are similar ideas, contrasting ideas, or whether one idea adds more detail or a further example to another. They can show that one idea is the result or conclusion of another, or to show the order of the ideas in a sequence. They are a key component in developing argument showing the structure of it. They help the reader to follow where the essay is going.

Kinds of signpost words and their function

Function	Signposts	Example
To introduce a sequence of points in an argument	*Firstly, secondly*	**Firstly**, I prefer the train because I can see the landscape. **Secondly,** I have control over my luggage.
	Then	If you cannot go, **then** let me know.
	To begin with	**To begin with,** this essay will identify the causes of this situation.
	Lastly	**Lastly**, we must also have a genuine industrial policy.
	Initially	He was **initially** skeptical about her idea.
	Subsequently	These factors will **subsequently** be analyzed in detail.
	As noted above / below / previously	**As noted previously,** a number of scholars have offered a different explanation.
To cross-reference to other parts of the essay	*As is discussed below / above*	This development is composed of a number of stages, **as discussed above.**
	As stated previously	**As stated previously**, there is the possibility that we get back to school.
	In addition	**In addition,** all her planning was paying off.
To add an idea, or more detail	*Moreover*	**Moreover,** we have to protect consumers who are particularly vulnerable.
	Also	Member States must **also** try to cooperate.
	Additionally	Everyone is getting a raise. **Additionally**, we are all going on vacation.
	Again	**Again**, history gives no cause for optimism.
	Equally	**Equally** unanimous was our decision to build up a European network for nature protection.
	Furthermore	The issue is, **furthermore**, complicated by external matters.
	And	The boy laughed cheerfully **and** jumped out.
	Besides	**Besides**, it is the season of forgiveness.
	Indeed	**Indeed**, scholars reject this theory as unrealistic.
	For example	It was larger and probably richer than - **for example** Silchester.
To give an example	*As an illustration / example*	**As an example**, the following quotation could be cited as

		representative of this viewpoint.
	For instance	Certain research methods, **for instance**, surveys and questionnaires, are particularly effective.
	To illustrate	I can give you two examples **to illustrate** this point.
	To demonstrate	I offer these stories not **to demonstrate** that people can be cruel.
	In particular	Such examples, and **in particular** those from the last five years, support the findings of recent research.
To focus on specifics in more detail	*Specifically*	The Commission is **specifically** aware of this.
	As a rule	The entrance measures, **as a rule**, 5 or 6 ft.
To generalize	*In general*	**In general**, it is true to say that a good understanding of theory is essential.
	Usually	The food at that restaurant is **usually** pretty good.
	For the most part	The conclusions are, **for the most part,** sound.
	On the whole	**On the whole** I am satisfied with the experiment.
	Generally	Agriculture is the main industry, **generally** combined with cattle-raising.
	In most cases	Humans are afforded special protections **in most cases**.
	By the same token	**By the same token**, that it is not safe to wash hands, face, body with standing water.
To introduce a comparison or further point to support an argument	*In comparison with*	He pictured the vanity of his diplomatic career **in comparison with** Pierre's happiness.
	Similarly	**Similarly**, foreign vessels prevail over Italian vessels in regard to goods embarked.
	Compared with	**Compared with** the first example, the second seems unconvincing.
	Whereas	**Whereas**, if the child is left to himself, he will think more and better, if less showily.
	In like manner	**In like manner** the suffrage of women prior to 1918 was a claimed moral right.
	Likewise	This scholar's argument is **likewise** flawed.
	In contrast	**In contrast** with your belief that we will fail I know we will succeed.
To introduce a	*Nevertheless*	**Nevertheless**, arguments in favor

		of the theory must also be considered.
contrast or alternative point or section	*But*	I like her, **but** I do not like her friend.
	Conversely	**Conversely**, a cold bath increases it.
	However	The case must not, **however**, be overstated.
	Nonetheless	Furious at Jessi, he was **nonetheless** concerned.
	Yet	It was early, **yet** we were all ready for bed after our long hike.
	By contrast	It seems quite warm today **by contrast** with yesterday's icy wind.
	Although	**Although** she was far away, she could see that he was watching her.
	On the other hand	**On the other hand**, many women choose to go out to work.
	Alternatively	We could take the train or **alternatively** go by car.
	On the contrary	**On the contrary**, I did not even hear it.
	After all	The world is but a little place, **after all.**
To introduce a fact or state the obvious	*Evidently*	He had **evidently** decided to hang back a little longer.
	Clearly	**Clearly**, popular opinion is against the changes.
	Obviously	She **obviously** wants you to stay.
	Naturally	We cannot **naturally** fly, so we make airplanes.
	Of course	These claims must, **of course**, be closely examined.
	In other words	**In other words**, she must give up singing.
To rephrase or explain	*Or rather*	All men want, not something to do with, but something to do, **or rather** something to be.
	To be more precise	The model is not universal. **To be more precise**, it is not applicable in seven per cent of the above cases.
	That is to say	Our friends, **that is to say** our son's friends, will meet us at the airport.
	Namely	There is only one negative example, **namely**, that of the government.
	Accordingly	**Accordingly**, I copied the story and sent it to him for his birthday party.
To introduce a	*Consequently*	**Consequently**, all parts of the

reason, result, proof or logical conclusion		plant, except the stem, are modified leaves.
	Thus	**Thus**, he learns that words name things and actions and feelings.
	Due to	**Due to** problems of access, research on this topic is scarce.
	As a consequence	The data are incomplete and, **as a consequence,** this interpretation is not convincing.
	Hence	The roads were covered in ice; **hence** it was not safe to drive.
	For this reason	**For this reason**, many people were glad when he ran away from home and went to sea.
	Indeed	I was **indeed** very glad to hear the news.
	As a result	I booked two more rooms for Bird Song **as a result** of it.
	Therefore	You had no real knowledge and **therefore** no way to make a wise decision.
	Because	Is it **because** winning the award gives them more confidence?
	In fact	On each subject there are **in fact** two pages.
	In conclusion	**In conclusion**, it has been demonstrated that the hypothesis is generally supported by the evidence.
To conclude	*In short*	**In short**, she had a cushion job.
	To conclude	**To conclude**, I would like to express my thanks to my family.
	Finally	**Finally**, he pulled away.

Adapted from "Using 'signpost' words and phrases" by University of East Anglia (2009)

The signpost words can be used at the beginning of sentences or, in most cases, in the middle or at the end, as demonstrated above. They are very effective in the first sentence of a paragraph to indicate what the function of it is in the context of the argument, or in the middle of a paragraph to develop a point, and at the end to conclude the idea of the paragraph.

It is important to use signpost words and phrases accurately, as they change the meaning of what is being written. These two sentences have opposite implications:

- The government's stance was resolute. <u>However</u>, the negotiations did not succeed.

- The government's stance was resolute. <u>Therefore</u>, the negotiations did not succeed.

Remarkable features about sentence skeleton and signpost words were explained. It includes their definitions, hints for diagramming a sentence and kinds of signpost words. In conclusion, these theoretical references provide all the precise information about these techniques which fundamental to improve English writing skills.

ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

Writing is a complex skill that requires the writer to express their ideas to communicate. Writers gain creativity when they write based on their own ideas, not copying what has been written (Salma, 2016).

Strategies for Teaching Writing

Smith (2015) states that teaching writing is done actively and explicitly in a developmental sequence. Multi-sensory teaching can be used by teachers to incorporate all the senses in a fun and engaging way, ensuring that all children learn regardless of learning style or background. The following are some of the strategies that can be used to teach writing skills at lower levels of learning:

Developmental sequence.

We teach the easiest skills first, and then build on prior knowledge. Our teaching sequence takes advantage of child development and brain

research to promote effective learning and good habits. Children learn in stages; imitation (The child watches as the teacher writes and then imitates the teacher), copying (The child looks at the completed model of a letter, word, or sentence and copies it to match the model) and Independent writing (The child writes unassisted, without a demonstration or a model).

Developmental order.

Teaching letters in a developmental order helps children master and boost confidence. We teach capitals first, and then lowercase letters. All letters are better taught in small groups of similar formation. Children master the easier letter groups, and then move to more difficult letter groups.

Multi-sensory teaching.

Children should be helped to develop their writing skills through explicit, multi-sensory, play based instruction. Children move, touch, feel and manipulate real objects as they learn the habits and skills essential for writing. We use music to speak to children and promote movement and memory. Other multi-sensory lessons use voices, letter stories, door tracing, air writing and mystery letter games to teach letter formation and placement on lines. In other levels like primary class four and above, teachers of the writing skill should maintain careful and continuous preparation at every stage, so that the pupils know what they are going to write before they put pen to paper.

According to Langan (2013), a teacher of English language ought to be aware of the stimuli to be used to arouse learners' interest which include:

Visual stimuli.

This involves the use of pictures, maps, charts and diagrams from various sources. If pictures are used in a lesson, students are going to be more motivated as they would know that their teacher has always something interesting to show. It is also used as a prize for good behavior.

Oral stimuli.

Use of anecdotes, discussions, debates, speeches, stories, songs, poems. The use of these different examples generates interest among students which results in an improvement in their learning process.

Reading.

Use of interesting and well selected types of writing which may be used in class. Reading aloud helps students learn how to use language to make sense of the world; it improves their information processing skills, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Different forms and viewpoints.

Looking at events from a different angle. For example, asking students to write about an event in or near their school. The teacher asks different groups to write about the same event in different forms such as:

- A letter home.

- A report to the police.

- A dialogue between a journalist and an eye witness.

Selection of audience.

When learners are given a chance to select their audience, it acts as a good stimulus for the students to write well.

To maintain the motivation.

The best learners written work could be displayed on the wall, presented to the rest of the class, included in a school magazine, or displayed on the school notice board.

In addition to these strategies, the 3Ps approach is worth to mention as a tool to help teachers to improve their students' English writing skills.

The 3Ps as a Conventional Learning Approach

Mugableh (2019) states that conventional learning approach focuses on the form rather than the meaning. The process unusually passes into three stages; namely, presentation, practice, and production known as 3Ps model. The teacher, who is dominant in the classroom, usually begins the lesson by providing the new forms and meanings to be learned.

This approach is conducted into three stages. In the first stage, the structure of a grammatical point is presented to facilitate understanding of the underlying rule. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. Mugableh added that the second stage involves moving from gathering knowledge into practice. In this stage, the focus is on the accuracy, which is "subject to the teacher's careful supervision or control". In the third stage, the author noted that the declarative knowledge obtained from the first stage is converted into "procedural knowledge" to produce the

language (p. 4).

The author also mentions that three basic ideas must be taught when referring to punctuation, as follows;

- There must be a full stop at the end of each sentence.

- There must be a question mark after a question.

- A comma should be placed where there is a pause for a moment. This is a rough and ready rule, and it will help, if the teacher bears in mind that it will not always work.

A useful method is to dictate short sentences, and the children then put in the full stops and question marks. The best thing, of course, is to be really careful to mark the punctuation of everything that is written, and to get the pupils to be careful also, whether it is in English or any other subject.

Types of Texts

According to Evayanti (2013) and Werlich (2006), there are four types of text, which are the following:

Descriptive text.

Descriptive text is a kind of text that is used to describe about a person, object, appearance, scenery, or phenomenon. In this text, the writer tries to make the readers as like they see, feel, and experience what the story tells.

Narrative text.

Narrative text is retelling a story that is told by the doer or other person's point of view. It is more about writing a chronological story, whether true or just a fictional.

Explanatory text.

Explanatory text is kind of text that aims at clarifying, explaining, teaching, or evaluating an issue. The writer tries to give information or sign to the reader by developing the idea by giving the example, process, cause and result, classification, definition, analysis, comparing and contrary.

Argumentative text.

Argumentative text is a text that is used to convince the readers, the writer attempts to persuade them as he describes, narrates or explains appropriate details to the reader.

Elements of Good Writing

Walker (2010) states that there are five elements of good writing, which are explained as follows:

Purpose.

Purpose is the reason why a writer is writing a particular paragraph. The purpose is the goal the writer is trying to achieve. The three most common goals of academic writing are:

- To inform the readers.

- To persuade the readers.

- To entertain the readers.

Audience.

This term refers to the person or group of people for whom a writer writes. A writer uses a particular style of language, tone, and content according to what is known about the audience. Good writers keep their audience in mind

as they write every sentence in their paragraph.

Clarity.

Clarity refers to how easy it is for the reader to understand a writing. Clear sentences are not vague or indirect; they get the point across to the reader by using specific, concise language. It communicates effectively the content of a written text with its intended audience.

Unity.

Unity means that each paragraph has only one main idea (expressed in the topic sentences) and that all other sentences in that paragraph revolve around that main idea. If a sentence does not adhere closely to the central idea expressed in the topic sentence, it does not belong in that paragraph. If a new main idea comes up, a new paragraph is needed.

Coherence.

A piece of writing has coherence when all of the ideas are organized and flow smoothly and logically from one to the next. When a paragraph or essay has coherence, the reader can follow the main ideas more easily. Three important features of coherence are:

- Logical order.
- Repetition of key words.
- Use of transitional words and phrases.

Writing Process

Whitaker (2009) affirms that there are seven steps that must be followed when writing, which are the following:

Choose a topic.

Look through the textbook until there is something of interest. Then narrow as many ideas as possible from subjects to topics. Once the specific topic is chosen for the paper, write the topic as a question that the paper will answer.

Think (brainstorm).

Write down all the possible answers to the question, and write down all the information, opinions, and questions about the topic. Brainstorming will help to see what is already known, what is thought and what else is needed to find out about the topic.

Plan (outline).

A basic outline is the first attempt to organize the ideas of the paper. It will help focus the research and consider the order of the ideas. To make one:

1. Write the question and its answer. A simple answer to the question is enough to start the basic outline.

2. Write down all the reasons to answer the question. Do not look at any sources.

3. Look at the list and organize the ideas. Some may be combined as one larger idea; some may just repeat others in different words.

4. Decide how to order these points.

Write.

Start writing and do not stop until the essay is finished. Write sentences by their own (they do not necessarily need to be related to each other). Or

write paragraphs separately, in any order. Many writers do the body paragraphs first and save the introduction and conclusion for the end.

Revise.

The next step is to revise the paper – strengthen the content. In fact, it is not needed to wait until have a complete first draft to start revising. It is possible to revise individual paragraphs as finishing them as well.

Edit.

In the editing step, the writer strives to improve a draft by correcting errors and making words and sentences clearer, more precise, and as effective as possible (not necessarily shorter). The process of editing involves adding, deleting, and rearranging words to cut the clutter and streamline overall structure.

Proofread.

It is a critical part of the writing process that involves scrutinizing a written document in order to identify and rectify grammar, punctuation, spelling and vocabulary errors. Proofreading is a fundamental part of this process.

Aspects of Writing

Word order.

It is the way in which words are arranged in sequence in a sentence to make it understadable. If words are placed in the wrong order, the result is a confusing, unclear, and an incorrect sentence. The sequence in which words generally occur may change depending if the sentence is formal or informal.

Punctuation.

It is the collection of marks such as periods, full stops, commas, or question marks that are used to make sentences flow smoothly and express meaning clearly. It separates ideas into sentences and clauses so that sentences are clear, it points out titles, quotes, and other key parts of language. The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meanings of texts by linking or separating words, phrases, or clauses.

Tense.

It denotes the time an action takes place, whether sometime in the past, in the present or will take some time in the future. It is shown by its grammatical form. There are three main tenses in English, present tense, past tense and future tense.

Grammar.

Grammar is the set of language rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to make sentences that convey meaning. It deals with the forms and structure of words, with their customary arrangement in phrases and sentences and with word meanings.

Activities to assess English writing skills.

Gap filling.

It is an activity in which words are removed from a text and replaced with spaces. Learners have to fill each space with the missing word or a suitable word. It is used to practice specific language points, for example spelling.

Ordering words or sentences.

In order to learn vocabulary and the order words must have in a text, this activity is the most suitable. It consists in words and sentences being misspelled and learners ordering and writing them correctly.

Sentence completion.

It works by providing a sentence which contains one or two blanks (usually), then asking learners to complete the sentence with the adequate word or words. The complex part comes when recognizing the tense of the sentence.

Parallel writing.

Parallel writing is the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a sentence. By making each compared item or idea in a sentence follow the same grammatical pattern, create a parallel construction. The usual way to join parallel structures is with the use of signpost words.

Assessing Written Work

As important as planning activities to help students develop their writing skills is assessing their written work. It is invaluable to both, students who can learn from their errors, and teachers who can check the students' progress and identify specific problems. Controlled writing tasks (such as gap-filling, ordering, parallel writing) can easily be corrected in class. Students can correct each other's work in pairs. This type of correction involves students in the revision and editing of their own pieces of writing so that they can learn from their errors. However, there are times when

students have to write more freely in English and it is necessary to correct their work individually.

Remarkable features about English writing skills were analyzed. It includes its definitions, teaching strategies, aspects of writing, types of texts, elements of good writing, writing process and activities to assess English writing skills. In conclusion, these theoretical references provide all the precise information about this skill.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials.

This research was successfully accomplished with the support of human, technical, and material resources. Among the human resources, the researcher, the students of eighth-year "A", who took part in the application of the sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques, and the teacher in charge of the subject, who allowed the development of the research. Referring to technical sources, the researcher required a laptop and internet connection to gather valid information for the development of the research. The material resources consisted of lesson plans focused on Presentation, Practice and Production model, which were suitable to implement the intervention plan. Moreover, written texts were appropriate to demonstrate students the correct way to use English when writing sentences and paragraphs. Flashcards were applied to persuade students' participation in the presentation stage of the lesson plan. Worksheets were beneficial to measure students' knowledge about the topics taught during the intervention plan.

Design of the research.

This research follows the design of action research, indicated by Creswell (2012), "is a systematic procedure done by teachers to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching, and their student learning." The author

described the following steps: determine if action research is the best design to use, identify a problem to study, locate resources to help address the problem, identify needed information, implement the data collection, analyze the data, develop an intervention plan, implement the plan and reflect on it. In accordance with Creswell, this research was developed in the following ways: first, the researcher determined action research as the best design to use. After that, students of eighth-year "A" were observed to identify their weaknesses in English writing skills. Then, information about writing skills, and sentence skeleton and signpost words was collected to be analyzed. After analyzing the information, an intervention centered on sentence skeleton and signpost words was designed and applied to improve English writing skills. Finally, the application of the intervention plan was evaluated and the results served to reflect on the students' progress in English writing skills.

Methods.

Different methods were applied during the development of this research. They are explained as follows;

The scientific method supported the researcher to collect important information about sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques intended to improve English writing skills.

The descriptive method facilitated the description of the different steps of the research and the kind of resources that were used. It served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation.

The analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze and interpret the data obtained through the tests, questionnaires, journals and observation sheets. Also, this method served to make a logical analysis and draw up the conclusions.

The statistical method contributed to make both the quantitative and statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and questionnaires. It served to represent the information in graphs.

Techniques and instruments.

With the aim to gather information, different instruments were designed, namely, tests, questionnaires, observation sheets and reflective journals. These instruments provided the researcher the necessary information to make pertinent quantitative and qualitative interpretations.

Test.

Two kinds of tests were applied to the participants. A pre-test was employed at the beginning of the intervention plan, in order to evaluate and measure students' knowledge in English writing skills. And a post-test was applied at the end of the intervention plan to analyze students' progress in the mentioned skills. The pre-posttests contained four questions, which were ordering, separating items, matching and filling the blanks. These questions assisted the researcher to assess students on punctuation, word order, tense, and grammar.

Questionnaire.

Two questionnaires were implemented; pre and post questionnaire. A pre-questionnaire was applied at the beginning of the intervention plan. And a post-questionnaire was employed at the end of the intervention plan. They were composed of five multiple choice questions related to how sentence skeleton and signpost words improve students' English writing skills. Their application was aimed to know students' attitudes, feelings, and perceptions towards the application of these techniques.

Observation sheet.

By means of observation sheets, the researcher wrote down the accomplishments that students have during each class. This instrument bolsters to maintain evidence of the students' improvement in English writing skills by applying sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques.

Reflective journal.

The journal promoted the researcher to identify the way how students reacted regarding to the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words in each lesson, which eventually provided a better understanding of the process of the intervention plan.

Population.

Thirty-two students of eighth-year "A" at 27 de Febrero High School took an active role in the development of this research. The participants were 18 boys and 14 girls who were all aged about 12-15 years old.

Description of the intervention plan.

The development of the intervention plan was carried out in different phases, which are explained as follows;

Phase 1. Initial reflection.

Assisted by a non-participant observation, the researcher was able to identify that the lack of writing skills is an issue among students of eighth-year "A". Being this the concern, the researcher read literature about writing skills and found out that sentence skeleton and signpost words are beneficial to empower learners in this skill.

Phase 2. Planning.

As a consequence, to deal with the eighth-year "A" students' weaknesses on writing skills, 3Ps lesson plans were presented, which is conducted into three stages. In the first stage, the structure of a grammatical point is presented. The second stage involves moving from gathering knowledge into practice. Finally, in the third stage, the language is produced. The lesson plans were organized with task-writing activities such as gap filling, ordering words or sentences, sentence completion, and parallel writing.

Phase 3. Action.

The intervention plan was developed during 40 sessions of 45 minutes each one in an eight-week period of time. The sessions were developed with lesson plans centered on the 3Ps model.

Phase 4. Observation.

While the intervention plan was taking place, the researcher monitored and recorded eighth-year "A" students' perceptions and accomplishments to the planned activities by means of a pre and post-test, a questionnaire, observation sheets, and a reflective journal.

Phase 5. Reflection.

Once the intervention plan was finished, the researcher considered the effectiveness of sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

f. RESULTS

The following section describes how the objectives were achieved. The first objective was reached researching the needed information about sentence skeleton and signpost words in books, different websites, and research works from some authors. The theoretical references were valuable to design the intervention plan as well as instruments like tests and questionnaires. Likewise, the methodological references were useful to apply the theory correctly.

The second objective was attained through the results of the application of the pre-test, which are displayed in Table 1. The third objective was accomplished by designing lesson plans based on the 3Ps model, which consisted of three stages: presentation, practice and production. Each lesson was addressed to improve the English writing skills.

The fourth objective was fulfilled through the comparison of the pre and post-questionnaire results, which is illustrated in tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The fifth objective was achieved with the post-test results that validated and confirmed the students' improvement in English writing skills through the use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.

Pre-Test Results.

Objective two: To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

a. Table 1

Pre-Test Scores of Eighth Year "A" Students in Writing

STUDENTS' CODE	WO	P	T	G	SCORE
	/2.0	/2.0	/4.0	/2.0	/10.0
VDFHS8A01	1.0	2.0	3.0	0.0	6.0
VDFHS8A02	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
VDFHS8A03	1.5	1.0	3.0	0.5	6.0
VDFHS8A04	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5
VDFHS8A05	1.0	0.5	3.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A06	0.5	1.0	4.0	1.0	6.5
VDFHS8A07	0.5	0.5	2.0	0.0	3.0
VDFHS8A08	0.5	1.5	3.0	0.0	5.0
VDFHS8A09	1.0	1.5	3.0	0.5	6.0
VDFHS8A10	1.5	1.5	3.0	0.0	6.0
VDFHS8A11	1.5	2.0	2.0	0.5	6.0
VDFHS8A12	1.5	2.0	3.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A13	0.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	3.0
VDFHS8A14	0.5	2.0	4.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A15	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.5	1.5
VDFHS8A16	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
VDFHS8A17	1.5	2.0	3.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A18	1.5	1.5	3.0	0.5	6.5
VDFHS8A19	1.5	2.0	2.0	0.5	6.0
VDFHS8A20	0.5	0.0	4.0	0.5	5.0
VDFHS8A21	1.5	2.0	3.0	1.0	8.0
VDFHS8A22	1.0	2.0	3.0	0.5	6.5
VDFHS8A23	0.5	0.5	2.0	0.0	3.0
VDFHS8A24	0.5	2.0	4.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A25	0.5	2.0	4.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A26	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	4.0
VDFHS8A27	0.5	1.5	2.0	0.5	4.5
VDFHS8A28	1.0	1.5	4.0	0.0	6.5
VDFHS8A29	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	5.0
VDFHS8A30	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.0	2.5
VDFHS8A31	1.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	4.0
VDFHS8A32	0.5	2.0	2.0	0.0	4.5
MEAN	0.9	1.3	2.4	0.3	4.9

Note. VDFHS= Veintisiete De Febrero High School, 8A= Eight year "A", 01= Students' code, WO= Word Order, P= Punctuation, T= Tense, G= Grammar.

b. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is shown in Table 1, the general mean score that students obtained was 4.9/10 in English writing skills, which indicates that students are placed in a below average range (see grading scale on page 120). The highest mean score that learners obtained was 2.4/4 in tense related to the simple present and present continuous. It demonstrated the facility that learners had to differentiate between these tenses. Even though students discerned between tenses, they needed to gather extra knowledge to achieve it. It is difficult for students to structure sentences with the appropriate tense.

The lowest mean score achieved by students was 0.3/2 in grammar, which shows that it was challenging to them to recognize the parts of speech and how to structure a sentence. In addition, students were unaware of when to write sentences in simple present and when to write them in present continuous.

Consequently, the results demonstrated that students background in writing skills was not good enough to develop writing tasks properly. Students had problems in ordering words, punctuation, identifying the tense and applying grammar rules.

According to Nunan (2003), writing is an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph that is clear to be understood by people. It requires the writer to express the content of the writing into a good composition by considering each possible aspect.

Comparison of the Pre and Post-Questionnaire Results.

Objective four: To apply the most suitable techniques of sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

Question 1: Signpost words are useful to connect sentences correctly.

a. **Table 2**

Usefulness of Signpost Words to Connect Sentences Correctly

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Agree	12	38	22	69
Undecided	7	22	8	25
Disagree	13	40	2	6
TOTAL	32	100	32	100

b. **Figure 1**
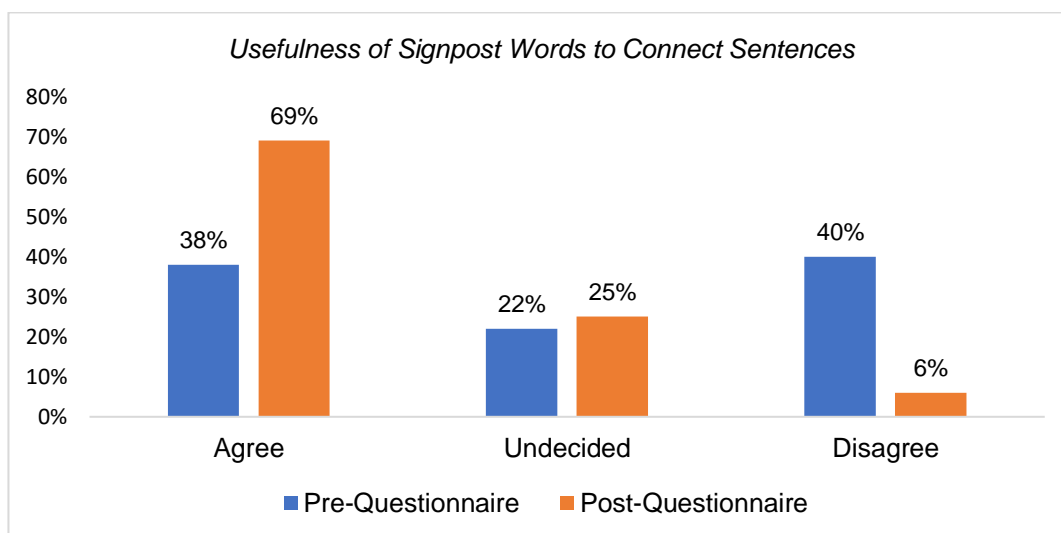
c. **Interpretation and Analysis**

As it is shown in Table 2, several students (40%) answered that they disagree that signpost words are useful to connect sentences correctly. This shows that students are aware of the correct way to apply linking words

when writing sentences. Whereas, after the intervention plan more than half of students (69%) agreed that signpost words were useful to connect sentences correctly. They expressed that this technique guided them to have a significant progress in linking effectively different kinds of writings. According to Williams (1982), signpost words link ideas within a sentence, link two sentences, two paragraphs, or even two parts of an essay together.

Question 2: Writing skills are developed better by diagramming sentences into its parts.

a. **Table 3**

Diagramming Sentences into its Parts to Develop Writing Skills

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Agree	4	13	18	56
Undecided	11	34	11	34
Disagree	17	53	3	10
TOTAL	32	100	32	100

b. **Figure 2**

Diagramming Sentences into Its Parts to Develop Writing Skills
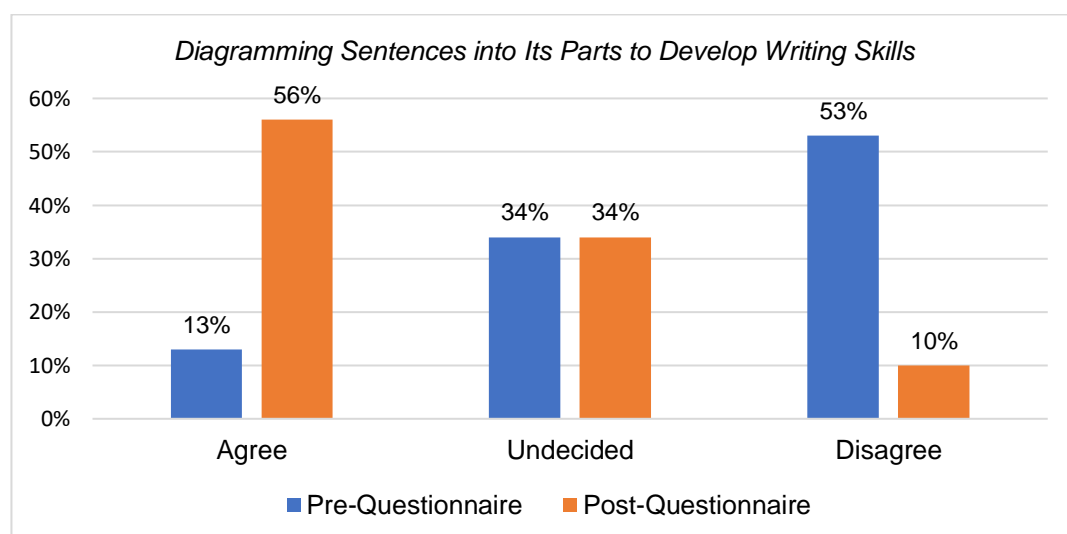
c. **Interpretation and Analysis**

According to the results displayed in Table 3, more than half of students

(53%) answered they disagree that writing skills are developed better by diagramming sentences into its parts. This demonstrates that students prefer to write sentences following a common structure instead of making a deeper illustration of the sentence itself. Contrasting the results obtained after the application of the intervention plan, more than half of students (56%) agreed that writing skills were developed better by diagramming sentences into its parts. This indicated that students made a meaningful improvement in their writing by using diagrams, which signifies that they are competent to write short paragraphs connecting sentences properly. As mentioned by Huffpost (2017), diagramming a sentence creates a clear visual that helps analyze what is written.

Question 3: Sentence skeleton makes it possible to see the structure of a sentence.

a. Table 4

Sentence Skeleton to See the Structure of a Sentence

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Agree	11	34	24	75
Undecided	6	19	5	15
Disagree	15	47	3	9
TOTAL	32	100	32	100

b. Figure 3

The chart is titled *Sentence Skeleton to See the Structure of a Sentence*

Category	Pre-Questionnaire	Post-Questionnaire
Agree	34%	75%
Undecided	19%	15%
Disagree	47%	10%
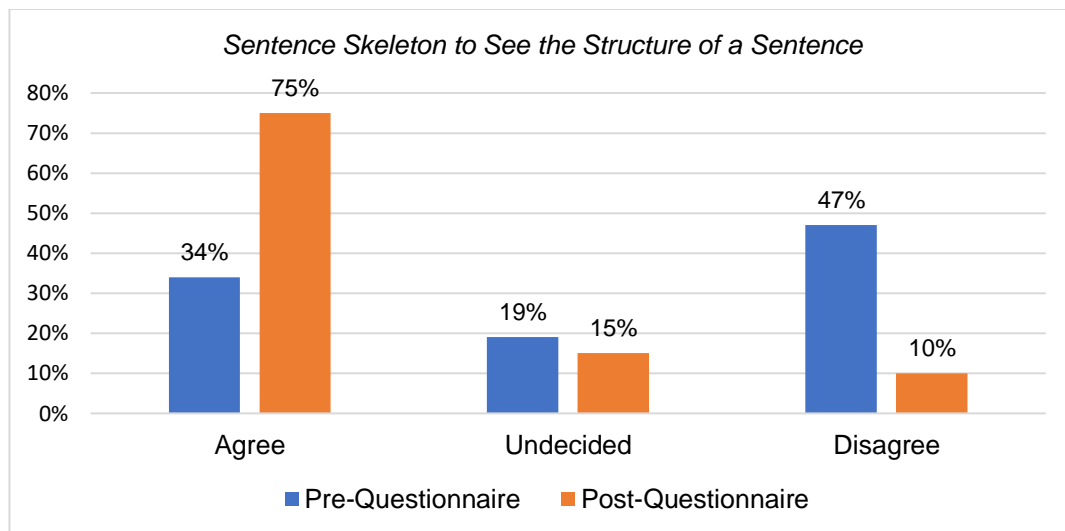
c. Interpretation and Analysis

The findings in Table 4 indicate the disagreement students had about sentence skeleton makes it possible to see the structure of a sentence. This demonstrates that students' background in structuring sentences was not good enough to write them properly. Additionally, they felt disappointed when they made mistakes using this technique. After the intervention plan, an affirmative change was appreciated. Many students (75%) agreed that sentence skeleton made it possible to see the structure of a sentence. This technique provided a lot of practice in recognizing the parts of speech, which motivated students to express their ideas and thoughts easily. It was possible for students to recognize the structure of a sentence (nouns, verbs, pronouns, prepositions, adjectives and adverbs) because they felt motivated to apply the technique confidently. According to Thipatdee (2019), the technique of sentence skeleton is focused on identifying the basic skeleton of a sentence which is at least to identify the subject and the

principal verb to comprehend a sentence.

Question 4: Sentence skeleton facilitates the formulation of sentences.

a. Table 5

Facility to Formulate Sentences through Sentence Skeleton

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Agree	11	34	20	62
Undecided	7	22	4	13
Disagree	14	44	8	25
TOTAL	32	100	32	100

b. Figure 4
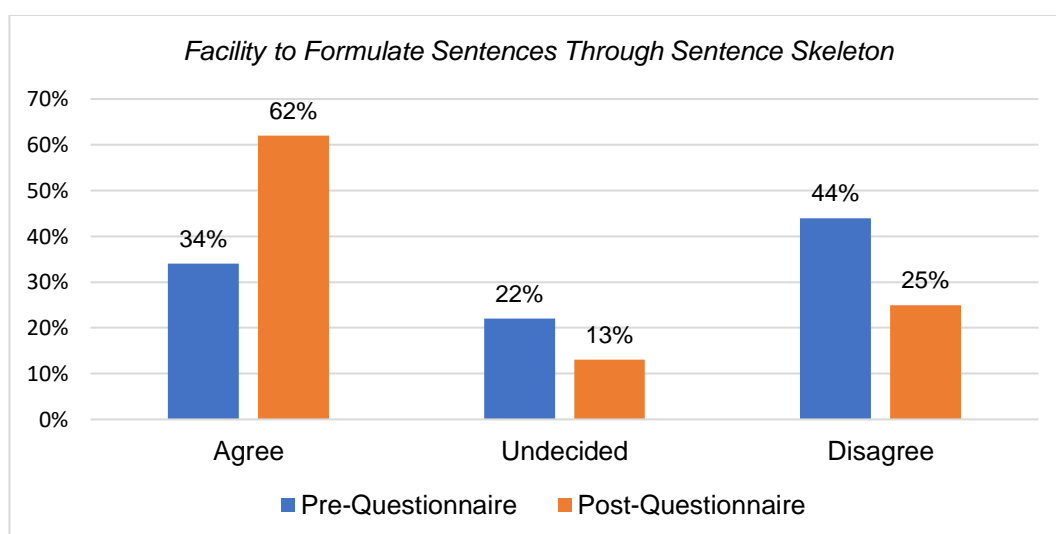
c. Interpretation and analysis

As it is presented in Table 5, several students (34%) answered they disagree that sentence skeleton facilitates the formulation of sentences. This revealed that students worked on writing tasks not following a correct structure. Moreover, students had a lack of interest in learning the appropriate way to structure sentences. Whereas, after the intervention plan more than half of students (62%) agreed that sentence skeleton facilitated the formulation of sentences. This pattern provided students the ease to

formulate sentences. They admitted that as they felt motivated it was easy for them to write sentence using the sentence skeleton technique. According to Duncan (2000), without the skeleton, that indispensable structure, language would be nothing but an amorphous mass of words, out of control and devoid of meaning.

Question 5: Sentence skeleton and signpost words make writing flow smoothly through the connection between ideas.

a. **Table 6**

Usage of Sentence Skeleton and Signpost Words to Make Writing Flow Smoothly

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Agree	12	38	21	66
Undecided	5	15	6	19
Disagree	15	47	5	15
TOTAL	32	100	32	100

b. **Figure 5**

Usage of Sentence Skeleton and Signpost Words to Make Writing Flow Smoothly.
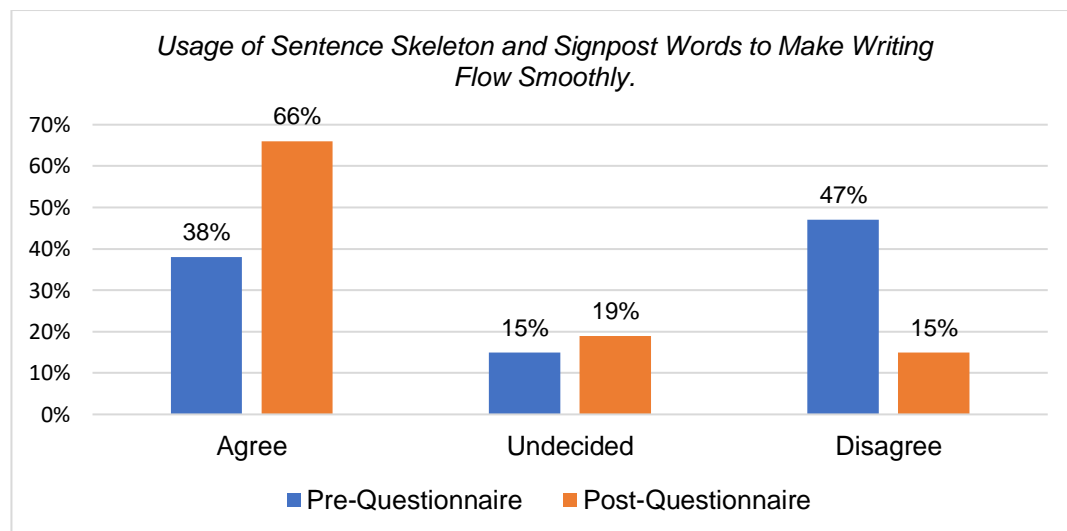
c. **Interpretation and Analysis**

The results in Table 6 detail that several students (38%) answered they disagree that sentence skeleton and signpost words make writing flow

smoothly through the connection between ideas. This demonstrates that students ignored the usage of these techniques as an instrument to link their ideas when writing paragraphs. However, after the intervention plan, more than half of students (68%) agreed that sentence skeleton and signpost words made their writing flow smoothly through the connection between ideas. The use of these techniques encouraged students to ask for additional details with the intention of having a remarkable improvement in their writing. Students' writing flows as expected, which represents a significant improvement in their writing skills. In accordance with University of East Anglia (2009), signpost words and sentence skeleton make writing flow smoothly, without any abrupt, disjointed breaks that leave the reader wondering what the points have to do with one another or what their relevance is.

Post-Test Results.

Objective five: To validate the effectiveness of sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve the writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

a. Table 7

Post-Test Scores of Eighth Year "A" Students in Writing

STUDENTS' CODE	WO	P	T	G	SCORE
	/2.0	/2.0	/4.0	/2.0	/10.0
VDFHS8A01	2.0	2.0	4.0	1.5	9.5
VDFHS8A02	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A03	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A04	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A05	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A06	2.0	1.5	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A07	0.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	7.5
VDFHS8A08	2.0	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.5
VDFHS8A09	1.5	2.0	3.0	1.0	7.5
VDFHS8A10	1.5	1.0	4.0	0.5	7.0
VDFHS8A11	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.0	7.5
VDFHS8A12	2.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	8.0
VDFHS8A13	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A14	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A15	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A16	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.0	7.5
VDFHS8A17	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A18	2.0	1.5	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A19	1.5	1.0	4.0	1.0	7.5
VDFHS8A20	2.0	2.0	3.0	0.5	7.5
VDFHS8A21	2.0	1.5	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A22	1.5	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.0
VDFHS8A23	1.0	2.0	4.0	0.5	7.5
VDFHS8A24	2.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	9.0
VDFHS8A25	1.0	2.0	4.0	0.5	7.5
VDFHS8A26	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A27	2.0	1.5	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A28	1.0	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.0
VDFHS8A29	2.0	2.0	4.0	0.5	8.5
VDFHS8A30	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
VDFHS8A31	1.5	1.5	4.0	1.0	8.0
VDFHS8A32	1.5	2.0	4.0	1.0	8.5
MEAN	1.6	1.9	3.9	0.7	8.1

Note. VDFHS= Veintisiete De Febrero High School, 8A= Eight year "A", 01= Students' code, WO= Word Order, P= Punctuation, T= Tense, G= Grammar.

b. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is displayed in Table 7, the general mean score that students obtained was 8.1/10, which indicates that students had a significant improvement in their English writing skills. This score places them in an average range (see grading scale on page 120). Students attained 3.9/4 in tense related to the simple present and present continuous, which is the highest mean score. In simple present tense, students not only identified it correctly but also the accurate way to write the verb in the third person. Likewise, in present continuous, students applied precisely the -ing ending when writing verbs. As a result of this, students started to write sentences accurately.

The lowest mean score achieved by students was 0.7/2 in grammar, which evidenced that students slightly improved their ability to identify the parts of speech and they structured sentences as requested. However, students misspelled some of the required words, which decreased their scores.

Consequently, three of the four aspects covered as word order, punctuation and tense were improved in a satisfying level. This improvement demonstrated that students developed their knowledge and abilities in writing skills which resulted in the increase of their mean score.

According to Nunan (2003), writing is an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph that is clear to be understood by people. It requires the writer to express the content of the writing into a good composition by considering each possible aspect.

Comparing Pre and Post-Test Means.

a. Table 8

Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Means of the Eighth Year "A" Students in

Writing Skills

Aspects	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Word Order	0.9	1.6
Punctuation	1.3	1.9
Tense	2.4	3.9
Grammar	0.3	0.7
MEAN	4.9	8.1

b. Figure 6

Comparison of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Means of the Eighth Year "A" Students in Writing Skills
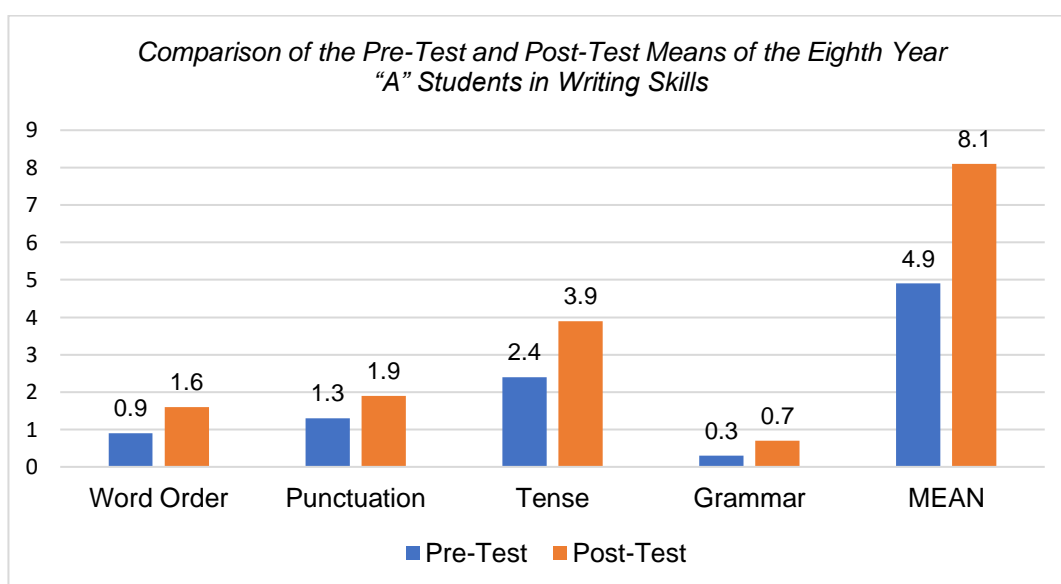
c. Interpretation and Analysis

The results displayed in Table 8 and Figure 6 indicate that students had a significant improvement in writing skills through the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words, which is evident in the increase of 3.2 points that students attained from the pre-test mean score that was 4.9/10 to the post-test that was 8.1/10.

The mean scores obtained in the pre-test by students in all aspects of

writing skills were 0.9/2 for word order, 1.3/2 for punctuation, 2.4/4 for tense and 0.3/2 for grammar. However, after the intervention plan, it was noticeable the significant enhancement in the mean scores attained by students in the post-test, which were 1.6/2 for word order, 1.9/2 for punctuation, 3.9/4 for tense and 0.7/2 for grammar. As it is evidenced in the post-test results, punctuation and tense were the aspects that students improved the most.

These results proved that the applied techniques aided students to reach a significant level in the four evaluated aspects. It demonstrated that students enhanced their knowledge in writing skills. This is in structuring sentences, using punctuation, recognizing tense and applying grammar rules.

g. DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the research showed that the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words developed significantly the writing skills among students of eighth year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero high school in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year, which is demonstrated with the increase of the students' mean score from the pre-test which was 4.98/10 to the post-test that was 8.12/10. In addition, students felt motivated to work using sentence skeleton and signpost words, which resulted in a positive effect in students' writing skills.

According to Thipatdee (2019), sentence skeleton is focused on identifying the basic structure of a sentence which is at least to identify the subject and the principal verb to comprehend a sentence. Additionally, University of East Anglia (2009) states that signpost words are words or phrases that express a connection between two ideas and make the transition from one point to the next in writing.

Some aspects were considered to assess students' writing skills. They were word order, punctuation, tense and grammar. The results of the pre-test showed that students struggled in structuring simple and complex sentences, using punctuation in words listed, recognizing tense between simple present and present continuous and applying grammar rules when writing sentences. However, after the intervention plan, the post-test results indicated that the problems diagnosed in the pre-test were overcome.

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Students wrote short paragraphs with the correct use of punctuation and structured sentences following the grammar rules. It is evident that the application of sentence skeleton and signpost words motivated students to work properly with the purpose of having a significant improvement on their writing skills.

In the early stages of the intervention plan, students were unwilling to work properly with the 3Ps model, namely, presentation, practice and production. When the intervention plan started, students were noisy and mischievous, and it was complicated to work as it was expected. In the course of the intervention plan, students' behavior changed gradually since students participated actively in class and started to pay more attention to the presentation stage, which is the most important one as it is the stage in which the new knowledge is taught. Likewise, when the intervention plan finished, students' attitude was positive and the environment inside the class was respectful.

Along with the research, some strengths and limitations were faced during the application of the intervention plan. On the one hand, the strengths were the different activities applied which caught students' attention and motivated students to participate. The teacher in charge of the English subject cooperated cordially allowing the researcher to apply the different techniques. On the other hand, some limitations showed up. The main limitation was the time per class that impeded a proper development of the intervention plan. Each class lasted 40 minutes, which was not enough to

work on all the activities. Another factor was the classroom infrastructure which was very small for the 32 students that there were in eighth year "A". The last factor was the few school desks students had in the classroom.

Sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques assisted students to improve their writing skills, which was the main objective of the research. The application of these techniques contributed to the improvement of students' ability to write well-structured sentences. Once the techniques were applied, students started to apply the grammar rules correctly and used punctuation when writing sentences and short paragraphs. The attitude students had in class was also improved since they began to learn the aspects of writing skills in an active way.

h. CONCLUSIONS

The students of eighth-year "A" dealt with many limitations in their writing skills. It was hard for them to write sentences and short paragraphs using the correct punctuation specifically placing commas. Another limitation they faced was to identify when to use simple present and present continuous as well as recognizing the subject, the verb and the complement in each sentence.

The application of sentence skeleton and signpost words as a technique diminished students' difficulties in writing skills. Students overcame the problems presented in their writing, which were in relation to word order, punctuation, tense and grammar. The applied techniques provided the correct path to be followed with the purpose of improving each aspect of writing. Therefore, students gained enough knowledge for using punctuation, recognizing tense and applying grammar rules in writing sentences and short paragraphs.

Sentence skeleton and signpost words assisted students to improve significantly their writing skills. These techniques also empowered students to work collaboratively with their classmates as well as a positive attitude when they developed different activities. This helped students to improve the classroom environment.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is advisable for teachers apply different quizzes during the development of each lesson to detect students' weaknesses and strengths in writing skills. Teachers should use the results obtained to plan activities that involve sentence skeleton and signpost words to increase students' ability for writing. In addition, once applied these techniques, a test should be applied to verify students' knowledge.

Teachers should certainly use sentence skeleton and signpost words as techniques for developing writing skills to the maximum extent. These techniques catch students' attention and keep them working as expected. Activities like parallel writing increase students' ability to write short paragraphs, ordering words improve students writing skills, as well as gap filling, substitution and sentence completion foster students' capability to recognize tense.

Teachers ought to apply sentence skeleton and signpost techniques to improve students' behavior and attitudes since they contribute to create a good environment in the class. The correct application of them motivates students to participate actively in the different activities during the development of the class. Signpost techniques also promote students' awareness about how important is to get along with their classmates.

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k. ANEXXES

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME

SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS TO DEVELOP ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF EIGHTH-YEAR "A", AFTERNOON SESSION AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF LOJA DURING 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

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LOJA – ECUADOR
2019

a. THEME

SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS TO DEVELOP ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF EIGHTH-YEAR "A", AFTERNOON SESSION AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF LOJA DURING 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

The present study will be carried out at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. This institution had changed its name several times. Its first name was Dolores Gangotena de Ponce, it began to work in 1958 while Dr. Camilo Ponce Enríquez was the President of the Republic. It is worth to mention that on November 25th, 1960, it changed its name to Colegio Nacional de Bachillerato Técnico 27 de Febrero de Comercio y Manualidades Femeninas. In the academic year 2009-2010, by Ministerial Resolution, it was called Colegio Fiscal Mixto 27 de Febrero, In 2013, in accordance with the policies of the Ministry of Education, it takes the name of Colegio de Bachillerato 27 de Febrero.

The institution staff is about 70 teachers and around 1147 students including the two sessions distributed in 43 grades. From the total students' population, 571 are girls who represent 49.8%, and 576 are boys who represent 50.2%.

The institution has the mission to lead and provide integral education to all students through educative and innovative processes to face and solve the issues of the globalized world, with opportunities to enter the labor field or continue their higher education at a local, national and international level.

The vision of the institution is to form autonomous, competent and integral people in a context of educational inclusion, within the framework of quality

toward excellence and fundamentally in the Institutional Educational Project with national and international vision.

Current situation of the research problem

The Ecuadorian Curriculum of English as Foreign Language for Educación General Básica (2016) sets that improving learners' writing skills is a sure way to develop a solid foundation for future literacy development. "Writing can introduce new aspects of language by providing a means to focus on vocabulary acquisition, grammar constructs and the rhythm and flow of a language".

Writing is partly mediated by the phonological speech system, but an independent orthographic system must also be learned. Learning how to write a coherent and effective text is a difficult and protracted achievement of cognitive development. Writing involves not just the language system. According to Kellogg (2008), writing poses significant challenges to our cognitive systems for memory and thinking as well. It is well-known that the skills of English writing are the most difficult according to Bryan (2001), who indicates that writing skills are concerning with tasks, the learners needed to draft or set outlines of what to be written and arranged correspondingly to the purpose of effective communication.

Due to the difficulty, many foreign learners have faced a large number of problems in writing, according to Barra (2001), who identified that mistakes often found in English writing were spelling, applying of punctuations, content ambiguity and redundancy, lacking various types of writing

presentation, lacking content knowledge of written topics, lacking content cohesiveness, failing to distinguish between facts and opinions, and failing to effectively communicate as expected.

Consequently, students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School do not demonstrate the appropriate English knowledge to be able to write correctly. This writing problem already exists in the L1, which results in the same problem when it comes to writing in English. Through a non-participant observation, the researcher realized that the students are not able to write paragraphs, and what is worse, they are not even able to write a simple sentence.

There are many reasons for writing problems. According to Bruning (2010), this is due to the lack of resources to develop writing activities. Students do not like to write, and when they do, they just do it in order to achieve a requirement in their school life. The aforementioned derives on lack of interest in the writing production because students' learning is focused more on producing an appropriate and understandable pronunciation. Moreover, the lack of a good methodology by the teachers is also a reason why students do not feel motivated to learn how to write.

In response to this problem, this research project proposes to investigate alternatives in order to make the students of eighth-year "A" conscious of the significance of using correct structures when writing sentences and paragraphs. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher will use two teaching techniques: sentence skeleton and signpost words. These

techniques will increase students' ability to write. Sentence skeleton technique, described by Wiliams (1982), is focused on identifying the basic skeleton of a sentence which is at least to identify the subject and the principal verb to comprehend a sentence.

As stated in University of East Anglia (2009), signpost words specify how the ideas are related, for example, whether they are similar ideas, contrasting ideas, or whether one idea adds more detail or a further example to another. They can show that one idea is the result or conclusion of another, or to show the order of the ideas in a sequence. They are a key component in developing an argument showing the structure of it.

As reported by (Sunthornwatanasiri, 2011), who conducted a research concerning the application of error analysis to enhance English writing competence, the techniques of sentence skeleton and signpost words, showed findings confirming that the activities of analyzing writing mistakes or errors and sentence connections enhanced the students' academic achievement.

Research problem

Considering the aforementioned elements, it is essential to research the following problem:

HOW DO SENTENCE SKELETON AND SIGNPOST WORDS TECHNIQUES IMPROVE ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF EIGHTH-YEAR "A", AFTERNOON SESSION AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE CITY OF LOJA DURING 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR?

Delimitation of the research

Timing.

This research will be developed during the school year 2019-2020.

Location.

The current project will be carried out at 27 de Febrero High School, which is a public school located between 27 de Febrero and Abraham Lincoln streets.

Participants.

The participants of this research project are the students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School, who are all about twelve to thirteen years old. There are thirty-three students, who are in an A1 level; and the researcher who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Subproblems

- What theoretical and methodological references about the sentence skeleton and signpost words are appropriate to improve the writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year?

- What are the issues that limit the development of the writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019- 2020 school year?

- What are the phases of the intervention plan that contribute to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year?

- Which activities based on sentence skeleton and signpost words are implemented to improve writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year?

- How effective was the application of the sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques to develop writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year?

c. JUSTIFICATION

From the scientific point of view, it is important to carry out this project because enough information can be gathered to give some theoretical elements in order to establish some alternatives to help students to become skilled writers. The sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques, described by Wiliams (1982) contains extended subjects, learners need to search for a principal verb, which usually appears late in the sentence, and then find the principal noun, which usually appears early in the sentence, for its subject.

From the educational point of view, this study will provide many benefits to in-service English teachers, the English students, and the students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School. In-service teachers will be benefited with enough knowledge about these techniques to apply them to their students. Moreover, English subject students will feel motivated to apply these new techniques in their future projects, since they have not been tried before. Finally, the students of eighth-year "A" will get the greatest benefit as a result of this study, they will improve their English writing skills through the application of these techniques.

The current study is also pertinent, because it is a proposal that can be used by teachers to face many issues related to English writing skills through the introduction of innovative techniques.

Finally, this research project is a legal requirement which demands the Universidad Nacional de Loja for the graduation process to get the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Major.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

- To improve the English writing skills through sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

Specific

- To research the theoretical and methodological references about sentence skeleton and signpost words and its implication in the development of writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

- To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

- To design an intervention plan based on sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

- To apply the most suitable techniques of sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

- To validate the effectiveness of sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve the writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

e. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SENTENCE SKELETON

This research project comtemplates the effective outcomes that sentence skeleton and signpost words have on the development of the English writing skills. This section presents information related to sentence skeleton and signpost words, such as definitions and steps to be followed during the application of the techniques.

Williams (1985 as cited in Thipatdee, 2019) states that the technique of sentence skeleton is focused on identifying the basic skeleton of a sentence which is at least to identify the subject and the principal verb to comprehend a sentence. For a sentence which contains extended subjects, learners need to search for a principal verb, which usually appears late in the sentence, and then find the principal noun, which usually appears early in the sentence, for its subject.

The author exemplified this: "The pollution of our environment by industrial waste, pesticides, solid wastes and oil spills, all of which have serious and lasting effects, is worrying many scientists". The verb is "is worrying", so if a question is, "What is worrying many scientists?" the answer will be pollution, therefore the subject of the sentence is "pollution" (p. 2).

Therefore, applying sentence skeleton by focusing on analyzing a subject and verb of a sentence, and signpost words, which reminds how sentences

are connected, will make the difference in writing for the English pre-service teachers.

According to Duncan (1991), without the skeleton, that indispensable structure, language would be nothing but an amorphous mass of words, out of control and devoid of meaning. In agreement with Huffpost (2017), diagramming a sentence creates a clear visual that helps analyze what is written.

Diagramming a sentence.

It starts with the key elements: subject and verb. The subject tells what the sentence is about; the verb tells what the subject is doing.

Helpful hints for diagramming a sentence.

- Always write the main sentence line first and then fill in the modifiers.

- Do not use punctuation, but do use capitalization and apostrophes.

- Multiple-word proper nouns (names and titles) and hyphenated words are kept together as a single word.

- When two different adjectives or adverbs modify the same word on the main sentence line, put them in the same left-to-right order as in the original sentence.

SIGNPOST WORDS

According to Wiliams (1982), signpost words are used to hint the learners that a text is not unconnected clauses and sentences, but the clauses and sentences cohere like railway carriages, and the words help them cohere are signpost words. The author identified twelve kinds of signpost words,

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which are; *however* for warning the learners that the line of reasoning is about to change, *in fact* for introducing specific information, *on the contrary* for expanding the information, *moreover* for presenting additional ideas, *as a result* for introducing the result of the preceding sentence, *for example* for exemplifying something, *in brief* for summarizing the preceding reasons, *meanwhile* for introducing an event that takes place during the preceding event, *therefore* for reasoning the preceding statement, *of course* for reminding something already known, in other words for restating the given information, and *in conclusion* for telling the learners that they reach the end of the line (p.2).

In accordance with University of East Anglia (2009), signpost is a name commonly given to words or phrases that express a connection between two ideas and make the transition from one point to the next in writing. They can link ideas within a sentence, link two sentences, two paragraphs, or even two parts of the essay together. They help to make writing flow smoothly, without any abrupt, disjointed breaks that leave the reader wondering what the points have to do with one another or what their relevance is.

Signpost words specify how two ideas are related: for example, whether they are similar ideas, contrasting ideas, or whether one idea adds more detail or a further example to another. They can show that one idea is the result or conclusion of another, or to show the order of the ideas in a sequence. They are a key component in developing an argument showing

the structure of it. They help the reader to follow where the essay is going; hence the term "signposts".

Kinds of signpost words (University of East Anglia, 2009)

Function	Signpost	Example
To introduce a sequence of points in your argument	Firstly, secondly	
	Then	
	To begin with	To begin with, this essay will identify the causes of this situation.
	Next	
	Lastly	
	Initially	
	Subsequently	These factors will subsequently be analyzed in detail.
To cross-reference to other parts of the essay	As noted above / below / previously	As noted previously, a number of scholars have offered a different explanation.
	As is discussed below / above	This development is composed of a number of stages, as discussed above.
	As stated previously	
To add an idea, or more detail	In addition	
	Moreover	
	Also	
	Additionally	
	Again	
	Equally	
	Furthermore	The issue is, furthermore, complicated by external matters.
	And	
	Besides	
	Indeed	Indeed, scholars reject this theory as unrealistic.
To give an example	For example	
	As an illustration / example	As an example, the following quotation could be cited as representative of this viewpoint.
	For instance	Certain research methods, for instance, surveys and questionnaires, are particularly effective.
	To illustrate	
	To demonstrate	
To focus on specifics in more detail	In particular	Such examples, and in particular those from the

		last five years, support the findings of recent research.
	Specifically	
To generalize	As a rule	
	In general	In general, it is true to say that a good understanding of theory is essential.
	Usually	
	For the most part	The conclusions are, for the most part, sound.
	On the whole	
	Generally	
	In most cases	
To introduce a comparison or further point to support your argument	By the same token	
	In comparison with	
	Similarly	
	Compared with	Compared with the first example, the second seems unconvincing.
	In the same way	
	Whereas	
	In like manner	
	Likewise	This scholar's argument is likewise flawed.
	In contrast	
To introduce a contrast or alternative point or section	In contrast	
	Nevertheless	Nevertheless, arguments in favor of the theory must also be considered.
	But	
	Conversely	
	However	The case must not, however, be overstated.
	Nonetheless	
	Yet	
	By contrast	
	Although	
	On the other hand	
	Alternatively	
	On the contrary	
To introduce a fact or state the obvious	After all	
	Evidently	
	Clearly	Clearly, popular opinion is against the changes.
	Obviously	
	Naturally	
	Of course	These claims must, of course, be closely examined.
To rephrase or explain	In other words	
	To put it more simply / in another way	
	Or rather	
	To be more precise	The model is not universal.

		To be more precise, it is not applicable in seven per cent of the above cases.
	That is to say	
	Namely	There is only one negative example, namely, that of the government.
To introduce a reason, result, proof or logical conclusion	Accordingly	
	Consequently	
	Thus	
	Due to	Due to problems of access, research on this topic is scarce.
	It could be concluded that	
	As a consequence	The data are incomplete and, as a consequence, this interpretation is not convincing.
	Hence	
	For this reason	
	Indeed	
	As a result	
	Therefore	
	Because	
	In fact	
To conclude	In conclusion	In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the hypothesis is generally supported by the evidence.
	In short	
	To conclude	
	Finally	
	As this essay has demonstrated	

Adapted from "Using 'signpost' words and phrases" by University of East Anglia (2009)

According to University of East Anglia (2009), the signpost words and phrases can be used at the start of sentences or, in most cases, in the middle or at the end, as demonstrated above. They can be very effective in the first sentence of a paragraph to indicate what the function of that paragraph is in the context of the argument, or in the middle of a paragraph to develop the point.

They should be used with careful thought about their function. Good structure is more than a list of points, connected with signpost words such

as 'also', furthermore', 'in addition', 'the next point'. This may indicate that the argument is becoming descriptive rather than analytical. Be clear what the relationship between the points is. Variation in the kinds of signpost words that are used can indicate that the issue is critically analyzed and the argument is thoroughly explored, with contrasting views, more detailed development of points, and conclusions drawn.

It is important to use signpost words and phrases accurately, as they can change the meaning of what is written. These two sentences have opposite implications:

- The government's stance was resolute. <u>However</u>, the negotiations did not succeed.

- The government's stance was resolute. <u>Therefore</u>, the negotiations did not succeed.

Remarkable features about sentence skeleton and signpost words were explained, for instance definitions, kinds of signpost words and the ways to use them correctly. Furthermore, it grants the ability to know when to use them. In conclusion, these theoretical references provide all the precise information about sentence skeleton and signpost words which is necessary to improve English writing skills.

ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

Lack of English writing skills is an issue that has been detected during this research project, that is the reason why in this chapter some important information will be analyzed in order to solve it.

Salma (2016) states that writing is a complex skill which requires the writer to express their ideas. In order to communicate, people use English not only in spoken form but also in written form. Writers gain creativity when they write based on their own ideas, not copying what has been written. In writing, the writer is required to treat several aspects such as content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanic, and organization.

According to Brown (2000), writing skill is one of the productive skills that should be mastered in using a language. It is because writing skill has significances in improving a communicative competence of learning the language.

Teaching strategies for writing skills.

Smith (2015) states that teaching writing is done actively and explicitly in a developmental sequence. We can use multi-sensory teaching to incorporate all the senses in a fun and engaging way, ensuring that all children learn regardless of learning style or background. The following are some of the strategies that can be used to teach writing skills at lower levels of learning:

- **Developmental sequence:** We teach the easiest skills first, and then build on prior knowledge. Our teaching sequence takes advantage of

child development and brain research to promote effective learning and good habits. Children learn in stages; imitation (The child watches as the teacher writes and then imitates the teacher), copying (The child looks at the completed model of a letter, word, or sentence and copies it to match the model) and Independent writing (The child writes unassisted, without a demonstration or a model).

- **Developmental order:** Teaching letters in a developmental order helps children master and boost confidence. We teach capitals first, and then lowercase letters. All letters are better taught in small groups of similar formation. Children master the easier letter groups, and then move to more difficult letter groups.

- **Multi-sensory teaching:** Children should be helped to develop their writing skills through explicit, multi-sensory, play based instruction. Children move, touch, feel and manipulate real objects as they learn the habits and skills essential for writing. We use music to speak to children and promote movement and memory. Other multi-sensory lessons use voices, letter stories, door tracing, air writing and mystery letter games to teach letter formation and placement on lines.In other levels like primary class four and above, teachers of the writing skill should maintain careful and continuous preparation at every stage, so that the pupils know what they are going to write before they put pen to paper.

According to Langan (2013), a teacher of English language ought to be aware of the stimuli to be used to arouse learners' interest which include:

- **Visual stimuli:** This involves the use of pictures, maps, charts and diagrams from various sources.

- **Oral stimuli:** Use of anecdotes, discussions, debates, speeches, stories, songs, poems.

- **Reading:** Use of interesting and well selected types of writing which may be used in class.

- **Different forms and viewpoints:** Looking at events from a different angle. For example, asking students to write about an event in or near their school. The teacher asks different groups to write about the same event in different forms such as:

  - A letter home.

  - A report to the police.

  - A dialogue between a journalist and an eye witness.

- **Selection of audience:** When learners are given a chance to select their audience, it acts as a good stimulus for the students to write well.

- **To maintain the motivation:** The best learners written work could be displayed on the wall, presented to the rest of the class, included in a school magazine, or displayed on the school notice board.

The 3Ps as a conventional learning approach.

Skehan (1998 as cited in Mugableh, 2019) states that conventional learning approach focuses on the form rather than the meaning. The

process unusually passes into three stages; namely, presentation, practice, and production known as 3Ps model. The teacher, who is dominant in the classroom, usually begins the lesson by providing the new forms and meanings to be learned.

According to Skehan (1998 as cited in Mugableh, 2019), 3Ps is conducted into three stages. In the first stage, the structure of a grammatical point is presented to facilitate understanding of the underlying rule. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. Skehan added that the second stage involves moving from gathering knowledge into practice. In this stage, the focus is on the accuracy, which is "subject to the teacher's careful supervision or control". In the third stage, Skehan noted that the declarative knowledge obtained from the first stage is converted into "procedural knowledge" to produce the language. This production is not guaranteed as students' control on their learning is "gradually loosened" when they move from stage to another (p. 4).

Discourse Analysis (DA).

According to Nunan (1991), discourse analysis is the study of language in use. In other words, it is the examination of language use by members of a speech community. It involves looking at both language form and language functions and includes the study of both spoken interaction and written texts. It identifies linguistic features that characterize different genres as well as social and cultural factors that aid us in our interpretation and understanding of different texts.

Teaching punctuation.

As maintained by Richards (2014), the punctuation that needs to be taught in the primary school is very basic and simple, and for the most part the teaching should come incidentally. There are three basic ideas that must be taught.

- There must be a full stop at the end of each sentence.

- There must be a question mark after a question.

- A comma should be placed where it is paused for a moment. This is a rough and ready rule, and it will help, if the teacher bears in mind that it will not always work.

A useful method is to dictate short sentences, and the children then put in the full stops and question marks. The best thing, of course, is to be really careful to mark the punctuation of everything that is written, and to get the pupils to be careful also, whether it is in English or any other subject.

Aspects of writing.

Basically, there are some fundamental components in writing. They are: content, organization, vocabulary, mechanic and grammar. Brown (2001) proposes six major aspects of writing that have to be required by a writer in producing a written text namely content, organization, discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics.

According to Jacobs (1981), there are five aspects of writing. They are:

Content.

This aspect refers to the substance of writing, the experience of main idea (unity). Content text is related to convey ideas rather than fluffing special function of transition, restatement is also used in content text to state again or in a new form a message that is stated.

Organization.

The aspect refers to the logical organization of the content (coherence). It is scarily more than attempt to piece together all collections of facts and jumbles ideas.

Vocabulary.

This aspect refers to the selection of words those are suitable with the content. It beings with assumption that the writer wants to express the ideas as clearly and directly. Choosing words that express meaning is precisely rather than skew it or blur it.

Grammar.

This aspect deals mainly with the use of grammatical and synthetic pattern on separating, combining and grouping ideas in words, phrases, clauses, sentences to bring out logical relationship in texting writing. In text, word is the smallest element that may be uttered in isolation with semantic or pragmatic content (with literal or practical meaning). Besides, phrases may refer to any group of words, or one word. Furthermore, clause is the smallest grammatical unit that can express a complete proposition. Sentence is a linguistic unit consisting of one or words that are grammatical linked.

Mechanics.

This aspect refers to the use graphic conventional of the language. Mechanic is the conventions of print that do not exist in oral language, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

Types of texts.

According to Evayanti (2013) and Werlich (1976), there are four types of text, which are the following:

Descriptive Text.

Descriptive text is kind of text that is used to describe about a person, object, appearance, scenery, or phenomenon.

In this text, the writer tries to make the readers as like they see, feel, and experience what the story tell.

Narrative Text.

Narrative text is retelling a story that is told by the doer or other person's point of view.

It is more about writing a chronological story, whether true or just a fictional.

Explanatory Text.

Explanatory text is kind of text that aims at clarifying, explaining, teaching, or evaluating an issue.

The writer tries to give information or sign to the reader by developing the idea by giving the example, process, cause and result, classification, definition, analysis, comparing and contrary.

Argumentative Text.

Argumentative text is a text that is used to convince the readers, the writer attempts to persuade them as he describes, narrates or explains appropriate details to the reader.

Elements of good writing.

In accordance with Walker (2010), there are five elements of good writing, which are:

Purpose.

Purpose is the reason why a writer is writing a particular paragraph. The purpose is the goal the writer is trying to achieve. The three most common goals of academic writing are:

- To inform the readers.

- To persuade the readers.

- To entertain the readers.

Audience.

The term audience refers to the readers. Good writers keep their audience in mind as they write every sentence in their paragraph

Clarity.

Clarity refers to how easy it is for the reader to understand a writing. Clear sentences are not vague or indirect; they get the point across to the reader by using specific, concise language.

Unity.

Unity in a paragraph means that all the sentences are related to the topic sentence and its controlling idea.

Coherence.

A piece of writing has coherence when all of the ideas are organized and flow smoothly and logically from one to the next. When a paragraph or essay has coherence, the reader can follow the main ideas more easily. Three important features of coherence are:

- Logical order.

- Repetition of key words.

- Use of transitional words and phrases.

Writing process.

In accordance with City University of Seattle (2010), there are seven steps that must be followed when writing, which are the following:

Choose a topic.

Look through the textbook until something interesting is found. Then narrow the ideas from subjects to topics. Once specific topic for the paper is gotten, write the topic as the question which the paper will answer.

Think (brainstorm).

Write down all the possible answers to the question, and write down all the information, opinions, and questions about the topic.

Brainstorming will help to see what is already known, what is though and what else is needed to find out about the topic.

Plan (outline).

A basic outline is the first attempt to organize the ideas of the paper. It will help to focus the research and consider the order of the ideas. To make one:

1. Write the question and answer. A simple answer to the question is enough to start the basic outline.

2. Write down all the reasons to answer the question. Do not look at any sources – use the brain.

3. Look at the list and organize the ideas. Some may be combined as one larger idea; some may just repeat others in different words.

4. Decide how to order these points.

Write.

Start at the beginning and write until the end. Or write paragraphs separately, in any orde. Many writers do the body paragraphs first and save the introduction and conclusion for the end.

Revise.

The next step is to revise the paper – strengthen the content. In fact, do not wait until having a complete first draft to start revising. Revise individual paragraphs as they are finished.

Edit.

Editing will make writing more precise and easier to understand (not necessarily shorter, but clearer).

Proofread.

When the paper seems to be ready to turn it, it is time to proofread, which is check for mistakes.

Word order.

It is the way in which words are arranged in sequence in a sentence to make it understadable. If words are placed in the wrong order, the result is a confusing, unclear, and an incorrect sentence. The sequence in which words generally occur may change depending if the sentence is formal or informal.

Punctuation.

It is the collection of marks such as periods, full stops, commas, or question marks that are used to make sentences flow smoothly and express meaning clearly. It separates ideas into sentences and clauses so that sentences are clear, it points out titles, quotes, and other key parts of language. The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meanings of texts by linking or separating words, phrases, or clauses.

Tense.

It denotes the time an action takes place, whether sometime in the past, in the present or will take some time in the future. It is shown by its grammatical form. There are three main tenses in English, present tense, past tense and future tense.

Grammar.

Grammar is the set of language rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to make sentences that convey meaning. It deals with the forms and structure of words, with their customary arrangement in phrases and sentences and with word meanings.

Remarkable features about writing skill were explained, for instance definitions, teaching strategies, aspects, types, elements and process. Furthermore, it grants the ability to write correctly. In conclusion, this literature review provides all the precise information about writing skill which is necessary to develop the intervention plan.

f. METHODOLOGY

Design of the research

This is an action research project where the researcher has found that writing skills is an issue among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020. A review of the theoretical references, the researcher decided to conduct an action research based on sentence skeleton and signpost words, which are the solution to solve the problem. According to Creswell (2012), action research is a systematic procedure done by the teachers (or other individuals in an educational setting) to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular educational setting operates, their teaching, and their student learning.

This researh project is based on action research and it will allow the pre-service teacher to become a participant to study aspects related to the problematic situation, gather information and analyze or reflect on the results that will be derived from the application of an intervention plan that lasts eight weeks, in which the results will justify if this work was effective or not in improving the students' writing skills.

Methods, techniques and instruments

Methods.

This study will make a description of the data that result from an intervention plan. The following general methods will be applied along the research:

The scientific method will facilitate the study of sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques intended to improve writing skills, it will help in the observations done both before and during the intervention. This method will facilitate the finding of the possible solution, as well as assisting the collection of data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

The descriptive method will facilitate the description of the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It will serve to explain and analyze the object of the investigation.

The analytic-synthetic method will be used to analyze the obtained results through the pre-test and post-test. It will be used also to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and draw up the conclusions.

The statistical method will be used to make both the quantitative and statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the qualitative analysis of the data obtained during the observations.

Techniques and instruments.

Data collection.

Since this project is an action research, elements of both quantitative and qualitative research will be selected for data collection. Quantitative

research considers variables and statistics whereas qualitative research considers an understanding of words or actions. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments are self-developed by the researcher considering the principles of question construction. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods (test) will be used to develop quantitative data collection instruments, and observations and interviews (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative ones.

Tests.

Tests will allow participants to perform cognitive tasks in relation to the basic writing skills. Additionally, tests will yield a numerical score by which the researcher will calculate the mean to compare the pre- and posttest results.

Pretest-Posttest.

A researcher-made pretest will provide a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School) receive a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or intervention plan, a posttest will measure again the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pretest-posttest comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaire.

A researcher-made questionnaire will be administered to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques. Likewise, a questionnaire will be administered in order to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires will support the tests results.

Observation.

The emphasis during the observation will be on understanding the natural environment as lived by the students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during their English classes. There will be two types of observations as detailed below.

Nonparticipant observation.

In nonparticipant observation, the researcher is not involved in the situation being observed. He observes and records behaviors but does not interact or participate in the setting under study. The objective of this nonparticipant observation is to identify the issue for this action research project which will be supported through the participant observation (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

Participant observation.

In participant observation, the researcher will become a part and a participant in the situation. The researcher will participate deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the sentence skeleton and signpost

words techniques in order to improve the writing skills amongst the students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year.

Reflective journal.

The researcher will use a reflective journal to help him identify important events that will happen in each lesson, which eventually provide a better understanding of the process of the intervention plan.

Description of the intervention plan

Due to the fact that this is an action-research study, the development of an intervention plan will be carried out in different phases.

Phase 1. Initial reflection.

During a non-participant observation, the researcher was able to see that students of eighth-year "A" did not make any attempt to develop properly any writing activities because they did not know how to do it. Although, they were involved in written tasks they were not able to complete them. The situation allowed the researcher to recognize that writing is an issue among learners who are not taught by using the appropriate method during their English classes.

Being this the concern, the researcher asked himself whether there are some different techniques that would better prepare students to improve their writing skills. Therefore, having read some mainstream literature on writing skills, the researcher found out that sentence skeleton and signpost words will empower learners as individuals.

Phase 2. Planning.

As a consequence, to remedy the eighth-year "A" students' weaknesses on writing skills, 3Ps lesson plans will be presented, which are organized with task-writing activities such as parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion. The 3Ps lesson plan integrates guided, controlled and free practices that promote writing skills among students. The 3Ps lesson promotes teacher centeredness and, in the latter, the teacher's role is limited to guiding students during the activity by selecting and sequencing the tasks, preparing learners for the tasks, and raise students' awareness.

The goal of these task-writing activities will give students of eighth-year "A" the opportunity to interact, to explore and share ideas, to write small stories, to take turns to present their writings, to react to others, to use an appropriate style of writing which eventually increase their writing skills which is a crucial element to achieve successfully the English language communicative competence.

As stated before, a 3Ps lesson model plan will be adopted to help students in the improvement of their writing skill which is described below:

On the other hand, this intervention plan will explicitly respond to the following research questions.

- What are the phases of the intervention plan that contribute to the improvement of the writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020

school year?

- How sentence skeleton and signpost words will be applied to improve writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year?

Phase 3. Action.

The intervention plan will be developed during 40 sessions of 45 minutes each one in an eight-week period of time. The eight weeks will be developed with lesson plans. As is usual, things will rarely go precisely as expected, therefore some minor changes or deviations will be made to meet possible drawbacks.

Phase 4. Observation.

During the intervention plan, the researcher will monitor and record eighth-year "A" students' reactions and achievements to the planned activities by means of a pre and posttest, a questionnaire, and a dairy or journal.

Phase 5. Reflection.

Once finished the intervention plan, the researcher will reflect critically upon the effectiveness of sentence skeleton and signpost words to improve students' writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.

The lesson plans used in this intervention plan will be developed following a 3Ps lesson model plan which consist on three phases: Presentation, practice and produce.

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INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 1

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"	**Participants:** 8th EGB "A"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos	**School Year:** 2019-2020
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos	**Topic:** People in the world

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To use simple present tense with the verb To Be by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • What's up? • Where about? **Structures** • Simple present tense with the verb to be.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will help students to pick up useful information for the development of the main tasks. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks students to close their eyes and imagine that they are in a car traveling around the world. How do they feel?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about countries and nationalities. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of verb to be, students write sentences using the present tense. **PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about countries and nationalities. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Paragraph about countries and nationalities. • Worksheet about countries and nationalities.

MONITORING PLAN:
Data Source 1: Pretest – Pre questionnaire
Date Source 2: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: November 4th to November 8th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.
Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 2

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"   **Participants:** 8th EGB "A"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos   **School Year:** 2019-2020
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos   **Topic:** People around us.

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To use simple present tense with the verb To Be by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • Keep an eye on • What does he look like? **Structures** • Simple present tense with the verb to be. • Possessive adjectives.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will help students to pick up useful information for the development of the main tasks. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks students to make a list of their relatives and their names. • Students draw a family tree.	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about family. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of verb to be, students write sentences using the simple present tense.	• Paragraph about family members.
• Mother • Father • Son • Daughter • Uncle • Aunt • Cousin	**PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about family members. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Worksheet about family members.

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: November 11th to November 15th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 3

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"   **Participants:** 8th EGB "A"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos   **School Year:** 2019-2020
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos   **Topic:** It is about me

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To describe people's personality by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion. • Talk about lifestyles and free time activities by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • To Be • Love • Like • Prefer **Structures** • Simple present tense.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will help students to pick up useful information for the development of the main tasks. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: What do you do on your free time? What are your friends like?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about lifestyles and free time activities. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of verb to be, students write sentences using the simple present tense. **PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about lifestyles and free time activities. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Paragraph about lifestyles and free time activities. • Worksheet about lifestyles and free time activities.

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: November 18th to November 22nd, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

Where Key Words column contains:
- Tall
- Short
- Fat
- Thin
- Chubby

INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 4

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

Participants: 8th EGB "A"
School Year: 2019-2020
Topic: Leisure activities

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?		
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.		
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To ask and answer questions about schedules by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.		
CONTENTS	**INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS**	**RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED**
Key expressions • No way. • Fond of. • What about. **Structures** • Prepositions of time. • Wh-questions (what time/when)	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some innovative activities for the present phase that will catch students' attention. The purpose of these activities is to introduce the topic of the class and the way it will be taught. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: What do you do on your free time? Do you practice any sports?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about what love is. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of prepositions of time, students write some sentences. They are free to use wh-questions.	• Paragraph about unknown sports. • Worksheet about unknown sports.
• Chinese • Korean • Japanese	**PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about sports they probably do not know. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: November 25th to November 29th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

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INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 5

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

Participants: 8th EGB "A"
School Year: 2019-2020
Topic: Amazing places

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To ask for and give information about location by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • Awesome. • Sticks out a mile. • On the map. **Structures** • There is – There are • Prepositions of place. • Imperatives.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will catch students' attention. The purpose of these activities is to introduce the topic of the class and the way it will be taught. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: Do you know the address of your house? Do you know where the City Hall is?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about where the places in Loja are. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of there is and there are, students write sentences about the city they know the best. **PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about amazing places. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Paragraph about Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. • Worksheet about cities.
• Airport • City hall • Hotel • Museum • Hospital • Botanical garden • Church • Restaurant • Gas station		

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: December 2nd to December 6th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

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INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 6

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

Participants: 8th EGB "A"
School Year: 2019-2020
Topic: Celebrations and customs

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To talk about customs by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • Celebrations • Holidays **Structures** • Simple present tense with adverbs of frequency. • Present progressive tense.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will catch students' attention. The purpose of these activities is to introduce the topic of the class and the way it will be taught. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: Do you know any celebration in Ecuador? Do you have any custom in your family?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about traditions and customs around the world. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of adverbs of frequency, students write sentences about the celebrations they know in present progressive tense.	• Paragraph about carnival.
• Carnival		• Worksheet about celebrations and customs.
• Halloween		
• Christmas		
• New year	**PRODUCE**	
	• Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about celebrations and customs. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: December 9th to December 13th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 7

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"   **Participants:** 8th EGB "A"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos   **School Year:** 2019-2020
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos   **Topic:** Daily routines

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To talk about routines and lifestyles by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • Jump out of bed. • Spend quality time. • Sleep like a log. **Structures** • Words related to lifestyles. • Words related to personality.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will catch students' attention. The purpose of these activities is to introduce the topic of the class and the way it will be taught. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: What do you do in the morning? What do you do in the afternoon? What do you do in the night?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words	• Students read a paragraph about daily routines. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of words related to lifestyle, students write sentences about their daily routines during the week. **PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about daily routines and lifestyles. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Paragraph about daily routines and lifestyles. • Worksheet about daily routines and lifestyles.
• Airport • City hall • Hotel • Museum • Hospital • Botanical garden • Church • Restaurant • Gas station		

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: December 16th to December 20th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

INTERVENTION AND OBSERVATION PLAN. WEEK Nº 8

INFORMATIVE DATA

Institution: Colegio de Bachillerato "27 de Febrero"
Teacher: Doc. Bertila Ríos
Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

Participants: 8th EGB "A"
School Year: 2019-2020
Topic: Professions

RESEARCH PROBLEM: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year?	
GOAL: By the end of the intervention plan students will be able to develop their writing skills using sentence skeleton and signpost words activities focused on the following aspects: Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, word order and tense.	
LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson students will be able: • To talk about routines by using parallel writing, gap filling, ordering words or sentences, substitution and sentence completion.	

CONTENTS	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	RESOURCES AVAILABLE / NEEDED
Key expressions • Jump out of bed. • Spend quality time. • Sleep like a log. **Structures** • Words related to lifestyles. • Words related to personality.	**PRESENTATION** • Teacher prepares some activities for the present phase that will catch students' attention. The purpose of these activities is to introduce the topic of the class and the way it will be taught. This would develop the "declarative knowledge" of the learner. **PRACTICE** • Teacher asks the questions: What do your parents do for a living? What do you want to do for a living?	• Flashcards • Projector • Laptop • Board

Key Words		
Key Words • Airport • City hall • Hotel • Museum • Hospital • Botanical garden • Church • Restaurant • Gas station	• Students read a paragraph about professions. Students are given some papers with a list of words. Through the use of words related to professions, students write sentences about what they want to do for a living. **PRODUCE** • Students are given a worksheet in which they demonstrate their competence to develop writing task-focused on key information about professions. The goal is to write a series of sentences in order to create a well-organized paragraph.	• Paragraph about professions. • Worksheet about professions.

MONITORING PLAN:
Date Source 1: Observation sheet, reflective journal
Data Source 2: Worksheet 1

SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from the thesis advisor.

TIME: January 6th to January 10th, 2019

Adapted from Murry, K. G., Herrera, S. G., Miller, S. S., Fanning, C. A., Kavimandan, S. K., & Holmes, M. A. (2015). Effect of Transnational Standards on U.S.

Teacher Education. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education). Syakur. (2007). The Components of Speaking Ability

g. TIMELINE

Phases	Activities	2019 Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2020 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Project	Presentation	x x x										
Project	Correction	x x										
Project	Approval		x x									
Project	Appointment of the Thesis Advisor		x									
Intervention plan	Validation of Data Collection Instruments			x								
Intervention plan	Act and Observe			x x x x	x x x x							
Intervention plan	Data Organization and Tabulation					x x x x						
Thesis Process	Interpreting and Reflecting						x x x x					
Thesis Process	Writing up and Reporting							x x x x				
Thesis Process	Thesis Review and Certification								x x x x			
Thesis Process	Graduation Application Procedures								x x x	x x		
Thesis Process	Private Review of the Thesis										x x x x	
Thesis Process	Corrections										x x x	
Thesis Process	Public Presentation											x x

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h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

Budget

Expenses	Cost
Internet connection	$90.20
Print of reports	$25.00
Print of the project	$35.00
Copies	$10.00
Unforeseen	$12.00
Computer equipment	$1200
Print of the final report and thesis	$1372.20

Financing

The financing of the expenses derived from the present research work will be assumed by the researcher.

Resources.

Human.

- The teacher candidate as a researcher.

- The thesis advisor.

- Students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year

Material.

- Printed materials

- Books

- Notebooks

- Laptop

Technical.

- Computer

- Printer

- Internet connection

i. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Observation Sheet

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: Observation sheet

Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

OBSERVATION SHEET		
Observation: **Topic:** **Objective of the session:**	**Date:** **Class size:** **Participants:** Eighth-year "A" students.	**Location:** **Duration of the observation start/end time:** **Observer involvement:** Participant/nonparticipant.

Dependent variable: Writing skills					
Rating scale 4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = rarely 0 = not observed					
Descriptors	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
The students consistently use capitalization while writing.					
The students use appropriate spelling.					
The students use appropriate grammar.					
The students show evidence of standard punctuation.					
The students identify the tense on the sentences they write.					

Independent variable: Sentence skeleton and signpost words					
Rating scale 4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = rarely 0 = not observed					
Descriptors	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**
The students understand how to diagram a sentence.					
The students use appropriate spelling.					
The students use appropriate grammar.					
The students show evidence of standard punctuation.					
The students identify the tense on the sentences they write.					

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: Reflective journal

Researcher: Larry Bryan Palacio Armijos

Reflective Journal		
Observation # **Topic:** **Objective of the session:**	**Date/Time:** **Class size:** **Participants:** Eighth-year "A"	**Role of the researcher:** Participant observer **Duration of the observation:**
Description of the event	**Reflective notes**	

Annex 3. Pretest and Posttest

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: PRETEST & POSTTEST

As student of the English language Department of Universidad Nacional de Loja, I would be very grateful if you can answer the following pretest & posttest in a clear and honest way. The information obtained will be for the development of the research work.

Student's code: …………………………….

Date: …………………………

You have 40 minutes to solve the following questions. Concentrate, read and analyze carefully. Good luck!

1. **Order the following words according to their sentence structure. (Word order) (2p)**

a. to music/Marlen/is listening/right now _____

b. speaks/French/Peter _____

c. lives in Paris/Luis _____

d. are watching/Juan and Pedro/TV _____

2. **Use commas to separate items in a list of three or more. (punctuation) (2p)**

a. Carlos wants to visit Paris Italy Germany and China.

b. The primary colors are yellow blue and red.

c. The tree is tall old and green.

d. I like to play soccer volleyball basketball and tennis.

3. Match the sentences with the tense they correspond. (Tense) (2p)

Lisa is doing homework.

Present Simple

Jaime lives in Mexico.

Present Continuous

Rita works in a school.

Peter and Mario are playing soccer.

4. Fill in the blanks choosing the present simple or the present continuous tense. (Grammar) (2p)

a. Lisa (sleep) _____ right now.

b. This cake (taste) _____ delicious.

c. The class (begin) _____ at nine every day.

d. Rita (study) _____ right now.

Thanks for your collaboration

Annex 4. Pre and post questionnaire

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

FACULTAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: PRE QUESTIONNAIRE & POST QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student, answer the following questionnaire with sincerity about the English subject. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code: ………………………………………………………….

Date: …………...……………………………………………………….

1. **Signpost words are useful to connect sentences correctly.**
   ○ Agree
   ○ Undecided
   ○ Disagree

2. **Writing skills are developed better by diagramming sentences into its parts.**
   ○ Agree
   ○ Undecided
   ○ Disagree

3. **Sentence skeleton makes it possible to see the structure of a sentence.**
   ○ Agree
   ○ Undecided
   ○ Disagree

4. **Sentence skeleton facilitates the formulation of sentences.**
   ○ Agree
   ○ Undecided
   ○ Disagree

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5. Sentence skeleton and signpost words make writing flow smoothly through the connection between ideas.

◯ Agree

◯ Undecided

◯ Disagree

Thanks for your collaboration

Annex 5. Research Matrix

Research Matrix

Theme: Sentence skeleton and signpost words to develop English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year.

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical Frame	Methodological design	Techniques and instruments
General: How do sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques improve English writing skills among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School in the city of Loja during 2019-2020 school year? **Specific:** ▪ What theoretical and methodological references about the sentence skeleton and signpost words are appropriate to improve the EFL writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year? ▪ What are the issues that limit the development of the EFL writing skills among eighth-year	**General:** To improve the English writing skills through sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques among students of eighth-year "A", afternoon session at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. **Specific:** ▪ To research the theoretical and methodological references about the sentence skeleton and signpost words and its application on the English writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. ▪ To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English writing skills among	▪ Writing skills. ▪ Sentence skeleton. ▪ Ways to diagram a sentence. ▪ Signpost words. ▪ Teaching strategies. ▪ Punctuation. ▪ Aspects of writing. ▪ Types of texts. ▪ Elements of good writing. ▪ Writing process.	**Preliminary investigation** ▪ Observing the English classes. ▪ Stating the background of the problem. ▪ Describing current situation. ▪ Locating and reviewing the literature. ▪ Creating a methodological framework for research. ▪ Designing an intervention plan. **Intervention plan and Observation** ▪ Administering test and questionnaires ▪ Observing and monitoring students' performance according to the intervention plan	▪ Participant and non- participant observation. ▪ Pre and posttest. ▪ Pre and post questionnaire. ▪ Teacher's journal.

"A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year? ▪ What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing EFL writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year? ▪ Which sentence skeleton and signpost words techniques are implemented to improve EFL writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year? ▪• How effective was the application of the sentence skeleton and signpost words to develop the EFL writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2019-2020 school year?	eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. ▪ To design an intervention plan based on the sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve the English writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. ▪ To apply the most suitable techniques of sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve the English writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year. ▪ To validate the effectiveness of the sentence skeleton and signpost words in order to improve the writing skills among eighth-year "A" students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2019-2020 school year.		**Presentation of research findings** ▪ Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquires ▪ Organized the final report.	

Annex 6. Grading Scale

Writing Skills

Quantitative score range	Qualitative score range
10	Superior
9	Excellent
8-7	Average
6-1	Below average

Sentence skeleton and signpost words as learning techniques

Quantitative score range	Qualitative score range
81-100 %	High level of use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.
61-80 %	Expected level of use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.
41-60 %	Moderate level of use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.
21-40 %	Unexpected level of use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.
01-20 %	Low level of use of sentence skeleton and signpost words.

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