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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL**

**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES MASTER'S DEGREE
PROGRAM IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

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**Analysis of the Effects of Visual Input on the Written Production of
A1-A2 Level Students of an EFL Classroom at a Public Higher
Education Institution**

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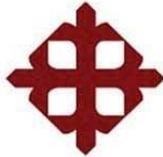
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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL**

**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

CERTIFICATION

We certify that this research project was presented by **Ochoa Gómez Mary Josefina** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**.

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DEDICATION

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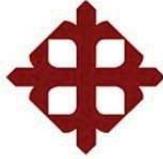
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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the effectiveness of visual input to scaffold the written production in A1-A2 level students at a public Higher Education institution. It also seeks to ascertain to what proportions visual input enhances students' written production and whether or not the quality of students' writing tasks improves by the utilization of visual input. The study followed an action research path to retrieve both qualitative and quantitative data in this small-scale inquiry. A class of 13 students was selected to participate in this study; their writing assignments were collected and later analyzed using a rubric based on the CEFR descriptors. As instruments of data collection, three worksheets presenting visual input (contextualized photos) were designed and applied along with three other identical worksheets that did not provide visual input. Apart from that, a teacher's diary was utilized to record students' overall behavior when performing the tasks. Results manifested that the use of visual input was undeniably a useful tool to scaffold students' written production. In fact, outcomes suggest that overall students' production and quality of written work were significantly enhanced by the use of visual input.

Key words: visual input, writing tasks, rubric, scaffold, students' written production.

INTRODUCTION

Communicative skills in a foreign language have become a key issue in the pursuit of wider opportunities for a successful career. Nonetheless, in order to develop these skills, it is necessary to provide abundant input (information) because it is an essential element to first and second language learning. Van Patten (2015) states that it is evident that learning is not immediate because nothing is acquired instantly purely through input exposure, accordingly, students need to “filter” input in order to understand the written or oral message received. That is why, productive skills (speaking and writing) take longer time to develop than other language skills and they require a considerable amount of practice.

Despite the diverse viewpoints and the variety of frameworks regarding second language acquisition, “in the 1970s and 1980s, SLA researchers came to agree that exposure to “meaning-bearing” input is essential in SLA” (Nava & Pedrazzini, 2018, p. 53). This means that learners need to process the information that they hear or read, analyze and digest it to attain an insight; however, this demands time and effort from both the teacher and the learner.

On the other hand, it is because of time, low English competence level of several students, and scarcity of teaching resources that teachers from public institutions are impelled to devote most of their classroom time to grammar, vocabulary, listening and reading, and less time to speaking and writing activities. However, between the latter, writing is the language skill that is given even less attention. Al-Mahrooqi (2014) affirms that writing surpasses the complexity of the rest of the language abilities. Furthermore, he claims that the majority of language courses emphasize the language needed to be able to interact in social situations, thus leaving writing at the last place. As a result, because of its complexity and time issues, writing has been the most neglected of the language skills. Accordingly, learners do not perform satisfactorily in this language area; some of them do not write very much, and others do not even write a word in the writing section of their tests/exams. This is why, it is crucial to find a way to help them generate ideas.

Since the world itself is a visual environment, images and diverse colors are everywhere. Nowadays, with the growing technology, the constant increase of social media use, and the endless appearance of applications, it is not difficult to realize how people become more and more involved in the visual world. Through the internet and social media, almost every individual can access all kinds of pictures and photos. Visual input refers to the use of images as a way of transmitting an idea or meaning. Like music, visual input has no language; therefore, it can be interpreted in any language and used for developing any language skill.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

1.1 Statement of the problem

A diagnostic test revealed that in a group of A1-A2 EFL level students taking their first semester in 2018-2019, at the Business Administration School of the University of Guayaquil (Guayaquil-Ecuador) presented difficulty in their written production, which was reflected in the fact that they did not even attempt to write a few basic sentences in the writing section.

These results led to the conclusion that some learners probably did not know what to write or how to start doing it; they had problems when generating ideas, or they did not have the necessary motivation to write.

It was also found that some students wrote very short texts with little information, or they took too long to start writing, thus showing either poor interest in writing, little creativity, or problems with generating ideas. The writing task is worth two points in a scale out of 10 of their exams (mid-term and final), consequently, if they do not write properly, not only will they attain poor grades in the writing section, but in their final grade, thus affecting their overall academic performance.

1.2 Justification

According to Amer (2017) "In April, 2003, the National Commission on Writing for America's Families, Schools and Colleges reported that writing is often the skill most neglected in schools" (p. 54). Our country portrays a similar reality because it is widely known that in most educational institutions (especially public) writing is one of the least developed language skills. This is probably due to several reasons such as the time available for teachers to develop the contents of the syllabus, the time it takes to teach students this skill, the little time available for correcting students' papers, the packed classrooms, and finally, the instructor's writing skills. Moreover, if lacks occur in first language writing, they will naturally occur when writing in a second language.

Consequently, it is essential to investigate diverse manners in which writing can be improved from the most basic stages.

A scant number of studies related to visual input (visuals/audio-visual material) have been carried out in the field of SLA (Second Language Acquisition), and even less regarding the use of visual input to enhance writing activities. Furthermore, the research done has utilized instruments such as questionnaires, surveys and classroom observations, but almost none has analyzed primary data such as the learners' own work as is the case in this small-scale inquiry.

Visual input has been present for a long time in mainstream education, showing positive results. In foreign language, teaching and testing its usefulness also becomes evident at the different levels of instruction. Thus, investigation within this field would provide diverse insights about how visual input can be used by teachers for the improvement of the learners' written production.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General objective

- To analyze the effectiveness of visual input to scaffold the written production in English of A1-A2 level students at a public Higher Education institution.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To review the types of visual input that can be used in an EFL classroom setting.
- To determine whether providing visual input results in the increase of the amount of words in students' written production.
- To identify the way or ways in which visual input could help students improve their written production.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 General

- How effective is the use of visual input to enhance the written production of A1-A2 level students of an EFL classroom at a public Higher Education institution?

1.4.2 Specific

- What types of visual input can be used in an EFL classroom setting?
- Does the use of visual input result in the increase of the amount of words in students' written production?
- In which way or ways could visual input help students improve their written production?

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 What is input?

The Cambridge Dictionary (2018) states that input [as a noun] is “something such as energy, money, or information that is put into a system, organization, or machine so that it can operate”. As a verb it means to “to put information into a computer or other piece of electronic equipment” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018). Correspondingly, it can be said that visual input (images) transmits a message or information to the viewer’s brain (which acts as a machine) with the purpose of producing something.

Smith (1993) claims that the word *input* is derived from one of the basic concepts of information processing. However, he asserts that in SLA, input refers to the language information to which the learner is exposed; in other words, all the different types of contact that the student has with the second language. Similarly, Kumaravadivelu (2006) defines input as the oral or written language that second language learners receive by means of several origins.

2.2 Definition of writing

Nunan (2003) provides several aspects that facilitate the understanding of the complex definition of writing:

- It is a physical and mental activity. Writing is to physically commit your ideas to paper, either through the use of ink, or through the typing of a written message by means of a technological device. In addition, writing is a mental activity that consists of developing thoughts, reflecting upon the ways to convey them, and correlate them into perfectly coherent sentences and paragraphs in such a fashion that they are understandable to the reader.
- Express and impress, are writing’s two main objectives. People who write have to analyze what they write from two different angles: themselves (the writer), and the reader (the audience). That is why,

their thoughts have to be transmitted in specific ways considering both the ideas they want to express, and how to express those ideas so they are clear-cut to the readers.

Writing involves “process” and “product”; the writer invents, coordinates, design drafts, edits, reads, and proofreads. This course of action is usually a cycle, and several times goes in different orders. Finally, the product is the final piece of written work which can be a letter, a research report, a story, or an essay (Nunan, 2003).

2.3 Writing in a second language

Writing is one of the most complex skills to develop even when it is in a first language. Therefore, writing in a second language involves a much higher challenge and effort from the part of the learner. Jozsef (2001) asserts that “Writing is among the most complex human activities. It requires the development of a design idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects” (p. 5).

Unlike speaking, writing is not a natural process that at a certain point emerges; it requires overt attention and practice. Lenneberg, as cited in Brown (2000), declares that there is a relationship between swimming and writing; he ascertains that humans all over the world can perfectly learn how to walk and talk, but that it is not the case with swimming and writing because both skills are closely related to cultural behaviors, which are learned. In his analogy, he mentions that in the same way there are non-swimmers, poor-swimmers, and excellent swimmers, there are these three kinds of writers. On the other hand, Harmer (2004) affirms that despite the fact that humans become adults naturally acquiring their L1 (and several times their second or third languages), writing needs to be formally learned. Moreover, Harmer emphasizes that children acquire spoken language in a natural way because of the continual exposure to it, while writing is a skill that requires full awareness.

A similar view is held by Rivers, who states that unlike speaking, writing is not part of a natural development stage (as cited in Lee, 1994). Furthermore, not

every individual has the capacity to be communicative and to express extensively in written mode, or even to write with devoted inspiration (Lee, 1994). Therefore, writing in L1 is already a challenging activity, and its level of difficulty considerably increases when it is attempted in L2.

Now, when second language teachers ask their students to write about something, the focus can be either on practicing/reinforcing language structures, or on fulfilling a communicative purpose. To this respect, Lee (1994) argues that L2 writing is more significant than the mere purposes of reinforcing vocabulary and grammar in the target language. Writing in a second language should be more ambitious than that; it should not limit to simple skill getting or practice of what has been studied in a classroom setting. Dvorak claims that writing involves the focus on language forms and communicating ideas or getting a message across (as cited in Lee, 1994).

Seeking to activate previous knowledge is one technique in which instructors can help ESL learners prior to starting the writing activity. Ensuring learners have the chance to consider what knowledge they already have for undertaking any writing task, enables ESL learners to consolidate new data into actual knowledge which enacts long-term memory (Watt-Taffe & Truscott, 2000, as cited in Cole, 2015).

2.4 Research on Second Language Writing

Brown (2000) explains that the same movement that switched the teaching of other skills, especially listening and speaking from a focus on accuracy to fluency and communication, are related to the improvement of writing in a second language. Nevertheless, numerous issues are arguable in this field as seen in table 1:

Table 1 *Tendencies when teaching writing in a second language*

<p>1. Composing vs. writing</p>	<p>Products resulting from writing are usually an outcome of thinking, drafting and revising processes which utilize specific abilities that are not naturally developed by every speaker. Thus, the writing pedagogy emphasizes <i>the process</i> for generating ideas, their organization in a coherent and logical form, the correct use of discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to set them in a coherent text. Text revision in order to clarify meaning, editing with the goal of using the correct language structures, and ultimately, yielding a final product.</p>
<p>2. Process vs. product</p>	<p>In the past, teachers were mainly preoccupied with the final product of writing: the report, the essay, the story, and what that product should appear like. Written pieces of work were expected to a) be tailored according to a certain English rhetorical style; b) utilize appropriate linguistic structure; and c) be aligned with what the readers recognize as traditional or accepted. Great emphasis was given to <i>model</i> compositions that learners could imitate and on the correctness of a learner's final product evaluated based on a rubric that consisted of content, organization, vocabulary use, and mechanics.</p> <p>Nevertheless, students become more involved if they are viewed as language designers, thus focusing on content and message, and acknowledging their inner reasons as the most significant learning element. That was the origin of the process approach to writing instruction. Process approaches take into consideration the majority of the following aspects (as cited in Brown, 2000):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Emphasize the writing process that leads to the final product. b. Assist writers in the comprehension of their composing process. c. Assist them in constructing their storage of tools for prewriting, drafting, and rewriting. d. Provide learners the necessary time to write and rewrite. e. Give special priority to the revision part of the process f. Allow learners to determine what they want to express when writing something g. Provide feedback along the process of composition (not merely when the final product has been delivered), but while they are trying to compose what they intend to. h. Promote feedback from other fellow learners i. Incorporate face-to-face conversations between the instructor and the learner along the composition process of writing. <p>The real objective is to obtain a final product, therefore, the process is a means to that end; there has to be a balance between both of them.</p>

<p>3. Contrastive Rhetoric</p>	<p>Kaplan (1966) argued that every language had specific traits in their written work, and that second language learners of English possess an inner and peculiar writing pattern. For instance, Kaplan considers that English writers are <i>straightforward</i>; on the other hand, Chinese writing style is considered <i>spiral</i> because they do not go straight to the point; thus, for the Chinese it is going to be more demanding to align writing to the patterns of the English language (Kaplan, 1966, as cited in Brown, 2000). As a result, a wise course of action would be to take into account learners' cultural background as a likely origin of complication.</p>
<p>4. Differences between L1 and L2 writing</p>	<p>At the beginning of the 1970s, studies on SL writing were highly grounded on preceding studies of first language writing. The conclusions drawn were that both L1 and L2 processes were analogous, or rather homogeneous. Nonetheless, it is crucial for instructors to assimilate that they are heterogeneous indeed, because Silva proved it through an L2 writing survey. Silva observed that writers of an L2 planned less, and had less fluency (using less words), they were not so accurate (which means they committed more errors), and were not as effective in clarifying objectives and organizing information (as cited in Brown, 2000).</p>
<p>5. Authenticity</p>	<p>It is fundamental to evaluate the reasons to ask students to write something; and to analyze whether classroom writing activities are real writing. Therefore, it is relevant to reflect upon what is our motivation to ask learners to write something. In education at any level, writing is a means to an end in daily life. If somebody does not possess the ability to convey their messages across in a written form, it is impossible to pass a course.</p>
<p>6. The role of the teacher</p>	<p>The role of the teacher involves the one of an instructor and tutor, just the opposite to somebody who over-exercises authority. As a mentor, the English teacher provides scaffolding to assist learners to actively develop their thinking process when composing, but at the same time respecting their learners' opinions, not establishing his or her own views. What instructors should do is to provide proper feedback that regards learners' morals and convictions.</p>

Source: Brown (2000)

Harmer (1991) claims that when writing in the classroom, the teacher needs to fulfill the roles of a motivator, resource, and feedback provider. A *motivator* because it is essential to create the appropriate environment for generating ideas, convincing students about the worth of the exercise, and inspiring them to do their best. Some students find it more enjoyable to generate ideas when

writing creatively. In some cases, the instructor may provide some prompts or ideas of his own to assist students with difficulties. A *resource* because teachers should be available to impart information when necessary, and they should provide advice in a positive and careful way. A *feedback provider* since teachers should be ready to check students' work in progress, and when correcting, teachers should be aware of the aspects of the language that will be assessed.

2.5 Writing in the classroom

Skillful writers often have an objective in their thoughts and perform writing in order to achieve that goal. Students tend to become mere effective writers when they write *real messages for real audiences* or when they realize that they could need to do this activity outside the class. Thus, the selection of writing tasks should depend upon students' motives to learn English, for instance, three are the most common reasons for learning English, and it is relevant to consider them (Harmer, 2004):

- English as a Second Language (ESL): Term used to refer to people who live in the country where the target language is spoken; therefore, they need it for a daily communication. These students have the necessity to learn how to fill out plentiful forms, write different types of letter, altogether with the need to learn general English.
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP): this term is used to describe learners who need to study a specific English content. For instance, people who work as doctors, or secretaries should study medical English. Differently, those interested in the business world, should study Business English and so on.
- English as a Foreign Language (EFL): term that describes learners who study English as part of their school or academic program in a non-English speaking country. Defining specific writing needs in this field is more challenging because this type of class will be crowded with people from diverse social and occupational settings. In this case-scenario, a positive thing to do is to focus on writing tasks that most students will likely need to do, although writing activities would fall into one of these categories: real purpose and invented purpose. Real purpose tasks are

activities that students will likely need to do outside the classroom using the language, while invented tasks mostly rely on pedagogical purposes, and learners may never have to do this type of activity (Harmer, 2004).

Several writing activities depend upon the amount of restriction, assistance and discipline given. Scrivener (2005) shares some writing activities:

- Copying: Learners rehearse by shaping letters in a notebook; they write down substitution tables from the board, copy examples from a textbook, among others.
- Doing exercises: Learners create simple-words sentences, phrases, etc. as a result from closely emphasized tasks with tight choices and tight chances for imagery or making mistakes or errors.
- Guided writing: Learners are guided to write lengthy texts in pretty prohibiting and restrained tasks by providing samples, models, common language, suggestions, management structures, etc.
- Process writing: Learners write what they want to, with the assistance, motivation and assessment of the teacher and their peers along the process of selecting a topic, connecting ideas, putting them in order, drafting, etc.
- Unguided writing: Learners write freely with no manifest scaffolding, help or assessment at the time of writing, although a title or task might be established, and the written activity might be graded afterwards.

2.6 Teaching the skill of writing

In order for students to learn to develop the writing skill, language teachers shall carry out the following activities before, during and after the writing process (Harmer, 2004):

- **Demonstrating:** Students need to identify the particular types of writing styles and genres; accordingly, teachers ought to attempt to draw students' attention to these characteristics.
- **Motivating and provoking:** teachers should provide students with certain suggestions as a resource, in case learners become entangled, or try to amuse and engage their students through a motivating

introductory activity such as unjumbling texts on the board before writing, or exchanging online e-mails and discussing about the writing topics before actually writing.

- **Supporting:** Learners need large amounts of assistance and feedback once they have started. This means that the educator should support, guide and assist whenever difficulties are encountered in the middle of a writing class activity, but obviously, this is not the case if there is an exam.
- **Responding:** Teachers may react to learners' written works in two ways, which are responding or evaluating. Responding means to try to assess students by giving them a type of feedback, for example, saying something like "Your holiday sounds interesting Silvia", or "Be careful with your past tenses Nejati". Apart from that, teachers can underline some verbs or language patterns and ask students to write them correctly next time.
- **Evaluating:** It is clear that teachers need to evaluate learners' work. It is human nature to desire to know how well one has done, especially if it is a progress or achievement test. When evaluating, it is worth telling students what they did successfully, and what needs improvement. When educators give students the corrected version of their work, it can still be used as a learning opportunity since one can underline errors, or circle them, and ask learners to try to rewrite correctly (Harmer, 2004).

Learners have the capacity to turn into skillful writers if they are a) lively stimulated and assisted to pursue a set of processes previous to the production of a final text; and b) informed about the process of preparation, in order to do it in an independent and transparent way in the future. The following activities are considered guided writing or process writing work, and they overlap most of the time (Scrivener, 2005). Table 2 describes how the teacher can assist students:

Table 2 *Guiding learners through the writing process*

1. Select a topic	10. Analyze sample/model texts alike to the ones they must or want to write
2. Select a genre	11. Design the text organization
3. Generate ideas	12. Write a draft
4. Debate their views with others to renew their standpoints	13. Obtain feedback on content
5. Choose between ideas	14. Obtain feedback on language use
6. Structure ideas	15. Write sections of a text in collaboration
7. Write notes, diagrams, etc. to assist with the organization of ideas	16. Make adjustments and rewrites
8. Select appropriate grammar and vocabulary that suits the text	17. Commit to paper a final version
9. Perform practice exercises on specific and helpful language structures	18. Identify suitable readers

Source: Scrivener (2005)

2.7 Visual input

According to Sinclair (1987), a picture is “a visual representation or image that is painted, drawn, or photographed, and rendered on a flat surface” (as cited in Lavallo, 2017, p. 3). Visual input refers to the use of photos, illustrations, graphs, among others, where the viewer or observer has to interpret what every picture represents. Since pictures have no language, it is the learner who interprets it depending on their previous experiences and socio-cultural background. Pictures are defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2018) as “something you produce in your mind, by using your imagination or memory”. Thus, pictures help to create mental representations of the outside world.

In the words of Hernández and Sánchez (2016) “visual aids are any instructional device that can be seen. They are also defined as training or educational materials directed at sense of sight” (p.13).

Pickett and other scholars provide various definitions of pictures; regarding pictures Pickett et al. write:

Pictures are images that interact information. Learners will need written language to communicate concepts, attitudes, and facts. Also they may need images as drawings, photographs, graphs, charts, and tables to exemplify and encourage written language. In written language, pictures must be suitable to learners and purpose, regardless of the subject matter.

(Pickett et al. 2001, 82, as cited in Khelil, 2013, p.7).

Khelil (2013) reflects on this by stating that pictures (visual input) makes writing appropriate to express or interact academically, this involves interpreting and clarifying specific information by means of drawings, charts, and so forth; and how they are differently analyzed is based upon the manner in which they are presented.

To this respect, visual input has to be simple for the viewers to understand, this means that the message implied in the pictures has to be readable for the students. To achieve this purpose, it was sought that the visual input selected for this study was as contextualized as possible.

2.8 Types of visual input

Doff (1988) mentions several visual aids and how they can be used in the class:

1. *The teachers themselves*: by using gestures, facial expressions, and actions to demonstrate the meaning of words and to exemplify situations.
2. *The blackboard*: It can be used by the teacher or students to design pictures, maps, diagrams, etc.
3. *Real objects (or realia)*: this refers to the bringing of real things to the classroom, such as household objects, clothes, food, etc.
4. *Flashcards*: these are cards showing pictures that the teacher can easily show their students
5. *Charts*: These are used for a longer presentation or practice; they are larger sheets of card or paper, which have images, text, and/or diagrams.

Doff (1988) also lists other visual elements that could be used in the English classroom, although he does not explain much about them: flannelboard, magnetboard, slides, filmstrip, and colored rods.

Another popular way in which images and pictures can be used is in information gap activities to practice listening and speaking. For example, two students are given each a different picture and they have to describe it and find the differences between them, or one student has a picture and has to describe it to the other student who will have to listen carefully and draw the same picture according to the instructions that he receives.

Regarding types of visual input input, Goldstein (2016) mentions “A fascinating advance is, in fact, the way in which still or moving images and design features combine with written text to create multimodal ensembles” (p. 2). Additionally, Donaghy and Xerri (2017) affirm:

Despite the fact that there are many resource books that promote the critical and creative usage of both still and moving images, resource books sell very few copies and it can take a long time before the activities proposed in them are adopted by authors of the much better selling coursebooks (p.2).

Therefore, it can be said that visual input (images) is divided into two general categories which are:

- a. still images/pictures, or non-moving images/pictures, and
- b. moving images combined with sound, or audio-visuals

Mansourzadeh (2014) shows that numerous authors (Wright & Haleem, 1992; Allen, 1983; Gaims & Redman) have divided audio-visuals into a sub-group of visuals, such as:

1. Chalkboard
2. Overhead projector
3. Wall pictures and wall posters
4. Picture flash cards

5. Word flash cards
6. Authentic printed materials
7. Realia, or real objects
8. Mime and gesture

Mansourzadeh (2014) affirms that the other group corresponds to audio-visuals where video, radio, cassettes, and TV are included.

According to Dharshini (2012), as cited in Hernández and Sánchez (2016), the overall form of classifying visual input resources is in two types: the ones requiring projection and not requiring projection.

Not requiring projection

1. Whiteboard
2. Picture Flash Cards
3. Word Flash Cards
4. Text books
5. Posters
6. Pictures
7. Photographs
8. Realia
9. Handout

Requiring projection:

10. Overhead projector

(Hernández & Sánchez, 2016, p.14)

Differently, for Salandanan (1996) “pictorial materials for instructional aids include non-projected flat pictures, projected slides, and filmstrips and transparencies” (p.83). Now, regarding still pictures he asserts that still pictures are generally classified as non-projected or projected. But in order to utilize them effectively, learners need to understand how to *read* them. Some learners merely observe several of the elements in the image. Students who are smarter can point out more specific items and find the connections that convey the overall meaning of the image. Yet they can go further by adding inventive details and linking the images with their personal experiences. Flat

pictures which are non-projected include photos printed in books and/or magazines, paintings and drawings (Salandanan, 1996).

Nevertheless, today there is a wider range of possibilities in which still and moving pictures and images can be used. For example, nowadays with the development of technology, the advent of internet, the creation of smart cell phones, and the broad spread of social media; teachers have richer image resources. Goldstein (2016) asserts that “the digital age has brought us instant messaging services (e.g., Whatsapp), applications (Skype), social media sites (Facebook) or video-sharing platforms (YouTube), all of which contribute to this extraordinary rise in visual communication” (p. 2). Similarly, Donaghy and Xerri (2017) claim that it is unimaginable to think about a second language learning environment with no presence of a textbook containing pictures, paintings, photos, comics, wallcharts, flashcards, picture books, student-designed work, YouTube videos, movies, media, and so forth. Thus, it can be affirmed that the number of resources in which images can be used nowadays is countless.

2.9 Benefits of teaching with visual input (pictures)

There are several studies that point out various benefits of using pictures in teaching:

- **To enhance memory retention:** Sa’diyah (2017) affirms that pictures facilitate retention, and “instructional media help students visualize a lesson and transfer abstract concepts into concrete, easy to remember objects” (p.166). McLeod (2007) claims that students’ long-term memory is enhanced and learning is made purposeful thanks to visual input (as cited in Jakubowski, 2013).
- **To improve motivation and concentration:** Halwani (2017) reported in his study that about 90% of the learners enjoy visual input as a means of teaching instruction. Furthermore, the utilization of visual guides enhanced their confidence, understanding, and concentration. Additionally, Sa’diyah (2017) found out that the picture-series aided learning strategy enhanced learners’ predisposition regarding the language acquisition process apart from their learning attitude in performing the writing task. Another scholar that states this is Lee

(1994) because her investigation revealed that 50% of the students were pleased to utilize pictures as well as being provided with vocabulary and grammatical structures. Moreover, the results of the questionnaires point to a shift towards a more positive tendency in terms of using pictures to enhance writing.

- **Images are easily available:** The website is an abundant source of free images. “Image search engines allow us to conduct searches using keywords or phrases to find exactly what we are looking for” (Keddie, 2009, p.129).
- **Pictures can be used basically to develop any language skill, or any aspect of the language:** Uematsu (2012) affirms that images and pictures can be used in more than one form. He also states that pictures can be utilized in innumerable manners. Images have the potential to be utilized in a number of ways, from vocabulary and accuracy to the developing of speaking and writing abilities (Krčelić & Matijević, 2015).
- **Pictures are an international language:** Images have the capacity to go even beyond the geographical limitations that a language cannot, and in the classroom setting, it is fundamental to promote the analysis and interpretation in dialogic and collaborative way (Keddie, 2009). What is the reason of the proverb “a picture and a thousand words”? The fact is that the picture’s viewer possesses a language. The visual representation starts a stream of reflections as the perceiver engagingly, inventively, and affectively interpret the image’s meaning. While analyzing the images, the observer is mentally and emotionally involved in trying to decipher the message transmitted through the picture(s) (Sinatra, 1975).

Visual representations are essential to language learning and they surely arise student’s motivation, curiosity and interest. If one reads a book, what makes it interesting is the details the writer provides, because the more details are given, the more effortless it is to represent it in people’s minds; most of the times this is an unconscious action. This happens even if readers are not aware of themselves picturing the scenes in their own minds.

2.10 The role of visual input in mainstream education

Triacca (2017) states that educators often utilize visuals as a backup for their oral presentations, to clarify concepts, and to promote the focus on significant items.

Koenig and Holbrook (2000) claim that materials used in the class often include images. These illustrations or images create a visual appeal that help to clarify arguments that book designers intend to explain. In some cases, the book relies on images for conveying meaning.

Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, and Iqbal (2015) carried out a study whose purpose was to investigate the utilization and advantages of visual aids in the learning process of the students from Dera Ghazi Khan; some of the conclusions from their research are:

- The use of visual aids as strategy for teaching promotes thinking and enhances the learning environment in the classroom.
- The adequate utilization of visual aids substitutes a tedious learning environment.
- Learners consider the use of visual aids advantageous and significant when it is directly linked to the content of the course (Shabiralyani, Hasan, Hamad, & Iqbal, 2015).

Therefore, it can be said that visual input (pictures) has a positive effect in basically any subject. In addition, it can be used to teach any language because visual input has no language.

2.11 The role of visual input and audio-visual aids in SLA: Why should visual input be utilized in a language classroom?

- **To get learners to predict something:** Images are of great help “to predict what is coming next in a lesson. This use of pictures is very powerful and has the advantage of engaging students in the task to follow” (Harmer, 1991, p. 136).
- **To generate meaning:** Pictures play a prominent role in generating meaning. The biggest challenge for English teachers is to try to simulate the outside world. If the outside world is made clear to students through representations, then it is likely they will learn the new language related

to it. The principle for guiding every single activity in the classroom includes the teacher, a tape recorder, or a written text that explains what the picture means, with the image conveying the message of a “new” piece of language (Wright, 1989). When teaching or learning English, it is undeniable that the use of visual input (pictures) substantially facilitates understanding of what the educator aims to explain.

- **To elicit information:** Teachers can ask learners to identify, characterize, or guess information about the people shown in a picture (Wright, 1989, as cited in Khelil, 2013). It does not matter if the teacher uses still or moving images, printed or projected; a picture is always an engaging way in which teachers can get information from their students.
- **To integrate content and language and to enhance memory retention:** Keddie (2009) claims that identically to words, images contain their own grammar – a system that processes and analyzes them. When words and images are combined, the complete experience of learning is more likely to be memorable and productive. Words and images are not separable. It is inevitable to read or hear words, and as a result think of images. At the same time, once an image is seen, words come to mind (Keddie, 2009). Memory retention is important in any type of learning, but it is imperative in language learning, particularly, in second language learning.
- **To involve students more actively in the learning process:** Through internet, tablets, cell phones, laptops, platforms, applications, WhatsApp, among other media and technological tools, learners stop being merely passive receivers of information, but instead they become active producers. Goldstein (2016) states “today’s literacies are about encouraging the audience not just to be passive consumers but active contributors of their own digital experience” (p. 4). This means that students are not only the viewers, but can become now visual composers of what other students are going to see. The production of a student, or a group of students can now become another or other students’ visual input.
- **To develop visual intelligence:** According to Armstrong (2009) the spatial type of learners think of images and pictures, love designing,

drawing, visualizing, and doodling; and they need to participate in activities such as art, Legos, videos, movies, slides, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, and trips to art museums. Gill (2005) argues that in EFL teaching giving priority to visual learning styles is essential to acquire a new language because the visual input such as power points, whiteboards, and printed materials stimulate students' minds (as cited in Lavallo, 2017).

- **To engage students:** The use of pictures arises students' enthusiasm for learning a foreign language. Uematsu (2012) asserts that pictures are immediately attracting to students and empower teachers to engage learners in the learning process.
- **To introduce a new topic, language item or activity:** "They can be used as warmers, to get the students to start thinking about the topics that will be introduced or to initiate classroom discussion and debate, which can sometimes be difficult to achieve" (Krčelić & Matijević, 2015). Mansourzadeh (2014) affirms that they are also helpful to captivate students' interest towards the instructional materials.

Wright (1989) describes some roles that pictures could have when speaking or writing:

- a. *Motivation:* So learners want to participate in the proposed activities.
- b. *Contextualization:* Because "they bring the world into the classroom", for example, a specific place or item.
- c. *Objectivity or interpretation:* For instance, a learner could say: "This is a train", merely describing an object, or if the picture is interpreted, the student would rather say: "It's probably a local train".
- d. *Cued responses or questions:* These can be done by means of controlled practice; pictures are aimed at guiding learners.
- e. *Stimulation and information supply:* Pictures can trigger information and enable learners to participate in activities such as conversation, discussion and storytelling (Wright, 1989).

2.12 The picture-cued technique to guide learners' writings

A picture-elucidation task involves a cognitive task of awareness (Skehan, 1998) where students' focus is on the remarkable characteristics of one or a sequence of images, cartoons or photos clarifying a particular feature of a language utterance meaning. This particular feature successively guides students to identify analogous prominent attributes in supplementary abstract graphic elucidations of the language utterance under study (as cited in Daghari & Bahman, 2015).

Brown (2004) states that one of the most utilized techniques to develop oral production in an intensive and extensive way is to use a picture-cue as a stimulus, which depends upon a portrayal on the part of the test-taker. He explains that pictures can be presented in a simple way, they may be conceived to bring about a word or an utterance; rather more thorough and labored; or formed by a sequence of pictures that reveal a story or an event. According to what Brown (2004), the picture-cued technique can be used to assess both speaking and/or writing skills. Regarding assessing writing skills, he declares that "familiar pictures are displayed, and test takers are told to write the word that the picture represents" (p.223). He also describes how the picture-cued technique is useful at an imitative level of type of writing as a spelling activity. In addition, he explains that in an intensive or controlled type of writing, there is a wide range of picture-cued tasks that have been used in ELT classrooms, for instance, see table 3:

Table 3 *General picture cued-tasks*

Short sentences	A drawing of some simple action is shown; the test-taker writes a brief sentence.
Picture description	A somewhat more complex picture may be presented showing, say, a person reading on a couch, a cat under a table, books and pencils on the table, chairs around the table, a lamp next to the couch, a cat under a table, books and pencils on the table, chairs around the table, a lamp next to the couch, and a picture on the wall over the couch. Test-takers are asked to describe the picture using four of the following prepositions: on, over, under, next to, around. As long as the prepositions are used appropriately, the criterion is considered to be met.
Picture sentence description	A sequence of three to six pictures depicting a story line can provide a suitable stimulus for written production. The pictures must be simple and unambiguous because an open-ended task at the selective level would give test-takers too many options. If writing the correct grammatical form of a verb is the only criterion, then some test items might include the simple form of the verb below the picture.

Source: Adapted from (Brown, 2004)

In short, this technique is so rich that it can be used in multiple forms and to enhance basically every single language skill, or linguistic aspect: grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing, etc. Besides this, visual input can focus either on form or meaning, or both.

2.13 Use of visual input to scaffold writing

Visual input is usually utilized to promote learners' participation and develop a beneficial position towards the learning of the target language.

The use of visual input enhances the development of critical thinking skills, and as a result, creativity emerges. Birdsell (2017) argues that "visual metaphors could be used in pedagogical tasks that promote students' critical and creative thinking skills" (p.10). Visual metaphors are a way in which images can be used in mainstream education or ELT classrooms. Besides this, Goldstein (2016) states that educators choose, analyze, and design pictures to convey numerous messages. This selection, interpretation, and creation is what is required for developing critical thinking, higher-order thinking skills. Due to the diversity of uses of visual input, it can be asserted that visual input can be used with learners of all ages, depending on the teacher.

In writing, pictures may serve these main purposes:

1. To motivate and engage students who are reluctant to write: Nowadays, diverse appealing visual aids are being used to inspire students to write (Al Mamun, 2014).
2. To help students in the process of generating ideas: Pictures help students to produce connections among the words "bringing out more detailed, knowledgeable, responsive awareness to the object, situation or text being communicated" (Canning & Wilson, 2001, as cited in Ramirez, 2012, p. 18). As a result of this establishment of connections with the real world, the process of generating ideas is facilitated.
3. To write creatively: Educators could utilize images and ask students to write in a creative fashion. Teachers can show images to learners and ask them to create an imaginary story utilizing a certain minimum of images; these could be flashcards, cue-cards, a projected image, etc. (Harmer, 2001). A great advantage of images is that they can be used more ambitiously than a purely descriptive way since students can use their imagination to go beyond what the visual input conveys.

In conclusion, visual input can be used as a powerful tool for scaffolding writing activities thanks to the aspects mentioned above: motivating students, helping

them to generate ideas, and to develop creativity. Therefore, through visual input students' brains will be stimulated to generate more and richer ideas. For the purpose of this study, only one of these ways was chosen, and this is writing activity worksheets which provide students with printed still pictures, in order to help learners, make connections with their previous experiences; thus, they are capable of generating more ideas.

2.14 The CEFR

According to the Council of Europe (2001) the Common European Framework Reference for Languages sets outlines for the design of language syllabuses, educational program rules, examinations, course readings, and so forth crosswise over Europe. It portrays with details what language students need to figure out to work towards a specific end goal using language for conveying meaning, and what skills and aptitudes they need to cultivate in order to have the capacity to perform successfully. The outline includes the social setting in which language is established. The Framework also designates levels of proficiency that enable students' advancement estimated at each phase of learning and on a long-term basis.

The Common European Framework was proposed to overcome deficiencies regarding correspondence among experts working in the field of current languages emerging from the distinctive instructive frameworks in Europe. It gives the way to educational directors, course designers, educators, instructor mentors, etc... to reflect upon their current practices, with a view to arranging and coordinating their endeavors and to guaranteeing that they meet the genuine needs of the students for whom they account (Council of Europe, 2001).

According to the textbooks utilized, students from this research fit into the transition levels going from A1 to A2 level of the CEFR.

2.15 How the CEFR utilizes visual input in international exams

The role of visual input in international exams working under the CEFR parameters has been prominent. For instance, several international examination boards have developed their own graduated tests and they use pictures as a way to assess English Language Learning:

- ECCE: This examination was developed by the University of Michigan. In its listening section pictures are shown, and according to the information that is heard, the test-taker has to select the correct answer. Regarding the reading section, pictures are utilized as a reinforcement of the written text, and in the speaking section of this exam visual input is provided in the form of a problem-solving task.
- TOEIC: In this exam pictures are also used in the listening section; however, they are not used in any other part of the test. The ETS (Educational Testing Service) designs and applies this exam.
- FCE: This exam is given by the Cambridge University, and it makes a wide use of visual input in its speaking section.
- IELTS: In this test, visual input is slightly provided; very few pictures can be found in the listening and reading sections.
- TOEFL: This test uses pictures in its listening section only to reinforce the conversations, but not as an actual tool for assessment.

As it can be observed above, most of these international exams use visual input to evaluate listening and/or reading skills, but none of the exams listed above utilize visual input to evaluate writing. One of the possible reasons for this to occur might be the fact that they aim at determining learners' actual competence, which is what students can do with the target language, and this are high-stake examinations with an advanced level of difficulty.

Conversely, the present study utilized visual input as a way to scaffold (or guide) students in their writing activities since they are still in a basic level of learning the target language, therefore, the purpose is evidently quite dissimilar. In this research, the criteria (rubric) used for analyzing students' work is based upon the overall parameters set by the CEFR.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology designed for this study. The approach selected is Classroom-based research whose type of inquiry is Action Research.

The objectives of this study are to analyze the effectiveness of visual input to scaffold the written production in English of A1-A2 level students at a public Higher Education institution. The first specific objective of this study is to review the types of visual input that can be utilized in an EFL classroom. Another goal of this research is to inquire whether providing visual input to students could result in the increase of the amount of words in their written production. In addition, the study seeks to identify the way or ways in which students' writings could be improved through the utilization of visual input.

Visual input is of different types, but it mainly refers to still pictures or non-moving images, and that is the type selected in this research because it is the most suitable to the classroom conditions and available resources. The purpose was to select visual input that is contextualized, which is related to the learners' experiences, and thereof, facilitate students' mental connections. Correspondingly, students were expected to produce more ideas resulting from these cognitive connections.

3.1 Action Research

According to Rust and Clark (2007) action research is "taking action to improve teaching and learning plus systematic study of the action and its consequences" (p.4). Action Research has as its main objective to create a connection between the most appropriate procedures to carry out activities, and the actual procedures in which actions are carried out in a social setting (Burns, 2009). This method suits the nature of this study because it is fundamental to analyze students' work, and its results will provide the necessary data to draw relevant conclusions in the Second Language Acquisition field.

Practical action research comprises "a small-scale" investigation, specifically spots a particular situation, and is carried out either by a sole educational

practitioner, or a group belonging to a school (Creswell, 2012). This study did not include a large number of participants, and it sought to identify and solve an educational concern.

The steps embedded in the action research process are identifying an area of focus, developing an action plan, collecting data, and finally, analyzing and interpreting data (Mills, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2012).

3.2 Mixed methods

According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2006) “Action researchers often use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures that are developed to fit their setting” (p. 106). In addition, Creswell (2012) asserts that “action research uses data collection based on either quantitative or qualitative methods or both” (p. 577). Therefore, in this research both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered in order to answer the research questions. The qualitative instruments utilized were students’ writing activities, a formative assessment tool (first-term exam), and a teacher’s diary. In contrast, a rubric had to be designed for measuring students’ written performance, thus, the analysis of results was mainly presented in a quantitative manner.

Creswell (2012) states that generally, mixed methods are applied when there is the presence of qualitative and quantitative data because its merge grants a more complete comprehension of the research matter under investigation rather than utilizing a single type of method. Thus, this study required the use of these methods because although most of the instruments utilized are qualitative in nature, they were operationalized in a quantitative way through the use of a rubric. Accordingly, results are mainly presented in the form of basic statistics, which is numbers, percentages, bars, and charts.

3.3 Population and sample

The population is made up by adult students from the Business School where there are eight academic programs: Commercial Engineering, CPA, Marketing, Management Engineering, Taxation and Finance, Systems Engineering, Foreign Trade, and the new academic program: Bachelor of Arts in Tourism (implemented in 2018). In this School there are around 10,000 students coming from different parts of Ecuador, and foreign countries too.

Learners study general English the first 6 modules and the last two modules they study basic Business English. The first six modules are taught using the book series *The English Hub* and for the 2 last modules they use the texts *Accounting and Administration A2, and B1+*. Both textbooks are from M&M publication publisher.

Students have three English class hours per week, and they can choose among the different schedules. For instance, Mondays and Wednesdays from 07h00 to 08h30, 08h30 to 10h00, 10h00 to 10h30, 12h30 to 14h00, etc. If they cannot attend classes on weekdays, they can choose the intensive courses where they receive the three hours once per week, for example, on Fridays or Saturdays from 07h00 to 10h00 am, 10h00 am to 13h00, etc.

The sample was an entire classroom of thirteen students selected because their syllabus was the one that best suited this research. For instance, module 1 was not appropriate for the topics of writing were highly related to their personal experiences; therefore, the role of visual input provided in their writing activities would not probably have been so relevant.

3.4 Participants

The students of English module four from the University of Guayaquil, School of Business Administration were the subjects of this study. Students were between 19 and 29 years old. These learners are in the fourth semester and the collection of data occurred during the first semester of the academic year 2018-2019 while they attended their English classes. For the English and Information Technology subjects, students are mixed, this means that participants were from different academic programs.

Participants were thirteen; nine women and four men, all of whom speak Spanish as their first language. In view of the diagnostic test results (table 4), which is applied as a requirement at the beginning of each semester, there were four students who got better results (more than ten over twenty). This means that their grades were above the level of their fellow classmates'. Nonetheless, the rest of learners did not achieve good grades, so they had to sign a commitment to go to tutoring classes. Something worth mentioning is that four students were taking the course for the second time.

3.5 Instruments for data collection

- Diagnostic test
- Student-generated data (worksheets and writing activities)
- Rubric
- Test data (First term exam)
- Teacher's diary

3.5.1 Diagnostic test

This test was used as a formative assessment tool because although it provided a grade (thus, it could be considered summative), it aimed at evaluating students' real knowledge, and thus adapt teaching practice. Popham (2006) affirmed that assessment is formative provided that the information obtained from it serves to enhance educational practice, and it seeks to satisfy the learners' needs (as cited in Dunn and Mulvenon, 2009).

In the Business Administration School, the Language Department usually organize their duties and the elaboration of evaluation and assessment tools in work groups. Therefore, there was a group of teachers who were in charge of designing the diagnostic tests. In the case of module 4, it was another teacher, and not the researcher who was in charge of its elaboration.

The exam was elaborated on the basis of the contents from the syllabus that learners had studied in the previous module (3). At the same time, the textbook is based on the CEFR.

The evaluation was intended to show to which extent students had internalized the contents acquired in the previous module (3), and thus, the educator had an idea of what students remember and what contents needed to be reinforced through tutoring classes. Pupils who got 5 or less points in this test had to mandatorily go to tutoring classes and had to sign a letter where they committed to go to any of the tutoring classes schedules offered.

The skills included in the exam were reading, vocabulary, and grammar. Writing is not usually included in these tests because it takes longer to grade, but for the purpose of this study, the teacher-researcher decided to include it. The purpose was to determine the amount of words used in students' written

production and thus uncover the problem that many students had when writing, which was that they wrote too little, or in some cases nothing.

The exam was administered to students on Wednesday May 16th 2018, but they did the written part on Monday May 21st 2018. The topic given to students was: Write about your last vacation (write a minimum of 60 words). Students had around 20 minutes to complete the task.

After, the number of words of each learner’s written production was counted. Two students out of thirteen wrote nothing, and three more wrote less than the minimum of words required, as it can be observed in the table below. This means that 38.46% of the students wrote less than 60 words. This problem prompted a consideration of the reasons why this happened and to pursue a feasible alternative to solve this situation. These results can be observed in table 4; the highlighted students obtained the highest scores.

Table 4 *Diagnostic Test results*

Students	Diagnostic test Grades	Number of words
A	9.5	0
B	17	73
C	8	42
D	9	87
E	11.75	67
F	8.25	70
G	12,25	67
H	6	28
I	5.5	65
J	8.25	54
K	6.25	68
L	8.5	0
M	15	99

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

3.5.2 Student-generated data (worksheets)

The instruments for obtaining the students’ data were three worksheets created on the basis of the writing activities required in Unit 6 from the course book “The English Hub 2B” used in module 4. Besides the three worksheets designed using visual input (pictures), students additionally had to do three more writing activities without visual input. The purpose was to ask them to do each writing task without and with pictures. In each one of the writing tasks they had to work on the exact same activity; the only difference was that in one

they had no pictures, and in the other one, some pictures were added. It was sought that the visual input provided had a direct relation to at least some of their experiences (contextualized visual input). The objective was to enhance the process of generating ideas, given the fact that in the diagnostic test some students demonstrated difficulties in doing so.

In the first writing task with no pictures, they had to write a paragraph about their city/town. Apart from the instructions, students could use the questions below to guide their writing:

- What are some of the popular sights in your city?
- Where are they?
- Why are they popular?
- Do many people visit them every year?

In the same writing task, this time with pictures, learners were told to do exactly the same activity with the sole difference that this time they had some visual input because they were given a piece of paper with images of some of the most popular tourist places in Guayaquil.

In the writing task number two with no pictures, students were asked to write sentences about how different their city was five years ago. They were allowed to use some ideas given. They had to use some comparative adjectives to describe their city. They were provided with an example and a few vocabulary words.

In this task with pictures, the same instruction was given, but this time they were given a paper with ten pictures of the city that they could observe. They were told to look at the pictures and to do the same activity.

The writing activity number three was different because the book already included two pictures, besides a model that learners could use to develop their own writing task. In both tasks, without and with pictures, students could see the model of an e-mail. The only contrast there was is that they were given a paper with four additional images besides the other two that the textbook included. In the task students had to look at two hotel advertisements below and write an e-mail to a friend of theirs. They would use the e-mail on the left as an example. They had to tell their friend which hotel they preferred and why.

3.5.3 Rubric

The textbook used in class for module 4 proposes activities to start developing A2 level of the CEFR. According to the number of hours that students have received at the end of modules 1 and 2, and according to the results obtained from their diagnostic tests, students started module 4 with an A1 level. Nonetheless, the activities proposed by the new book are A2 level; accordingly, learners are in a transition period of A1 and A2 level.

An analytic rubric, based on the criteria corresponding to the CEFR, was designed and utilized. First, it was designed, then reviewed by peers, and finally corrected and revisited by the project advisor. "A rubric is a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work" (Goodrich, 1997, p.14), therefore, it was used to facilitate data analysis of students' written activities.

The rubric consisted on the use of several parameters divided into accuracy, lexis and mechanics. There were five parameters corresponding to accuracy, two to lexis and three to mechanics, which means in total there were ten parameters. The first five that belong to accuracy were quantitative while the other five parameters belonging to lexis and mechanics, were qualitative. This rubric was the same applied to both types of writing activities, the one without pictures and with pictures, and it had to be used to analyze each piece of writing of each student.

In the quantitative parameters, for instance, the number one, the number of coordinating conjunctions was counted. In the second parameter, subordinating conjunctions were counted. In the third, fourth and fifth parameters, the task was more complex since it was necessary to identify the exact number of sentences, and decide which ones were syntactically correct, used the correct tenses, or the ones that were not coherent (difficult to understand, or that required higher effort to understand).

Besides quantitative parameters, it was essential to apply qualitative parameters because all of the aspects were not entirely measurable; thus, a Likert scale was utilized to facilitate scrutiny. To identify to which scale each parameter belonged to, it was necessary to establish the number of occurrences in this form, see table 5:

Table 5 *Classification of categories per number of occurrences*

Always	1-2 times
Usually	3-4 times
Sometimes	5-6
Rarely	7-18
Never	More than 18

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

In table 6, the rubric used to analyze each student's activity can be observed:

Table 6 Analytic Rubric for the Assessment of the Writing Skill of A1-A2 Level EFL Students at the University of Guayaquil

WRITING ACTIVITY # 1: STUDENT "A"										
WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT					NUMBER OF WORDS	50				
PARAMETERS					ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	# OF ITEMS
ACCURACY										
1	USE OF COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, OR, YET, SO									1
2	USE OF SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: BEFORE, AFTER, THAT, WHEN, BECAUSE, IF, ETC...									1
3	WORDS ARE SYNTACTICALLY WELL-ORGANIZED INTO SENTENCES									1/4
4	APPROPRIATE SELECTION OF TENSES ACCORDING TO A TIME CONTEXT									4/4
5	SENTENCES ARE COHERENT AND UNDERSTANDABLE (COMPREHENSIBLE)									2/4
LEXIS										
1	CORRECT SELECTION OF WORDS (WORD-CHOICE)		X							
2	USE OF THE NECESSARY RANGE OF VOCABULARY WORDS TO COMPLETE THE TASK			X						
MECHANICS										
1	APPROPRIATE USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS	X								
2	CORRECT SPELLING OF FAMILIAR WORDS OR PHRASES	X								
3	APPROPRIATE USE OF THE MOST BASIC PUNCTUATION RULES	X								
WITH VISUAL INPUT					NUMBER OF WORDS	82				
PARAMETERS					ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	# OF ITEMS
ACCURACY										
1	USE OF COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, OR, YET, SO									2
2	USE OF SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: BEFORE, AFTER, THAT, WHEN, BECAUSE, IF, ETC...									2
3	WORDS ARE SYNTACTICALLY WELL-ORGANIZED INTO SENTENCES									3/7
4	APPROPRIATE SELECTION OF TENSES ACCORDING TO A TIME CONTEXT									6/7
5	SENTENCES ARE COHERENT AND UNDERSTANDABLE (COMPREHENSIBLE)									6/7
LEXIS										
1	CORRECT SELECTION OF WORDS (WORD-CHOICE)	X								
2	USE OF THE NECESSARY RANGE OF VOCABULARY WORDS TO COMPLETE THE TASK	X								
MECHANICS										
1	USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS	X								
2	CORRECT SPELLING OF FAMILIAR WORDS OR PHRASES	X								
3	APPROPRIATE USE OF THE MOST BASIC PUNCTUATION RULES	X								

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019, based upon the CEFR

3.5.4 Test data (first-term exam)

As mentioned above, this is a summative assessment tool, which was used as the second writing activity (without visual input). The fact that a real exam was used does not undermine its analysis, given the fact that in all of the writing activities with and without pictures, students did not have access to any other material than the worksheet or line paper where they had to work. However, there was an exception in the third writing activity since, in order to perform that activity, they needed to use the textbook.

Garrison and Ehringhaus (2007) claim that summative assessment in an educational setting is a method of ensuring reliability and that is eminently included in the process of grading learners' academic performance.

3.5.5 Teacher's Diary

The table below shows the information that was included in the form of a teacher's diary. The objective of using a teacher's diary was to record valuable information such as the date in which the activity was going to take place, the number of the worksheet (without or with visual input), the language function, the grammar structures, the vocabulary, a few questions regarding classroom management techniques, and an observation on the students' behavior when performing each activity. This is a useful tool to keep track of the teacher's work; the filled teacher's diary forms are included in the Appendices section. In the table 7, the teacher's diary sample can be observed:

Table 7 *Teacher's Diary format*

Date	
Worksheet No. 1	
Textbook	
Function	
Structures	
Vocabulary	
Students	
Classroom management	
Time designated for performing the activity	
Comments	
Observation	

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

3.6 Procedure

This study was carried out by a single teacher-researcher, and included 13 participants, which were students from module 4 of the English program at the Business School of the University of Guayaquil. The period for this was almost a complete semester (CI 2018-2019), and it required development of writing activities in six different dates because learners had to do six different writing tasks.

- The first activity was to give students the diagnostic test, then check it, and count the number of words in their writing activity. Next, a percentage of the number of students that had problems producing a written text was obtained. The diagnostic test served to identify the problem, in this case writing.
- Later, the syllabus of the learners' textbook was analyzed, and the unit and the number of activities that were designated. The following step was to design three writing worksheets containing visual input, and to decide the other three writing activities that were going to be worked by the students (in the class) in one-line sheets of papers. Then both the worksheets and the writing activities were done by the students; they were applied in this order: Writing Activity 1: without visual input, then after around two weeks, the writing activity 1: with visual input was applied, and so on. Most of the activities were done within a two-week interval.
- The writing tasks without visual input were always applied first since these were the regular activities suggested by the textbook that was utilized in the course, in addition, this is the regular way in which students have performed writing, thus, this was not new; the different activity was the one with visual input. According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2006) due to the high requirements of participating in the roles of practitioner-researcher, action research data collection methods ought to be straightforward and they must not interrupt the natural class process. Therefore, the primary reason to follow this sequence was to try to keep the normal flow of the classroom activities.

Another powerful reason to do the writing tasks without visual input first, is because images and pictures are remembered faster and more easily by the brain. Dewan (2015) states that “research on visual communication shows that pictures have a number of advantages over words” (p. 1). In a study on Alzheimer’s disease, carried out in the field of psychology by Ally (2012), he points out that “both groups of patients demonstrate markedly better memory for pictures over words, to a degree that is significantly greater in magnitude than their healthy older counterparts” (p. 1). Consequently, outcomes obtained would be biased if the sequence had been the opposite, this is, applying the activity with visual input first, and then the activity without it. As a result, students would surely remember the visual input they would have observed in the previous activity, especially due to the contextualized nature of pictures.

- Once all of the students’ writing tasks were collected, a rubric acknowledging some aspects related to the CEFR and some others pertaining to this study were designed. This rubric was peer-reviewed, and then corrected and revisited by the tutor advisor.
- Next, students’ work was scrutinized according to the quantitative and qualitative parameters from the rubric. In order to do this, it was crucial to establish a procedure. First, it was necessary to use *a few writing correction symbols (above the errors, or to the margin of the page)* to simplify and clarify the analysis. Then, it was essential to identify, analyze and classify the different types of errors; for instance, if it was a word order error, the researcher would write W.O. to the margin or near the error, if it was a spelling error, the letters Sp. were written, and so on.
- Next, errors were counted (if applicable), or were placed under the categories of: always, usually, sometimes, and never. In order to identify to which category each parameter corresponded, it was of paramount importance to establish the number of occurrences, as mentioned above. The range of occurrences can be seen in table 5.
- Afterwards, the number of words of each piece of writing was counted.

- Then, the median of each quantitative parameter was drawn: without and with visual input. In order to do so, it was necessary to compare each parameter per each student and per each writing task.
- Next, the number of occurrences regarding the qualitative parameters were counted and classified per task without and with visual input.
- Finally, results were tabulated and compared: without versus with visual input.

It is relevant to mention that to ensure accuracy of the findings, the process of analyzing each student's piece of writing from each writing task was done at least twice.

3.7 The Action Research process

According to Burns (2005), as cited in (Griffie, 2012) “action research design is controversial, seemingly contradictory, and probably an as yet unfinished and still evolving design” (p.109).

It is relevant to mention that action research practitioners do not completely agree on a fixed set of steps for carrying it out, nor they do about its content and nature (Mackey & Gass, 2005). That said, there are several ways in which Action Research can be carried out. For this study, the set of steps followed are the ones suggested by Mills (2011) as cited in Creswell (2012):

Stage 1: Identify an area of focus: This means to define the area by practicing self-reflection and description. In this part, the teacher-researcher reviews the literature regarding to the area of interest.

Stage 2: The teacher-researcher designs an action plan to guide the research.

Stage 3: Then, data is collected through multiple-sources data, such as quantitative and qualitative.

Stage 4: This last phase regards the analysis and interpretation, in addition to sharing findings.

The steps above are explained in more detail in the sub-headings below.

3.7.1 Identification of an area of focus

In several years of experience, the teacher-researcher has observed that students in general did not perform satisfactorily in the writing section of their first-term and final exams. Nevertheless, it was essential to find out whether the sample selected for this research presented the same inconveniences. Accordingly, to ascertain whether the participants of this study presented the same problem, a writing activity was included in their diagnostic test. In this section of the exam, a similar problem was detected as it has already been mentioned in the section 3.5.1, Diagnostic test, see table 4.

3.7.2 Action plan design

After deciding on the research questions and reviewing a large body of literature, an action plan was designed.

First, the contents of all the programs that the teacher-researcher had were analyzed to determine the module (or English program) that would best suit the research. Then, one of the programs was selected, module 4, because it was not such a basic level, or so advanced, and the practice of extra activities would not affect the regular flow of the class process. With a more advanced level, it would have been more ambitious to cope with both the program and the extra written tasks including visual input.

Then, the contents were selected along with the development of three written activities proposed by the textbook. Afterwards, the three worksheets proposing visual input activities were designed, and then corrected by the tutor. When they were approved, they were applied to the students.

Next, it was imperative to design the tool in which the students' results were going to be measured. For that purpose, CEFR contents regarding A1 and A2 levels were reviewed, so they could be included in the design of that rubric. Furthermore, it was necessary to reflect on the aspects of language that were going to be analyzed.

Then, after the teacher-researcher designed the rubric, it was peer-reviewed by fellow co-workers, all of whom had several years of experience as second language teachers. Next, it was approved by the tutor of this research project. The rubric had ten items, five of which were quantitative because it was literally

absolutely necessary to count, but it also had qualitative parameters, for which a Likert scale was utilized.

After, students' writing tasks were collected, the teacher researcher realized that in order to facilitate the analysis, the use of writing codes was essential. Therefore, the teacher-researcher investigated about this topic and selected the writing codes that were going to be utilized in the study. After analyzing the students' writing tasks, it was noticed that it was fundamental to establish a range per number of occurrences per each category of the qualitative parameters, the categories were always, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. Each category had to be assigned a range of number of occurrences (errors).

Finally, each piece of writing was checked three times in order to ensure the validity of results.

3.7.3 Data collection process

As mentioned earlier, quantitative and qualitative data instruments were used such as the diagnostic tests to determine the problem, teachers' diaries to keep a record of every class, three worksheets (which were designed by the teacher-researcher and included visual input to scaffold students' writing), an exam, and the design of a quantitative rubric in order to analyze students written production.

3.7.4 Analysis and interpretation of data gathered

This last stage deals with **the analysis and interpretation of data gathered**, in addition to sharing findings. This part of the process can be seen and read in the next chapter: Analysis of results.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

After analyzing writing activities without and with visual input, results were compared. The first aspect (and one of the most relevant) was the number of words produced in each writing task. In writing task number 1, 92% of the students improved when using visual input while task number two retrieved a significant yet not so successful 69%. Finally, in third writing task the percentage of students that increased the number of words in their writings was 63%. This can be observed in the table below.

Table 8 *Comparative table of writing activities: without vs. with visual input*

STUDENTS	WRITING ACTIVITY 1		WRITING ACTIVITY 2		WRITING ACTIVITY 3	
	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	50	82	82	73	72	56
B	103	146	88	139	126	117
C	60	107	80	89	66	71
D	119	120	92	167	84	119
E	72	86	74	70	95	79
F	96	118	81	164	119	98
G	92	110	79	104	81	84
H	28	53	21	83	35	56
I	98	130	90	125	48	98
J	73	64	46	113	73	81
K	67	106	33	136	81	93
L	47	87	83	68	78	75
M	90	103	128	93	76	88
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	12 / 13		9 / 13		8 / 13	
PERCENTAGE	92.31		69.23		61.54	

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

At the beginning, students did not know that this was part of a research project. They did the first activity as part of their formative assessment to avoid bias. If students had known what the purpose of the research was, they would have striven for more accurate performance in the activities presenting visual input (pictures).

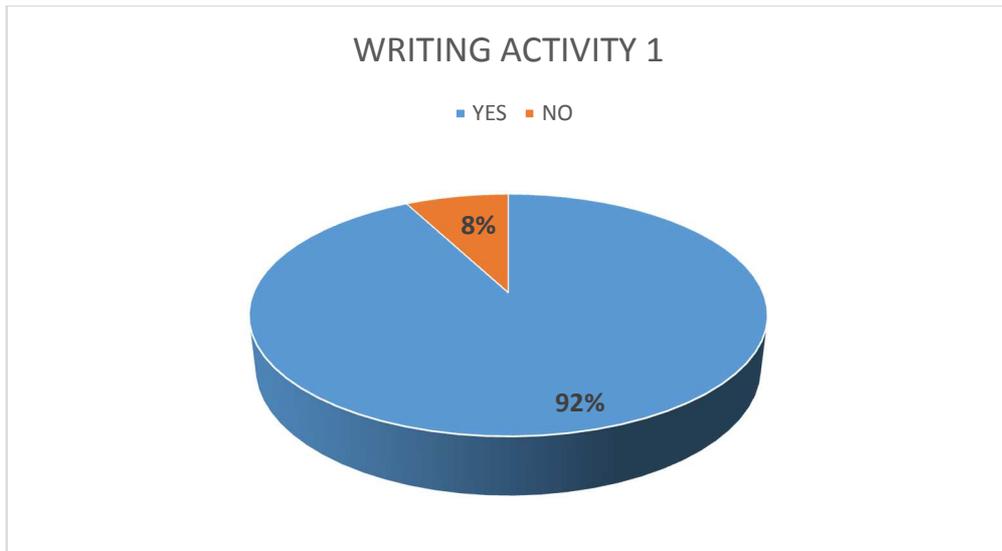


Figure 1. Writing activity 1. Prepared by the author, 2019

The pie chart above indicates that 92% of the students increased the amount of words in the writing activity number one, which provided visual input. In this activity the percentage of success was the highest, in comparison to activities two (69%) and three (61.54%). This is probably because students thought that this activity was going to be part of their process grade, consequently, there was external motivation for them to do their best.

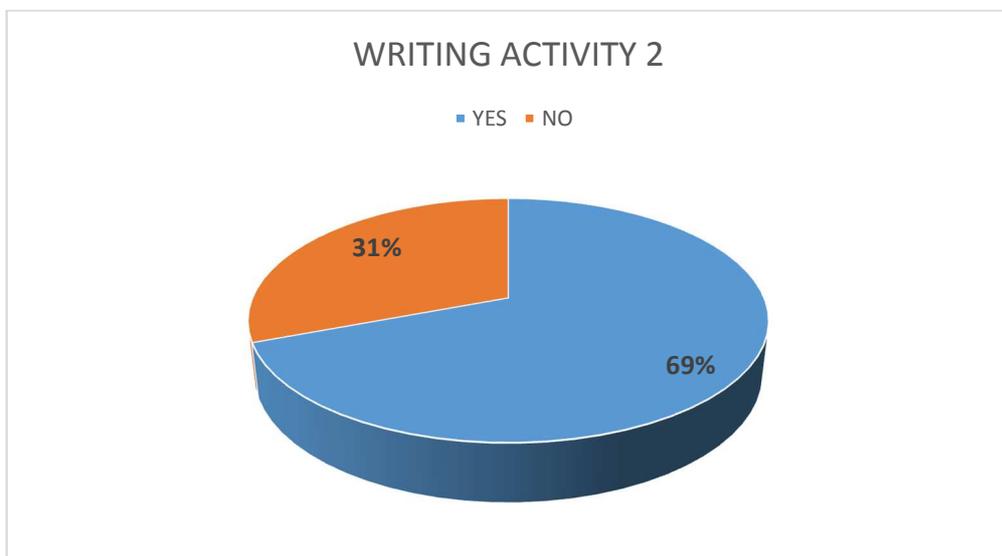


Figure 2. Writing activity 2. Prepared by the author, 2019

This chart shows that 69% of the students increased the number of words in their writing activity number two, which provided visual input. Although there was some progress, it was less significant than the improvement obtained in the first writing activity providing visual input. This situation is probably due to

the students' understanding of not being obligated to participate in the study since on that day they were informed that those activities were not part of their process grade, thus, they were completely free to continue or drop the study. As their external motivation did no longer exist, they felt less engaged to do their best.

Whereas in the activity two, in which there was no visual input, learners knew that it was part of their mid-term exam. Thus, students knew that this was a highly significant part of their final grade, and that is why most of the learners did their best.

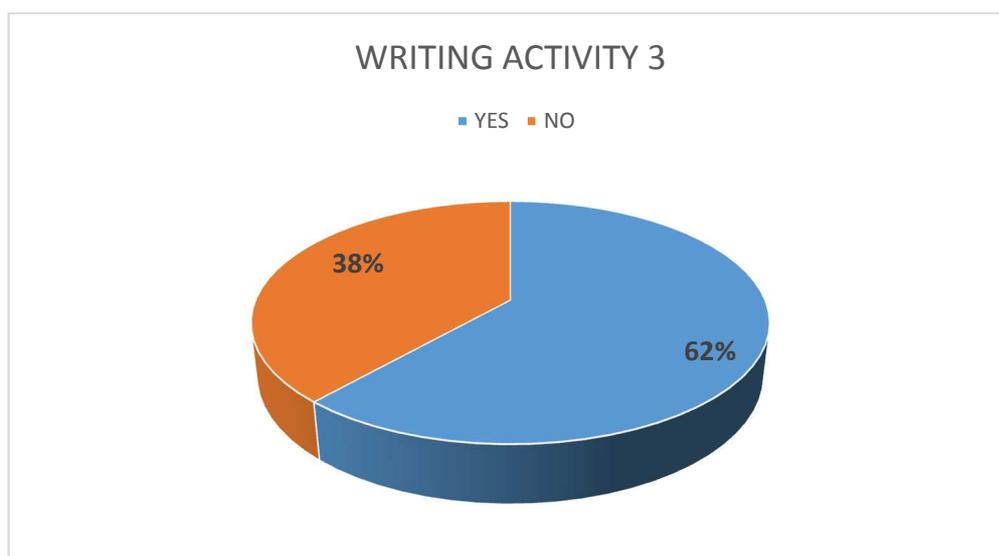


Figure 3. Writing activity 3. Prepared by the author, 2019

The results in the pie chart above suggest that 62% of the students produced more words in the writing activity number 3 (with visual input). This is a positive result, but it is still the activity in which students seem to have progressed the least. A possible explanation for this situation could be that learners already knew that the activity was not mandatory, and that it did not represent a relevant grade for them.

Another possible cause could be the fact that in the activity without visual input, students actually had access to two pictures, and a model e-mail. Apart from that, students had an extra advantage: as they had to use their book, they could observe the vocabulary available on those two pages (30-31). This setting was different from the writing activity 3 (with visual input) where students were not allowed to use any resource other than the worksheet. This

worksheet also provided the same two pictures that learners had in the book, the same model e-mail, but additionally; it provided more figures related to the topics from the given instruction.

This disadvantage is reflected in the amount of words students wrote. Even so, there was an improvement in the activity presenting visual input.

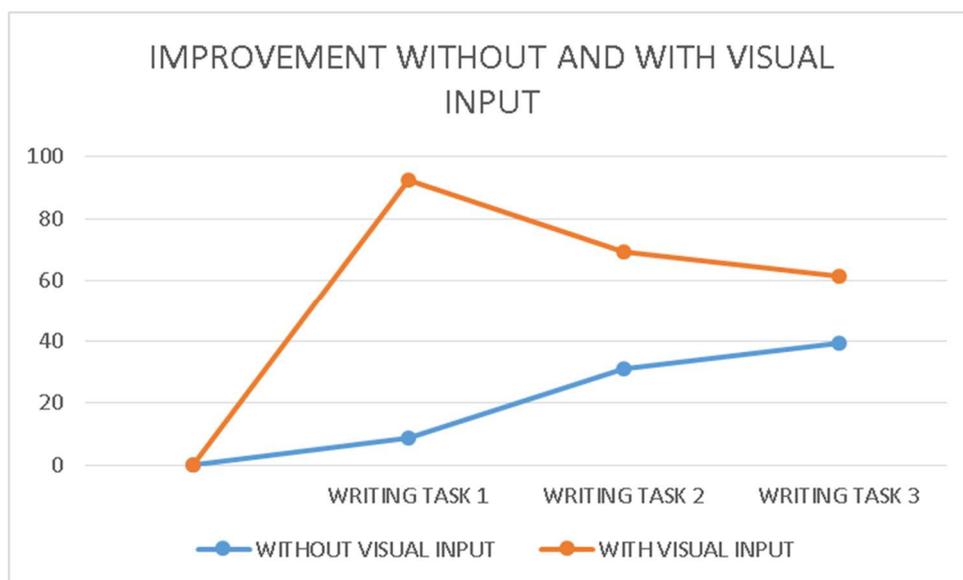


Figure 4. Improvement without and with visual input. Prepared by the author, 2019

The line graph illustrates the percentage of success obtained in every writing activity providing visual input. Its analysis was already done separately (above), per each writing task.

4.1 Analysis per parameter

4.1.1 Quantitative Parameters

Each student's piece of writing was analyzed and its words counted; besides that, for example the number of coordinating conjunctions and subordinate conjunctions were also counted. The number of sentences was counted and then the number of sentences that were syntactically well-organized, the ones that used appropriate tense and the sentences that were coherent and understandable were also counted. The purpose of doing this was to have a more precise idea of the richness of the students' writings. The quantitative parameters used in the analytic rubric are shown in table 9 below.

Table 9 *Quantitative parameters*

ACCURACY	
1	Use of coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
2	Use of subordinating conjunctions: before, after, that, when, because, if, etc...
3	Words are syntactically well-organized into sentences
4	Appropriate selection of tenses according to a time context
5	Sentences are coherent and understandable (comprehensible)

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.1.2 Quantitative Analysis: Writing Activity number 1

- In the first parameter: use of coordinating conjunctions, the median is 1.69 without visual input, and 2.15 with visual input. This means that there was an increase in the use of coordinating conjunctions in the task providing visual input. In addition, there are six students that are above the median (with visual input). This can be observed in table 10:

Table 10 *Writing Activity 1: Parameter 1*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	1	2
B	3	2
C	2	2
D	2	3
E	1	2
F	1	2
G	1	3
H	0	2
I	4	2
J	2	2
K	1	2
L	1	2
M	3	2
TOTAL	22	28
MEDIA	1.69	2.15

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the second parameter: use of subordinating conjunctions, the median is 1.69 without visual input, and 2 with visual input. There is also an increase, but now in the use of subordinating conjunctions. There are two learners who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 11 *Writing Activity 1: Parameter 2*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	1	2
B	3	4
C	1	2
D	2	1
E	3	1
F	1	2
G	3	1
H	1	0
I	2	2
J	2	2
K	1	1
L	0	2
M	2	6
TOTAL	22	26
MEDIA	1.69	2.00

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the third parameter: words are syntactically well-organized into sentences, the median is 0.36 without visual input, and 0.49 with visual input. Evidently, there is an increment in the number of words that are syntactically well-organized into sentences. There are seven students who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 12 *Writing Activity 1: Parameter 3*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.25	0.43
B	0.89	1.00
C	0.40	0.14
D	0.22	0.14
E	0.17	0.50
F	0.38	0.36
G	0.67	0.56
H	0.00	0.25
I	0.20	0.70
J	0.25	0.00
K	0.20	0.70
L	0.50	0.71
M	0.63	0.89
TOTAL	4.74	6.39
MEDIA	0.36	0.49

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fourth parameter: appropriate selection of tenses according to a time context, the median without visual input is 0.78, and 0.70 with visual input. In this parameter there was a decrease in the appropriate

selection of tenses, probably because if there are more words, there are also more probabilities of making errors or mistakes.

Table 13 *Writing Activity 1: Parameter 4*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	1.00	0.86
B	1.00	1.00
C	0.80	0.43
D	0.44	0.43
E	0.83	0.50
F	0.75	0.73
G	0.78	0.89
H	0.50	0.50
I	0.40	0.80
J	0.75	0.33
K	1.00	0.80
L	0.83	0.86
M	1.00	1.00
TOTAL	10.1	9.1
MEDIA	0.78	0.70

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fifth parameter, which is the use of coherent and understandable sentences, the median without visual input is 0.58, and with pictures 0.69. This reflects that in the writing using visual input, there is a rise in the number of coherent sentences used.

Table 14 *Writing Activity 1: Parameter 5*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.50	0.86
B	0.89	1.00
C	0.60	0.71
D	0.33	0.29
E	0.83	0.50
F	0.75	0.64
G	0.67	0.89
H	0.00	0.50
I	0.40	0.60
J	0.50	0.33
K	0.80	0.60
L	0.50	1.00
M	0.75	1.00
TOTAL	7.5	8.9
MEDIA	0.58	0.69

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.1.3 Quantitative Analysis: Writing Activity number 2

- In the first parameter: use of coordinating conjunctions, the median is 1.85 without visual input, and with 1.46 visual input. This means that there was a decrease in the use of coordinating conjunctions in the task providing visual input.

Table 15 *Writing Activity 2: Parameter 1*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	3	0
B	3	3
C	2	0
D	2	2
E	2	0
F	1	4
G	1	2
H	0	2
I	3	4
J	1	2
K	0	0
L	2	0
M	4	0
TOTAL	24	19
MEDIA	1.85	1.46

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the second parameter: use of subordinating conjunctions, the median is 1.92 without visual input, and 2.15 with visual input. There is an increase in the use of subordinating conjunctions. There are six learners who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 16 *Writing Activity 2: Parameter 2*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	2	1
B	3	3
C	1	3
D	2	1
E	1	1
F	1	1
G	1	3
H	0	3
I	2	3
J	3	4
K	2	2
L	2	1
M	5	2
TOTAL	25	28
MEDIA	1.92	2.15

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the third parameter: words are syntactically well-organized into sentences, the median is 0.32 without visual input, and 0.48 with visual input. Evidently, there is an increment in the number of words that are syntactically well-organized into sentences. There are five students who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 17 *Writing Activity 2: Parameter 3*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.56	1.00
B	0.60	0.90
C	0.43	0.11
D	0.00	0.27
E	0.00	0.75
F	0.22	0.20
G	0.10	0.64
H	0.33	0.17
I	0.43	0.38
J	0.00	0.22
K	0.50	0.33
L	0.00	0.33
M	1.00	1.00
TOTAL	4.17	6.30
MEDIA	0.32	0.48

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fourth parameter: appropriate selection of tenses according to a time context, the median without visual input is 0.40, and 0.71 with visual input. In this parameter there was an increment. In addition, there are seven students above the median (with visual input).

Table 18 *Writing Activity 2: Parameter 4*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.89	1.00
B	0.90	0.90
C	0.29	0.44
D	0.00	0.91
E	0.17	0.88
F	0.44	0.80
G	0.50	0.82
H	0.33	0.50
I	0.29	0.38
J	0.00	0.33
K	0.25	0.67
L	0.38	0.67
M	0.83	1.00
TOTAL	5.3	9.3
MEDIA	0.40	0.71

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fifth parameter, which is the use of coherent and understandable sentences, the median without visual input is 0.49, and with visual input 0.68. This reflects that in the writing using visual input, there is a rise in the number of coherent sentences used. There are five students who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 19 *Writing Activity 2: Parameter 5*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.78	1.00
B	0.80	0.90
C	0.14	0.56
D	0.17	0.64
E	0.50	0.88
F	0.44	0.60
G	0.70	1.00
H	0.33	0.33
I	0.43	0.50
J	0.50	0.22
K	0.25	0.67
L	0.38	0.67
M	1.00	0.88
TOTAL	6.42	8.83
MEDIA	0.49	0.68

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.1.4 Quantitative Parameters from Writing Activity number 3

- In the first parameter: use of coordinating conjunctions, the median is 2.31 without visual input, and with 2.08 visual input. This means that there was a slight decrease in the use of coordinating conjunctions in the task providing visual input.

Table 20 *Writing Activity 3: Parameter 1*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	1	0
B	2	3
C	1	2
D	2	2
E	3	2
F	4	4
G	2	2
H	3	2
I	3	3
J	2	2
K	2	2
L	2	1
M	3	2
TOTAL	30	27
MEDIA	2.31	2.08

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the second parameter: use of subordinating conjunctions, the median is 1.31 without visual input, and 2.08 with visual input. There is an increase in the use of subordinating conjunctions. There are three learners who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 21 *Writing Activity 3: Parameter 2*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	1	2
B	3	4
C	3	2
D	0	1
E	1	1
F	1	2
G	2	2
H	2	3
I	1	3
J	0	1
K	2	2
L	0	2
M	1	2
TOTAL	17	27
MEDIA	1.31	2.08

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the third parameter: words are syntactically well-organized into sentences, the median is 0.43 without visual input, and 0.44 with visual input. As it can be observed, both medians are almost even. There are six students who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 22 *Writing Activity 3: Parameter 3*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.86	0.33
B	0.75	0.75
C	0.50	0.50
D	0.00	0.13
E	0.43	0.38
F	0.20	0.50
G	0.50	0.60
H	0.00	0.20
I	0.50	0.17
J	0.29	0.25
K	0.44	0.64
L	0.33	0.33
M	0.80	1.00
TOTAL	5.60	5.77
MEDIA	0.43	0.44

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fourth parameter: appropriate selection of tenses according to a time context, the median without visual input is 0.64, and 0.76 with visual input. In this parameter there was also an increment. In addition, there are six students above the median (with visual input).

Table 23 *Writing Activity 3: Parameter 4*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.86	0.67
B	0.83	0.88
C	1.00	0.88
D	0.50	0.50
E	0.64	0.75
F	0.60	0.75
G	0.75	0.80
H	0.00	0.60
I	0.50	0.67
J	0.57	0.75
K	0.78	0.82
L	0.50	0.83
M	0.80	1.00
TOTAL	8.3	9.9
MEDIA	0.64	0.76

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

- In the fifth parameter, which is the use of coherent and understandable sentences, the median without visual input is 0.63, and with visual input 0.77. This reflects that in the writing using visual input, there is a rise in the number of coherent sentences used. There are seven students who are above the median (with visual input).

Table 24 *Writing Activity 3: Parameter 5*

STUDENTS	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT	WITH VISUAL INPUT
A	0.86	0.67
B	0.83	1.00
C	0.67	1.00
D	0.25	0.75
E	0.71	0.75
F	0.90	0.88
G	0.88	0.80
H	0.00	0.80
I	0.50	0.67
J	0.57	0.63
K	0.56	0.45
L	0.67	0.83
M	0.80	0.83
TOTAL	8.19	10.05
MEDIA	0.63	0.77

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2 Analysis of qualitative parameters

In this part, the Likert scale was used because it was not possible to quantify the items in the same way and in quantitative parameters. Below, the parameters analyzed qualitatively can be observed.

Table 25 *Qualitative Parameters*

LEXIS

- 1 Correct selection of words (word-choice)
- 2 Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words to complete the task

MECHANINCS

- 1 Appropriate use of capital letters
 - 2 Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases
 - 3 Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules
-

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.1 Writing Activities without and with visual input

In order to bring to light the exact number of frequencies in each category, it was required to count the number of occurrences per each parameter, per each student from each writing activity. Afterwards, they were put together in a comparative table. N.V.I. stands for No Visual Input (without visual input), whereas V.I. stands by Visual Input; if the occurrences were counted horizontally, the result should be 13, which is the number of students from the classroom this research was carried out with.

Therefore, the first element that will be found in this part is a comparative table per each writing activity (without and with visual input), and then an analysis of each qualitative parameter described in the form of written text and comparative bars. In each table you can see the information presented as occurrences (number of students who were classified into that category), while in the analysis per parameter the information is represented in the form of comparative bars, per percentages.

4.2.2 Writing Activity 1

Table 26 *Writing Activity 1: Without visual input vs. with visual input*

PARAMETERS		ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER	
		N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.
#	LEXIS										
1	Correct selection of words (word-choice)	1	3	4	4	4	6	4	0	0	0
2	Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words to complete the task	1	3	5	6	5	3	2	1	0	0
MECHANINCS											
1	Appropriate use of capital letters	11	9	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
2	Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases	4	8	5	4	3	1	1	0	0	0
3	Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules	4	4	4	7	3	1	2	1	0	0

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.3 Lexis

- The figure 5 shows that in two of the five categories from the first parameter (correct selection of words), students improved their overall performance in the writing task 1, with visual input. In the category *Always*, learners correctly selected words in a percentage of 8% percent in the activity without visual input, versus a 23% in the activity with input. In the category *Usually*, results matched; finally in the category *sometimes*, the activity without visual input was 31% whereas with visual input, it increased to 46%.

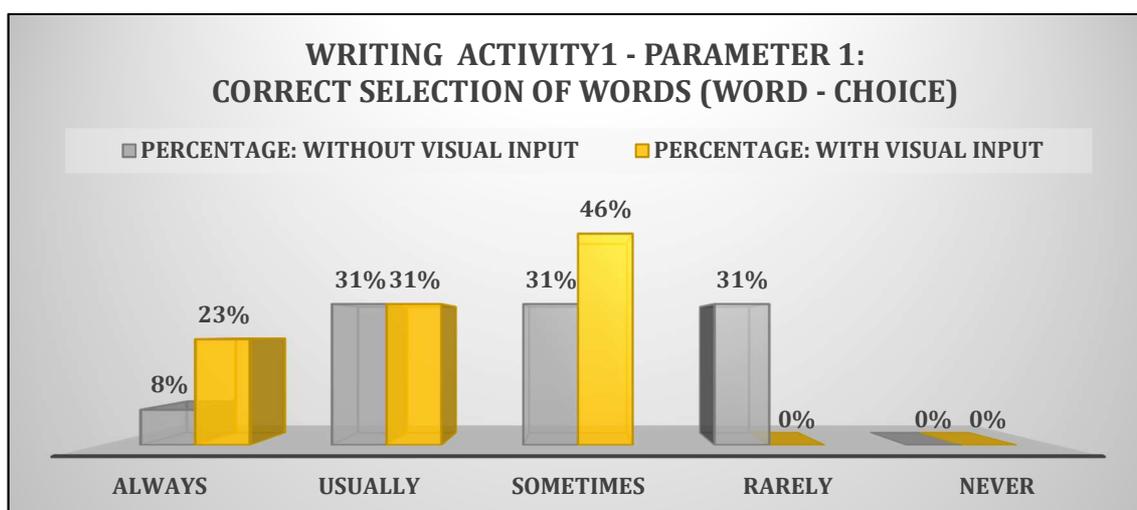


Figure 5. Writing activity 1 – Parameter 1. Prepared by the author, 2019

- In figure 6, the incidences about the 'Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words', are shown. This means that students used more vocabulary words in the writing task containing visual input. The bars point out that higher percentages in the frequencies of always and usually were obtained in the writing with visual input.

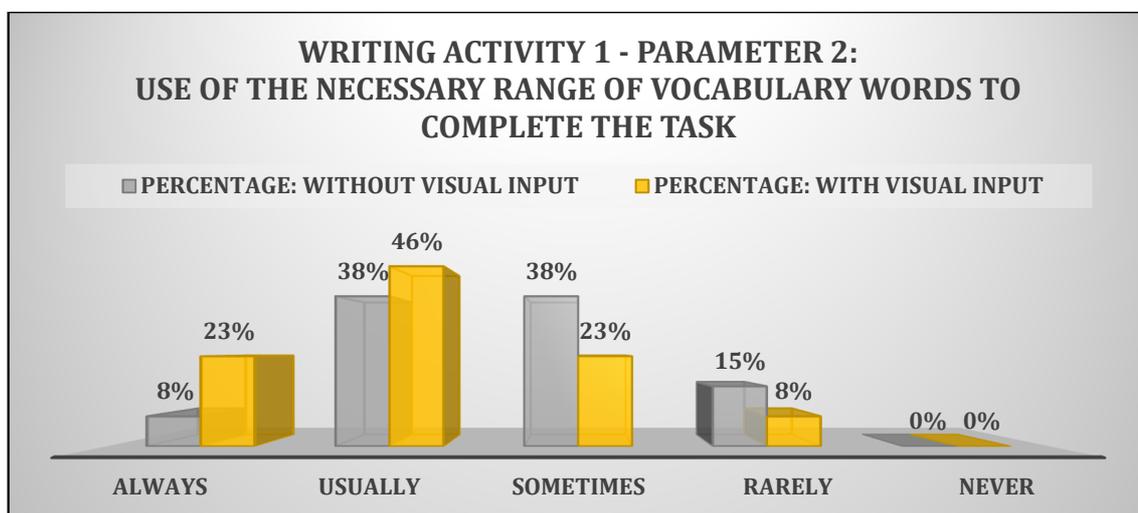


Figure 6. Writing activity 1 – Parameter 2. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.4 Mechanics

- Figure 7 displays the incidences about 'Appropriate use of Capital letters' without and with visual input. In two of the categories (always and sometimes), the activity without visual input outnumbered the activity with visual input, which means they obtained higher percentages. Nevertheless, in the category usually, the writing task with visual input clearly has a significant higher percentage. Finally, in the two last frequencies, the percentage was 0% in both writing activities with and without visual input.

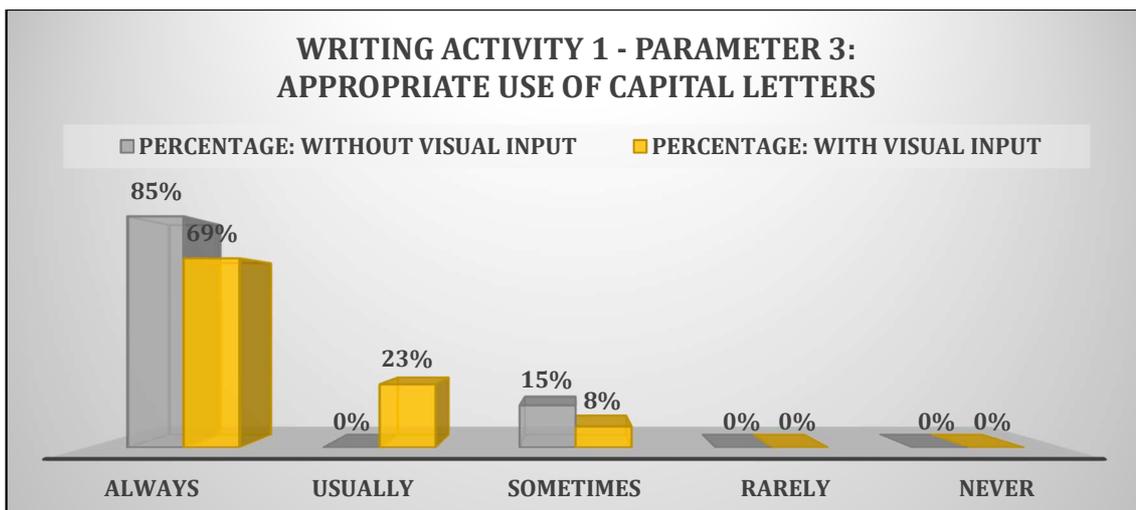


Figure 7. Writing activity 1 – Parameter 3. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 8 represents the percentages of ‘Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases’. It can be observed that students made less mistakes in spelling when the writing task contained visual input in the category *Always*, thus, its percentage was 62%, while in the writing activity without visual input, its percentage was 31%. However, there is a high percentage in the frequencies of usually and sometimes in the writing task without pictures.

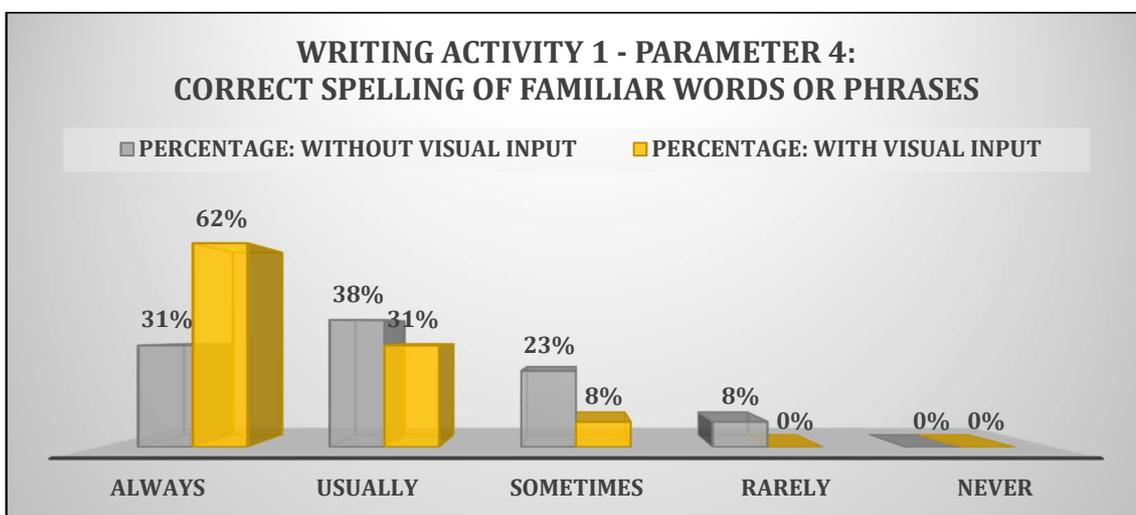


Figure 8. Writing activity 1 – Parameter 4. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 9 shows the percentages of ‘Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules’. In the frequency *Always*, results of both writing activities without and with visual input obtained identical results, whereas in the frequency *Usually*, the percentage of the writing task

with visual input was significantly superior to the writing task without visual input.

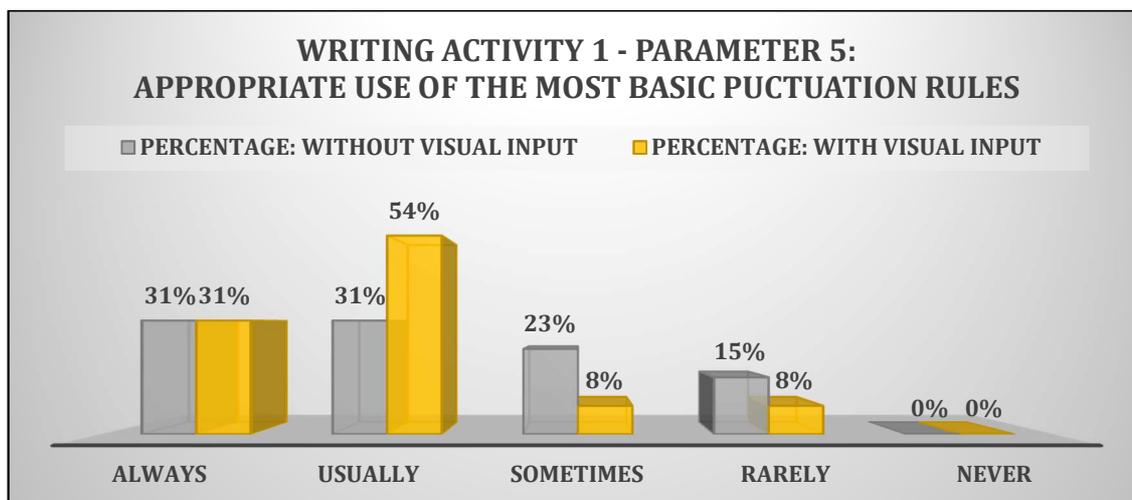


Figure 9. Writing activity 1 – Parameter 5. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.5 Writing Activity 2

Table 27 Writing Activity 2: Without visual input vs. with visual input

#	PARAMETERS	ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER	
		N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.
1	Correct selection of words (word-choice)	2	3	2	4	6	6	2	0	1	0
2	Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words to complete the task	3	5	1	5	4	3	4	0	1	0
	MECHANICS										
1	Appropriate use of capital letters	7	10	4	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
2	Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases	3	6	6	4	2	3	2	0	0	0
3	Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules	2	5	4	3	3	2	3	3	1	0

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.6 Lexis

- Figure 10 shows the percentages of the 'Correct selection of words (word-choice)' in both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the categories of *Always* and *Usually*, the percentages are higher in the writing task with visual input. In the category *sometimes*, both tasks obtained similar results.

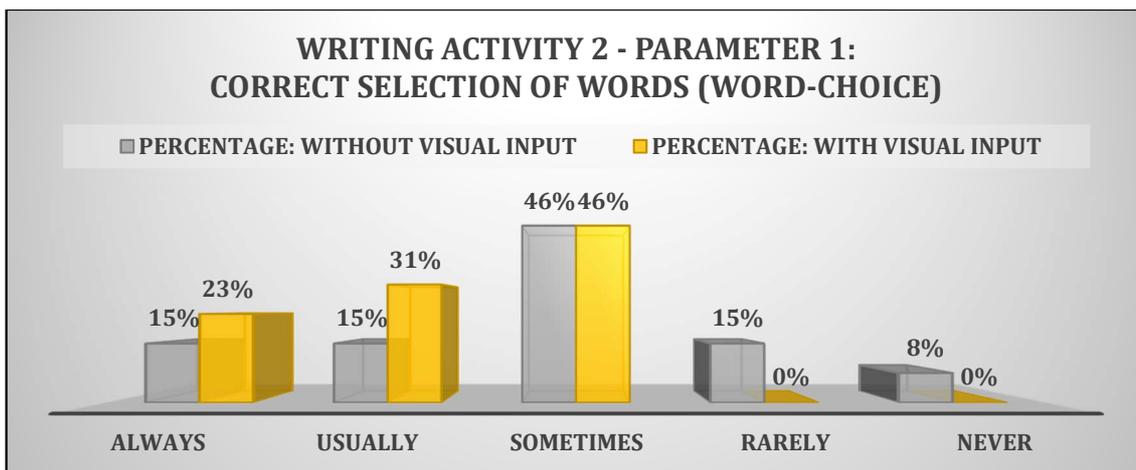


Figure 10. Writing activity 2 – Parameter 1. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 11 represents the percentages of the ‘Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words’ with the writing activities without and with visual input. The categories *Always* and *Usually* show higher percentages in the writing task with visual input.

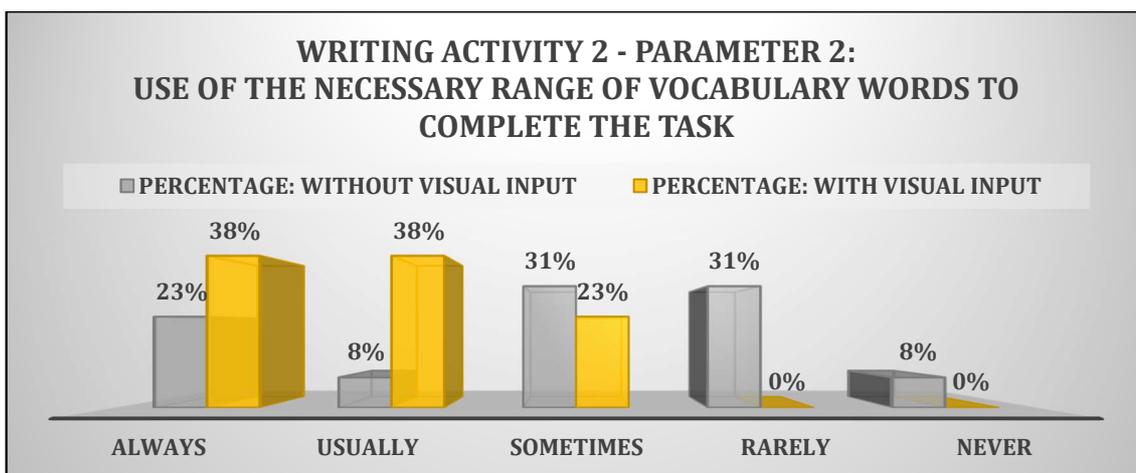


Figure 11. Writing activity 2 – Parameter 2. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.7 Mechanics

- Figure 12 displays the percentages of the ‘Appropriate use of Capital letters’ with the writing activities without and with visual input. The higher percentage in the category of *always* shows that students used more capital letters in the writing task that contained visual input, but not in the categories of *usually*, *sometimes* and *never*.

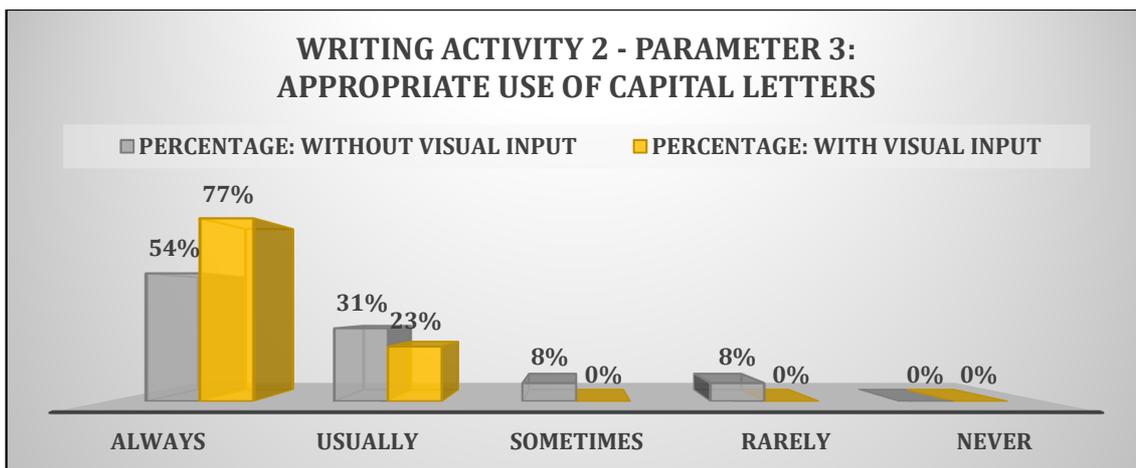


Figure 12. Writing activity 2 – Parameter 3. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 13 presents the percentages of the ‘Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the category *Always*, the writing task with visual input shows a relevant increase in its percentage, whereas in the category *Usually*, it was just the opposite.

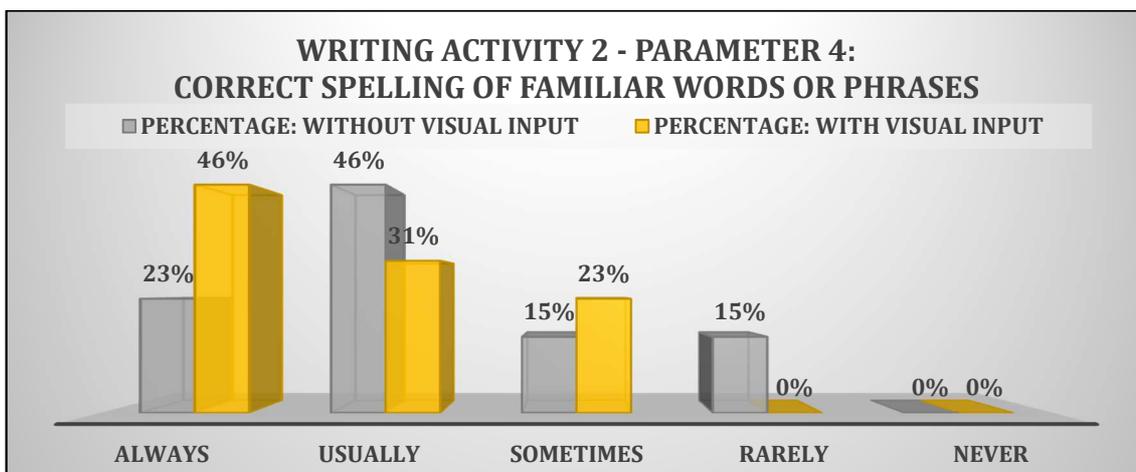


Figure 13. Writing activity 2 – Parameter 4. Prepared by the author, 2019

- In Figure 14 appear the percentages of the ‘Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the category *Always*, the percentage was significantly superior to the one obtained in the writing activities without visual input, therefore, students used more accurate punctuation in the writing task that contained visual input.

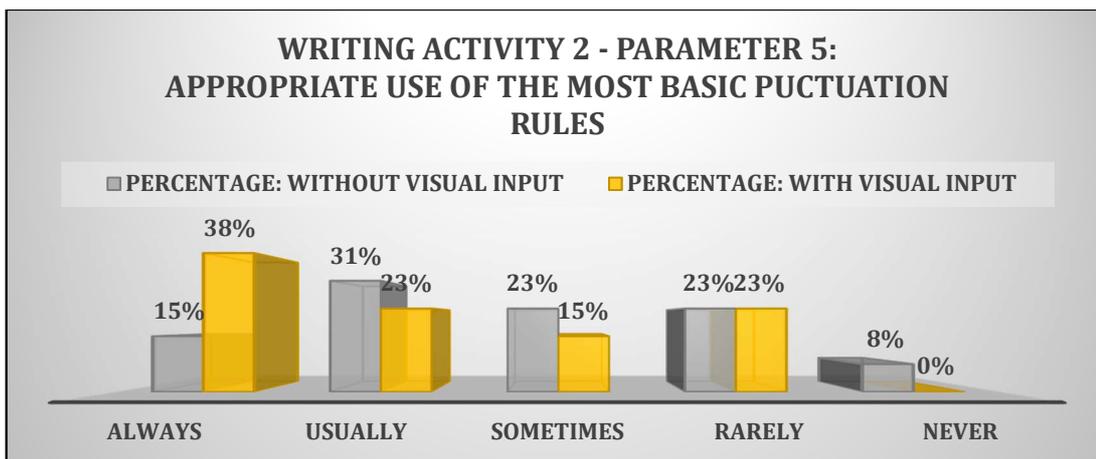


Figure 14. Writing activity 2 – Parameter 5. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.8 Writing Activity 3

Table 28 *Writing Activity 3: Without visual input vs. with visual input*

PARAMETERS		ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER	
#	LEXIS	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.	N.V.I.	V.I.
1	Correct selection of words (word-choice)	4	2	4	8	2	0	3	3	0	0
2	Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words to complete the task	4	5	5	5	2	3	2	0	0	0
MECHANICS											
1	Appropriate use of capital letters	10	11	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases	7	9	4	2	1	2	1	0	0	0
3	Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules	3	4	8	3	1	4	1	2	0	0

Note: Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.9 Lexis

- Figure 15 displays the percentages about the ‘Correct selection of words (word-choice)’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. The results point out that students selected slightly more words correctly since in the category of *Usually*, the percentage was higher in the writing activity providing visual input. Although in the category *Always*, it was the opposite form.

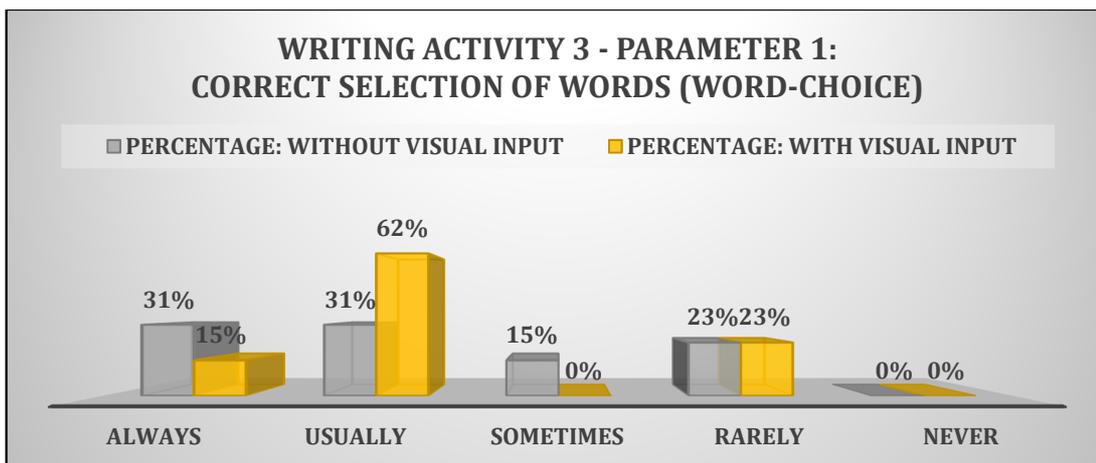


Figure 15. Writing activity 3 – Parameter 1. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 16 presents the percentages of the ‘Use of the necessary range of vocabulary words to complete the task’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the first category, *Always*, the percentage of the writing task providing visual input exceeds the percentage of the writing task without visual input. Differently, in the category of *Usually*, the percentages are identical.

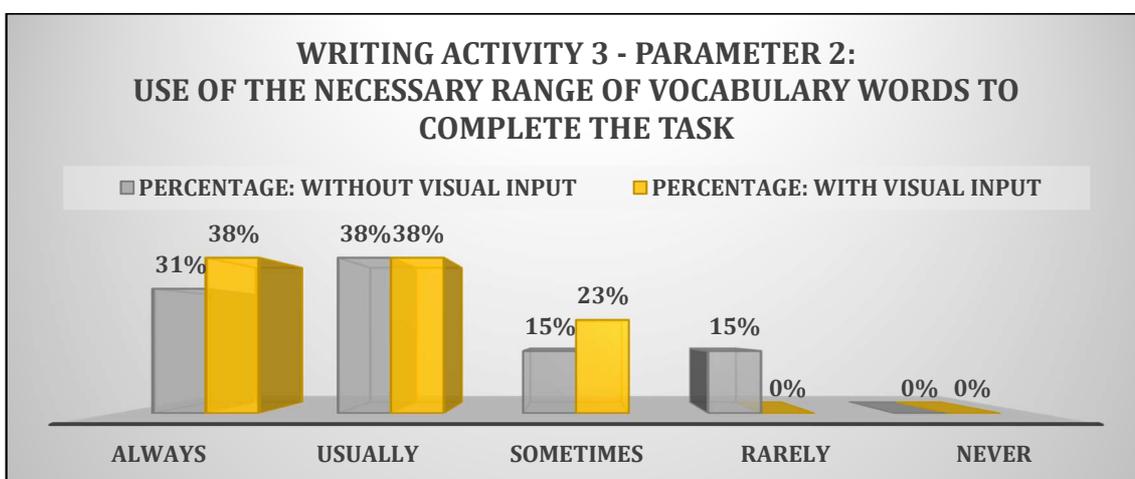


Figure 16. Writing activity 3 – Parameter 2. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.2.10 Mechanics

- Figure 17 shows the percentages of the ‘Appropriate use of Capital letters’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the category *Always*, the percentage is superior in the writing task with visual input than in the writing task without visual input. In the category *Usually*, both writing tasks have equal results. This may suggest that

students used capital letters more appropriately in the writing task with visual input.

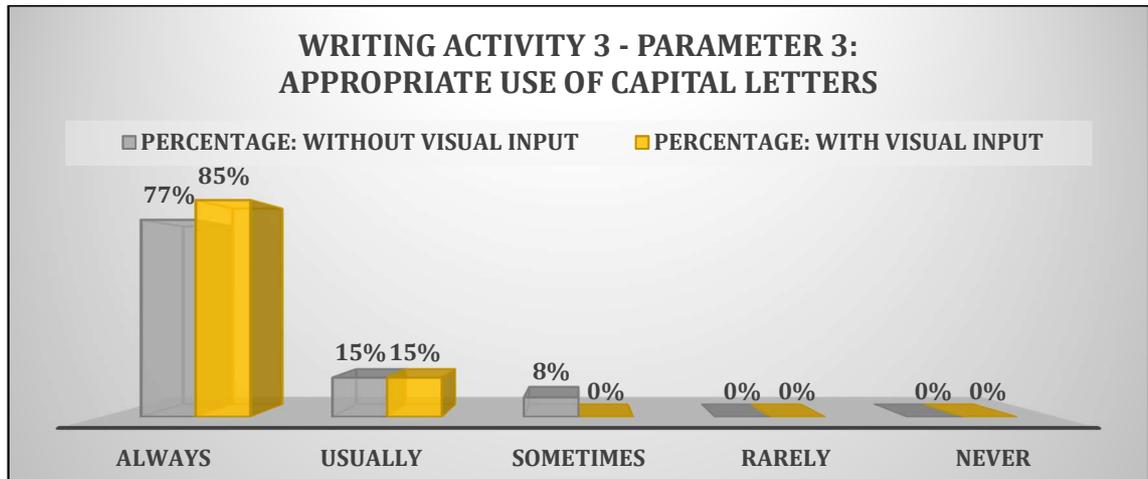


Figure 17. Writing activity 3 – Parameter 3. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 18 represents the percentages of the ‘Correct spelling of familiar words or phrases’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. The percentages of the categories *Always* and *sometimes* in the writing activity with visual input are higher than the percentages in the writing task without visual input. Conversely, in the category *Usually*, it is just the opposite, the percentage of the writing task without visual input is considerably superior to the percentage in the writing task with visual input.

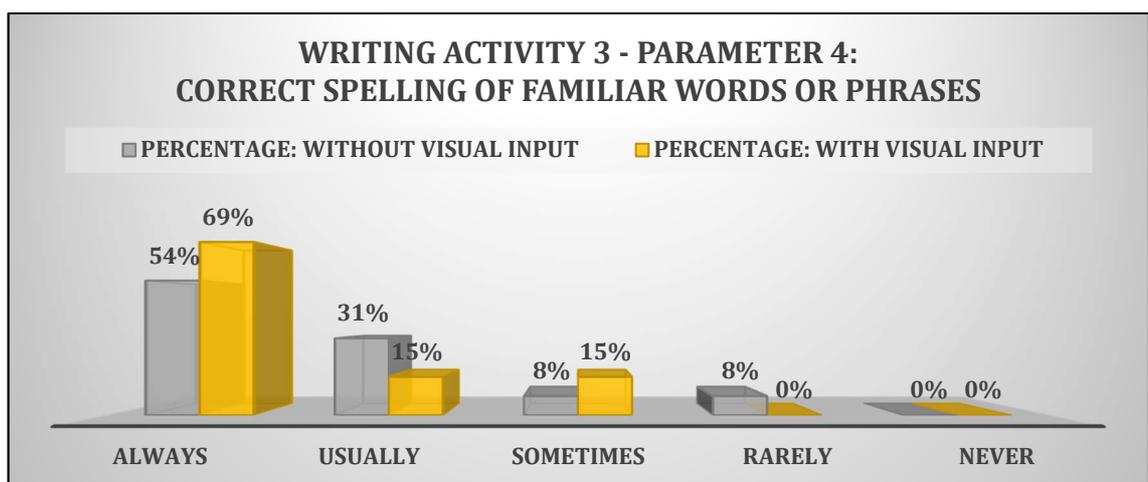


Figure 18. Writing activity 3 – Parameter 4. Prepared by the author, 2019

- Figure 19 shows the percentages about the ‘Appropriate use of the most basic punctuation rules’ of both writing tasks without and with visual input. In the category of *Always* the percentage of the writing task with visual input was slightly higher than the percentage of the writing activity without visual input; whereas in the category *Usually*, the writing task without visual input obtained a higher percentage. These results might suggest that there is balance in both writing activities (without and with visual input).

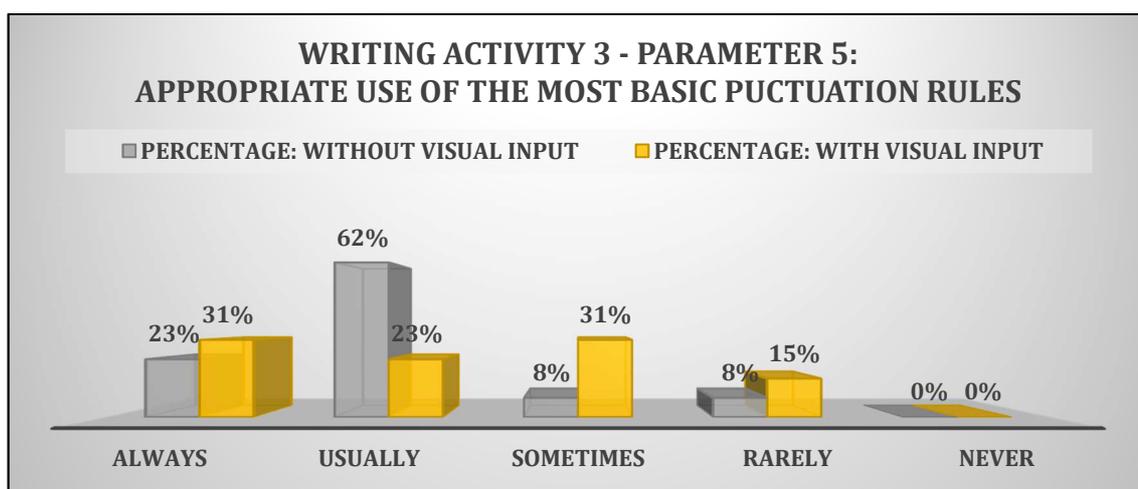


Figure 19. Writing activity 3 – Parameter 5. Prepared by the author, 2019

4.3 Most significant variations in students’ writings: without vs. with visual input

In this section, transcriptions of two students’ writings per each task (without and with visual input) will be shown. There will be two different students’ transcriptions for writing task 1, two for writing task 2, and two for writing task 3. After that, an analysis of both tasks 1, 2 and 3 (without and with visual input) will be done.

4.3.1 Writing task 1

This task focused on description of places. Students were commanded to write a paragraph about their city/town. They were provided a set of four guiding questions: (1) what are some of the popular sights in your city? (2) Where are they? (3) Why are they popular? (4) Do a lot of people visit them every year? These guiding questions provide support for the beginning writing students.

Both writing tasks 1 (with and without visual input) provided the same guiding questions; however, the task with visual input contained colorful images of several tourist places: Malecon del Salado, Malecon 2000, Parque Forestal, Metrovia stop, Puerto Santa Ana. Both writing tasks were part of students' formative assessment. Each task was done in different days, and learners had around 20 minutes to perform them. To see the original documents from the following transcriptions, go to Appendices M (student E) and N (student F).

4.3.1.1 Student "E": transcription without visual input

1 My city is Guayaquil and the popular sights place are, Historic Park, Malecon
2 2000, Samanes Park, Botanic Garden. And Malls.

3 Historic Park is situade, in Entre Ríos, Is more popular than Botanic garden
4 because here are animal's variety.

5 Botanic Garden is more beautiful then Historic park because here have lot of
6 plants that you don't imagnate.

7 Malecon is more pollutions than Samanes Park. that is because Malecon have
8 littler trees than Samanes Park.

4.3.1.2 Student "E": transcription with visual input

1 The people sights are Malecon 2000 and Metro Way, because these places
2 are public! In Metrovía People transported to one place another, because is a
3 public transportation, People go to work, home, to visit any Friend or Family.
4 Have enough stations. alround guayaquil and Kms Daule way. Malecon 2000
5 is very concurred because people just want walk, speak another person,
6 celebrated birthday or just play in the games or eat, buy. People visit them a
7 lot because is a place confortable, beautiful and funny.

4.3.1.3 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student E - Task 1

Lines one and two of the student's first written production (without visual input) show basic writing patterns: listing with verb to be. The student has mentioned tourist places and their location, providing mere answers to guiding questions one and two. Guiding question three was only partially answered with an attempt to compare the places in pairs, but no actual justification of why they are popular was provided. Nevertheless, the same learner developing the same task with visual input this time, wrote longer sentences with actual

description focusing less on just writing answers to the questions and more on expanding her explanation of why the places are popular. She crossed over from just telling the places to showing their characteristics. She used descriptive adjectives like concurred, comfortable, beautiful and funny while in the task without visual input only one adjective can be spotted (line 5).

4.3.1.4 Student “F”: transcription without visual input

1 In my city Guayaquil exist very place turist, the Peñas, Malecon 2000,
2 Samanes Park; this place are popular sights in my city.

3 the Peñas and Malecon are in the center of the city and the Samanes park is
4 in North of the city, Other place very popular is Pink zone because the people
5 go to dance and is very nice because the presentation show in the night club
6 is funnier.

7 They place is very popular because is very crowedes

8 Every year come here turist of the other country, becaue my city is beautiful
9 and the people is very pretty.

4.3.1.5 Student “F”: transcription with visual input

1 In my city the popular sights are the Malecon 2000, in this place the turist are
2 facined because is beautiful, the Imax is very incurried, I can see the river
3 Guayas and the Visit National (Puerto) in the night the people visit all Malecon
4 and the towel color is in front of the boulevard. Other place is the Florestal
5 park, I going to here when I want pass time with my family, And the Metroway
6 is the popular transportation but is very fast I move in the city very quickly.

7 There are in Guayaquil, and are very popular because are wonderful and the
8 people visit every year because us history is very interesting and this place are
9 part of us history.

4.3.1.6 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student F - Task 1

Lines one and two of the student’s transcription without visual input only list few tourist places from Guayaquil while lines one and two from the writing with visual input presents the reason why people like to visit those places. Guiding question one is fully answered in both tasks, whereas question two is partially answered is tasks 2 without and with visual input. Regarding question three, the student gave a highly superficial answer by saying that the place was

popular because it was crowded (line 7, without visual input). Nevertheless, in the same task, but presenting visual input, the student went further by using adjectives such as wonderful and interesting (lines 7 and 8), and also explained these places are part of our history (lines 8 and 9). Question three was answered in both tasks, without and with visual input.

In the task without visual input the learner used the verbs exist, to be, dance, and come, while in the task with visual input the learner wrote verbs such as: to be, the auxiliary verb can, see, visit, go, want, pass, and move. With regards to adjectives, although a few of them were misspelled, in the task without visual input the student wrote: popular, nice, funnier, crowded, beautiful and pretty. In the task with visual input, the student wrote one adjective more: fascinated, beautiful, concurred, popular, fast, wonderful, and interesting. In relation to adverbs, in writing task without visual input only one adverb was used (very) whereas in the task with visual input two adverbs were used: very and quickly.

As it can be observed, the task presenting visual input helped the learner to remember and describe in more detail more tourist places of the city. Accordingly, the student used more verbs, nouns, adjectives and even adverbs in the task where pictures were provided.

4.3.2 Writing task 2

The objective of this task was that learners wrote sentences where they had to describe how different their city was five years ago. Students had to use comparative adjectives and nouns related to their city.

Writing task 2 without visual input was, in fact, a summative type of assessment since that task was the writing section of their mid-term exam, therefore, students were aware of its weight regarding academic performance. In this task, students were asked to write sentences about how different their city was five years ago. Furthermore, they were given the prompt: many/parks – streets/clean – many/recycling bins, and they were told to use comparative adjectives in that activity. Students had one hour to perform their exam, which means that they could decide the amount of time they would spend in each section; they had reading, grammar, vocabulary and writing. However, the

writing task 2 with visual input was part of their formative assessment, thus, this was not a significant grade for them, differently from their mid-term exam.

Both writing tasks 2 had the instruction and the prompt, but the writing task 2 presenting visual input additionally provided two example sentences to guide students' writings. Conversely, in writing task 2 without visual input the teacher-researcher did not give students these examples because it was an exam. For each task, learners were given about 20 minutes. Visual input presented was comprised of eleven pictures of diverse parts of Guayaquil, which portrayed different aspects of life in the city. To see the original documents from the following transcriptions, go to Appendices O (student G) and P (student H).

4.3.2.1 Student "G": transcription without visual input

- 1 "The peñas is the oldest place that have Guayaquil". Recently was restored.
- 2 They have many tourist places example:
- 3 The Malecon 2000 is the most popular that Malecon del Salado.
- 4 The avenues are modern and have pollution.
- 5 The Guayaquil city is most beautiful that Duran city.
- 6 They have a funnier place the Play Land Park.
- 7 is visited for many people and people of other cities. Now have more parks
- 8 and green areas.
- 9 The modern Guayaquil is better that old Guayaquil.

4.3.2.2 Student "G": transcription with visual input

- 1 Five years ago Guayaquil city was dirtier than it is today. In actually Guayaquil
- 2 have many parks. The most popular is Samanes Park. Samanes Park is
- 3 biggest than Seminario Park. Some parks have many recycling bins, this help
- 4 to the parks and streets are clean.
- 5 Five years ago Guayaquil haven't any recycling culture, now have more
- 6 recycling works.
- 7 Five years ago the city was as pollution as it is today. The city as modern as
- 8 Quito.

- 9 Now Guayaquil have a cleaner system for the parks and streets.
- 10 Samanes park is the most important park than others parks. Because in it can
11 make concerts race runnin and many events for the people of Guayaquil and
12 other cities.

4.3.2.3 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student G - Task 2

In the transcription without visual input, the learner vaguely used comparative adjectives. The purpose of the task was to compare Guayaquil five years ago and today by using comparative adjectives and nouns related to the city. The only sentence where this is accomplished is in line nine of the writing task 2 without visual input. Conversely, in writing task 2 with visual input, the learner used both more comparative structures and wrote more sentences comparing Guayaquil five years ago and now, for instance, in line one he wrote “five years ago Guayaquil city was dirtier than it is today”. In lines two and three there is a comparative sentence, although it does not completely follow the instruction. Moreover, in lines five, six, seven and nine there are three more sentences which depict what was asked to do in the instruction.

In the task without visual input these were the verbs used: to be (in simple present mainly and once in simple past) have, and visit (past participle) whereas in the task with visual input more verbs were used; these verbs are: to be (in simple present and simple past), have, help, can and make. Besides, the learner used more adjectives and nouns in the writing task with visual input. As it was previously mentioned, one thing that certainly influenced this was that besides having access to pictures, students were given two model sentences of what they were expected to do, this certainly provided extra information and facilitated the task. However, students tried to do their best in the task without visual input because it was an exam, and thus, an important grade, contrary to the task with visual input, which did not have an important influence in their overall academic performance. Another aspect to mention is the time, in the exam, students decided the amount of time spent on the writing section, while on the other task, they only had twenty minutes. Furthermore, anxiety could have affected learner’s performance in the mid-term exam (task without visual input). Consequently, both tasks had significant advantages and disadvantages that are worth mentioning.

4.3.2.4 Student “H”: transcription without visual input

1 My city is Duran, my city was five years ago don't have parks. Was 3 years ago,
2 my house is more big.

4.3.2.5 Student “H”: transcription with visual input

1 Five years ago the Samanes park was place very greener than it is today. For
2 there there was no trash in the streets and today it is a very clean place and
3 where people visit it a lot. In my city 5 years ago I was all old. and now we have
4 a park where we can go to enjoy what could be done to improve the park is
5 that there are penalties for throwing garbage. I like my city because it is very
6 relax.

4.3.2.6 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student H - Task 2

There is a clear difference between transcriptions without and with visual input. In the task without visual input the learner could vaguely write a comparative sentence (line one), while on the task presenting visual input, although with errors, he wrote the comparative sentence: “Samanes park was place very greener than it is today” (line one). In lines two and three, there is no use of comparative adjectives, nevertheless, the learner attempted to establish a difference between Guayaquil in the past, and at present. The student tried to explain the activities that could be done in a park and one measure that had been taken to improve it (lines three, four and five).

In the task without visual input a greatly limited amount of words were written while in the task with visual input there was a larger amount of words. For instance, the learner wrote very few nouns in the task with no visual input, these are: city, Duran, parks, years, and house (five in total), whereas in the other task (with visual input) he wrote nouns such as: years, Samanes park, place, trash, streets, people, penalties and garbage. In the first transcription the student used the verb to be (present and past) and the verb have while in the second transcription (with visual input) the learner wrote the verbs to be, visit, have, can, go, enjoy, could be, improve, there are, throw and like. Regarding adjectives, the student wrote only one adjective (big) in the first transcription whereas in the task with visual input, the learner wrote these

adjectives: greener, clean, old, and relax. In the first transcription, very few verbs, nouns, and adjectives were used, and this impeded to carry out the instruction (order). In the task without visual input, the learner just tells, while on the task with pictures, he tries to show, explain and describe. To sum up, in the task with visual input, the learner was encouraged to write more and was willing to take more risks when writing in a second language.

4.3.3 Writing task 3

This task was the last one, and in both without and with visual input students were told to look at two hotel advertisements (in their books or worksheet) and write an e-mail to a friend. Learners were asked to tell their friend which hotel they preferred and why. This means that they had to present reasons and arguments to describe their hotel choice.

In both tasks, without and with visual input, they were provided with a model or example in order to guide the activity. In task 3 without visual input, the model was in the students' textbooks, on page 31, therefore, students had the advantage of accessing to all the information on pages 30 and 31, whereas on the task presenting visual input, learners had merely the model e-mail and no more.

In general, having access to the information in that e-mail was an excuse for several learners to just copy and paste complete sentences, instead of producing their own ideas. The reason: by that time students perfectly knew that the activity was not an obligation, and it did not represent extra points for them, so they did not put so much effort on these activities. This happened in both tasks: without and with visual input. As a result, the teacher-researcher had to carefully read each students' writing and compare it to the model presented to them to identify if learners had just copied fragments or entire sentences. If this was the case, the teacher wrote N.O., which stands by NOT ORIGINAL, and these words were not counted as part of their written production. This was done in order to know that those words were not originally produced by the learner. Students had around 20 minutes to perform each task. To see the original documents from the following transcriptions, go to Appendices Q (student D) and R (student M).

4.3.3.1 Student “D”: transcription without visual input

1 Dear Andrea,

2 *I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. (N.O.-not counted) For us*

3 I think the hotel on the beach it's a better travel. Remember walking in the
4 night for all beach, also sleep in the tent, travel in the afternoon in the yacht,
5 also entertainment in the hotel with play zone, pool, Jacuzzi and other
6 activities.

7 for you also rooms only \$50 per night, free water sports lessons every day for
8 you and other friends. And free tour around the town also for you and other
9 person and finally one travel complete for the rainforest in the morning.

4.3.3.2 Student “D”: transcription with visual input

1 Dear Evelyn

2 My friends and me see for the trips and likes for the hotel on the beach
3 because the place it's comfortable and little people, because walking for the
4 malecon all it's a relax and desestrés, the hotel have free wifi, pool big, the
5 places it's a beautiful and económico

6 the hotel on the beach have free water sports lessons for every day and I'm
7 like sports for the water and swimming for the beach and see slow all beach for
8 the reflexion for you life, the beach it's the best place for the world. It's a
9 incredible for the oceans, animals, person, eat.

10 the hotel on the beach it's a recoment for the vacations and free time and relax.

4.3.3.3 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student D - Task 3

Differently from the previous tasks, this one deals with developing the ability to interact with other people in a written manner. In writing tasks 1 and 2, without and with visual input, students had merely to describe something what was asked. However, in both tasks 3, learners had to write an e-mail to a friend telling them which hotel choice they prefer and justify why. Thus, students need to use the format used in an e-mail.

In task 3 without visual input, the greeting is not correct since the student wrote “Dear Andrea” and her name is Andrea, therefore, she cannot write an e-mail to herself. At the end of her greeting, she did not put a comma (,). The

introductory sentence was exactly the same from the model e-mail provided by the textbook, and that is why these words were not counted. On the other hand, in the task presenting visual input the greeting was correct because the learner understood that she was writing to another person. Regarding the closing and signature, none of these are found in any task (without and with visual input).

The learner had to recommend and justify his hotel choice, and this was done in both mails. Nevertheless, in task 3 without visual input the student stated this only in line three whereas in the task with visual input, she stated it more firmly and in different words in lines two, three, eight and ten.

In the first transcription, the student named more (tell) than what she explained while in the task presenting pictures, the learner was more descriptive, which means that she showed, or presented more arguments to justify her hotel choice. In the task with no visual input, ideas are not well organized whereas in the task with visual input, the student conveyed her ideas in a clearer way since she used more complete sentences instead of mere fragments.

4.3.3.4 Student “M”: transcription without visual input

1 Dear Denis,
2 I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. For us, I think the beach
3 is better, but remember I don't like staying in hotels. Also at the beach we can
4 do water sports.
5 Plus, at the beach we can surfing or swimming and the night we could go to
6 dance.
7 I don't think the hotel is a good option because it doesn't include a car to get
8 around and you know it's hard looking for a taxi in the heart of the city.
9 What do you think?
10 Juan

4.3.3.5 Student “M”: transcription with visual input

1 Dear Denis,
2 I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. For us, I think the beach
3 is better. I know the hotel has better deals but it's expensive. I really want to

4 go to the beach, it's cheaper than hotel and we can take free water sports
5 lessons every day, also we can get free tour around the town. I know the hotel
6 in the heart of the city its'more elegant and comfortable but I prefer rustic hotels
7 like the hotel on the beach, plus, in the city it's hard to get around without a car
8 there.

9 What do you think?

10 Juan.

4.3.3.6 Analysis of both transcriptions: Student D - Task 3

In both transcriptions (without and with visual input), the learner utilized greetings, the closing expressing, and he also wrote his signature, thus, clearly demonstrating knowledge about how to write an informal mail. The student started his e-mail in both tasks by writing the same introductory expression presented on the e-mail example (lines two of both transcriptions).

In the task without visual input, the learner seems to have forgotten that according to the instruction he had to choose between the two hotels proposed in the advertisements because he stated that he did not like staying in hotels, line three, accordingly, he did not choose any of the hotels. In contrast, in the task providing visual input, the student clearly declared his hotel choice (lines six and seven).

In the first transcription, the use of adjectives was fairly limited (lines three, seven and eight) because the student used the adjective good and its comparative form (better), and the adjective hard. Nonetheless, in the second transcription (with visual input), he utilized significantly more adjectives, such as better, cheaper, free, elegant, comfortable, rustic, and hard.

In tasks 3 without and with visual input, the learner "showed", not only told, however, in the task with images, the student presented a deeper explanation by using more nouns, verbs and adjectives (especially adjectives). This demonstrates that utilizing images highly helps students in developing their ideas with more ease, therefore, learners write more words allowing them to be more descriptive. In other words, visual input remarkably encouraged most students to go from just "telling" (or naming things) to "showing" several characteristics.

4.4 Teacher's diary observations

Apart from the basic information included in the teacher's diary form shared in the methodology section, some observations on the students' behavior were recorded per day in which the writing activities were performed; these can be read below.

Monday June 25th: First writing activity (without visual input)

Comments: This day, the class started by working on a brief vocabulary review, and some more language practice regarding comparative forms. Later, the researcher explained the instruction for the writing activity (without visual input) to the students and wrote it on the board.

Observation: Students tried to use their dictionaries, cell phones, and/ or mobile devices in order to help themselves perform the task. Regular dictionaries were often allowed, nevertheless, they were asked not to use them. This created anxiety within learners, thus, the teacher asked them to focus on the activity and try to do their best. The educator asked them not to worry about the errors or mistakes they could make. Then, they showed relief and started doing the activity.

Wednesday July 11th: First writing activity (with visual input)

Comments: This writing activity was the one providing visual input, and it was administered to the students two weeks after the first activity because they had done it before; therefore, it was necessary to elapse some time so that they did not write exactly the same ideas as in the first activity. This time, they did it before the new class started (because students had to cover a different topic).

Observation: Students' faces reflected a little surprise, and even after the teacher had already given the instruction about what to do, they seemed a little confused. Then, the educator had to give the instruction again. Students did not seem to understand the role of pictures at the beginning of the activity. Later on, it was explained to them to follow the instructions that they had on the worksheet, and to use visual input (pictures) as a resource to help them generate ideas, but they were also told that if they had different

ideas from the ones on the pictures, they had total freedom to write about them.

Monday July 4th: Second writing activity (without visual input)

Comments: This was a summative assessment, which means it was a real grade for students. Students have two exams: one written and one oral. That day was the written exam, which comprises reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening and writing.

Observation: This written activity was a section in their first-term exam. Students were concentrated on their exam. All of the students wrote something on the writing section, although not all of them wrote the minimum amount of words.

Monday July 16th: Second writing activity (with visual input)

Comments: This activity took place almost two weeks after the writing activity without visual input. As mentioned before, the purpose is that learners did not write exactly the same ideas. If they had done both activities on the same day, then, they could probably have written the same information. The activity was assigned before starting the new class, which was about a different topic. Before the students started to work, the teacher gave instructions about what the task was about.

Observation: There were still a couple of students who were not very sure about what to do in the activity. Therefore, the teacher gave them the instruction again.

Wednesday July 18th: Third writing activity (without visual input)

Comments: This was an activity done with their textbooks because the task in the book already provided two pictures (visual input) besides presenting a model of the task learners had to do. Thus, students needed their book in order to look at the two pictures presented, and the e-mail model that they had to use to guide them in the written task.

Observation: As students were using their books, it was harder to check on them because some of them were trying to use the vocabulary words that they had on previous pages. It was necessary that the teacher-researcher

repeated that students could only use the information and pictures they had on pages 30 and 31.

Monday July 23rd: Third writing activity (without visual input)

Comments: Students did the activity before starting the following class. As usual, students were explained about what they had to do before they received the worksheet.

Observation: Students were normally working on the task.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objectives of this study were first, to analyze the effectiveness of visual input to scaffold the written production in English of A1-A2 level students at the University of Guayaquil (a public Higher Education institution). Second, to review the possible types of input used in the EFL classroom environment. Third, to determine whether providing visual input would help students increase the amount of words used in their written production. Finally, this research aimed at identifying the way or ways in which the utilization of visual input could be beneficial for students' written production.

5.1 Conclusions

After carrying out this research, it can be claimed that all of the objectives that were set have been satisfactorily achieved. After the analysis of results (of each student's piece of writing) through the use of the analytic rubric and the teacher's observation diary, there are several conclusions that can be drawn:

- In the literature review the diverse ways in which visual input has been utilized over time were presented. For instance, Doff (1988) lists some of the oldest visual elements used in the English classroom, such as flannelboard, magnetboard, slides, filmstrip, and colored rods. He also asserts that another popular way to use images is in information gap activities for practicing listening and speaking. Visual input (pictures) can be categorized into two main groups: still images and moving images. These can be used in a wide variety of ways, which is for teaching any mainstream subject, foreign/second language, or any language skill.

According to Dharshini (2012), as cited in Hernández and Sánchez (2016), the overall form of classifying visual input resources is in two types:

Not requiring projection: Whiteboard, picture flash cards, word flash cards, text books, posters, pictures, photographs, realia, and handouts.

Requiring projection: Overhead projector (p.14).

Salandanan (1996) also classifies still pictures (visual input) as non-projected and projected. In order to utilize visual input effectively, learners need to understand how to *read* them. Some learners merely observe certain elements in the image, while others who are smarter can point out at more specific items and find the connections that convey the overall meaning of the image. Yet they can go further by adding inventive details and linking the images with their personal experiences. Flat pictures which are non-projected include photos printed in books and/or magazines, paintings and drawings (Salandanan, 1996).

Nevertheless, today there is a wider range of possibilities in which still and moving pictures can be used. For instance, with the technological advances, the appearance of the internet and smart cell phones, and the broad spread use of social media, teachers have richer and countless image resources.

Therefore, in the literature, the different types of visual input that can be used in an EFL classroom were reviewed.

- Results plainly show that the number of words increased in the three writing tasks. Although this improvement was more evident in the first writing activity, students unquestionably wrote more words in the Writing worksheets that presented visual input. Yet, not only had the amount of words increased, but also language use was perceived as enhanced. Furthermore, students made a significant progress in the quality of their written work.
- Students' work was enriched in aspects such as the use of coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, syntactically well-organized sentences, correct selection of tenses, production of coherent and understandable sentences, correct selection of words, use of the necessary words to complete the task, use of capital letters, correct spelling of words, and appropriate use of punctuation rules. The first five mentioned above belong to the quantitative parameters, and the last five aspects belong to the group of qualitative parameters of the study.

- For the reasons stated above, and as it has already been explained in the Analysis of Results section, outcomes suggest that overall students' production and quality of written work were greatly enhanced by the use of visual input.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results obtained, the following recommendations were drawn:

- Visual input should be provided in writing activities in order to assist learners in the process of generation of ideas, at least in the basic levels of learning a foreign language.
- Before working with visual input, the instruction of the activity should be clearly explained to the students along with its role.
- Learners must be taught to observe, and not only see the images. They should acquire the ability to interpret the visual input presented, so they can have access to the maximum benefits.
- Visual input should be used by EFL educators in any of its forms, printed, or projected: still, and/or moving images, moving pictures blended with sounds (audiovisuals), printed material such as wall pictures or posters, flashcards, realia, gestures, and pictures designed by students on their own, among others.
- It is advisable that the University of Guayaquil invests in more technological equipment that facilitates the utilization of visual input in all of its forms.

5.3 Drawbacks of the study

Research and researchers are not free from facing certain limitations and shortcomings, and this is not an exception:

- It was not so simple to find a syllabus that the teacher-researcher had, that could fit the research's objectives. For instance, the syllabi of other English courses (modules), could not be used because its contents were excessively basic, and did not offer an acceptable amount of written activities to assess. Moreover, the brief writing activities required mostly personal experiences; therefore, the role of visual input in the designed worksheet might have been minimum.

- Another difficulty was the teacher at the same time was the researcher; so the activities had to be designed in a short period of time, and it was a real effort to perform the activities, and at the same time cope with the syllabus. Learners only have three hours of English per week, thus, it was a challenge to advance with the research, and the academic program.
- Another limitation was to find the appropriate images to include in the worksheets, and that they conveyed the correct message. In order to do that, it was essential that the researcher thought as a reader. It was then relevant to ask the question: What message does this image transmit? Besides, some images could not be taken from the internet, as simple as it may seem, hours were spent trying to find the right image.
- Finally, one of the most substantial difficulties encountered was to understand each student's pieces of writing due to the diversity of their handwritings, and the inappropriate use of punctuation. It certainly demanded a great deal of time and effort to identify where an idea (sentence) started, and where it ended. It was often necessary to ask for other peers' points of view to validate results.

Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, this study was possible thanks to the organization and to the establishment of parameters and number of occurrences, in addition to the way in which information was classified and processed.

5.4 Limitations of the study

- The number of participants was certainly reduced. This was due to the fact of the complexity of the analysis. Numerous aspects regarding the language structure had to be analyzed, and as a consequence, results might not be generalizable.
- Another limitation was the bounded amount of research material that has been published related to the use of visual input to boost second language students' writing.

5.5 Suggestions for future research

- It is advisable that surveys regarding the use of visual input in writing activities are applied to both teachers and students for investigating the amount in which this diverse and dynamic tool is being utilized by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) educators, especially to develop or enhance writing skills.
- It would be ideal to increase the number of participants in order to obtain more generalizable, and thus, more reliable results.
- The use of technological tools or applications is highly recommended to facilitate the understanding of students' handwritings and their analysis; especially if the purpose is to analyze larger amounts of students' primary data.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Students' consent form

Yo, _____, con C.I. # _____, estoy de acuerdo en participar en esta investigación y en calidad de participante acepto que mis trabajos escritos a lo largo de este semestre (CI 2018-2019) sean analizados con el fin de determinar la eficiencia del estímulo visual en mis trabajos escritos.

- Mi participación es voluntaria, pero esto no implica que tendré algún beneficio. Esta investigación no me causará ninguna incomodidad.
- Seré libre de salir de la investigación sin ninguna consecuencia.
- Mi información será confidencial, lo cual quiere decir que será protegida utilizando otro nombre o código asignado.
- El nombre de la investigadora con quien cooperaré es: Lcda. Mary Ochoa Gómez. En caso de que necesite más información acerca de este estudio podré escribir al correo: mary.ochoag@ug.edu.ec
- Firmando este formulario, acepto participar en esta investigación además de estar de acuerdo en responder a interrogantes adicionales que podrían requerirse a lo largo de la misma.

NOMBRES	FECHA	FIRMA
<i>DE LA INVESTIGADORA</i>		
Lcda. Mary Ochoa Gómez		
<i>DE LA /EL PARTICIPANTE</i>		

APPENDIX B

Sample of student's diagnostic test

M4-DIAGNOSIS TEST

 FACULTY of BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT of FOREIGN LANGUAGES	SCORE: <u>6/20</u>
Name: <u>Mónica Marcela Osorio Enríquez</u> Teacher: <u>Leda Patricia Malaveille García</u> ID: <u>7093/2221</u> Date: <u>17 May 2018</u>	Student's signature: _____

Mónica Marcela Osorio Enríquez

I. READING SECTION (5 Points)

Read the text and decide if the statements are True or False.

www.campusblog.net

Campus blog:

I'm Jeremy Fisher and this is my blog! I'm an undergraduate at Valley State University. I have been a student here for only two months, but I already love it! I'm majoring in Public History, and I live on campus. My roommate and I have a really small room, but it's nice. I like living on campus because I am close to everything I need. I'm only a five-minute walk from the library and where my classes are. The campus is really cool and there's lots of things to do here. We have a new internet café, and there are a few nice parks on campus, too. We even have a gym for students who live on campus, and they're great! I haven't gone there yet, but I want to. There's also a small grocery store here, and they stay open really late. It's great when you need something fast! Plus, just a couple of minutes down the road, there is a huge shopping mall. There's a lot of great stores, and I have already bought a lot of things there. It's so close, you can even walk there! I'm thinking about getting a job on campus. Maybe I can work in the History Department, that way I can get to know my professors better!

1. Jeremy lives on campus with two roommates.
2. The campus has a new park.
3. The grocery store closes early every day.
4. There is a shopping mall near the campus.

T	X
F	✓
F	✓
F	X

2,50

II. VOCABULARY SECTION (10 Points)

A. Complete the sentences with the words in the box. There are two extra words which you don't need to use.

1. John is a very serious person. I've never seen him laugh!
2. When I got to the airport, I found out that my luggage wasn't there.
3. Don't forget to return this book to the library in ten days.
4. What you did to Brian was really awful!
5. When I arrived at the party, nobody was there!

- a) Serious
- b) Arrived
- c) Awful
- d) Luggage
- e) Return
- f) Delayed
- g) Purse

2,50

B. Complete the table with the words/phrases in the box

a professor an award seasick lost a star
 a race a class to concerts put horseback riding

TAKE	WIN	GET	GO	BECOME
a shower	a medal	a degree	camping	a champion
6. <u>an award</u> ✓	7. <u>a race</u> ✓	8. <u>lost</u> ✓	9. <u>to concerts</u> ✓	10. <u>a star</u> ✓
11. <u>a class</u> ✓	12. <u>horseback riding</u> ✓	13. <u>put</u> ✓	14. <u>seasick</u> ✓	15. <u>a professor</u> ✓

C. Match.

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| 16. washing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D | a. camera |
| 17. parking | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G | b. lights |
| 18. video | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A | c. station |
| 19. subway | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C | d. machine |
| 20. traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B | e. lot |

IV. GRAMMAR SECTION. (10 Points)

A. Choose a, b or c.

- | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. <u>A</u> washing the windows this afternoon? | a. Let's | b. How about | c. Why don't we |
| 2. Can you drive <u>C</u> downtown? | a. we | b. us | c. our |
| 3. Those shoes are nice. I want to buy <u>C</u> . | a. their | b. those | c. them |
| 4. Does your brother have <u>A</u> CDs? | a. much | b. many | c. lots |
| 5. I'd like <u>B</u> sugar in my coffee, please. | a. a few | b. much | c. a little |
| 6. Let's go! We don't have <u>A</u> time. | a. much | b. a few | c. a little |
| 7. The post office is <u>C</u> the supermarket and the museum. | a. next | b. in front | c. between |
| 8. There aren't <u>B</u> carrots left. Only two. | a. any | b. many | c. much |

1,00

B. Complete the blanks with the Present Simple or the Present Progressive of the verbs in parentheses.

9. I goes (go) on an exchange program to the U.K.
 10. Why painting (you / paint) the wall blue?
 11. James plant (plant) some flowers in the yard right now.

C. Use the prompts to write sentences. Use the Present Simple, the Present Progressive or the Past Simple.

12. Robert / watch TV / and / have / dinner / last night /
Robert watching TV and have dinner last night.
 13. Carol / not make / dinner / right now /
Carol don't make dinner right now.
 14. My sister / never / travel / by plane /
My sister never travels by plane.
 15. Bill / not call / Kato / last weekend /
Bill don't call Kato last weekend.
 16. you / play / guitar / in a band /?
Can you play guitar in a band?

D. Complete with the Present Perfect Simple of the verbs in parentheses.

17. Robert: If you ever see (you / ever / see) a zebra?
 18. Raul: Yes, I visited (visit) the zoo many times and I seen (see) lots of zebras.

E. Complete the blanks with the correct preposition.

19. I hang out with my friends at the weekend.
 20. Do you have this skirt in red?

28 words

Write about your last vacation
 in my last vacation go a play football in late amgar, and I go to play sand
 -park with my family, I go to a play the guitar with my friends.

APPENDIX C

Designed Writing Activity 1: With Visual Input

DATE: _____ NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ SCHEDULE: _____

UNIT 6: WRITING ACTIVITY # 1 (6.2 My city, p. 23)

WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR CITY/TOWN. USE THE QUESTIONS AND PICTURES BELOW FOR IDEAS.

- ✓ What are some of the popular sights in your city?
- ✓ Where are they?
- ✓ Why are they popular?
- ✓ Do a lot of people visit them every year?



APPENDIX D

Designed Writing Activity 2: With Visual Input

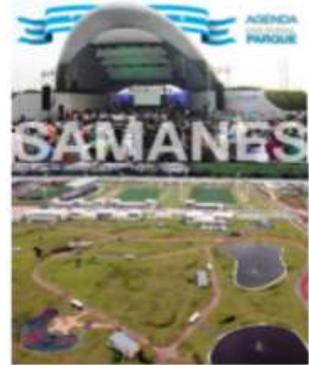
DATE: _____ NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ SCHEDULE: _____

UNIT 6: WRITING ACTIVITY # 2 (6.3 keep our city clean, ps. 24-25)

WRITE SENTENCES ABOUT HOW DIFFERENT YOUR CITY WAS FIVE YEARS AGO. USE IDEAS GIVEN. USE COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE YOUR CITY.

Many / parks - *Streets / clean* - *Many / recycling bins*

Provided example: Five years ago my city was greener than it is today / Five years ago my city wasn't as green as it is today.



APPENDIX E

Designed Writing Activity 3: With Visual Input

DATE: _____ NAME: _____ CLASS: _____ SCHEDULE: _____

UNIT 6: WRITING ACTIVITY # 3 (6.6 On a break, ps. 30-31)

LOOK AT THE TWO HOTEL ADVERTISEMENTS BELOW AND WRITE AN E-MAIL TO A FRIEND OF YOURS. USE THE E-MAIL ON THE LEFT AS AN EXAMPLE. TELL YOUR FRIEND WHICH HOTEL YOU PREFER AND WHY.

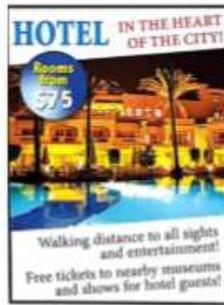
TIP: When you are asked to write an e-mail or letter based on given information, don't forget to expand on the prompts given, comment on them and relate them to your personal preferences, likes, etc.

Dear Jake,

I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. For us, I think the cruise is better. Remember, it's hard to get around without a car there. I know the other trip has better deals, but they are really expensive when you pay for your transportation! Also, I don't like staying at hostels. I really want my own bathroom! I know the cruise is more expensive but I think it's worth it. All the things we can do are included in one price, but in the hostel trip almost nothing is included. Plus, with the cruise we can see the other islands as well.

What do you think?

Albert



APPENDIX F

Teacher's Diary 1

Date	Monday June 25 th
Worksheet No. 1	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.2, pages 22-23.
Function	Making comparisons
Structures	Comparatives from short and long adjectives, regular forms.
Vocabulary	Adjectives: clean, crowded, dirty, empty, huge, noisy, old-fashioned, quiet, slow Other words and phrases: area, article, building, mention, palace, plus, probably, stuff, tower, view, you bet!
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	20 minutes
Comments	This day, the class started by working on a brief vocabulary review, and some more language practice regarding comparative forms. Later, the researcher explained the instruction for the writing activity (without visual input) to the students and wrote it on the board.
Observation	Students tried to use their dictionaries, cell phones, and/ or mobile devices in order to help themselves perform the task. Regular dictionaries were often allowed, nevertheless, they were asked not to use them. This created anxiety within learners, thus, the teacher asked them to focus on the activity and try to do their best. The educator asked them not to worry about the errors or mistakes they could make. Then, they showed relief and started doing the activity.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

Teacher's Diary 2

Date	Wednesday July 11 th
Worksheet No. 1	WITH VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.2, page 23.
Function	Making comparisons
Structures	Comparatives from short and long adjectives, regular forms.
Vocabulary	Adjectives: clean, crowded, dirty, empty, huge, noisy, old-fashioned, quiet, slow Other words and phrases: area, article, building, mention, palace, plus, probably, stuff, tower, view, you bet!
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	20 minutes
Comments	This writing activity was the one providing visual input, and it was administered to the students two weeks after the first activity because they had done it before; therefore, it was necessary to elapse some time so that they did not write exactly the same ideas as in the first activity. This time, they did it before the new class started (because students had to cover a different topic).
Observation	Students' faces reflected a little surprise, and even after the teacher had already given the instruction about what to do, they seemed a little confused. Then, the educator had to give the instruction again. Students did not seem to understand the role of pictures at the beginning of the activity. Later on, it was explained to them to follow the instructions that they had on the worksheet, and to use visual input (pictures) as a resource to help them generate ideas, but they were also told that if they had different ideas from the ones on the pictures, they had total freedom to write about them.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

Teacher's Diary 3

Date	Monday July 4 th
Worksheet No. 2	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.3, pages 24-25.
Function	Describing a city, making comparisons
Structures	Comparative forms: irregular adjectives.
Vocabulary	Verbs: build, celebrate, collect, follow, take place, throw Other words: activity, can, earth, everyone, faucet, for example, litter, nature, paper, pollution, public, recycling bin, welcome (adj).
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	60 minutes (as this was an exam, students decided the amount of time devoted for the writing section).
Comments	This was a summative assessment, which means it was a real grade for students. Students have two exams: one written and one oral. That day was the written exam, which comprises reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening and writing.
Observation	This written activity was a section in their first-term exam. Students were concentrated on their exam. All of the students wrote something on the writing section, although not all of them wrote the minimum amount of words.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

Teacher's Diary 4

Date	Monday July 16 th
Worksheet No. 2	WITH VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.3, pages 24-25.
Function	Describing a city, making comparisons
Structures	Comparative forms: irregular adjectives.
Vocabulary	Verbs: build, celebrate, collect, follow, take place, throw Other words: activity, can, earth, everyone, faucet, for example, litter, nature, paper, pollution, public, recycling bin, welcome (adj).
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	20 minutes
Comments	This activity took place almost two weeks after the writing activity without visual input. As mentioned before, the purpose is that learners did not write exactly the same ideas. If they had done both activities on the same day, then, they could probably have written the same information. The activity was assigned before starting the new class, which was about a different topic. Before the students started to work, the teacher gave instructions about what the task was about.
Observation	There were still a couple of students who were not very sure about what to do in the activity. Therefore, the teacher gave them the instruction again.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

Teacher's Diary 5

Date	Wednesday July 18 th
Worksheet No. 3	WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.6, pages 30-31.
Function	Talking about vacations and comparing things.
Vocabulary	Vacation and accommodations: hostel, motel, R. V. (recreational vehicle), tent, yacht Other words and phrases: access, accommodation, active, ad (advertisement), coupon, deal, each, entertainment, it's worth, rainforest.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	20 minutes
Comments	This was an activity done with their textbooks because the task in the book already provided two pictures (visual input) besides presenting a model of the task learners had to do. Thus, students needed their book in order to look at the two pictures presented, and the e-mail model that they had to use to guide them in the written task.
Observation	As students were using their books, it was harder to check on them because some of them were trying to use the vocabulary words that they had on previous pages. It was necessary that the teacher-researcher repeated that students could only use the information and pictures they had on pages 30 and 31.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

Teacher's Diary 6

Date	Monday July 23 rd
Worksheet No. 3	WITH VISUAL INPUT
Textbook	The English Hub 2 B, Unit 6, lesson 6.6, pages 30-31.
Function	Talking about vacations and comparing things.
Vocabulary	Vacation and accommodations: hostel, motel, R. V. (recreational vehicle), tent, yacht Other words and phrases: access, accommodation, active, ad (advertisement), coupon, deal, each, entertainment, it's worth, rainforest.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Were all the students on Task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ If not, when was that and why did it happen?
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did the task last the right length of time? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did it work? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Did the students understand what to do in the task? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ➤ Were my instructions clear? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Time designated for performing the activity:	20 minutes
Comments	Students did the activity before starting the following class. As usual, students were explained about what they had to do before they received the worksheet.
Observation	Students were normally working on the task.

Source: Adapted from British Council (2004)

APPENDIX G

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 1 (student E)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT

#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 1	Student E
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	1	And
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	3	Than - that - because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	1/6	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	5/6	
5	Coherent sentences	5/6	
6	Word choice	8	Rarely:the(its), situade(located), have(there are), imagnate(imagine), pollutions(polluted), littler(less), don't(can't), lot of(so many)
7	Necessary vocabulary	72	Usually
8	CAPITALIZATION	0	Always
9	Spelling	3	Usually (place-then-lot)
10	Punctuation	2	Always
	WVA	1	Have (has)
	WVF	1	are (there are)

WITH VISUAL INPUT

	PARAMETERS	Writing task 1	Student E
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	And - or
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	1	Because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	3/6	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	3/6	
5	Coherent sentences	3/6	
6	Word choice	4	Usually: people(main- principal), to(from), concurrred(crowded), have(there are)
7	Necessary vocabulary	86	Usually
8	CAPITALIZATION	2	Always
9	Spelling	2	Always: alround(around), confortable(comfortable)
10	Punctuation	4	Usually
	WVA		
	WVF	1	Celebrated (celebrate)

APPENDIX H

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 1 (student F)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 1	Student F
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	1	And
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	1	Because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	3/8	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	6/8	
5	Coherent sentences	6/8	
6	Word choice	8	Sometimes: very(a lot of), this(these), other(another), funnier(very funny), they(this), of(from), pretty(nice), exist(there are)
7	Necessary vocabulary	96	Usually
8	CAPITALIZATION	1	Always
9	Spelling	6	Sometimes: turist(tourists) x2, place(s)x2, show(s), club(s), countriez(countries), crowedes (crowded).
10	Punctuation	6	Sometimes
	WVA	2	is (are)x2.
	WVF		

WITH VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 1	Student F
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	And - but
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	2	Because - when
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	4/11	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	8/11	
5	Coherent sentences	7/11	
6	Word choice	8	Sometimes: incurried(crowded), towel color(?), other(another), here(there), pass(spend), but(because), us(our), this(these)x2
7	Necessary vocabulary	118	Usually: this student almost doubled the amount of words
8	CAPITALIZATION	5	Sometimes
9	Spelling	5	Usually: turist(tourists), boulevaer(boulevard), fascined(fascinated), wont(want), place(places)
10	Punctuation	5	Sometimes
	WVA		
	WVF	1	Going (go)

APPENDIX I

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 2 (student G)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 2	Student G
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	1	And
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	1	That
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	1/10	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	5/10	
5	Coherent sentences	7/10	
6	Word choice	6	Sometimes: Have (are)- Pollution (Polluted)- Have (There are)-Most (More)- For (By)
7	Necessary vocabulary	79	Usually
8	CAPITALIZATION	2	Always
9	Spelling	2	Always: That (Than)- Example (For ex.)
10	Punctuation	2	Always
	WVA	1	Have (Has)
	WVF		

WITH VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 2	Student G
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	and-for
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	3	than-as-because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	7/11	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	9/11	
5	Coherent sentences	11/11	
6	Word choice	6	Usually: actually (nowadays)- biggest(bigger)-have(there are)-pollution(polluted)-most (more)-make (do)
7	Necessary vocabulary	104	Always
8	CAPITALIZATION	1	Always
9	Spelling	4	Usually: cleaner(cleaner)- sistem(system)-other(others)- runnia(running)
10	Punctuation	4	usually
	WVA	2	have(has)-help(helps)
	WVF	2	are(to be)-haven't(didn't have)

APPENDIX J

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 2 (student H)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 2	Student H
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	0	
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	0	
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	1/3	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	1/3	
5	Coherent sentences	1/3	
6	Word choice	2	Never: her (Years)- more big (bigger)
7	Necessary vocabulary	21	Never
8	CAPITALIZATION		Rarely
9	Spelling		Rarely
10	Punctuation	3	Rarely
	WVA		
	WVF	2	Don't (Didn't)-Is (was)

WITH VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 2	Student H
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	for-and
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	3	where-because-that
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	1/6	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	3/6	
5	Coherent sentences	2/6	
6	Word choice	5	Sometimes: for(because)-thin(than)-where(that)-relax(relaxing)-all(?)
7	Necessary vocabulary	83	Usually
8	CAPITALIZATION		Always
9	Spelling		Always
10	Punctuation	5	Sometimes
	WVA		
	WVF	1	was(is)

APPENDIX K

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 3 (student D)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 3	Student D
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	For-and
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	0	
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	0/4	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	2/4	
5	Coherent sentences	1/4	
6	Word choice	6	Sometimes: Travel-the(x2)-entertainment-with-person-friendly
7	Necessary vocabulary	84	Sometimes
8	CAPITALIZATION	0	Always
9	Spelling	1	Always: Tour
10	Punctuation	2	Always
	WVA		
	WVF	1	It's

WITH VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 3	Student D
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	For-And
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	1	Because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	1/8	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	4/8	
5	Coherent sentences	6/8	
6	Word choice	9	Rarely: See-little-relax-desestres-economic-for-slow-all-recoment
7	Necessary vocabulary	119	Sometimes
8	CAPITALIZATION	3	Usually
9	Spelling	4	Usually: Places-swimming-vacations-increible
10	Punctuation	7	Rarely
	WVA	3	Like-have-see
	WVF		

APPENDIX L

Sample of Analysis: Writing task 3 (student M)

WITHOUT VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 3	Student M
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	3	And-for-but
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	1	Because
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	4/5	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	4/5	
5	Coherent sentences	4/5	
6	Word choice		Always
7	Necessary vocabulary	76	Always
8	CAPITALIZATION		Always
9	Spelling		Always
10	Punctuation	2	Always
	WVA		
	WVF		

WITH VISUAL INPUT			
#	PARAMETERS	Writing task 3	Student M
1	Coordinating Conjunctions	2	But-and
2	Subordinating Conjunctions	2	than-like
3	Syntactically well-organized sentences	6/6	
4	Appropriate selection of tenses	6/6	
5	Coherent sentences	5/6	
6	Word choice	0	Always
7	Necessary vocabulary	88	Always
8	CAPITALIZATION	2	Always
9	Spelling	1	Always: Tour
10	Punctuation	6	Sometimes
	WVA		
	WVF		

APPENDIX M

Original document: Writing task 1 (student E)

Without Visual Input

1 My city is Guayaquil and the popular sights/ place are Historic park, Malcom zoo, Samanes Park, Botanic Garden and malls.

2 Historic Park is situated in "Entre Rios", is more popular than Botanic den because here are animals variety.

4 Botanic Garden is more beautiful than Historic park because here have lot of plants that you don't imagine.

5 Malcom is more pollutions than Samanes Park.

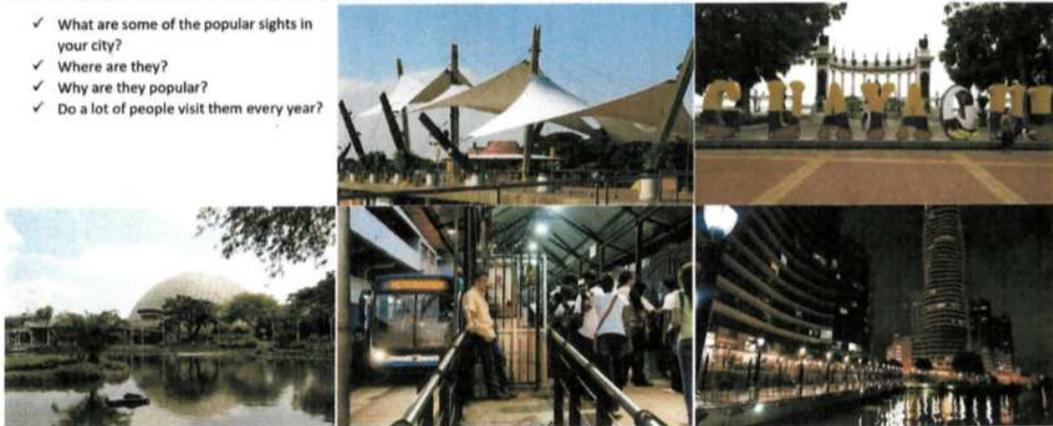
6 That is because Malcom have littler trees than Samanes Park.

With Visual Input

UNIT 6: WRITING ACTIVITY # 1 (6.2 My city, p. 23)

WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR CITY/TOWN. USE THE QUESTIONS AND PICTURES BELOW FOR IDEAS.

- ✓ What are some of the popular sights in your city?
- ✓ Where are they?
- ✓ Why are they popular?
- ✓ Do a lot of people visit them every year?



The people sights are Malcom zoo and Metro way, because these places are public! In Metro way people transported to one place another because is a public transportation, people go to work, home, to visit any friend or family. There enough stations around Guayaquil and Kms. Mule way. Malcom zoo is very concurred because people just want walk, speak another person, celebrated birthday or just play in the games or eat, buy. People visit there a lot of because it is a place comfortable, beautiful and funny.

APPENDIX N

Original document: Writing task 1 (student F)

Without Visual Input

1 In my city I know quite a lot very (place) tourist, the Petronas, Malacca 2000, Somerset Park, this place are popular sights in my city. 2 ✓

3 The Petronas and Malacca are in the center of the city and the Somerset park is in North of the city. Other place very popular is Pink zone because the people go to lounge and is very nice because the presentation show in the night club is famous. 5

4 they place is very popular because is very crowded. 6

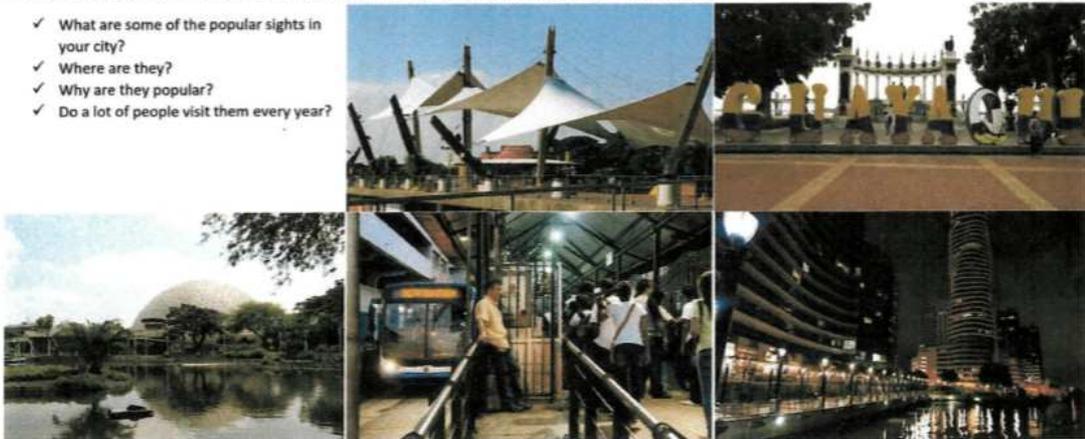
7 Every year come here tourist of the other country because my city is beautiful and the people is very pretty. 8

With Visual Input

UNIT 6: WRITING ACTIVITY # 1 (6.2 My city, p. 23)

WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT YOUR CITY/TOWN. USE THE QUESTIONS AND PICTURES BELOW FOR IDEAS.

- ✓ What are some of the popular sights in your city?
- ✓ Where are they?
- ✓ Why are they popular?
- ✓ Do a lot of people visit them every year?



In my city the popular sights are the Malacca 2000, in this place the tourist are famous because is beautiful, the SMK is very interesting, I can see the river Quaya and the Westwood (Park) in the night the people visit all Malacca and the tourist club in front of the building. Other place is the Somerset park, I go to here when I want pass time with my family, and the Metroline is the popular transportation but is very fast, I move in the city very quickly. 5 they are in Singapore and are very popular because are wonderful, and the people visit every year because the history is very interesting and this place are part of us history. 11

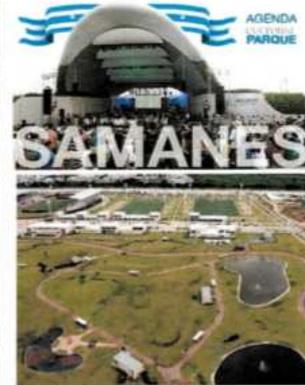
APPENDIX O

Original document: Writing task 2 (student G)

Without Visual Input

The park is the oldest place that have Guayaquil. Recently was restored. They have many tourist places for example: the Malcom zoo is the most popular that Malcom del oxalado. The avenues are modern and have pollution. The Guayaquil city is most beautiful that Duran City. they have a funny place the Play Land Park is visited for many people and people of other cities. Now have more parks and green areas. The modern Guayaquil is better than old Guayaquil.

With Visual Input



1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

- 1 Five years ago Guayaquil city was dirtier than it is today. In actually Guayaquil have many parks.
- 3 The most popular is Samanes Park. Samanes Park is bigger than Seminario Park. some parks have many recycling bins, this help to the parks and streets are clean.
- 5 Five years ago Guayaquil haven't any recycling culture, now have more recycling boxes.
- 7 Five years ago the city was as pollution as it is today. The city is modern as quite.
- 9 Now Guayaquil have a cleaner system for the parks and streets.
- 11 Samanes park is the most important park than others parks because in it can make concerts, role runner and many events for the people of Guayaquil and other cities.

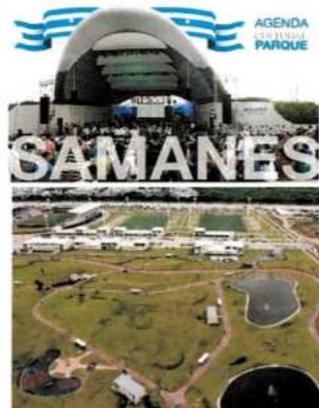
APPENDIX P

Original document: Writing task 2 (student H)

Without Visual Input

my city is Duron. my city, we like her ago don't have park
was 3 years ago, my house is more big.

With Visual Input



Five years ago the Samanes park was place very greener than it is today. for the there was no trash in the streets and today it is a very clean place and where people visit it a lot. In my city 5 years ago I was all old and now we have a park where we can go to enjoy. What could be done to improve the park is that there are penalties for throwing garbage. I like my city because is very relax.

APPENDIX Q

Original document: Writing task 3 (student D)

Without Visual Input

Dear Andrea ☺

I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. forests
 I think the hotel on the beach ^{WC} is a better choice. Remember walking ^{WVF} in the night for all ^{WC}
 beach, also sleep in the tent, travel in the afternoon in the night, also entertainment in the
 hotel with ^{WC} play zone, pool, yoga? and other activities. ^{2 syn!}
 For you also rooms for only *10 per night, free water sports lessons every day for you and
 other friends. And free ^{SP} tours around the town also for you and other ^{WC} person and finally
 one travel complete for the rainforest in the morning - ^{4 syn.}

With Visual Input



Dear Andrea ☺

My friends and me ^{WC} are for the trips and like for the hotel on the beach because the place is comfortable and little people, because
 walking for the night, all ^{WC} relax and together, the hotel have free wifi, ^{WC} typical big, the place is a beautiful and economic
 The hotel on the beach have free water sports lesson for every day and from the beach for the water and swimming for the beach
 and see ^{WC} all beach for the collection for the trip, the beach is the best place for the world. ^{7th syntax} It's a incredible for the
 ocean animals, ^{WC} pension, eat ^{WC} ^{2 syn.}
 the hotel on the beach is a ^{WC} recommend for the vacations and free time and relax. ^{SP} → syntax

APPENDIX R

Original document: Writing task 3 (student M)

Without Visual Input

Dear Denis,
I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. For us, I think the beach is better, but remember I don't like staying in hotels. Also at the beach we can do water sports. 2 ✓
Plus, at the beach we can surfing or swimming and the night we could go to dance. 3 syn.
I don't think the hotel is a good option because it doesn't include a car to get around and you know it's hard looking for a taxi in the heart of the city. 5 ✓
What do you think? ✓
Jean

With Visual Input



Dear Denis, I'm sending you the ads for the trips we can go on. For us, I think the beach is better. I know the hotel has better deals but it's expensive. I really want to go to the beach. It's cheaper than hotel and we can take free water sports lessons every day. Also we can get free taxi around the town. I know the hotel in the heart of the city it's more elegant and comfortable but I prefer rustic hotels like the hotel on the beach. Plus, in the city it's hard to get around without a car there. 6 ✓
what do you think? ✓
Jean. ✓

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Yo, **OCHOA GÓMEZ MARY JOSEFINA**, con C.C: # **0924294911** autor/a del trabajo de titulación: **Analysis of the Effects of Visual Input on the Written Production of A1-A2 Level Students of an EFL Classroom at a Public Higher Education Institution**, previo a la obtención del título de **Master en Enseñanza de inglés como Idioma Extranjero** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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FICHA DE REGISTRO DE TESIS/TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

TÍTULO Y SUBTÍTULO:	Analysis of the Effects of Visual Input on the Written Production of A1-A2 Level Students of an EFL Classroom at a Public Higher Education Institution		
AUTOR(ES)	OCHOA GÓMEZ, MARY JOSEFINA		
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PALABRAS CLAVES/ KEYWORDS:	visual input, writing tasks, rubric, scaffold, students' written production		
RESUMEN/ABSTRACT: This research analyzes the effectiveness of visual input to scaffold the written production in A1-A2 level students at a public Higher Education institution. It also seeks to ascertain to what proportions visual input enhances students' written production and whether or not the quality of students' writing tasks improves by the utilization of visual input. The study followed an action research path to retrieve both qualitative and quantitative data in this small-scale inquiry. A class of 13 students was selected to participate in this study; their writing assignments were collected and later analyzed using a rubric based on the CEFR descriptors. As instruments of data collection, three worksheets presenting visual input (contextualized photos) were designed and applied along with three other identical worksheets that did not provide visual input. Apart from that, a teacher's diary was utilized to record students' overall behavior when performing the tasks. Results manifested that the use of visual input was undeniably a useful tool to scaffold students' written production. In fact, outcomes suggest that overall students' production and quality of written work were significantly enhanced by the use of visual input.			
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