

# 3 \*PROMOTING CREATIVE WRITING IN EFL LEARNERS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

*EULICES CÓRDOBA ZÚÑIGA<sup>1</sup> - CAROLINA BEDOYA RODRIGUEZ<sup>2</sup>  
ANGIE RAMIREZ GAVIRIA<sup>3</sup> - ESTEBAN MAYORGA MUÑOZ<sup>4</sup>*

## Resumen

Este artículo establece la efectividad de la implementación de la enseñanza de idiomas basada en tareas (TBLT, por sus siglas en inglés) como una forma de promover la escritura creativa en doce estudiantes de enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera en una universidad pública colombiana. Se planificaron, diseñaron e implementaron diez tareas creativas, después de realizar un diagnóstico escrito que reveló que estos estudiantes presentaban dificultades para expresar los mensajes escritos. Los datos fueron recolectados mediante observación, entrevistas e informes escritos. Los resultados indican que las tareas facilitaron condiciones pedagógicas efectivas y sistematizadas para potenciar dicha habilidad en estos estudiantes. Los educandos aprendieron a organizar las ideas principales de manera creativa, a aclarar los objetivos de sus trabajos

\*This book's chapter is the result of a research entitled. "Developing EFL Language Skills through Task-Based Language Teaching"

<sup>1</sup> PhD. In Education Sciences. Corporación Universitaria Adventista/Universidad de Antioquia. eucorzucho@gmail.com / docente.ecordoba@unac.edu.co / eulcies.cordoba@udea.edu.co

<sup>2</sup> A bachelor in English as a foreign language teaching from Universidad de la Amazonia. Email: carolinabr@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> A bachelor in English as a foreign language teaching from Universidad de la Amazonia. Email: angie.ramirez.gaviria@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup> Especialista en Educación. Coordinador Lic. en Español e Inglés. Corporación Universitaria Adventista. emayorga@unac.edu.co / lic.espanoleingles@unac.edu.co. Número de Orcid: 0000-0002-7598-9023

y a generar escritos innovadores-originales. En conclusión, TBLT ofreció a los docentes en formación oportunidades para inventar producciones escritas imaginativas, lo que les llevó a producir escritos creativos; y, como consecuencia, superaron los problemas de escritura y aprendieron a producir escritos creativos.

### ***Palabras clave***

Escritura creativa, habilidad de escritura, y mensajes escritos, proceso de escritura y TBLT.

### ***Abstract***

This article examines the effectiveness of the implementation of task-based language teaching (TBLT, for its acronym in English) as a way to promote creative writing in twelve students of English as a foreign language in a Colombian public university. Ten creative tasks were planned, designed and implemented, after conducting a written diagnosis that revealed that these students had difficulties expressing written messages. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and written reports. The results indicate that the tasks provided effective and systematized pedagogical conditions to enhance this ability in these group of learners. Participants learned to organize main ideas creatively, clarify the objectives of their work, and generate innovative-original writing. In conclusion, TBLT offered pre-service teachers opportunities to invent imaginative written productions, which led them to produce creative writing; As a consequence, they overcame writing problems and learned to produce creative writing.

### ***Key Word***

Creative-writing, writing-skill, Writing-Process, TBLT, and written-messages.

## INTRODUCCIÓN

Nowadays, English as a foreign language (EFL) programs demand students to master all four language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing in the same level of competence. Therefore, the undergraduates are required to produce successful papers, in which they communicate their thoughts in an effective written way. In this context, enhancing creative writing in EFL education seems to be a fundamental skill that helps students to develop their critical thinking, strengthen their creativity to represent real or unreal facts with words, letters, or any other written production. Although EFL programs are determined to promote this ability among their learners, a great number of learners still present some challenges with this competence either during the learning process or when they graduate. According to Kellogg (2008), creative writing difficulties exist in part because “learning how to write a coherent and effective text is a difficult development that contrasts sharply with the acquisition of speech” (p.2). Additionally, Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) indicate that “writing a correct English sentence; putting the ideas together in a coherent way; choosing the right vocabulary to express ideas and having ideas about the suggested topics and deciding how to start become real challenges for EFL students” (p.1). Promoting creative writing in EFL learners require students not only to master a high- level of competence in writing ability, but also to be creative, to know the content and necessary knowledge to communicate what he / she wants originally.

Previous studies on creative writing (Bayat, 2016; Morgan, 2006; and Ryan, 2014) have reported that this practice aims to promote the production of original text that integrate imagination, innovation and critical thinking. Morgan (2006) defines creative writing as the activity of reconstructing current knowledge, concepts, sounds, images and dreams in the memory and associating them with each other to compose a new piece of writing; it is the transfer of an individual’s feelings and thoughts about something onto paper. In this respect, creative writing means creating imaginative texts more than reproducing what other individuals have already said, these papers seek to transforming the information into an original paper. However, Tarnopolsky (2005) affirms that creative writing in English as a foreign language is practically unknown and unused in EFL teaching. He explains this practice necessitates its introduction into EFL teaching as one of the best

ways of promoting and intensifying “students’ linguistic and intellectual development by helping them to create L2 texts that come to reflect their expertise” (p, 9). In this regard, Moberg and Kobylarz (2016) consider that creative writing is set aside in EFL composition classes.

Thus, to ascertain the effectiveness or not of the implementation of TBLT as a pedagogical method to promote creative writing in twenty EFL learners who were in the fourth semester at a Public university in the southern region of Colombia. Based on this, the general purpose of this article is to promote creative writing through the implementation of TBLT in a group of twelve EFL learners at a public Colombian university; to plan and design tasks which allow students to practice different types of writing activities; to implement the assignments; and to verify if the implementation of the methodology has positive, negative or harmful impacts to enhance creative writing in these students and to overcome the trouble the learners had in general writing skill.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### ***Writing skill in EFL education***

Writing is a complex, demanding and productive skill that is acquired through time, habit, attitudes, constant practice, well-planned stages; and creative tasks whether in a first or foreign language. This ability is defined by Floyd, Keith, Taub and McGrew (2007) as an important aspect of language learning transfer the process of decoding words to producing ideas and generating written products. Yet, writing does not come automatically as a part of educating process, it is a response to a stimulus which is provided either by the teachers, undergraduates’ needs or tasks that require students to come up with new ideas from inputs that have been given to them. In this regard, Gonca (2016) explains writing is a challenging process because it involves many elements such as drafting ideas, content, vocabulary, organization, mechanics, cohesion, revising and editing; which make some teachers and learners tend to focus on them, reducing the applicability of creativity in writing. For those reasons, Reis (2008) suggests that learning to write is a process learned through deep practice, confidence, and autonomy. In practice, writing is

one of the ways to show their creativity, express their ideas, thoughts, point of views and to come out with a significant output.

Based on the above mentioned, EFL education should integrate not only, the teaching of writing as an another macro-skill, but also incorporate the education of creative writing and recognize it as a meaningful practice that allows to learners make emphasis on what and how is produced based by the students to represent their ideas. According to Nunan (as cited in Grossman, 2009) writing is diverse, it includes a simple list, memoir, letters, formality and informality, to academic and general texts like: Emails, essay, reports among others compositions. However, each type of writing displays a variety of features which “can be observed within the sentence, grammatical level, and text structure.” (p.275). Similarly, Derakhshan and Karimi (2015) explain that writing involves a creative process which is visible in the different ways to transfer information, knowledge or experiences into papers. In this sense, this article is based on the fact that writing is a creative, innovative and meaningful way to produce original papers. Then, EFL education necessitates to integrate different pedagogical strategies, methods and approaches to promote creative writing either in general or academic writing courses.

### ***Creative Writing***

Referring to creative writing, Taylor (1974) suggests that creative composition is a micro-skill in writing that opens up students’ opportunities to transform their ideas into an original written product. In EFL education, this is a fundamental process that incentive learners to create, innovate and use their creativity to compose any kind of paper. To this respect, Naidoo (as cited in Anae, 2004), concludes creative writing facilitates not only social and language skills, but also it provides an essential medium to go through personal issues. Creative writing is “a powerful tool to open up communication” (p. 11). Likewise, Vecino (as cited in Avila, 2015) suggests creative writing as a research tool to improve students’ feelings towards writing. In that sense, creative writing could be useful to improve the EFL learners writing skills and motivation. The autonomy to choose topics of interest and the creation of a comfortable environment to write are fundamental aspects to increase learners’ motivation to write. Consequently, creative writing is an effective activity to encourage less motivated students to write and overcome their struggle to

express and connect their ideas.

Additionally, Akkaya (2014) says that creative writing is a practice that develops the creativity and personality of learners. He insists that this micro-skill generates spaces that relate the students' experiences with the need to learn how to communicate with texts. In the same way, Stillar (2013) states that creative writing is an expressive process that helps learners to refine their writing abilities because it works as an impulse that produces the desire for writing. Equally, Oral (as cited in Temizkan, 2011) explains that creative writing is the act of putting ideas and feelings about a particular topic on paper by using the imagination. In this regard, Bayat (2016) argues that creative writing increases the students' writing attitude because when students write about something that draws their attention, their motivation will increase and they will want to write. With this respect, Bishop (1994) indicates creative writing is the ability to help students to empower themselves through language one aspect that is strongly considered as relevant is the importance of learners' experience in the language which is discovered, explored and clarified as a result of the creative writing process development. In summary, creative writing is an expressiveness, imaginativeness and innovative writing that encourages learners to express what they think or believe comfortably.

On the other hand, Arshavskaya (2015) argues that creative writing reinforces the writing skill in EFL learners through inspiration, imagination, flexibility, and provides fluidity, innovation, originality and potential to write. Also, she declares that creative writing concedes that although students are not familiar with the topics they have to write about, they can consult peers and friends who might offer accounts of personal experiences related to the topics discussed in class. The extent to which this happens depends on a great deal on the abilities of both the instructor and the students to search, synthesize, and integrate material from a range of sources.

Arthur and Zell (as cited in Bayat, 2016) define creative writing as the activity of reconstructing current knowledge, concepts, sounds, images and dreams in the memory and associating them with each other, therefore creating a new piece of writing is the transfer of an individual's feelings and thoughts about something onto paper. That trans-

formation of information or knowledge into papers leads students to develop their creativity. Creativity is the capacity that human beings have to integrate their abilities in the creation and production of new ideas, giving original products based on previous knowledge.

Creativity is not only a matter of artistic skills or a capability that related to a specific field. It is an inside skill that is part of everybody's life and it can be showed in daily activities. According to Blagg (as cited in Khan, 2012) says that creativity is designed to bring new, different and unexpected responses to a situation and enhances fluency, flexibility and originality in students (p.57). In the same way, Lindquist (2003) expresses that creativity is for the humanity and society an essential part of the existence. He states that writing it is not only a question of artistic creativity, but something necessary to process consciousness, imagination and creativity. Although the theoretical construct discussed favors creative writing as the activity of reconstructing current knowledge, enhancing writing skills and promoting creativity when composing. The influence of TBLT to empower creative writing has not been demonstrated yet, Khan (2012) considers that "creativity could be demonstrated in music, fashion, science or problem solving, or in maintaining positive relationships. Others may be creative in the range and quality of ideas and words that they use in language." (p.57). In other words, all students are somewhat creative, that is why, this article is intended to analyze the advantages and disadvantages to implement TBLT as a method to promote creative writing in EFL undergraduate.

### ***Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)***

TBLT is a teaching and learning approach that has been long used in plenty of research studies which demonstrated the influent of this methodology to enhance EFL teaching and learning education. Cordoba (2018) states that TBLT is a real-life world method that offers the opportunity to learn the language by completing meaningful assignments. Tilfarlioglu y Basaran (2007) consider that TBLT has a positive effect upon writing skill. It offers emphasis on enhancing intensive target language use by creating productive results. In this sense, Tilfarlioglu y Basaran (2007) indicate that:

*Task-based writing activities may prove to be a good means of integrating the four skills and foster effective language learning because such activities are done to*

*produce something, reaching a conclusion and/or creating a whole picture of something within a pre-set frame. Although such activities are done to improve the learners writing skill, they are expected to help improve the other skills, as well (p.135).*

Those tasks are integrated to the students' context, background, and English level and are intended to expand the learners' competences in any of the four language skills: Reading, writing, speaking or listening. In this current research study, TBLT is seemed as a series of tasks, techniques and activities that may create the classroom scenario which may encourage the undergraduates to develop creative writing skill among the participants. Based on Kafipour, Mahmoudi y Khojasteh (2018), "TBLT shifted from a traditional approach of teaching writing to a more student-centered methodology. TBLT presents learners with a topic and asks them various questions to motivate them to discuss it" (p.1). In this view, TBLT is a communication-oriented method that encourage students to use their knowledge to make real tasks that help them become independent language users. In this sense, Ellis (as cited in Kafipour,2018) "the main objective of TBLT is to engage language learners in authentic language use through carrying out a series of tasks while interacting with other learners. It also assists students to learn new linguistic knowledge and organize their existing knowledge" (p.2). In this article, TBLT is seemed as a way to enhance decision making, the production of creative writing, perform real-world assignments that match students' interests and create motivating, stimulating and challenging activities that foster learners' knowledge.

TBLT has been the focus of many researchers (Ellis, 2006; Nunan, 1989; Kumara-vadivelu,1993; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Willis,1996; Seyedi and Farahani, 2014), they all agree that this methodology creates daily-life EFL practice that offers different alternative to acquire the language from a long-life learning process. However, in the last ten years, a new trend within TBLT has come out, which suggests that Task-based writing instruction within the framework of this approach makes learners involved in active mutual work on tasks that are reasonable for them and related to their real-life experience (Kawachi, 2003). In this position, Task-based writing (TBW) is analyzed as a branch of TBLT that emphasizes on promoting writing skill. To this respect, Rozati (2014) considers that TBW refers to the development of writing activities that try to empower writing profi-



ciency. Promoting writing skill through communicative competence that adjust students' knowledge.

Furthermore, TBW provides practice through the development of different exercises that allow students to plan, design, do and revise the target tasks. TBW helps learn all aspects of writing, on the part of learners and the impact of this strategy on the teaching of writing skills. In this view, it might be said that TBW as a branch of TBLT offers teacher trainees self-expression, writing exploration, originality and creativity in writing skill. In this respect, Marashi and Dadari (2012) point out that "learners benefited significantly from task-based writing in terms of both their writing and creativity" (p.1). Task-based writing instruction encourages learners to be involved in active mutual work on tasks that are reasonable and related to their real-life experience. In summary, TBW might be a useful way to promote creative writing due to several reasons. First, the students have chances to complete tasks, in which they choose what they want to write about. This increases the possibility to have learners working with interest, passion and engagement in the writing tasks. Secondly, the tasks are opportunities to explore writing, expressing ideas freely and cover daily life situation that match students' interests. Finally, TBW enhances creative writing, originality and innovation when the students write. The more they practice creative text, more possibilities they have to refine their skills in the writing ability.

### ***Implementing TBLT as a way to promote creative writing***

To implement TBLT as a pedagogical method to enhance creative writing, Arshavskaya, (2015) believes that this methodology could be implemented in EFL classrooms by creating exercises related to students' lives. In this reference, Dörnyei (2008) presents four stages that could follow to promote creative writing in EFL classrooms: creating the basic conditions, generating-maintaining writing desires, protecting-helping students; and encouraging positive self-evaluation. From this position, it is evident that promoting creative writing requires authentic situations that help students to write about their experiences. Similarly, it is necessary to encourage and create creative writing culture that fosters the interests of students to write. Lastly, protecting-helping and encouraging a positive attitude that makes students feel comfortable when they write.

In this sense, Barzegar and Sadr (2013) declared that in each of these four phases, creative writing plays a meaningful role. In the first phase (creating the basic motivational conditions) creative writing offers autonomy to select the topic of interest what allow learners feel comfortable with writing about what they like; in the second phase (generating motivation) creative writing includes creative activities such as brainstorming, memorizing and reciting poems, listening poetry, reading pictures, among others which generates motivation to write; the third phase (maintaining and protecting motivation) creative writing is a set of writings such as poems, poetry, stories and narrations which requires different purposes and styles. That diversity maintains the writer motivated to write, and the last phase (encouraging positive self-evaluation) creative writing makes learners critics their work.

Creative writing activities include discussions about social problems and analyzing readings focused on social problems where learners have to check the style, positions and authors' purposes to have an idea of how to lead their writings and motivate them to write about their positions Temizkan (2011). To this respect, Demir (as cited in Santos, 2017) declares that through critical thinking people acquire instruments which help them to know how to live in a social environment that presents problems. This is connected to the concept of meaningful learning advocated by Ausubel who suggests that meaningful learning occurs when new experiences are related to what a learner already knows Grabe and Grabe, (2000). In addition, Jonassen (2000) expresses that a learning is meaningful when it engages students in an active, constructive, intentional, authentic, and cooperative process. Hakkarainen (2011) is consistent with the precious account as among the 17 features he established that a process must develop to produce a meaningful learning he mentioned active, constructive, self-directed, individual, collaborative, co-operational, conversational, contextual, emotionally involving, goal-oriented, reflective, abstract, multiple perspectives-oriented, critical, experimental, multi-representational and creative. For that reason, creative writing has been conceived as a practice that involved the above features which aid a meaningful learning.

On the other hand, Ellis (2002) proposes three main phases to implement when the framework of TBLT is applied in a classroom. These phases reflect the chronology of a

task-based lesson. Thus, the first phase is 'pre-task' and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, such as whether students are given time to plan the performance of the task. The second phase, the 'during task' phase, centers around the task itself and affords various instructional options, including whether students are required to operate under time-pressure or not. The final phase is 'post-task' and involves procedures for following-up on the task performance. Though the history of teaching writing skills, there has been created some approaches: Genre approach, product, the process and the process genre approach.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To conduct this study, the author utilized a qualitative action research approach. Ferrance (2000) says that "action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement" (p.1). This research design is often used in the educational inquiry circle to empower students, reflect and act upon the weaknesses that learners may encounter in the classes. In this sense, Ferrance (2000) "action research allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make change" (p.1). This author proposes three cycles: posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action. In this present research, the authors decided to follow these phases, which are also shared by Hong and Lawrence (2011); Tripp (2005), and Young, Rapp and Murphy (2010). They all agree that action research focuses on overcoming the difficulties that the teachers find in the classes. This research methodology served to plan, design, implement and reflect upon the implementation of TBLT as a way to enhance creative writing among the participants.

### ***Context and participants***

The study was developed at a Colombian Public University located in the southern region of the nation. This university offers English as a foreign language as a professional program to train new teachers in this process the researchers met and decided to work

together to promote creative writing among twelve undergraduates (6 males and 7 females) that were in the fifth semester of the EFL program. They aged 18 to 22, had a language proficiency of B1 based on the Common European Framework of Reference (British Council, 2001). They agreed to participate in the study by giving consent to be observed, interviewed and to review-analyze their written production. Although, they were framed into B1 level, these learners showed serious difficulties to create simple writing production related to familiar topics. Similarly, they failed to write about their experiences, interest and socio-cultural contexts. In sum, their writings were unclear, without simple writing structures and full of mistakes. Those difficulties were linked to other such as: the learners wrote limited communicating content, disorganized, inaccurate word choice and little or no spelling strategies papers. Based on these difficulties, the teachers-researchers decided to plan. Design, implement and evaluate whether or not the implementation of ten classrooms creative written assignment that these students were asked to create would be a way to promote writing skills in these group of learners.

### ***Data collection instruments***

Data were collected using observation, interviews and written reports. The researcher firstly observed the students, after that they interview the participants and finally their written reports were analyzed following a rubric designed by the researchers. This was a dynamic process that help the teachers-researchers to gain necessary information to reach the project goals and objectives that were oriented to better understand the phenomenon under studied.

### ***Observations***

According to Driscoll (2011) in the educational research observation has been long used to have a general view of the teaching and learning process. He suggests that there are two main observations: participant observation and unobtrusive observation. "Participant observations allow the researcher to interact with participants and become part of their community. Conversely, in unobtrusive observation, you do not interact with participants but rather simply record their behavior" (p.160). In this research, the teachers-researchers utilized both kind of observations to have a wide perception about the way the students reacted to the implementation of the tasks, their responses to each one

of the assignments they were asked to complete and their reactions, interactions with friends. In total, ten classroom observations were conducted. However, three of the ten observations were unobtrusive observations, which were used not to interfere the normal behavior of the students in the development of the classes and the remaining were participant-observations that helped the researchers to interact, work cooperatively, ask questions and verify the information that was kept in the previous observations, interviews and the analysis of the written reports. In total, ten classroom observations were conducted in which the twelve participants were observed. They were 45 minutes long, they were carried out in the students' classroom, and to guarantee that the whole data were saved the observations were video-taken to be shortly analyzed.

### ***Interviews***

Interviews were used to gain a wide insight about opinions, perceptions and thoughts of the students about the implementation of the tasks. They served to supplement and triangulate the information to expand the data- to validate the data kept during the observations, and the analysis of the reports. Driscoll (2011) says that interviews is a way researcher can gather information about people's beliefs or behaviors. He insists that this method an excellent way to gather data for your primary research project (p.161). The researchers piloted ten in-depth interviews, Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2001) point out that "in-depth interviews are most appropriate for situations in which the researcher want to ask open-ended questions that elicit depth of information from relatively few people" (p.1). Three of the ten interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study to deeply explore the general perspectives of the learners toward their over-all learning processes. After that, seven new interviews were piloted to verify, identify, and understand learners point of views about the implementation of the assignments. In general terms, the interviews were a good tool to triangulate the data obtained from the observations and written reports. All the interviews were 40 minutes long, audio-taped, planned and carried out in a quiet the office.

### ***Written reports.***

Written reports as a data collection technique helps the researchers to have a detail description of what the participants do during the implementation of the action plan. In this

respect, Patton (2003) considers that written reports and other documents or programs records, letters, personal diary and written responses are meaningful ways to collect data from fieldwork because they have a detailed description of what has been done. Based on this perspective, the teacher-researchers decided to use this instrument to capture and preserve meaningful information related to each task that was carried out in the application designed to enhance creative writing tasks. In this sense, the teacher-researchers collected ten written reports from each participant. These reports were collected once the students have completed the three phases proposed by Ellis (2002) and Willis (). They showed an account of the progress the students made during the implementation. In total, 102 written reports were analyzed following a rubric that was designed by the researchers. Before the students write the reports, they were given a rubric on how the final product of every week would be evaluated. The rubric took into account the title, content, development, organization, mechanic, scholarship and vocabulary. The written reports gave the researcher the possibility to deeply explore the progress or weaknesses, the students had during the application.

### ***Pedagogical implementation***

The pedagogical implementation was carried out following three main phases. The researchers firstly planned, designed and implemented ten tasks that were related to the students' lives. To plan the assignments, the researchers considered the learners' English level, their interests, the phases of each tasks and the requirements that each written report would demand. Other issues that were analyzed were: the development of the tasks, the types of writing for each one of the works and the length of time necessary for each. For the designing of the written productions (tasks), elements such as: how to cope with the demands of the participants, what to assess in students' written work, how to conserve the focus of the students on creative writing a part from just promoting writing skill itself, how to assess formatively and at the same time provide meaningful feedback so that students realized the most important was to foster creativity when they write. Once, those components were inserted to the plan, the implementation started. It included three stages pre-task, during task and post-task that will be explained in the development.

### ***Development***

To implement the action plan, a series of ten creative written work were done following the three phases aforementioned. The pre-task was carried out to guide the students about the necessary to develop the tasks with responsibility and the need to fulfill all the requirements. The participants were also informed that would cover their English competences, their likes-dislikes and the process to develop the written production. Additionally, the types of writing and the time allow for every activity, the feedback they would receive and all detailed information was provided previous to get into developing the implementation was given. Cordoba (2016) suggests that this phase is “to illustrate the students the chronogram-requirements of the task, show them the topics, set the goals and procedures of the task, and provided additional instructions to develop the activities” (p.19). He insists that discussing the outcomes and the what, how, when, and where learners will submit their product is also necessary. When the participants knew how the project would be conducted, the second stage started.

### ***During-task***

This phase was organized for the students to create their written assignments and submit them to the teachers-researchers. During this process, the participants showed the teachers their papers and they corrected, provided feedback and guided them to finally reach the goals of each task. To this respect, Cordoba and Rangel (2018) recommend that this segment of the tasks is to review their assignments, ask and answer questions and make changes if necessary, to present their production to the teachers. In this research study, this period was used to doing the same, however, taking in mind that the main goal was to foster creativity the type of recommendations from the researchers were flexible and oriented to promote a great environment for the students to exploit their creativity when they were writing the tasks. Although, the pupils knew in advance that their work would be evaluated taking into consideration a rubric (See appendix...) designed to verify how creative their production were, this stage let the pupils do their work freely, receive guidance from the teachers-researches, polish their papers, edit then to lastly present a final version to the researchers.

### ***Post-task***

Once the participants presented the final version of their written production, the tea-

chers-researchers reviewed all the papers and based on the rubric they provided students with recommendation on the formal way to write, how creative the written productions were, some particular details such as: structure of the papers, the title, organization, writing quality, style and level of content. At this point, the students were offered a time to talk about the limitation and how they overcame them throughout the process. At the end, the teacher redesigned two follow-up activities at the beginning of the study because there were a lot of structure of the papers, the title, organization, writing quality, style and level of content mistakes to be overcame. Nevertheless, these difficulties were overpowered tasks after tasks. To end, it was noticeable that the learners leant to integrate those elements properly.

### ***Data analysis procedure***

The data analysis procedure started by collecting the information. After the data gathered, the researchers transcribe-organized on Word documents to be shortly labeled with names, notes, dates and purpose. Afterwards, the information was segmented based on the identification of recurrent words, phrases and sentences. In this step, the researchers read and reread the repeating quotes, words, phrases and sentences to be reorganized into different sections on the documents. These documents were inserted commentaries, references and review to be reorganized. Next, the information from the observations, interviews and written reports was compared to be interpreted taking in mind the goals of the study. Once all the data were compared, examined and construed, the researchers reread individually, took notes and had a meeting to discussed about their insights and reached the findings and conclusion of the study. In this sense, the study used descriptive, in-vivo and pattern coding to ensure the validity and reliability of the study. Equally important, other verifying techniques were used in the study: member checking, triangulation into methods, time and participants.

## **FINDINGS**

This section states the findings and discussion of three main elements: first, creative writing in EFL education, Creative writing, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and



## Implementing TBLT as a way to promote creative writing

### *Creative Writing in EFL Education*

The data collected during the research process demonstrated that creative writing in EFL Education is a valuable practice that sometimes is let aside by teachers who consider that the only way of writing possible is the academic or technical writing such as poetry, essays, structure reports, research reports or any other formal papers that learners are asked to write in the academic-science field. In this respect, participant 12 stated that: “Academic-scientific papers do not allow the learners to write by using their imagination, emotions, thoughts and previous experiences. He was required to write structure written production that sometimes is not the reflection of what he wanted to express, but they need to satisfy the need of the academy community. In his viewpoint, it cut my desire to express what he had in his mind or what his imaginary thoughts are willing to express” (Interview 2, participant 1). By the same token, Participant 5 expresses that:

“his creativity was affected by the structure of writing. He thinks that covering all the requirements of academic paper is difficult, paying attention to the content, the punctuations, the grammar, the style and check if the paper will fit into the need of the readers is a risk that interferes significantly in the wishes the learners have to explore new ways of communication” (Interview 4, participant 5). In an observation talk, participant 8 says that “formal writing is a way to reduce the Intermediate English users’ initiative to communicate their thoughts, ideas and daily life situations or experiences into a paper” (Observation 5, participant 8). Likewise, Participant 10 points out that “he feels frustrated when he submits his papers and sees that it is full of corrections, suggestions, and things to be improved. He says that because he demonstrates in each paperwork that he refers to his life and all the experience that he has gained in life” (Interview 5, participant 10). Definitively, the participants’ highlight that academic writing differs from the creative writing in the sense that, creative writing is a more a general practice or activity that consists on making the writing process enjoyable, in which much more than following a format, the importance is to empower students’ creativity, imagination, innovation and activating different ways of interpreting all that the learners have lived in their daily-lives conditions.

Based on the excerpt from the participants, it could be said that promoting Creative Writing in EFL learners should firstly enhances general writing, so that the learners may have the possibility to write about whatever they want to write about. General writing enriches students' creativity, due to it is less elaborated writing, so the students can communicate easily. Secondly, promoting creative writing depends on the types of tasks, they must be oriented to EFL learners' interests, daily-lives, needs and engaging enough to let them explore their imagination, innovation, and creativity through writing. In addition, creative writing production needs to foster critical thinking, reflection, innovation, and originality when the students are in the process to write. As a consequence, EFL teachers should lessen the over-correction, instead of correcting every single word, they may focus on how to help students use their capabilities to generate original, interesting and meaningful papers that communicate what they actually want to express. Although fostering creative writing seems to be a less technical or academic-scientific process, if the EFL trainees are educated from the beginning on how to organize creative-critical, innovative and original written production, they are able to become creative writers in any kind of written production.

### ***Creative Writing***

The information gathered during the research study established that creative writing is an EFL education process that is not usually included in the English language teaching-learning. Most of the writing formation is oriented to promote the ability to write and how the papers students produce fit into the teachers' rubrics, writing systems or the requirements of each task. Things like: spelling, grammar, content, organization, punctuation and technical issues such as word choice, syntax, and other rules make students be afraid of writing in EFL training development. Regardless, the participant 12 expresses in a written report that "he felt frightened to write first because he was not accustomed to doing that and secondly, he did not know how to cope with all written rules" (Written report 2, participant 12). As can be seen, written rules can refrain students to write for different reasons. In this case, experience, technical or sophisticated rules that demand students to produce accurate papers. In order to lessen this, it is necessary to promote the writing culture among the participants, it is not important how they write or what they write about, the focus is to let them know that they are able to come out with a writing production that

could or not fulfill the technical production.

Once, they have written something that could be connected to them, their families or their interests, they would start learning how to integrate the rules, pace the papers, check their own mistakes, in terms of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, sentence structure, cohesion and others writing elements. Nevertheless, EFL educators should consider that when the students start writing, one of the most influential factors is to guide them properly. That is to say, fostering the interests, passion, and love to write about themselves or things they would be fascinated to talk about on their papers. In this sense, Creative Writing could be promoted by giving time to eliminates stress and anxiety, giving the opportunity to develop imagination, helping learners with creative strategies such as: asking questions, self-reviewing, team working, brain-storming and other that can lead the student to reflect upon their productions.

Based on the above, it seems that creative writing could be achieved throughout three main states: stimulating students to develop a creative writing culture, encouraging them to write creative, original and innovated papers that match their interest, experiences, and asking them to produce written productions as an entertainment way to confront their bad or express what they think or want in their lives. In summary, creative writing is taught and learned for several reasons and with different purposes such as grammar, vocabulary, cultural knowledge, or practicing writing skills and language comprehension. As a consequence, creative writing can be used to offer acting as to be part of the core curriculum of a school. the reaches of creative writing are wide, it depends on the students' and teachers' goal in the implementation of creative writing. It means that creative writing could be conceived as a method, strategy, technique or tool depends on the impact that teachers and learners want to achieve. creative writing as a valuable ingredient in English curriculum because it involves aspects of learners' cultural context

### ***Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)***

Based on the information collected during the study, the researchers praise the use of TBLT as one of the ways to develop creative writing skills among the students. This methodology allowed students to create diverse options to complete their tasks, they select

what they desired to write about, they made choice-decisions, transformed their thoughts, stimulated their creativity-critical thinking and consider alternatives to connect their ideas. Referring to this, three participants indicate that: Participant 8: “this way of developing the tasks was challenging. He made choices, what kind of information to collect, depict what he believes was the most important to add to the papers” (triangulation of data techniques, observations, interview, and written reports).

Participant 7: “TBLT persuaded her to reach each tasks’ goals, she was focused on completing the assignments by means of trying to demonstrate that she was creative, innovative and has an extraordinary imagination. That is why, her tasks’ results received her classmates and respect, admiration. She says it was because this method (TBLT) helps students to deeply express their ideas and thoughts creatively” (Interview 8, participant 8). Participant 6: “TBLT liberated him from his fear of making mistakes and perceived writing as a difficult area of language learning. He revealed one of the benefits of implementing creative writing in education for him is that creative writing assignments foster critical thinking, writing itself, open student’s view, imagination and the willingness to express their opinions in a written way.” (Written report 5, participant 6).

As it can seem from the quotes, creative writing is not only a means to help students unleash their creative side and feel more comfortable when writing in and about everyday life, but has also been proven to improve language learning. It implies to use verbal tense correctly to make the message clear to the audience and make the reader understand the changes of time and place in the story to feel familiar with them. Writers also must have and extend knowledge of adjectives and their correct use to describe people, places, and objects in a way that makes the reader feels what the author is narrating. Thus, the role of creativity in this kind of writing is to help the writers to find their own style, to mix the genres of preferences and play with the real objects, people and places to transform into something fantastic. Creative writing is perceived as a way to change the class dynamic and look for spaces in which the students and teacher could take advantage of the writing process to teach something new, express their feelings, ideas, and knowledge, make people reflect; and in terms of language, enriches the language practice, knowledge acquisition, and enjoyment.

On the other hand, the results from the data collection instruments revealed that implementing TBLT as a way to promote creative writing benefited the participants to foster their critical thinking. Promoting such skill helped the students to overcome their limitations to write and see their writing problems as an opportunity to learn how to write general papers properly. TBLT facilitated reflection, genuine possibility to master creative writing by means of conducting tasks that involved them in meaningful language learning.

In addition, TBLT encouraged learners to develop tasks that demanded them to make choice, evaluate their position, review their point of view, analyze, check and submit written production that was based on three phases, pre, while and post. Those stages were oriented to promote not only a better-writing process but also to enhance real-world writing assignments, in which the undergraduate students gained experience to write in different styles (persuasive, descriptive, explanatory, exploratory and personal) writings. In those papers, they were able to integrate different writing elements, such as good content, acceptable vocabulary usage, organized the paper appropriately and took into account the organization, the grammar, and mechanics necessary to pace a piece of writing.

Equally important, creative writing tasks augmented learners' active, constructive and intentional engagement in the writing classes. So that, the authenticity, autonomy and cooperative-team work increased. It was due to the fact that the implementation of TBLT developed self-criticism and self-evaluation which led them to appreciate their work, praise their talents and increased their self-esteem towards writing. In the beginning, they express that "writing was a very difficult competence to be acquired because they were not able to deal with all the writing components" (point of view shared by all the participants at the opening of the study). However, this idea was rapidly modified as they started developing their coursework.

In this order of ideas, it can be said that creative writing promotes meaningful learning. The students took part in constructive, intentional, genuine, and collaborative projects that matched their daily-lives, co-operational, conversational, contextual, emotionally

involving, goal-oriented, reflective, multiple perspectives-oriented, critical, experimental and multi-representational assignments.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the above mentioned, the researchers conclude that Task-Based Language Teaching was an effective way to promote creative writing in this group of EFL learners. This method helped the participants to overcome their limitations to write general papers, organize their papers, reflect upon what they wanted to express and to realize that writing demands them to pay attention to certain rules to finally write coherent and cohesive papers. This was achieved through the constant development of tasks that were designed taking into account the students' interests, daily-life situations, and the clear stages, in which they were able to discover their mistake to be shortly corrected. In this sense, it may be said that the implementation of creative writing tasks was crucial to 1) increase learners' time to organize their ideas on a paper, 2) foster FL learners' preferences and engagement in the writing process and 3) promote meaningful learning. Accordingly, the first major practical contribution in this respect was that the participants were realized that learning to write creatively demands time, practice, the development of clear purpose when producing texts. Regardless, the researchers determine that TBLT is an effective way to foster creative writing. However, the implementation of this methodology should consider carefully the learners' interests, their language levels, their daily-lives situations and plan the assignments well, so that overcorrecting should be limit to the less possible, otherwise, the leaners could find creative writing frustrating and difficult to reach. Another important point to consider during the implementation of creative writing is the fact that leaners were kind of afraid at the beginning because they were conscious that their writing level was limited to writing sentences, isolated words or short paragraphs. In this case, one recommendation is to start by motivating students, asking them to write simple papers or asking them to fallow writing prompts. After this time, it is necessary to provide them with valuable information that could help them overcome their mistakes, use their creativity and critical thinking to write.

Furthermore, the development of the study helped the researchers state that promoting Creative Writing in EFL learners through the implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching was a practice that stimulated the use of creativity, innovation, critical thinking and encouraged students to develop tasks, in which they performed spontaneous and original ways to write flexibly. This was fundamental in the process because it made the participants logical, unique, significant and pleasant text that represented their actual lives. In this respect, it may be pointed out that generating enjoyable learning environments, flexibility, personalizing and contextualizing writing promoted critical thinking, increased discussion, students' involvement and empowered students to show how creative they were. They became more active, participative and interactive by discussing, writing and justifying the reasons to write each piece of paper. Based on that, the researchers recommend teachers, school designers, and policymakers to develop writing plans that are appealing to student's daily-lives, interest and context. These proposals would benefit the teacher and students to make writing practice effective. Creative writing tasks should encourage learners to write, be flexible, have good relations with the learners, to be sensitive to what learners write and enlarge their creative skills. In doing so, teachers should recognize that all learners have something to say, it is not good to think that this practice will be useful only with learners that are successful writers because even learners who are not good in writing could offer something new and creative. Finally, though the current review was based on analyzing the role of creative writing to enhance creative EFL writing skill, the findings suggested the implementation of creative writing should be implemented not only in EFL writing courses and classrooms, but in teaching programs as a strategy of integration of culture and the language competences

## REFERENCES

- Akkaya, N. (2014). Elementary Teachers' Views on the Creative Writing Process: An Evaluation. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 14.
- Annamalai, N.; Kok Eng, T.; Abdullah, A. and Sivagurunathan, S. (2015). Exploring the Interactions on an Online Narrative Writing Platform. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, L2.
- Anae, N. (2014). Creative Writing as Freedom, Education as Exploration": creative writing as literary and visual arts pedagogy in the first-year teacher-education experience. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(8).
- Archibald, O. and Hall, M. (2008). Investigating Contemplative Practice in Creative Writing and Education Classes: A Play (of Practice and Theory) in Three Acts. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 2(1).
- Arshavskaya, E. (2015). Creative Writing Assignments in a Second Language Course: A Way to Engage Less Motivated Students. In *Sight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 10.
- Avila, H. (2015). Creativity in the English class: Activities to promote EFL learning. *HOW*, 22(2).
- Barzegar, R., and Sadr, S. A. (2013). The Effect of Emotional Intelligence Awareness-Raising Activities on L2 Motivation. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 3 (1), 67-86.
- Bayat, S. (2016). The effectiveness of the creative writing instruction program based on speaking activities (CWIPSA). *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 8(4), 617-628.
- Bishop, W. and Ostrom, H. (1994). *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Burns, A. and Richards, J. C. (2009). *The Cambridge Guide to Second Language Teacher Education*. Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press.
- Burkhart, C. (1975). Creative writing... a new curriculum. Annual Meeting of the Conference on English Education (13th, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Mar. 20-22).
- Córdoba, E. (2016). Implementing Task-Based Language Teaching to Integrate Language Skills in an EFL Program at a Colombian University. *Profile Issues in Teachers'*



- Professional Development, 18(2), 13-27.
- Dali, K; Lau, A., and Risk, K. (2015). Academically Informed Creative Writing in LIS Programs and the Freedom to be Creative. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 56 (4).
- Derakhshan, A. and Karimi, E. (2015). The Interference of First Language and Second Language Acquisition. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 5(10), 2112-2117.
- Dornyei, Z. (2008). Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(3), 273-284.
- Driscoll, D. L. ( 2011). Introduction to primary research: Observations, surveys, and interviews. *Writing spaces: Readings on writing*, 2, 153-174.
- Ellis, R. (2002). *The methodology of task-based teaching*.
- Ferrance, E. (2000). *Action research*. LAB, Northeast and Island Regional Education Laboratory at Brown University.
- Fleta, M. T. and Garcia, M. L. (2011). Creative Writing for Language, Content and Literacy Teaching. *International Education Studies*, 4(5).
- Floyd, R., Keith, T., Taub, G. and McGrew, K. (2007). Cattell–Horn–Carroll cognitive abilities and their effects on reading decoding skills: g has indirect effects; more specific abilities have direct effects. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 22(2), 200-233.
- Gonca, A. (2016). Do L2 writing courses affect the improvement of L1 writing skills via skills transfer from L2 to L1? *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11(10), 987-997.
- Grabe, M. and Grabe, C. (2000). *Integrating the Internet for Meaningful Learning*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Grossmann, D. (2009), *Process Approach to Writing*. Centre for English Language Studies
- Guion, L., Diehl, D. C., & McDonald, D. (2001). *Conducting an in-depth interview*. University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, EDIS.
- Haines, C. (2004). *Assessing students' written work: marking essays and reports*. Routledge.
- Hakkarainen, P. (2011). Promoting meaningful learning through video production-supported PBL. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-based Learning*.
- Hong, C., and Lawrence, S. (2011). *Action research in teacher education: Classroom*

- inquiry, reflection, and data-driven decision making. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 4(2), 1-17
- Jonassen, D. (2000). *El Diseño De Entornos Constructivistas De Aprendizaje*. Dirección de Investigaciones y Postgrados. Caracas.
- Kafipour, R, Mahmoudi, E; y Khojasteh, L. (2018). The effect of task-based language teaching on analytic writing in EFL classrooms. *Cogent Education*, 5,
- Karim, K. and Nassaji, H. (2013). First language transfers in second language writing: An examination of current research. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 1 (1).
- Kellogg, R. (2008). Training writing skills: A cognitive developmental perspective. *Journal of writing research*, 1(1), 1-26.
- Lamer, J. and Mergendoller, J. R., (2010). Meaningful Work. *Educational Leadership*, 68(1).
- Leal, P. (2015). Connecting reading and writing using children's literature in the university L2 classroom. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(2), 199–218.
- Libao, N., Sagun, B., Tamangan E., Pattalitan, A., Dupa, M. and Bautista, R. (2016). Science Learning Motivation as Correlate of Students' Academic Performance. *Journal of Technology and Science Education*, 6 (3).
- Lincoln, F. and Idris A. B. (2015). Teaching the Writing Process as A First and Second Language Revisited: Are They the Same. *Journal of International Education Research*, 11 (2).
- Lindqvist, G. (2003) 'Vygotsky's Theory of Creativity'. *Creativity Research Journal*, 51 (2), 245 — 251.
- Mageehon, A. (2011). Play as a Method of Engaging Students in Developmental Writing. *National Association for Developmental Education*, 5(3).
- Marashi, H., and Dadari, L. (2012). The Impact of Using Task-based Writing on EFL Learners' Writing Performance and Creativity. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 2(12).
- Mayer, P. (2009). Guidelines for writing a Review Article. Zurich-Basel Plant Science Center. Taken from [http://ueberfachliche-kompetenzen.ethz.ch/dopraedi/pdfs/Mayer/guidelines\\_review\\_article.pdf](http://ueberfachliche-kompetenzen.ethz.ch/dopraedi/pdfs/Mayer/guidelines_review_article.pdf)
- Mermelstein, A. D. (2015). Improving EFL learners' writing through enhanced extensive

- reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(2).
- Moberg, E. and Kobylarz, K. (2016). *Composition, Cognition, Creativity, and Community*. Young Rhetoricians Conference.
- Morgan, W. (2006). "Poetry makes nothing happen": Creative writing and the English classroom. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 5(2).
- Nasir, L; Naqvi, S. M., and Bhamani, S. (2013). *Enhancing Students' Creative Writing Skills: An Action Research Project*. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 6(2).
- Noguchi, J. (2006): The science review article – An opportune genre in the construction of science. *Linguistic Insights. Studies in Language and Communication*. Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 11(1).
- OECD. (2016), *Innovating Education and Educating for Innovation: The Power of Digital Technologies and Skills*. Paris. OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264265097-en>
- Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The qualitative report*, 13(4), 695-705.
- Palafits. (2012). *La Creatividad Según Vygotsky (1981) Consideraba que La Creatividad Existe Potencialmente en Todos Los Seres Humanos, y es Susceptible De Desarrollar, o Sea, Que No es Privativa De Los Genios, Sino Que Está Presente en Cualquier Ser Humano*. ClubEnsayos.com., Taken from <https://www.clubensayos.com/Temas-Variados/CREATIVIDAD-La-Creatividad-Según-Vigotsky-1981-Consideraba/411759.html>
- Patton, M. (2003). *Qualitative evaluation checklist*. *Evaluation Checklists Project*, 21.
- Piske, F. H. R., Stoltz, T., Guérios, E., de Camargo, D., Vestena, C. L. B., de Freitas, S. P., de Oliveira Machado Barby, A. A. and Santinello, J. (2017). The Importance of Teacher Training for Development of Gifted Students' Creativity: Contributions of Vygotsky. *Creative Education*, 8. 131-141.
- Reis, A. (2008). *Process Writing*. The University of Birmingham: Centre for English Language Studies.
- Ryan, M. (2014). Writers as performers: Developing reflexive and creative writing identities. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 13 (3).
- Rozati, S. M. (2014). Language teaching and task-based approach. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 4(6).

- Santos, L.F. (2017). The Role of Critical Thinking in Science Education. *Journal of Education and Practice*.
- Sharpe, M. E. (2004). Imagination and Creativity in Childhood. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*; 42(1).
- Seyabi, F., and Tuzlukova, V. (2014). Writing problems and strategies: An investigative study in the Omani school and university context. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 3(4), 37-48.
- Stillar, S. (2013). Raising Critical Consciousness Via Creative Writing in the EFL Classroom. *TESOL Journal*, 4(1), 164-174.
- Taylor, B. (1974). Toward a Theory of Language Acquisition. *Language Learning. A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, 24, 23-35.
- Tarnopolsky, O. (2005). Creative EFL Writing as a Means of Intensifying English Writing Skill Acquisition: A Ukrainian Experience. *TESL Canada Journal*, 23 (1).
- Temizkan, M. (2011). The Effect of Creative Writing Activities on the Story Writing Skill. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 11(1).
- Tilfarlioglu, F., y Basaran, S. (2007). Enhancing reading comprehension through task-based writing activities: An experimental study. *Reading*, 7(3).
- Tripp, D. (2005). Action research: A methodological introduction. *Educacao e pesquisa*, 31(3), 443-466.
- Yagcioglu, O. (2016). Increasing Creativity with the Self-studies in Basic English Classes. *European Journal English Language Teaching*, 1(2).
- Young, M; Rapp, E; and Murphy, J. (2010). Action Research: Enhancing Classroom Practice and Fulfilling Educational Responsibilities. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, 3.
- Werby, O. (2007). Characteristics of a Successful Online Learning Experience, A Case Study of Internet-Based, Adult, Cooperative, Creative Writing Project.
- Wooten, V. J. (1968). Primary Creative Writing. *Journal Cit-Texas Outlook*, 52 (4), 24-64.