WEWRITE!: A COMPLEMENTARY, ACCESS-SELF ONLINE MATERIAL FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EFL STUDENTS’ WRITING SKILLS AT THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES OF PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAIERIANA.

RESEARCH PROJECT

EDWARD RUIZ MARTINEZ
JULIANA CASTAÑEDA GONZÁLEZ

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAIERIANA
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE
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EDWARD RUIZ MARTINEZ
JULIANA CASTAÑEDA GONZÁLEZ

ADVISOR:
HAROLD CASTAÑEDA-PEÑA

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES
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ABSTRACT:

This research project aims to determine the role of an access-self online material based on a genre approach in the development of students’ academic writing skills within the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages. In order to achieve this objective, the project was structured in three phases: a phase of design, a phase of implementation and a phase of evaluation. Particularly, we took into account Jolly & Bolitho’s (1998) framework for materials development across the phases. First, according to the proposal of the mentioned authors, the design phase of the project included the identification and exploration of the needs, as well as the contextual and pedagogical realization of the access-self material. In this latter step, a genre-based approach was integrated (Hyland, 2004) as the base of the instructional design of the access-material and we adapted Harmer’s (2007) Boomerang model to create a sequence of tasks which promoted the discovery of the genres, its study and practice; a self/peer assessment of the users’ genre learning processes, and the sharing of their own written texts. Then, the implementation phase of the study combined the piloting of the access-self material and its partial implementation in a Low Advanced English course of the B.A program. Findings related to the evaluation phase suggest that the access-self online material provides learners with the opportunity of giving feedback and advice; accepting feedback, recognizing their own weaknesses and acknowledging both their reactions to the texts and the writers. In addition, users’ opinions regarding the access-self material recognize its usefulness in the writing process and its value for fostering collaboration and the improvement of writing.

KEY WORDS:

Academic writing, materials development, access-self materials, genre-based instruction, self-access learning
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INTRODUCTION

Writing in the university is one of students’ most pressing challenges when going through higher education (Castelló et al., 2012) and this might happen because writing within an academic context is not always seen as a process of discovery and study, collaborative practice and independent construction of texts. In addition, even though that writing requires students to be reflective on the way the academic community configures its own ways of structuring written academic texts and achieving their communicative purposes, classroom practices usually focus on it as means of evaluation (testing) of students’ skills (Richards & Renandya, 2002; Serrano, Duque & Madrid, 2012). Nevertheless, research on this matter (Chala & Chapetón, 2013; Devy-Satriani, 2012) also shows that by implementing a genre-based approach in writing instruction, students experience activities that can contribute meaningfully to the development of their skills.

Therefore, this research project aims to determine the role of a complementary online access-self material based on a genre approach in the development of students’ writing skills. In order to do this, the research was structured in three phases. First, there was a phase of design, in which the needs of B.A-in-the-Teaching-of-Modern-Languages students were identified, explored and addressed with the design of an access-self material based on a genre approach. Second, there was a phase of implementation, in which the designed material was used by a specific group of students of the undergraduate program. Third, there was a phase of evaluation, in which both the written productions of students and their opinions towards the material were collected to determine its role and assess it in terms of its content and form.

These phases were executed by following Jolly & Bolitho’s (1998) framework for materials development. This framework includes seven stages: 1) identification of a need, 2)
exploration of the need, 3) contextual realization of the material, 4) pedagogical realization of the material, 5) physical production of the material, 6) use of the material, and 7) evaluation of the material. Thus, due to the nature of this research, this document will be structured in chapters, taking into account as model the steps previously mentioned, and each one of them will be explained in the introduction of each chapter. However, since this document not only reports the process of design of a product, but also the process and results of a systematic research, each chapter will give an account in relation to both elements.

Hence, the first chapter, Identification of Needs, will present a statement of a problem which generates the need of developing an access-self material, and the reasons for doing so. Next, the second chapter, entitled “Exploration”, will give an account of the state of research in relation to academic writing and materials development, and how previous findings are relevant for this project.

Likewise, the third chapter, entitled “Contextual Realization”, will present a theoretical perspective to further understand the problem and the conceptual basis to address it. Then, the fourth chapter, entitled “Pedagogical Realization”, will explain both the methodological elements of the study, as a systematic research, and the principles for the instructional design of the access-self material, as a research for the development of a product. Next, the fifth chapter, entitled “Physical Production”, will detail the principles for the design of the access-self material and also will describe it. The sixth chapter, entitled “Use and Evaluation of the Material”, will discuss findings which resulted from the implementation of the access-self material in relation to its role and what students commented about it. Finally, the last chapter, entitled “Conclusions and Implications”, reflects on how the objectives of the research were achieved and the implications the study had and can have for the future use of the access-self material and further research.
1. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

According to Jolly & Bolitho (1998), the phase of Identification of Needs consists of identifying a problem or a need that calls for a solution that involves the creation of new material. In this chapter, we explore the reasons why writing does not come naturally, much less when it requires academic vocabulary, and we focus on the context of academic writing for the students of the BA in the Teaching of Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

English courses throughout the program have several writing objectives that students must meet and that are expected to be transferred into other areas aside from the language learning classroom. Although throughout these language courses students are taught how to write different types of texts, informal discussions with them seem to suggest that these written productions are mostly evaluated only in their final form and the writing process is not often closely guided.

The moment students enter university in Colombia, they are not well prepared to write academic texts but as future teachers, students at the B.A in the Teaching in Modern Languages should all feel very comfortable when writing. To do this, they should be familiarized with the standard structures of different kinds of academic texts and the vocabulary and language the community uses. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to find students who do not know where to begin and much less how to proceed when writing. Keeping in mind all of the above, and in order to help B.A. students meet their writing objectives, we chose to focus on the development of a complementary material that would help students reinforce both their identities as academic writers as well as writing skills.
1.1. Statement of the Problem

In Colombia, entering the higher education level is usually a difficult process for many students because as they become part of the new academic community, “[they] are confronted with new […] writing demands not necessarily transferable from the previous learning experiences” (Castelló et al., 2012, p.572). In consequence, students have a hard time coping with the challenges of the university’s writing tasks since they pose an issue to them: the new demands that academic contexts present cannot be fulfilled by students because they do not have the preparation to face such pressing matter (Castelló et al., 2012). In addition, this situation seems to be aggravated –in terms of becoming more difficult for students- when it is done within the learning process of a foreign language, since at the same time they are developing their writing skills in the mother tongue. Gutiérrez-Rodriguez & Flórez-Romero (2011) note that, in general, situations like this may be caused due to weak basis in the academic preparation of students prior to the university, and flaws in the teaching/learning processes of academic writing within the university context.

Also, it has been recognized that becoming part of the academic community of a university requires that students produce texts within the discursive conventions of that particular community (Gutiérrez-Rodriguez & Flórez-Romero, 2011). However, students who pass from school to this level of the education system usually have difficulties in integrating such conventions to their knowledge, even after they are part of a community for a long time.

In relation to this fact, we believe that through a writing development process, through which students are presented with models of the type of texts they are supposed to do, write drafts, improve their texts based on a teacher’s or peer’s feedback and hand in a final revised
version, there will higher chances for them to learn about what the discourse community requires.

Particularly, within the context of the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages\(^1\) (hereinafter the Major), we have had the opportunity to experience (as students) that the development of academic our writing skills has been highly marked by an inductive and intuitive process. Nevertheless, we have also identified by informally interacting with our classmates that although other courses have provided students with input to understand and know how to write specific texts in English, there is still a need for extra support in developing this skill.

Thus, we implemented a questionnaire (See Appendix A) in order to explore what students’ needs were. It was implemented among 22 students, between fourth and ninth semester, and they were addressed with questions about the academic writing practices they have had within the Major. The responses revealed that there are problems in terms of how academic writing is approached during students’ formative processes. Nevertheless, these answers were unwillingly conditioned by the options given in the questionnaire by the researchers. Therefore, they might not reflect the complete reality of what students experience in the Major.

On the one hand, 59% of respondents agreed on the issue that academic writing is a difficult exercise of their daily academic life. As for the reasons to this, 40% of the respondents stated that the difficulty is based on that there is no composition and rewriting

\(^1\) Free translation of the authors. The original title of the program is “Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas”.
process oriented in the classroom. Consequently, students have had to learn autonomously about the type of texts and their characteristics.

The questionnaire addressed the perspectives on real practices of academic writing in the Major. Respondents were asked what the purpose of academic writing exercises were, based on their experience in the Major and, according to the options given in the questionnaire, 68% of them believe that academic writing exercises solely aim at evaluating students’ skills in certain moments. This last element poses a great issue for them since it would correspond to an old paradigm of assessment in which there is an emphasis on the product, and evaluations (written texts) are only means of testing students (Richards & Renandya, 2002). In other words, academic writing exercises are used as evaluation methods within the classroom, and according to the students’ perspectives there is no process of learning strategies about how to write academically.

On the other hand, students were asked about what should be the purpose of academic writing should be exercises in the Major and 86% believe that it should orientate the academic writing practice as a process in which they can follow text-based structures but their skill would be improved due to a process of composition and rewriting. This means that students understand that the process of writing academically implies that they learn while doing it and getting feedback to improve.

Finally, in coherence with the information presented before, we believe that the issue of improving students’ academic writing skills can be addressed and supported by the development of a complementary online access-self material based on a genre approach. Research in regards to this latter concept (see chapter 2.1. Literature Review) has shown that learners develop more solid knowledge about the types of text they study and a further
development of their writing skills. For its part, the development of the material would also serve as a strategy to address students’ necessity of having a resource which they can use to reflect on their own academic writing practice and complement their learning process.

1.2. Research Question

What is the role of a complementary access-self material based on a genre-approach in the development of students’ academic writing skill within the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages?

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective

To design, implement and evaluate a complementary access-self material for the students of the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages that provides them with the opportunity of developing their writing skills.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

This research project covers two modalities of what a bachelor thesis is within the standards of the B.A. in the Teaching of Modern Languages. In consequence, the specific objectives are classified by phases; hence, they are presented in terms of both a product and a systematic research process. The first and the second phases are related to the modality of elaboration of a product. The third phase is mainly related to the consolidation of the research process.
Table 1:

*Phases and specific objectives of the research project*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Specific Objective</th>
<th>Product / Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Design Phase</strong></td>
<td>In order to achieve the specified objectives, we will follow Jolly &amp; Bolitho’s (1998) recommendations in terms of the identification and exploration of the need for the material, its contextual realization and its physical production. This latter phase will result in the complementary access-self online material itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.</td>
<td>To design an academic writing access-self online material for fostering students’ development of their academic writing skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1.</td>
<td>To explore the needs of students at the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages in regards to their preparation in academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2.</td>
<td>To establish both the pedagogical and design principles for the production of the access-self online material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3.</td>
<td>To propose a syllabus for the material based on a genre approach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4.</td>
<td>To create tasks for students to recognize, complement and self/peer-assess their knowledge of the argumentative genre.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Implementation Phase</strong></td>
<td>In this phase, the access-self material will be piloted and implemented to collect students’ written artifacts and their opinions about the material itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.</td>
<td>To carry out a pedagogical intervention by partially implementing the material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Evaluation Phase</strong></td>
<td>In this phase, students’ artifacts will be analyzed to determine the role of the material. Also, students’ opinions will be used to evaluate the material in relation to its contents and its design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.</td>
<td>To determine the role of the access-self material in the development of students’ academic writing skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.</td>
<td>To determine evaluative opinions of the users of the access-self material.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4. Justification

According to what has been presented as our research problem, we believe that this project is pertinent from three perspectives. One, from which we reflect upon our current role as students; another, in which we take into account our future role as teachers; and a final one, which allows us to place our research project within the limits of two institutional frames: the Languages Department research lines and the modalities of bachelor thesis from the curriculum of the B.A. in the Teaching of Modern Languages.

On the one hand, as students, we recognize the necessity and the value of having complementary resources through which we can reflect on our process as writers. We have dealt and currently deal with academic writing using English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of our daily academic life; however, we also admit our lack of technical knowledge—in terms of what has been previously addressed as discursive conventions—as well as that of our peers. Consequently, the development of the material will help us, and our peers, in the recognition, understanding and usage of specific academic texts knowledge to improve its users’ writing skills.

On the other hand, as future teachers we—as students of the Major—owe our future students a process-oriented teaching/learning dynamic in which, with our support, they can be critical about their own progress and how meaningful learning is achieved. In a meeting with the teachers of the Major and professor Charles Bazerman (3rd October, 2014), all the participants agreed on the fact that writing is a very important part of the Major because it works as an exercise to reflect upon our own learning and how theory can reflect on it. This way, through a process-oriented-and-genre-based guide towards academic writing we can promote a “learner-centered […] [approach that] encourages individuals to take more
responsibility for their own learning…” (Jordan, 1997, p.167); in other words, it is intended that students can address autonomously their own learning process, through a genre-based material focused on the development of their writing skills, specifically, for academic purposes.

In addition, we consider this research project both relevant and beneficial because, as it has been stated previously, the implications of learning to write academically, our experience as English students at the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages and the results from the implemented questionnaire (see Appendix A) seem to suggest that complementary support in the development of academic writing skills is needed in the program.

Consequently, the development of a complementary online access-self material which helps students improve their academic writing skills seems to be appropriate according to contextual needs. Having this in mind, such material will, first, help students gain confidence in their skills by “engaging them in tasks which are stimulating, which are problematic but which are achievable too [through a process-oriented perspective of what the tasks are]” (Tomlinson, 1998, p.9). Secondly, it will promote learning through novelty, variety, attractive presentation and appealing, in order to attract learners’ curiosity, interest and attention (Tomlinson, 1998, p.7). Likewise, the material will be practical and suitable for students of the Major that wish to have additional resources when having to write multiple texts. Moreover, the material will be accessible for students not to have a unique study source to consult for the characteristics and descriptions of the types of texts they must write.
Hence, the students may use the material to find information they may need to comply with the requirements of the undergraduate program in terms of writing proficiency of academic texts while also having the opportunity to interact with their peers.

Additionally, it is also necessary to indicate that our research project is inscribed under the modalities $c$ and $d$ of the bachelor thesis requirements of the B. A. in the Teaching of Modern Languages. On the one hand, modality $c$ encircles “a project that within the field of process planning and following its conditions, originates an action plan to be executed, which results from a diagnosis about a determined reality related to the discipline of the major”\(^2\). Then, regarding this, it is possible to say that our research project follows this methodological process as proposed by Jolly & Bolitho (1998), since we have determined a series of specific needs in the Major and we have a clear research and development process to follow. On the other hand, the project can be categorized in modality $d$, which refers to “a product elaborated with the established professional quality criteria (including a reflective, investigative, and planning process to support it.)”\(^3\). In this case, our project is pertinent since we aim at designing an access-self online material in order to ultimately determine its role in the development of EFL students’ writing skills.

As a final point, as researchers we have established that this research project is related to two of the research lines of the Languages Department at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana\(^4\). The first line of research, titled “Languages, Learnings and Teachings”, is concerned with the relationships between language, learning and teaching and takes into account materials development as an area to work on. Therefore, this bachelor thesis can be

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\(^2\) Taken and freely translated from Comité Asesor de Carrera (2004).

\(^3\) Taken and freely translated from Comité Asesor de Carrera (2004).

\(^4\) Taken and freely translated from Agray (2009).
inscribed in that research line since we intend to develop a complementary online access-self instructional material.

The second research line in which this project is inscribed is titled “Hyper-Mediations, New literacies and Web Social Processes” and is related to the study of the socially-web-situated reading and writing practices among cyber-societies. In consequence, our research project could fit within the limits of this research line since, as researchers, we seek to study the current writing practices of students and to provide them with opportunities to develop their skills as academic writers, through an online environment.
2. EXPLORATION

According to Jolly & Bolitho (1998), the Exploration phase consists of examining the area of need while determining related areas and the studies that can serve as reference for the writing of the materials.

Once we identified the needs that had to be improved, we proceeded to establish a connection between the problem and the existing research on the matter. As mentioned before (see chapter 1.1. Statement of the Problem), based on the options given by the researchers/material developers in the implemented questionnaires, these showed that many students think they need more guidance in their academic writing processes because they feel that the final product is only what matters.

Consequently, in this chapter we will explore the state of research in regards to the key concepts that encircle the theoretical basis of our study. For this, we chose to explore studies centered in academic writing and materials development.

2.1. Literature Review

The present Literature Review will show a brief, yet meaningful, compilation and integration of the National and International status of research in the areas of Academic Writing and Materials Development. These two key concepts constitute the core of our theoretical bases since our project addresses a proposal for the B.A. in the Teaching of Modern Languages, which can be placed in the intersection of both mentioned areas.

Particularly, for this Literature Review we consulted the institutional online repository of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana and the following five databases: EBSCO, JSTOR, Science Direct, Dialnet and Redalyc. The combination of descriptors used in the
latter for the initial compilation of studies were “Genre-based Approach”, “Teaching”, “Writing”, “Materials” and “Self-Access”. As a result, we obtained more than 30 research products such as scientific articles, undergraduate and master’s dissertations as well as doctoral thesis. Nevertheless, the reader will only find an integration of 8 of the most relevant studies for both Academic Writing and Materials Development, which constitute the general bases of this project’s theoretical and methodological construction.

Initially, in the area of Academic Writing there are a series of studies which provide this research with the general overview of what has been done on the matter, and with possibilities of its improvement of the context of study through the integration of more specific approaches such as Genre-based Writing. It is important to highlight that based on the databases consultation, as authors of this research, we have noticed that in Colombia most of the studies focus mainly on Academic Writing in the country’s L1 (Spanish). In contrast, research in L2 Writing in other parts of the World has been further developed and this is especially relevant to us since the current project addresses L2 learners. Nevertheless, both perspectives on Academic Writing are fundamental to understand students’ difficulties when writing in their L2, since they tend to transfer their knowledge and challenges from their L1 to their writing process in the L2 (Gómez, 2011).

Additionally, in the area of Materials Development for fostering Second Language Learning of writing we have found a relevant number of studies which will allow us to reflect on two elements: how that skill can be developed through instructional materials and how the research process itself may be integrated with the methodology of Materials Development. In the next sections the reader will find both local and foreign studies which help address the two elements previously stated.
2.1.1. Academic Writing

The first study consisted of an exploratory-descriptive investigation, carried out during the months of September-October of 2006 and April-May of 2007, by Martha Cecilia Andrade-Calderón (2009). The author studied and explained the writing behaviors of students from various majors in a Colombian university. For her research, 240 undergraduate students of the Universidad Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca were chosen randomly to take a test in two parts; the first consisted of a diagnostic questionnaire and the second was a programmatic evaluation test. For this latter, students answered simple questions of personal data, habits and attitudes and then they proceeded to answer three open questions that evaluated linguistic, communicative and pragmatic competences. From the results of this test, Andrade was able to build a writing profile for the university’s students that included: little interest in writing; writing only when needed or demanded rather than for personal interest; most writing happens in Spanish; the most common written work consists of essays, articles, research projects, summaries and reviews; the most common resource is the Internet; problems with grammar, structure and vocabulary are the most common; no writing because of lack of time or laziness; teachers do not tend to instruct on how to write and they evaluate only the product. (Andrade-Calderón, 2009, p. 333)

The author’s results are useful for our research because of two major contributions: the role of teachers and instruction in the development of students’ writing skills and the presentation of a writing profile of university students based on their academic writing practices. On the one hand, by recognizing the fundamental role of teachers in writing instruction we can explore how it is transformed when a genre-based approach is adopted in teaching. On the other hand, the fact that the author identified that students tend to do certain
types of written work in the university is very relevant for our study since it allows to focus our attention on genre in writing instruction.

Such element, as presented this second study by Kim (2007), has progressively moved to the center of the discussions on how to teach writing and its value has increased more and more in terms of its educational applications. In order to reach such conclusion, the author conducted a revision of literature regarding the concept of genre, its applications in teaching and how it can be contrasted to the process-based approach. For the first point, Kim (2007) took Swales as this author establishes that genre is: “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p.34). In particular, these communicative events refer to types of texts (oral or written) which have both structural patterns as well as communicative purposes (Swales as cited in Hyon, 1996). Therefore, genres reunite both a functional perspective and a structural one. This is a very relevant point for us as researchers/material developers since such understanding of literacies provides us with the theoretical basis to analyze writing learning processes as well as to propose the pedagogical route to frame the sequence of activities in our material.

In regards to the second point of Kim’s (2007) research, the author found that such approach has been traditionally used in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) education for helping learners better understand how certain types of texts are written for the discourse community they are in; for example, the university. Therefore, we could say this is very useful input for us because, as we have presented in our statement of the problem, when students enter the university they are given writing tasks which prove to be challenging for them due to the parameters and standards of the new discourse community. However, many studies, as those conducted by Tardy (2006), Yasuda (2011) and Chala & Chapetón (2013),
have demonstrated that using a genre-based approach in teaching is highly adequate and meaningful to foster students’ writing skills.

Regarding Tardy’s (2006) research, the author conducted a revision of literature in which he focused on the key findings of 60 studies that addressed the question of how writers learn genres. Particularly, the researcher identified two trends in genre writing development in both L1 and L2 contexts: classroom-based instruction or workplace-based practice. Tardy’s analysis of the studies showed that one important part of genre learning is modelling that occurs both when it is presented by a teacher or when it is drawn back from previous knowledge of other genres by the learners. In addition, the author found in the research on the matter that repeated practice of certain elements when writing specific types of texts improves the possibility of learning about the genre and write texts within its limits. Therefore, we could say that the controlled guidance in terms of what the learner should do when writing is essential since it is the opportunity for receiving feedback and trying again the exercise of writing a specific text.

At this point we can establish that, based on Tardy’s analysis, the role of feedback is essential in genre-based instruction since it characterizes writing as a process of construction of genre knowledge (both the communicative functions and structures) and the specific types of texts themselves. In consequence, these elements are especially relevant for our research since they give us an insight of what are the pedagogical actions that define genre-based teaching and its implicit perspective on language learning. Moreover, the study is important because it offers us a state of the art around the concept of genre, genre instruction and the most influential scholars who have researched on the matter. Particularly, Ken Hyland stands out in Tardy’s revision and he will play a central role in our theoretical framework (see
chapter of Contextual Realization, sub-section 3.2.1) because of his detailed work on the concept of genre and its implications in the teaching/development of writing.

The latter reflections can be connected to Yasuda’s (2011) study of how novice foreign language writers develop genre awareness, linguistic knowledge and ultimately their writing skills through genre-based tasks. The study had the participation of a population of 70 Japanese sophomore students at a university in Japan, whose English levels corresponded to a score between 52-61 of the TOEFL iBT Test (B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The students were enrolled in a two-semester writing course that aimed to promote the learning of both academic and non-academic genres. Based on this, the researcher used three types of data collection instruments: the survey, the interview and tests to assess students’ knowledge about writing emails before and after the implementation of the genre-based tasks.

This methodological design is helpful for us as researchers/materials developers since it shows how a proposal of pedagogical intervention can be integrated in a research process. Also, the study is relevant for our research project since it provides us with a reflection of how difficult it is for students to establish a connection between the idea of what a certain text is, its communicative goal (social situated purpose) and the language forms that are required to produce it according to the standards of the context. Therefore, our proposal of development of an access-self material based on a Genre Approach for the development of writing could benefit students who use it in their process of establishing such connection and, consequently, improving their academic writing skills.

As for Chala & Chapetón’s (2013) work, the authors carried out a qualitative action research study at the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages (the same
context of our research) at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá. The study aimed to explore and describe the role of genre-based activities in the creation of argumentative essays. It involved the participation of 15 students (2 male and 13 females) who were enrolled in a high intermediate level English course and it consisted of four stages: first, the revision and profile of what has been done in the field and how writing instruction is usually addressed in language classrooms; second, the articulation of the theoretical background on the matter; third, the implementation of a pedagogical sequence and the collection of data; fourth, the analysis of the collected data based on the theoretical reference of the study.

In their paper, the authors clarified that the implementation stage followed a specific pedagogical sequence of six steps: the exploration of the genre; the process building knowledge about the field to address; the construction of the first draft; the (self/peer) revision of the draft and its submission; the assessment and evaluation of the submitted text by the teacher; and finally the edition and publication of the text. As for the data collection instruments, the authors retrieved information through the recording of the classes, the application of questionnaires and interviews to the participants, and the evaluation of their essays. The study then showed that genre-based activities have both supportive and encouraging roles in the creation of argumentative essays. Students acknowledged the importance of interaction in their writing process, as well as knowledge about the specific text they had created. Consequently, the researchers could relate their findings to Ken Hyland’s theoretical input on how genre-based teaching should promote supportive learning and explicit teaching of a genre.

This last study is highly relevant for our research for multiple reasons. First, in contrast to Yasuda’s (2011) study which aimed to determine how writers can gain awareness of how to write a non-academic genre, this study allowed us to understand how genre-based
instruction can be applied in English for Academic Purposes and, specifically, for the learning and creation of an academic genre as it is the argumentative essay. Also, this study showed a recurrence in terms of the theoretical background which serves as a basis of their research. The latter can be evidenced in how this study, and several of the previous ones, have retrieved Ken Hyland’s (2004) notes on genre and genre-based instruction. Moreover, the implemented pedagogical sequence was very enlightening for us as researchers/material developers since it is a clear example of how a genre-based approach can be integrated to classroom teaching practices and, in our case, as the base of the instructional design in a complementary access-self material for the development of writing. Regarding this point, we want to highlight the major influence of this study in the construction of our research question since it made us ask ourselves what would be the role of a complementary access-self material in the development of students’ writing skills.

Therefore, taking into account the previous studies and highlighting the special influence which the latter one had for us, we wanted to explore what has been done in relation to materials development in genre-based instruction. This will be addressed in the following subsection.

2.1.2. Materials Development

The first study in the area of Materials Development related to a genre-based development of writing is the one that was conducted by Devy-Satriani (2012). As declared by the author, this project was both a Research and a Development study which had two specific objectives: to identify the needs of English writing materials and to design appropriate English writing materials for eighth grade students of an Indonesian school. To accomplish this, the author followed seven steps: a needs analysis, the construction of a
course grid (syllabus), the design of the material, its validation by an expert, its revision by the author, its try-out, and the writing of its final draft.

In order to address the first objective and the first step of the study, the author implemented a questionnaire that aimed to explore students’ needs regarding the writing tasks and its contents. In relation to the second objective, the researcher created a three-unit syllabus and proposed nine tasks per unit. These were subsequently adapted to follow a genre-based instructional methodology and organized in the physical production of the material. Then, an expert was asked to evaluate the material based on a grid created by the researcher and this information was ultimately used to improve the material (in terms of how it could best accomplish the purposes it was being designed for). Finally, the material was piloted and once again revised to ensure its design was complete.

This study is particularly enlightening for our research since it guides us in terms of the type of study our research can be categorized into. As Devy-Satriani (2012) mentioned, her project could be classified as both a research and development study. This latter could also be referred as a “Design and Development Research”, which ultimately refers to research projects that “draw on existing theory and evidence to design and iteratively develop interventions or strategies, including testing individual components to provide feedback in the development process” (Institute of Educational Sciences & National Science Foundation, 2013, p.9). Consequently, Devy-Satriani’s (2012) study is relevant for our research since it led us to solve a question that as researchers/material developers we have been asking ourselves: which type of study does our project falls into? Now, it is evident that our study can be placed within the limits of a “Design and Development Research” since it seeks to play a potential beneficial roles in students’ development of their writing skills.
Moreover, Devy-Satriani’s (2012) study is important for our research since it provides us with a successful integration of the theoretical principles of genre-based instruction and the physical production of an instructional material. Although our proposal seeks not only to design the material but also to implement it and evaluate its potential roles, the mentioned study allows us to reflect on the importance of having a both an evaluation and a piloting process of any material in order to ensure its appropriateness for the context to which it is proposed. In consequence, the implementation of the material would be more beneficial for students who use it since its learning goals could be better achieved.

Additionally, the previous research also contributes to ours in terms of the type of activities to be found in a genre-based instructional material for the development of writing. It was clear that Devy-Satriani’s (2012) proposal integrated a communicative perspective of language learning because its activities aimed to get students to reflect on the functional purposes of descriptive and narrative texts as well as on the language structures needed to fulfill them. Nevertheless, our access-self online material aims to be complementary in terms of the knowledge students can gain and the skills they can develop regarding the genres (texts) they need to use within the academic community they are part of. Therefore, our syllabus (see chapter 4.2.1. The syllabus) will not explicitly address language use contents, but as researchers/material developers we do not exclude the possibility that such type of reflections arise when students use the material and interact through it.

A second study in the field of Materials Development is the one presented by Lassiter (2014). In her paper, the author explores the current state of L2 writing instruction and reflects on how many teachers across the United States implement process-based pedagogies as a way to teach learners the way writing occurs and also be able to assess their progress.
However, Lassiter (2014) explains that by doing this, teachers tend more to have students learn standardized patterns of writing and less to have them develop their own voices as writers. In order to address the previous situation, the author created a four-unit teacher’s guide for writing instruction, which contained activities that teachers could implement in the classroom. Such material was mainly based on Ken Hyland’s (2004) input regarding what genre and genre-based pedagogies are, their influence on having students develop their identities as writers, and the way a genre-based instruction leads students to a better understanding of the discourse community they are part of. Therefore, the activities proposed in the material ultimately aim at having learners discover their personal voices in writing, explore and learn about different genres, and work collaboratively to negotiate meanings.

Particularly, all four units of the resource guide contain lesson plans for teachers to consider. Each one of the units reflects on a particular topic related to the act of writing as a process of discovery of genres and collaboration among learners. The first unit addresses students’ experiences with writing and implicitly leads students to learn about the narrative genre. The second unit explores the differences between genres; then, the activities in the lesson plans are oriented to have students recognize the way information is presented in oral texts, and how that same information can be transmitted through written texts. The third unit offers teachers activities related to students’ development of argumentative skills and the fourth unit seeks to present teachers with activities for students to reflect on the characteristics of the studied genres and collaboratively give an account of that.

This latter study is highly relevant for ours since it shows how important it is to continue moving from writing instruction focused on form to one which balances how texts are structured, their communicative purpose and how students can develop their own identities as writers within the discourse communities they are part of.
Therefore, it would be possible to say that this research complements Devy-Satriani’s (2012), and subsequently, our understanding on how to incorporate genre-based activities to materials and writing instruction since Lassiter (2014) reflects on how to make collaborative work essential in learning how to write.

In addition, Lassiter’s (2014) research also complements our findings in regards to the theoretical principles of genre pedagogy (see chapter 2.1.1. Academic Writing). Therefore, we can confirm that Hyland’s (2004) work will be highly relevant for our research in terms of his theoretical development of the concept of genre and its integration in the teaching of L2 writing.

Also, as researchers we recognize that even though the material proposed by Lassiter (2014) has an immediate goal very different from the one our access-self material will, it led us to think on how a teacher will be involved in the usage of the latter. Therefore, we recognize that since our access-self material will be complementary in relation to the fundamental instruction students receive in the courses of the Major, then it should allow the participation of both students and teachers. However, the access-self material will be centered on students and its role in their development of writing.

A third study that we could include in the area of Materials Development research is the one conducted by Ochoa & Medina (2014). In their paper, the authors ask themselves to what extent the use of a virtual room can shape EFL students’ writing. In order to answer this question, they created a series of workshops focused on writing development, which integrated the use of a virtual room and its resources to have students learn how to accomplish multiple communicative purposes through writing specific types of texts. Although it is not clear if the authors designed or adapted the material (virtual room), their study is important
for our research since it provides us with evidences that by using virtual environments, it is possible to promote that students learn how to write.

Also, even though it is not addressed by the author as such, the organization of the workshops and the type of texts students had to write allow us to find glimpses of genre instruction (as understood in the mentioned previous studies) in the way tasks are proposed and in students’ artifacts. For example, the analysis of the latter conducted by the researchers showed that students recognized specific communicative purposes of the tasks and they could only complete them by using of certain types of structures and vocabulary. Moreover, the joint construction of an understanding of what the different types of texts mean integrates two important characteristics of what the previous studies have shown regarding genre instruction: reflection about a genre and collaborative work.

All in all, the present literature review has shown many studies in the area of academic writing and materials development which not only offers this research theoretical backgrounds for understanding what genre-based instruction is, but also concrete research experience which reveal the methodological steps that should be taken into account for the instructional design of our online access-self materials.

Specifically, the mentioned studies and the revision of literature in general has allowed us to focalize the theoretical framework of this project in three fundamental topics: L2 learning of writing, genre-based instruction and materials development. Even though it was not possible to find concrete past studies related to access-self materials or self-access learning of writing, these concepts will be addressed, along with the aforementioned, in the following chapter of Contextual Realization.
3. CONTEXTUAL REALIZATION

Following the scheme that was presented in the introduction, it is now time to briefly introduce the Contextual Realization phase. Jolly & Bolitho (1998) consider that throughout this phase general categories and suitable ideas, contexts and texts for the proposed material are found. Therefore, this chapter will address the theoretical bases that we need for our research project. Particularly, we have decided to frame our study within Applied Linguistics and its development in terms of writing instruction. Then, we will connect the progress in the mentioned discipline to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and how it is related to genre-based instruction. Finally, we will reflect on the relations between the latter element and the process of materials development and access-self materials. These three areas of analysis will also provide this research with the background to interpret the results of the implementation of the access-self material, in the evaluation phase (see chapter 6. Use and Evaluation of the Material).

3.1. Applied Linguistics

As Davies (2007) remarks, Applied Linguistics (AL) is not an easy concept to define because many authors have different ideas of what it is. However, we agree with Schmitt (2002) as he points that AL uses what is known about language, what is known about how it is learned and what is known about how to use that knowledge and applies it to solve real-world language issues.

In addition, Cook (2003) describes AL as “the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world.” (p.5). The author explains that since language is at the core of human life, many everyday activities might not exist without language. In consequence, Applied Linguistics intends to “investigate
and understand all the facts of language use...” (p.5). Ultimately, such facts have been the core of AL as they have broadened the spectrum of its studies: not only are they aimed to understand languages as solely structural linguistic systems but also, according to Wilkins (seen in Schmitt, 2002), as manifestations of language in the center of human affairs. Definitely, those purposes have led Applied Linguistics through different paths; for example, bridging language studies with education.

Furthermore, Schmitt (2002) indicates that such connection was done by means of reflecting on how to teach second languages. Initial attempts to bring together both language studies and education over one vigilant discipline were done during the early twentieth century. The “grammar-translation method” was used in the teaching of second languages with a special focus on having students learn the target language grammar by means of direct translation from the L2 to the L1 (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). According to Schmitt (2002), “the method grew into a very controlled system, with a heavy emphasis on accuracy [mainly about the reading and writing skills]...” (p.4). Therefore, we could say that this perspective promoted the use and development of writing solely as a means to practice the correct use of grammar rules and no attention was put to strategies, functions or other elements that nowadays are crucial for the development of such skill.

However, as Schmitt (2002) states, the tide turned as a new method emerged to make emphasis on the oral language and promote direct exposure to the target language; such method was called the” Direct Method”. As Cook (2003) affirms, one of the reasons why the translation aspect was “removed from the equation” had close relation to the numerous arrival of immigrants to The United States of America, which shared no common first language, but needed to learn to communicate. Evidently, this resulted in a strong setback for the development of the teaching and learning of the writing skill because the beliefs behind
language instruction were focused on oral production through natural interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Additionally, Cook (2003) also points out that the “Direct Method” was soon surpassed by the “Natural Approach” which was based in psychological ideas of providing students with meaningful input in the second language, similarly to the process children “naturally” follow when learning their first language. Nevertheless, this method was also mainly focused on oral comprehension and production and, as it happened with its predecessors, it was undermined by a new whole movement within language learning/teaching in AL: the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

This movement was primarily based on the idea that since communication is a social phenomenon the goal of teaching languages is to have students achieve successful communication. Nevertheless, this notion surpasses previous beliefs about language teaching and learning in which emphasis was made in one or others skills and moves to a perspective in which all of them (listening, speaking, reading and writing) should be addressed in a balanced way in the language classroom. This new approach to language learning made also possible to think differently of the language teaching-learning practices, where the teacher is the facilitator of learning experiences and tasks are highly oriented towards a stronger emphasis on students’ motivation and their participation as communicators (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

This latter approach established a point of no return for language teaching-learning practices since not only did practices start to focus more and more on learners but also the beliefs about learning also changed to be more centered on the learner. Initially, as AL began to develop, language teaching/learning practices were marked by practices in which the
learner was seen as a “empty box” to be filled with knowledge. This latter was provided by the teacher and learning was highly influenced not by the way students best learned but by the way teachers’ teaching styles. Nevertheless, since both teaching and learning practices started to be adapted to the individual characteristics of learners and their learning styles, multiple approaches and reflections about language learning arose.

For example, nowadays, scholars and teachers around the world promote that language teaching/learning practices lead learners, on the one hand, to increase the level of interaction in language learning situations; and, on the other hand, to take more control of their own processes (Gass & Mackey, 2012; Davies & Elder, 2005; Richards & Renandya, 2002; Gardner & Miller, 1999). As a result, a new approach to language learning which integrates both of the previously mentioned elements is genre-based instruction. This latter can be applied in many ways and forms to the learning process of students. However, this concept, and its relation to collaborative learning, will be further discussed in the following subsection.

3.2. English for Academic Purposes

English has gained strength over the last century by expanding along with global markets; for that reason different theories and practices concerning the teaching and learning of the language have emerged. Nowadays, people all over the world learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and this fact has led to the belief that it is the dominant language in both higher education and research all over the world (Hyland, 2006). It is because of this that English for Academic Purposes (EAP) emerged as a branch of English for Specific Purposes.
The aforementioned author wrote that EAP is “usually defined as teaching English with the aim of assisting learners’ study or research in that language” (p.1). According to ETIC (seen in Jordan, 1997), EAP “is concerned with those communication skills in English which are required for study purposes in formal education systems” (p.1).

Every academic community has its own scholarly discourse, its own way of communicating, one that varies not only in topics and vocabulary but also in the practices and strategies used to address a particular audience. It is through these discourses that communities build knowledge and engage in teaching and learning. For that reason, once students enter higher education they are compelled to change the way they engage with their academic communities. Additionally, writing is considered the means through which students and academics get to share their experiences and interact with each other and whilst doing this, they slowly build the conventions of their community (Hyland, 2000; 2004; 2006).

EAP is concerned with a very large portion of academic discourse. However, having in mind that writing is highly recognized in academic life because it is 1) a rich source of information about social practices of academics and 2) what academic do the most (Hyland, 2000), the following subsection will focus on academic writing and its relation to social interactions from a genre-based approach.

3.2.1. Genre-Based Approach to Teaching Writing

Nowadays, it appears that most university courses and other professional programs emphasize on writing. Academic writing was thought of as transferable, decontextualized skills across all areas and disciplines; now, it is necessary to understand academic discourses because of their diversity and implications for writers (Hyland, 2000). Writing is a means of interaction for students with teachers and peers and it has become “essential as a means of
gaining access to the knowledge of our disciplines and navigating our careers.” (Hyland, 2000, p.ix). That is to say that writing is embedded within a particular social context in which meanings are constructed collectively.

According to Ramirez (2007), all writing takes place within social spheres and as human beings it is our nature to use interaction as a means of communication, learning and transforming. Moreover, “as writers start jotting down their thoughts, they engage in dialogic communication with the world and with the powers that compel them to write” (Chala & Chapetón, 2013, p.27). Therefore, writing does not occur outside a context; academic writing, particularly, happens within a shared disciplinary context and it is always aimed at an audience that shares interests. We write for a reader and we write to communicate with others who understand our context and share our discourse; and through these written interactions, the field is enriched.

Additionally, since we seek to give students the opportunity of developing their academic writing skills within the community, it is necessary that we consider academic writing as a collective social practice. By doing so, we regard every writer as someone with a particular discourse shaped by three factors: their background knowledge, with whom they interact and the way they share the knowledge they construct.

The genre-based approach “sees communicative competence as involving the mastery of different types of texts” (Richards, 2006, p.36). Here, we understand that “text” is a written production. In addition, Richards & Schmidt (2010) affirm that the genre-based approach is intended for the teaching of writing. However, this approach is usually applied under the schematics of a genre-based writing curriculum.
Particularly, Hyland (2004) argues that genre-based writing teaching is very useful because “it pulls together language, content, and contexts, offering teachers a means of presenting students with explicit and systematic explanations of the ways writing works to communicate” (p.6). In other words, a genre-based approach in the teaching of writing not only integrates linguistic aspects of writing such as grammar and vocabulary, but also addresses how to produce specific types of messages, in relation to the purposes they are aimed to achieve within a specific discourse community. This allows the tailoring of the material according to the students’ needs while also finding the text’s purpose within the community.

Moreover, Hyland (2004, p.21-22) lists 7 reasons why genre-based writing teaching should be implemented:

1. Allows teachers to identify the kinds of texts students will have to write in their target academic or occupational contexts and to organize their courses around their needs.
2. Enables teachers and learners to see how texts are related to particular contexts.
3. Helps teachers and students to see that texts are purposeful and patterned to serve writer and community purposes.
4. Provides teachers with principled means of supporting the development of student writing.
5. Shows how some texts are valued more than others within a community.
6. Provides students with a means of understanding, using and critiquing these texts.
7. Encourages teachers to integrate grammar, process, content and function.
As the author proposes, this reasons support why writing instruction should be promoted through a genre-based approach. One way to apply this is by developing instructional materials because, as Richards & Renandya (2002) argue, they serve as a basis of a high amount of language input (and practice) for learners.

In the following section, we will explore what materials are, how they are developed and the elements that should be taken into account for doing so.

3.3. Materials Development

According to Tomlinson (1998), materials development is anything that writers, teachers and even students do in order to provide and exploit different sources of language input, whether it is information and/or experience, so that the language learning is promoted.

Anything that can help the students to learn the language more effectively can be considered a material. However, there are many elements which material writers should consider when developing and/or designing materials. Materials should take into account not only students’ needs, as most would think, but also those of the teachers; they should cater for all varieties of wants and needs, and they should be flexible in the different choices they give whilst having the potential of engaging learners both cognitively and affectively.

The previous elements, and many more, can be addressed by following conscious and rigorous sequences for the development of materials. For example, Jolly & Bolitho’s (1998) framework for materials development offers the possibility to follow a series of steps to design, implement and evaluate language learning materials. As it has been presented before, this framework consists of multiple steps: first, materials developers ought to identify and explore students’ needs; then, they have to determine both the theoretical and pedagogical principles and procedures which will be needed for the physical production of
the material. Once this is achieved, students are to use the material and this implementation will eventually lead the material developer to evaluate it, according to its objectives and its theoretical and pedagogical bases.

Particularly, regarding the required theoretical bases, Jolly & Bolitho (1998) state that materials developers (or material writers, as the authors called them) should reflect on the notions of language and language learning before producing the physical materials. Thus, the way Applied Linguistics has progressively addressed the issue of language teaching and learning has been carefully considered in order to develop a complementary access-self material (see section 3.1. Applied Linguistics). Specifically, in relation to writing instruction, we detected that teaching-learning practices have been mainly focused on content and on processes.

On the one hand, Dubin & Olshtain (1986) state that focus on content is related to the emphasis that materials, syllabi and/or courses make in linguistic contents (such as grammar or vocabulary). For example, as presented by Larsen-Freeman (2000) (see section 3.1. Applied Linguistics), it could be said that the Grammar-Translation Method is characterized by a traditional perspective of focus on content. Nevertheless, Dubin & Olshtain (1986) say that when situational elements of language use are taken into account in its learning, content focus moves closer to a communicative perspective of language teaching and learning.

On the other hand, the authors previously mentioned refer to focus on process as the emphasis made by materials, syllabi and/or courses in the organization and sequencing of contents and activities and the type of tasks students are asked to complete. For instance, a genre-based approach would fit this category since it reflects on how students can discover and learn about different types of texts, and use this information to write them. However, this
issue will be further developed in the following chapter (see chapter 4.2.2. The approach).

However, a genre-based approach also would fit into the category of content-focus since such approach aims at guiding students in the learning of how to write specific types of texts for the discourse communities in which learners participate on a daily basis.

In addition, Jolly & Bolitho (1998) emphatically present that materials should provide learners with “clear exercises and activities that somehow meet the need for language-learning work initially recognized” (p.93). This aspect about the pedagogical realization of materials is essential since it is what learners will be in contact with, and will potentially impact (Tomlinson, 1998) their language learning processes. In order to achieve this, materials developers have to guarantee that activities have a logical relation and lead the learner to achieve a concrete outcome. In relation to this, Harmer (2007) has proposed multiple teaching sequences that can be applied to classroom-based instruction, but also it is our opinion as researchers/material developers that they can be adapted in materials design. However, all of the sequences that the author has developed integrate (in different orders) three elements or phases: Engage, Study and Activate.

According to Harmer (2007), the “Engage” element is related to that part of the class in which learners are hooked to the topics by means of different strategies, activities and/or materials. The “Study” element refers to the construction of learners’ own understandings of any topic by means of simple practice tasks or complex activities; the key point of this phase is that learners constantly reflect on the nature of the input by putting into practice or analysing its usage. The “Activate” element makes reference to the personalized implementation of language; that is, the free production of the language content being
learned. As mentioned previously, these three elements can be arranged into different sequences and, in next chapter, we will present and discuss how this is directly related to our access-self material (see chapter 4.2.3. The activities).

All in all, this outlook of what materials development is leads the way to designing, implementing and evaluating specific types of materials. Particularly, the following section will focus on the case of access-self materials and their implications in language teaching-learning.

3.3.1. Access-Self Materials

Although what is most likely to come into mind when talking about materials in language learning are coursebooks, it is important to remember that these are not the only examples of materials. In the context of language education, a material is “anything which is used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language” (Tomlinson, 1998, p.2). This means that everything used deliberately in order to present or inform about the language being learned, and anything that allows the learners to increase and improve their knowledge and their experience can be considered as a material; whether it is a newspaper clipping, DVDs, books, flashcards, online environments and even guest native speakers.

Access-self materials are specific types of learning resources that can also take different forms, but bare the essential characteristic of fostering that students work at their own pace on what they need or want about the language, without having to necessarily consult a teacher (Tomlinson, 1998). This idea is very powerful since learners are required to be involved in their learning processes as decision-makers of what, when and how to learn (Gardner & Miller, 1999). In addition, the previous authors state that specially produced access-self materials better address learners’ language needs since they can integrate more
effectively the contents that learners require and the strategies through which they can best learn.

Moreover, access-self materials lead learners to take on alternative roles that traditional materials (such as coursebooks, language workbooks, among others) would probably not do (see Fig. 1).

![Alternative Roles Diagram]

*Fig. 1: Authors’ adaptation of changing roles in SALL, by Gardner & Miller (1999).*

Even though the authors do not delve into the role-changing situation, we infer that as **Planners** of their learning, students must make decisions about when and what to learn. Furthermore, as **Assessors** of others’ and their own language learning processes, we think that students also act as **Advisors** and **Evaluators** since they would have to provide feedback or recommendations to others and themselves in regards to the learning process or the language topic being learned. Finally, students can act as **Motivators** of their own process, and of others’, by means of supporting peers and acknowledging their accomplishments.

Nevertheless, learners do not always assume the previous roles without the proper guidance. In fact, Gardner & Miller (1999) state that self-access learning, through access-self materials, can be implemented in classroom-based courses, in which teachers act as
Counsellors or Guides in students’ path. Particularly, teachers that assume these roles can instruct learners to complete activities or use complementary information provided by the access-self material, in order to promote the development of students’ responsibility towards their language learning processes. Also, teachers that act as Counsellors/Guides can support the learners in relation to specific contents of the language.

Thus, on the one hand, the previous roles show that access-self materials offer the possibility to work alone or with others. This fact reflects the potential influence of access-self materials in terms of autonomous and collaborative learning processes. On the other hand, access-self materials can be valuable resources in traditional teaching settings where it is desired that learners occupy a central role in their processes and teachers just monitor their progress and help if needed.
4. PEDAGOGICAL REALIZATION

Jolly & Bolitho (1998) state that the phase of Pedagogical Realization consists in the choosing of the appropriate exercises and activities for the material. However, since this document also integrates a research project report, we will discuss the methodological design of the study as well as the instructional design of the proposed access-self material.

4.1. Type of Research

This section will mainly focus on the methodological design of the research project. First, we will present why this project can be considered both a qualitative study and a design-and-development research. Next, we will present the population and, finally, the instruments of data collection for both the identification of needs and for the evaluation of the access-self material.

4.1.1. Qualitative research

As presented by Dörnyei (2007), qualitative research can be defined in multiple ways since there is no consensus on the matter. Nevertheless, Hernández-Sampieri, Fernández & Baptista’s (2010) definition of qualitative research is a start point. According to the mentioned authors, qualitative research methodology addresses reality and analyzes data interpretatively. Therefore, qualitative research follows a path of study of the social phenomena, its participants and the settings in which actions take place (Heigham & Croker, 2009). In that respect, a perspective from qualitative research applies to this study since it addresses a social phenomenon as it is language teaching and learning. Also, this study fits within the limits of qualitative research since it intends determine the role of an instructional access-material in the writing learning process of the population of the B.A in the Teaching
of Modern Languages. In order to do this, there must be a careful consideration of the current conditions for the development of writing skills within the Major.

For their part, Marshall & Rossman (seen in Vasilachis, 2006) have also identified that qualitative studies are interactive because the researcher is in constant contact with the participants in order to take into consideration their perspectives about the problem. This feature clearly applies to our study since, as researchers/material developers, we have used B.A students declared needs to design a complementary access-self material, which will ultimately be submitted to an evaluation based on learners’ accounts.

4.1.2. Design and development research

According to the Institute of Educational Sciences & National Science Foundation (2013), design and development research aims to creating solutions for specific educational issues which result in the improvement of learners skills. In relation to this, Ellis & Levy (2010) state that such solutions can be presented in the form of tools or products. Consequently, we believe it is possible to categorize our study as a design and development research since it first analyzes the situation of learning how to write in English at the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages; then, it detects a problem in the way that writing instruction is approached by the program; and finally, it proposes the design, implementation and evaluation of a complementary access-self material.

4.1.3. The population

As it has been presented before, the general context of this research is the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Therefore, the particular population to which the material is aimed are the students of said program. At first, two randomly selected students from the Major were invited to use the access-self
material as part of the piloting process of it. Then, we partially implemented the access-self material with students of a Low Advanced English course of the B.A. In order to do this, we asked the teacher of the class for permission and collaboration to have students use the access-self material. Then, the access-self material was shown to the whole class and after this they were invited to explore it, complete the activities of one specific unit and share their texts in the Writing Lab. This first attempt was not sufficient to get students to use the access-self material. Therefore, with the help of their teacher, additional reminders and explanations were given to students on how to complete the task assigned by the teacher and how to interact with the material. After this, a total of 16 learners (5 women and 11 men) participated in the Writing Lab by uploading specific texts (introduction paragraphs to their essays) required by the teacher. Once students provided feedback among themselves, the comments on the webpage (access-self material) were taken for analysis. Students had been previously informed that what they shared in the platform could be used as data of analysis for our research.

4.1.4. Instruments of data collection

For this research project, we took into account the contributions of previously conducted studies in order to design and implement our instruments of data collection (see chapter 2.1. Literature Review). Particularly, these instruments were needed in two of the three phases of the study: the design and the evaluation phases.

First, for the design phase, Devy-Satriani’s (2012) study was relevant since it led us to design and implement a close-ended questionnaire to explore the current state of writing instruction (see chapter 1. Identification of Needs) in the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages. According to Nunan (1992), a questionnaire is popular means of data collection and, specifically, close-ended questionnaires are those in which the possible answers to it are
pre-established by the researcher. In regards to this, McDonough & McDonough (1997) specify that close-ended questionnaires can have multiple types of questions. On the one hand, the authors state that **factual questions** are used by researchers to determine characteristics among the population who participates in the study. On the other hand, the authors indicate that **multiple-choice** questions explore specific information about a topic and they can require one or more choices by the respondent. Also, McDonough & McDonough (1997) mention that questionnaires would ultimately determine students’ needs regarding their learning process. As Mackey & Gass (2005) state, although the implementation of questionnaires is common in research, their value as means of data collection of opinions and attitudes of respondents is high for educational researchers since learners can report their reactions to learning, classroom activities, among others.

Moreover, Chala & Chapetón’s (2013) and Ochoa & Medina’s (2014) studies also showed valuable input regarding another way of data collection. Specifically, we took into account students’ written artifacts on the Writing Lab section of the access-self material. This type of data constitutes an important source of information since it leads the way to see how learners are putting into practice what they have learned, thanks to the implementation of the access-self material and their regular courses.

### 4.2. Instructional Design

This section will make emphasis on the pedagogical principles and methodological procedures that constitute the access-self material. On the one hand, we will explain our understanding of what a syllabus is and why it is necessary in any instructional material. Then, we will present the syllabus proposal for the material and briefly discuss its parts. Once
this is done, we will explain the relevance and implications of both the approach and the sequence of activities adopted by the access-self material.

4.2.1. The syllabus

As Nunan (1988) states, syllabus design refers to the selection and grading of content to be taught/learned. Therefore, reflecting on the principles for syllabus design and types of syllabi is highly relevant for the development of our access-self material since its contents should be coherently selected and logically ordered.

Nevertheless, as the author mentions, content selection is not a simple task since it requires a careful consideration of the beliefs about language and its learning. Our literature review (see chapter 2.1.) and our theoretical framework (see chapter 3. Contextual Realization) have led us to consider English not only as a system of linguistic signs but also as a means communication and meaning construction. Hence, students’ English language learning process, and specifically of writing development, must move on from instruction focused on form to instruction focused on functions.

In addition, Nunan (1988) has established that information about learners’ language needs is necessary to construct a syllabus which compiles those contents that students require. Specifically, we have previously established (see chapter 1.1. Statement of the Problem) that learning how to write in English as a Foreign Language is often challenging for learners in higher education since, on the one hand, they lack the sufficient knowledge about the specific texts in their academic contexts and; on the other hand, instruction on this matter, through teaching or instructional materials, is not always sufficient. Therefore, as researchers/material developers, we believe that a proposal of instructional material to address such situations should offer students of the B.A in the Teaching of Modern
Languages complementary information about the types of texts that are often required by the program’s courses.

The previous analyses then have guided us as researchers to choose the functional-notional type of syllabus for our access-self material. This selection is appropriate since such type of syllabi focus on the communicative purposes and the conceptual meanings of the content to be learned. Thus, the chosen type of syllabus and the approach selected for the access-self material are compatible due to the features of genre-based instruction (see chapter 3.2.1. Genre-Based Approach to Teaching Writing) of writing and its emphasis on what texts are meant for.

Table 2 shows the syllabus’ proposal for the complementary access-material to be developed. Since it is focused on learning about the genres (see chapter 4.2.2. The approach) and its functions, the syllabus will refer to the communicative function to be addressed in each lesson and the topics they refer to (Nunan, 1988).

**Table 2:**
*WeWrite! Syllabus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Communicative Function</th>
<th>Writing Practice/Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 WeWrite like Lois Lane</td>
<td>In short</td>
<td>Sharing a fact</td>
<td>Expository sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He said, she said</td>
<td>Reflecting on a fact</td>
<td>Expository paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The whole story</td>
<td>Talking about a fact</td>
<td>Expository texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 WeWrite like Shakespeare</td>
<td>Your journey</td>
<td>Sharing past learning experiences</td>
<td>The Autobiography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell a tale</td>
<td>Sharing current learning experiences</td>
<td>The Journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For our syllabus, we proposed three units that corresponded each to a genre that students encounter throughout the Major. In order to do this, we consulted and studied the programs of the English, Pedagogical and Linguistics courses of the Major, (in which learners are required to write in English), and also based on our own experience as students, we chose to create a syllabus around expository, narrative and argumentative texts. On the one hand, expository texts are those which aim at reporting, informing and describing an event, situation or person, without proving the reader with a personal opinion. In addition, narrative texts are those which aim at telling stories which reflect on personal or social issues and usually involves a setting where the story occurs, character and events. On the other hand, argumentative texts are those which aim at convincing or persuading the reader in regards to what a situation, event, person, or object is in relation to the personal opinion of the writer.

Since many students of the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages know about the previous types of texts, this access-self material will be especially useful for those who seek complementary practice and guidance in relation to the topics addressed by it. Each one of the type of texts previously mentioned is covered by the each one of three units of the access-self material. Also, each one of the text is addressed from a bottom-up perspective in the lessons that form each unit. We grouped these three units because of the communicative functions of these types of texts and the academic context of the students, and with the hopes that they would provide the students with a means of understanding and using them (Hyland, 2004).
The three proposed units go as follow:

UNIT 1 - WE WRITE LIKE LOIS LANE: This unit focuses on expository texts and the tools needed to write them. The unit is named after the fictional character “Lois Lane” since she portrays a woman reporter, who wants to inform facts in regards to any situation or people. Students are presented with three lessons in which they can go through three different levels of expository texts: expository sentences, expository paragraphs and expository texts.

UNIT 2 - WE WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE: This unit centers in narrative texts and is divided into two lessons where students can explore two different types of texts that fit into the narrative genre that they encounter in the Major: the autobiography and the journal. This unit is named after the famous author William Shakespeare due to his relevant contributions to Literature.

UNIT 3 - WE WRITE LIKE CHOMSKY: This unit is named after the famous scholar Noam Chomsky due to his controversial comments around language studies and the way he has to convince others. The unit focuses on presenting useful tools for learning to write argumentative texts. In general, students will learn to present, structure and develop their point of view by working in three levels: argumentative sentences, argumentative paragraphs, argumentative texts. Each of these topics will be covered in one lesson. This unit was completely constructed for students’ use for the purpose of this project.

For the construction of this last unit, we followed Hyland’s (2003) steps for genre-based instruction. The next subsection will explain in detail these steps.

4.2.2. The approach

As Hyland (2003) states, genre-based instruction of writing should be oriented to showing learners that texts are formed by certain language patterns (formal knowledge about the genres) and that they have specific purposes. Both of these elements are determined by
social conventions since writing is then seen as a social practice. According to Baynham (cited in Chapetón & Chala, 2013), this means that writing is influenced by the subjectivity of the writer, the writing process, the purpose (of the text) and the audience it is written for, the text as a product and the power relations around the writing act of a specific text.

Particularly, our access-self material allows the writer to express his/her ideas around some activities which aim at giving the learner the opportunity to learn about the genres. In addition, since the access-self material is intended to be complementary to students’ learning process of writing, it offers the resources for learners to find the aid they need for every step of the way when writing. Moreover, by giving students complementary knowledge about the genres, they can reinforce what they know in regards to the purposes of texts and who they are for. Also, the access-self material offers students the chance to understand their texts as products since they are encouraged to share what they create with others, according to the standards and parameters which each lesson establishes in relation to the topics. Last, but not least, the access-self material answers not only to students’ needs of having additional support in their writing development process, but also to the institutional requirements of the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages, in relation to the contents which students must learn.

Furthermore, teaching writing by taking into account the previous elements can be done through a series of steps, which integrate a genre-based instructional proposal and can lead learners to fully understand and use the specific types of texts of the contexts they are part of. Hyland (2003) proposes four steps which were adapted to fulfill the objectives of the access-self material; these steps are modeling, scaffolding, revision and independent construction of the text. All four of them were taken into account for the proposal of the syllabus for the unit we developed in our access-self material. (See Appendix B)
The first step refers to the presentation of the necessary information about the genre to the learners for them to analyze and internalize. Then, the second step guides the student to write a text based on some activities to put into practice what was learned. In this case, the access-self material is the one which scaffolds the learner by proving him/her with predetermined feedback for the exercises. The student has then the opportunity to share with other his/her written production and this leads to the third step (revision), which guides the learner to revise the text based on what has been learned and the comments of the teacher (or peers). Finally, the fourth step involves a leaner who now would have to write once again the text by himself in order to present it to his reader.

### 4.2.3. The activities

In order to implement Hyland’s (2003) steps for genre instruction, we integrated Harmer’s (2007) Boomerang model (see Fig. 2) to sequence specific activities which would guide the learner to explore the genres and appropriately use them.

![Boomerang Sequence](image)

*Fig. 2: Scheme of boomerang sequence. Taken from Harmer (2007, p.55)*

According to Harmer (2007), the “Engage” phase is the first of the Boomerang sequence and it must lead learners to be “hooked” by the presentation or discovery of the
topic. This would lead them to the “Activate” phase, which should allow the controlled practice of the contents that are being studied in the lesson. Then, the learner would move on to the “Study” phase, in which he would have to conduct a revision of his previous free practice to reinforce the learning of the topics or elements that were not clear before. However, we adapted the Harmer’s model (see Fig. 3) so that our access-self material would better address the steps for genre-instruction and the features of role of learners in self-access language learning.

**Fig. 3:** Authors’ adaptation of Harmer’s Boomerang sequence (2007)

Hence, the “Engage” phase would be related to the presentation and exploration of genre (modeling), according to Hyland’s (2003) proposal. Then, learners would move on to a controlled practice (“Self-Study” phase) of the content in order to check their understanding of the topic. This latter stage would still be related to Hyland’s modeling step since the controlled practice would allow them to analyze concrete examples of the content. If so far understanding is achieved, learners would be able to have a freer practice of the topic (“Activate” phase).

Here, they would be provided with activities to complete activities and get feedback based on their answers or also produce original texts and share them with the community.
(scaffolding). Finally, the sequence of activities would ask learners to self-assess their texts and/or peer-assess their partners’ (Hyland’s revision step) in order to improve their written productions (Hyland’s independent writing step).

This previous process can be further evidenced in the detailed explanation of activities for Unit 3 WeWrite like Chomsky of the syllabus⁵ (see Appendix B).

⁵ Due to time pressing issues in the research process, we were able to propose a three-unit syllabus but we could only fully design one of those units.
5. PHYSICAL PRODUCTION

The fifth stage of Jolly & Bolitho’s (1998) framework consists of the physical production of the material, which involves the decisions made in relation to its layout, its size and format, the visuals in it, among others. In this chapter, we will present the principles used for the production of our access-self material and we will describe the access-self material we designed.

5.1. Principles for Materials Development

For the development of our access-self material, we took into account the principles of access-self activities and the features of access-self materials presented by Tomlinson (1998).

On the one hand, we wanted to provide students with the opportunity to choose what to work on and to do so at their own pace and time. Therefore, although the material has a sequence of activities which students can follow, they are able to explore and use the material the way it fits best their needs. If a student wants to do one activity because that is the one which he/she requires to understand the topic, it can be done.

In addition, we wanted to have open-ended activities that had a wide variety of responses and not one correct answer. In consequence, students can always check their text productions by taking into account the theoretical elements that the access-self material offers them and the (self)assessment grids which are integrated to lessons.

We also wanted to engage learners' individuality by providing them with opportunities for personal involvement, investment of energy and development. Actually, this is one of the elements that distinguishes our access-self material, since it gives learners
the opportunity to explore and interact with it from different places and situations. Thus, they can play more participative, active and autonomous roles in their learning processes.

Finally, we wanted to provide students with varied and comprehensible input in order to facilitate informal acquisition. Therefore, the access-self material integrates an informal language register, so that students feel more comfortable and close to it. Also, the access-self material offers the tools, resources and explanations with catchy presentations and colorful designs in order for learners to be motivated to study by themselves. (Tomlinson, 1998, p.322)

Additionally, we wished that learners would use our material to receive and give feedback through commentaries and not by using answer keys, and that they would have the chance to do activities where they should think about their own learning processes.

5.2. “WeWrite!”

For the physical production of our material, we wanted to design something attractive, easy to use and easy to access. We also took into consideration that it was designed for university students aged around early to mid-twenties who are well acquainted with technologies. For these reasons, we decided to create an online webpage called WeWrite\(^6\) where students are able to enter and review the different parts an essay has whilst also sharing with others, doing exercises and visiting external links.

An online material would allow us to create attractive exercises, to be easily reached and more flexible than, say, a traditional workbook. It gave us the possibility to create a less linear process where users could go from one section to the other freely (although not without

\(^6\) Link to the web page: [www.wewrite.ml](http://www.wewrite.ml)
guidance), and where users could be redirected from one section of the webpage to another, or to external webpages.

WeWrite! consists of three main sections: Get started, Hands on and the Writing lab. The lessons were created taking into account our adaptation of Harmer’s (2007) Boomerang model (see chapter 4.2.3. The activities), where students can engage, self-study, activate and self-assess or peer-assess.

![WeWrite! Homepage](image)

**Fig. 4: WeWrite! Homepage**

The first section, *Get started*, is divided into two parts. First, *What is WeWrite?* describes the material to the students and who it is for; also, it presents the approach and the focus of the access-self material. In the second part, *Who am I as a writer?* includes a small
questionnaire for students that can direct them to the Unit that suits best to their language needs.

The second section, *Hands on*, is where the three units are located. Unit 1 and 3 include three lessons; as for Unit 2, it includes just two lessons. However, the purpose is that in each of them students can find different activities that allow them to discover or activate new knowledge, practice it, interact with other users and find external links to additional resources. The online format allowed us to include a section for comments where they could share answers, doubts and questions.

Additionally, each of the units focuses on one type of text. The first unit, *WeWrite like Lois Lane*, is proposed to focus on expository texts; the second one, *WeWrite like Shakespeare*, is propose to emphasize narrative texts; and, last but not least, Unit 3: *WeWrite like Chomsky*, focuses on argumentative texts. These genres were chosen according to the ones that students are required to learn in the Major, as mentioned in chapter 4.2.1. However, this research project mainly focused on the design of the last unit: *WeWrite like Chomsky*. 
Fig. 5: Contents tables from Hands On. WeWrite!

As mentioned above, the lessons in the WeWrite! like Chomsky section included activities in which students would activate their knowledge and where they could put into practice what they learned. These activities were based on authentic model texts which previous students of the Low Advanced English courses wrote and which they shared with us voluntarily. By offering current English students those texts, they can get a clearer idea of what the theoretical elements refer to and they can follow the pattern to create their own texts. These texts can be shared in comments sections that accompany most of the activities in all three units. What students share and what they reply to each others gave us, as administrators
of the website, the possibility of recording interactions among users or interacting ourselves with them and at the same time gave the users the possibility of giving and receiving feedback.

For the last section of WeWrite! we included a Writing Lab (see Fig. 7). This tool granted a space where students could share their own written productions as well as read and comment on those of their classmates. Here students can add new topics within the created forums for them to interact with each other. This section allowed us to collect artifacts from students of the Low Advanced class, which are analyzed in the next chapter where we deal with the use and evaluation of the material.
Fig. 7: WeWrite! Writing Lab main page.
6. USE AND EVALUATION OF THE MATERIAL

According to Jolly & Bolitho (1998), this phase consists of students using the material that has been produced. The use of the material allows data to be collected, analyzed and cross-evaluated with the objectives of the material.

For this phase, we wished to have the students from a Low Advanced English Level class use the material next to the class assignments that they were meant to do for their course. Before doing this, we piloted the material with two volunteers who tested the webpage. For this piloting exercise, the two volunteers explored the sections of the material, reading the explanations and examples and participating in the exercises. Once they used the material, the volunteers answered a questionnaire (see Appendix C) in which they gave us their opinions about the material and its role in their learning process. Their comments would then help us revise the material in terms of its content and design so that it would accomplish our objectives.

The volunteers expressed that in spite of not having all units available they had liked what they explored because of how the information was presented. The eye-catching visuals, the colors and the general design met Tomlinson’s (1998) principles in terms of novelty and attractive presentation. The material’s design caught the volunteers’ attention and motivated them to explore even more.

As for the role of the material in their learning process, Participant 2 (P2) stated that “(she) already knew the topics, however (she) could strengthen some of them.” This could be perceived as a way in which the learner builds up her confidence about the language (Tomlinson, 1998). Furthermore, Participant 1 (P1) stated, “it is useful that you remind the writer all necessary definitions and the structure of each essay”, and P2 wrote “I realized how
important is to keep in mind the purpose of my thesis statement at the moment of formulate [...] principal arguments”. This reflected the relevance of the material in students’ learning process and showed us that the material was potentially useful for the two volunteers.

The volunteers also stated that to have had the opportunity to share one’s texts with others in the Writing Lab was very positive because receiving feedback from others is very meaningful when writing. To us, this supports our belief of writing as a skill that can be developed through social situated practices since peers’ comments will always reflect an underlying understanding of what genres that both the writer and the reader have in common. Therefore, the revision and re-construction of texts will lead them and their writers to adjust more to the discourse conventions which mark the writing process in a certain context.

Lastly, the volunteers suggested that our material should include more exercises in which they could receive feedback (controlled practice) and to improve the clarity of the instructions in the Writing Lab section as to how to share one’s texts with others (P1).

Once we piloted the material, we proceeded to share our webpage with the students of the Low Advanced English course and we asked their teacher to invite them to explore the material and to use it as a complement of their classes. Students were free to use, explore and participate however and whenever they wanted to because of the self-access element we wanted to work with. However, although there was evidence of plenty visits to the webpage, there were very few interactions. This led us to continue reminding students that the tool (material) was available but it was not until the teacher gave them a specific assignment to be completed in the Writing Lab that students participated.

Since obliging students to use the material would go against its purpose, a possible way to encourage them to use the webpage was the option proposed by the teacher.
Nevertheless, this time the teacher sent very specific instructions of what to do, how to use some parts of the Writing Lab and where in it they had to publish their texts. This was very useful since it was the only way in which the use of the material was promoted. This alternative reflects Gardner & Miller’s (1999) stance about guiding learners for them to develop progressively autonomous attitudes toward their learning processes (see chapter 3.3.1. Access-Self Materials).

In this phase, we also analyzed students’ opinions. This allowed us to evaluate the access-self material in relation to its principles and how they relate to its content and form.

6.1. The role of the material

In this section, we will determine the role of WeWrite! in students’ development of writing, based on their written artifacts (see Appendix D). These artifacts were extracted from the Writing Lab of the access-self material and then submitted to an open-coding process of data, which allowed us to group their interventions by considering their common themes. To identify the categories, we used the software Atlas.ti. We filtered the information and this led us to a total of four categories that show the potential roles of an access-self material in the development of students’ writing skills: acknowledging, accepting feedback, recognizing and recommending (see Appendix F).

In the following subsections, we will discuss the results gathered in each of the four categories in relation to the theoretical basis of this research project. In order to do this, we will present excerpts of the data collected and we will identify learners as Participants (P) that range from 1 to 16. Therefore, reference to them will be made by using the codes P1 to P16.
6.1.1. Acknowledging

This category groups the reactions students had towards the texts they read and their feelings toward the work of the authors of those texts. Therefore, according to our interpretation of Gardner & Miller’s (1999) alternative roles in self-access learning through access-self materials (see chapter 3.3.1. Access-Self Materials), it could be said that learners took on a role of Motivators in their peers’ writing processes, since they expressed congratulating messages to the writers and thoughtful opinions in regards to their texts.

6.1.1.1. One’s own reaction to texts

On one hand, learners acknowledged their own reactions to the texts submitted by their peers; that is, they expressed how they felt towards their peers’ texts. For example, P12 reacted the following way to P8’s text:

“I like all the different expressions you use because it creates a very good atmosphere for the reader. :)” (P12 → P8)

This comment towards P8’s text reflects that it had a positive effect on P12 since this latter expressed that he/she “liked” what P8 wrote. This interpretation could be reinforced by taking into account what it seems to be a happy smiley face “:)” at the end of P12’s comment. Also, P12 specifies what it is that catches his/her attention (“different expressions”). Possibly, we could interpret out of P12’s comment that he/she feels more motivated to read when he/she finds specific language forms in the text. In this hypothetical case, P8 would definitely act as the Motivator (Gardner & Miller, 1999) of this interaction. Anyhow, although it is not possible to know if P8 had such intention when he/she wrote the text, it can be interpreted out of P12’s comment that P8 caused that effect.
Another example, similar to the previous one, is P4’s reaction to the texts of both P2 and P3:

a. “I would like to see more about it!” (P4 → P2)
b. “I would like to read more about it!” (P4 → P3)

Although P4’s reaction is almost the same for both P2’s and P3’s text lead us to believe that these writers managed “to hook” P4 to the topic of their texts. Additionally, P4 uses two emoticons in his/her comment to P3. A possible interpretation of this could be that the reader is potentiating or increasing the “strength” of her comment. Nevertheless, as we mentioned before, both “a” and “b” can also be interpreted as cases of involuntary motivation of the reader by the writer (Gardner & Miller, 1999).

Additionally, it is possible to believe that the cases of interactions presented above are also examples of formed connections between the writer and the reader, as established by Hyland (2000). However, these connections go beyond the mere linguistic message since participants also used emoticons with the possible intention of adding extra meanings and features to their comments, which apparently could not be done by means of words.

6.1.1.2. The writer

On the other hand, students also acknowledged their peer’s efforts as writers and the strategies they use in their texts. For example, when P8 reacts to P12’s text, he/she recognized several elements in the process:

“as soon as I read your hook I took a liking to your introduction. I like the way you provide a context for the reader who does not handle the subject.” (P12 → P8)

First, when P12 says “as soon as I read your hook...”, he/she is possibly
acknowledging the special feature of that introduction paragraph: it is not anybody’s, and it
is not any hook; it is P8’s hook. Then, P12 adds “I like the way you provide a context…”
and also refers directly to the writer as a way, probably, to make emphasis on the special
characteristic of the text: it is P8’s text.

Moreover, P12 also refers to two more elements in his/her comment: the hook and
the context. This reflects what Hyland (2004) refers to as an understanding of the genre. If
P12 did not know that an introduction paragraph should have a first sentence that hooks the
reader and then a contextualization of the topic, he/she could not comment on P8’s text and
much less acknowledge him/her. Therefore, we could say that in order to acknowledge
another writer’s text, it is necessary to understand what they aim at and what they should
include.

6.1.2. Accepting feedback

Another potential role of an access-self material in the development of students’
writing skills is the possibility it offers to accept feedback from others. This element is
essential in genre-instruction because it characterizes writing as a process of knowledge
(about the genre and about disciplinary topics) construction (Tardy, 2006). We found that the
access-self material gave students the opportunity to tell each other the value of their
opinions.

For example, P4 reacts to P1 comment on his/her text in the following way:

“Thanks! I'll do it!” (P4 → P1)

This case in particular portrays language learners as Assessors (Gardner & Miller,
1999) because they understand why their peers’ recommendations are important for their
written products. Thus, it could be said that students act as Self-Assessors when they do not put barriers to their peers’ feedback, but on the contrary, they embrace it politely.

Also, when accepting feedback, students complete an essential part of their genre-based learning process since they, along with others, are participating in the task of scaffolding their writing development. This surely relates to Hyland’s (2004) proposal regarding the social construction of knowledge (and skill) in regards to genres. Possibly, the reason why learners did not explicitly accept others’ recommendations in the Writing Lab could be because they did not find the feedback useful or found it irrelevant. Nevertheless, students should be encouraged to share and tell others when their input was valuable.

6.1.3. Recognizing one’s own weaknesses

A third potential role for access-self materials in students’ development of their writing skills is the possibility it offers to recognize one’s own weaknesses. This category is related to how a learner can realize that he/she has to improve some points in his/her writing production thanks to other people’s feedback.

For instance, one of the students recognized her own weakness after reading a commentary made on one of her classmate’s texts. She wrote:

“As [P2] said, it would be great that we add some questionnaires to support the ideas... Neither did I do that 😞” (P4 → P2).

This demonstrated that students can develop their writing skills not only from experiencing writing themselves but also from others’ experiences. P4 showed that he/she was internalizing writing processes from reflecting upon his/her peers’ productions and by comparing them to his/her own. Through a shared experience, P4 is building knowledge about the genre by noticing one of its properties. After he/she reflected on his/her classmate’s
and his/her own texts, P4 became aware of the importance of finding valid information to support one’s ideas.

In addition, this attitude towards his/her learning process reveals that P4 is adopting a role of **Self-Assessor** (Gardner & Miller, 1999) since he/she is recognizing and reflecting on something that needs to be changed of his/her text. In consequence, we could interpret that the interaction by means of access-self material also led P4 to review, or learn something new, about the type of text all learners are studying at the Low Advanced English course we worked with.

### 6.1.4. Recommending

The last potential role of the access-self material that we detected in students’ written artifacts was the possibility of learners to recommend; that is, to give both advice and feedback to their peers.

#### 6.1.4.1. Giving advice

On the one hand, we found in students comments that they advised their peers on how to correct, edit, and in general proceed with their texts. The following interactions show that from their experience they became *Advisors* to other learners (Gardner & Miller, 1999).

> “I would advice you to use a period after the Word future and then use a connector like also just to make the sentence shorter.” (P2 → P1)

This first example shows P2 not only saying what P1 should arrange in his/her text, but also P2 is briefing the reasons. This type of intervention reflects how learners shape their discourses and give proper feedback based on their knowledge about the type of text being studied.
In the second example, something related to the previous case occurs:

“Maybe you should explain why it is a problem, and how is it affecting the population or the characteristics of the people implied.” (P8 → P3)

Particularly, P8 also gives advice in terms of the knowledge he/she has about the type of text. However, P8 centers his/her attention in the functional part of the genre. From this, we can interpret that he/she is asking P3 to revise how the contextualization (the statement of the situation) and P3’s stance are reflected in the text.

Therefore, both of the previous examples are very interesting because they show how learners do mind about language structures, but also about the communicative purposes of texts when genre-based instruction is integrated into their language learning processes (Hyland, 2004).

6.1.4.2. Giving feedback

On the other hand, students’ written artifacts also portrayed that the material offered the possibility to all of the participants to read their texts and give each other feedback. Among these texts they pointed out some advantages and disadvantages.

For example, P8 told P3 the following:

“however I consider you should clearly state the problem, in this case if you think that teen pregnancy is a problem.” (P8 → P3)

This is a valuable case because it allows us to interpret that, even though P8 does not share P3’s point of view, the first does recognize that the objective (which was to present a stance in relation to the topic) was achieved by the writer. If we revise Hyland’s (2004) proposal, the fact that this happens is very good for learners since they are developing their
writing skills and, more particularly, their knowledge of the genre.

Moreover, this example shows how P8 is acting as an Assessor (Gardner & Miller, 1999), since he/she is expressing his/her objective opinion on the matter.

6.2. Users’ opinions about the material

Each student participated and interacted with the material in his/her own way (Gardner & Miller, 1999) and their written productions permitted them to engage in small dialogues (Chala & Chapetón, 2013). In the following subsections, we will explore the material users’ opinions in regards to WeWrite!, according to their comments posted on the Writing Lab (See Appendix G).

6.2.1. Comments on the contents of the material

Students acknowledged that the material provided a meaningful way to find and understand their own mistakes. They expressed that they liked being able to communicate with other students and have them be their readers. P9 wrote:

“Interacting with peers is a meaningful way to see what kind of mistakes I am committing and how I can improve them [...] Definitely, it is a good website because of forums that allow students to have a communication between them as authors and lectors.”

For them, as Hyland (2000) said, writing became a means of sharing and interacting with each other. Students acknowledged that the material gave them the opportunity of collaborating, the possibility to improve and that it was useful for their writing process. They also thought it was helpful to receive other people’s opinions about their texts because it might complements the teachers’. This is expressed by P8 when he/she wrote:

“Besides, it may help us to know and consider our partners’ opinions in different domains, which is sometimes difficult to reach during the class.”
This showed that the material fulfilled the description of self-access material that Tomlinson (1998) gives, in which the material gives the students the opportunity to go at their own pace without the need to go back to their teacher.

Moreover, the material proved to be engaging and promoted learning through the novelty of its presentation. (Tomlinson, 1998) This can be evidenced in the following statements given by some participants.

P11: “I have recommended it and I will keep doing it. for some, me included, writing in your L2 is a challenge. But this page gives you what you need in order to become better writers.”

P8: “I think this site is very useful since it provides a no conventional space for learners to interact and help each other in the writing process.”

These statements could prove that the tasks presented were stimulating for the students while also being achievable and attracted their curiosity, attention and interest as “engaging them in tasks which are stimulating, which are problematic but which are achievable too [through a process-oriented perspective of what the tasks are]” (Tomlinson, 1998, p.9).

6.2.2. Comments on the form of the material

As for the form of the material, some students expressed having some technical difficulties when publishing their texts with the HTML codes the Writing Lab demanded and internet connection.

P7: “I do not know if it is just me, but the page does not load properly or it just crashes”
P9: “the link has many problems, so I had to refresh the site a lot.”

However, in spite of these technical issues, students expressed that they enjoyed the webpage and they thought it was good for practice.

P2: “I liked very much this website”
P7: “the site is great!”

P9: “It is a good job :) :)

Even more important, students suggested that the webpage should be shared with others who might find it useful and who might take advantage of the tools provided.

P1 wrote: “To create and, moreover, to spread virally a web-page is not an easy task. It would be a great idea to use social webpages to do it, I am completely sure that by doing it this page might get more visitors, thus, more people can have access to all the tools that this webpage provides.”
7. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In this last chapter, we will go back to our objectives to compare them to the results obtained after using the material. This research project aimed at designing, implementing and evaluating a complementary access-self material for the students of the Bachelor of Arts in the Teaching of Modern Languages that provides them with the opportunity of developing their writing skills. Taking this into account, the project had three sets of specific objectives that corresponded to three different stages: design, implementation and evaluation.

In relation to the phase of design, we sought to design an access-self material for fostering students’ development of their academic writing skills. To design the unit, the lessons and the activities we took into account the program for the Low Advanced English Level in which students are expected to be able to write pros-and-cons essays and problem-solution essays.

Following Jolly and Bolitho’s (1998) framework for materials writing, a genre-based approach (Hyland, 2004) and our adaptation of Harmer’s (2007) Boomerang Sequence, we designed tasks that allowed students to work autonomously with open-ended activities and where they were able to self-assess as well as peer-assess. Particularly, Hyland’s genre-based approach was the basis of the pedagogical proposal since it refers to a specific way of understanding learning how to write in a foreign language. Additionally, Harmer’s (2007) model allowed us to identify how activities can be logically sequenced so they can serve a pedagogical purpose. Based on this, we adapted the model so it could be integrated with Hyland’s (2004) theoretical proposal, and so it could reflect the principles of access-self learning through materials.
These elements are highly relevant for they represent the innovative characteristic of the product that we developed and can be the starting point of future instructional materials of the same type, within the B.A in the Teaching of Modern Languages or similar programs.

For the phase of implementation, we partially implemented the material with a group of Low Advanced students. We do not consider it a full implementation because only one of the three proposed units was available for students to use. From this phase, we were able to see that there were autonomous decisions coming from students and risks of publishing their written productions although there was little participation from the students in the lessons and their activities. Since our material sought to be access-self we could not force students to use every aspect of it; however, when students were asked by their teacher to use the Writing Lab, they did it. We were then able to collect what they said and use it as written artifacts, and their opinions towards the material as evidence of their interaction with it.

In regards to the phase of evaluation, students’ artifacts were analyzed to determine the role of the material, while their opinions were used to evaluate the material in terms of content and design. The web counter we had installed in the material allowed us to see how many times the webpage had been visited. Nevertheless, this number did not reflect the amount of participations that were evidenced in the end. This issue led us to believe that students might have gathered the information they needed and then left the webpage without completing the activities, sharing their experience or taking the risk of publishing their own texts.

However, as mentioned above, the Writing Lab seems to be a space in which students could interact with each other. Although comments did not surpass from two to three interactions, the forum showed that students both recognized their classmates’ efforts in
writing and that they reflected on the grammatical elements, contextual elements and form. Participants acknowledged each other as writers, and their own reactions toward others’ written productions. Additionally, they gave feedback and advice and recognized their own mistakes when writing.

When asked for their opinion, the users expressed that they felt the material allowed for meaningful interaction outside of the classroom. Despite some technical problems with the webpage, students appreciated the usefulness of the material and acknowledged that it was helpful for their writing processes.

After designing, implementing, evaluating our online access-self material, we were able to determine the different roles it had in the development of students’ academic writing skill. Our material had the role of providing opportunities for the students to acknowledge others as writers and their own reactions towards a given text; giving, receiving and accepting feedback amongst peers; giving advice to others and recognizing their own weaknesses. These were all ways in which students developed their writing skills and the answers to our original research question.

Having in mind the results of our research project and the difficulties we encountered, we believe that for further research it is important to look into the reason why students are not likely to have the initiative to study autonomously. In addition, it would be important to explore why is it that students prefer to take the information found on the webpage without taking part of the activities or sharing their experience with others while doing so. Finally, we think it would also be enriching to continue exploring the use of WeWrite! over time as well as completing the units to other areas of academic writing within the B. A in the Teaching of Modern Languages.
8. REFERENCES


Appendix A

Needs Analysis Questionnaire conducted to students of the B.A. in the Teaching of Modern Languages.

Escritura Académica en Inglés

La presente encuesta pretende recoger datos acerca de su experiencia en escritura académica en inglés en la Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas. Además, se pretende conocer sus necesidades en cuanto al tema para la próxima elaboración de un manual de escritura académica en inglés para los estudiantes de la LLM. Por favor, lee con atención las preguntas para responder.

*Obligatorio

1. Edad *
   Indica tu edad
   Marca solo un óvalo.
   
   ☐ 15 - 19
   ☐ 20 - 24
   ☐ 25 - 29
   ☐ 30 +

2. Semestre *
   Seleccione con base en la cantidad de créditos aprobados del programa de la LLM
   Marca solo un óvalo.
   
   ☐ 1
   ☐ 2
   ☐ 3
   ☐ 4
   ☐ 5
   ☐ 6
   ☐ 7
   ☐ 8
   ☐ 9
   ☐ 10
3. Nivel de Inglés de la LLM

Muestra solo un ítem.

☐ Elemental
☐ Básico
☐ Pre-intermedio
☐ Intermedio Bajo
☐ Intermedio
☐ Intermedio Alto
☐ Avanzado Bajo
☐ Ya he culminado todos los cursos de inglés de la LLM.

Pasa a la pregunta 4.

El ejercicio de escribir académicamente

4. ¿Los ejercicios de escritura académica representan una dificultad para usted como estudiante de la LLM?

Muestra solo un ítem.

☐ Sí
☐ No, no representan ninguna dificultad

5. Si contestó afirmativamente la pregunta anterior, por favor indique el grado de dificultad que supone el ejercicio escritura académica para usted.

Muestra solo un ítem.

1 2 3 4 5

Baja dificultad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Alta dificultad

6. Indique cuáles de los siguientes factores han influido en su escritura académica y por ende en su percepción de la dificultad de tal ejercicio.

Selecciona todos los que corresponden.

☐ Instrucción formal y trabajo progresivo de los escritos
☐ Aprendizaje autónomo de los tipos de escritos y cómo escribirlos
☐ No hay un acuerdo sobre los tipos de escritos y que todos tienen diferentes características y parámetros para cada profesor.
☐ Falta de retroalimentación en cuanto a los escritos
☐ No hay un proceso de composición y reescritura orientado desde el aula
☐ Otro: ____________________
7. ¿Conoces en qué consiste la escritura académica? *
   Marca solo un óvalo.
   
   ☐ Sí, conozco lo que es
   ☐ Sí, conozco parcialmente lo que es
   ☐ No, no conozco con exactitud lo que es

8. ¿Cuáles de los siguientes tipos de escrito académico conoces? *
   Selecciona todos los que correspondan.
   
   ☐ Ensayo
   ☐ Reporte
   ☐ Informe de Lectura
   ☐ Reseña Descriptiva
   ☐ Reseña Crítica
   ☐ Autobiografía
   ☐ Crónica
   ☐ Journal
   ☐ Otro: ________________________________

9. ¿Cómo aprendió usted acerca de los tipos de escritos que marcó anteriormente? *
   Marca solo un óvalo.
   
   ☐ Recibió instrucción formal acerca de ellos en las clases de la universidad.
   ☐ Recibió modelos/formatos base para seguir.
   ☐ Aprendí autónomamente según ejemplos en internet.
   ☐ No recibí instrucción sobre los textos. Aprendí mediante el ensayo y el error.

10. ¿Cuál cree usted que es el propósito de los ejercicios de escritura académica en la LLM en cuanto a su práctica y uso real? *
    Selecciona todos los que correspondan.
    
    ☐ Contribuir con el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los estudiantes en inglés como lengua extranjera
    ☐ Evaluar en un momento específico la habilidad de escritura de los estudiantes
    ☐ Fomentar el desarrollo de la identidad del estudiante en cuanto al ámbito académico
    ☐ Desarrollar las ideas de otras personas en escritos con formato y estructuras fijas
    ☐ Funcionar como un ejercicio más del aula de clase, sin relación significativa con las demás actividades del aula.
    ☐ Otro: ________________________________
11. ¿Cuáles de los siguientes propósitos considera usted que deberían asumirse en la LLM en cuanto a los ejercicios de escritura académica? *

Seleccióna todos los que correspondan:

- [ ] Ofrecer a los estudiantes modelos de escritos para que ellos los tomen como base para hacer sus propios escritos.
- [ ] Usar los ejercicios de escritura académica para evaluar a los estudiantes en un momento específico, sin posibilidad de revisión y re-escritura de los escritos.
- [ ] Orientar la escritura académica como proceso en el que el estudiante sigue estructuras formas base de escritos pero perfecciona su habilidad gracias a un proceso de composición y re-escritura.
- [ ] Otro: __________________________

12. ¿Considera usted que el desarrollo de un manual de escritura académica en inglés para los estudiantes de la LLM ayudaría a superar las dificultades que tal ejercicio tiene? *

Marca solo un ítem:

- [ ] Sí, un manual ayudaría totalmente
- [ ] Sí, un manual ayudaría mucho pero es necesario el trabajo progresivo en clase
- [ ] No, un manual no sería de gran ayuda para mejorar la habilidad de escritura académica de los estudiantes
- [ ] Otro: __________________________
### Appendix B

Contents Unit 3: *We Write like Chomsky.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson 1: This, I Believe</th>
<th>Lesson 2: As I Was Saying...</th>
<th>Lesson 3: Settle Down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contents in Writing</td>
<td>Contents in Writing</td>
<td>Contents in Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. What you should know about thesis statements!</td>
<td>A. The paragraphs as parts of an essay.</td>
<td>A. What is an essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are thesis statements?</td>
<td>- The title</td>
<td>- The Pros and Cons essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How are thesis statements composed?</td>
<td>- Introduction paragraph</td>
<td>- The Problem Solution essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tips you should know about thesis statements</td>
<td>- Body paragraph</td>
<td>B. The structure of an essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. What you should know about topic sentences!</td>
<td>- Conclusion paragraph</td>
<td>C. Original texts by other students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are topic sentences?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- How are topic sentences composed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tips you should know about topic sentences</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engage:</th>
<th>Engage:</th>
<th>Engage:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lesson will present the self-learner the main theoretical information of the topic to cover.</td>
<td>The lesson will be divided into the three types of paragraphs (introduction, body and conclusion) and students will be able to learn and practice for each of them.</td>
<td>The lesson will present a general overview of the structure of Pros &amp; Cons and Problem Solution essays, and will give suggestions as how to construct them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Study</th>
<th>Self-Study</th>
<th>Self-Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lesson will present the learner an exploration exercise in which some of the theoretical elements previously presented can be tested and questioned if necessary. External links will be included for more information.</td>
<td>Each division will begin by giving students the conceptual clarification of what each type of paragraph is. External links will be included for more information.</td>
<td>The lesson will include a selection of original texts from students of the major that have its components signaled. External links will be included for more information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activate</th>
<th>Activate</th>
<th>Activate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excerpt paragraphs of the same text which was used as</td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be asked to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Then, the lesson will have students practice on simple exercises in which they must identify or create the thesis statements or the topic sentences.</strong></td>
<td><strong>a base for lesson 1 will be shown for students to relate them to the theoretical principles previously presented.</strong></td>
<td><strong>identify the order of a series of paragraphs from the same essay according to their characteristics. Then they can share their experience in the comments section. Students will be then invited to share their own productions in the Writing Lab.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Finally, students will be asked to share in the Writing Lab some thesis statements and/or topic sentences with the community.** | **Activate**
By recognizing the characteristics of the types of paragraphs, they will have the opportunity to share examples of their own with the community and select out of a group the correct type. |  |
| **Self-Assess/Peer-assess**
This can be done while in the exercises or in the Writing lab. | **Self-Assess/Peer-assess**
Done through the exercises and in the Writing lab. | **Self-Assess/Peer-assess**
Done mainly through the Writing lab. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Did you learn something with the material (WeWrite)?</th>
<th>Did your answer was &quot;Yes&quot; tell us about what you learned. If your answer was &quot;No&quot; tell us what and why didn't you learn.</th>
<th>Did you like the material (WeWrite)?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
<th>What do you think about the Unit 3 (WeWrite like Chomsky)?</th>
<th>What do you think about the Writing Lab?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1 (P1)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Material is short in content but it is pretty precise. As there are some activities that can't be done yet, the page looks incomplete. The WeWrite like Chomsky argumentative essay exercise was interesting and I enjoyed the concepts and definitions because they were short and straight to the point.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I loved the visuals. The images and the colors caught my attention right away. I also liked the way we can practice the lessons through the webpage, the examples were interesting.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>It is useful that you remind the writer all necessary definitions and the structure of each essay. I loved the way you relate a type of essay with a renown personality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2 (P2)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I already knew the topics, however I could strengthen some of them. An example of this could be the selection of the topic sentences because I realized how important it is to keep in mind the purpose of my thesis statement at the moment of formulate those principal arguments.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>It is eye-catching. Nevertheless, I had some difficulties in the use of the page. I think it is because of my bad theme.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>About the unit I think it has good resources, the explanations are clear. I suggest that quizzes could be just a little bit longer. It is not about to do a hard exam but if we have more options for practicing it will be better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C: Answers to the questionnaire after the piloting exercise of the access-self material (WeWrite) made with two volunteers.
## Appendix D

Classification of entries by categories of students’ interactions and shared texts

### Acknowledging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ack. the Writer</th>
<th>“I like your hook.” (P2 → P1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The way you started your introduction is really catching” (P2 → P1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But I like really much your topic and you have good ideas.” (P2 → P1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like your topic.” (P3 → P2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“for me your thesis statement was clear enough.” (P3 → P2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like your thesis statement” (P4 → P2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I really liked this topic.” (P1 → P4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“But in general aspects its a great introduction paragraph.” (P1 → P4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The topic is interesting and a lot can be said about it.” (P7 → P6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It looks interesting…” (P4 → P3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Regarding your introductory paragraph I would like to tell you that I think it is very interesting how you use statistics to show the impact of the phenomenon” (P8 → P3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Good one!” (P9 → P10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“as soon as I read your hook I took a liking to your introduction. I like the way you provide a context for the reader who does not handle the subject.” (P12 → P8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I have to say that I you chose a very interesting topic” (P8 → P12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I really liked your Hook!” (P8 → P12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Good job :)” (P8 → P12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Your topic is very interesting” (P6 → P13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“your Introduction and your topic are great.” (P6 → P14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Your topic is innovative” (P6 → P15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“your Introduction is very good.” (P6 → P16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“and you managed very well to create a big picture for the reader to understand the situation about guns in the U.S.” (P8 → P12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ack. One’s Own Reaction to the Text</th>
<th>“I would like to see more about it!” (P4 → P2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“i would like to read more about it! 😃” (P4 → P3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Although this topic is not attractive to me, you caught my attention thanks to the way you develop your introductory paragraph.” (P9 → P8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like all the different expressions you use because it creates a very good atmosphere for the reader. :)” (P12 → P8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like a lot your topic, it’s so interesting. Beside, I think you have a good introduction paragraph because you use clear and meaningful information :)” (P9 → P7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Giving Feedback

“The second sentence that starts with childhood is really good but is a little bit long.” (P2 → P1)
“I also think you can be more specific with your thesis.” (P2 → P1)
“Also, would you consider a more appealing and catchy title for your essay? It is somehow plain :).” (P7 → P6)
“However, I consider you should clearly state the problem, in this case if you think that teen pregnancy is a problem.” (P8 → P3)
“Just one little thing about punctuation” (P9 → P10)
“Some things I found
-20-year-old: avoid adding the ‘S’
-Entered the school: ED
-And I really don’t understand what you mean by provision :P” (P8 → P12)
“But I am not sure if the first sentence is the best to be the first” (P6 → P13)

Giving Advice

“I would advice you to use a period after the word future and then use a connector like also just to make the sentence shorter.” (P2 → P1)
“Regarding that it is a known topic, it should be better if you add some studies or any source that talk about
Agrochemicals in corps, in order to make it more powerful.” (P3 → P2)
“Personally, I would change just a few things. Perhaps, I would add quotation marks in this sentence “it still exists
94 countries worldwide in which this capital punishment is applied.” and add the source of info. Also, I would use
hedging in some sentences where you stated points that are not 100% sure. EX> “In most cases, people ///MIGHT///
conceive death penalty as an effective way of reducing crime rates” ” (P1 → P4)
“Nevertheless, I would recommend to check punctuation ;)” (P7 → P6)
“Maybe you should explain why it is a problem, and how is it affecting the population or the characteristics of the
people implied.” (P8 → P3)
“I think before “although...” could be a period because I see that sentence is too long.” (P9 → P10)
“Just one thing, don’t forget mention the author (quote).” (P9 → P8)
“you could put the references of your quotes. :) think also a better title.” (P6 → P13)
“Think about a good title to your article. ;)” (P6 → P14)
“but you could develop more ideas about your topic before your thesis, and put some references.” (P6 → P15)
“Think about a good title to your essay.”” (P6 → P15)
“You only could put some references. ;)” (P6 → P16)

Recognizing One’s Own Weaknesses

“As Lina said, it would be great that we add some surveys to support the ideas... Neither did I do that 😞” (P4 → P2)

Accepting Feedback

“Thanks! I'll do it!” (P4 → P1)
“If you read carefully, you can find the quote's author right there. Thaks for your comments 😊” (P8 → P9)
### Appendix E
Classification of entries by categories of students’ comments about the Writing Lab

**Acknowledging**

| Ack. the opportunity the material provides of collaborating | “Definitely, it is a good website because of forums that allow students to have a communication between them as authors and lectors.” (P9) |
| | “Besides, it may help us to know and consider our partners’ opinions in different domains, which is sometimes difficult to reach during the class.” (P8) |
| | “I like the concept of the website because you can write about any topic and get feedback.” (P3) |
| | “I like the forum idea because you can share with others and get corrected” (P2) |
| Ack. the possibility of improvement provided by the material | “tools as this one that gives us the opportunity to improve in writing skills.” (P9) |
| | “Interacting with peers is a meaningful way to see what kind of mistakes I am committing and how I can improve them.” (P9) |
| | “It may contribute to find mistakes that as a writer we ignore, but as a readers we find easily.” (P8) |
| | “[...] I am not a good writer; however, I am always searching new ways to improve it.” (P3) |
| | “I have recommended it and I will keep doing it. For some, me included, writing in your L2 is a challenge. But this page gives you what you need in order to become better writers.” (P1) |
| Ack. the usefulness of the material in the writing process | “I think this site is very useful since it provides a no conventional space for learners to interact and help each other in the writing process.” (P8) |
| | “The site is an useful tool to check your essays, also it can be helpful if you have particular doubts about your essays or if you cannot ask your teacher at a particular moment.” (P7) |
| | “The writing Lab is a useful tool for everyone who is interested in their writing process. I found it interesting because I am not a good writer;” (P3) |
| | “I think that if someone needs help with choosing a topic, the Writing Lab can provide them not only with any topic, but it also provides samples of essays.” (P3) |
| | “it is really useful for our writing process” (P2) |

**Giving Advice**

“Also, I would really recommend to use a toolbox to help you to edit the contents of your texts. Very few of us understand how HTML code works… and editing through commands.
can be very time-consuming just to make our texts more appealing.” (P7)
“Maybe, it can be also use to share other stuff like workshops or useful links to other resources! :) (P7)
“To create and, moreover, to spread virally a webpage is not an easy task. It would be a great idea to use social webpages to do it, I am completely sure that by doing it this page might get more visitors, thus, more people can have access to all the tools that this webpage provides.” (P1)

**Expressing thoughts towards the material**

“It is a good job :) :)” (P9)
“the site is great!” (P7)
“I liked very much this website” (P2)
“I just did not like that every time I will write something I have to write a code that i think its because of security but im asked everytime i write.” (P2)
“But in general its a really creative and good website to practice” (P2)

**Reporting technical issues**

“it needs to be fixed because the link has many problems, so I had to refresh the site a lot.” (P9)
“there seems to be a problem with the WRITING LAB link” (P7)
“I do not know if it is just me, but the page does not load properly or it just crashes. Also, from time to time the posts are not uploaded to the forum (this is the third time I write this post) and you lose your progress..” (P7)
“I really do not know the real purpose of the codes at the end of the page, but it does not affect the process of writing.” (P3)
Appendix F

Map of categories of the possible roles of the access-self material in students’ development of writing skills.
Appendix G

Map of categories of students’ opinions in relation to the content and form of the access-self material.