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INTENSIVE READING AS A DIDACTIC STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS OF ENGLISH WRITING IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The use of intensive reading to improve the rhetorical functions of written expression in English of university students at level B1 according to the CEFR is analyzed. A quasi-experimental research design was used, applying qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the influence of intensive reading on written expression. Sixty students from the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo participated. Data were collected through structured observation, with pre-test and post-test evaluations to measure the results in control and experimental groups. The results indicate significant improvements in the experimental group regarding indicators of written expression such as the definition of terms, comprehension, explanation of idiomatic phrases, exemplification, association, coherence and cohesion, grammar and spelling, writing, and transmission of ideas. The study emphasizes the critical role of written production in academic and professional contexts, facilitating effective communication through a structured integration process of receptive and productive skills. It is concluded that intensive reading is a valuable tool that allows students to improve their comprehension and written production, and it is recommended that it be integrated into teaching programs to strengthen receptive and productive skills.

KEYWORDS: English B1 Level, Intensive Reading, Rhetorical Functions, Written Expression.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalised academic environment, proficiency in English writing has become essential for university students' academic success and professional development in English and non-English educational institutions. However, a significant number of learners at the B1 level struggle to express their ideas clearly and coherently in written form, limiting their ability to participate effectively in academic discourse. The mastery of communicative skills in this language frequently defines the ability to access information on the Internet and elite educational opportunities; therefore, it is essential to enhance its learning through a teaching method that reinforces linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic skills, i.e., communicative skills (Moreira-Aguayo & Venegas-Loor, 2020). A key skill to foster these communicative competencies is the ability to write.

Academic writing remains a significant challenge for both students and teachers of English, as many learners fail to achieve the proficiency levels required at the university level. Previous research has highlighted this issue as a persistent concern in higher education. Valverde and Caro (2015) indicate that this problem is associated with insufficient academic preparation, limited integration of digital resources in scientific training, and a lack of effective didactic materials to support writing development. Furthermore, there is ongoing debate regarding the appropriate use of digital tools in enhancing students' academic writing skills. On the one hand, technological tools such as text generators facilitate the production of sentences, paragraphs, essays, etc., quickly while providing immediate feedback on grammar, style, and coherence. On the other hand, there is concern among teachers about the potential effects of over-reliance on these technologies, leading to a passive approach to writing, loss of creativity, and diminished critical thinking (Garg, 2024). For this reason, this paper serves as a guide for those who value the relevance of academic writing in their language education. Academic writing plays a crucial role in linguistic development, as it favors acquisition, participation, and access to culture, allowing students to master the written language and adapt to the discursive norms specific to their field of study (Reyes, 2020). Academic production favors critical thinking and the formation of academic identities, fulfilling epistemic, rhetorical, enabling, critical, and expressive functions (Navarro, 2021).

Despite the growing importance of English writing skills, many university students encounter

considerable difficulties when attempting to express their ideas clearly and coherently in written form. These difficulties are often associated with limited vocabulary, insufficient knowledge of grammatical structures, and a lack of familiarity with the rhetorical conventions of academic writing. Consequently, students frequently struggle to organise ideas logically, construct coherent arguments, and convey meaning effectively (Habi and Musdzal, 2025).

Academic writing is a complex cognitive process that requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge with higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and argumentation. Through writing, students not only demonstrate their understanding of academic content but also develop the ability to construct coherent and logically organized arguments. However, many learners at the B1 level struggle to achieve this level of proficiency, particularly in terms of coherence, clarity, and rhetorical organization.

Previous research highlights a strong interdependence between reading and writing skills, suggesting that exposure to well-structured texts can support the development of written expression. By engaging with academic texts, learners can observe how ideas are organized, how arguments are developed, and how linguistic resources are used effectively (Wei & Jianda, 2023). Nevertheless, while these studies confirm the general relationship between reading and writing, limited attention has been given to how intensive reading specifically contributes to the development of rhetorical functions in academic writing. This gap indicates the need for further investigation into targeted reading strategies that can enhance students' writing performance.

Among the various reading strategies employed in language education, intensive reading has received particular attention as a pedagogical approach that encourages detailed analysis of texts. Through intensive reading, students examine vocabulary, grammatical structures, and discourse patterns, thereby developing a deeper understanding of how language functions within written communication.

To address this gap in the literature, the present study investigates the effectiveness of intensive reading as a didactic strategy for improving the written production of B1-level English students at the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo (ESPOCH). Specifically, the study examines the extent to which intensive reading enhances the rhetorical functions of academic writing such as

definition, exemplification, and logical organisation of ideas among B1-level learners. In addition, the research compares the written performance of students in the experimental group with that of those in the control group while controlling their pre-intervention writing abilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Importance of Reading in the Teaching-learning Process of the English Language

Intensive reading is widely recognised as a fundamental component of language learning. Through reading, learners are exposed to authentic linguistic structures, vocabulary, and discourse patterns that contribute to the development of communicative competence. Reading activities also provide learners with opportunities to engage with meaningful texts and expand their knowledge across a variety of academic disciplines.

Numerous studies have examined ER as a strategy that promotes language development through exposure to meaningful and comprehensible input. In higher education contexts, reading plays an especially important role because students are required to interpret complex information and engage with academic literature in English. Regular exposure to written texts enables learners to develop vocabulary knowledge, grammatical awareness, and comprehension skills, which are essential for effective communication in both academic and professional settings (Tamirat and Gemechis, 2025).

2.2 Intensive Reading as a Strategy for English Language Teaching.

Several authors highlight that teacher-guided intensive reading allows a detailed and analytical approach to texts, facilitating deep comprehension and learning of complex linguistic structures (Ruiz, 2011). Mena (2023) explores the effects of intensive and extensive reading on the acquisition of English grammar. It highlights that intensive reading allows a detailed analysis of grammatical structures, contributing to students' grammatical competence development.

This method allows students to develop a deeper understanding of how language functions within specific contexts. By analysing texts closely, learners become more aware of linguistic patterns and rhetorical structures that can later be applied in their own written communication. As Yujiao and Jie (2023), demonstrate that analyzing rhetorical structures helps learners understand how language functions in academic contexts, linking syntactic

complexity to communicative purposes. This supports text analysis approaches like intensive or genre-based reading, enabling students to internalize linguistic patterns for their own writing. However, the findings are based on a specific corpus, limiting generalizability, and the study does not directly test how classroom instruction in rhetorical analysis impacts writing performance.

2.3 Development of Written Expression in English Learning

Yujie and Jinghui (2023), examined how linguistic complexity predicts the quality of second language (L2) academic writing. The researchers found that syntactic, lexical, and phraseological complexity significantly influence writing quality, indicating that successful academic writing requires learners to integrate grammar, vocabulary, and discourse organization when constructing texts. Critically, this finding supports the claim that writing is a highly complex skill in L2 learning because students must simultaneously manage linguistic accuracy and the logical organization of ideas. However, the study also implies that focusing only on grammatical correctness is insufficient; effective academic writing development requires instruction that also strengthens vocabulary sophistication and structural coherence, which are essential for clear academic communication.

Crespo and De Pinto's (2016) study highlights that writing in English is essential in secondary education. It helps students integrate vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic structures, improving their communicative competence. By applying strategies to overcome writing challenges, students strengthen their ability to use the language effectively in academic contexts, which favors their deep learning and proficiency in English.

2.4 Rhetorical Functions in the Written Expression of English Language Learning.

Several sources show how rhetorical functions in written production are fundamental for learning English, improving students' ability to communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts. Pérez Tapia's (1998) study highlights how rhetorical functions in English text summaries improve textual clarity and organization, enabling effective and well-structured communication. The research of Batista Vargas (2021) highlights that rhetorical functions in writing improve the organization of ideas and communication, helping to develop linguistic skills in educational contexts, including the coherent structuring of ideas and adequate use of grammar and vocabulary. It is highlighted that rhetorical

functions are key in academic writing in English, improving clarity and coherence in scientific discourse, and are fundamental in teaching (Martín Martín, 2010). For students learning English as a foreign language, developing these skills is particularly important because it enables them to participate more effectively in academic discourse.

2.5 English Writing Process: Coherence, Cohesion, Editing

Encinas *et al.* (2020), emphasizes that textual coherence and cohesion are fundamental to achieving clear communication in writing in English as a foreign language. Techniques related to the proper use of connectors to link ideas, logical structuring of texts, proofreading and editing of writing, and incorporating quotations coherently help to organize ideas logically and connect sentences, improving comprehension of the message. Without these tools, texts can be confusing and ineffective.

2.6 Meaning Convention in the Written Expression of English Language Learning

Some scientific articles address the importance of the conventions of meaning in the written expression of English learning, focusing on the proper transmission of ideas and the correct use of language. Orts (2013) analyzes how the conventions of scientific writing in English are deeply influenced by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which emphasizes critical thinking and empirical research. He details the structure and linguistic elements used in scientific writing, highlighting the importance of objectivity, clarity, and precision. (Schleppegrell, 2004) explores how linguistic conventions in academic writing in English facilitate the expression of complex ideas and the development of communicative skills in educational contexts, referring to the language structures and rules that guide organization, grammar, vocabulary, and style in academic writing in English; these conventions are essential for conveying complex ideas clearly and coherently in educational contexts.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design is quasi-experimental since we worked with a group of students in which the research variables were manipulated, establishing the cause-effect relationship. The approach is qualitative and quantitative; the qualitative approach is related to the independent variable corresponding to intensive reading, and the quantitative approach is related to the dependent variable, written expression. The information is collected at the place of the group studied, so it is field research. The bibliographic documentary research was required for the theoretical and legal foundation.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

Participants

The sample comprises 60 students taking the B1 level English course at the Faculty of Computer Science and Electronics of the Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo. The students were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group, each consisting of thirty participants.

Instruments

The data was collected using the structured observation and written assessments technique designed to evaluate students' rhetorical and linguistic abilities, according to the parameters and criteria of the research variables, with participant modality, since the teacher researchers were directly involved in the study where the investigated phenomena took place, therefore, it is also a field observation. It is a qualitative type of observation since it depends on the researchers to analyze the reading and written comprehension of those investigated. A rubric was used to establish assessment scales to evaluate the students achievements after the intervention and compare them with the data collected at the beginning of the research.

Table 1. Analytical rubric used to assess students' academic writing performance.

Criterion	Excellent (5)	Very Good (4)	Good (3)	Average (2)	Poor (1)
Definition	Concepts are clearly and accurately defined with precise academic language.	Concepts are defined clearly with minor inaccuracies.	Basic definition provided but lacks clarity or precision.	Definition is vague or partially incorrect.	No clear definition or completely incorrect.
Explanation	Ideas are thoroughly explained and demonstrate deep understanding.	Ideas are explained clearly with minor gaps.	Explanation is understandable but somewhat limited.	Explanation is weak and lacks clarity.	Ideas are not explained.
Exemplification	Relevant and clear examples strongly support the ideas.	Examples support ideas but may lack depth.	Some examples are provided but are limited or partially relevant.	Examples are unclear or weakly connected.	No examples are provided.

Comparison	Clear and logical comparison or contrast between ideas or concepts.	Comparison is present but slightly limited.	Basic comparison is attempted.	Comparison is unclear or poorly developed.	No comparison provided.
Coherence	Ideas are logically organized with a clear progression.	Organization is mostly logical with minor issues.	Organization is somewhat clear but inconsistent.	Ideas are poorly organized.	No logical organization.
Cohesion	Effective use of connectors, transitions, and grammatical links.	Connectors used with minor errors.	Limited use of cohesive devices.	Very few connectors used.	No cohesive devices used.
Form and Edition	Correct grammar, punctuation, and formatting throughout.	Minor grammatical or formatting errors.	Some noticeable errors that do not hinder understanding.	Frequent errors affecting readability.	Serious errors that make text difficult to understand.
Content	Ideas are highly relevant, clear, and academically developed.	Content is relevant with some development.	Content is adequate but lacks depth.	Content is limited or partially irrelevant.	Content is unclear or irrelevant.

Note; Students' written texts were evaluated using an analytical rubric consisting of eight criteria: definition, explanation, exemplification, comparison, coherence, cohesion, form and edition, and content. Each criterion was rated on a five-point scale ranging from poor (1) to excellent (5). The rubric used for the assessment is presented in Table 1.

Data Collection Procedure

A pre-test was administered to both groups at the beginning of the study to establish their initial level of writing competence. Following the instructional intervention, a post-test was conducted to measure any improvements in students' writing performance.

3.3 Data analysis

The data were processed using Microsoft Excel, allowing the generation of graphs and tables with scales, frequencies, and percentages for each of the evaluation items. The qualitative rating scale is organized in descending order with the options excellent, very good, good, average, and poor, associated with their respective numerical equivalents: 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. From the information in each table, histograms were constructed, followed by the analysis corresponding to each item or parameter. This analysis compares the Pre- and Post-test results for the experimental group, where the intervention was implemented, and for the control group. In addition, a qualitative analysis was carried out based on the results obtained.

The Z-score was used as a statistician to evaluate the hypothesis, determining whether it should be accepted or rejected. This score was plotted on the standard curve. In addition, four tables will be included detailing the pre-test and post-test results for both the control and experimental groups, presented in the results section.

3.4 Educational intervention

An educational proposal is presented to improve the writing skills of English students at ESPOCH, aiming to reach level B1 according to the CEFR. The

proposal includes a workbook that uses a methodology based on the communicative approach, integrating reading and writing to foster the development of complete language skills. Specific techniques and strategies include using adapted texts to practice skimming and scanning, exercises linking key vocabulary and grammatical structures, and written production tasks based on given models to prepare students for the Cambridge PET test. This methodology seeks to facilitate the internalization of semantic and syntactic components necessary for effective and autonomous writing.

4. FINDINGS

The results were analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of intensive reading as an intervention strategy to improve written production. A comparison between the experimental and control groups was conducted through pre-test and post-test assessments. The analysis focused on several dimensions of writing development, including the definition of key terms, comprehension of idiomatic expressions, exemplification ability, contextual association, logical organization of ideas, grammatical cohesion, and academic editing of texts.

Overall, the findings indicate that students in the experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement after the intervention, particularly in areas related to textual coherence, vocabulary use, and the effective transmission of ideas in academic writing. In contrast, the control group showed only minor progress, suggesting that the improvement observed in the experimental group can be attributed to the implementation of intensive reading strategies.

These findings align with Mena (2023),

supporting the view that intensive reading promotes deeper engagement with textual structures, which in

turn enhances students' linguistic and writing abilities.

4.1 Pre-test and post-test results on rhetorical functions of written production using intensive reading

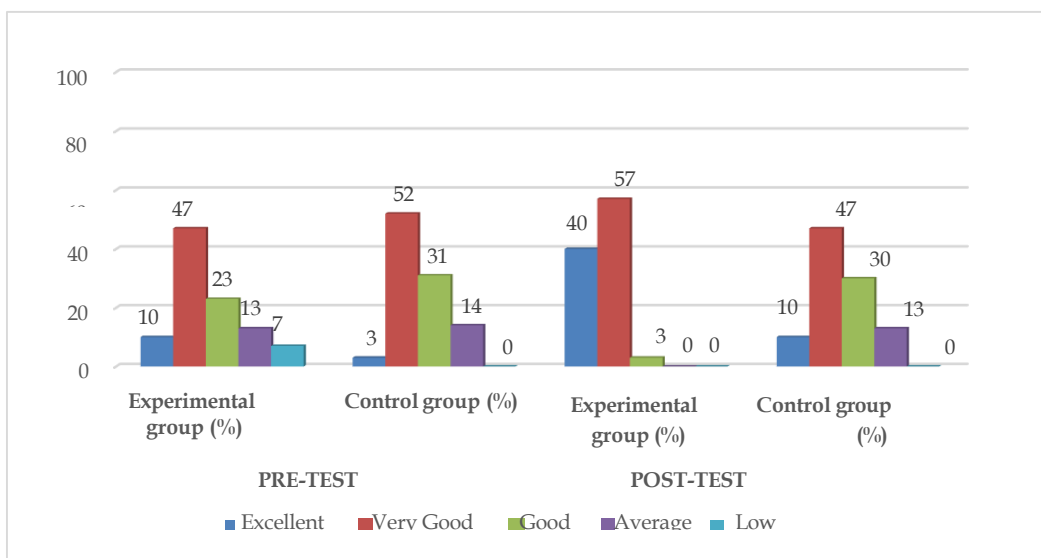


Figure 1. Ability to Adequately Define Basic Terminology Related to a Text.

The results presented in Figure 1 are related to the Definition parameter, which refers to students' ability to explain keywords within the context of a text. This question evaluates pre-writing skills. According to the results obtained in the pre-test, it is observed that both the experimental group and the control group have, for the most part, a very high level of skill, classified as "Very good" on the qualitative rating scale, with 47% and 52%, respectively. The second most prominent category is "Good," with 23% for the experimental group and 31% for the control group. It is evident that the results of the control group in this item are slightly

higher than those of the experimental group, but in general, both groups show an adequate performance in this skill.

The post-intervention results demonstrate a marked improvement in students' performance, particularly in the definition skills of the students in the experimental group, going from 10% of students on the "Excellent" scale to 40%. An increase is also observed in the "Very good" scale, from 47% to 57%, while the results in the lower scales decrease considerably. For this part, the control group slightly improved compared to the pre-test results.

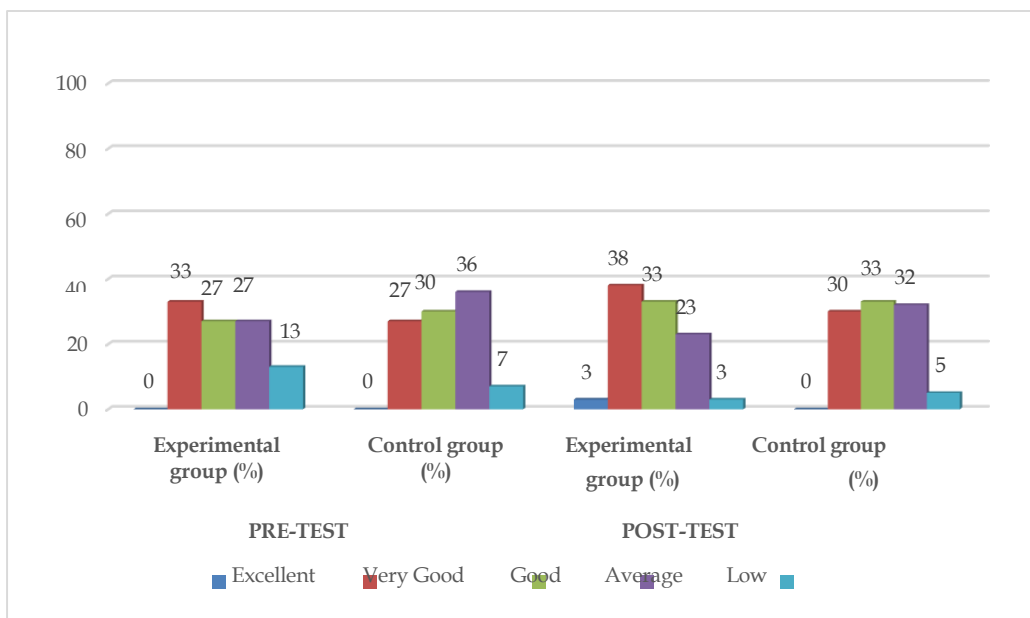


Figure 2. Understanding and Explaining Idiomatic Phrases and Collocations in Context.

Figure 2 shows the data on the students' ability to understand and explain idiomatic phrases and colloquial expressions within a text as part of the prewriting process. Regarding the pre-test results in this parameter, it can be stated that both the experimental group and the control group show minimal differences in the "very good," "good," "average," and "low" scales. Neither group had students with excellent results (0%), but many had low results. It is concluded that both groups present similar characteristics in terms of their performance

in this aspect of evaluation.

According to the post-test results, the experimental group showed moderate improvement, reaching 38% on the "Very good" scale, while the control group demonstrated only slight progress up to 30%. These results suggest that exposure to texts through intensive reading can facilitate better recognition and interpretation of idiomatic language in context. In conclusion, the experimental group slightly improved in developing this evaluation parameter compared to the control group.

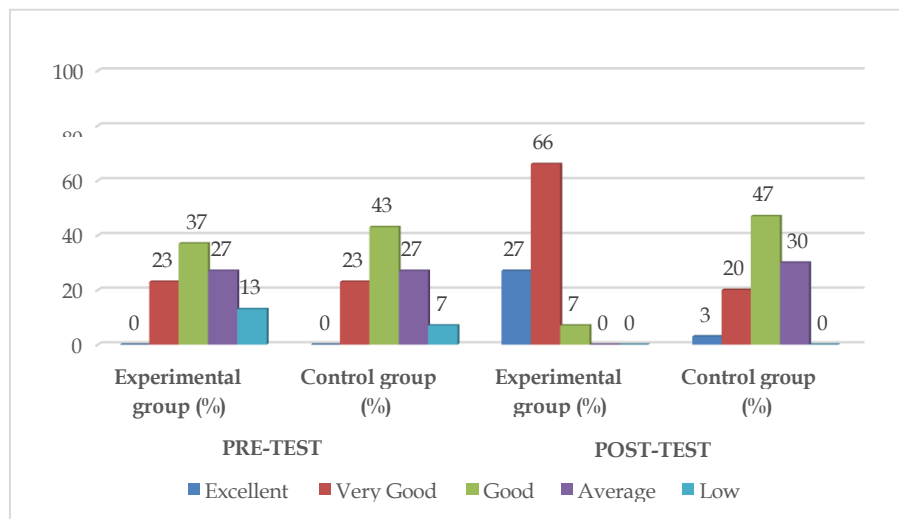


Figure 3. Ability to Exemplify Items from a Text to Verify Comprehension.

Figure 3 shows the pre-test analysis indicated that students in both groups experienced difficulties providing examples to support textual understanding, as no participants reached the highest evaluation level.

After the intervention in the experimental group, 66% of the participants performed on the "Very good" evaluation scale, going from 23% in the pre-test to

66% in the post-test. In addition, the experimental group significantly improved the "Excellent" scale, going from 0% in the pre-test to 27% in the post-test. On the other hand, the control group showed very similar results in both the pre-test and post-test. It is concluded that the experimental group improved considerably in their ability to exemplify and, in turn, broadened their semantic spectrum.

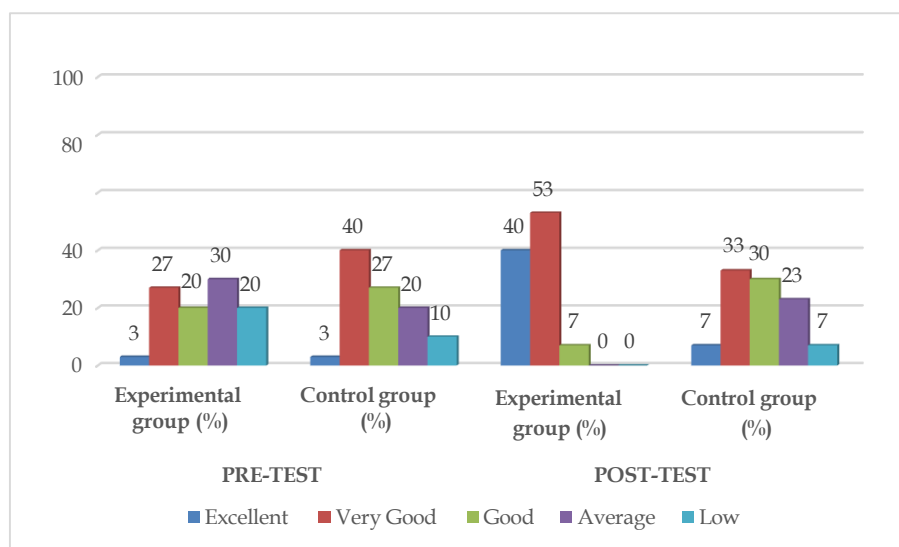


Figure 4. Ability to Associate Situations in the Text with Real Life Situations.

This refers to the ability to associate situations described in a context with real-life situations presented in Figure 4. The analysis shows neither group masters this skill, as both have a 3% achievement on the "Excellent" scale. The control group has a slight advantage over the experimental group in this parameter since, in the following two scales, considered as adequate development, the results of this group are slightly higher than those of the experimental group. In the average and low-performance scales, the experimental group presents more students than the control group. Therefore, the control group performs slightly better than the experimental group in this evaluation parameter.

The results obtained in evaluating this item in the

post-test show a significant improvement in the experimental group, which was initially at a disadvantage compared to the control group according to the pre-test results. The performance scales increased considerably, from 3% to 40% on the "Excellent" scale and from 27% to 53% on the "Very good" scale. Seven percent of the participants in the experimental group were on the "Good" scale, and no participants were on the lower scale. On the other hand, the control group showed a slight improvement in this aspect compared to the pre-test results. It is concluded that the experimental group significantly improved their ability to associate situations in a text with real situations, increasing their vocabulary level and reading comprehension ability.

4.2 Pre-test and post-test results on the writing process using intensive reading

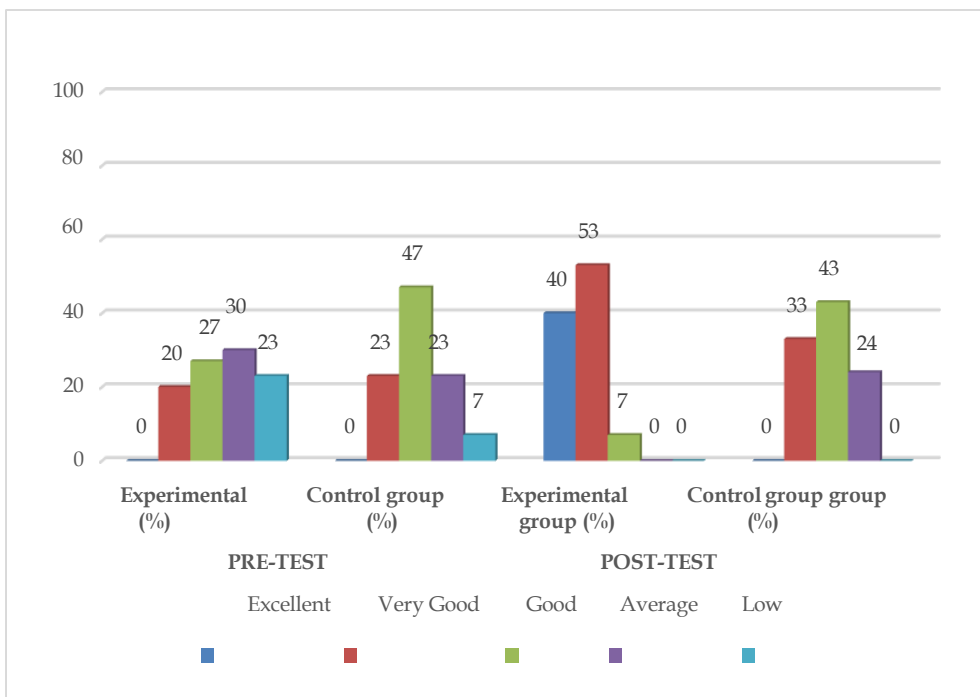


Figure 5. Processing of Ideas in Logical and Sequential Order with Details of Form.

The ability to organize ideas logically, chronologically, and sequentially, using adequate vocabulary is evaluated. The pre-test results indicated in Figure 5, that students in both groups struggled with organizing ideas logically and sequentially showing 0% on this scale, although the control group initially demonstrated slightly stronger performance.

The pre-test data are shown in Figure 5, indicating that no student in the experimental or control groups reached the "Excellent" category, showing 0% on this scale. However, the control group outperforms the experimental group in the "Very Good" and "Good" categories, with 23% and 47%, respectively, compared to 20% and 27% for the experimental group. In addition,

the control group shows a more homogeneous performance across the various rating categories, from "Very Good" to "Low." In conclusion, the control group performs better in organizing ideas logically, chronologically, and sequentially.

The post-test analysis shows a significant improvement in the experimental group: in the "Excellent" scale, performance increased from 0% to 40%; in "Very Good," it improved from 20% to 53%; and only 7% of the students were classified as "Good." The control group's results were similar to the pre-test's, with no notable "Low" scale changes. It is concluded that the experimental group showed a positive response to the intervention, with results in the post-test significantly better than in the pre-test.

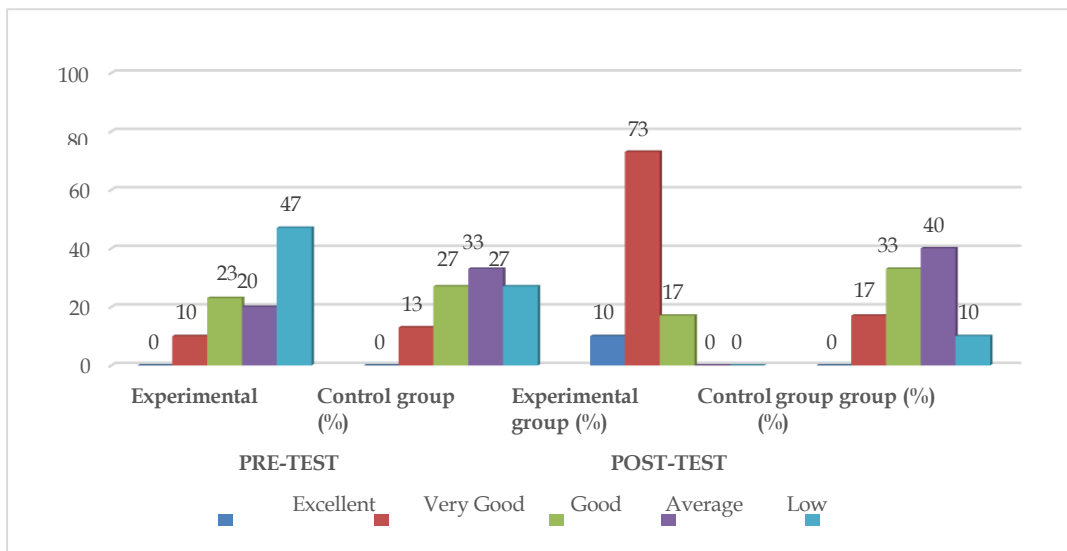


Figure 6. Ability to Connect Ideas with Appropriate Grammatical Elements and Correct Spelling.

Figure 6 presents the pre-test results on the students' ability to connect ideas using appropriate grammatical elements and correct spelling, in addition to developing syntactic components and appropriate use of vocabulary based on a model text. The results indicate that the control group outperforms the experimental group in the "Very Good," "Good," and "Average" categories, with percentages of 13%, 27% and 33%, respectively, compared to 10%, 23% and 20% for the experimental group. However, the experimental group showed a higher proportion in the "Low" category, with 47%, compared to 27% of the control group, indicating poor performance in this aspect. None of the groups reached the "Excellent" category. Although the control group showed better percentages than the experimental group, both groups needed to improve cohesion and connection of ideas. According to the

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Coherence and Cohesion for level B1 consists of the learner: "Linking a series of short, concrete and simple elements to create a cohesive and linear sequence".

The post-test results show a significant improvement in the experimental group in this ability: in the "Excellent" scale, an increase from 0% in the pre-test to 10% in the post-test was observed; in "Very Good," the increase was from 10% to 73%. However, on the "Good" scale, there was a decrease from 23% to 17%, and no results were reported on lower scales. On the other hand, the control group also improved, although without achieving results in the "Excellent" category. In conclusion, after the intervention, the experimental group significantly improved in managing this skill.

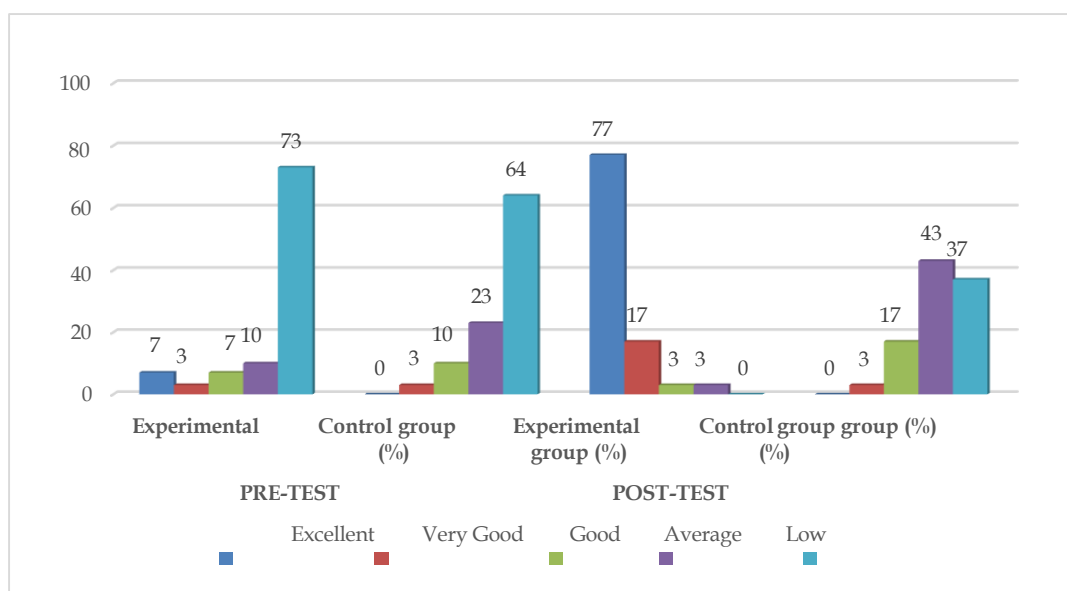


Figure 7. Ability to write texts including all their academic components.

The students' ability to edit their texts, focusing on the content and syntactic components from an academic perspective, and their pre-test results are shown in Figure 7. The experimental group has the highest percentage in the "Low" category, with 73%, while the control group registers 64% in the same category. The other scales show very low percentages for both groups. However, the control group showed slightly higher performance in developing this skill. In conclusion, both groups show low performance in this parameter, although the difficulties are more pronounced in the experimental group.

4.3 Pre-test and post-test results on the convention of meaning in written production using intensive reading.

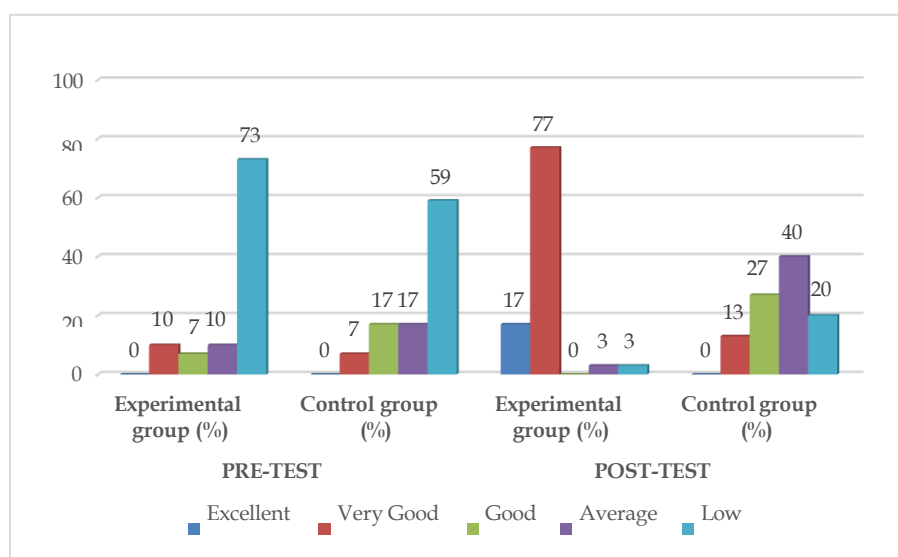


Figure 8. Adequate transmission of ideas with appropriate language and meaningful details.

Figure 8 shows the results in conveying ideas effectively in an essay, using appropriate language and meaningful details, including semantic and syntactic components and formal elements. The pre-test results reveal that the experimental and control groups faced significant difficulties in this aspect, with the highest percentages in the "Low" scale being 73% and 59%, respectively. The other qualitative scales showed very low values. Direct observation suggests that these difficulties could be due to inadequate time management, which prevented many students from adequately completing this part of the pre-test. In conclusion, both groups demonstrated insufficient performance in writing texts with the necessary academic, semantic, and syntactic elements, although the control group showed a slight advantage.

After participating in an intervention program, the experimental group significantly improved this competence. In the post-test, the percentage of

In the post-test, the experimental group showed a marked improvement in this aspect, with an increase in the "Excellent" category from 7% to 77%. However, the "Very Good," "Good," and "Average" categories registered lower averages of 17%, 3%, and 3% respectively. Meanwhile, the control group experienced a modest increase in the "Good" and "Average" categories from 10% to 17% and 23% to 43% between the pre-test and post-test, respectively. It is concluded that the experimental group's performance improved significantly after the intervention, especially in writing academically compliant texts prior to editing.

students achieving the "Excellent" category increased from 0% to 17%, and in "Very Good" from 10% to 77%. The "Average" and "Low" percentages were minimal, with only 3% each. On the other hand, the control group also experienced improvements, although less noticeable compared to the experimental group. The experimental group exhibited considerable improvement in academic writing, excelling in using semantic and syntactic components, and adhering to academic writing norms.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study extend beyond descriptive outcomes by demonstrating how intensive reading functions as a mechanism for developing rhetorical competence within the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B1 level. While both groups initially exhibited adequate lexical knowledge and basic grammatical

awareness, their inability to integrate these elements into coherent written discourse reflects a gap between declarative knowledge and procedural use. This aligns with recent research emphasizing that writing proficiency at the B1 level requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the ability to organize meaning across sentences and rhetorical units (Biber et al., 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, intensive reading contributes to writing development by providing repeated exposure to well-structured texts, enabling learners to internalize discourse patterns such as definition, exemplification, and logical sequencing. These rhetorical functions are central to CEFR descriptors for intermediate learners, which highlight the ability to produce connected text and express relationships between ideas. The improvement observed in the experimental group suggests that structured reading tasks facilitated noticing and uptake of syntactic and discourse-level features, supporting contemporary models of integrated language development in which input-driven learning enhances written output (Liu, 2024; Xiaopeng and Xiaofei, 2024).

The pre-test results also revealed that limited familiarity with efficient reading strategies, particularly speed reading, constrained students' performance. This supports emerging evidence that superficial digital reading habits may weaken deep processing skills required for academic writing (Ladislao Salmerón et al., 2023). However, the post-test gains in the experimental group indicate that targeted intervention can mitigate these effects by promoting deeper engagement with texts and enhancing cognitive processing of linguistic input, particularly when instruction incorporates meaningful, strategy-based activities that foster motivation and critical thinking (Camila, 2022).

Despite these positive outcomes, several potential confounding variables must be critically considered. First, teacher involvement during the intervention may have influenced student performance, as increased guidance and feedback are known to impact writing development independently of instructional strategy. Second, learner motivation could have been higher in the experimental group due to exposure to novel and interactive activities, which may partially account for their improvement. Third, the role of digital tools and materials was not controlled, and variations in students' access to or familiarity with such resources could have affected both reading and writing outcomes. Future studies should isolate these variables to better determine the specific contribution of intensive reading.

Finally, the strong correlation between the pre-test and post-test, the data reveal that the experimental group ($r = 0.88$) suggests not only consistency but also meaningful learning progression, reinforcing the effectiveness of the intervention. In contrast, the moderate correlation coefficient of 0.68 in the control group indicates limited development without targeted instructional support. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of integrating intensive reading into EFL curricula as a structured approach to developing both linguistic accuracy and rhetorical competence, particularly within CEFR-aligned frameworks.

6. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that intensive reading is an effective strategy for improving specific components of academic writing at the B1 level. The intervention led to measurable gains in students' ability to define key terms, interpret idiomatic expressions, provide relevant examples, and organise ideas coherently, reflecting a stronger integration of receptive and productive skills. These outcomes indicate that exposure to structured textual input can directly support the development of writing competence.

This study confirms that intensive reading is an effective strategy for improving specific components of academic writing at the B1 level. The intervention led to measurable gains in students' ability to define key terms, interpret idiomatic expressions, provide relevant examples, and organise ideas coherently, reflecting a stronger integration of receptive and productive skills. These outcomes indicate that exposure to structured textual input can directly support the development of writing competence.

The findings also reveal that existing teaching resources and practices at ESPOCH are insufficient to meet B1-level writing requirements, particularly in fostering reading writing connections. Therefore, English programs should incorporate intensive reading tasks that emphasize rhetorical structure, vocabulary in context, and guided text analysis. In addition, targeted teacher training and the alignment of materials with international proficiency standards are recommended to enhance instructional effectiveness. Therefore, English programs should incorporate intensive reading tasks that emphasize rhetorical structure, vocabulary in context, and guided text analysis. In addition, targeted teacher training and the alignment of materials with international proficiency standards are recommended to enhance instructional effectiveness.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study strongly recommend increasing the time dedicated to developing productive skills within the teaching-learning process. English teachers must integrate activities that strengthen receptive and productive skills since working on these skills in isolation does not favor effective communicative performance. Based on the experience acquired during the implementation of the educational intervention, it is suggested that the integration of receptive and productive strategies be carried out in stages. To enhance writing, it is advisable to structure the activities in three phases: Before, During, and After reading. The selection of resources and activities within the educational process should be done carefully, considering the needs of the students and the objectives established

Ethics Statements

The ethical criteria the Human Research Ethics Committee of ESPOCH set were considered. The students involved signed an informed consent to participate in the research. Minimal risk was considered, and personal data from the participants was not included in this study.

Generative AI Statement

The authors state that no generative AI tools were utilized in the writing or analysis of this manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

There were no reportable conflicts of interest associated with this publication.

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Authorship Contribution Statement

Padilla Padilla: Concept and design, data acquisition, data analysis/interpretation, drafting the manuscript, critical revision of the manuscript, statistical analysis, obtaining funding, administration, technical or material support, supervision, and final approval.

Lara Olivo: Data acquisition, data analysis/interpretation, manuscript writing, critical manuscript revision, statistical analysis, obtaining funding, administration, technical or material support.

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in each training unit. It is recommended that the product developed in this research be used as a didactic resource to improve the written production of ESPOCH B1 level students.

8. LIMITATIONS

The research's contribution is unquestionable; however, it should be recognized that there are limitations; the most relevant is that it is limited to a single university, which makes it difficult to generalize it to other educational contexts. In addition, the impact of the intensive reading methodology on students' written expression may vary according to the social and cultural context in other environments, so it is necessary to continue developing research that evaluates the impact of this methodology in other educational contexts.

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