

## **Implementación de diarios de escritura para potenciar la adquisición de conjugaciones verbales para el desarrollo del lenguaje individual y social con fines comunicativos**

Implementation of writing journals to enhance the acquisition of verb conjugations for development of language individual and social for communicative purposes

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### **RESUMEN**

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo implementar el Diario de Escritura como una estrategia pedagógica, creativa e innovadora para mejorar la adquisición de la conjugación verbal en inglés en estudiantes de 8° básico de una escuela pública del centro histórico norte de Barranquilla. Se utilizó un método mixto para la recolección y análisis de datos cuantitativos y cualitativos, y el paradigma utilizado fue el Paradigma del Pragmatismo. Asimismo, las estrategias de investigación utilizadas para la recolección de los datos fueron: cuestionarios con rúbrica de evaluación, entrevistas no estructuradas (informales) con los sujetos de estudio, entrevista estructurada (formal) con el profesor de inglés y observación de clase. Los resultados de este estudio demostraron que la estrategia de escribir un diario es un recurso valioso y constructivo para mejorar la adquisición y el desarrollo de la competencia gramatical en inglés en estudiantes de octavo grado. Además, subraya la importancia de una práctica gramatical coherente y progresiva para el beneficio y el desarrollo de la comunicación individual y social.

*Palabras claves:* diario de escritura, conjugaciones de verbos, estrategia de implementación, propósitos comunicativos, competencia lingüística, gramática, escritura.

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to implement Writing Journal as a pedagogical, creative and innovative strategy to improve the acquisition of verb conjugation in English in 8th grade students at a public school in north historic center of Barranquilla. A mixed method was used to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data, and the paradigm used was Pragmatism Paradigm. Likewise, the research strategies used to collect the data were: questionnaires with assessment rubric, no structured interviews (informal) with the study subjects, structured interview (formal) with the English teacher and class observation. The results of this study demonstrated that the writing journal strategy is a valuable and constructive resource for enhancing the acquisition and development of English grammatical competence in eighth-grade students. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of consistent and progressive grammar practice for the benefit and development of individual and social communication.

*Keywords:* writing journal, verbs conjugations, implementation strategy, communicative purposes, linguistic competence, grammar, writing.

## PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Grammar is a present, influential, and necessary linguistic competence within the teaching-learning processes of a foreign and native language at all educational levels in Colombia. It consists of two main components: syntax and morphology; where the implementation of writing correct verb conjugation represents the ability to produce grammatically logical sentences, development of language for individual formation and the constitution of society for communicative purposes for the benefit of the acquisition of English as a standardized foreign language in the country. Likewise, in schools, the teaching of grammar is of utmost importance for processes of affective communication, text comprehension, written production, vocabulary improvement, critical thinking development, and preparation for tests.

As well, there are many issues surrounding the teaching and learning of grammar in public schools in Barranquilla. However, one recurring problem is the lack of learning, teaching, and utilization of verb conjugation in English in all its grammatical tenses. Likewise, there is a lack of innovative or creative didactic strategies or tools that seek to depart from the traditional pedagogical method and include other models that promote the use of well-conjugated verbs.

Such is the case for eighth-grade students in a public school in Barranquilla, where there is a grammatical issue regarding the conjugation of verbs in English. Furthermore, despite having the physical resources to develop learning and teaching with various strategies that highlight the proper use of verbs, they are not utilized. Instead, the instruction is primarily based on explanations at the blackboard, in-class activities, workbooks, and having students come up to the board as a form of punishment for discipline issues and lack of knowledge.

The Ministry of National Education (2005) acknowledges that the foundations for a bilingual and competitive nation lie in the globalization of the foreign language to develop the ability to

communicate better, open borders, understand other contexts, appropriate knowledge, understand it, and enrich oneself. Therefore, it is imperative that classrooms work, investigate, apply, and design new ways to achieve proficiency in the foreign language with the best use of grammar for communication. This issue arises towards the implementation of writing strategies for the benefit of acquiring verb conjugation skills in different every day and academic situations that eighth-grade students in this institution face daily.

According to César (2015), "it is proposed that verbs encode argument structures that activate syntactic and semantic processing frameworks that go beyond the concrete designation of an action" (p. 20). Hence, there is a need to propose short-term and long-term solutions to address the current issues in the national education system, aiming to establish a grammatical mastery as a means of bold and fluent communication for the development and functionality of global communication.

In this regard, the present research is focused on the implementation of Writing Journal that allows eighth-grade students in a public school in the city of Barranquilla to strengthen their skills in verb conjugation and proper use of conjugated verbs in different tenses, addressing the described grammatical problem.

## Question research

How may the implementation of writing journal enhance the acquisition of verb conjugations for development of language individual formation and the constitution of society for communicative purposes in 8th grade students at a public school in Barranquilla?

## Literature Review

Regarding the acquisition of grammar, Rubio (2004) analyzes the treatment of grammar exercises in textbooks for a second foreign language to determine if the texts follow the communicative model. This study focuses on four textbooks in

Spanish, English, and German commonly used in state universities in the United States. The results indicated that the main emphasis of teaching still lies in written production and the mechanical practice of non-daily situations for the study subjects.

Moreover, Romani (2011) conducted research on the difficulties that teachers face when teaching English grammar as a second foreign language to students and the challenges they must overcome to learn it. Thus, this study aimed to investigate if there are significant differences in teachers' perceptions of difficulties related to gender, qualification, experience, and teaching level, using mean scores and T-tests to interpret the data. The results of this analysis concluded that the role of grammar rules in an academic context has been a significant problem for students, as grammar has been seen as an obstacle, compounded by the lack of innovative, creative, and cross-cutting methods, strategies, or tools that promote the teaching of English grammar.

Goodman (2014) states that "children learn a language best in an environment rich in opportunities to explore interesting objects and ideas (p.10)". Creating a pleasant working environment has become of utmost importance in helping students navigate and maintain an active role in their learning, especially in teaching grammar of a foreign language. Similarly, Ellis as cited in Aljani (2012) argues that "grammar is no longer seen as something meaningless, a set of context-independent rules prescribed about linguistic forms, but rather it is considered as a fundamental value for communication and indispensable mastery in the acquisition, learning, and fluency of a second language" (p. 415).

Besides, Cong (2020) considers the importance of defining what grammar is and what its purpose is, taking into account the current communicative educational era of language, where for many teachers and students, grammar is not essential for mastering a foreign language. However, Mr. Cong focuses his research on the important role that grammar plays in the development of students' linguistic system. Based on this, he conducts a critical evaluation to explore the effective way of

teaching grammar in languages. As a result, he demonstrates that grammar goes beyond a set of rules or structures, and having grammatical knowledge allows students to progress in their educational processes.

According to Siliwangi (2019), regarding writing, he considers it to be the most challenging skill to master when learning a new language. It requires not only vocabulary and oral fluency, but also grammar, which improves language usage and helps better understand the structure of words (morphology) and how to combine them to convey a broader meaning (syntax). To demonstrate this, he conducted a study analyzing grammatical errors in students' descriptive texts. The results showed that the majority of students make mistakes in verb agreement, incorrect use of tenses, pronouns, and capitalization. Besides, in a context of Indonesia, where writing is considered a painful activity and oral culture is more accepted, Iftanti (2016) posits that "it is necessary to improve the students' writing skills through a meaningful way namely writing journal article (p. 1)". Therefore, Mrs. Iftanti presents several discussions. As a result, writing journal ranks as one of the most comprehensive cognitive writing skills for learning, practicing, and improving a language.

Another example is in a study made by Trong (2010) with several EFL students who have difficulties in writing in English. Therefore, writing journal is used as a strategy to improve writing processes. The result of this research revealed that "the findings confirmed the benefits of writing a journal as an extensive activity to promote students' writing motivation, as well as to build a bond between teachers and students" (p. 81).

In brief, nowadays, it is no longer enough to simply explain the grammar and structure presented in textbooks and workbooks. It is now essential to address the needs of students, allowing them to connect with their motivations and learning strategies. To achieve this, various research has shown the advantages of using different teaching strategies or methods that involve the use of

grammatical structures in contextualized linguistic activities and games in real-life situations. The goal is to generate interest in students, improve their fluency and grammatical understanding, foster their autonomy, and expose them to the cultural and linguistic knowledge of the foreign language. All of this is done in a creative and enjoyable manner, allowing students to learn without fear of making mistakes and promoting the importance of learning, teaching, and promoting English grammar in the classroom.

## **METHOD**

The present research study opted for a mixed method, as Hernández-Sampieri (2014) considers that the objective of this type of research is to represent a set of systematic, empirical, and critical research processes to make inferences based on all the gathered information and to understand the phenomenon or problem under study. Therefore, the selection of this method is appropriate, as the previously identified problem seeks the implementation of pedagogical strategy as tool to improve the acquisition of verb conjugation in English in 8th grade students at a public school. Consequently, it will be necessary to infer the effectiveness through data collection and evaluate how these pedagogical strategies for teaching, learning, and understanding communicative communication in English promote the proper use of verb conjugation in different grammatical tenses. Furthermore, it is pertinent because this method allows for a broader, comprehensive, complete, and profound perspective of the students' situation regarding the teaching and learning of conversational and grammatical English.

## **Paradigm**

Taking into account what has been discerned in this research project and considering the relevance and conceptual plurality of the paradigm according to Kuhn cited in Miranda (2020) as "a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world that provides a philosophical framework for the organized study of this world" (p. 5), the paradigm that aligns

appropriately with this study is the Pragmatism paradigm. As Guerrero (2016) states pragmatism is a way of characterizing reality and scientific truth, that is, understanding the reality of a problem or phenomenon (p. 6).

## **Data sources**

The techniques and instruments used in the investigation are: questionnaires (with assessment rubric), structured interviews (formal) with the English teacher of the class and unstructured interviews (informal) with the study subjects, and observation (with a class observation guide by Colombian Ministry of National Education).

## **Questionnaires with assessment rubric**

According to Cisneros (2022), a questionnaire is "a series of organized, structured, and specific questions that allow for the measurement or evaluation of one or several variables defined in a study, in response to the research problem or hypothesis" (p. 1178). Additionally, it suggests that a questionnaire can include closed and open-ended questions. For this study, a questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended multiple-choice questions was used, where students had to select the verb conjugated in the appropriate grammatical tense for each question. For the quantitative evaluation, an assessment rubric was used, which according to Barrios (2018), "a rubric is an assessment tool or instrument that consists of a list of characteristics of a task to facilitate the evaluation of the quality of a product or learning domain" (p. 6). For this study, an assessment rubric was designed, which allows obtaining a score and thus determining the percentage of correct and incorrect answers.

## **Unstructured interview (informal) for students**

According to Barrios (2018), a rubric is an assessment tool or instrument that consists of a list of characteristics of a task to facilitate the evaluation of the quality of a product or learning domain. For this study, the researchers designed

an assessment rubric, which guided the students through each stage of the Role Play evaluation and provided them with a preview of the components to be evaluated during the activity. Similarly, for the recording of the interviews the instrument was used through a mobile recording application, such as voice notes, which provided high acoustic quality during the interviews, and regarding the transcription process, Kvale (2011) states that it is an interpretive process in which the differences between speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and major problems. This technique was used when the interview data was collected in its entirety. For the textual transcription of the interviews, the conventional transcription standards of Corpus ELE were employed and adapted to the needs of this research.

### **Structured interviews (formal) for English teacher**

From Blasco's (2018) point of view, a directed interview is one that is predetermined from its formulation of questions to the sequence in which they occur (p. 3). Additionally, it is a verbal, directed, preconceived instrument where researchers previously planned the structure of the questions, delimiting the topics with the intention of obtaining information about specific facts. Through this type of interview conducted with the English teacher in charge of 8th grade, it was possible to reaffirm the existing problem recognized by the teacher, as well as her attempts to solve and find ways to improve second language learning.

### **Observation (with a class observation guide by Colombian Ministry of National Education)**

Rodríguez cited in Rekalde (2014) considers that "observation is an interactive method of gathering information that requires the involvement of the observer in the observed events, as it allows us to obtain perceptions of the studied reality that would be difficult to achieve without emotional involvement" (p. 207). For educational purposes, the researchers observed three classes taught in

the same 8th-grade classroom of a public school in the southwest area of Barranquilla city. During this observation, the previously described issues, the teaching methodology employed by the regular teacher, the students' response to that methodology and strategy, their disposition towards the topic, and other aspects were evident. Additionally, a class observation guide provided by the Colombian Ministry of National Education was used, adjusted to the purposes of this research.

### **Population and context**

The research was conducted in a public school in north historic center of Barranquilla, with a focus on training educators, located in a neighborhood with a socio-economic classification of 2. The selected group was the 8th grade of high school in the daytime session, consisting of 30 students aged between 13 and 15 years old. It is a mixed-gender classroom, with different learning styles. The majority of students have not received external English language instruction outside the classroom. They do not engage in bilingual practices beyond the 4 hours of English class they have each week.

**TABLE 1. POPULATION OF 8 GRADE STUDENTS**

Category	Sub-category	
Gender	Male	21
	Female	9
Age	Less than 14	0
	Between 13-14	24
	13 years	5
	More than 15	1
Learning styles	Visual	12
	Auditory	5
	Verbal	8
	Kinesthetic	5
Learn English outside of the classroom	Yes	6
	No	24

*Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study*

**RESULT**

The results obtained from the research process are presented, which demonstrate significant evidence that both contributes to and reaffirms the previously described issue. It provides an enlightening perspective on the difficulties and patterns identified in this grammatical aspect of the language. Additionally, these findings offer a valuable insight into the contribution and impact of implementing a writing journal as a pedagogical

strategy to enhance grammatical acquisition for the benefit of comprehensive and coherent communication through proper verb conjugation. Herein, a series of tables representing the employed instruments is presented, including a questionnaire, class observation, and a comparison between before and after the implementation of the pedagogical strategy proposed in the current study.

**TABLE 2. QUESTIONNAIRE EXERCISE**

Students	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	Total
1	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	4.01
2	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	1.37
3	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	3.02
4	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	2.03
5	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	2.03
6	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
7	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.71
8	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.38
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4.67
10	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1.37
11	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.38
12	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1.37
13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	3.35
14	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1.04
15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	2.69
16	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.38
17	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
18	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
19	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	1.04
20	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3.02
21	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	0.71
22	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
23	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.71
24	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
25	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.71
26	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
27	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	4.01
28	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	0.38
29	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.71
30	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	0.0
<b>Indicators</b>	<p><b>High Rating (4.0 – 5.0):</b> The conjugated verbs in the activities presented in the questionnaire demonstrate a good mastery of grammatical structures.</p> <p><b>Average Rating (3.0 – 3.9):</b> The conjugated verbs in the activities presented in the questionnaire show grammatical inconsistencies.</p> <p><b>Low Rating (1.0 – 2.9):</b> The conjugated verbs in the activities presented in the questionnaire do not show mastery and present grammatical deficiencies.</p>															

Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study

Data	
Mean	1.33633
Median	0.71
Mode	0
Standard Deviation (s)	1.39245
Skewness	1.02152
Kurtosis	-0.08206
Lowest Score	0
Highest Score	4.67
Distribution Range	4.67
Total Number of Scores	30
Number of Distinct Scores	11
Lowest Class Value	0
Highest Class Value	5.59

Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, it can be observed that eighth-grade students have a mode of 0, indicating that the scores obtained with respect to the instrument are well below the minimum grade in the standardized Colombian grading system. Similarly,

#### Conjuga los verbos que están entre paréntesis ( ) en presente simple

1. Anne (work) works in a language school X
2. She (be) is a teacher X
3. He (teach) teaches English X
4. Her students (come) come from all over the world X
5. Anne usually (go) goes to school by bus X
6. On the bus she (have) has time to correct a few tests. X
7. I sometimes go (go) to work by car ✓
8. Ben works (work) in a hospital X
9. Do you like (like) fish? X
10. She doesn't (not/teach) English X
11. Matthew never watches (watch) television X
12. Is she playing (play) football? X
13. They always eat (eat) dinner at 7 o'clock ✓
14. We live (not/live) in a big house X
15. Valerie studies (study) English at university X

Source: Image taken from the questionnaire administered by the researchers

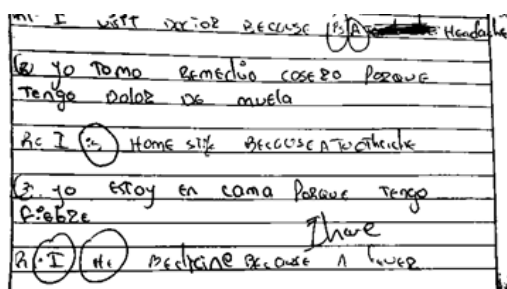
the mean and median suggest a deficiency below the minimum. Thus, the standard deviation is 1.3, implying that less than a quarter of the study subjects achieved and demonstrated proficiency in the language and its grammatical structure. This resulted in the lowest grade of 0, with only three students scoring above 4.0.

TABLE 3. CLASS OBSERVATION

PLANNING WORK IN THE CLASSROOM
<p>The current academic performance of the students and their profile is diverse and can be divided as follows:</p> <p>Basic for those students who have little knowledge of English, do not practice or study outside of the institution's regular curriculum hours. They possess a very basic understanding of English and cannot form complete and logical sentences.</p> <p>High for those students who have intermediate knowledge of English, practice daily with games, songs, etc. They study the language in specialized English institutes and can comprehend instructions given in the language, participate, and formulate questions and answers with a broad, complete, and logical sense.</p> <p>It is evident that some students are not highly motivated in class, while only a few shows interest in participating in activities.</p>
<p>Learning goals scheduled for the class</p> <p>Listening activity by completing a text.</p> <p>Written exam: translating sentences from Spanish to English using the vocabulary related to diseases learned in class.</p>
<p>The pedagogical strategies selected for the class by the teacher are as follows</p> <p>Brief explanation to review vocabulary and grammar covered in previous classes.</p> <p>Reading the text aloud followed by its translation.</p> <p>Translation of words that students do not understand.</p> <p>Explanation using mime gestures for vocabulary related to diseases, such as headache, toothache, among others.</p>
<p>Content (topics and subsystems) to be developed in class</p> <p>The content to be developed in class is derived from the educational curriculum and the school's institutional textbook called "Way to go" for eighth grade, pages 50 to 59, unit 2.</p>

<p>The procedures for assessing learning in class</p> <p>The procedures for evaluating learning in class by the teacher are:</p> <p>Attendance in class.</p> <p>Class participation.</p> <p>Exam.</p>
<p>Other aspects necessary to understand the activities that will be carried out in class</p> <p>The teacher emphasizes the correct pronunciation when practicing the vocabulary learned in class</p>
<p>CLASS OBSERVATION</p>
<p>Pedagogical Strategies Used According to the School Group's Characteristics</p> <p>The teacher explains, uses mime gestures, and The Grammar-Translation Method.</p>
<p>Pedagogical strategies employed in accordance with the characteristics of the student group</p> <p>The teacher explains, uses mime gestures, and The Grammar-Translation Method.</p>
<p>Materials and Resources During the Development of Topics</p> <p>8th-grade curricular book "Way to go", notebook, pens, whiteboard.</p>
<p>Evaluation and Student Feedback Procedures</p> <p>The teacher began the class by reminding that the exam would be conducted for the second time on today's class.</p>
<p>Classroom Atmosphere and Student Behavior</p> <p>Students were not enthusiastic or engaged in the class. However, a few students were eager to showcase their correct pronunciation in front of others when participating</p>
<p>Application of the Code of Conduct Rules</p> <p>At no point during the class were there any acts that jeopardized the physical or psychological integrity of the students.</p>
<p>Other observations</p> <p>None recorded</p>

Source: Diagram extracted from *Annual Performance Evaluation: Teachers and Educational Managers Law Decree 1278 of 2002* by the Ministry of National Education (2008). Adapted for the purposes of the study by the authors



Source: Image taken from the examination conducted by the teacher

As shown in the image, during the observed sessions, the issue related to the correct usage and conjugation of English verbs is evident. The image corresponds to a test administered by the teacher, which includes a set of four sentences that the students were required to translate into English.

It is necessary to make the caveat that the evidence presented in the image corresponds to the exam that the eighth-grade students conducted on the day of observation. This exam focused on the translation of sentences from Spanish to English,

involving the use of the present simple grammar and vocabulary related to illnesses and possible remedies.



**TABLE 4. COMPARISON BEFORE AND AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY**

Before the implementation of writing journal strategy	After the implementation of writing journal strategy
<p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando tu rutina diaria</p> <p>Hello my name is Santiago Barrios and my rutine is</p> <p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando lo que te gusta hacer en tus vacaciones o tiempo libre</p>	<p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando tu rutina diaria</p> <p>I wake up at 5:15 am, I eat the breakfast when I finish I go to the bathroom for take a shower, I wear my uniform I go to the school.</p> <p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando lo que te gusta hacer en tus vacaciones o tiempo libre</p> <p>In the vacation I like to play video games in the pss, I like to play football and watch videos.</p>
<p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando tu rutina diaria</p> <p>My rutine is</p> <p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando lo que te gusta hacer en tus vacaciones o tiempo libre</p> <p>I like Play soccer, I like Play video Games</p>	<p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando tu rutina diaria</p> <p>I wake up at 5:15 am, I eat the breakfast when I finish I go to the bathroom for take a shower, I wear my uniform I go to the school.</p> <p>Realiza un corto escrito narrando lo que te gusta hacer en tus vacaciones o tiempo libre</p> <p>In the vacation I like to play video games in the pss, I like to play football and watch videos.</p>

Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study

As evidenced in the table, at the outset of the diagnostic tests (questionnaires and written assessments), eighth-grade students were unable to form sentences in English with complete and logical meaning. In most cases, they left the activity blank and repeatedly expressed a lack of knowledge to write what was required in the prompt. However, progressively, with the implementation of the writing journal strategy and additional grammatical explanations by the teachers, the students consistently practiced, resulting in significant improvements in their compositions and, consequently, in the correct verb conjugation.

It is important to note that the researchers did not assign a quantitative score to this activity since its purpose was to demonstrate the subsequent progress and effectiveness of the proposed strategy with the study subjects in the current scientific research.

Note: The interview conducted with the English teacher at the institution was conducted in Spanish, the teacher's native language, in order to provide her with comfort and naturalness in both the questions and her responses.

In relation to the information collected from the interview conducted with the teacher, it can be affirmed that the explanations are linear and traditional, implying the use of a standard method with minimal variation in its application. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the consistent application of the same approach for grammar explanations does not take into consideration the diverse learning styles, needs, or levels of comprehension, interpretation, and acquisition of English as a second language. This, in turn, contributes to disinterest and a lack of attention when it comes to developing language competencies.

**TABLE 5. TEACHER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE**

Date: 15/09/23	Duration: 3:00	Place: public school
Question	Line	Description
1. ¿Qué metodología utiliza para explicar la gramática en 8º grado?	5	En cuanto a la metodología utilizada para explicar la gramática en el grado en el que soy profesora/que soy docente/puedo decir que uso el método directo/en el que los estudiantes/bueno/se les explica la gramática directamente al idioma inglés/
2. ¿Qué estrategias emplea para explicar la gramática en 8º grado?	10	Las estrategias que uso para explicar/bueno/si ellos no entienden una palabra se las explico con mímicas para una mejor comprensión/y los clásicos esquemas/por ejemplo/sujet + verb+ lo que venga/

Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study.

**TABLE 6. STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE**

Date: 08/0923	Duration: 1:32	Place: public school
Line	Description	
5	Bueno/mi experiencia/con la gramática pues/no sale de lo que se da en el colegio/eh bueno/con la conjugación de verbos/como dije/lo usaría cotidianamente/pero/no es eh/algo a lo que le preste/ mucha atención/aparte que en el colegio/siendo sincera en este punto/no me siento preparada para escribir un texto/porque/eh siento que no tengo/lo necesario/como para hacer uno/bien /eh porque/bueno/me faltaría saber más acerca de/la manera correcta de los verbos/y de eh/redactar un texto/que palabras usar/eh de que manera formar porque no sé/eh verbos y la estructura/	

Source: Cervantes et al (2023). Table prepared by the researchers for the purposes of the study.

Note: The interview conducted with the students was conducted in Spanish, the student's native language, in order to provide him with comfort and naturalness in both the questions and his responses.

Based on the transcription extracted from the recording of an unstructured interview conducted with a student from the investigated public school, it becomes evident that there is a lack of solid structures, strategies, tools, resources, or teaching and learning approaches for acquiring verb conjugation, grammar, and writing skills. This interview segment underscores the continuous need for projects or strategies focused on fostering meaningful, cross-cutting, and transformative knowledge acquisition to enhance logical and coherent communication.

## DISCUSSION

Conjugating verbs in English is often one of the primary challenges and significant recurring issues in the development and acquisition of language learning skills for non-native English-speaking

students. Therefore, this investigative study has delved deeply into this specific grammatical area issue among eighth-grade students at a public school in Barranquilla. Furthermore, this discussion will focus on the analysis of the results based on data collected through mixed methods instruments, highlighting identifying trends, the implications of the proposed strategy (writing journal), and pedagogical recommendations for future research in the practice and development of grammatical writing skills.

The results in the previous section reveal a concerning outlook regarding students' grammatical competence, as evidenced in table 2: questionnaire exercises. The scores obtained from this questionnaire demonstrate that the majority of students struggle to form sentences with complete and logical meaning, resulting in a deficit in their ability to communicate effectively in various situations. However, this study proposes the pedagogical strategy of the writing journal as an alternative for the improvement and acquisition of correct verb conjugation in English. In this manner, students progressively engage, practice,

and consistently learn the composition of short writings that enable them to enhance and develop their grammatical writing skills.

In this regard, the implementation of the writing journal demonstrates that eighth-grade students significantly improved their grammatical and verb conjugation skills, as evidenced in table 4, comparing before and after the implementation of the writing journal.

In this vein, there exist other academic studies that corroborate the observed trend with the writing journal and have explored the utility of this strategy in the process of learning and acquiring a second language, providing consistent results that enhance the necessary skills for effective communication in the acquired language. An illustration of this is a scientific action research study conducted on nine university students from the Philology and Languages program with a focus on English at the National University of Colombia, carried out by Castellanos (2008). Castellanos examined the high-intermediate level of English of these students through the planning, implementation, and evaluation of reading exploration via written reflections in a journal, focusing on topics of their personal interest. This research concluded that “the journal became a tool for language learning. Similarly, they were able to investigate the topics they explored, which allowed them to expand their knowledge (p. 111)”.

In this context, it is relevant to mention another parallel research endeavor that likewise incorporated the journaling strategy for the enhancement of students' written production. Hernández (2007) conducted a qualitative study in Costa Rica with second-year students in the English program at the School of Modern Languages, University of Costa Rica. In this study, explicit aspects of linguistic topics (syntax, morphology, vocabulary, and punctuation) were examined using students' journals, showcasing how this strategy facilitated the improvement of their writing skills. Within the journals, students were engaged in summarizing ideas, expressing

opinions, and providing reactions and critiques of their readings.

Initially, this strategy was introduced as a project where students composed their entries every two weeks, which were subsequently reviewed and provided with feedback by the instructor. Moreover, students were encouraged to include additional instructional materials such as brochures, exercises, among others, to aid them in tracking their linguistic errors and demonstrating improvement. According to Hernández (2007) “journal writing can be a helpful tool to improve students' writing skills (p. 23)” and she further adds that “for teachers, the journals provide authentic samples of students' work; therefore, they can pinpoint content and linguistic problems and provide individual and group feedback (p. 23)”.

The preceding contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the writing journal strategy in enhancing learning and second language acquisition skills. Furthermore, these findings bolster the notion that this strategy can be regarded as a valuable tool in the teaching process of English and its linguistic aspects.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that there are research endeavors of substantial contributions and significant constructs that focus on developing and enhancing grammar as a necessary skill for students through approaches different from the writing journal. These approaches are entirely valid and complementary to the planning and design of sustainable lesson plans and curricula that incorporate a variety of methodologies and tools to foster and promote grammatical acquisition in a second language.

Such is the case with third-semester students of Morphosyntax I in the English Teaching program at a public university in Colombia; their aim was to implement and propose alternatives for the development of grammatical competence within the context of written production. In this research, teaching grammar was considered a contentious and challenging subject for non-native English

speakers. Consequently, it is suggested that the use of hand-written activities with paper and pencil fosters an enriching process and improvements in terms of grammatical elements. Likewise, Artunduaga (2013) posits that “the fact that writing demands a great deal of grammar is the perfect excuse to explore, analyze, and reinforce most—if not all—the grammar topics a language user needs in order to be communicatively competent (p. 23).”

Similarly, in Costa Rica, Córdoba (2015) conducted a qualitative research study in three high school courses at the School of Modern Languages. The objective was to determine students' perceptions regarding grammatical content and the extent to which this content aids their writing skills. The results obtained demonstrated incongruence in students' perceptions but highlighted recurring grammatical deficiencies in writing. Therefore, Córdoba (2015) proposes that ‘teachers should integrate grammar instruction into the revising and editing process. This helps students make immediate applications and allows them to see the significance of grammar in their own writing (p. 19).

These research studies highlight the versatility and adaptability of the grammar teaching process, presenting significant insights and tools that educators can implement to address students' grammatical deficits. Therefore, it is imperative to emphasize that implementing a diverse range of effective approaches is necessary and highly beneficial for the more robust development of languages.

In summary, the writing journal strategy has proven to be an effective pedagogical resource for enhancing the verb conjugation and grammar skills of the subjects in this research. The results presented underscore the importance of constant practice and contextualization of grammatical competence as a necessary skill for the development, comprehension, expression, interpretation, and communication of verbal structures. However, it is appropriate to acknowledge that the success of the strategy largely depends on its proper

integration within a comprehensive bilingual education program and its combination with other pedagogical factors. Likewise, it is worth highlighting that the use of the writing journal is a constructive, valuable, transformative, and cross-cutting tool for various competencies, aiming to promote effective and fluent communication in English as a second language.

## **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of the pedagogical strategy known as “writing journal” emerges as a valuable resource to enrich the experience, strengthen, and acquire English verb conjugation in the formulation of sentences and texts with complete and logical meaning. Furthermore, it provides students with the opportunity to develop their language competencies in a robust and coherent manner, contributing to the development of essential linguistic skills for fluency and writing in a second language.

Similarly, this strategy has proven to be a constructive and transformative tool that not only enhances grammatical skills but also fosters more effective communication in English. However, it is accurate to assert that it is not a pedagogical resource that can be applied universally, as it heavily relies on the needs, level, and academic context in which it is intended to be implemented. Therefore, the use of other educational strategies or approaches may also be necessary for it to be effective in more rigorous contexts.

In this regard, it is pertinent to recommend, for future research, the study of the “writing journal” strategy in combination with other strategies to verify the behavior, effectiveness, dynamics, and didactics of students' grammatical progress with its application. Likewise, we encourage future researchers interested in writing journal to design creative portfolios with writing activities that promote the learning of English verb conjugation. It is appropriate to reaffirm the importance of knowing how to conjugate correctly, as this leads to expressive, dynamic, and fluent communication.

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