Using the process-genre approach to identify Biotechnology students' perceptions when composing a descriptive text

Aplicación del enfoque proceso-género para identificar las percepciones de los alumnos de Biotecnología al escribir textos descriptivos[i]

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Abstract:

This is a qualitative study that explored how the use of the process- genre based approach (PGBA) to writing can help A2 Biotechnology engineering students at "Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca (UPP)" shape their perception of writing when composing descriptive texts. An action research design was adopted with six students. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted, one before working with the Process Genre Based Approach (PGBA) and the second interview after implementing the PGBA with the participants. And two writing tasks were assigned to the participants to observe their writing skills before and after the PGBA writing lessons. The findings reported on this study demonstrated the positive effect that the PGBA has on the development of the students' writing skills and the students' perception of writing. While most previous research had been focused on quantitative methods, this study aimed to provide a qualitative insight.

Keywords:

Process-genre based approach (PGBA), writing, writing process, approaches to writing, writing perceptions

Resumen:

Este estudio exploró cómo el uso del enfoque de proceso-género (PGBA) en la escritura puede ayudar a los estudiantes de Ingeniería en Biotecnología de nivel A2 de la Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca (UPP) a formar su percepción sobre la escritura al redactar textos descriptivos. Se adoptó un diseño de investigación-acción con seis estudiantes. Se realizaron dos entrevistas semiestructuradas, una antes de trabajar con el Enfoque Basado en Géneros de Procesos (PGBA por sus siglas en inglés) y la segunda entrevista después de implementar el PGBA con los participantes. Y se asignaron dos tareas de escritura a los participantes para observar sus habilidades de escritura antes y después de las lecciones de escritura empleando el PGBA. Los resultados de este estudio demostraron el efecto positivo que tiene el PGBA en el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes y en su percepción sobre la escritura. Aunque la mayoría de las investigaciones previas se han centrado en métodos cuantitativos, este estudio tuvo como objetivo proporcionar una visión cualitativa.

Palabras Clave:

Enfoque basado en proceso-genero (PGBA), escritura, proceso de escritura, enfoques para escribir, percepciones de la escritura

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Introduction

Writing is one of the macro skills that students need to develop for communication purposes; however, it seems that less priority is given to the development of this skill in the classroom (Khanalizadeh & Allami 2012). As a consequence, students' perception about writing may be influenced by writing teachers as they might tend to provide feedback on the content rather than the form of their text, which may lead students to misconceive the objective of the writing lessons. There are a number of studies conducted on written production where the main focus is analyzing and identifying the type of grammatical errors that students commit and how to correct them (Sihombing, Khoirun & Estrelita, 2015).

Although various research studies (i.e. Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019) have stressed the value of different approaches to teach writing, a few have considered the process-genre approach to writing with the purpose of shaping students' perception of writing when composing descriptive texts. Through the implementation of this approach, we expect to influence the students' perception of writing in a positive way.

This study intends to explore how using the process- genre approach to writing can help A2 Biotechnology engineering students at "Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca (UPP)" shape their perception of writing descriptive texts. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and two writing tasks which were conducted with A2 Biotechnology students at UPP.

Literature Review

Although writing is one of the macro skills that students need to develop for communication purposes in the EFL classroom, it has been noticed that little attention has been paid to writing in college students. Moreover, there is a misconception about the objective of writing lessons as it has been reported by Diab (2005) in her study about the Teachers' and Students' Beliefs About Responding to ESL Writing, where it is argued that writing teachers tend to provide feedback on the content rather than the form of texts. Furthermore, some of the studies referring to written production have been conducted with the purpose of identifying the grammatical errors of students (Sihombing, Khoirun and Estrelita,2015). For this reason, writing for some teachers can be seen as a difficult skill to practice since it is time consuming and requires a lot of time for thinking and organizing (Khanalizadeh and Allami, 2012). However, Matsuda (as cited in Abate, 2008) has demonstrated that practicing writing as a process enhances the students' achievements in learning the language. Likewise, Selvaraj and Aziz (2019) add that writing is a thinking process which involves the students to think creatively and organizing ideas to put them into

words. Hence, Scott (as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019) argues that writing approaches are important to meet the goals of writing. In fact, not knowing the approaches to be used can mislead the objective of the lesson (Selvaraj and Aziz, 2019).

In other words, writing is the skill that helps students consolidate their language knowledge and develop their high order thinking skills to compose a text; for this reason, the approach selected by the teacher to help students develop writing skills is of great relevance since it can make the difference between developing writing skills or using writing only as a means of grammar and vocabulary practice. As a consequence, knowing the different approaches to writing is important for every teacher.

Approaches to writing

Several approaches are reported in the literature to address the teaching of writing. There are different ways to approach teaching writing in the classroom; for instance: "product approach, process approach, genre approach; and the process-genre approach to writing" (Kamrul Hasan & Mohd Moniruzzaman, as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019, p. 455); and the process-product approach (Carta & Greenwood, as cited in Selvaraj and Aziz, 2019). These authors define these approaches as follows:

> (1) Product approach to writing. It consists of the imitation of model texts (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019), where students are not allowed to create (Abate, 2008).

> (2) Process approach to writing. The purpose of this approach is to get the final product through the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing) (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019).

> (3) The genre approach to writing: as Harmer states (as cited in Abate, 2008)

In a genre approach to writing students study texts in the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing. Thus, if we want them to write business letters of various kinds, we let them look at typical models of such letters before starting to compose their own. If we want them to write newspaper articles, we have them study real examples to consider facts about construction and specific language use which is common in that genre (p.259).

> (4) The process-genre approach to writing "allows the students to take benefit from the process of writing; prewriting, drafting, revising and editing and get familiar with the text they are going to produce" (Agesta, 2016, p.812).

> (5) The process product approach to writing: Carta & Greenwood (as cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019) maintains that "employing this approach is to develop

students' writing skills by mastering product approach prior to process approach" (p.457).

There is a considerable body of literature regarding the approaches to writing. For this reason, the approach selected to teach writing plays an important role in the students' learning process as it should go beyond the mechanics of the language, and it should require the learners to develop their ability to analyze, evaluate and create to compose a coherent piece of writing. Hence, for the purpose of this study the process-genre approach was used.

The process-genre approach to writing

The process-genre approach to writing was first proposed by Badger and White in 2000; these authors maintain that "writing involves knowledge about language (as in product and genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches)" (pp. 157-158). In addition, according to Frith (2006) and Goa (as cited in Babalola, 2012) the process genre approach to writing is a combination of the process and the genre approach that considers the development of the writing skills as well as the writing conventions. Moreover, Agesta (2016) suggests that teachers should follow six steps in order to overcome students' difficulties in writing: preparation, modelling of the text, planning, joint construction of the text, independent construction of the text and revising. Furthermore, Matsuda (as cited in Babalola, 2012) claims that the process-genre approach to writing should be considered one of the most successful approaches in the writing field because of the results that have been reported by using this approach.

Various research studies have been conducted to analyze the effect of the process-genre approach on the development of writing skills. In this section, the findings of three research papers are discussed outlining the benefits of this approach to writing.

The first research study was conducted in the Federal Polytechnic of Ede in Nigeria by Babalola (2012) to find out the effect of the process-genre based approach (PGBA) on the English performance of 40 computer science students. The group was divided into two groups of 20 students. Two researchers designed the instruments based on the process-genre instructional manual and all students were asked to answer a pre-test (essay test). Additionally, students in group 1 were treated with the PGBA in essay writing for 24 hours within six weeks; whereas students in group 2 continued using the traditional lecture method. The information collected was analysed using the analysis of Covariance and the results showed that the PGBA in teaching writing has a significant

effect on the students writing performance, since the scores in group 1 were significantly higher than the other group results, showing improvement in the organization, content, expression and mechanical accuracy in their post-test.

Similar to Babalola (2012), the second study conducted by Agesta and Cahyono (2017) aims to investigate the effect of the process-genre approach on the students´ writing achievement and across their personalities (extrovert and introvert). This research study was conducted on 56 Jr. High School students at Koto, Singkarak, West Sumatra, Indonesia. This group was divided into Class A and Class B with 28 students each, they were taught how to write a report text for about six sessions. Both groups were monitored with a pre-test in order to find their previous writing skills and another test to check their personality. After the sixth session, the students were administered a test to find out the effect of the PGBA on the experimental group. The results showed that the students who were taught by using the PGBA significantly improved their ability to write a report text, showing improvement in the following areas: organization, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. On the other hand, the process-genre approach across personality did not show any improvement or difference.

Finally, the last research study was conducted by Ajmal and Irfan (2020) at the Forman Christian College Institution in Lahore, Pakistan. The aim of this study was to explore the effects of the PGBA on the students' writing anxiety. This study was carried out with 80 intermediate pre-university students with the same academic backgrounds and abilities; the group was divided into two groups of 40 students each, section E4 is the experimental group and section E5 are the controlled group. Section E4 students were taught by using the process-genre-based approach for about twelve sessions within twelve weeks. Both groups participated in an interview before and after the research experiment to find out their level of anxiety. The results show that there is a significant difference between both groups since the level of anxiety was dropped at about 18% in the experimental group.

The results of these studies show that the process-genre approach to writing has a positive effect on the improvement of the students' writing skills as well as on the reduction of anxiety at the moment of taking a writing test. Although various research projects have been conducted on the development of writing, not all researchers have considered the process genre-approach to writing with the purpose of developing fluency in students to shape their perception of writing when composing descriptive texts.

Therefore, this study intends to explore how using the process-genre approach to writing can help A2

Biotechnology engineering students at "Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca (UPP)" shape their perception of writing when composing descriptive texts. As a result, the following research questions are set:

- How does the process-genre approach to writing shape the students' perceptions of their writing ability to compose descriptive texts?

- What is the students' perception of their writing improvement to compose descriptive text after using the process-genre approach?

- How can the use of signposting help students write descriptive texts with more ease?

Methodology

This study adopted a constructivist worldview and it is a qualitative action research that intends to explore how the process-genre approach to writing can shape University students' perception about writing when composing descriptive texts.

For the purpose of this research a pre-writing task, an action plan, a post-writing task and a couple of semi-structured interviews were designed to be conducted with six A2 Biotechnology students at the Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca.

Worldview, approach, design

For the purpose of this study a constructivist worldview was adopted since the interest was on the perceptions of our participants regarding the use of the process-genre approach. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) state, "the researcher's intent is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world" (p.8). Moreover, participants were asked about their opinion concerning their writing improvement and they were given the opportunity to reflect on their progress.

In addition, an action research design was adopted since writing difficulties were detected in the engineering A2 students at UPP to write descriptive texts; as a consequence, the PGBA was implemented to inquire about its effect on these students' writing ability. Furthermore, as stated by O'Brien (2001) action research "has a social dimension - the research takes place in real-world situations, and aims to solve real problems" (p. 2). This is the case of the group selected, where a *problem* was identified since students were having difficulties with their writing, and the process-genre approach to writing was used to observe its effect on the students' writing performance after a certain period of time.

Finally, similar to Creswell and Creswell (2018), Bell and Waters (2018) state that "researchers adopting a qualitative perspective are more concerned to understand individuals' perceptions of the world" (p.24). Thus, a qualitative approach was employed since we expected to gather our participants' perceptions about how the use of the process-genre approach influences their ability to compose descriptive texts. Hence, a couple of semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out the students' "opinion and experiences" along this process. In fact, Laforest (2009) proposes that semi-structured interviews are suitable and can be mainly used with small groups to study specific situations as they provide deeper insight into perceptions and opinions.

Setting

This research was carried out at Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca in Biotechnology Engineering in Zempoala, Hidalgo. This institution has the objective of conducting research in different fields; for this reason, the writing skill is of great importance to the students. This public university is located in Zempoala and it consists of fifteen buildings assigned to different fields of study. Nevertheless, due to the pandemic, these students were taking online classes three times a week; on Mondays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., on Wednesdays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., and Fridays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the beginning of this research project. Although after a couple of months, the teaching modality changed to face to face learning, so the classrooms where students took their writing lessons were A 18 on Tuesdays, A 62 on Wednesdays and A 16 on Thursdays. This situation could vary the results of this study and influence the original way in which the observations were originally planned because participants were less active online, and during the face-to-face sessions students interacted more with their peers and their teacher.

Participants

For the purpose of this study a group of six students from Biotechnology Engineering at Universidad Politécnica de Pachuca was selected. This group is formed by four women and two men from 19-20 years old who have an A2 English level following the Common European Framework according to their initial diagnostic test. The participants were selected according to their proficiency level, their willingness to participate and their time availability. In addition, the university has the objective of conducting research in different fields and once these students finish their 5th quarter, they have the opportunity to participate in an exchange program; for this reason, it is essential to develop their writing skills at an early stage. Participants were previously asked for their consent to participate in this study and they were informed about the main objective of this research.

Instruments

As stated in the introduction of this document, qualitative action research has been adopted for this study. Hence, two semi-structured interviews were conducted, one before working with the PGBA and the second interview

after implementing the PGBA with the participants. In addition, two writing tasks were assigned to the participants to observe their writing skills before and after the PGBA writing lessons.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews offer the interviewer the opportunity to prepare predetermined questions and at the same time the freedom to ask for clarification in order to inquire more about the central topics (Griffee, 2005). Additionally, Rabionet (2011) identifies that semi-structured interviews give the researcher the chance to focus on their research topic and at the same time the possibility to hear the participants' experiences.

The first semi-structured interview was conducted in order to explore the students' perceptions, their past experiences in writing as well as their writing strategies. It was composed of 12 open-ended questions; the first three questions were used to establish rapport and set the context (Rabionet, 2011). At the same time, the purpose was to explore the participants' opinions about learning English. The following eight questions were focused on the content; four of them were aimed to find information related to their writing experiences, such as the type of texts they had written before and their writing frequency. The other four were focused on what students consider are their writing strategies. And finally, the last interview question was intended to collect additional comments that allowed us to have a deeper insight on the students' responses (Baumbusch, 2010). After the instrument was piloted, it was conducted via zoom, and it was recorded with the previous authorization of the students.

The second semi-structured interview was carried out to identify the participants' experience after using the process-genre based approach. The objective was to find out if their perception of writing changed after the implementation of the PGBA writing lessons, and if they noticed changes in their way of writing a descriptive text. It included nine questions that intended to explore the participants' opinion about the impact of the PGBA on writing on their final writing task. Most of the questions were focused on the participants' opinion about their improvements in writing after taking a lesson with the PGBA; one question aimed to identify the purpose of writing descriptive texts; two more questions were directed towards the participants' recent experience in the process of writing; one question was centered on the participants' perception of writing after finishing the PGBA writing lessons; and another question intended to explore if the signpost words helped the participants write with more ease. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Writing tasks

Two writing tasks were assigned to the participants. According to Willis (as cited in Sabah, 2018) a task is defined as an objective-oriented activity. In the same vein, Nunan (as cited in Sabah, 2018) points out that a task goes beyond specific language forms and focuses on a communicative outcome. For this reason, in order to illustrate the participants' writing performance before and after the implementation of the PGBA writing lesson, they were given a writing task. At the same time, those tasks were useful to keep record of the expected improvements in their writing ability. These writing tasks also served as support to the participants' arguments provided in the interviews about their writing improvements and the use of signposting.

First writing Task

In the first writing task students were asked to write a description of a city. First, the participants worked on a brainstorming activity to gather vocabulary and useful ideas that could be used in their descriptive text. Afterwards, they were asked to link those ideas into a paragraph. This task was handled without any guidance during the session. The objective of this activity was to identify the participants current writing skills in which it was noticed that the participants' text was far from following the PGBA because many of them wrote two lines and some of them were disjointed sentences.

For the second task students were asked to write a descriptive text following the six steps of the process-genre approach which I describe below.

Implementation of the process- genre approach

According to Agesta (2016), Yan (2005) explains the steps to be followed in the PGBA during each stage. The process-genre approach was introduced to the students by doing some activities to understand how to write a descriptive text. This approach included preparation, modeling text, planning, joint construction of the text, independent construction of the text and revising.

1. Preparation: A video was used to help the participants understand the purpose of a descriptive text. After that, the structure of the text was explained.

2. Modeling of the text: In this section, a model of a descriptive text was taken from the book Write Right Paragraph to Essay 1 in order to be analyzed by the participants and understand the social function of the text and some linguistic features.

3. Planning: In this stage practice on writing appropriate topic and closing sentences was provided to the participants. At the same time, they also worked on useful vocabulary.

4. Joint-construction of the text. Participants worked on an outline to understand the structure of a descriptive text; they also analyzed it along with the teacher through guided questions to make sure they included all the required elements.

5. Independent-construction of the text. Participants worked on writing a first draft of a descriptive text.

6. Revising. The participants were asked to revise their drafts using some guided questions to identify the elements of the descriptive text. After this, they exchanged their text with their partners and worked on peer correction; they used the same guided questions. Finally, they provided comments to their partners.

Second writing task

In this task the Biotechnology students were asked to write about the description of their favorite city; they were asked to consider all the elements of the descriptive text they worked on throughout the PGBA lessons. The teacher gave them an overview of the elements that their text should contain. This descriptive text was useful to illustrate the participants' improvements and to support the arguments provided during the interviews.

Data analysis

As explained earlier, the instruments used in this qualitative action research are the following: two semi-structured interviews and two writing tasks. The analysis of the data gathered through these instruments is described below.

Semi-structured interviews Analysis

The data collected through these interviews was analyzed by means of content analysis. First, we transcribed all our participants' responses in order to analyze and understand the data collected. After that, we read the interview transcripts several times in order to become familiar with the data (Griffee,2005). Then, we highlighted using different colors all the significant responses to the aim of this study that were provided by the participants in order to pre-code our data (Boyatzis, 1998). The above categories were aligned with the research questions as we were seeking to find the students' perceptions of writing.

Writing tasks Analysis

To analyze the texts, we focused on the rhetorical structure of the two versions of the text; and at the same time the content, organization and language improvements were observed using a rubric provided by Cambridge Assessment English. To begin with, the first descriptive text was analyzed with the rubric in order to identify the current writing skills of our participants. This was useful to have evidence of their writing ability before using the PGBA. Afterwards, once the group practiced writing a descriptive text with this approach, they were asked to write the second text which was analyzed with the same rubric in order to observe the improvements. Finally, we compared the results obtained.

Findings

The section describes the main findings of this research. The information provided by the results will be described to answer the following research questions:

● How can the process-genre approach to writing shape the students' perceptions of their writing ability to compose descriptive texts?

● What are the students´ perception of their writing improvement to compose a descriptive text after using the process-genre approach?

● How can the use of signposting help students write descriptive texts with more ease?

Students' perceptions before the PGBA

Sihombing, Khoirun and Estrelita (2015) argue that teacher's qualifications, gender or experience do not make a significant difference in the way they choose to teach writing because most teachers use writing as a means of vocabulary and grammar practice. Similarly, Kassen (as cited in Diab, 2005) argues that "research on pedagogy shows that teachers' feedback often focuses on form rather than on content" (p.29).

After conducting the pre-interview, the majority of the participants perceived writing as a difficult skill to learn since they believed their grammar and vocabulary knowledge was limited. When they were asked why writing is difficult, some of their responses were the following:

It is mainly necessary to know the structure of the text to later on choose the verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, etc. And also, to write a coherent text (Elsa).

The most important thing is that we understood how to write a text and also which are the parts of the text so that we can write a descriptive text in coherent way (George).

I would need to have a better understanding of the expression I would use and also a better understanding on how to organize my ideas (Haniel)

Based on these comments above, it can be concluded that the perception of the A2 Biotechnology students has changed since they now understand that writing a text is not only learning vocabulary and grammar, but also knowing the structure of the text, the genre and the importance of coherence in a text.

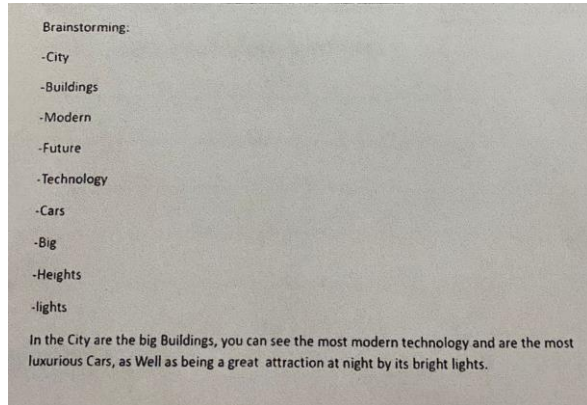**Students' perception about their writing improvements after using PGBA**

As reported by Agesta and Cahyono (2017) several studies on the effectiveness of the PGBA have been conducted by different researchers; in the majority of the cases positive outcomes have been reported. Building on this idea, when the participants were asked in the second interview to tell us if the PGBA had helped them improve their writing ability, the majority of them reported that they had noticed improvements on their writing skills. The following extracts support this idea:

> Because I realized how it was the correct way to write a text having the parts as the title, the body and a closing. Because that way I can compare how I am doing my text and guide me so that it is better written (Elsa).

> In fact, it was a big change because at the beginning it was a text of 3, 4 sentences, and right now it was something longer, so… And more meaningful (...) I was not writing coherently or following an order (Haniel).

The interviewees' responses clearly show that they are now aware of the elements that they need to consider to compose a text; they know that the text has a structure they need to follow and the importance of analyzing models to facilitate their writing process.

Figure 1. Elsa's descriptive text before the implementation of PGBA
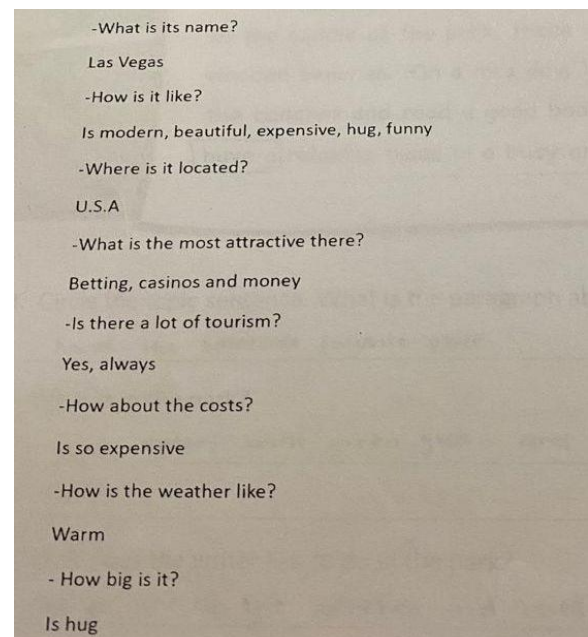

Source: own elaboration

In addition, one of the main significant outcomes is that the final draft of their descriptive texts shows a positive correspondence between the students' perception and the improvements on their final writing task as it is demonstrated with Figure 1 and Figure 2.

These figures show the first participants' writing task and illustrate that they produced basic vocabulary and isolated phrases; errors impede the comprehension of the text. In addition, the text is not connected with signpost words or coherent ideas and the target reader cannot be fully informed about the

topic. In addition, these participants do not know the structure of a descriptive text.
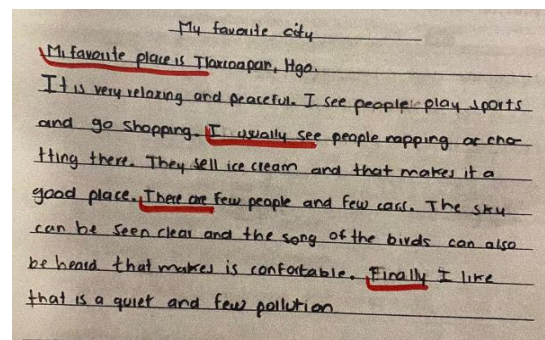
Figure 2. Mary's descriptive text before PGBA
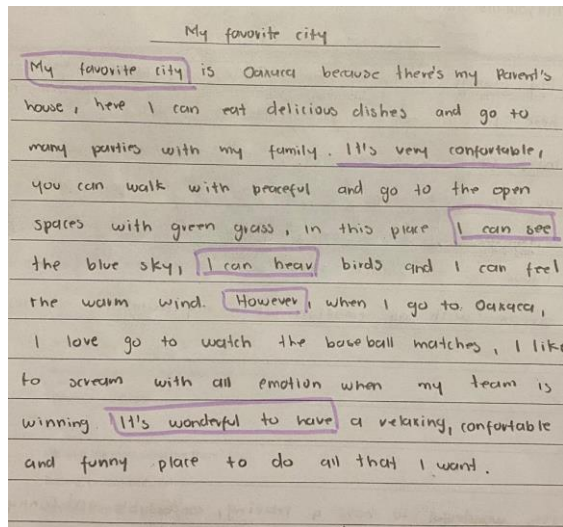

Source: own elaboration

Contrastingly, the results obtained from the majority of the participants on the second writing task showed improvements in organization; since most of the texts were coherent, and at the same time were following the structure of a descriptive paragraph as it is illustrated on Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3. Elsa's descriptive text after the implementation of the PGBA

Source: own elaboration

Figure 4. Mary´s descriptive text after the implementation of the PGBA
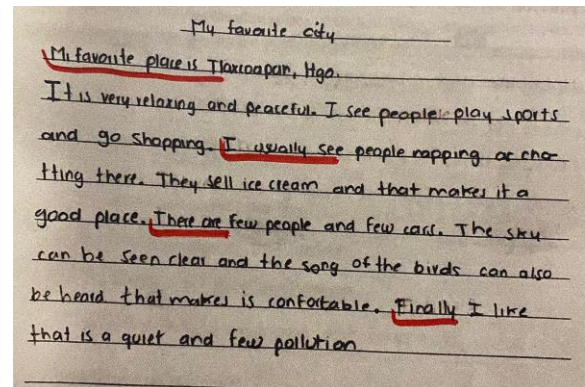

Source: own elaboration

These second writing tasks evidenced that the PGBA not only had a positive effect on students' perception about writing, but also it certainly helped them improve their writing ability to compose a descriptive text. In this second writing all the content is relevant to the tasks, and the target reader is fully informed, the text is connected and coherent, and some signposting words and target language are used accurately.

Although there are significant differences between the first and second descriptive texts, there is still opportunity for improvement in the use of language and signposting. Agesta and Cahyono (2017) argue that when the results are not significant enough when using the PGBA to writing, it is because there was not enough attention given to one of the stages in the process.

Use of signposting

Following Williams (1985), signpost language is words that can help a writer compose a coherent text. This group of words also helps the reader anticipate the information that follows in a passage. One of the inquiries addressed in this research project is the use of signposting words and its impact on the participants' writing ability. It was expected that knowing and understanding signposting words would help students write with more ease. However, after analyzing their final task, only two of the participants used signposting language in their descriptive text as it was indicated in the writing model provided by the teacher.

Figure 5. Elsa´s descriptive text and the use of signposting

Source: own elaboration

Figure 5 is a representation of the incorporation of signposting into the participants' descriptive text and how it enhances the coherence of the text, although it is not enough to indicate that the participants understood how to use the signposting language as only Elsa used the word finally in the correct form, whereas Mary used the word, however, out of context, as it can be observed in Figure 4.

Despite the fact that the expectations were not completely met in the use of signposting language to help students write with more ease, it is clearly seen in the participants' final product that the participant who understood the use of signposting language and its importance added coherence to the text. Even though this result was not very encouraging, it might be explained by the fact that the time to practice the signposting language was not sufficient, and our participants needed more time to understand the use of it.

Conclusions

The present research aimed to explore how the implementation of the process-genre based approach to writing shaped A2 Biotechnology students' perception of writing to compose descriptive texts. This research has provided evidence that before using the PGBA, the majority of the participants perceived writing as a tool of vocabulary and grammar practice. However, after going through the stages of the process-genre approach, their perception changed to focus more on the content and the organization of the text.

Some of the most significant findings are that when the participants were asked to write a descriptive text about their favourite city, they were aware of the structure of the text, the use of signposting and some of them even used the sentence patterns provided by the model quite accurately. The findings reported in this study contribute to the existing knowledge of the PGBA, the understanding of the students' perception of writing and the positive effect

this approach has on the development of coherence in writing. It could also add to the importance of teaching writing with more focus on the process and genre and not only on grammar and vocabulary.

Nevertheless, one of the limitations of this research was time, since it was not possible to provide more than one example to write a descriptive paragraph, and students were not able to enhance the use of signposting and sentence patterns; at the same time not all the lessons were taught in a face-to-face modality and it affected the follow up of the lesson in the sense that we were not able to monitor the students' progress as we expected.

Despite these limitations, the study suggests that using the process-genre based approach to writing can shape the students' perception since we showed that writing goes beyond the use of vocabulary and grammar practice since it provides students with the necessary practice to identify different types of writing genres and their rhetorical structure. This information can be used to develop targeted interventions aimed at improving the way we have been teaching writing so far and make us aware that continued efforts need to be made in the writing field.

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