Description of Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs) made by EFL students at Gimnasio Colombo Británico in Bogotá, Colombia.

Leonardo de Waal

Universidad Santo Tomas

B.Ed. in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language

The Faculty of Education

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ABSTRACT

A phenomenon too familiar in English language learning, mistakes are deemed necessary in the process of second language acquisition, SLA and second language learning, SLL and not a mere indication of a student's learning deficiency. While language learning cannot be achieved without making mistakes, the repetition of the same type of 'avoidable' mistakes delays learning. As evidenced from written texts, these mistakes are prevalent among teenagers in a bilingual school in Colombia where most eighth graders, when prompted, can correct the mistakes themselves. One of the causes for these mistakes can be found in one of the various dimensions of Crosslinguistic Influence (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008), where the production of the target language (TL) is sometimes 'influenced' by the speaker's mother tongue, MT; the outcome of which is referred to as Interlanguage (IL) Selinker (1972, 1992).

This study will delve into the nature of these most common non-developmental mistakes made through IL and explain how they have become fossilised (Selinker, 1972). These mistakes have been collected and systematically complied into a corpus, and are referred to in this study as Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs).

The objectives of this study are to investigate the reasons why students make CEMIs, categorise the mistakes, and provide certain strategies to improve students' accuracy.

Keywords: Error Analysis, Crosslinguistic Influence, Interlanguage, Mistakes, Fossilisation, CEMIs, Negative Transfer

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INTRODUCTION

In the facets of human learning, whether it be learning to ride a bicycle, learning to walk or even the simplest action we take for granted: learning to communicate, learning requires trial an error. The same goes for learning a language, only this process would be called 'making educated guesses and mistakes'. Probably the only difference between learning to ride a bicycle and learning a language is that in the latter, mistakes are not only expected but 'desired'. What is not desirable is the "cessation of development" (Elder, 2001) due to the frequent reoccurrence of the same mistake. This is the case for English language learning in Colombia, where bilingual schools are having their fair share of difficulties in this matter.

To help improve language competence, some schools, mainly private schools that can afford it, implement strategies to try to address this issue (and others) by recruiting native teachers and an incorporating intensive English-language curriculum for other subjects whose language of instruction is English, i.e. maths, history, and science. This type of instruction is known as Content-based Instruction (CBI). Most bilingual schools in Colombia have adopted this strategy, including the Gimnasio Colombo Británico school (GCB) in Bogotá, Colombia. However, not until recently, this school would lower the intensity of CBI-driven classes after 5th grade. Before 2015, from 6th grade and up, the number of CBI classes had dropped to a less than a quarter. This disparity, including other factors that will be discussed later, may have and may have had a negative influence on written texts produced by the students.

While 'expected mistakes' are being made, some are ongoing and repetitive and like a scratched record, stalls progress. This study proposes to name, analyse and classify this type of mistake which has frustrated both teachers and students alike. Due to the basic-level language from which these mistakes derive, and the fact that 97% of the time they can be self-corrected by

the student (based on a study where students who made these specific mistakes were asked to reflect upon them), I have referred to them as *Careless* English Mistakes, CEMIs.

Among other reasons, the frustration of CEMIs lies on the notion that students are aware of elementary grammar, spelling and punctuation rules from earlier grades, yet they still make basic-level mistakes in higher grades of secondary. At GCB, these mistakes that have transcended through time as they have been deemed to cause no concern. That is, these errors are global errors (Burt and Kiparsky in James, 1998 p. 93) which prevent understanding at sentence level. Instead Error Analysis (EA), and Contrastive Analysis (CA), will be done on the *local* errors.

The present study is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1: Problem Statement. In this chapter, I will discuss not only the various problems that arise from CEMIs, but also the need for accuracy in language production for the teenagers in a bilingual school. Frequent questions regarding mistakes in L2 language learning will be asked like if all mistakes should be corrected, or why they are problematic in language learning and teaching in the context of bilingual schools. There will also be a discussion about other issues that result from the making of CEMIs. This includes the reason for dealing specifically with CEMIs as opposed to any type of mistake.

The need for academic precision in language production will also be discussed including reference from English-language rubrics and assessment criteria, where CEMIs could be responsible for the loss or possible awarded marks. Finally, since language learning takes place in a bilingual environment, I will provide a summary of earlier studies in this matter from a Spanish-language to English-language perspective – mainly from Latin-American studies.

Chapter 2: Justification, will discuss the importance of the research of errors in the Colombian context and how this contributes to English language classes. This includes a look at the need to look at mistakes from the perspective of the teacher.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework will provide a succinct overview of the linguistic phenomena of errors and mistakes. A taxonomy behind how CEMIs are made is explained, citing various authentic examples of transfer-related issues like morphology and phonology. The theoretical framework goes over the way in which the research was conducted and how existing literature related to the topic helped to discuss the nature of making this type of mistakes. This included rationale behind the occurrence of the most common type of CEMI, referred to in this study as the Faulty Interchange of Triple I's (FITI) where students use the words *is*, *its*, and *it's* incorrectly as they suppose they can be used interchangeably. Though there are more mistakes of this nature, only the most common will be explained in the study.

Chapter 4: Research Design will explain how exploratory research was carried out as a means to determining the nature of the problem and the methods used to collect the data.

Chapter 5: Data Collection and Analysis will discuss the way the data was collected and take an in-depth look at the taxonomy of the various linguistic interferences from which CEMIs derive.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications will draw conclusions on the research including some strategies that could be implemented to curb the number of CEMIs made and prevent them from becoming permanent.

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT

Throughout my teaching career, I have never been so taken aback by a simple question a student asked me: "If people understand me, why should I worry about 'silly' mistakes?" It was only after days of reflection that I managed to come up with an appropriate answer, "Because you are how you speak. Do you want to be known for your language mistakes?" The answer was 'no'.

These 'silly' mistakes require attention. They have perplexed me throughout my teaching career. Actually, very little has been done to identify this type of mistakes and draw plausible conclusions as to why they are made and how to assist students in avoiding them. While there is literature on this type of EFL mistake, there is very little that deals with this phenomenon in a Colombian bilingual-school context; hence the initiative of 'filling in the void' of this matter. Providing strategies that help students steer clear of these Careless Mistakes before they become fossilised, will allow teachers to focus on other language aspects.

As an English language teacher, I strive for ways to improve teaching methods and strategies. This may entail considering innovative ways or approaches of teaching a certain topic or ways to help students improve language performance. Both initiatives involve reflecting on the students' abilities, their needs, and their weaknesses.

For me, the common denominator of the three is something inevitable but necessary: mistakes. It is something that is par for the course in language teaching; however, I have come across the same type of 'basic' mistakes - repeatedly. These specific mistakes are the misspelling of 'basic' high-frequency words and avoidable mistakes in punctuation. It has become perplexing not only due to their systematic reappearance in students writing, but also due to the reoccurrence in higher grades despite the fact that they are neither difficult to spell nor new,

unseen topics. Examples of the type of mistakes, CEMIs, they tend to make are confusions of *were* for *where, its* for *it's*, and *life* for *live,* among others.

Frustrated by the frequency, and ease at which these mistakes occur, I became further intrigued. Though these mistakes are also made in higher grades (10^{th} and 11^{th}), I decided to work with eighth grade students to locate the most common. As Colombian students attending Gimnasio Colombo Británico, these students are English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. That is, language learning that "takes place in a setting where the language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learnt only in the classroom" (Ellis, 1999).

As part of this study, a survey was conducted to the alumni (Appendix B) to obtain feedback on what they were required at the university in terms of English language. This was done as part of the needs analysis to a) find out what level of English is required of them b) see how important English was to them in at the university and c) verify whether CEMIs had a negative influence on their grades.

Initial findings suggest that they are not only required to pass English as a subject at school, but they will also have to pass an English assessment test as a prerequisite to graduate from their collages. In most cases, this is a C1 level test which students find challenging, as opposed to the B2 required in the English component of the Prueba SABER 11 state exam.

Examples of C1 exams in Colombia are the Cambridge Advance English test, CAE, TOEFL IBT (80 points) and IELTS (Band 8). As per the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* or CEFR, the C1 level is attained by a 'proficient user', and as such accuracy is important. This level represents "an advanced level of competence suitable for more complex work and study tasks". Hence the requirement at university level.

Per the "Common Reference Levels: qualitative aspects of spoken language use" chart, the CEFR states that for accuracy in C1, candidates' errors are 'rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur'. (ibid p 28). This type of mistakes is what Corder (1981) refers to as 'erroneous' mistakes which are errors of performance, not competence, that "may contain what are often called slips of the tongue, false starts, changes of mind, and so on…and do not normally present problems of interpretation" (Corder, 1981, p. 18). While performance refers not only to the comprehension of language but also to its use and the understanding of how to produce language, competence is, as defined by Chomsky, the "knowledge that speakers have of their language as a system of abstract formal relations" (Widdowson, 1996, p. 24).

Performance mistakes are notably evident in students' writings. Naturally, there are some mistakes that are more prevalent than others, but some students seem to make a specific type of these mistakes recurrently and systematically. It is this type of mistakes that some teachers at Gimnasio Colombo Británico tend to turn a blind eye to. They do so with the purpose of allowing students to participate in unfettered communication in their target language (TL) as they deem these 'minor mistakes' of performance, insignificant since they do not hinder the understanding of the overall message. According to Corder's (1981) observations on error analysis, they are right, for these inaccurate utterances, 'do not normally present problems of interpretation' (p18). So instead, the teachers focus on the type of overt mistakes, the ones whose messages lead to confusion or incomprehensibility. These teachers are referred to as being 'radical' as they "they tend to over-look mistakes in the interest of good relations, students' confidence…" (McArthur & McArthur, 1992, p. 663). While this strategy may be appropriate during a teacher-student conversation addressing a matter of personal concern, this is may not

suitable for written compositions where interruptions do not fall into play and 'erroneous' mistakes affect accuracy.

This type of mistake which are 'erroneously' recurrent and whose general cause is influenced by *interlanguage* Selinker (1972) is what will be referred to in this study as Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs), which are typically non-developmental, performance errors that are not made due to ignorance or ineptness. They are an issue if a student intends to attain the C1 level in English since spelling is considered important in English language tests like the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) secondary English exam students have to sit in grade 10 (Appendix A) or the TOEFL iBT (Appendix A2), the Cambridge Advanced English exam (CAE) where they may lose marks or are not awarded the top score if "common word errors" are found (Appendix A3).

The considerations above bring the research question below:

What pedagogical implications in EFL emerge through the description of Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs) in a group of EFL students at Gimnasio Colombo Británico in Bogotá, Colombia?

Objectives

The main objective is to not only to pinpoint the most common CEMIs made by Gimnasio Colombo Británico, but to describe how Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs) occur in a group of EFL students at Gimnasio Colombo Británico and provide pedagogical suggestions and implications on how they can be 'treated' with form-focused instruction.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To identify the most common mistakes made by EFL students in grade eight of Gimnasio Colombo Británico.
- To characterize Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs) occurrence in grade eight of Gimnasio Colombo Británico.
- To provide suggestions on how Careless English Mistakes (CEMIs) can be 'treated' with form-focused instruction in the English classroom.

CHAPTER 2: JUSTIFICATION

There are important issues that concern students, English teachers, readers and ultimately the academic community. First, students are required to pass English assessment exams both in secondary school as well as at college. Unlike students attending language academies or institutes, theses students' motivation to learn a L2 is what Gardner and Lambert (1972) calls instrumental:

> Instrumental motivation refers to a practical or pragmatic reason for language study. Instrumental motivations for language learning include passing a language requirement, getting a monetary reward such as an increase in pay grade for language competence, or having a better chance of getting into medical school.
>
> Gardner and Lambert, 1972

At GCB, students are instrumentally motivated and required to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) Second Language test. Though they are assessed in different ways and bear some resemblances regarding accuracy, mistakes in these tests are not a concern if they are not *global* (Burt and Kiparsky, 1974) in nature. That is, the TOEFL iBT Integrated Writing Rubric, confers the highest mark for writing (Band 5) if only "occasional language errors that are present do not result in inaccurate or imprecise presentation of content or connection", whereas the IGCSE Second Language exam (IGCSE 0500), awards the highest mark, Band 1, if written production is done in such a way that "Candidates write accurately" where they "use punctuation and grammatical structures to define shades of meaning," and "spell simple, complex and

technical words with precision." Consequently, accuracy is deemed an important criterion. In fact, inaccuracy in writing, like making spelling mistakes, hampers the writer's credibility because "even if they don't affect meaning, [they] are distracting, 'uncomfortable', and may lower respect for the speaker/writer." (Ur, 2012).

An important indicator of the need to improve language proficiency comes from the students themselves. A survey was conducted in 2016 to 53 students who had graduated from the school (Appendix B). Here are the most important findings: first, with regards to the place of study, 98.1% of the alumni are studying in Colombia. Despite this, 90.6% of them are/were required to take some sort of English exam as a graduation requisite. Second, the level of language proficiency required by the university for most students (47.9%) is/was C1. Finally, when asked about the English language need in the curriculum of their respective programs, 29.3% stated that 50% of their classes required the knowledge of English and 18.9 % claimed that 75% of their classes required it. These figures represented the largest portion of the pie.

When discussing the effects of poor language performance, CEMIs do create a negative effect on the reader since most of these mistakes are due to poor spelling. Furness (1996) states that when a reader has to 'stop and puzzle over a misspelled word, or to smile over it, he has stopped thinking about what the writer is trying to say… For a moment, the line of thought is lost' (p 17).

Finally, CEMIs also frustrates the teacher. A survey carried out to the secondary English teaching staff indicates that 98% of them have encountered CEMIs in student's output and while they have tried to correct them in an assortment of ways, they recur. In other words, even though these mistakes no are no longer deemed developmental, students make the same mistake repeatedly.

There have been some studies that delved into the issue of error analysis and error correction in Colombia. In an essay called "Error Analysis in a Written Composition", Dr. David Alberto Londoño of the Insituto Universitaria de Envigado carried out research in 2007 regarding errors – not mistakes. Through clinical elicitation he did research on errors in SLA where he gathered output data from only one student and analysed its content afterwards. Some of his findings coincide with the CEMI corpus but does not have the same rationale for their production since they are competence errors which occurred due to phonetic transfer. Dr. Londoño's student was also keen to learn the language since "professional goals require a good command of it."

Sampson (2012) also did research in a Colombian university; however, he focused on 'the effects of uncoded correction'. In his research entitled, "Coded and uncoded correction of errors in adult Colombian EFL learners", his sample was bigger; 10 students from an assortment of academic disciplines. The data gathering technique was like that of Londoño's, i.e. through experimental elicitation. In his case, he asked students to produce weekly texts of 150 words that would "elicit similar language forms." Afterwards, he corrected the texts and subsequently provided feedback – the focus of his study.

Despite noticeable differences in the studies, both authors dealt with errors, techniques and data collection of students with the same profile. These students also had to take compulsory lessons to pass an English assessment exam as a degree requisite.

Outside Colombia, there has been research on error analysis for Spanish-speaking EFL students. The first, was done within the context of Mexican Spanish-speaking ESL students which goes along the same language as the research of this study. In his paper entitled "Reference: Error analysis in a learner corpus. What are the learners' strategies?" Castillejos uses

the corpus (the International Corpus of Learner English) which belongs to the Université Catholique de Louvain as opposed to using a corpus with information gathered from within his one context.

Despite this, Castillejos (1970) analyses how EA has been criticised including the "weakness in error evaluation judgements". He based his research using Corder's method of gathering data.

The second is a research carried out by Maria del Mar Ramon Torrijos who focuses on the importance of the learner's native language (L1) in written production of a second language (L2), particularly the use of L1 linguistic rules by Spanish speakers when they are writing in the target language (L2). This has certain resemblances of this paper as it similar transfer patterns are evident.

Finally, in "Análisis de errores originados por influencia de la pronunciación en las redacciones de estudiantes españoles de la lengua inglesa" by Rodríguez Aguado, J. (1993), there was is an interesting perspective into error analysis as it focuses exclusively into morphological, syntactic and overall pronunciation (mispronunciation rather) of an ESL student's effort to produce language in their TL. Again, as is suggest by (Serrano, 2013) negative transfer is one of the culprits of inaccuracy. The author uses 100-word ´free written compositions' as the source of experimental elicitation of Spanish-speaking students at the public university of Valladolid University from which he cites examples and rationale for mistakes made. The context is a written exam (as opposed to priming) so students were aware of the 'seriousness' and repercussions of a fail grade. The test was done after completion of 400 hours of instruction. Data was gathered using S.P. Corder's method – another indication that Corder is far from being 'old had' or 'outdated'.

The paper is interesting in the sense that some of the mistakes that he registers are mistakes that have been made here in Colombia (which are present in my corpus) and it is reassuring to know that Serrano has encountered them too.

However, again, and sadly, the research is rather inconclusive. It explains what type of mistakes are made by ESL students, cites examples in their rationale but it does not reveal any sort of remedial initiatives, methods, or strategies to prevent students from making them. It is the purpose of this study to propose such strategies.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As teachers of a language, not only of English, working with mistakes is the norm. Thus, it goes without saying that we need to identify, understand, help understand and correct them using a technique, not just spoon-feeding; otherwise, there might be a misconceived message that either we, as teachers, do not care, or that they do not matter. They do matter, and just as there is a mistake-correction interdependency, so is there a two-way street in language learning of giving and receiving. In this analogy, a knowledgeable teacher is required to 'give instruction' and a student willing to 'receive' that instruction with the right type of motivation. Consequently, mistakes "are of interest, at least to teachers and learners." (James, 1998, p. 86) as both teacher and student can mutually benefit from them. The teacher may adopt novel ways to address them by devising strategies and producing material and students will reap the benefit by attaining accuracy. I concur with James (1998) who believes that teachers simply "cannot escape from a preoccupation with learners' errors, and they are attracted towards EA by its promise of relevance to their everyday professional concerns." (p. 201). Thus, in the analysis of errors, this is where EA is significant. Corder (1967) states the importance of EA as a means to a) give information on the learner's progress b) provides the researcher with information on how language was learned, and c) use it as a learning tool by which the student discovers rules about the TL.

However, contrary to Pit Corder's belief that "Mistakes are of no significance to the process of language learning" (1981, p. 10); they are indeed a much-required hurdle over which students must venture for performance improvement. Regarded as "a device the learner uses in order to learn." (Amara, 2015), "learners' errors can actually contribute to the process of language acquisition" (Johnson, 2000 in Miroslaw 2013, p 337). They are "an important part in

of the highly complex developmental process of acquiring the target language" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 85).

While most students in grade eight have taken advantage of this 'device', some have not since they have incorporated and accepted the mistake in their everyday written output, sometimes at no fault of their own as will be explained later.

At GCB, language accuracy is a sought-after requirement for achieving desired academic results both for in-house tests and external language assessment exams. But which mistakes should be tackled? Though it would be practically impossible to conduct a nationwide study in every bilingual school, a sample could be used from a grade in one school. Again, it seemed that the collection of all mistakes was also an unattainable undertaking, so I decided to filter out the global errors and focus on local grammatical errors of performance, not competence. In 1965's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Chomsky differs competence from performance. In the former, inaccuracies arise from the ignorance of the TL rules which he calls *errors*. As for the latter, 'performance mistakes' are slips made due various causes including tiredness, emotion or nervousness all of which may lead to typos, leaving out words or poor punctuation.

In order to delve into the issue at hand, we need to clarify the sometimes interchangeably-used 'error – mistake' dichotomy. In general terms, an error is "a deviation from accuracy, correctness or truth" (McArthur & McArthur, 1992) while a mistake is something you did unintentionally which produces an undesired result. However, in applied linguistics things are not that simple. Errors are 'unsuccessful bits of information' (James, Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis (Applied Linguistics and Language Study), 1998, p. 1) which are usually made by native speakers (NS). Referred to as mere *slips*, these errors can be self-corrected at will (Harmer, 2007) and do not hinder communication. Mistakes, on the other

hand, occur due to learner TL-ignorance and require correction through explanation. This distinction was clearly made for the first time by S. Pit Corder in 1967. He considered a mistake as performance flaw and an error as failure in competence.

Before learners make mistakes, they hypothesis or make 'intelligent guesses' using linguistic knowledge to produce these utterances. This type of knowledge can be split into implicit and explicit knowledge. In the former, the learner processes language input subconsciously (Hulstijn, 2005) by "noticing, comparing, and integrating" (James, 1998, p. 8), whereas in the latter, the learner uses his or her knowledge of one language as a resource for formulating hypotheses about the forms, structures, functions, meanings, rules, and patterns of another (R. Ellis, 1994). It is precisely in this type of learning where there is a higher likelihood of evidencing Crosslinguistic Influence (CLI) (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008). The language of the speaker at this stage is also known as interlanguage (IL), a term coined by Larry Selinker (1969, 1972). This is believed to be distinct from both the learner's L1 and from the TL; a sort of 'learner's representation' of the TL (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008).

Bearing some of the same traits as IL, Crosslinguistic Influence (Kellerman & Smith (1986) has a much wider scope in applied linguistics as it gives explicit rationale L1 interference. It gives linguistic and psycholinguistic reasoning describing "the full range of ways in which a person's knowledge of one language can affect that person's knowledge and use of another language." (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 3). This strategy, conscious of unconscious of using the knowledge of one language to produce another is known as transfer.

Transfer can occur from the L1 to L2, L2 to L3 and L2 to L3 and vice versa. To keep track of which language influences the other Jarvis & Pavlenko (2008) categorised them in terms

of *directionality*. Figure 1 illustrates the 'direction'of the transfer where L1 to L2 transfer is known as 'forward transfer' and L2 to L1 is known as 'reverse transfer'.

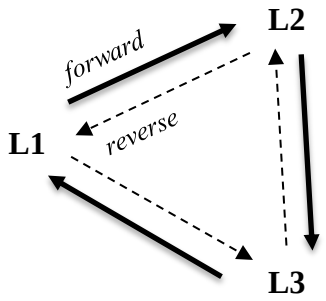


Figure 1: Directionality

To proper illustrate the comparison between FL learning paradigms, Figure 2 represents, the fields of study in relationship to the type of learner language production directionality. All directionalities of the transfers mentioned are forward. The utterances made from MT to the TL is 'interfered' by the learner's IL. This does not occur in TA or EA.

Having made the distinction, this paper will analyse the mistakes from four main perspectives: Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA), Crosslinguistic Interference (CLI), and Interlanguage (IL) fossilisation. Though CA and EA have been challenged by linguistics with one flaw or another, both bear, to some extent, worthy virtues.

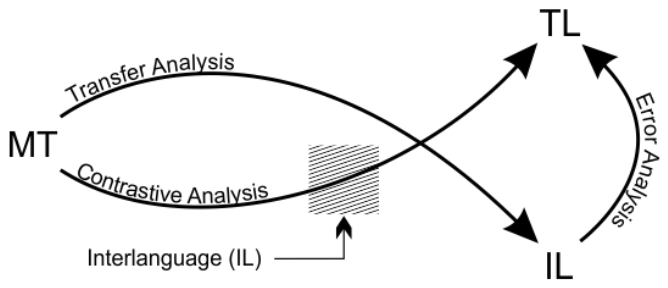


Figure 2. FL Learning Paradigms Fish and their relationships

Contrastive Analysis

In Contrastive Analysis, analysis of errors is carried out by comparing the inaccurate utterances of L2 output with the rules of the student's MT. That is, L2 language production is compared to its translation from the MT to see how their deviated utterances were 'interfered'. In this way, errors could be predicted a priori. Popular in the 50's and 60's when the eradication of errors was the main objective of language teaching, CA was criticised by many scholars on the assertion that it was inaccurate as not everyone's errors could be generalised. The learning process was considered individual. Also, CA was associated with both the Structuralism language description as well as the Behaviourism learning theory, both of which were also heavily criticised and outdated (James, 1998). The use of CA will benefit to understand why students make certain mistakes that have been 'grammar translated'. An example of this the addition of the definite article to talk about general appreciations as in:

"I like the* (✓ ~~the~~) hot dog."

Error Analysis

In the 1970's Error Analysis became an updated alternative to CA, which lost ground soon after. Though the concept was not new, Pit Corder (1974) was acknowledged as playing a fundamental role in establishing EA as part of applied linguistics. For Corder, EA is 'the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language'. (James, 1998, p. 1)

The main feature of EA consisted on a systematic analysis of errors in stages where a) learner language output data was gathered, b) errors were identifying from the texts, c) errors were described, d) explained and e) evaluated. Though I consider this systematic approach

toward the analysis of errors to be useful and ideal for a more accurate registration of the mistakes, I disagree that the analysis of errors should be confined to merely to the errors arising as a result of the lack of knowledge (Corder, 1974) since learners engaged in the academia need be accurate when producing language.

Corder (1974) categorises errors in three types; *presystematic*, *systematic* and *postsytematic*. Presystematic errors are those which are made due to the learner's unfamiliarity with rules in the TL. Systematic errors are those that occur when the learners use the wrong rule and postsystematic errors are those where the learner is aware of the correct TL rule yet inconsistently makes the mistake. This last category applies to CEMIs where transfer is also an issue.

Crosslinguistic Interference

Crosslinguistic Interference is the "influence of a person's knowledge of one language on that person's knowledge or use of another language" (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 1). It deals with the phenomena of transfer, which was heavily frowned up on the 50s when it was considered "a negative phenomenon, associated with low moral character and limited mental abilities" (ibid).

There are distinct types of CLI, but not all of them will be discussed in this study as they show little relevance in explaining the cause of CEMIs. Consequently, only the following types will be included in this study: Negative transfer (Odlin, 1996), phonological transfer (Curtin, Goad, & Pater, 1998), Syntactical Transfer, Morphological Transfer (Jarvis & Odlin, 2000) and Orthographic Transfer (Cook & Bassetti, 2005)

Negative Transfer

Transfer issues are not all bad. In fact, there is a concept known as positive transfer when the cognate is applicable in one's L1 and TL. An example of this is the use of true cognates which are words that bear similarities in both spelling and meaning like these Spanish- English comparisons: '*abrupto* – abrupt', '*arrogante* – arrogant' or even the words, '*error* and error' for that matter.

In negative transfer, at the forefront of this study, utterances in the TL are interfered by the learner's MT which influences the intelligibility of the utterance as it violates TL rules.

Transfer has a systematic analysis of its own called Transfer Analysis (TA). This analysis appears as the newest of the three types of analysis of errors. It is an amalgamation of CA and EA. First, it studies the discrepancies between the learner's IL and their mother tongue (MT) (James, 1990) by comparing both utterances (like in CA). The difference, however, lies on the fact that CA compares the discrepancies between the learner's MT with their TL. TA is not acknowledged as a fully-fledged science of its own, rather a 'procedure within EA' (James, 1990: 207)

Phonological Transfer

Phonological transfer (Curtin, Goad, & Pater, 1998) has to do with "the ways in which a person's knowledge of the sound system of one language can affect that person's perception and production of speech sounds in another language." (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 62). There are two levels of analysis. First, the segmental level or features concerning individual sounds or phonemes. Second, the analysis of stress, pitch or intonation are done in the suprasegmental level.

Both levels of phonological transfer are evidenced in CLI. Such is the case of words like *other* pronounced /ˈːəθər/ instead of /ˈʌðə/ since at the segmental level, the letter *o* in Spanish has no variation in its pronunciation. At the suprasegmental level, a student will sometimes use incremental intonation for statements – which would normally be used for yes/no questions.

Syntactical Transfer

Though there are certain similarities between Spanish and English syntax (like adding the -s inflectional morpheme for some words like cars and *carros*) there are also differences within the same category of words like people and *personas* where the word *people* is a plural noun but bears no inflectional morpheme. This type of forward syntactic transfer is prevalent in ESL and is the cause for mistakes like '*childrens' and '*womens' (✓children and women). In CEMIs syntactic transfer falls into play with the occurrence of dropping pronouns. In English, a pronoun is required when preceding an auxiliary verb in a statement, whereas the pronoun may be dropped in Spanish. For example:

We didn't go to the park.	(Nosotros) *no fuimos al parque*.
He read a book last night.	(Él) *leyó un libro anoche*.

In Spanish, the addition of the pronoun may be used to emphasize the message. Whilst these sentences are grammatically appropriate, students may choose to generalise the rule in the TL like:

✓It's a beautiful day.	**Is a beautiful day*.

But perhaps the most perplexing syntactical difference for EFL students in grade eight, and the second most commonly made CEMI, is the faulty omission or unnecessary inclusion of the definite article. Whereas in Spanish articles are required to precede a noun, this may be omitted in English depending on the desired message.

I like chess.	*Me gusta el ajedrez*.
The people are dancing.	Las personas están bailando.

Morphological Transfer

Another issue within the CLI dimension has to do with morphological transfer (Jarvis & Odlin, 2000). This is a useful strategy for those who stumble upon a rock on their communication path. Rather than using another word, ask or check a dictionary, students tend to make 'intelligent guesses' when trying to figure out how to write a word. Not finding the 'exact' word they are thinking of in L1, they force a word with L2 morphemes. Such is the case for the word homework where students add the plural marker bound morpheme s as a suffix to produce the local error *homeworks*. This may also be interpreted as an overgeneralization of the rule as most words in English add such bound morpheme in plural nouns.

Perhaps one of the most notorious influences of L1 in the TL is orthographic transfer also known as writing system transfer (Cook and Bassetti (2005b). Since whatever is written (in L1 or L2) has a direct influence on the way words are pronounced, there is a direct connection between orthographic and phonological transfer. This is the case of using L1 phonemes to produce output in the TL. Such is the case of "does* are interesting places to visit…" (✓those) which was written by a grade 9 student which looks more like an error of competence; thus not a CEMI.

Orthographic Transfer

Perhaps the best contribution in identifying the cause of negative orthographic transfer in mistakes for EFL learners can be attributed to the two categories for 'phonetically motivated mistakes' which James (1998) categorises into two 'routes' a learner takes in producing language

at the word level. The first route is related to a spelling strategy used to produce language in L2. The second route is one of a phonological nature where the learner produces language in his mind before they fall into 'written misencodings' (James, 1998). This is the case of learners who pronounces properly but falters when activating their "TL phonographic or sound-to-symbol rules to present the pronunciation of each phoneme". (James, 1998, p. 137). Here, the learner uses L1 language conventions such a L1 phonemes which can cause orthographical mistakes.

Another issue that has to do with spelling is transliteration. There has been evidence of transliteration in the production of some of the texts in grade eight. Transliteration is the use of L1 graphemes to assimilate TL pronunciation. This strategy effects spelling and will confuse the NS. For example, one student who meant to write *those* wrote the transliterated form *does* - /ˈdəʊz/.

Fossilisation

To understand the concept of fossilisation we need to first refer to *Interlanguage* (IL) a term Selinker coined 1972. As an intermediate state of knowledge of language that develops through a successive approximation of the TL, IL begins with the learner's MT and ends in native-like fluency. However, because many learners cease to develop beyond a certain point, their interlanguage are said to *fossilize* (Selinker, 1970) at various stages. Fossilization is a stand-alone linguistic phenomenon and manifested as deviant forms of utterances from TL. I have witnessed this in EFL learners at bilingual schools where it occurs at all levels, from a phonological to a pragmatic layer and even, as I have noticed, at sociolinguistic level. At the sentence level, it covers areas like grammar, lexis, and pronunciation.

In EFL, it is not unusual for students to simply 'learn a mistake'; however, in doing so with no correction, they sustain fossilization over time. This happens when a learner, in the process of rule formation and hypothesis testing, simply does not 'see' any errors; consequently, he finds no need to correct himself, even if the errors are still present. If the learner receives positive feedback i.e. he is understood, even with mistakes, he will not correct himself. This is the case for advanced learners, who have had errors for a long time. This seems to be the case at GCB, especially within the individual learner and its individual fossilization. Selinker (1978), splits individual fossilization in two subcategories; error reappearance and language competence fossilization. The case which has been diagnosed in the school for grade eight is error reappearance which refers to "the inappropriate interlanguage structures that are thought to have been corrected but continue to appear regularly." (Xueping , 2008, p. 127).

The problem with fossilised mistakes is that is no learning. In other words, "fossilization is equivalent to cessation of development" (Elder, 2001 p.279). It is particularly this frustration of stalled learning and recurrent frustration that has led to address this issue.

At GCB, students have fossilized some words due to three main reasons: first, forward transfer affects students when producing language in the TL; second, the student's teachers have failed, in earlier grades, to raise awareness or importance of local mistakes and have instead considered them a mere slip. Though they are detected, like the confusion of *its* for *is*, they are considered isolated events whose treatment is unimportant, in comparison to the frequent global errors that *do* need to be tackled. Finally, previous teachers themselves were not native teachers and the modelled utterances provided were far from faultless examples (Pawlak, 2014), causing what Selinker (1972) calls 'training fossilization' where students 'learn the mistake' which in turn has compromised the quality of their output.

Phonetic Fossilization

One of the most common types of fossilization in FL learning is phonetic fossilisation. This has to do with phonological errors that occur due to mispronunciation of words in the TL as a result of its L1 interference. For instance, the case of and *been* and *being* – a type of CEMI which is sometimes used interchangeably. This may be since there is an irregular phonetic pattern between the 'ei' in 'either' and the diphthong 'ei' in words like *seeing* or *being.* I believe this type of fossilization as a consequence of lack of TL exposure. Students who have never been exposed life in a TL country have issues using articulators to pronounce alveolar sounds. That is, they find it hard to emit sound using the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge - the flat part of the palate which is located behind the teeth.

Morphological fossilization

Like other languages, the English language lexically morphs into desired parts of speech by adding affixes – a type of morpheme. The study of these additions or modifications of root words is known as morphology. However, morphology can be very irregular and not always follow the same rules. An example of this, is the addition of the 'ed' suffix in regular past verbs, but irregular patterns for irregular verbs. This leads to error due to the overgeneralisation of rule application, which is rare in eighth grade. Another example of irregularity is the third-person singular and plural morpheme –s. This former is a facet of syntactic agreement such as *drinks* and is suffixed to lexical verbs and auxiliaries such as *has.* However, there are other markers for third-person singular, such as *buses, crises,* and *criteria*. The latter is used to pluralise nouns in words like cats, books, and pens. However, again, some nouns are irregular in nature like

women, *children*. Some eighth graders add the -s bound morpheme in these words, but can correct them when asked.

Characteristics of CEMIs

In order to understand the true nature of CEMIs, it is important to understand the categories under which they fall since not all mistakes are of a *careless* nature. CEMIs derive from a decoding switchboard between the MT and the TL, also referred to as *interlanguage*. CEMIs are all words in the Longman Communication 3000 list of most commonly used words in spoken and written forms of the English language. This, as well as an array of psycholinguistic issues, is precisely what induces error in grade eight as students produce language in the TL which is, at times *erroneous*. Performance errors are made as a result of their attempt to produce language in the TL. Here, as cited in Corder (1981), students are "compelled to hypothesize, based upon the observed output which results from the (second language) learner's attempted production of a target language norm" (p87). This hypothesising of rules sometimes leads to inaccuracies in the TL which occurs whenever students are not corrected properly, consequently becoming fossilised. I believe correction must be constant and reiterated to prevent re-occurrence or "backsliding" which Selinker (1972) refers to as "the regular reappearance or re-emergence in interlanguage productive performance of linguistic structures which were thought to be eradicated". This is typically what happens to CEMIs when basic, elementary-level mistakes 're-emerge' in higher grades, even after prior instruction. Whereas students will make mistakes as part of their learning process, it is disappointing that they be allowed to transcend from grade to grade carrying the same make minor mistakes in their route to tertiary education.

CEMIs are not new to bilingual learners in Gimnasio Colombo Britanico, or in any other school for that matter. I have monitored them over 10 years from various bilingual schools in Colombia and compiled them into a corpus of CEMIs of both written and printed mistakes. One thing I have noticed is that the despite the evolution of technology used in word processing,

simple mistakes are still made. The Apple iPad™ even goes a couple of steps further in making writing 'easier'. It features auto-capitalisation, auto-correction, spell checker and the popular predictive text. On desktop devices meanwhile, Microsoft Word has all the previous tools except predictive text. Regardless, one would have thought that simple language mistakes would fade away as technology progressed. It has not.

The assistance of a word processor by students, which automatically underlines spelling and punctuation mistakes, is not always accurate as it has been proven that not all CEMIs are detected by a Microsoft Word® the most widely used software[1]. However, when the students were asked to hand in a task by hand, the presence of CEMIs was evident. In this case, 87.4 % of all the TIFI-type of mistakes in the corpus were handwritten which suggests that it is not a mere case or a typo or defective spell checker, but that students wrote what they thought was right.

As students are asked to produce assignments in the TL, they learn to hypothesise when composing a text. This is fundamental in learning a second language. This hypothesizing may be the cause of mistakes, but what has a direct effect on the CEMIs? Sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. While there is only one known type of error in the former (a cross-cultural misunderstanding, covered later on) there are multiple instances of psycholinguistics. A characteristic of a CEMI is that they come from high-frequency words. Table 1 is an example of how some of the CEMIs words are very frequently used in the English language.

[1] Wikipedia.org. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_processor

According to the Oxford English Corpus, which has in excess of 2 billion words, these are the 100 most common words in written English. The CEMI words will be in bold, block capital letters.

Table 1

The 100 Most Common Words in English according to the Oxford 3000™

1	**THE**	26	they	51	when	76	come
2	**BE**	27	we	52	make	77	**ITS**
3	to	28	say	53	can	78	over
4	of	29	her	54	like	79	think
5	and	30	she	55	time	80	also
6	a	31	or	56	no	81	back
7	in	32	an	57	just	82	after
8	that	33	will	58	him	83	use
9	have	34	my	59	know	84	two
10	I	35	one	60	take	85	how
11	it	36	**ALL**	61	**PEOPLE**	86	our
12	for	37	would	62	into	87	work
13	not	38	**THERE**	63	year	88	first
14	on	39	**THEIR**	64	your	89	well
15	with	40	what	65	good	90	way
16	he	41	so	66	some	91	even
17	as	42	up	67	could	92	new
18	you	43	out	68	them	93	want
19	do	44	if	69	see	94	because
20	at	45	about	70	**OTHER**	95	any
21	**THIS**	46	who	71	than	96	**THESE**
22	but	47	get	72	then	97	give
23	his	48	which	73	now	98	day
24	by	49	go	74	look	99	most
25	from	50	me	75	only	100	us

Notice the word ‘be’ corresponds to the conjugation of the verb. That is, CEMI words like *is, been, being* and *were* are included in the list. The words *where, life, live, another, homework, think* and *think* can be seen in the Oxford 3000™ and the Longman Communication 3000® corpus of the 3000 most frequent words.

In essence, CEMIs are *erroneous* (Corder, 1981) *local errors* (Burt and Kiparsky, 1974) of high-frequency words[2] made due to Crosslinguistic Interference which have become *fossilised* (Selinker, 1972). At GCB, they become increasingly noticeable in grades eight and up. This may be due to the decreased frequency of English language teaching and exposure.

In fact, English is no longer the language of instruction for any subject other than the English language itself. Although the transition to English as a first language is currently in the works, beneficial results will not be reaped any time soon. Furthermore, students no longer have form-focused instruction (FFI) but an international curriculum whose favours fluency and performance at the expense of competence and accuracy. Though competence and performance go hand in hand, accuracy can be attained through FFI of language topics like idiomatic and rhetorical language, grammar, advanced punctuation, among others. Nowhere else, and on no other occasion will students have the opportunity to acquire literature and language-rich content.

[2] Words belonging to the Longman Communication 3000 corpus of most frequent words in both written and spoken English.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

Due to the nature of the research and the fact that I will personally carry out research in order to improve teaching, I plan to do exploratory research. This type of research does not provide definitive or conclusive answers; rather, it becomes a springboard upon which further research can be made by identifying causes or problems. This is done by describing, explaining, identifying key issues and validating noteworthy findings from the data.

Grade eight was chosen as they are beyond the threshold of basic level of English language competence for this school. That is, they are fully aware of basic grammar, spelling and punctuation rules, from which CEMIs originate. Being within an age range of 14 to 15 years, the group is an even mix of boys and girls who are learning the second language for instrumental reasons. Their level of English, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages[3] (ACTFL), could be considered Intermediate High where writers:

> Are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often but not always of paragraph length, and they typically contain some evidence of breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of Intermediate High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken

[3] The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking (ACTFL, 1999)

> language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension. (p 13)

At this level, students in grade eight at GCB make *local* errors. This type of error allows for overall understanding of the message. This is typical in those who incur in CEMIs.

With the purpose of gathering authentic data from the students, they were asked to carry out an assortment of writing activities like articles, letters, and one-paragraph texts (Appendix B). The assessment criteria evaluated accuracy (Appendix D), which, according to the needs analysis is of importance for the students as they will be required this in tertiary-level education.

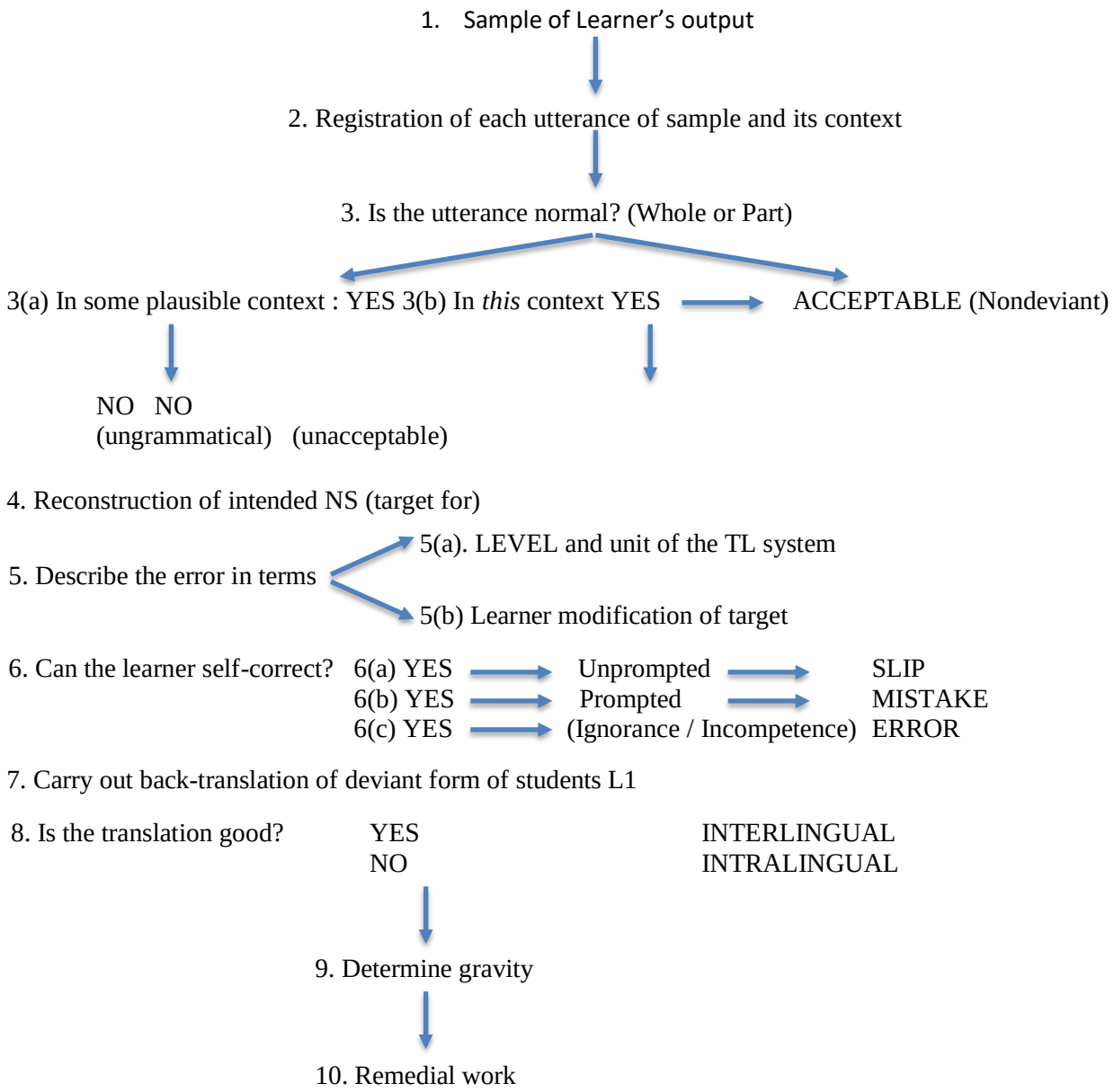
CHAPTER 5: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In order to compile data through exploratory research, data was gathered through primary research. That is, personally collecting data from a specific sample group as not all 89 students were studied, only those with diagnosed symptoms of CEMIs. For this, a sampling method was used to study a focus group whose criteria for sampling for the study included "all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (Patton, 1990, p. 176). This is also known as 'convenience or opportunity sampling' since it is convenient for the teacher to have the population at their fingertips where "the members of the target population are selected for the purpose of the study if they meet certain practical criteria" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 98).

For this study, the focus group was assigned some class-oriented tasks with specific guidelines and language conditions. One of these task (Appendix C) consisted on a short, handwritten text of 150 where quantitative data was gathered through clinical elicitation. During the correction and marking, the text was scanned for CEMIs. If any of these mistakes were present, they were added to the CEMIs corpus. This data was then classified and then analysed. Mistakes were added including class grade, mode (printed or handwritten) and the quoted text in which the mistake was made, to add context.

This study gathered information from the written production of students from grade eight by following the steps which Corder (1971. 1981) calls 'algorithms' (Figure 3), or steps carried out to study mistakes.

Figure 3. Algorithm for Error analysis (adapted from S.P. Corder, 1981: 23)



The data has been compiled from authentic, academic-related texts of an assortment of text types and genres and tests that include letters, stories, articles, activities, quizzes and exams. All the texts were done with formal assessment in mind, and the students were aware of this. Informing them of this was important as they had to make an effort to produce accurate

language, from which reliable data could be collected. However, an unassessed task (Appendix C) was assigned which offered even more reliable data as there was no pressure on the students 'to get things right'.

Clinical Elicitation

Although natural learner language data is preferred to carry out EA, most of the data came from its elicitation. Corder (1974) identifies two types of elicitation, both of which are present in this study. First, Clinical Elicitation which is "getting information to produce any data of any sort" (Ellis, 1999). Students were asked to produce texts of language where they could use language in context for functional purposes, usually to practise previously-taught concepts. For instance, on a discussion on whether or not downloading music from the internet is considered unlawful, students expressed their views in writing by taking part in an open forum. This was an ideal opportunity for them to adjust their language "in accordance with social conventions that call for different forms of address, different pronunciations, different words, different grammatical structures, different discourse patterns, and so forth, in different social contexts." (James, 1998, p. 106). A task of this type allows for a spontaneous production of text which would yield authentic texts (as opposed to a mere filling in the blanks) from which mistakes can be collected.

Identification of errors

Steps were taken to keep track of the mistakes students made by jotting down each mistake and feeding an Excel spreadsheet with every high-frequency mistake in a systematic manner; thus, providing a data gathering tool. With the purpose of preserving the authenticity of

the mistake, the whole sentence was transferred to the corpus so that one could get an idea of both the context as well as the intention of writer. This is of essences since 'The only way we can reasonably determine whether a mistake is a slip or a genuine error is by reference to the writer's semantic and structural intentions' (Taylor, 1986 p 154 in (James, 1998).

Students whose mistakes were recorded have retained their anonymity (for ethical and legal reasons). Their mistakes were classified systematically in accordance to error type, student age, intended message, and mode (whether the utterance was produced by hand or via a computer printout). Initial findings suggest students are more CEMI-prone in their written production when they compose by hand. Although less CEMIs were made when using a word processor, they fact that they were made at all is a likely result of carelessness or over-spellcheck dependency.

Description of errors

While there are other mistakes that comprise the corpus, here are the top 10. Trying to tackle all the mistakes at the same time seemed not only impractical but also confusing to the students, so only the first type, FITIs was studied.

The two most common mistakes made were the Faulty Interchange of Triple I's (FITI): *It*, *Its*, and *It's* (Table 2) followed by mistakes with or the absence of the definite article *the*. These CEMIs have been present in all types of text types and genres. Table 3 shows the frequency the mistakes are made, extracted from an assortment of texts and from two grades. The data collected comes from the experimental elicitation stage carried out this year.

Table 2

List of CEMIs (Top 10)

Type	Frequency	% of CEMIs
Is vs. Its vs. It's	165	24%
Articles (omission & addition)	102	15%
Where vs. Were	75	11%
These vs. This	65	9%
Live vs. Life	53	7%
Enter	46	6%
Other vs. Another	40	5%
Nowadays	34	3%
Too vs. To	22	3%
Homework	18	3%
Been vs. Being	17	2%
	637	92%

Table 3 reveals ten of such fragments from the written production of eighth grade students. This type of Careless Mistake I have named Faulty Interchange of Triple I's (FITI), because of the misuse of the words *is*, *its* and *its* believing that they are the same or *interchangeable*.

Table 3

Careless English Mistakes with FITI's

Grade 9	Handwritten		Printed		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Female	35	21.2	8	4.8	43	26.0
Male	31	18.8	2	1.2	33	20.0
Total	66	40.0	8	6.0	76	46.0

Grade 10	Handwritten		Printed		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Female	37	22.4	12	7.3	49	30.0
Male	33	20.0	7	4.2	40	24.0
Total	70	62.4	19	11.5	89	54.0

DATA ANALYSIS

To analysis the occurrence of CEMIs, I extracted authentic data from a task students had to carry out for an in-class academic task (Appendix C). Of the 89 texts (from the total number of students in grade eight) only some of those which bore evidence of CEMIs will be analysed below. These examples will be identified as 'Example' the corresponding number from Appendix C. Other examples from the CEMIs Corpus have also been included in this analysis. They can be identified with the word 'Corpus' before each example. In both cases, please note that the texts were not corrected or marked. Additionally, notice that though there may be other mistakes in each sentence, the focus is entirely on CEMIs.

For the analysis, I propose to analyse the mistakes in two phases: a) the description of the mistakes using Contrastive Analysis and b) provide linguistic rationale behind their occurrence using Error Analysis (EA). CA will play an important role in understanding the nature of the mistakes from the perspective of the learner's L1 interference. Here, I shall look for commonalities between the idiosyncratic dialect (Corder, 1967) of the student to that of their desired or intended message in the TL. Additionally, I shall explain the possible nature and cause of the CEMIs from the point of view of the learner and based on the taxonomy discussed in Chapter 3.

The most notorious characteristic of CEMIs is the fact that they re-occur after a while, despite prior instruction and become fossilized. This type of fossilization is known as 'error reappearance' Selinker (1972) and is the first of two types fossilization, the other being of 'language competence' for which CEMIs do not apply. Consequently, I have decided to divide the analysis of CEMIs into three types of fossilization: Phonetic, Morphological and another I shall call 'Punctuational' due to the influence of L1 punctuation marks in the TL, usually by

omission, though there is evidence of addition. These types of fossilization will then branch into various subcategories of CLI taxonomies i.e., phonetic transfer, syntactic transfer, orthographic transfer and punctuation transfer, all of whose direction of transfer is *forward*. Reverse transfer will not be discussed as it is directly related to positive transfer, a phenomenon which assists correctness, no hamper it.

EXPLANATION OF ERRORS

Errors of Phonetic Fossilization

Negative Phonetic transfer

The most common mistake in this category is what I have called the Faulty Interchange of Triple I's (FITI). To many learners, this mistake has been fossilised as they are used interchangeably. The fact that they come from handwritten texts suggests they are not typographical mistakes, nor mistakes due to over-spell check dependency. The are clearly slips, as they care corrected when prompted.

As can been seen from the authentic samples (Table 4), FITIs are most commonly made by hand and are divided into three types:

Type 1: *Is* replacing *it's* as in "*I'm grateful of what you are doing for me, *is very nice of you…*". This by far the most common mistake. It corresponds to 56.4% of all FITI mistakes registered in the CEMIs Corpus.

Type 2: *Its* replacing *it's* as in "*Im crazy about football, *its my favorite activity because you never know what is going to happen. *Its very unpredictable*." This is the second most common FITI mistake with 25.5% frequency ratio.

Type 3: *It's* replacing *is* as in "*I think travelling *it's an experience you will never forget and you learn many things in a trip.*" According to the CEMIs corpus, this is the least common FITI mistake with a frequency ratio of just 18.8%.

Table 4

Mistakes and modes of FITI-induced mistakes in eighth grade

	TIFI Examples	Mode
1	*I'm grateful of what you are doing for me, <u>is</u> very nice of you…*	HW
2	*I want to learn as much as possible about English life-style, <u>it's</u> nature, and <u>it's</u> literature.*	HW
3	*…my brother told me that he did motocross and said me that is fantastic because you have a lot of adrenaline.*	HW
4	*Bungee jumping <u>it's</u> the best decition I have ever made.*	HW
5	*Being a king again it's possible, so take courage and reach your kingdom.*	HW
6	*Im crazy about football, <u>its</u> my favorite activity because you never know what is going to happen. Its very unpredictable.*	HW
7	*…but remember, the oxygen in tank is for a limit time, then is finished.*	PR
8	*(the Sphinx)… <u>it's</u> mysterious past and what even historians say about it, <u>it's</u> connection with Napoleon Bonaparte [and] about its nose.*	HW
9	*I think is one of the sensations that every person want to fill.*	HW
10	*…and you know that the only way to support your team <u>its</u> to go in front of the goal keeper…*	HW

PR = Printed, HW = Handwritten.

In the case of Type 1, the pronunciation of the *ts* consonant cluster is partially ignored and reduced to a simple -s. The second type is caused by a punctuation error. This may be due to the fact that though apostrophes have been accepted into 'current Spanish usage' by the Real Academia de la Lengua Española, it is not used for possessives, while Type 3 mistakes are a made in peculiar manner for which I can give no exact explanation.

To elaborate, Type 1 bears the typical traits of negative phonetic transfer i.e., mispronunciation and/or intonation, in this case of the consonant cluster *ts*. These phonologically-induced errors are produced when learners fail to differentiate voiced from

voiceless end-of-word consonants as in is (voiced) and it's (unvoiced). The same goes for the CEMI *live*, *life* and *leave.* The spelling of this confusing triplet can also be produced due to the mispronunciation of the words. I believe students are aware of the pronunciation of the words (as they are high-frequency words) but deviation of spelling occurs during the decoding process into written composition; thus, producing *live* or *life* which, despite the end vowel might produce a more accurate spelling than writing /lɘʌ′ve/.

This type of CEMI (Table 5) is the most diverse and error-prone type due to the number of confusing words in the same category: Leave, Lives (Plural), Lives (3rd Person), Life, Live (Verb). Again, all these words are frequently used words in the English language, per the Longman Communication 3000.

Table 5

Mistakes derived from Live, Leave and Life.

Corpus Example	Type	Occurrence (%)
My plain lives at 8:00 in the morning.	Leave	1.9
Everybody in their lifes, had think about being a fish.	Lives (plural)	47.2
If I had met before the girl who leaves in the front apartment…	Lives (3rd Person)	5.7
Money is one of the most important things in live but is not everything.	Life	30.2
Every human being has the right to life and it would be a crime if someone	Live (Verb)	15.1

CEMI Corpus

Another very commonly confused pair is the pronunciation of *were* and *where*. This causes confusing to some students who have not been corrected on the use of a diphthong in the latter. This is probably due to the fact that Spanish has no 'invisible diphthongs' as in *where*.

1. *...also the rooms the first night where very untidy as well as with a bad smell…*
2. *The hotel were I stayed for the vacations, offered around-the-clock service of food.*

From what I have seen, it is clear to me that there is a direct reciprocated interdependency (for good or for bad) between the learner's orthography with that of their phonology. However, these learners stumble upon two CEMI-bound hurdles during composition, a) the sound-letter correspondences of Spanish, against the irregular English phonetic system and b) the variable syllable length utterance in English against the invariable Spanish type. While the former is a case of sporadic transliteration in grade eight (due to the intermediate level of English competence), the latter is a more frequent but generally uncorrected habit where students simply bypass vowel lengths. However, to infer spelling by adopting MT syllabic conventions in the TL does not always yield orthographic accuracy. Students contemplating this strategy un aware of the fact that English language is a stress-timed language while Spanish is a syllable-timed language. This means that while in Spanish there is no variation in length between one syllable and another this is not the case in English. The words *were* and *where* may possess the same number of syllables in either language, in English the latter is longer. This is also the cause of mistakes like *this* vs. *these*.

3. *"I recommend you to remodel your hotel to avoid this disadvantages."*
4. *"I like a lot these activity because is an easy way to pass funny time…"*

This confusion may be made for two reasons: a) the word this ends in a what students may perceive as a plural morpheme -s and may thus believe it is already plural or b) the learner fails do differ the voiced from the unvoiced consonant.

A rare example of a negative phonetic transfer is the confusion between *now* and *know*. Because all letters are used in Spanish to pronounce a word, learners may choose to employ such orthographic strategy in English. This sometimes produces undesired mistakes in the TL as in

English, orthography is very inconsistent in terms of it sound-letter correspondences. Take for example words like *though* and *thought*.

Orthographical Transfer

Taking advantage of the sound-letter correspondence of Spanish, some students opt for the use of the L1 alphabet and phonemes in the writing of words in the L2. This type of linguistic transfer is known as *orthographical* or informally *transliteration*. This strategy is usually used when writing a word whose spelling is doubtful. This was very popular in Colombia during the 80's to assist a leaner with pronunciation when reading the lyrics of a popular English song.

The frequency of which this type of mistake is made is low; however, I have included it in the study to exemplify the negative phonetic transfer strategy which at time interferes with thr spelling of other words.

5. *The public must *now about their gobermnent.*
6. **Media is a good way to *now about *it's going on with "important" people.*

These mistakes are made in written form only. This is possibly so since Word® actually identifies the error as 'possible word choice error'. However, it does not always identify this type of mistake.

7. *"I want to now the way to New York."* (not identified as a mistake by Word®)
8. *"I want to now the difference between say and tell."* (identified error in Word®)

Another example of negative phonetic transfer is transliterated word ‘spect’ which is pronounced /esˈpekt/ in the learner’s MT. Here, the student prefixed the s consonant cluster with an /ɛ/ sound.

9. (Example 2, Lines 12-13) *“I spect from English class learn a lot and improve my English, they have tell…”*

Both examples 2 and 3 of transfer inaccuracies are actually developmental errors, not erroneous mistakes. In example No. 10, there is a common omission mistake. This is due to a combination of both negative phonetic as well as syntactic transfer. This happens since, in their L1, students tend to use the elliptical ‘estados unidos’ in informal register, omitting the definite article. This in turn is transferred to the TL where the article omission prevails.

10. (CEMI Corpus) *“I would like to live in Ø United States…”*

Errors of Morphological Fossilization

Negative Syntactic transfer

There is negative syntactic transfer from the Spanish verb 'to be' in the third person 'es'. This is a phonetically-fossilised mistake which occurs in oral utterances as well. For instance, some students will say "Is that" from negatively-transferred 'Es que' meaning 'The thing is that…". In most cases, this is said when, in a teacher-student conversation when providing an excuse for an issue of personal concern. The teacher in this case plays the role of listener, not teacher so there is no interruption or correction. They are overlooked for the sake of practicality and to keep the flow of the conversation steady.

In this type of mistake, the cause lies in L1 negative syntactic transfer due to the similarities in syntax of the L1, *no pronoun + be + adjective*; however, this leads to ungrammaticality in the TL. As a local error, I believe that this mistake originates from syntactic rule in the L1, where the third person pronoun *it* can be omitted '*es importante*'. The following is an example from Table 3, Example 9.

11. (Corpus) *I think *is one of the sensations that every person want to fill.*
12. (Example 3, Lines 6-7) *"…Colombia is a beautiful country full of resources, *is just that we don't know how to manage that*."
13. (Example 4, Lines 2-3 ", maybe *is the way they talk or act, but they are really interesting."

I find it curious that the student (Sentence 11) still incurs in this simple mistake at this stage of high school (grade eight). This gives me a clear indication that this is no longer a

developmental error but a 'slip of the pen' which becomes frustrating especially when I consider that some teachers overlook them as if it were not important.

14. (Example 1, Line 2-3) *"I love to sleep, *is like I had a relationship with my bead."*

15. (Corpus) *"I want to go to USA for my vacations…"*

From Another mistake (Sentence 14) is the omission (Ø) of the definite article *the*. It is common for students in eighth grade to refer to the United States as 'USA' instead of the States or America. Students choose not to write or say 'America' when referring to the US due to the cross-cultural misunderstanding that 'América' refers solely to the continent and *not* the country. This is an example how CEMIs is also a sociolinguistic issue.

Errors of 'Punctuational Fossilization'

Negative punctuational transfer

While the use of some punctuation marks is similar in both L1 and TL, others like the apostrophe and the upside-down explanation and question mark are not equivalently used. Hence the mistake. Perhaps due to ignorance, some company names in Colombia use English punctuation to add 'spice' or give it a 'professional' look when to the native reader, it may produce quite the opposite.

In SLA, the same strategy is used. We have seen how students at GCB add unnecessary morphemes while omitting others that are needed. This addition and omission is not exclusive to orthography. It is also in use during the transfer of punctuation. Students are always using both L1 and TL during a normal day of class. Spanish is usually spoken even during English class and this constant translation allows for slips, in this case of punctuation. Very seldom do students communicate in the TL when carrying out a written assignment in pairs. Code switching is not unheard of as a result. Sentence 14 depicts an example of omission, in this case of a comma.

16. (Example 1, Line 7-8) *"...just like a bird I'm ready to fly wherever the wind takes me."*

In this sentence, a CEMIs is produced due to omission. There is an omission of an end marker in between the words birds and I'm. This is unusual, but a mistake nonetheless. An example of a CEMI, this type of mistake is present in an assortment of modes and forms. Sentence 15 was written.

17. (Example 2, Line 1) *"My name is Santiago, I actually live in Bogota D.C"*

The cause of this type of mistake is very common in grade eight. Spanish punctuation rules allow for commas to be used in between simple sentences to include a 'pause'. In English, however this would incur in a comma splice.

The omission of full stops at the end of an independent clause is also considered a CEMI. It is rather odd that this type of end mark is not an issue when composing paragraphs, as is normally the case since students correctly punctuate entire chunks of text with a full stop. It seems to only be prevalent in simple sentences within paragraphs.

18. (Example 2, Line 3) *"I like *united *states because *is a very calm country *it is clean…"*

There is a lack of capitalisation in the words 'united states'. This is caused to due to the use of Spanish conventions which requires no capitalisation for nationalities. Mistakenly however, this rule has been used in proper noun. Furthermore, there are multiple punctuation mistakes. Absence of capitalisation is one of them. Among the known causes of the mistakes in this line, there could be another cause that occurs during composition; when students slowly compose, short strings of texts at a time, they may process their ideas with 'mental pauses' which separate each idea, or independent clause. The issue lies on the fact that these pauses are not made explicit when transferring ideas into words.

19. (Corpus) *"…so most of my books are in *english and in *german."*
20. (Example 3, Line 1-2) *"My *english level is really low *last year my language grades were like 75-80."*

Though Sentence 19 has punctuation mistakes, the general message is got across, though with 'basic' local mistakes. This is a common issue in handwritten texts where the word *English* is not capitalized. This student simply forward-transferred the punctuation rule of their L1 to the TL relying on the notion that since in Spanish, languages nationalities and languages are not capitalised, the same would be proper for English. This mistake would not be less common when assignments are submitted in a print, taking advantage of an automatic correction feature of a word processors like Microsoft Word. However, Word would not identify the missing

punctuation mark, as witnessed during the transcription of the example into this study. There is a need for an end mark to separate the two simple sentences.

21. (Example 4, Lines 7-9) *"My favorite celebrity is Benedict Cumberbatch,* I enjoy reading like fish enjoy swiming."*

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATONS

Seeing that mistakes are inevitable; the best stance is to use them to promote a better understanding about language. While some may say that there should be more emphasis on correct spelling, accurate grammar, appropriate vocabulary, and proper punctuation, others may argue that fluency should be at the forefront of every class. Though there is an endless discussion on what fluency actually is, for this study it is being able to speak in a continuous manner with few pauses and where the intended message is delivered successfully despite mistakes. If this is the case then more *laissez-faire* attitude towards mistakes may be allowed.

I believe these two radical positions should meet half way. Synergizing these concepts would give students a break from excessive red ink from marking, while not sacrificing accuracy. Correction should be part of the learning process especially since learners "expect to be corrected on their inaccurate oral and written production in the hope of learning something from their errors, and most of them would be perhaps surprised and disappointed if such corrective feedback were to be withheld" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 25). But what should be corrected and in what manner?

In general terms, teachers tend to correct student's writing whenever the message is obscure or unclear. While this may be a valid reason, those 'silly' CEMIs should not be marginalised as it may hinder the swift flow of information or worse yet, compromise the credibility of the author, as is the case in academic writing. A reader should be able to read a text in an uninterrupted manner, and not have to pause every now and then to try and make sense of a message. This is where FFI plays an important role in language instruction as a means to "encourage students to attend to, understand, and gain greater control over targeted language

features control over targeted language features, whether they are grammatical, lexical, phonological or pragmalinguistic in nature" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 26).

Regarding the way in which the corrections should be made, there are some very important ways.

Strategies

The study addressed written language production issues made by EFL in grade eight of GCB. The issue of them making the same mistakes year after year has alerted the need to provide strategies for their eradication, or at least provide them with tools to engage on the right type of explicit knowledge to tackle them. Strategies may be implemented to either prevent CEMIS from occurring or from them *backsliding* (Selinker, 1972). In both strategies, the compromise of three important players in language teaching education at Gimnasio Colombo Británico need to agree to work harmoniously and simultaneously to produce faster results. These players are the Language Curriculum, Prevention, and Correction.

Language Curriculum

It is clear that there needs to be provisions in the curriculum to tackle these mistakes from earlier grades. Focusing on phonics in pre-school and primary will help learners understand the differences in pronunciation of words like *where* and *were*. This in turn will improve spelling. Changes to the language curriculum need to be implemented as this school tends to heed only to the Cambridge International Education, CIE, curriculum – which does not explicitly deal with this issue. Understanding that CEMIs do exist, and having identified the most common types could be a starting point to dealing with them before they become fossilized.

Seeing that accuracy is more important than fluency at Gimnasio Colombo Británico, the language curriculum needs to be revised. This does not mean going back to the drawing board with a completely new curriculum. It merely means adding FFI to specifically address CEMIs. FFI of CEMIs could be done at the beginning of the course to remind students of the importance of proper punctuation and spelling, especially for CEMIs which are avoidable if addressed properly. Since some of the CEMIs are made due to the mispronunciation, teaching of phonics is crucial, especially in common confusing words like *were/where*, *this/these* and *live/life*.

Prevention

Using the CEMIs corpus to predict mistakes is very useful in GCB. Understanding what constitutes a CEMI, action can be taken to address them before they are made. This is where FFI is very useful. However, Form-focused instruction is only beneficial when linguistic features of the mistakes are addressed "over a short period of time" and when it "separates the introduction and controlled practice of the target language forms from their use in communicative activities. (Pawlak, 2014, p. 171).

Making sure that basic punctuation and spelling of specific homophones (*its / it's*) is covered as early as grade 1 will be beneficial in the long run. In order to solidify learning, perhaps a reminder should be made at the beginning of every year.

From is generally seen at GCB, there is no apparent practice of going back and revising. Little effort is made to get the minutiae of punctuation right so proofreading is skipped. This may be attributed to 'textese', a type of short-handed text used in smartphones when chatting, where there seems to be an accepted understanding that it is alright to write that way. This needs to be

changed by fostering of the habit of proofreading as means to improve not only accuracy and ease of reading but also the negative impression they may give to the reader. When using a word processor, seldom do students check their work once completed as they take it for granted that the spell checker's coded correction is suffice.

Proofreading is one of the main reasons students make CEMIs since they can correct them themselves when prompted; consequently, we need to "train [the students] to read their own work critically so that they can make corrections and changes with or without [the teacher's] guidance." (Harmer, 2004, p. 117).

Correction

There is a Spanish saying that says that 'Everything in excess is bad'. I believe it is a valid premise that would also be appropriate for the correction of errors. I believe Brown (2007) is right when he stated that "Errors are a 'necessary' manifestation of inter-language development, and we do well not to become obsessed with their constant correction" (p. 228). Be prudent, only correct if necessary. The key to an adequate, meaningful correction is knowing who to correct, what to correct and when.

That said, there are three strategies that the teacher may consider to correct effectively. They may give personalised oral feedback, use marking symbols or correct a common issue as a class.

Some students prefer oral feedback. This personalised, one-to-one discussion infuses the additional benefit of care, which may motivate the student further. In this strategy, students' CEMIs are addressed in person where students are asked to ponder on the mistake and their

intended meaning. This is an effective way to check whether the mistake is made due to ignorance or if it is indeed a slip. A productive follow up would be to provide specific tailor-made workshops to focus on those specific issues which can be used as a complementary task alongside instruction where it would not impede the flow of the class.

The other type of recommended strategy is correction using marking symbols for students to correct on their own and out of the classroom, which allows them to self-correct their work at their own pace. For the identification of CEMIs in a student's text, an empty triangle (△) is drawn on top of the mistake. The triangle was chosen as an uncommon alternative to the traditional marking symbols. It is reminiscent of the red warning triangle in traffic signs and as such used to warn students of their mistake. This warning gives the students a chance to improve accuracy before final submission, resulting in improved accuracy and academic performance. Recognising the symbol also allows students to develop of explicit and even implicit knowledge since they create a mental link between what mistake was made and how they occurred. Using coded correction (Lee, 2004, p. 287) which is writing the correct form above each error, the use of marking symbols) instead of flooding a text of red ink has "the advantage of encouraging students to think about what the mistake is, so that they can correct it themselves" (Harmer, 2004, p. 111).

Finally, the teacher may choose to correct a mistake in conjunction with the entire class. This is a way to focus on the mistake without putting any single student on the spot as the teacher elicits the correction by taking centre stage. This type of correction Harmer (2004) refers to as 'remedial teaching'. This is when the teacher goes over a certain mistake for the entire class since they "come across mistakes which many people in the same class are making" (Harmer,

2004, p. 112). This would avoid embarrassing or putting a single student on the spot for a simple mistake.

Regardless of which strategy is used, when correcting, there should be focus on one CEMI at a time. This will help students more than trying to cover various mistakes at the same time. Under no circumstance should students be penalised for making these mistakes, especially if they are mere slips. Students should be reminded of the importance of accuracy and thus be given the chance to redeem these local mistakes.

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APPENDIX A: IGCSE WRITING PAPER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This is general criteria that corresponds to the marking of the written production extended tier of the 0500 English exam.

band 1 (36–40): Confident and stylistic completion of challenging tasks throughout the portfolio

- **W1:** Candidates describe and reflect effectively upon experience, give detail and analyse thoughtfully what is felt and imagined. Arguments are cogent and developed in mature, persuasive thought.
- **W2:** Facts, ideas and opinions are ordered logically, each stage in the argument or narrative carefully linked to the next. Paragraphing is a strength, and candidates are confident in experimenting where appropriate in the structure of expressive writing.
- **W3:** Candidates write with assurance, using a wide range of effective vocabulary.
- **W4:** Candidates vary their style with assurance to suit audience and context in all three assignments. They use well-constructed sentences.
- **W5:** Candidates write accurately. They use punctuation and grammatical structures to define shades of meaning. They spell simple, complex and technical words with precision.

band 2 (31–35): Frequent merit and interest in the choice of content and the manner of writing

- W1: Candidates describe and reflect upon experience, and analyse with occasional success what is felt and imagined. Some argument is well developed and interesting, although the explanation may not always be consistent.
- W2: Facts, ideas and opinions are often well ordered so that the construction of the writing is clear to the reader. Sentences within paragraphs are mostly well sequenced, although some paragraphs may finish less effectively than they begin.
- W3: Candidates write with some confidence, demonstrating an emergent range of varied vocabulary.
- W4: Candidates give evidence of understanding the need to write appropriately to audience and context even if there is not complete consistency in the three assignments. There is some fluency in the construction of sentences.
- W5: Candidates show some signs of understanding how punctuation and grammatical structures can be used to aid communication. Errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are minor, and rare at the top of this band.

APPENDIX A2: TOEFL WRITING PAPER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ETS TOEFL

iBT/Next Generation TOEFL Test
Integrated Writing Rubrics (Scoring Standards)

Score	Task Description
5	A response at this level successfully selects the important information from the lecture and coherently and accurately presents this information in relation to the relevant information presented in the reading. The response is well organized, and occasional language errors that are present do not result in inaccurate or imprecise presentation of content or connections.
4	A response at this level is generally good in selecting the important information from the lecture and in coherently and accurately presenting this information in relation to the relevant information in the reading, but it may have minor omission, inaccuracy, vagueness, or imprecision of some content from the lecture or in connection to points made in the reading. A response is also scored at this level if it has more frequent or noticeable minor language errors, as long as such usage and grammatical structures do not result in anything more than an occasional lapse of clarity or in the connection of ideas.
3	A response at this level contains some important information from the lecture and conveys some relevant connection to the reading, but it is marked by one or more of the following: • Although the overall response is definitely oriented to the task, it conveys only vague, global, unclear, or somewhat imprecise connection of the points made in the lecture to points made in the reading. • The response may omit one major key point made in the lecture. • Some key points made in the lecture or the reading, or connections between the two, may be incomplete, inaccurate, or imprecise. • Errors of usage and/or grammar may be more frequent or may result in noticeably vague expressions or obscured meanings in conveying ideas and connections.
2	A response at this level contains some relevant information from the lecture, but is marked by significant language difficulties or by significant omission or inaccuracy of important ideas from the lecture or in the connections between the lecture and the reading; a response at this level is marked by one or more of the following: • The response significantly misrepresents or completely omits the overall connection between the lecture and the reading. • The response significantly omits or significantly misrepresents important points made in the lecture. • The response contains language errors or expressions that largely obscure connections or meaning at key junctures, or that would likely obscure understanding of key ideas for a reader not already familiar with the reading and the lecture.
1	A response at this level is marked by one or more of the following: • The response provides little or no meaningful or relevant coherent content from the lecture. • The language level of the response is so low that it is difficult to derive meaning.
0	A response at this level merely copies sentences from the reading, rejects the topic or is otherwise not connected to the topic, is written in a foreign language, consists of keystroke characters, or is blank.

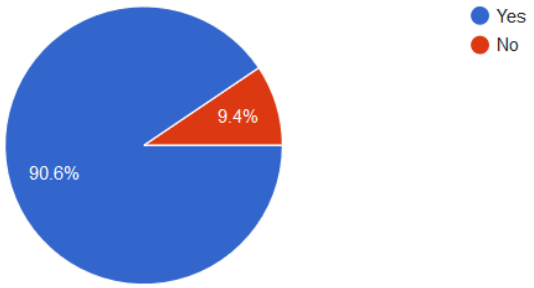
APPENDIX A3: CAMBRIDGE CAE WRITING PAPER ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

C1	CONTENT	COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT	ORGANISATION	LANGUAGE
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task with sufficient flexibility to communicate complex ideas in an effective way, holding the target reader's attention with ease, fulfilling all communicative purposes.	Text is a well-organised, coherent whole, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns with flexibility.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, effectively and precisely. Uses a wide range of simple and complex grammatical forms with full control, flexibility and sophistication. Errors, if present, are related to less common words and structures, or occur as slips.
4	*Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.*			
3	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task effectively to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward and complex ideas, as appropriate.	Text is well organised and coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices and organisational patterns to generally good effect.	Uses a range of vocabulary, including less common lexis, appropriately. Uses a range of simple and complex grammatical forms with control and flexibility. Occasional errors may be present but do not impede communication.
2	*Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.*			
1	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Uses the conventions of the communicative task to hold the target reader's attention and communicate straightforward ideas.	Text is generally well organised and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices.	Uses a range of everyday vocabulary appropriately, with occasional inappropriate use of less common lexis. Uses a range of simple and some complex grammatical forms with a good degree of control. Errors do not impede communication.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	*Performance below Band 1.*		

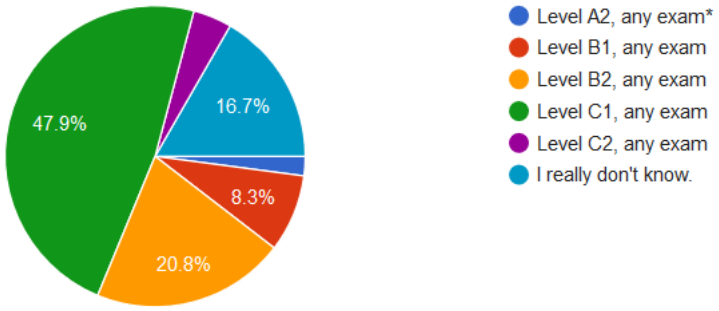
APPENDIX B: RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY OF THE ALUMNI

Did your university require that you pass an English exam in order to be able to graduate?

(53 responses)

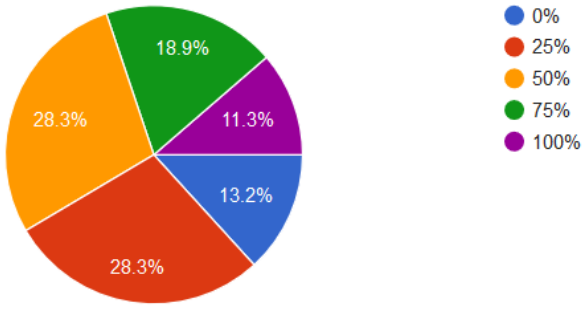


If so, what level were you expected to achieve? (48 responses)



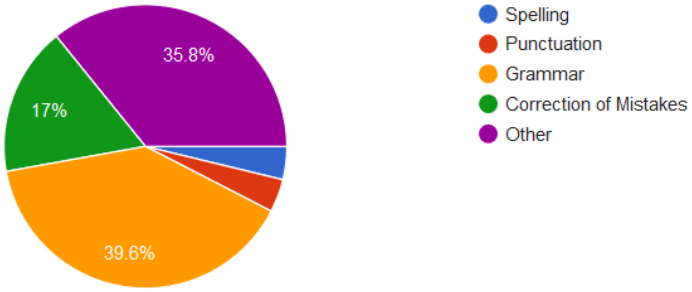
What percentage of subjects do you study where English was needed?

(53 responses)



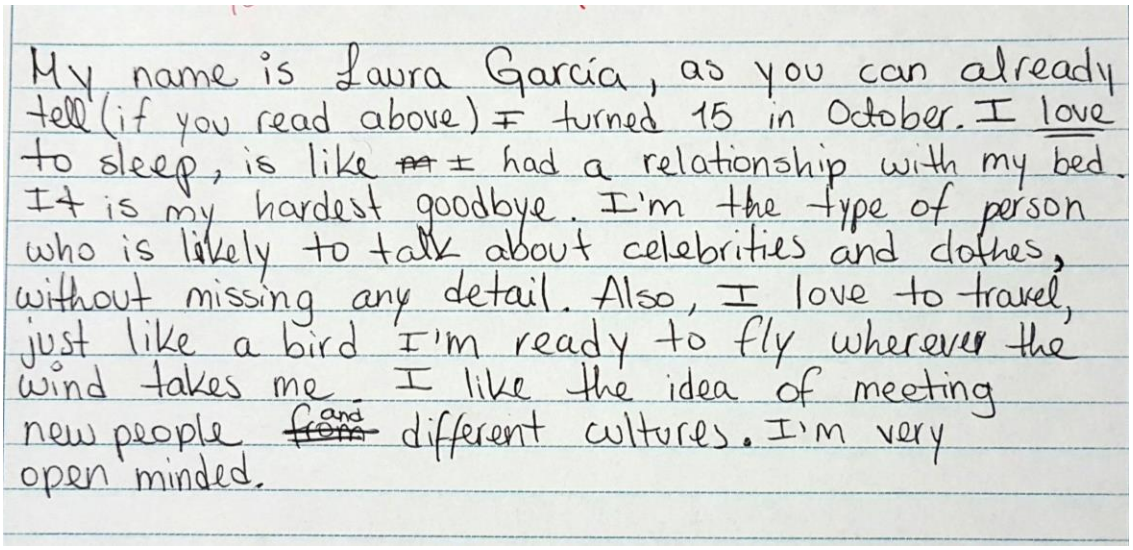
Based on your personal experience and needs at the university, more emphasis in high school English classes should be on

(53 responses)



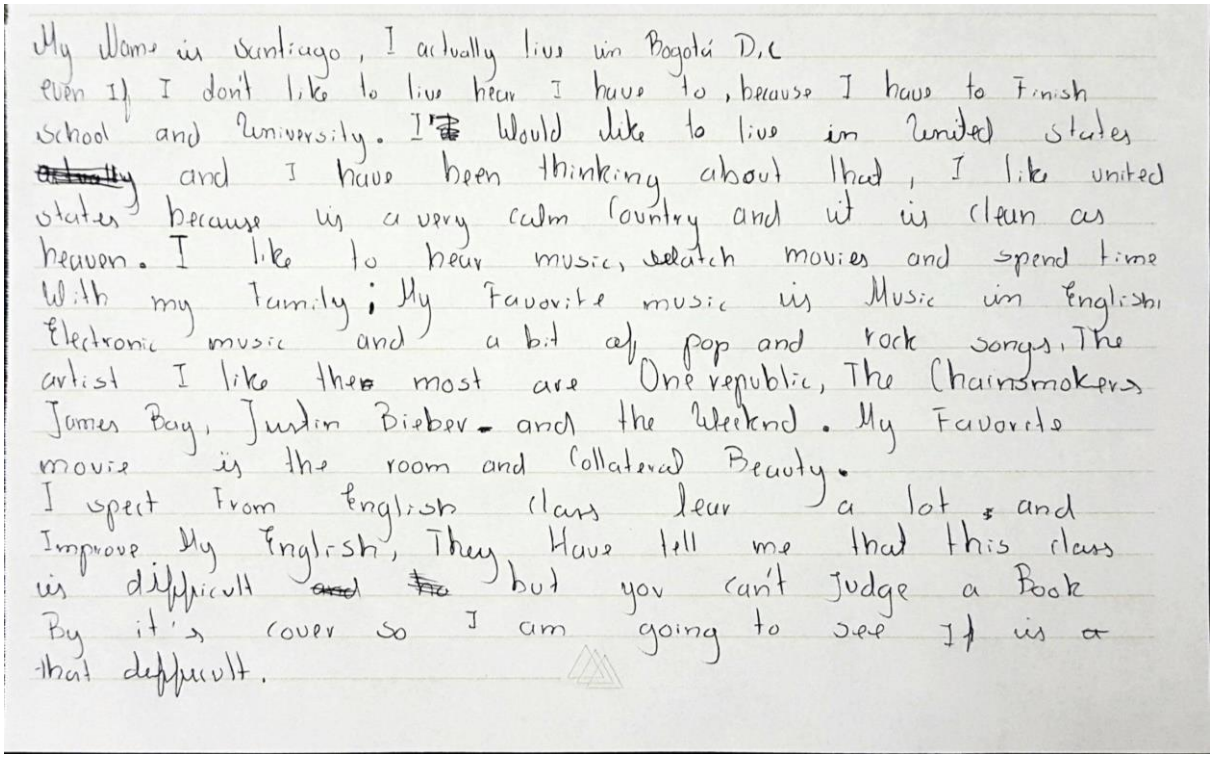
APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF CEMIS

Example 1



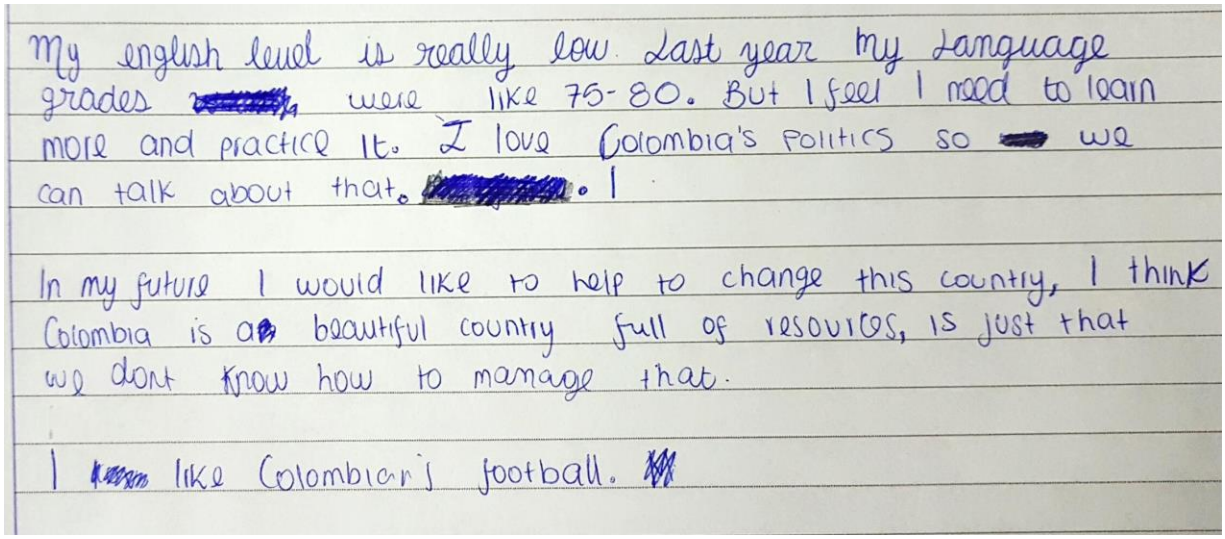
My name is Laura García, as you can already tell (if you read above) ~~I~~ I turned 15 in October. I love to sleep, is like ~~I~~ I had a relationship with my bed. It is my hardest goodbye. I'm the type of person who is likely to talk about celebrities and clothes, without missing any detail. Also, I love to travel, just like a bird I'm ready to fly wherever the wind takes me. I like the idea of meeting new people ~~from~~ and different cultures. I'm very open minded.

Example 2



My Name is Santiago, I actually live in Bogotá D.C even If I don't like to live hear I have to, because I have to Finish school and University. I ~~I~~ Would like to live in United states ~~actually~~ and I have been thinking about that, I like united states because is a very calm country and it is clean as heaven. I like to hear music, watch movies and spend time With my family; My Favorite music is Music in English Electronic music and a bit of pop and rock songs. The artist I like ~~the~~ most are One republic, The Chainsmokers James Bay, Justin Bieber and the Weekend. My Favorite movie is the room and Collateral Beauty.
I spect From english class hear a lot, and Improve My English, They Have tell me that this class is difficult ~~and~~ ~~the~~ but you can't judge a Book By it's cover so I am going to see If is a that difficult.

Example 3

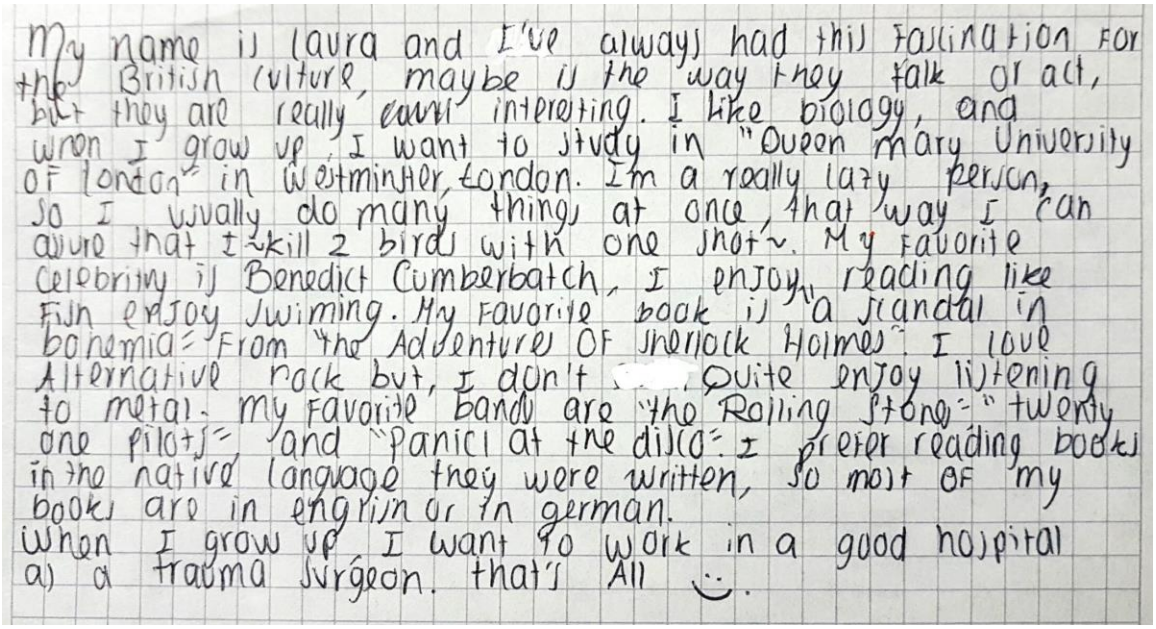


My english level is really low. Last year my language grades [redacted] were like 75-80. But I feel I need to learn more and practice it. I love Colombia's politics so [redacted] we can talk about that. [redacted]. I

In my future I would like to help to change this country, I think Colombia is a beautiful country full of resources, is just that we dont know how to manage that.

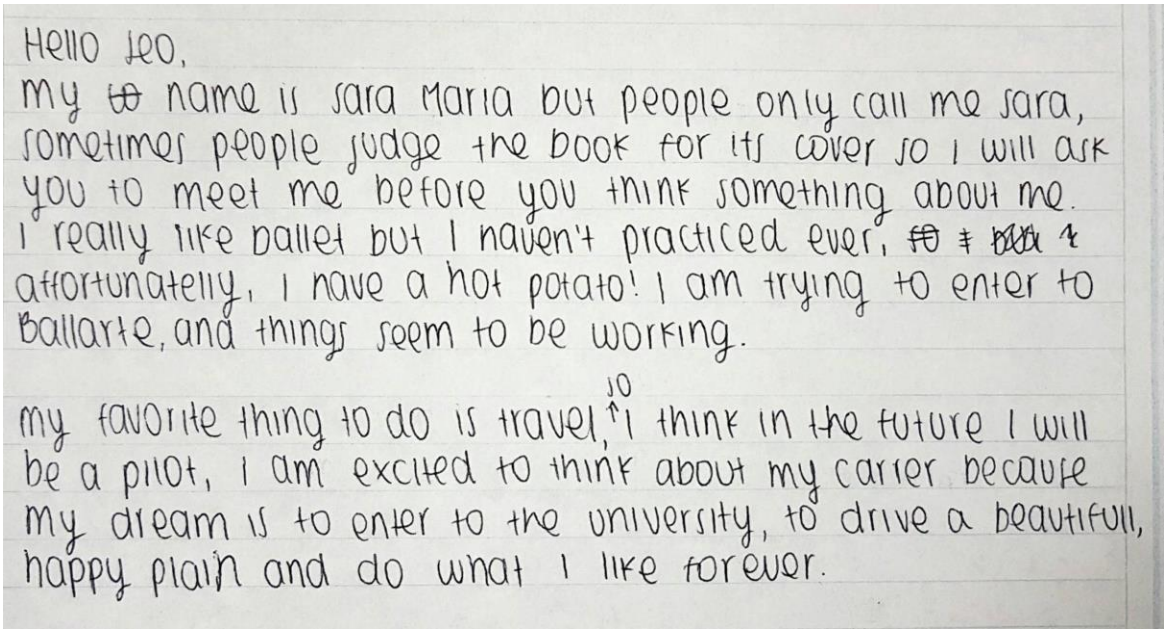
I [redacted] like Colombian's football. [redacted]

Example 4



My name is Laura and I've always had this fascination for the British culture, maybe is the way they talk or act, but they are really cool interesting. I like biology, and when I grow up, I want to study in "Queen Mary University of London" in Westminster, London. Im a really lazy person, so I usually do many things at once, that way I can assure that I "kill 2 birds with one shot". My favorite celebrity is Benedict Cumberbatch, I enjoy reading like Fish enjoy swiming. My favorite book is "a scandal in bohemia" From "the Adventures of Sherlock Holmes". I love Alternative rock but, I don't [redacted] quite enjoy listening to metal. my favorite band are "the Rolling Stone" "twenty one pilots" and "panic! at the disco". I prefer reading books in the native language they were written, so most of my books are in english or in german.
When I grow up, I want to work in a good hospital as a trauma surgeon. that's All ☺.

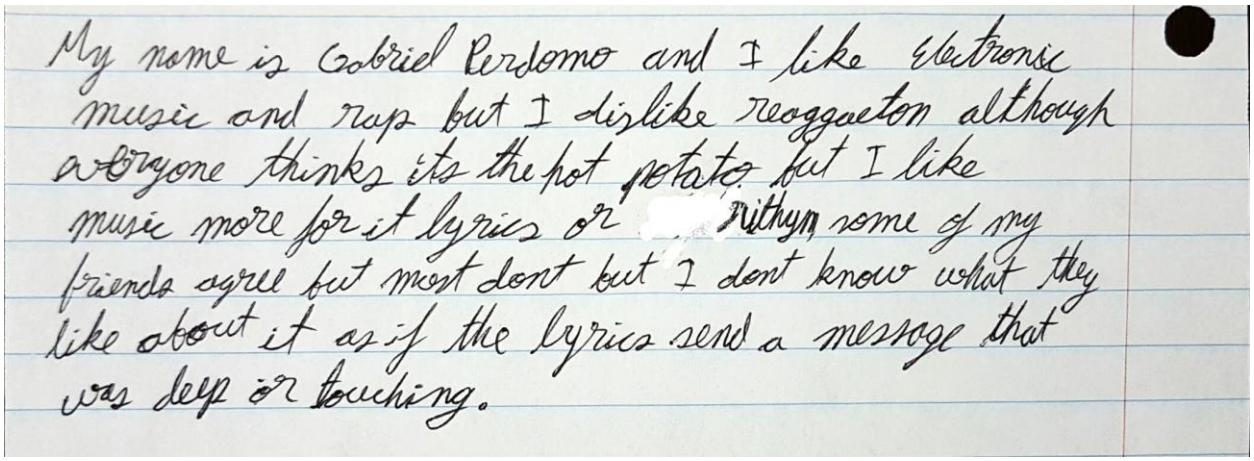
Example 5



Hello Leo,
my ~~to~~ name is Sara Maria but people only call me Sara, sometimes people judge the book for its cover so I will ask you to meet me before you think something about me. I really like ballet but I haven't practiced ever, ~~to~~ ≠ ~~bbb~~ 4 affortunatelly, I have a hot potato! I am trying to enter to Ballarte, and things seem to be working.

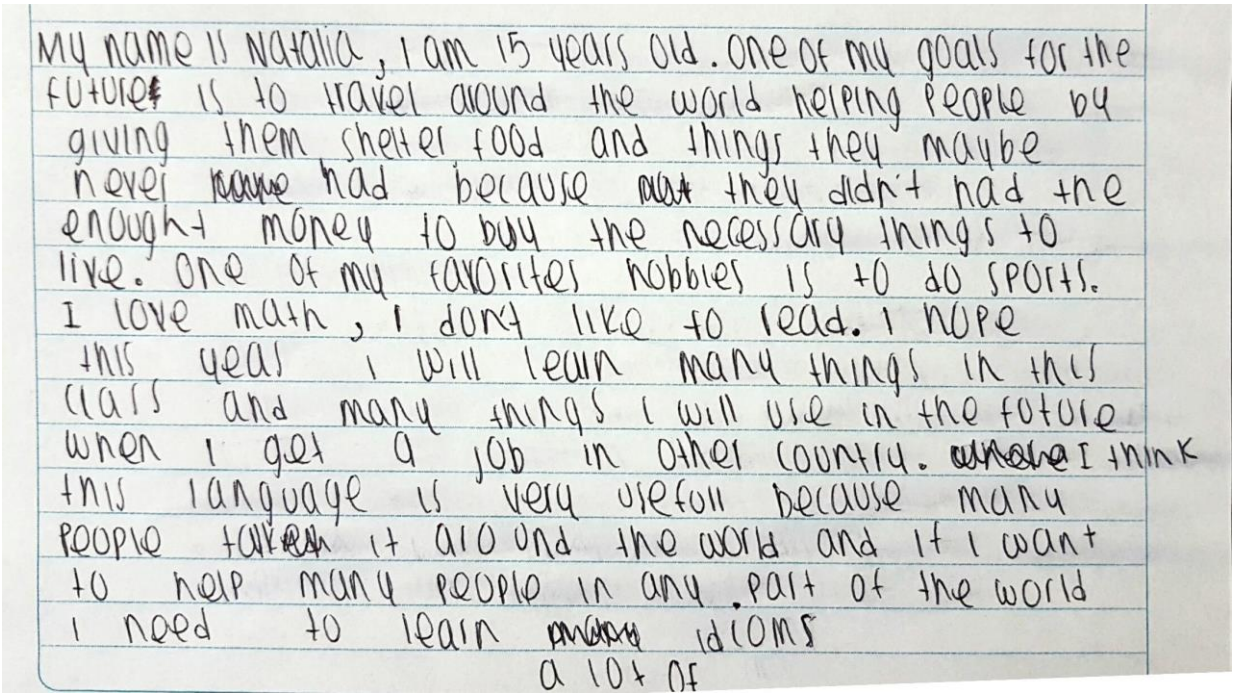
my favorite thing to do is travel, so ↑ I think in the future I will be a pilot, I am excited to think about my carrer because my dream is to enter to the university, to drive a beautifull, happy plain and do what I like forever.

Example 6



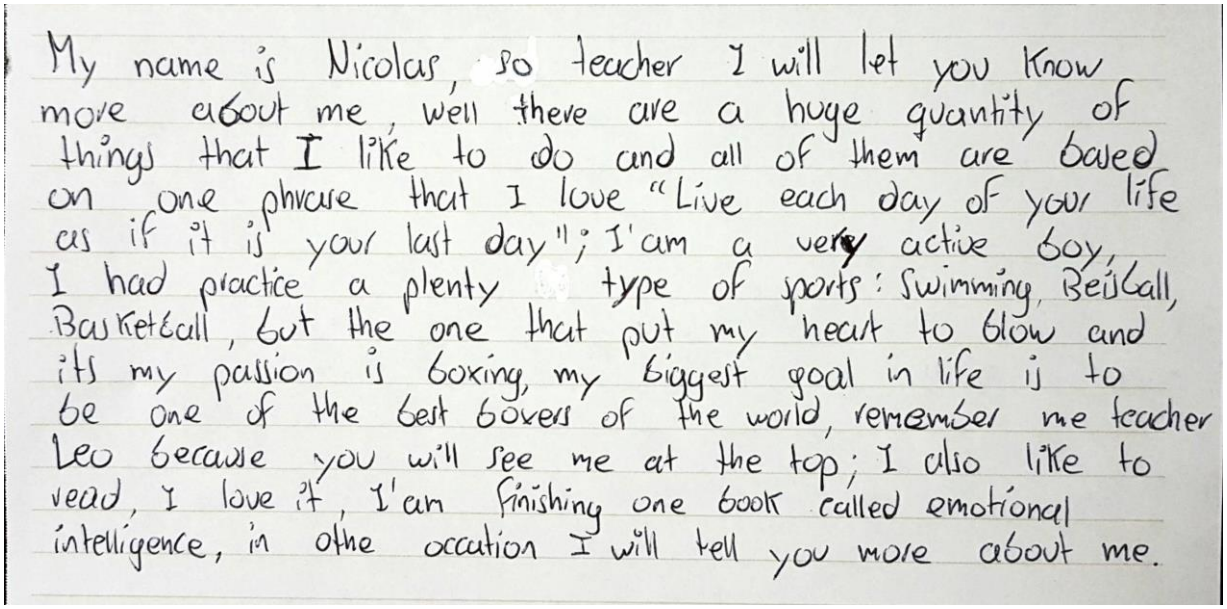
My name is Gabriel Perdomo and I like Electronic music and rap but I dislike reaggaeton although everyone thinks its the hot potato but I like music more for it lyrics or [illegible]rithym some of my friends agree but most dont but I dont know what they like about it as if the lyrics send a message that was deep or touching.

Example 7



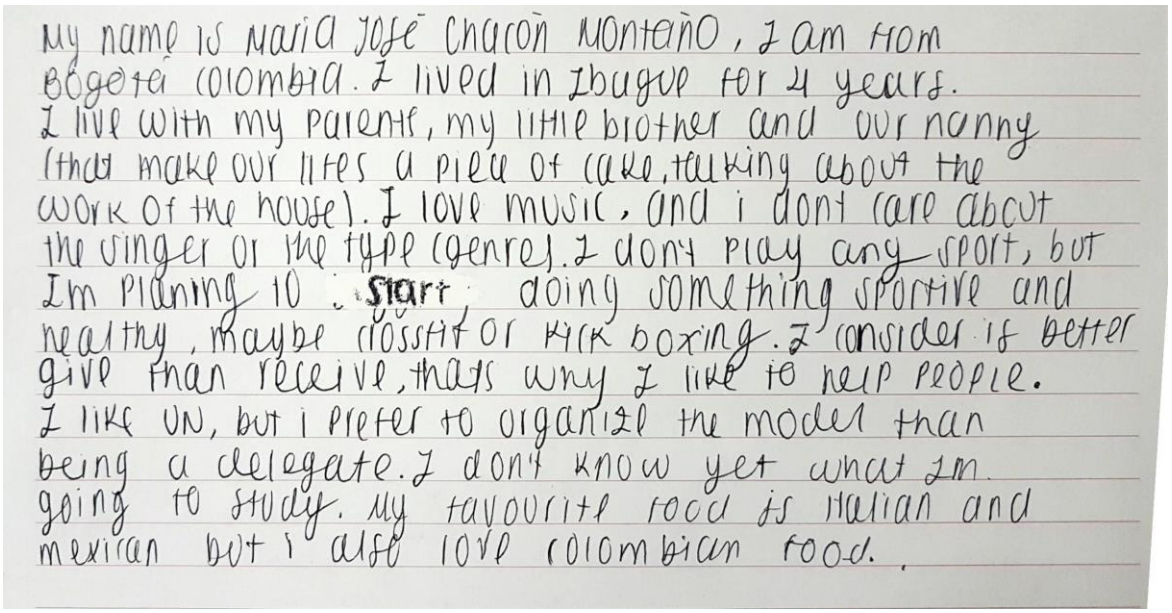
My name is Natalia, I am 15 years old. One of my goals for the future is to travel around the world helping people by giving them shelter food and things they maybe never had because they didn't had the enought money to buy the necessary things to live. One of my favorites hobbies is to do sports. I love math, I dont like to read. I hope this year I will learn many things in this class and many things I will use in the future when I get a job in other country. I think this language is very usefull because many people talk it around the world and if I want to help many people in any part of the world I need to learn a lot of idioms

Example 8



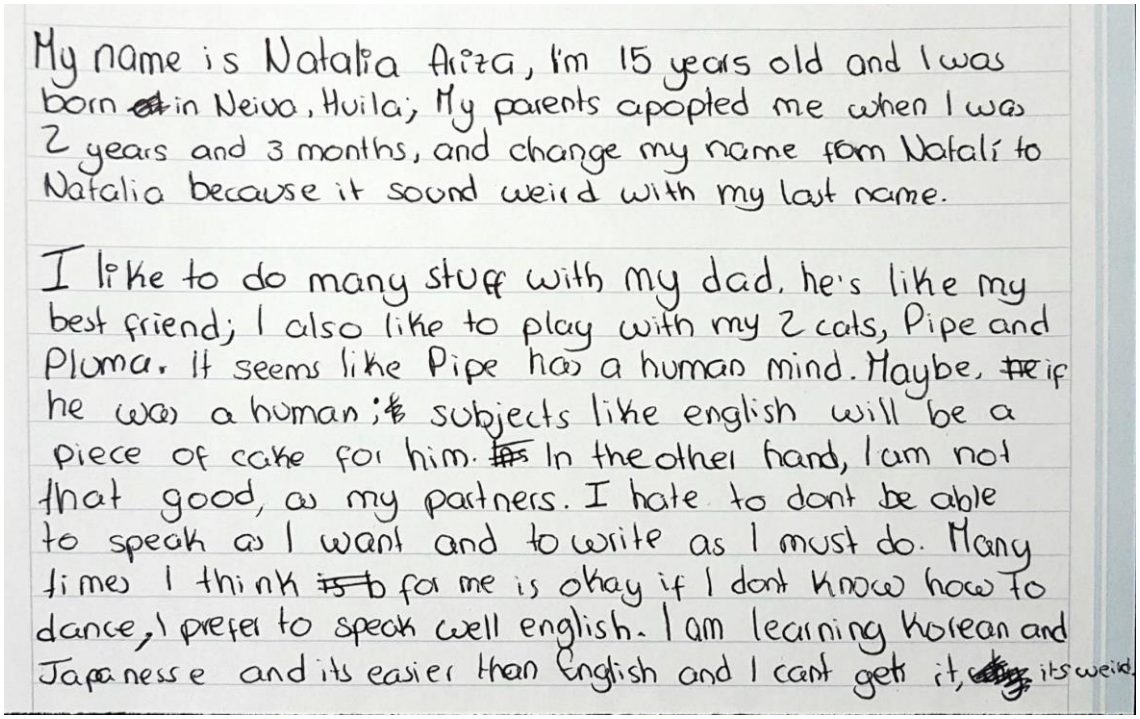
My name is Nicolas, so teacher I will let you know more about me, well there are a huge quantity of things that I like to do and all of them are based on one phrase that I love "Live each day of your life as if it is your last day"; I'am a very active boy, I had practice a plenty type of sports: Swimming, BeisBall, BasketBall, but the one that put my heart to blow and its my passion is boxing, my biggest goal in life is to be one of the best boxers of the world, remember me teacher Leo because you will see me at the top; I also like to read, I love it, I'am finishing one book called emotional intelligence, in othe occation I will tell you more about me.

Example 9



My name is María José Chacón Montaño, I am from Bogotá Colombia. I lived in Ibague for 4 years. I live with my parents, my little brother and our nanny (that make our lifes a piece of cake, talking about the work of the house). I love music, and i dont care about the singer or the type (genre). I dont play any sport, but Im planing to start doing something sportive and healthy, maybe crossfit or kick boxing. I consider is better give than receive, thats why I like to help people. I like UN, but i prefer to organizl the moder than being a delegate. I don't know yet what Im going to study. My favourite food is Italian and mexican but i also love colombian food.

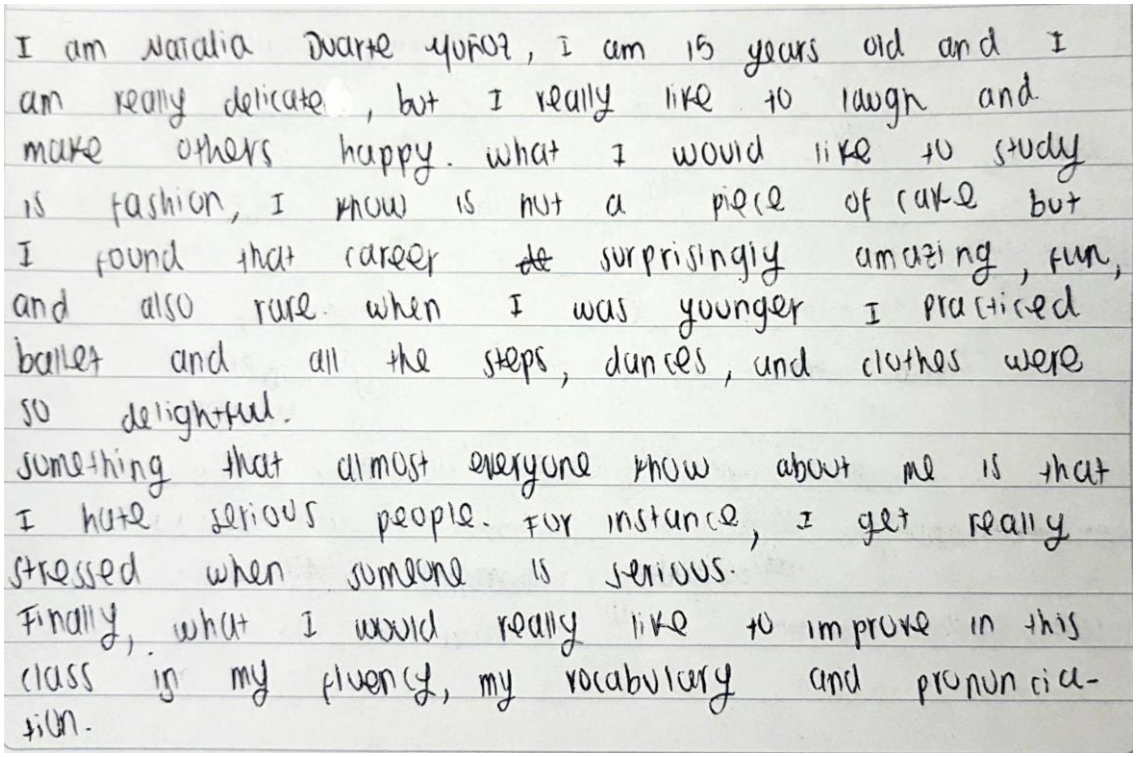
Example 10



My name is Natalia Ariza, I'm 15 years old and I was born ~~of~~ in Neiva, Huila; My parents apopted me when I was 2 years and 3 months, and change my name form Natalí to Natalia because it sound weird with my last name.

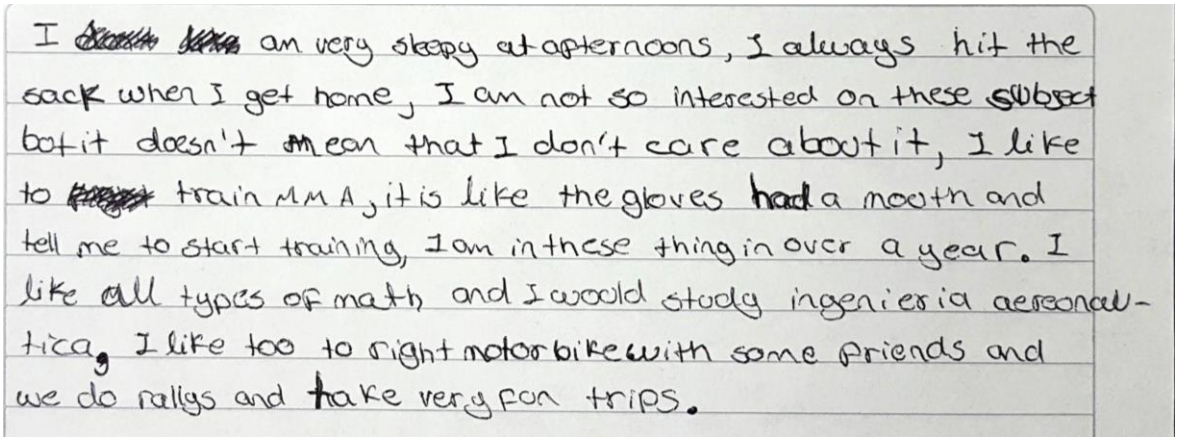
I like to do many stuff with my dad, he's like my best friend; I also like to play with my 2 cats, Pipe and Pluma. It seems like Pipe has a human mind. Maybe, ~~the~~ if he was a human; ~~&~~ subjects like english will be a piece of cake for him. ~~His~~ In the other hand, I am not that good, as my partners. I hate to dont be able to speak as I want and to write as I must do. Many times I think ~~is to~~ for me is okay if I dont know how to dance, I prefer to speak well english. I am learning Korean and Japanesse and its easier than English and I cant get it, ~~why~~ its weird.

Example 11



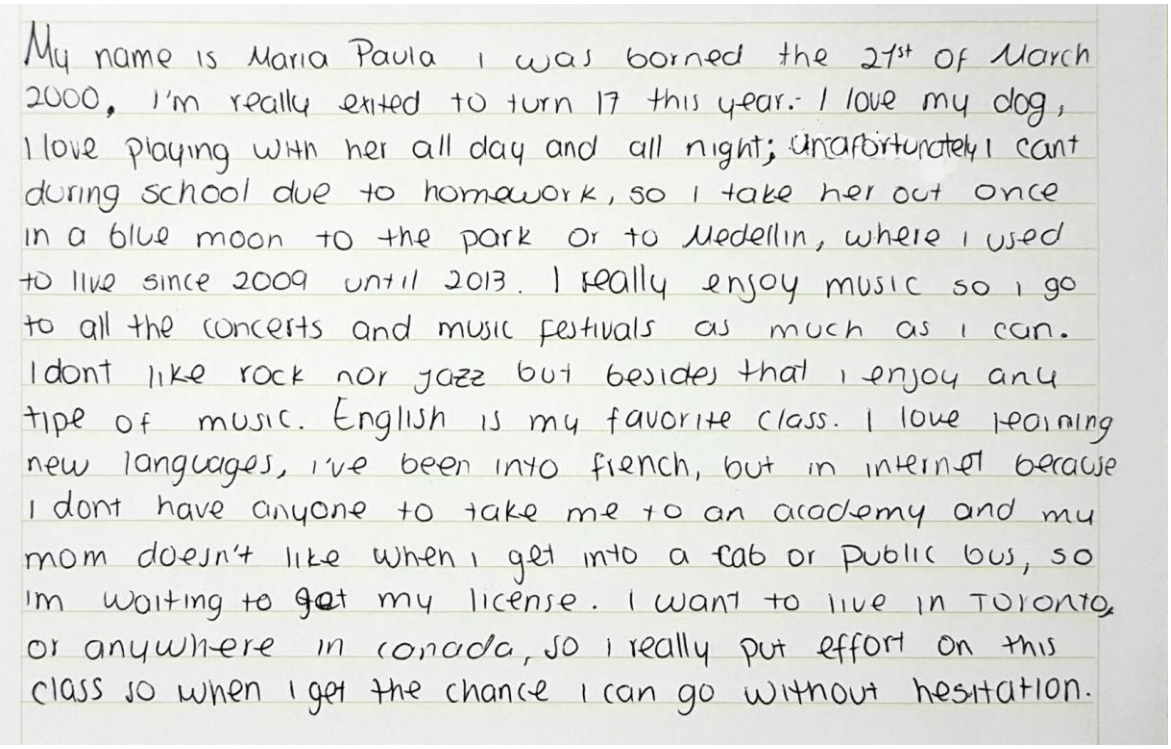
I am Natalia Duarte yuñoz, I am 15 years old and I am really delicate, but I really like to laugh and make others happy. what I would like to study is fashion, I know is not a piece of cake but I found that career ~~de~~ surprisingly amazing, fun, and also rare. when I was younger I practiced ballet and all the steps, dances, and clothes were so delightful.
something that almost everyone know about me is that I hate serious people. For instance, I get really stressed when someone is serious.
Finally, what I would really like to improve in this class is my fluency, my vocabulary and pronunciation.

Example 12



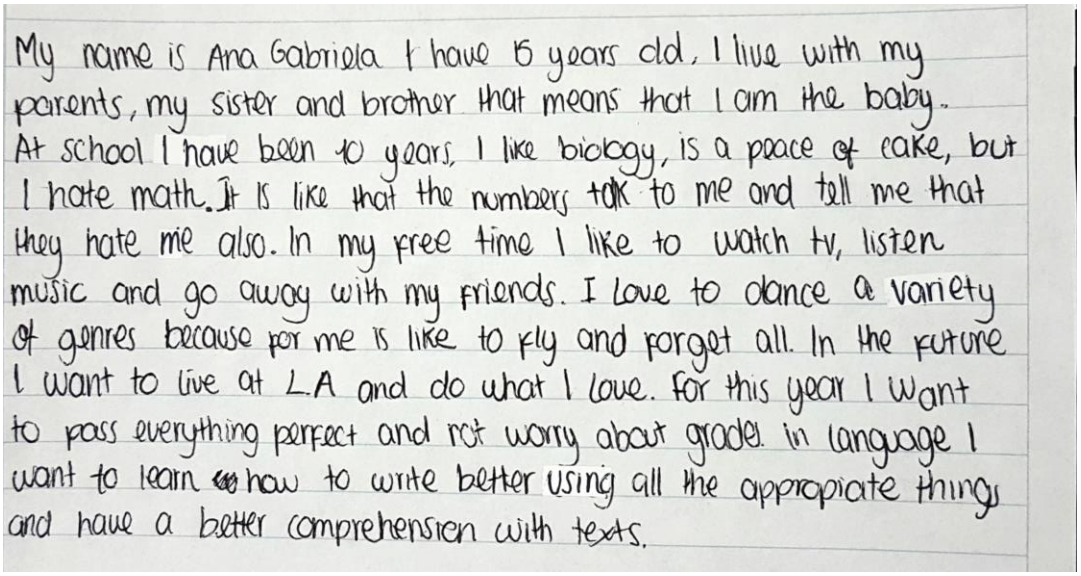
I ~~[illegible]~~ am very sleepy at afternoons, I always hit the sack when I get home, I am not so interested on these ~~subject~~ but it doesn't ~~m~~ean that I don't care about it, I like to ~~[illegible]~~ train MMA, it is like the gloves had a mouth and tell me to start training, I am in these thing in over a year. I like all types of math and I would study ingenieria aeronautica, I like too to right motorbike with some friends and we do rallys and take very fun trips.

Example 13



My name is Maria Paula I was borned the 21st of March 2000, I'm really exited to turn 17 this year. I love my dog, I love playing with her all day and all night; unfortunately I cant during school due to homework, so I take her out once in a blue moon to the park or to Medellin, where I used to live since 2009 until 2013. I really enjoy music so I go to all the concerts and music festivals as much as I can. I dont like rock nor jazz but besides that I enjoy any tipe of music. English is my favorite class. I love learning new languages, i've been into french, but in internet because I dont have anyone to take me to an academy and my mom doesn't like when I get into a cab or public bus, so Im waiting to get my license. I want to live in Toronto, or anywhere in canada, so I really put effort on this class so when I get the chance I can go without hesitation.

Example 14



My name is Ana Gabriela I have 15 years old, I live with my parents, my sister and brother that means that I am the baby. At school I have been 10 years, I like biology, is a peace of cake, but I hate math. It is like that the numbers talk to me and tell me that they hate me also. In my free time I like to watch tv, listen music and go away with my friends. I Love to dance a variety of genres because for me is like to fly and forget all. In the future I want to live at L.A and do what I love. for this year I want to pass everything perfect and not worry about grades in language I want to learn how to write better using all the appropiate things and have a better comprehension with texts.

APPENDIX D: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessment criteria for the IGCSE language exam[4].

BAND 1
W5: Candidates write accurately. They use punctuation and grammatical structures to define shades of meaning. They spell simple, complex and technical words with precision.
BAND 2
W5: Candidates show some signs of understanding how punctuation and grammatical structures can be used to aid communication. Errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are minor, and rare at the top of this band.
BAND 3
W5: Candidates use punctuation and grammar competently although the range is not strong. There may be a number of minor errors especially at the bottom of this band and even occasional errors of sentence separation.
BAND 4
W5: Candidates use a limited range of punctuation and grammatical structure with some care, although occasionally grammatical error will cause the reader some difficulty. There may be quite numerous errors, particularly of sentence separation and the misuse of commas.
BAND 5
W5: Candidates show knowledge of simple punctuation and grammar, but the amount of error, especially of tense and the use of prepositions, is sometimes considerable. Sentence separation is often poor, but error does not prevent the reader from understanding what is written.
BAND 6
W5: Candidates occasionally use appropriate punctuation and can spell simple words, but the reader is not convinced that their understanding, especially of grammar, is adequate.
BAND 7
W5: Weaknesses in spelling, punctuation and grammar are persistent, but the reader is able to follow at least part of the writing.
BAND 8
W5: The amount and breadth of error prevents sufficient communication of meaning.

BAND 9 (0) band 9 (0): Writing does not meet the above criteria

[4] Cambridge IGCSE First Language English 0500/0522. Syllabus for examination in 2016