

**UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE BAJA CALIFORNIA
FACULTAD DE IDIOMAS
FACULTAD DE HUMANIDADES Y CIENCIAS SOCIALES**



**Challenges in Academic EFL Writing: A Proposal to Strengthen
Writing Performance of Scholarly Scientific Articles among
Mexican Graduate Students**

Para obtener el Grado de Maestría en Lenguas Modernas

Presenta:

María Fernanda Villafuerte Bianchi

Tijuana, Baja California, junio de 2017

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Abstract

In today's globalized world, the need for English is present in every university and person seeking international recognition or willing to grow professionally or academically. Thus, as the pressure to publish increases, so does the demand that this should be done in English. Unfortunately, for non-native English speakers, scientific English writing is often an endeavor that comes with struggles. Research on language teaching and academic writing tries to identify and understand the main factors that affect the writing performance of nonnative English speakers; however, in the context of higher education in Mexico, few initiatives have been implemented to support learners in their process of writing scholarly articles. To address this gap, this study proposes a didactic proposal to strengthen the scientific English writing performance of Mexican graduate students. The proposal takes as basis results obtained after conducting a focus group among ten Mexican graduate students and assessing the quality of their journal articles. As main findings, the focus group revealed that students undergo a complex translation process from their mother tongue into English and perform a quick final revision of the manuscripts. Also, students are aware that scientific writing in Spanish and English are different, but they cannot tell many of the differences. On the other hand, the assessment of journal papers revealed low quality scores in terms of grammar, syntax, punctuation, coherence, cohesion, sentence formation, paragraph formation, verb usage, and consistency in abbreviations. Such results suggest that Spanish as the mother tongue has a significant impact on the writing process and performance of Mexican graduate students.