

# WRITING A THESIS IN ENGLISH

## Academic Writing – Report/Thesis Writing

*Writing a thesis in English is a challenge. However there are many benefits to doing it:*

**According to Scopus (the biggest database of peer-reviewed literature) 80% of all published journal articles are in English.** So if you want the chance to be published and reach a bigger audience then writing in English is the way forward.

Additionally, the process of writing your thesis in English will allow you to master academic writing in a second language and therefore future academic work, and research also shows that this level of reading and writing **will also improve your other language skills**- speaking and listening.

By simply translating your thesis from Spanish (or any language) into English will not allow these benefits, and more importantly generally do not provide a readable and high-quality document.

**This short guide will outline the challenges and strategies to help you to make the decision as to whether it's possible for you.**

We will look at **pre-writing, writing, and editing** stages.

### **Pre-writing: Reading-first approach**

The reading before writing approach (Kerge et al, 2013) will allow you to become familiar with the vocabulary, grammar styles, writing styles and concepts of the topic you are writing about. This also allows you to begin your literature review and eventually **make it easier to express your ideas in English.**

To begin choose academic articles written by a native speaker, related to your topic/ or the discipline your studying. (see the ask document on 'Reading difficult/ authentic articles in English' to use as a guide when reading these articles)

### **Writing**

Through the above reading-first approach, you will notice that there are significant writing styles between English and Spanish. One particular one is that English academic work is focused on being **succinct**. This means it is 'cleaner' - giving the fewest words and not to complicate things. This is why typical Spanish sentences are between 20-30 words and only 15-20 in English.

Additionally, at this stage it is useful to read the ASK guides on academic writing ([http://repository.urosario.edu.co/handle/10336/12986?\\_ga=2.248016839.1743735621.1502740955-215045016.1495021728](http://repository.urosario.edu.co/handle/10336/12986?_ga=2.248016839.1743735621.1502740955-215045016.1495021728)). A useful start is the guide '**Writing a research a proposal**', which explains the 4 parts needed in your initial proposal which will help you plan your first draft:

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/672> ;

Kerge, K., Alp,P., & Pajupuu,H., 2013. 'Measuring Lexical Proficiency in L2 Creative Writing'.

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hille\\_Pajupuu/publication/261726302\\_Measuring\\_Lexical\\_Proficiency\\_in\\_L2\\_Creative\\_Writing/links/0a85e5356165a8ec78000000/Measuring-Lexical-Proficiency-in-L2-Creative-Writing.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hille_Pajupuu/publication/261726302_Measuring_Lexical_Proficiency_in_L2_Creative_Writing/links/0a85e5356165a8ec78000000/Measuring-Lexical-Proficiency-in-L2-Creative-Writing.pdf)



1. A working title
2. An Introduction to the Topic
3. A Preliminary Literature Review
4. The Research Methodology

Remember, your first attempts won't be perfect, but will allow you to start assembling the language, structures, ideas etc. that you have gathered from the notes during pre-writing (reading) activities. **What's important here is getting the words on paper to begin.**

### Revising/editing

**Sometimes it is difficult to see our own mistakes, and at this stage the language aspect becomes more specialized and precise.**

Things like word-usage, punctuality, grammatical accuracy, clarification of ideas and flow of your arguments needs to be checked....and checked again.

This is where you will especially need support from your peers, thesis advisor, your department, and ASK!

**Again, the ASK documents on writing will help here**

Two additional tools to use are:

- <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/describing-trends/>  
<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/> - *a great resource to find the correct academic phrases and connectors.*
- <http://www.linguee.com/> - *an excellent dictionary for academic translations (a lot better than Google translate!)*