

An Action Research on EFL Writing Dilemmas: A Case of Saudi Students and Instructors

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Abstract:

Learning to write in a second language is a great challenge for students; however, certain factors might minimize these challenges. In general, the Saudi students face difficulty to develop the writing competence in a foreign language because they rely on instructors as a sole source of knowledge. Therefore, the study investigated the English language writing in a university in Saudi Arabia. It implemented an action research design based on three main phases; namely, exploration, intervention, and reflection stage. The main questions asked include how the instructors view the writing style of students within the setting and how they perceived the English language writing curricula among the students. The data drew several conclusions that provided insight into the Saudi Higher Education concerning English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. The first is the spoon-feeding of Saudi learners throughout their educational years; therefore, they find it challenging to gain hold of their learning. Second, writing in English is a challenging task for Saudi students. Third, some of the students memorize writing passages to pass their English course. Fourthly, teaching to write was done by focusing on form, writing mechanics, rather than communicative aspects of writing and genre. This study has contributed towards the understanding of Saudi learners in university language classrooms analyzing their perceptions and expectations.

Keywords: Action research, EFL writing, English language learning, foreign language learners, instructors, Saudi higher education, Saudi students.

Cite as: Alkubaidi, M. (2019). An Action Research on EFL Writing Dilemmas: A Case of Saudi Students and Instructors. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (3) 151-164.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.10>

Introduction

In the history of language teaching, significant changes are occurring in the writing instruction for the second language. Restriction such as non-creative acts (copying and dictations) were applied to write in classical education that advocates education based on the traditions of Western culture (Timothy, 2015). According to Ferris (2016), in the early 20th century, second language writing (SLW) was taught through guided composition methods. However, in language instruction, the writing was significantly affected by the audio-lingual method in the latter half of the 20th century. It used a repetitive pattern of the grammatical sentences in oral drills for teaching second language learners. The writing was likely to assist in reading, listening, and speaking skills of the learners, given its recognition as a secondary skill. The structuring of this teaching approach is necessary to minimize the rate of errors made by the students (Ferris, 2016). The approach used for teaching the students is adapted through composition in the first language pedagogy so that they can write composition in the prescribed patterns. It is because writing in a foreign language requires a specific type of organizing patterns of organization to be followed with certain linguistic features functioning as units to communicate.

The students, who are unable to write cohesive and coherent essays in the second language tend to memorize sentences before exams (Kabouha & Elyas, 2015). Saudi students are incompetent in using their language; despite their exposure for about six years of English language instruction before entering the university. Al Fadda (2012) evaluates the difficulties experienced by students in learning to write English. The results showed that the differences between written and spoken English serve as a significant challenge to the students. Moreover, attention to different learning styles, the usefulness of certain strategies, and computer-assisted writing instruction were drawn by the students as they expressed their preferences towards writing. This finding highlighted the need to investigate conventional approaches to teach writing as perceived by the instructors and the students.

Writing is an entirely different task for individuals in a foreign language setting because everyone in the surrounding community speaks the target language. In a foreign language context, the social aspects of writing (authentic purpose, audience, and context) are often absent from the second language writers. Students face a variety of challenges in learning to write in a second language. However, none of the studies have articulated specific challenges of Arabic speaking student writers in the Saudi context. A previous study conducted by Kabouha and Elyas (2015) explain the pressure experienced by the students in passing the English language test after conducting a specific module in a limited period. The power of memorization is upstanding among the Arabic-speaking learners; therefore, they can write down in their exams. A concrete-sequential learning style is encouraged by the majority of the speaking cultures in Arab as they require specific planning, analysis, memorization, review, and searching for perfection.

There is a need to investigate the perceptions of instructors and students regarding the writing classes to improve the quality of teaching skills that would help in the promotion of instructional changes. The teaching methodology plays a vital role in the way students perceive the writing process. It is crucial to evaluate the instructors' approach towards writing instruction given his frequent complaints about low writing proficiency of the students. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the perceptions of instructors and students on writing classes in Saudi university,

improvements required in the quality of writing instruction, and preferences of students. This study's aim was implemented through an action research-based workshop intervention that is likely to render the learning needs of students. The study results would bring significant improvement in understanding the challenges faced by Saudi students as they learn to write in English.

Literature Review

The systems, other than those learned during the process of first language acquisition, are referred to as second language writing systems. It is required to improve the awareness level of different linguistic units for the writing systems; for instance, Arabic learner requires exposure to the consonants, English learner needs to be introduced to syllabus and characters as he/she aims to learn the Japanese language. The way a learner learns the second language writing system depends on the discrepancies between two language systems. Benahnia (2016) states that it is difficult for second language learners to adapt to the meta-linguistic, cross-cultural differences, and complexities of English language and syntax. These problems may continue with some learners through their journey of learning different styles that delay their progression of second language acquisition and proficiency. The indications about differences between first language writing system and second language writing system were presented by Cook & Bassetti (2005), as they were well-aware about the impact of other writing systems. Different areas, such as metalinguistic and reading, refer to cognitive ability to transfer linguistic knowledge across languages.

The users of first language writing systems using Roman alphabet produce more spelling errors; moreover, they even face difficulty in learning a second language system. The Arabic speaking individuals learning to write in English face difficulty to write from left to right, as previously they used to write from right to left. The level of phonological transparency may even cause confusion between both the languages, which plays a vital role in knowledge transfer while learning to write in the second language. Reading is likely to become beneficial for a learner if first and second language learners possess similar linguistic units (Cook & Bassetti, 2005). These students are capable of reading faster and encoding the language more vastly. It observed that more time is required by the Arabic learners to encode the phonological passage in English.

Hyland (2015) describes writing as disembodied, which shows no connection between the context and any personal experiences of the writers and readers. The text is likely to be decoded and understood because of adopting the right skills. Testing the ability of learners to communicate based on purpose and genre is considered reliable because it is easy to count assessment on grammatical structures, writing mechanics, and vocabulary choices. It shifts the role of instructors towards examiner from being a writing instructor. The examiner is the one who perceives texts as a mean of demonstrating linguistic skill, rather than just expressing ideas through written texts. Hyland (2015) states the audience concept a debatable issue observed by the linguistic choices in the writeup. This approach of learning demands familiarization of the instructors towards the discourse community of the learners.

Writing is a taught skill for the native speakers of English; however, the process is complicated for the non-speakers writing in English as they had acquired a particular type of contrastive

rhetoric, which reflects their culture. A study conducted by Rass (2011) suggests that cultural transfer results in failure of the Arabic speakers to think of their readers. The way of writing is rather lengthy and indirect in the Arabic written rhetoric. The reader is kept busy guessing what he/she would get, rather than clarifying the point in the beginning. The spelling errors of the learner are significantly affected through the Arabic language interference, resulting in learners to recall articulation of words (Alhaisoni et al., 2015). The Saudi instructors face time shortage as a challenge that is dedicated to the practice of teaching to write in the Saudi context.

The problems faced by English language learners were sought by Javid and Umer (2014), by highlighting severe problems in organizing ideas, lexical items, spelling, and grammar. However, the implementation of pair and group work was suggested to practice more, as the time for writing courses was not adequate. The difficulty faced by second language learners in writing was confirmed by Aldera (2016), after analyzing the cohesion and coherence of eight participants writing a few compositions based on their undergraduate learning. The results showed that areas of logical thoughts, inter-sentence relations, lacked proficiency in syntax, advanced composition methods, and cohesive devices were scored poorly by the learners. The learners failed in differentiating between good and bad models of English language writing because of inadequate application of primary language and writing mechanics.

Hameed (2016) investigates the mechanics of writing and analysis of spelling errors by students of varying proficiency levels. The participants were instructed to complete dictation of words that were considered problematic. It helped in indicating the major types of errors made by these learners that include transposition, substitution, insertions, and omission. Writing errors were also investigated by Al-Khairy (2013), who found significant problems in spelling, irregular verbs, punctuation, and lexical items. Rajab et al. (2016) identify the perceptions and practices that prevail among the instructors in the provision of feedback on writing. The obstacles faced in delivering corrective feedback in writing classes include large class sizes, limited time, and an overwhelming workload. The perceptions of instructors on these issues were either disregarded or made invisible. Alqurashi (2015) explores the perspective of students on the responses provided by the instructors. The study showed the willingness of the English language learners in rereading their work after receiving comments on it by the instructor. It signified the need for acknowledging the value of written feedback provided by the instructor on the surface and meaning-level errors.

Methodology

The study has employed an action research design based on three main phases that include exploration, intervention, and reflection stages. The use of an action research project generated a vast amount of data. The perceptions of students and instructors on writing in the English language was investigated by conducting interviews, field notes, classroom observations, and classroom diaries. Exploring the writing setting of the workplace was conducted during the first phase, that is the exploration phase. This phase completed by achieving classroom observation through the academic year 2017 – 2018. Here, the writing classes were observed concerning teaching and responding to the writing instructions. It conducted semi-structured interviews with the instructors and the students. The main questions asked from the instructor include;

- How did instructors view the writing style of students within the setting?
- How did instructors perceive the English language writing curricula among the students?

The students, along with the instructors, were also interviewed. It conducted an intervention consisting of 24 writing workshops throughout the academic year in the second phase of the study among the student committing to the project. The workshop comprised of four cycles with six workshops in each. The main aim of writing workshops was to fulfill the needs of students by identifying topics and differentiating approaches to teach writing. The study followed an action research approach within each workshop for designing the writing workshops, rather than following a pre-set plan. The workshops were planned based on the notes taken through observations, which acted as guidance for conducting the study. The students were prompted to use writing portfolios, including a vocabulary log and classroom diaries during the workshops. It analyzed collected data from the previous two phases in the third and final phase known as reflection phase.

Results and Discussion

Phase 1 - Exploration

Instructor's Interview Analysis

The interviews conducted with the instructors helped in understanding the way instructors taught writing in their classes, the reluctance of students in participating, along with reasons behind student's frustration. These interviews justified the procedure used to conduct writing workshops in the second phase. The interviews with the instructor pinpointed the major highlights as the questions revolved around teaching to write in a second language, the needs of students, methods of instruction, and usage of resources and material required for delivering lessons.

According to two of the instructors, the engagement of the students lacked in the correct levels of English language learning; although, students had undertaken placement tests. It considered the lack of basic ability to construct simple sentences, including subject, verb, and object as the most severe drawback. However, English was known as an important course for students in the field of Science and Medicine. One instructor stated,

"I was [surprised] to see that despite attempting the placement test, the basic sentence construction in the English language was inadequate among the students, which further increased our responsibility."

Another instructor shared her experience of free writing in an elementary school in detail that offered freedom to the students to write anything they wished. The students intended to freely write because they knew that no grading was to occur for it. Instructor quotes her experience, *"[W]hen I asked my students how did they feel about the test, all of them were pleased; I also saw those students participating that were previously reluctant to participate in the writing class."*

Although the instructors believed freewriting to be efficient, students would not know how and why it was essential to use a writing pack in the curriculum. Such as, only one instructor used this approach; while, some of them just wrote down words.

According to Instructor B, the process approach adopted for the writing is a plan mapped out in the learner's books. She prioritizes the activities, i.e., "brainstorming, activities, then the first

draft, and then they have to make the final draft.” It reflects that they were aware of the practices that promote their students to learn, as stated;

“[A]t the end I think that they all use the same style that they want to find out what is right and what’s wrong in their writing and they have to pass. And even for us instructors, we’ve to follow what’s in the writing booklet or writing packs. So whatever brainstorming activities, we have we go through with the students.”

The use of innovative teaching methods was limited as they lack the interest to execute it. The lack of interest further amplifies when a task is to be completed in a limited time. It leaves no room for the instructor to execute new or exciting strategies. The writing of the learners is likely to improve when there is an improvement in their proficiency level. Moreover, the instructor observed that the schooling of the girl (private and public) affected their proficiency level;

“Also, I find a difference between students who graduated from public schools and those who graduated from private schools. I guess those who come from private schools; are exposed to different, another curriculum. It’s different from what they take in public schools. So, I find the level of creativity in writing with those students a bit higher than the government schools.”

Instructor C and D had similar views as that of Instructor A and B, who considered the writing of the students inadequate along with their willingness to learn more. The more apparent strategy adopted by the students was to memorize the content as they felt it could save their grades in the exam. Instructor C states,

“[S]tudents feel safe as they can do things on their own and get good scores; also, students can imitate the sentence which gives them a sense of accomplishment.”

Likewise, it observed a similar pattern, i.e., lack of inclination towards writing was observed for the instructor who was trying to communicate the writing techniques to the students, who eventually failed to learn. According to instructor C, the word ‘secure’ best describes the students’ memorization feeling as they were aware of what to write in an exam. The strategy of instructor D of providing a format to the student also failed, as despite having the format, students writing fail to meet the expectations of the instructor. However, Instructor C explained that unwillingness of EFL student and their resistant accounted for their lack of learning, as stated;

“[I] think. However, we try even if they are reluctant, we try to make them love it and start to be interested and motivated but sometimes, yeah it’s hard to make them accept the idea of writing a free paragraph.”

At the end of the term, the interview could only be conducted with instructor D, as other instructors did not have the time to participate. The researcher met instructor G for the first time, maintaining a formal conversation style. The interview was conducted in a classroom as other instructors occupied the staff room. Since instructor G is non-Saudi; therefore, she does not know how to communicate in Arabic. Due to this, she only delivered lectures in the English language.

She supported another instructor statement by highlighting that it is imperative to learn; although, writing is difficult. She stated that;

"[I] know it's a challenge but I definitely think it's important for them to be able to learn writing from their English instructor just so that it could help them in the future with their studies and even beyond their studies when and if they decide to get a job, they should be able to do some basic writing. Even if they don't decide to get a job, at least, they can help their children when they do have them. So yeah, I think for the overall development of any new language, the writing is an important skill for a student."

It found that written communication occurred just once throughout the interview with the instructors, reflecting the grammar, vocabulary as well as writing mechanism. It was briefly highlighted by instructor G, who emphasized that the writing should be primarily focused on how to achieve the communicative purpose, rather than on the grammatical structure. Such as;

"But then I don't know how, when you're pressed for time, and you know, and we need I think that's something we have to communicate to instructors to instructors more to, to shift their focus more away from you know just there, you know there are 5 grammar mistakes [indiscernible]. And more to what are they communicating and it's not; it's not [indiscernible] the change can't happen overnight."

Instructor J describes that the use of collaborative working may not be instrumental in every field, and every subject as a classroom instructor may have limited time to complete the work and learn about each practice. The instructor highlighted the capability of students to learn writing using technology, such as with the use of visual technology. Similarly, the instructor showed that using a material consistent with the culture helps them in learning. In this context, one of the instructors stated that;

"Once I [indiscernible] something a song and I was so very excited, and I prepared the worksheets, and one of the students said it's haram (meaning it is Islamically prohibited) and she was insulting about it. "Excuse me, instructor," uh, she, uh I remember her with her friend, they were very [indiscernible] direct. "Instructor please we don't listen to songs by her if you are going to use them, the song, we will, can we get out?" I told them okay, no songs, okay, you can keep your seats, we can do something else, and it was like I spent a long time, [cross talk] to find the right song, to find them."

Student's Interview Analysis

The researcher conducted seven interviews, each with different students. Initially, it conducted interviews at the inception of the classes. The duration of the interview ranged from ten to twenty minutes. Students were hesitant and spoke very little as a result of the asymmetrical relationship between the student and the researcher. The students provided short answers as they were not comfortable, despite making significant efforts. Two more reasons that contribute to the low response of the participants include lack of time and questions about their learning. According to student A, writing is *essential*; however, she did not provide details as to what was necessary as evident from the respective quote,

"[I] know that writing English is very important for understanding it and becoming self-independent in it."

Student A attended an English course and had been taught language in schools for about ten years. She was unable to share her opinion on the teaching of the English curriculum and the use of different approaches. Also, she faced difficulty in answering the questions. At times she would stay quiet, and the researcher had to move to the next question. She was unable to recommend anything which could have improved her writing competence; although, she shared that she enjoyed working with her pair and had no experience working in a group.

Contrary to this, student B articulated the opinions presented by student A, as to why she felt that English is vital for her;

"Let us take social media as an example when someone asks me about Islam; I can only reply in Arabic; that's why no one would understand me. I must communicate in English so that they can understand what I'm saying [...] So if someone disapproves of Islam in some way, I can discuss it with them in English".

English learning was enjoyed by student C as she reflected the advantages of learning English as for her future; she perceived it to be beneficial in the long run for her career and its development.

"[I]'d like to learn English as it is the only way I can be successful in my career, or grow."

Similarly, student D opinionated that the methods of teaching should be improved; although, she accepted that the deliverance of the curriculum was good. Student E stated that learning English is significantly crucial as she has to communicate with people in England. She stated that simple English is good as she finds it more interesting, which allowed her to focus on the task at hand. She discussed that there were many grammatical errors in the curriculum, which made it dull. She generally wrote sentences in Arabic and then convert it in English.

"[L]earning English is crucial for me as it is my only mode of communication with the people in England. However, to be honest, I find the curriculum quite boring".

Consequently, student F believed that English leaning is crucial if she wants a good GPA and a successful career. She found English leaning to be boring; however, realized its significance for learning. She stated that according to her college, the writing of English was considered to be insignificant until examinations occurred. She also likes to work with her pair, i.e., Amani and felt that group work is messy. She supported the use of visual technology in class. She also stated that the repetition of the concept makes writing dull. According to student G, English and its writing is necessary for progress and working in groups was much more enjoyable. The college's material, according to her, was dull and repetitive. Technology assistance was supported by her; while, she was also able to produce and compose content.

Similarly, student D also realized the significance of English as she traveled a lot. She expected that the university would focus on the learning of the students; however, she felt that the university

ignored it due to the student's low proficiency level as her. She also believed that a lack of pace with the instructor also impacted her learning. She stated that instructors were less considerate towards the students. She stated that her main objective was to improve her grammar.

Phase Two – Intervention

A one-day writing workshop was arranged for all the seven students as an intervention. It conducted a total of six workshops in one cycle, and there was a total of four cycles. The students were asked to write their experience in Arabic for each workshop. It should comprise of what they learned, what they found interesting, what was challenging, and what were their thoughts on the topic as well as the writing strategy. Such as, students were encouraged and were asked to reflect. They were also asked to share their thoughts on the workshop, write about their activities, and their feelings. They wrote of what they found exciting and provided very little explanation of it. Realistically, it is better to provide some training to the students on the procedures before the workshop. The diaries were maintained in Arabic as the objective was to assess student's perception, rather than their language. Given the constraints of time, some students were unable to write their experience regularly. The following section shares a narrative account of the four cycles of the workshop.

Cycle One

Cycle one aimed to know about the creation of a relaxed learning environment by the students. It considered the ability to write short notes as the overarching learning objective for this cycle. The workshops picked up pace after the introduction of visual aids through video clips, which was a positive sign. It also increased the motivation among the students to write as the medium of instruction attracted their interest.

Table 1

Workshop design for cycle one

Workshop	CEFR Descriptor	Topic	Medium of Instruction	Writing Approach
Workshop 1	Students will be able to write sample notes	Students' choice	Writing	Writing as personal expression: Freewriting
Workshop 2		Use of dictionary	Writing and reading	
Workshop 3			Visual aids	
Workshop 4		Describing appearances of different individuals	Video clips (Visual and auditory)	
Workshop 5			Video clips (Visual and audio)	
Workshop 6			Video clips (Visual and audio)	

Cycle Two

In cycle two, students provided a total of 24 positive observations. New vocabulary was presented using pictures through the observations, and the students found it enjoyable and

motivating that increased their ability to construct sentences. A total of seven negative observations were detected. The negative observations were related to time constraints, understanding of the video clips, and writing lengthy texts.

Table 2

Workshop design for cycle two

Workshop	CEFR Descriptor	Topic	Medium of Instruction	Writing Approach
Workshop 1	Students will be able to write sample sentences and provide descriptions	Basic Sentence Structure	Data show (visual and audio)	
Workshop 2		Compose simple sentences	Video clip (Visual and audio)	
Workshop 3		Pronouns + People Descriptions	Pictures (Visual aids)	
Workshop 4		Describing faces	Worksheet (Visual aids game)	Writing and speaking
Workshop 5		Describing themselves	-	-
Workshop 6		Revise previous activity	-	-

Cycle Three

Fashion was chosen as a topic to write about in the third cycle. The task had to be kept simple to maintain the students’ interest and motivation. Students were suggested to construct a collage of favorite fashion pieces. Students were instructed to cut the fashion pieces in pairs and write a short description of the items after tagging them. A total of 20 positive comments were summed up by the students in cycle 3, with a single negative comment that was a time constraint. However, positive comments achieved for the workshop include that it was helpful, beneficial, fun, enjoyable, etc.

Table 3

Workshop design for cycle three

Workshop	CEFR Descriptor	Topic	Medium of Instruction	Writing Approach
Workshop 1	Students will be able to write short notes on the topic of choice	Revision (Basic Sentence Structure)	Writing	Writing as a cognitive process
Workshop 2		Fashion		-

Workshop 3		Fashion vocabulary	Kinaesthetic	-
Workshop 4	Students were able to write a short, simple postcard	Postcard message	Writing	Reader oriented teaching and writing as a social interaction
Workshop 5		Fashion		Writing processes
Workshop 6		Fashion		-

Cycle Four

Writing as a cognitive process was focused on cycle four by practicing the use of mind maps, formulating drafts, and outlines. Time was the main issue here because students were in their final term and had a high GPA as of their target. The instructors use a short writing test to assess students with different types of writing. These tasks were provided as homework to the students, which provided them unlimited time to practice extensive writing. The instructor inquired about a few queries from the students as they came to the class, and it seemed that the majority of the students were struggling and require proper guidance.

Table 4

Workshop design for cycle four

Workshop	CEFR Descriptor	Topic	Medium of Instruction	Writing Approach
Workshop 1	Student was able to write a paragraph	Paragraph modeling	Reading and writing	Writing through reading
Workshop 2		Drawing mind maps		Writing as a cognitive process
Workshop 3		Writing an outline		Writing as a cognitive process
Workshop 4		Complete paragraph writing		Writing as a cognitive process
Workshop 5		Complete paragraph writing		Writing as a cognitive process
Workshop 6		Freewriting	Writing	Writing as a personal expression

Phase Three – Reflection

Instructors' Reflection

Instructors viewed the perfection of writing as the essence of good writing. The instructors' approach to writing was similar to that of a building block approach or "grammar-translation" method. This building-block approach to writing was considered a good one by the instructors. One of the instructors describing the approach used to teach writing stated that;

“Last year we had these ah building blocks, the older writing booklet, it was like building blocks of the same structure of sentences then we moved into a paragraph, all the sentences talk about the same thing. But now we have a genre approach for this year trying to give students models on the same genre to help them try to write something similar.”

The writing rules comprise of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar. Instructors mainly focused on the writing mechanics during teaching, and he tested the student's ability through the application of writing mechanics during the exam. The writing mechanics were considered necessary for students to become proficient writers. In a similar context, one of the instructors outline that;

“even though how many times you mentioned to them that you have to start with the title, you have to do the indentation, you have to, these things I think we have to focus on more maybe because they are useful for them.”

The exam conducted at the end of each module was the main reason for focusing on writing mechanics. A rubric was determined that helped in the assessment of sentence structuring and writing mechanics. According to one of the instructors;

“You could label our writing technique or style here and as focused writing. If you compare it a little bit to the IELTS when you take an IELTS course before the exam, they prepare you to take the exams, so they don't teach you creative writing. So, it's more like focused writing than any other.”

Students' Reflections

The students believe that writing is secondary in comparison to the other skills, which include listening, reading, and speaking. According to the students, writing is a subordinate skill used for practicing vocabulary and grammar with little attention paid to writing skills. Teaching writing also needed reinforcement of vocabulary items through reading, recomposing correct sentences, and practicing grammatical rules. Students perceived writing similar to the instructors and believed that instructors did not pay much attention to teaching writing;

“I've noticed that there is not much concern for writing. In the first level, they used to give us paragraphs and then let us write, memorize, and train ourselves. We never had real training in writing. They just let us write paragraphs thinking that they've taught us everything. No one was even there to correct for us.”

In regular classes, learning takes place at minimum, as compared to the learning strategies applied in the workshops. The students lacked the skills to use the correct words in their writing; although, their primary focus was on the vocabulary;

“I originally didn't know grammatical rules or writing principles, so the workshops helped me in that way even in level one, they didn't use to tell us the organization of the sentence like the first subject and then verb. I never knew anything like that, so in the workshops, you gave us rules in the beginning and benefited a lot from it. Also the vocabulary, there are words in the books, but we don't benefit from them in writing, even when you write, you don't think of using them, which

is the opposite of the workshops, the words we take are varied and can use them in the writing, so it helps a lot.”

There is a significant difference in the way's students perceives their writing objectives. While the instructors criticize the attitude of students without making any attempts to make the material enjoyable, they blame the students for not following appropriate objectives towards learning. The teaching approach used by the instructor to make the students learn in the second language does not foster learning because it is somewhat outdated. The instructors need to build confidence among the learners for enhancing their language abilities and transpire students through their positive outlook. On the contrary, students are more inclined towards using compensational strategies (like memorizing paragraphs) to make up for lack of learning.

Conclusion

This research investigated the challenges faced by the English language learner as they learn to write in a higher education setting. The study has also explained the factors affecting how students reflect on their practice and their decision-making power. The study helped in highlighting teaching practices of the instructors, student's perceptions on their learning, and dynamics between instructor and student. The learners were responsible for constructing knowledge based on their beliefs, experiences, and culture, followed by the instructor to create their reality. The study results have significantly contributed towards the understanding of Saudi learners for analyzing their perceptions and expectations to make teaching practices much better in university language classrooms. Possible solutions can be enabled by investigating the challenges faced by the students and instructors. The study would provide an initial base for continuing investigation about writing pedagogy. The study also has highlighted the importance of listening to the voices of students and instructors from the classroom, considering the broader contribution to the field of second language writing. Future studies need to conduct longitudinal studies to provide qualitative results on Saudi learners in various higher education settings. The challenges are likely to be minimized by improving the language learning system, along with the quality of teaching and learning in the Saudi language classroom. There is a significant implication for this study, as it would positively affect the English curriculum and educational policy within the Saudi higher education system.

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