The Correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Writing Strategies and Writing Performance

By

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Abstract

For many years, the importance of writing strategies as a considerable contributor to educational success has been the focus of L2 learning research. Writing is one of the productive skills that students should develop in the early stages of English language learning. Developing this creative skill will help students to learn other language essential skills such as reading, speaking, and listening. The aim of the current study is twofold: firstly, finding out Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' writing strategies and writing performance. Secondly, identifying the correlation between Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' writing strategies and writing performance. In view of that, this study is a correlational research in which the sample consists of (377) students from different Iraqi EFL preparatory schools during the academic year 2021/2022. Two instruments are used to achieve the aims of this study: Oxford's (1990) classification of language leaning strategies types has been developed to identify "Students' Writing Strategies" and an emotive writing test is developed to assess students' writing performance. After their validity and reliability are verified, the two instruments are applied to the research sample. The findings reveal that participants' writing strategies is statistically correlated with their writing performance. In addition, Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' WS contribute positively in explaining the variation in WP.

Keywords: writing strategies (WS), writing performance (WP).

Introduction

According to Richards et al. (1992, p. 269), WP is "a person's actual use of linguistics". Brown (2000, p. 30) refers to language performance as "the overtly observable and concrete manifestation or realization of competence. It is the actual doing of something. Regarding WP, he refers to as the actual production of linguistic events that provides students with the opportunity to learn all the rules of their language and how they can better organize their ideas more coherently using the language.

WS are the deliberate choices made by writers in order to overcome a writing difficulty (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Manchon, et al. (2007, p. 231) claim that WS are "The actions employed in the act of producing text", they refer to any actions employed in the act of producing an essay that occurred during the prewriting, planning, drafting, revising and editing stages. According to (Oxford, 1990, p.8), WS are the techniques, approaches, behaviors, and

actions that students use to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their writing. Oxford's definition is adopted as the operational definition.

Furthermore, WS assist students to generate the ideas, order the ideas in good line, and check their writing to improve the writing result. Besides, Ellis (2008) states that Oxford's taxonomy of strategies is considered the most comprehensive language learning strategy and is applied to guide the study investigating students' strategy used in writing. That is why there is a need to investigate the role of WS on students' WP.

This research provides insights for teachers to promote EFL students' WS to better develop their WP. However, the problem of the current study is best expressed through answering the following research question:

Is there a relationship between EFL preparatory school students' writing strategies and their writing performance?

Since one of the educational purposes is to equip learners with strategies to cope with stressful and challenging situations that they might face in the learning process. WS are assumed effective promoting EFL students' WS and WP. As the correlation between EFL preparatory school students' WS and WP. has not been fully investigated yet in the Iraqi EFL context.

Literature Review

Writing Skill

Since one of the important variables in this study is writing, it is necessary to review some theories of writing that become the references in conducting the research. In the research, definition of writing, importance of writing, elements of writing, and writing difficulties as well as students' writing performance and its kinds are presented.

Definition of Writing

According to Harmer, (2004), writing is considered a device for expressing ideas, views or knowledge in a written form and in a clear and systematic way by incorporating correct structures, good coherences between sentences and paragraphs; it should also be devoid of mechanical mistakes like spelling and grammar.

As stated by Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 529) "writing is viewed as a result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising". Zimmerman and Rodriguez (1992, p. 4) define writing as "a way of thinking, a way of learning, and a way of sharing ideas with others." They add that it involves much more than just arranging letters in a purposeful arrangement. Hyland (2009, 2003) also states that writing is the process whereby a person selects, develops, arranges and expresses ideas in units of discourse.

This definition of writing is strongly promoted by Richards (1990, p. 529) who support that "writing is viewed as a result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising". As stated by Nunan (2003), writing is the act of physically committing words or ideas to some media, such as an email message entered into a computer or a student's composition.

The Importance of Writing

Fareed et al. (2016) denote that writing is an essential skill for students to master since it allows them to think critically and extensively in order to produce excellent work. Moreover, they also imply that writing ability can be seen as a personal or private activity, it can be a useful instrument for acquiring and recalling information. The importance of learning to write, in agreement with Harmer (2004), is concluded in the following points:

a) Unlike speaking, writing is not always time-bound. It shows that students have more time to think about writing activities than they do in speaking activities.

b) Because students think while they write, writing drives them to focus on particular language usage. It may help them develop as they work through the concerns that writing brings up in their minds.

c) Writing has always been a method of supporting previously learned language. In the learning process, the teacher uses writing skills to make a note of newly learned grammar, vocabulary, etc.

d) Writing is frequently used as a warm-up for other everyday activities, especially when students are writing sentences. Students are given time to consider their ideas before being asked to create a sentence.

e) Writing can also be a constituent of a bigger activity, such as language practice, acting out, or speaking, where the attention is on something else. Students are asked to improve brief interchanges that they will perform out in front of the class.

f) Writing can also be used to help students in completing a different sort of work (in this case speaking and listening).

g) Writing is considered as the principal base upon which one is learning and intellect will be judged. Writing skill provides us with communication and thinking skill. Furthermore, it triggers our ability to clarify and refine our ideas to others and ourselves.

h) Writing skill is a very significant part of communication that progresses your communication skills since it allows you to communicate your message with simplicity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations.

i) Good writing skill as well let you express yourself, help you become more clear and brief, besides allow you to stand out as compared with the rest.

Elements of Writing

Brown (2004) points out that those elements of writing are; content, organization, language use (syntax and discourse) and vocabulary, while Weigle (2002) adds another element that is mechanics. The following is a description of each writing element:

Content

Thesis statement, related ideas, idea development, and idea development through personal experience, illustration, facts, and views are all included. The material contained; such as the topic, explanations, discussion, and the core of the key topic presented, is referred to as the content.

Organization

It considers the effectiveness of the introduction, the logical flow of ideas, the conclusion, and the length of the text. It means that during the writing process, each sentence's or paragraph's order in the written text is obvious. The individuals should be able to communicate well with one another.

Language use

The construction, structure, and constituents of the language used in written text, such as syntax and sentence complexity, are all aspects of language use.

Discourse

Topic sentences, paragraph unity, transitions, discourse markers, cohesion, rhetorical norms, reference, fluency, economy, and variation are all samples of linguistic conventions (Ellis, 2008).

Syntax

In spoken and written language, syntax is one of the key-ways writers convey meaning in a text. It refers to the set of rules that determines the arrangement of words in a sentence, in which words are combined to form phrases, clauses and sentences. (Miller, 2008).

Vocabulary

Word choice is important when it comes to producing a high-quality text. The correct language should be used depending on the type of writing task. The greater the number of vocabularies used in a text, the better the odds of a better result (Cumming, 2001).

Mechanics

It includes characteristics like spelling, punctuation, capitalization, reference citations, overall neatness and presentation, and the type of handwriting employed, as well as whether it is intelligible or not (Weigle, 2002).

Aspects of Writing

Brown (2004, p. 221) classifies linguistics aspects of writing into micro and macro skills, mechanical components and coherence and cohesion. The descriptions of all aspects are expressed as follows:

Micro and Macro Skills

According to Brown (2015, p. 437), for writing production, the following micro and macro skills are considered important.

Micro Skills

1)   Produce graphemes and orthographic forms of English
2)   Produce writing at a well-organized rate of suit the aim
3)   Produce an adequate core or words and use fitting word order
4)   Use acceptable grammatical system, patterns and rules
5)   Express a precise meaning in a changed grammatical form

Macro Skills

1)   Use cohesive devises in written discourse.
2)   Use the verbal forms and conventions of written discourse.
3)   Correctly achieve the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
4)   Convey associations and connections between events, and communicate such relations as a core idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
5)   Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.

6)   Appropriately deliver culturally specific references in the context of the written text.

7)   Develop and use a set of writing strategies, such as accurately evaluating the audience's interpretation, using pre-writing devices, writing with fluency in the first draft, using paraphrases and synonyms, asking peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Mechanical Components

McLane and McNamee (1990) mention that writing mechanics are regarded as the conventions governing the technical aspects of writing, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization and abbreviation.

The acknowledged standards that should be followed when creating sentences are known as writing mechanics. They are key ways to successfully communicate ideas and pair with grammar as the standards to adhere to when writing. The official standard for grammar and writing mechanics has been established by consensus. Even though they are not set in stone, using them as a guide is still a smart idea (Brown, 2015).

Coherence and Cohesion

Making meaning of language in text/discourse analysis is related to the words cohesion and coherence (Taboada, 2004). Cohesion and coherence have an important part in understanding the message and in the negotiation of meaning in the discourse. A good writing needs a good grouping of cohesive relations and coherent structures in the text.

Cohesion

Cohesion is the relationship of meaning between one or more items in the text or speech, much like other semantic relations like synonym, antonym, and polysemy. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 270), "Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist within the text, and is expressed through the striatal organization of the text. It take places where the interpretation of some components in the text is dependent on that of another".

Coherence

As claimed by Taboada (2004, p. 158), "Coherence is the hanging together of the text with relation to its context of situation or culture". Yule (2008, p. 126) views coherence as "everything fitting together well, and it is not something that exists in words or structures, but something that exists in people". Coherence is the outcome of how the audience interprets the text's meaning and is influenced by that relationship (Tanskanen, 2006).

Characteristics of Written Language

According to Brwon (2015), the characteristics of written language are as follows:

Permanence

When something is written down and delivered to its intended audience in its final form, the writer hands over some control: the power to edit, explain, and remove. That possibility is likely the most crucial factor in making writing a dreadful experience! Student writers frequently believe that submitting written work to a teacher makes them vulnerable, if not helpless.

Production Time

A writer can definitely become an "excellent" writer by creating well-organized techniques for attaining the end output if given enough time. The bad news is that many

educational settings require students to write within time constraints, or "writing for presentation," (examination writing, for example).

Distance

One of the most difficult challenges for authors is predicting their audience. This expectation encompasses everything from broad audience characteristics to the interpretation of specific words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs.

Orthography

The manipulation of a few dozen letters and other textual symbols captures everything from basic greetings to incredibly complex ideas. We sometimes take our pupils' mastery of the mechanism of English writing for granted. If kids are illiterate in their first language, you must start with the basics of reading and writing.

Complexity

Writers must learn how to produce syntactic and lexical diversity, how to join sentences, and other aspects of written L2 discourse (which may or may not correspond to their L1 rhetorical tradition). Sentence combining, for example, might be problematic for English learners since the shorter sentences and clauses common in spoken language may not be suitable in written language.

Vocabulary

Written language necessitates a greater use of vocabulary than spoken language. Good writers will learn to use the variety of word choices to add richness to their writing. Furthermore, lexical diversity encompasses more than just seeking up synonyms; it also includes an understanding of the variations of meaning, or connotations, of words in context.

Formality

The rules of written forms are not always easy to understand, whether a student is texting a friend or writing an academic essay. The most difficult norms for L2 students to master are in academic writing, where they must learn how to describe, explain, compare, contrast, illustrate, defend, criticize, and argue within specific styles.

Writing Difficulties

This study is concerned to provide insight into some of the issues that students commonly face when writing in English as a second language. The major goal of this study is to figure out why students have difficulty writing. For English language learners (ELLs), writing is the most challenging language skill to master. Gomaa (2010) indicates, "Students' first language affects learning the target language". This is why students make certain mistakes and repeat them. Along with Byrne (2000), three factors influence writing process they are:

Psychological problem

A student is expected to be able to write his/her own without the possibility of interaction or feedback, and itself makes the act of writing difficulties.

Linguistic problem

A student must keep the communication through his/her own efforts and to make certain, both through his/her choice of sentences structure and by the way his/her sentences are interrelated together and sequenced, that the text he/ she writes or produces can be understood on its own.

Cognitive problem

A student has to master the written form of the language and to learn definite structures that are significant for actual communication in writing.

Writing Process

According to Kroll (2001), writing process allows students to express what they already know as well as explore and develop ideas on certain subjects in order to create a strong work that effectively connects ideas, feelings, and emotions. As stated by Brown (2007), the process approach is writing activities that contain some major stages including drafting, getting feedback from the students' partner or from their teacher, and finally revising.

According to Johnson (2008) and in agreement with Coffin et al. (2003), the process approach involves five major stages, they are; prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Prewriting

(generating ideas):   is the first stage that permits writers to generate ideas, collect information, organize thoughts, and prepare for writing the first draft. There are numerous prewriting stages; they are freewriting, questioning, mapping and brainstorming.

Drafting

In drafting, students develop the meaning using ideas in pre-writing strategies, center on the broad focus, and eliminate or add information. This step emphasizes content rather than mechanics. It should be written as fast as possible. If the students are having something wrong with completing the first draft, they may return to the prewriting stage.

Revising

This is an important step in the writing process. As part of the rewriting procedure, the students revisit the draft and improve it by revising and rearranging the information in order to develop their writings. They change the language, order, and flow to create a better order of events. Sentences and paragraphs may be deleted if they do not contribute to excellent writing.

Editing

Students should pay attention to writing mechanics, such as formatting and language accuracy. Editing entails correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation issues, as well as repetition and style. That is why the researcher should hold off on editing until the piece of writing has been revised (Hedge, 1988). This stage includes two main methods: self-editing and peer-editing (Coffin et. al, 2003):

Publishing

It is the final stage of writing which involves submitting a piece of writing to a publisher and sharing it with the public. Each writer's purpose, however, is to publish his/her work and reach out to people (Langan, 2002).

Writing Strategies

Writing Strategies are language-learning strategies employed by students in writing. Oxford (1990, p. 8) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make

learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. Whereas Wenden and Rubin (1987, p. 19) describe language-learning strategies as "any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information".

Oxford's Classification (1990)

Oxford (1990) extends the classification of O'Malley learning strategies into six sub-strategies within two main strategies include direct (memory, cognitive and compensation) which involve direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case a new language, and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective, and social) which contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning. The detailed descriptions of the six sub-strategies are as follows:

Memory strategies

techniques especially adapted to help the learner store new information in memory and receive it later.

Cognitive strategies

Skills that include manipulation and transformation of the language in same direct way (e.g., through reasoning analysis, note taking, functional practice in naturalistic settings, formal practice with structures and sounds, etc.).

Compensation strategies

Behaviors used to compensate for missing knowledge of some sort (e.g., inferencing while listening or reading or using synonyms or circumlocution while speaking or writing).

Metacognitive strategies

This type of strategies helps learners to adjust their learning through planning, arranging, focusing, and evaluating their own learning process.

Affective strategies

Techniques like self-reinforcement and positive self-talk that help learners get better control feelings such as confidence, motivations, and attitudes associated to language learning.

Social strategies

Behaviors involving other people in the language learning process (e.g., questioning, cooperating with others, facilitate interaction with others, often in a discourse situation).

Types of Writing Strategies

WS are described by (Oxford, 1990, p. 8) as the deliberate choices made by writers to overcome a writing difficulty. Those strategies are techniques, approaches, behaviors, and actions that students use to develop the competence and effectiveness of their writing. In the case of L2 writing, the term writing strategy refers to how L2 learners carry out composing, that is "any actions employed in the act of producing text". It refers to any actions employed in the act of producing an essay that occurred during the prewriting, planning, drafting, revising and editing stages (Manchon, et al., 2007). The following is a discussion of writing strategies in details (Oxford, 1990):

Memory strategies

Memory strategy is a tool for storing information in long-term memory and accessing it when it is time to write something down. Memory can be defined as a storage place for our

stored knowledge of both specific and general topics. Another clarification is that it relates to the process of memorizing and remembering. The students' information will be saved in the brain using the memory method. It signifies that this technique causes students to store all of the knowledge in long-term memory, and that the students can recall the information from any step or procedure in the strategy.

Cognitive strategy

Students can use cognitive strategies to better understand, comprehend and produce new language, resulting in more efficient processing. In other words, it serves as a device for converting information into the target language. This method aids students in properly digesting target language information; for example, readers can pick up on the message written by the students.

Compensation strategy

The compensation strategy aids students in overcoming knowledge gaps or learning limitations. When students have insufficient knowledge of the target language, they utilize a compensatory approach to help them understand it. When students confront insufficient understanding of the target language when writing English, they can employ their mother tongue in this method.

Metacognitive strategy

The term "metacognitive strategy" refers to a way for regulating the total learning process that extends beyond the cognitive mechanism. This assists students in effectively planning, organizing, and analyzing their language learning. Consequently, the term "metacognitive strategy" refers to thinking that goes beyond and beyond cognitive thinking. Actions beyond simply cognitive devices that allow students to coordinate their own learning process in writing are referred to as metacognitive strategies. Identifying the purpose, organizing, and self-monitoring are all part of a metacognitive method.

Affective strategy

Students' internal approach for managing their affective domain in relation to their writing process is referred to as affective strategy. Emotions, attitudes, and motivations are all referred to as affective. The student's interest and attitude toward language acquisition are heavily influenced by the affective technique. Emotion, attitudes, motivation, value, lowering anxiety, keeping a language-learning journal, and praising yourself are all examples of affective strategies. Students who know how to control their emotions and attitudes are frequently considered good students. Negative emotions can stifle growth. Positive emotions and attitudes, on the other hand, can make learning far more productive and pleasurable

Social strategy

Students can use social strategy to collaborate with others and gain a better understanding of the target culture as well as the language. Students can practice cooperating with others by doing and discussing something in the target language together. Creating mental

links, reviewing thoroughly, and utilizing action plan are all part of the memory approach. It assists students in storing and memorizing key information heard in the new language so that they can use it in their writing.

Oxford (1990) gives a Summary of writing strategies as indicated in Table (1):

Table (1): Oxford's classification of Writing Strategies

No.	Main Strategy	Sub-strategy
1	Memory Strategy	● Creating mental linkages ● Reviewing well ● Employing action ● Repeating
2	Cognitive strategy	● Recognizing and using formulas pattern ● Using resources ● Translating ● Recombining
3	Compensation strategy	● Selecting topic ● Switching to the mother tongue ● Using synonyms
4	Metacognitive strategy	● Identifying the purpose ● Organizing ● Self-monitoring
5	Affective strategy	● Lowering anxiety ● Writing a language learning diary ● Rewarding yourself
6	Social strategy	● Asking for help ● Cooperating with peers

To make it clear, below are the descriptions of each item of the writing strategies indicators:

Creating mental linkages

Students can use this strategy to help them include new terms into their writing. Students develop their own context and construct phrases using the new vocabulary they have learned.

Reviewing well

This technique requires the review of some new terms at different intervals. For example, after learning a new term, one studies it 10 minutes later, then 20 minutes later, an hour later, a day, two days later, a week later, and so on until the content becomes second nature.

Employing action

The use of action develops the students' ability to remember new words. As students, try to remember new words by writing them down many times or by attempting to form some expressions with the words on cards.

Repeating

One of the ways of repeating in writing is to write the same expression in a different way. Students take advantage of emphasizing the importance of the term. Students, for instance,

use passive voice to convey the same meaning in a different way.

Recognizing and using formulas pattern

Recognizing and applying formula patterns improves students' comprehension and writing output. Patterns involve at least one space that can be provided with an alternative term, whereas formulas are unanalyzed expressions. This regular activity can help students have a better knowledge of the material and develop their writing skills.

Recombining

This method aids students in putting together phrases or sentences. It enables students to integrate two or more phrases or sentences into a single expression or statement.

Using resources

Students derive benefit from this method since it permits them acquire new ideas and terminology. Students will get the job better if they use a variety of resources, such as a dictionary or a text sample. In writing, students can seek up the definitions of phrases and words they have put down in their notebook using a dictionary or other reference tools.

Translating

For students, translating can be a useful method. It lets students compose literature using their own language as a foundation and then translate it into the new target language, or vice versa.

Selecting topic

Choosing a topic is a way for assisting students in selecting a topic that they are interested in. Aside from picking an interesting topic, writers must take the reader's interests, needs, and degree of comprehension in consideration.

Switching to the mother tongue

Code exchange or switching is a term used to describe this method. It entails students employing their mother language for words or expressions rather than translating them since they are unsure of the appropriate English words.

Using synonyms

This method includes writing a term that has the same or almost the same meaning as another word in the same language.

Organizing

This technique involves a number of tools, including careful scheduling and maintaining a language-learning journal. To manage language learning, students should create practical weekly schedules for language learning, and a learning language notebook is a useful instrument.

Identifying the purpose

The goal of a writing assignment is to connect the type of written form to the audience's needs. Writing serves a variety of purposes, including conveying information, amusing the audience, and sharing opinions. Students can structure their writing to achieve the aim if they know what they are writing for.

Self-monitoring

For writing, self-monitoring is critical in order to track students' progress. Students must recognize and repair their own faults in any language skill using this method.

Lowering anxiety

Anxiety can obstruct students' ability to learn to their full capacity. When students experience worry or stress while writing, they must relax their body and mind by breathing deeply or listening to music in order to re-establish a positive mindset for learning.

Writing a learning language diary

Students' feelings, attitudes, and views regarding the learning process are described in language learning diaries. They can also provide particular information about which writing strategies students find useful or unhelpful.

Rewarding yourself

Students frequently need to find ways to keep their spirits up while continuing to write. The most potent encouragement comes from within the students, not from others. Giving oneself a prestigious reward for good writing performance can help one regard a well-crafted composition more highly.

Asking for help

This method entails approaching someone for assistance in learning the target language. Furthermore, the students seek correction of their work from others who are knowledgeable and have a solid command of the English language. Students can seek for clarification on anything they are unsure about.

Cooperating with peers

This method entails a concerted attempt to collaborate with other peers in order to improve writing skills. It is accomplished by requesting feedback or ideas on the writing from peers.

Students' Writing Performance

According to Wehmeier (2001), WP is "The act or process of accomplishing writing activities is known as writing performance. Moreover, Abu-Jalil (2001, p. 107) defines writing performance as "what students really accomplish when given writing assignments". In a recent study, it was described as the average of students' scores on writing assignments (products) combined with their scores on a self-reporting questionnaire on English writing processes.

Kinds of Classroom Writing Performance

According to Brown (2015), there are five main types of WP. These include:

Imitative or Mechanical

Writing: for acquiring the principles of the orthographic code, students will "write down" English letters, words, and brief sentences at the initial level of learning to write. At this time, a variety of classroom techniques is widely used.

Recognition Techniques

Identification of letter features is a common problem for beginner readers, and the same basic ability applies to writers. Discover the various letter; letter and word matching; circle anything you can find; and capital and lowercase letter matching.

Copying

Learning to write by hand is a psychomotor and kinesthetic as well as a cognitive task. Even if students can perceive letter distinctions, they could struggle to produce them, thus copying is an old-fashioned yet effective activity in tiny doses.

Sound-Spelling Practice

Phoneme-to-grapheme correspondence is a fundamental writing ability that applies to all alphabetic writing systems. A new system could be problematic for learners whose first language is nonalphabetic (Chinese, Japanese, etc.).

Dictation: is a good way to practice sound–spelling correspondences while also strengthening grammar and discourse elements. Dictations usually consist of the teacher reading (aloud) a brief paragraph, rereading it in segments, pausing for pupils to write down what they hear, reading it a third time, and then assessing their responses for accuracy.

Intensive or Controlled Writing

For learning, reinforcing, or testing grammatical principles, writing is sometimes employed as a production modality. This type of focused writing is most commonly seen in written grammar drills. This sort of writing does not permit for much, if any, innovation on the writer's part. Presenting students with a paragraph in which they must alter a specific structure throughout is a typical kind of controlled writing. As an example, they may be asked to change all present tense verbs to past tense; in this case, other temporal references in the text may need to be changed as well.

Self-writing

Self-writing, or writing with only the self in mind as an audience, may account for a considerable amount of classroom writing. The most visible example of this category in the classroom is note taking, which involves students taking notes during a lecture for subsequent recall. Other places to take notes include the margins of books, digital notes and highlights, portfolio entries, and plain notepaper kept for later access.

Display Writing

Writing is a way of life in the school curriculum framework, as previously said. Short answer questions, essay exams, and even research projects will all have a display component for all language students. One of the academic skills that academically bound ESL students must master is a variety of display writing strategies.

Real Writing

While display writing is present in almost every classroom writing assignment, some classroom writing focuses on the true conveyance of messages to an audience in need of those messages. The two categories of real and display writing are actually two ends of a continuum, with a mixture of display and real writing in the middle. Academic, vocational/technical and personal are subcategories of real writing.

Method

Population and Sampling

A Population refers to any collection of an identified group of human beings or non-human entities such as objects, institutions, time, units, etc. (Mills & Gay, 2019). The population of current study is Iraqi EFL   preparatory school students 5th. grade at Karbala' governorate during the academic year 2021 / 2022.

A sample is a group of individuals, items, or events representing the larger group's characteristics from which the sample is drawn (Mills and Gay, 2019). To select the study sample, (377) Iraqi EFL 5th. preparatory school students at Karbala' governorate are randomly selected.

Description of The Study Instruments

To achieve the aims of the current study, two instruments have been used. They are; WSQ and WPT.

Writing Strategies questionnaire (WSQ)

After reviewing the relevant literature, a questionnaire relying on Oxford's (1990) classification of language leaning strategies has been developed. The questionnaire consists of (53) items. Each item in the questionnaire is answered on a four point Likert scale ranging from always (3 scores) to never (0 score). The items have been distributed into six sub-strategies within two main strategies:

A   **Direct Strategies** includes 24 items distributed as follows
1)   Memory Strategy : 5 items
2)   Cognitive Strategy : 14 items
3)   Compensation Strategy : 5 items
B   **Indirect Strategies includes 29** items distributed as follows
1)   Meta-cognitive Strategy : 12 items
2)   Affective Strategy : 10 items
3)   Social Strategy : 7 items

Writing Performance Test (WPT).

To measure EFL preparatory school students' WP, an emotive writing test is used. According to Celce – Murcia et al. (2014), an emotive writing test is concerned with personal writing, such as writing letters or emails to friends describing personal experiences. Accordingly, the students are asked to write a film they saw recently. The scoring scheme of WPT consists of five components: organization, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and style and quality of expression. These components are leveled from five to one. Thus, the highest score a student can get is (25) while the lowest score is (5).

Validity and Reliability

The instruments have been exposed to a jury of thirteen university instructors who are experts in the fields of ELT and linguistics. The jurors are asked to decide the face validity of the study instruments and to decide the suitability of the scoring schemes used in scoring the writing. Reliability of STQ is estimated by using Test/retest method and Cronbach Alpha.

While the reliability of WPT is found by using Cronbach Alpha, which indicates that, all the reliability coefficients are acceptable. The experts agree on the scoring scheme, the whole instruments and their items, except for some linguistic modifications that have been taken into consideration.

Results

To achieve the first aim of this study, the two instruments (WSQ and WPT) are applied to the study sample. The arithmetic means and standard deviations have been computed, and t-test for one independent sample has been employed to determine the significant differences between the arithmetic and theoretical means. The results are shown in Table (2 & 3) and Figures (1, 2 & 3):

Table (2): Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and T- Test Values of Writing Strategies

| Direct Strategies	Sample	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Theoretical Mean	t-Value Computed	t-Value Critical	Significance 0.05
Memory	377	9.302	2.634	7.5	13.284	1.96	Significant
Cognitive	377	26.329	5.577	21	18.554	1.96	Significant
Compensation	377	10.186	2.358	7.5	22.113	1.96	Significant
Indirect Strategies Meta-cognitive	377	20.989	5.723	18	10.142	1.96	Significant
Affective	377	17.135	5.415	15	7.657	1.96	Significant
Social	377	12.005	4.104	10.5	7.122	1.96	Significant

Table (3): Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, and T- Test Values of writing performance test

Variable	Sample	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Theoretical Mean	t-Value Computed	t-Value Critical	Significance 0.05
writing performance	377	15,186	4,281	15	0,842	1,96	Not significant

Figure (1): Arithmetic and Theoretical Means of Writing Strategies Questionnaire: Direct Strategies
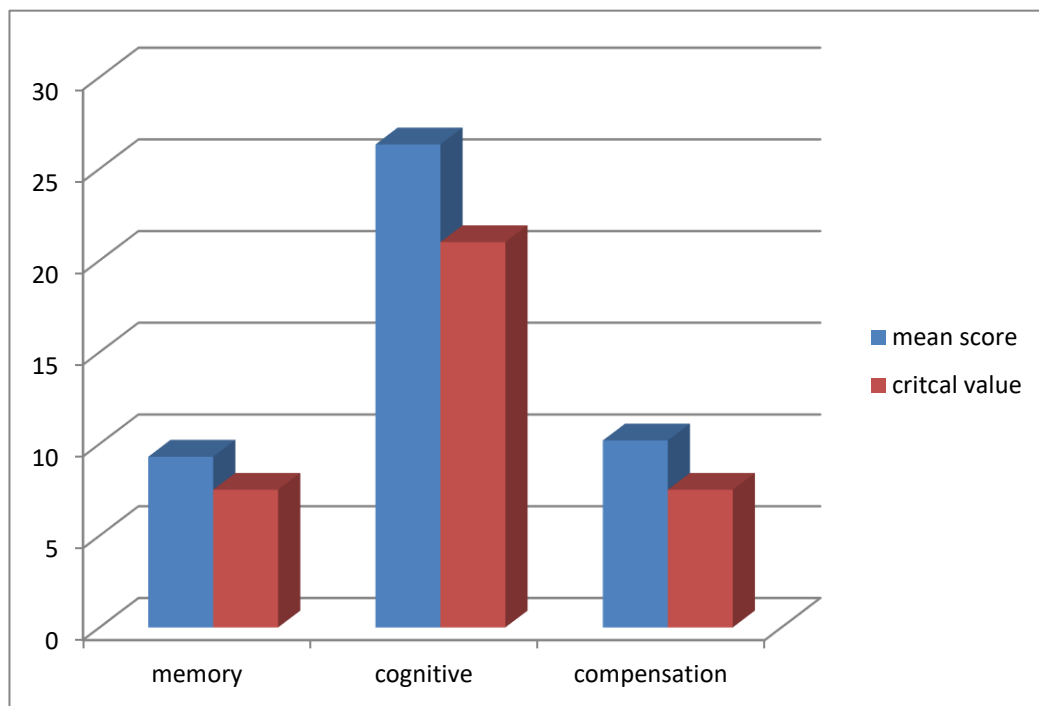
Figure (2): Arithmetic and Theoretical Means of Writing Strategies Questionnaire: Indirect Strategies
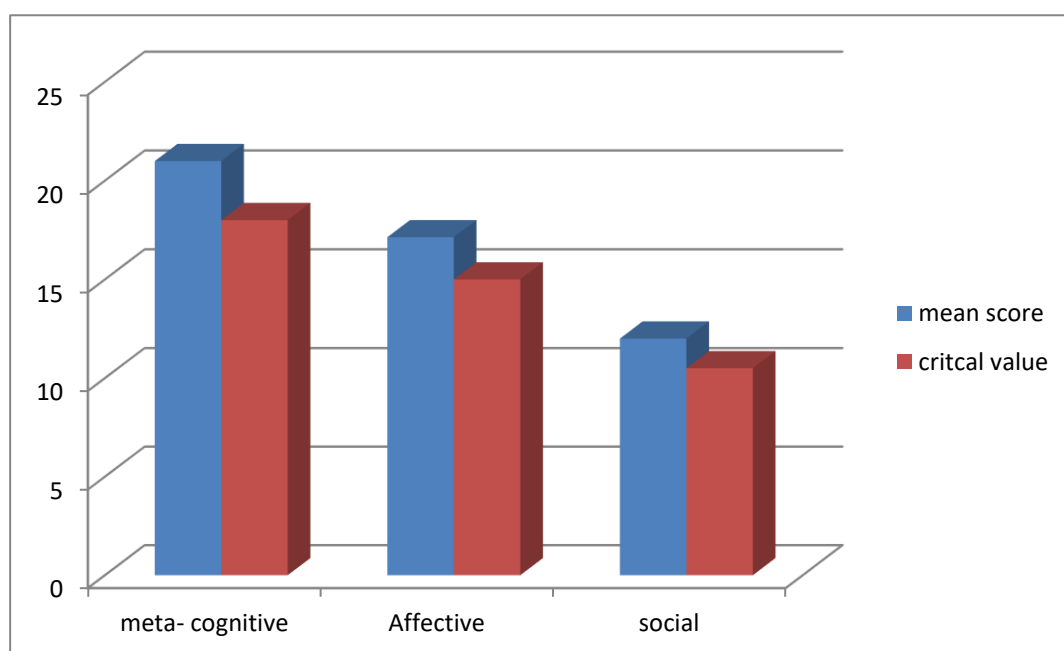
Figure (3): Arithmetic and Theoretical Means of Writing Performance Test

To achieve the second aim. Students' responses to writing strategies questionnaire and writing performance test are analyzed using Pearson's coefficient, and the findings are as shown in Table (4):

Table (4): The Correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Direct Writing Strategies and Writing Performance

Direct Writing Strategies	Sample	The Correlation between direct writing strategies and writing performance	t-Value		Level of Significance (0.5)
			Computed	Critical	
Memory	377	0.604	14.732	1.96	Significant
Cognitive	377	0.537	12.204	1.96	Significant
Compensation	377	0.524	11.909	1.96	Significant

Table (1.4) above reveals the following:
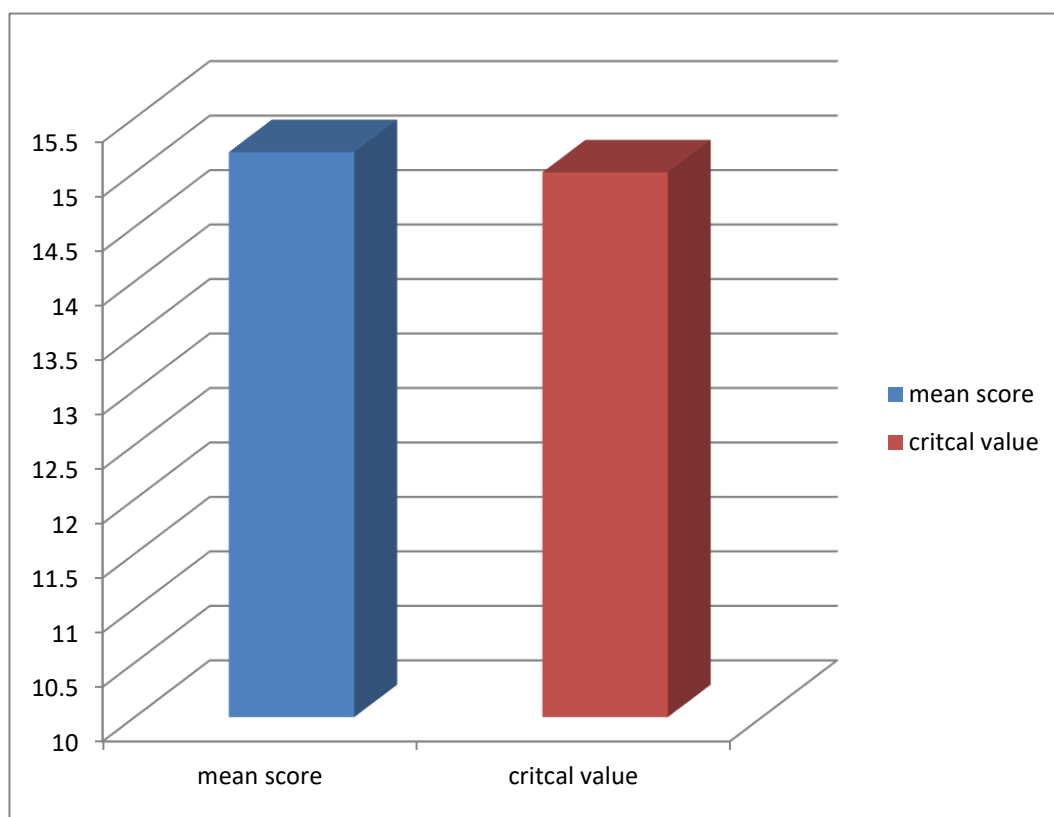
1) The correlation coefficient value between memory strategies and writing performance is (0.604). The computed t-value (14.732) is found to be greater than the critical value

(1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between memory strategies and writing performance.

2) The correlation coefficient value between cognitive strategies and writing performance is (0.537). The computed t-value (12.204) is found to be greater than the critical value (1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between cognitive strategies and writing performance.

3) The correlation coefficient value between compensation strategies and writing performance is (0.524). The computed t-value (11.909) is found to be greater than the critical value (1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between compensation strategies and writing performance.

In order to identify the correlation between indirect writing strategies and writing performance, the same procedures above have been followed. The results are indicated in Table (5).

Table (5): The Correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School Students' Indirect Writing Strategies and Writing Performance

Indirect Writing Strategies	Sample	The Correlation between indirect writing strategies and writing performance	t-Value		Level of Significance (0.5)
			Computed	Critical	
Metacognitive	377	0.400	8.511	1.96	Significant
Affective	377	0.367	7.646	1.96	Significant
Social	377	0.437	9.500	1.96	Significant

Table (5) above reveals the following:

1) The correlation coefficient value between metacognitive strategies and writing performance is (0.400). The computed t-value (8.511) is found to be greater than the critical value (1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between metacognitive strategies and writing performance.

2) The correlation coefficient value between affective strategies and writing performance is (0.367). The computed t-value (7.646) is found to be greater than the critical value (1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between affective strategies and writing performance.

3) The correlation coefficient value between social strategies and writing performance is (0.437). The computed t-value (9.500) is found to be greater than the critical value (1.96) at (0.05) level of significance and under (375) degree of freedom. This means that there is a positive correlation between social strategies and writing performance.

However, it can be affirmed that the writing strategies are positively correlated with writing

performance. Therefore, the question, which is about whether there is a correlation between Iraqi EFL Preparatory School students' writing strategies and their Writing Performance, is answered.

In order to decide the prevailing writing strategies among the study subjects, the total score of students on each writing strategy is converted into percentages then the arithmetic means and standard deviation of these percentages are computed as displayed in Table (6).

Table (6): Percentage of Students' Writing Strategies

Writing Strategies	Arithmetic mean of ratios	Standard Deviation
Memory	0.620	0.175
Cognitive	0.626	0.132
Compensation	0.679	0.157
Metacognitive	0.583	0.158
Affective	0.571	0.180
Social	0.571	0.180

Relying on the results above, it can be concluded that Iraqi EFL preparatory school students mostly use the direct strategies. Moreover, it is found that the dominant writing strategies of Iraqi EFL preparatory school students are compensation strategies, followed by cognitive strategies, then the memory strategies, and while the metacognitive strategies come later followed by affective and social strategies.

Discussion Of Results

In relation to this study, the findings reveal that Iraqi EFL preparatory school students employ effective WS. Accordingly, they employ their WS in all six sub-strategies of two main strategies (direct and indirect) in which compensation strategies contribute more to participants' WP than other variables do.

On the part of WP, it is found that the students have a moderate level of WP that is statistically significant. Moreover, according to the data computed from the study instruments, the students' WS are statistically correlated with their WP. In addition, Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' WS contribute positively in explaining the variation in WP.

Conclusions

In the light of the preceding results and discussions related to the aims of the study, it is concluded that Iraqi EFL preparatory school students employ effective WS with a moderate level of WP. Therefore, Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' WS are statistically correlated with their WP. Furthermore, the results obtained through the study instruments show that the students' WS contribute positively in explaining the variation in WP. The dominant writing strategies of the participants are compensation strategies within the direct strategies, while the metacognitive strategies come later within the indirect strategies.

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