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*Corresponding author
Chalak Ali Mohammed Ameen
chalak.ali@chu.edu.iq

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Exploring the Impact of Journal Writing on Enhancing Kurdish EFL Students' Argumentative Essay Writing Performance

Chalak Ali Mohammed Ameen/English Department, College of Education, Charmo University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq
Almas Nasradeen Abdulrahman/English Department, College of Education, Charmo University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Abstract

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Improving writing skills has always been a challenge for EFL students in different countries and contexts. To assist students in enhancing their writing skills properly, various techniques have been utilized by EFL teachers and educators, one of which is journal writing. The current study is a quasi-experimental investigation into the impact of journal writing on enhancing the argumentative writing skills of Kurdish EFL students. The participants of the study are 40 second-year Kurdish EFL students of the English department at Charmo University. They are divided into two groups, controlled and experimental. Two tools of data collection have been utilized to collect the data, namely pre-, post-tests and a questionnaire. The results of the tests have been analysed via SPSS (version 26). The test results reveal a significant difference between both groups' progress in favour of the experimental group students (p-value 0.0000001). Additionally, the questionnaire results clearly demonstrate that the experimental group students had positive perspectives on the impact of journal writing on enhancing their overall essay writing performance, as well as their argumentative and counterargument writing performance in particular. In addition, the students believe that journal writing implementation enhanced their motivation and self-confidence to write efficiently.



About the Journal

Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences (ZJHS) is an international, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, double-blind and open-access journal that enhances research in all fields of basic and applied sciences through the publication of high-quality articles that describe significant and novel works; and advance knowledge in a diversity of scientific fields. <https://zancojournal.su.edu.krd/index.php/JAHS/about>

1. Introduction

Students encounter numerous challenges and difficulties while trying to learn and improve their language skills. These challenges may vary from one language skill and/or context to another. Regarding the enhancement of EFL students' writing skill performance, it is considered one of the problematic skills that EFL students face various challenges while attempting to improve. In order to assist EFL students in enhancing their writing skills, numerous techniques and methods have been utilized/suggested by language instructors and students. Journal writing is one of those techniques that has been used to develop EFL students' writing skill performance in different parts of the world. Since, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no research in the context of Kurdistan Region universities on this essential topic, it was considered worthy of investigation and research.

Therefore, while the research focuses on 'Exploring the Impact of Journal Writing on Enhancing Kurdish EFL Students' Argumentative Essay Writing Performance', it is guided by the following three research questions:

- What is the impact of the journal writing technique on enhancing Kurdish EFL students' argumentative essay writing performance?
- What are the perspectives of Kurdish EFL students towards the impact of the journal writing technique on enhancing their motivation in writing essays?
- What are the perspectives of Kurdish EFL students towards the impact of the journal writing technique on enhancing their confidence in writing essays?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview

Writing is considered of paramount importance in various fields and disciplines of life. In the EFL context, it plays a vital role in students' success in their studies. Writing is defined as "the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader" (Sokolik, 2003, p. 88). In Harmer's (2004) view, writing is not only essential for academic progress; rather, it is vital in professional settings. In addition, Harmer maintains that writing requires structuring ideas effectively, and coherence and cohesion must be mastered properly. Additionally, writing skills are considered one of the most challenging skills for students, specifically for EFL students (Richards and Renandya, 2002). In a similar vein, Mohammed Ameen and Muhammad (2023) believe that writing skills are difficult for both teachers and students alike. The difficulties require EFL learners to make considerable effort and practice their writing regularly and effectively. Moreover, for students to be successful in writing, they need to have a good command and mastery of several elements of writing, including generating good ideas, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, cohesion, coherence, unity, and organisation (Hillocks, 1986; Rijlaarsdam et al., 2005). In addition, there are different stages of writing that EFL students need to go through, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and finally, the final version of the piece of writing (Hyland, 2003). Hence, as mentioned above, due to the difficulty of writing skills for EFL students, teachers are required to employ various techniques to help students overcome these difficulties and consequently develop their writing skills. One of the techniques that has recently been focused upon and considered vital is journal writing.

2.2 Definition of Journal Writing

Journal writing is defined as free writing activities that students write freely and regularly without having the fear of being evaluated by their teacher (Richards, 1992; Porter et al., 1996; Johnson, 2002; Curtis and Bailey, 2009; Zittoun and Gillespie, 2011; Barjesteh et al., 2011). They may gather ideas and consequently express their personal reflections on different topics in their daily life experiences in their notebooks or blogs. Journal writing may include diaries, personal narratives, creative writing, and reflections (Hashemi and Amerian, 2011; Wu-Yuin et al., 2015).

Moreover, Spaventa (2000:168) asserts that via journal writing, “writers keep a record of ideas, opinions, and descriptions of daily life; journals help writers develop creativity.” Furthermore, journal writing is considered a prewriting activity that helps EFL students enhance their writing in relation to fluency and accuracy (Peyton, 1990; Reid, 1993; Casanave, 1994). Hence, since journal writing requires the students to practice their writing on a regular basis, a few times a week, it is expected that the students will develop their cohesion, coherence, unity, and generation of ideas (Fitriana, 2010).

Argumentative essay, which is the present study’s focus, is the type of essay that is “widely used to express opinions, construct logical arguments, and develop critical thinking, which are essential for academic discourse” (Bacha, 2010: p.35). Moreover, Ferreira (2005: p.99) argues that “argumentative writing in EFL contexts requires students not only to master the linguistic aspects of English but also to develop the rhetorical strategies necessary to present arguments and counterarguments effectively.” Thus, writing argumentative essays requires students to construct logical arguments, think critically, and develop the ability to formulate counterarguments.

2.3 Significance of Journal Writing

Journal writing is considered vital by various scholars in the field of pedagogy. Garmon (1998) believes that via journal writing, teachers know their students’ abilities, strengths, and weaknesses better. This helps teachers to adapt their method of instruction to serve the particular needs of the students. Besides, Harmer (2007) maintains that as a result of reading their students’ journals, teachers will be exposed to many aspects of their students’ writing that they were unaware of before. In addition, it is also believed that journal writing has a strong connection with a student-centred approach since it promotes students’ critical reflective thinking (Chabeli, 2001; Rolfe et al., 2001). Furthermore, a number of studies demonstrated that journal writing helps students to gain positive attitudes about the writing skill (Tahseldar, 2018; Hapsari et al., 2018; Yulianawati et al., 2019). In a similar vein, Tuan (2010) believes that journal writing increases students’ motivation to write better and practice authentic language outside the classroom. This develops a good relationship and cooperation between students and their teacher (Kose, 2005). In line with this, Chandrasegran (2002) asserts that journal writing should be considered as a supplementary and complementary tool that can enhance students’ writing properly. Last but not least, it is believed that journal writing is a good way of encouraging and motivating students to step towards autonomous learning (Rokini and Seifi, 2013) and consequently become independent writers (Tahseldar, 2018).

2.4 Related Studies

Several studies have been conducted on the effect of journal writing on enhancing EFL students’ writing skills. The results of many of these studies revealed that journal writing has a positive and significant impact on the writing performance of EFL students. However, the results of some other studies did not yield such a positive effect. Below, some of these studies are briefly demonstrated. Lagan (2000) conducted a study experimenting whether EFL learners’ difficulties in writing can be overcome via journal writing employment. The conclusion he reached was that the more students practice writing, the better they will perform in their writing. Moreover, the study of Tuan (2010) in Vietnam resulted in increasing the EFL students’ fluency and accuracy in writing; that is, in addition to their motivation level increase. Similarly, the results of Dabbagh’s (2017) quasi-experimental study in Iran indicated a significant difference between the controlled and experimental groups of students’ overall writing scores in favour of the experimental group students. However, there was no significant difference between the two groups in relation to mechanical errors. In addition, Tahseldar (2018) conducted a study on Lebanese school students. His results showed the students’ significant improvement in the post-test compared to their pre-test scores.

Furthermore, Sudirman et al.'s (2021) study in Indonesia resulted in students' better focus and progress on writing elements such as coherence, cohesion, order, content, unity, and organization of ideas.

On the other hand, Fageeh (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental study on the effect of journal writing on EFL students at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. The results of the final test of both groups showed no significant difference between the two groups' achievements. The present study is different from the previous studies and has its own significance. Firstly, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, it is the first study conducted on the impact of journal writing on enhancing Kurdish EFL students. In addition, focusing on the impact of journal writing specifically on argumentative essays is also considered of genuineness and original worldwide since, again, to the best of researchers' knowledge, the researchers did not find any research studying that specific topic on Google Scholar or any other platforms.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

In this study, two tools of data collection were utilized, namely pre- and post-tests and a questionnaire. Pre- and post-tests were used to measure the progress that the students made by the end of the semester as a result of the journal writing intervention. Moreover, a questionnaire was used to reveal the students' perceptions and attitudes towards the impact of journal writing on enhancing their argumentative essay writing. Using more than one tool of data collection in a study is considered vital since it increases validity and reliability in a way that they cross-validate one another and fill in any gaps that may exist as a result of using a single tool of data collection (Lynch, 1996; Long, 2005). Besides, "the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone." Cresswell (2014:215). Hence, due to the many benefits of triangulation, two tools of data collection have been used.

3.1 Pre- and Post-tests Implementation

The participants of the current study are 40 second-year students of the English department, evening studies at Charmo University. They are chosen since they study the module of 'Academic Writing', which involves practising essay writing on a regular basis. They are divided into two equal groups (20 students each). One group is assigned as the control group, while the second is assigned as the experimental group. In the first week of the spring semester of the academic year 2024-2025, after obtaining the students' consent from the researchers, both groups took part in a pre-test. Students of both groups were asked by the second researcher (who was the teacher teaching the 'Academic Writing' module to the students) to write an argumentative essay on '*Social Media Use or Family Communication*'. The pre-test results of both groups were graded by their teacher as the first grader. After that, to ensure consistency and reliability of the results, the test papers were scored by a second (external) scorer from Sulaimani University. From the second week of the course, the experimental group students were required by their teacher to write journals regularly (one journal per week as homework). In contrast, the controlled group students were taught the '*Academic Writing*' module traditionally.

The journal topics for the experimental group students were decided upon collaboratively by the students and their teacher; sometimes, the students were given full freedom to write about an argumentative topic of interest. The essays written were evaluated by their teacher, and the papers were given back to the students with the teacher's feedback on them, so the students could benefit from them. The course continued for 14 weeks. The last week of the course, both groups took a post-test that required students to write an argumentative essay on '*A Choice between Family, Friends or Both*'. Again, the test papers were scored by their module's teacher and an external

scorer. In order to establish a correlation between the two scorers, the coefficient Cronbach's Alpha has been utilized. The results showed a reliability of 93.3% between the two test scorers (raters). Weir (2005) believes that a correlation of over 90% between two markers indicates excellent reliability.

Furthermore, for grading the students' essays, Ozfidan and Mitchell's argumentative writing rubric (2022) was adapted with a few modifications. The analytical rubric assessed the essays on 10 different elements, namely "Thesis Statement, Introduction, Supporting Evidence, Counter Argument, Structure and Organization, Vocabulary and Lexical Diversity, Language and Style, Grammar and Mechanics, Conclusion and Overall Argument Effectiveness". Each criterion had its own descriptors (see appendix), and each one weighed 10% of the overall mark. Among the ten criteria, three of them (Counter Argument, Supporting Evidence, and Overall Argument Effectiveness) were specifically devoted to grading the students' abilities to create arguments, counterarguments, and demonstrate their positions and perspectives with evidence successfully. In other words, 30% of the whole grading weight was devoted to students' argumentation ability.

3.2 Questionnaire Implementation

During the last week (15th week) of the course, the experimental group students' consent was obtained to participate in a Likert-scale questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 15 statements that the participants could tick one of the options that included 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', and 'strongly agree.' The questionnaire was designed by the researchers, taking advantage of a few previous studies. The statements took into account the students' perspectives on the effectiveness of journal writing in enhancing their writing performance, counterargument abilities, and their motivation and confidence to write adequately. To guarantee the face and content validity of the statements, Best and Kahn's (2006) recommendations were followed. The questionnaire was sent to a team of jury members (three PhD holders in the field of applied linguistics). Consequently, the jury members' feedback was worked on, and the statements were adapted accordingly. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha was used to obtain the questionnaire's reliability, which was 92%. The questionnaire was administered in a quiet and friendly atmosphere, and the researchers were present to answer any questions that may have arisen while the students filled out the questionnaire.

4. Results

4.1 Pre- and Post-tests' Results

Independent sample t-tests were utilized to analyse the results obtained. The pre-test results of the controlled and experimental group students clearly confirmed that both groups' mean scores were very close to one another, as the controlled group students' mean score was 34.125%. In contrast, the experimental students' mean score was 34.25%. The independent sample t-test results clearly indicate that there was no significant difference between the two groups' writing proficiency levels at the outset of the course, as their p-value was 0.098.

Table 1: Pre-Test Results in Two Independent Sample T-Tests

Both Groups' Pre-test results	Group	N.	Mean	d.f.	T. Value	P-Value
	Control	20	34.125	38	-41.695	0.098
	Experimental	20	34.25			

4.2 Controlled Group Results

The last week of the course (week 15), both groups took part in a post-test in which the students were required to write an essay on '*A Choice between Family, Friends or Both*'. The following paired sample t-test table demonstrates the controlled group students' results:

Table 2: Controlled Group Paired Sample T-test

	Mean	N.	d.f.	T. Value	P. Value
Pre-test	34.125	20	38	-4.68	0.0001
Post-test	41.50	20			

The above table evidently demonstrates that the controlled group students' progress between the pre- and post-tests was significant (0.0001). In relation to the details of the control group progress, the table below breaks down each element's progress between the pre-test and post-test; it also illustrates the p. value for each element individually.

Table 3: Breakdown of each Criterion Progress in Controlled Group

Control Group Results	Writing Criteria (Elements)	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Progress Achieved in Points (out of 10)	p. value
	Thesis Statement	3.25	4.125	0.875	0.015
Introduction	3.875	5	1.125	0.009	
Supporting Evidence	3.5	4.625	1.125	0.001	
Counter Argument	3.75	4.875	1.125	0.001	
Structure and Organization	3.25	4.5	1.25	0.002	
Vocabulary and Lexical Diversity	3.125	3.5	0.375	0.08	
Language and Style	3.5	4.125	0.625	0.56	
Grammar and Mechanics	3.5	3.875	0.375	0.08	
Conclusion	3.125	3.5	0.375	0.08	
Overall Argument Effectiveness	3.25	3.375	0.125	0.33	
Total	34.125	41.5	7.375	0.0001	

4.3 Experimental Group Results

Another paired sample t-test has been utilized to show the experimental group students' progress between the pre- and post-tests. The results indicate a highly significant progress (0.0000001).

Table 4: Experimental Group Paired Sample T-test

	Mean	N.	d.f.	T. Value	P. Value
Pre-test	34.25	20	38	-8.125	0.0000001
Post-test	53.65	20			

Moreover, in order to understand each element's progress details, the table below is drawn, which breaks down the results of each element distinctly.

Table 5: Breakdown of each Criterion Progress in Experimental Group

Experimental Group Results	Writing Element	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Progress Achieved out of 10 Marks	P. Value
	Thesis Statement	3.75	5.25	1.5	0.05
	Introduction	3.75	6	2.25	0.02
	Supporting Evidence	3.75	5.25	1.5	0.03
	Counter Argument	3.125	5	1.875	0.007
	Structure and Organization	2.875	5	2.125	0.006
	Vocabulary and Lexical Diversity	3.125	4.75	1.625	0.33
	Language and Style	3.5	5.5	2	0.33
	Grammar and Mechanics	4	5.875	1.875	0.82
	Conclusion	3.375	5.625	2.250	0.2
	Overall Argument Effectiveness	3.5	5.375	1.875	0.05
Total	34.25	53.625	19.37	0.0000001	

Hence, after illustrating each group's progress individually, another independent sample t-test has been utilized to compare the progress of both groups (controlled and experimental).

Table 6: Both Groups' Post-Test Results in Independent Sample T-tests

	Group	N.	Mean	d.f.	T. Value	P-Value
Post-test results	Control	20	41.5	38	4.162	0.0001
	Experimental	20	53.625			

The results of the above Independent Sample T-test clearly demonstrate that the experimental group students outperformed their counterparts in the control group. The results show a significant difference in progress between the two groups in favour of the experimental group students (0.0000001). However, the controlled group students' progress was also significant (0.0001) as they were also taught for 15 weeks, but their progress was considerably less than that of the experimental group students. Thus, as the chart above shows, the control group students' mean score increased from 34.125% to 41.5% (7.375%), whereas the experimental group students' mean score increased from 34.25% to 53.625% (19.37%).

Furthermore, another independent sample t-test was run to compare the mean score increase of each element of the essay individually in both groups. The results indicated significant differences between the two groups and in all the elements in favour of the experimental group students. The table below may clarify this further.

Table 7: Mean Progress Difference in Independent Sample T-tests

Criteria	Mean Progress Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Thesis Statement	1.5	0.010
Introduction	2.25	0.000
Supporting Evidence	1.875	0.002
Counter Argument	1.875	0.002
Structure and Organization	2.125	0.000
Vocabulary and Lexical Diversity	1.625	0.003
Language and Style	2	0.007
Grammar and Mechanics	1.875	0.004
Conclusion	2.250	0.001
Overall Argument Effectiveness	1.875	0.002

To further clarify the overall results, the following pie chart is drawn:

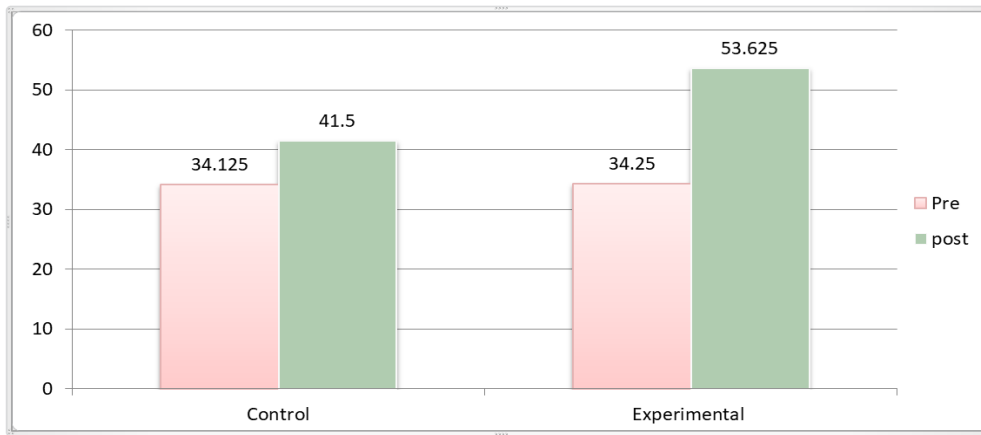


Figure 1: Both Groups’ Progress

4.4 Questionnaire Results

As mentioned in the methodology section, the questionnaire consisted of 15 Likert scale statements. Its major results are demonstrated here. Generally speaking, the majority of the participants agree that in the beginning of the journal writing process they did not like the journal writing, but now they enjoy it and are interested in it (statements 1, 2, 4, 6).

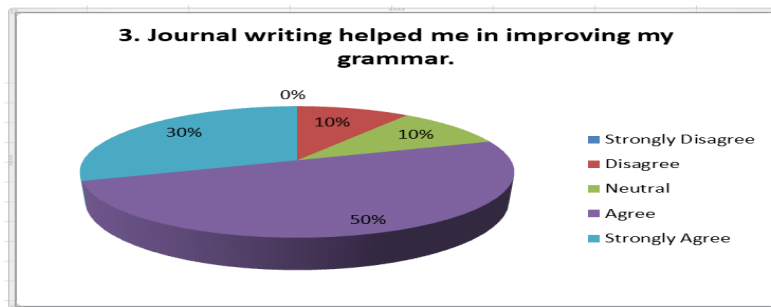


Figure 2. Journal Writing and Improving Grammar

Figure 2 shows the results of statement three, which take the participants’ perspectives on the role of journal writing in improving their grammar, clearly reveal that 16 students (80%) agreed or strongly agreed that journal writing was helpful in improving their grammar, and only 2 participants (10%) rejected it.

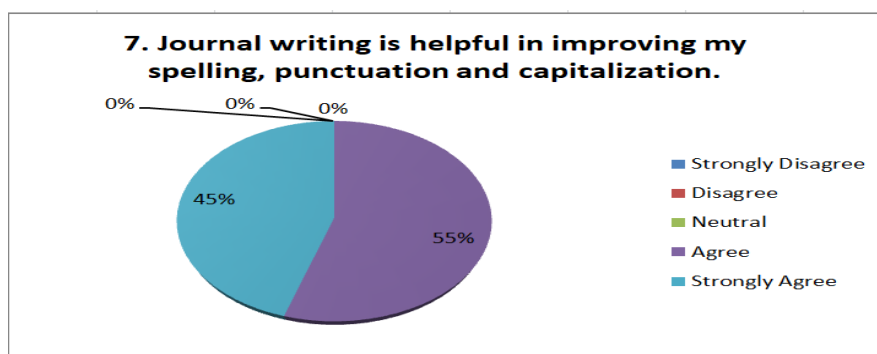


Figure 3. Journal Writing and Improving Writing Mechanics

Figure 3, in addition, illustrates the statement seven results demonstrate that all the participants (100%) agree or strongly agree that journal writing was helpful and effective in improving their mechanics, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

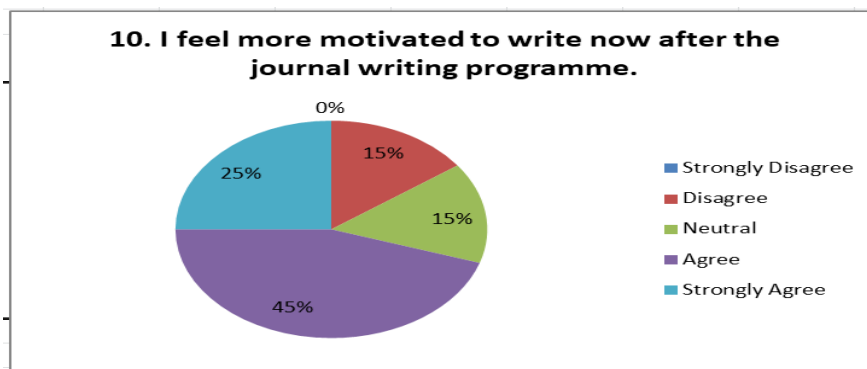


Figure 4. Journal Writing and Motivation

Regarding the impact of journal writing on students’ motivation to write, Figure 4 shows the results for statement 10 shows that 14 students (70%) agreed that journal writing increased their motivation to write.

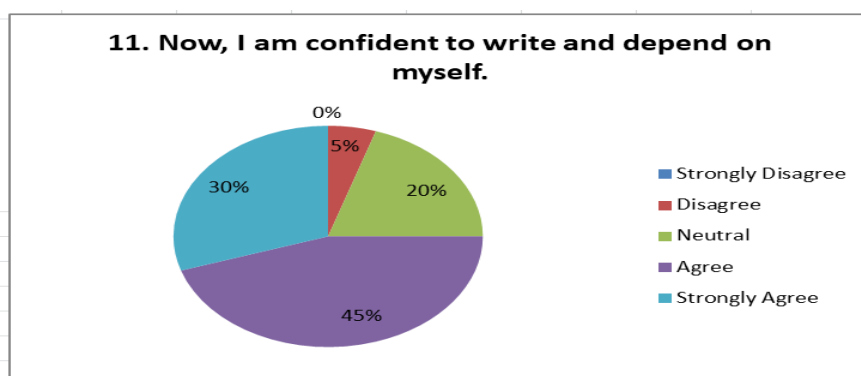


Figure 5. Journal Writing and Self-Confidence

Concerning the impact of journal writing on the students’ confidence to write, Figure 5 illustrates the results of statement 11 clearly reveal that three-fourths of the students (75%) agree that journal writing made them confident to write and depend on themselves.

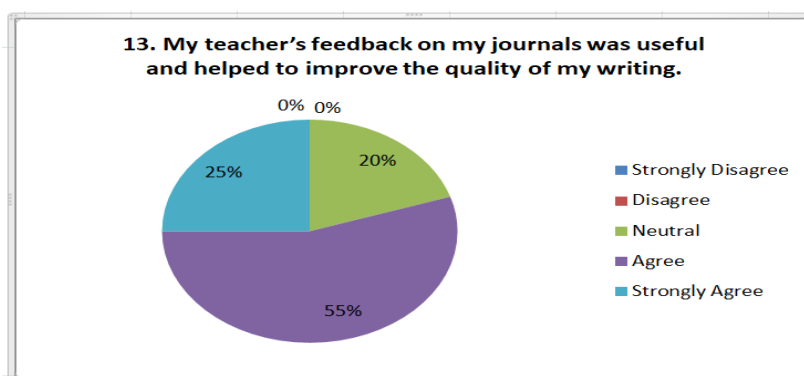


Figure 6. Significance of Teacher’s Feedback

In relation to the significance of teachers’ feedback on the journals written, statement 13 results illustrate that over three-fourths (80%) of the students believe that teachers’ feedback was helpful in improving the quality of writing. Besides, two students had neutral views, and no student rejected it.

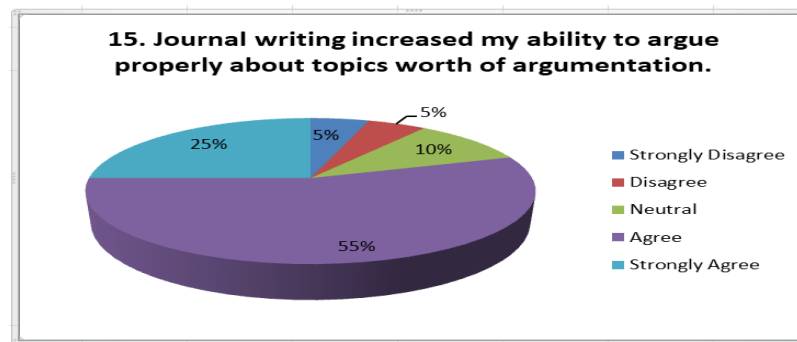


Figure 7. Journal Writing and Students' Argument Abilities

Finally, statements 14 and 15 are related to the impact of journal writing on enhancing students' abilities to argue properly and think deeply when they write argumentative essays. In this regard, 17 students (85%) showed agreement with the statement that journal writing made them think deeply about the argumentative topic, and this led them to argue properly in their essays. Moreover, statement 16 results revealed that over three-fourths (80%) of the students agree that journal writing enhanced their competence to argue adequately in their essays about argumentative topics.

5. Discussion

Statistical analyses of both groups' pre- and post-test results clearly demonstrate that both groups (controlled and experimental) made significant progress as a result of the 15-week academic writing module. The paired sample t-test (Table 2) demonstrates that the controlled group students progressed significantly (0.0001). However, the second paired sample t-test (Table 4) demonstrates that the experimental group students' progress was considerably more significant than the control group students (0.0000001).

Additionally, in relation to breaking down the results over the 10 rubric elements and the difference made by both groups in each element by the end of the semester, the results evidently illustrate that the experimental group students did noticeably better in all 10 criteria used for scoring the essays' written. For example, the controlled group students' progress in the elements of *thesis statement*, *counterargument*, *vocabulary and lexical diversity*, *grammar and mechanics*, and *overall argument effectiveness* were 0.875, 1.125, 0.375, 0.375, and 0.125 marks out of 10 marks each, respectively. On the other hand, the experimental group students' progress in the same elements of the essay were 1.5, 1.875, 1.625, 1.875, and 1.875, respectively (see tables 3 and 5). Hence, it is very evident that the experimental group students' progress was remarkably more significant compared to the control group students' progress.

Several previous studies and existing literature confirm that journal writing is of paramount importance and has an effective impact on enhancing EFL students' overall essay writing abilities. The current study's results are in congruence with Safitri (2001), Marefat (2002), Huang (2010), Tuan (2010), Dabbagh (2017), Tahseldar (2018), and many others. In line with this, Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (2006) believe that providing students with opportunities to write freely about topics of their interest will make students good writers. Moreover, the current study yielded similar results to Sudirman et al.'s (2021) study that journal writing enhanced their students' coherence, cohesion, order, unity, and organization. Likewise, Tuan's study (2010) in Vietnam resulted in the progress of the students in terms of writing fluency and accuracy.

Additionally, the current study's results are in agreement with Dabbagh (2017), the experimental group students' scores had progressed more than those of the control group students. However, contrary to the current study's results, Dabbagh's experimental group students did not develop significantly in mechanical errors. Conversely, the current study's results (Table 5) demonstrate that the students' progress in mechanics and grammar was significant ($p = 0.082$). In support of this, the questionnaire statement seven results (Figure 3) demonstrate that 75% of the questionnaire participants agree that journal writing was very effective in enhancing students' abilities in relation

to mechanical errors. In terms of grammar, the current study's results demonstrate that the experimental group students' progress in grammar, compared with their counterparts in the control group, was significant (p value 0.004). In line with this, statement 3 results (Figure 2) demonstrate that 80% of the experimental group students agree that journal writing was very effective in improving their grammar. This is in line with several previous studies (Hillocks, 1986; Hashemi and Amerian, 2011; Hidayat, 2011) that journal writing increases students' grammar. Nonetheless, a few other studies' results (Fitriana, 2009; Barjesteh et al., 2011) show that students' grammar did not progress in their studies as a result of implementing journal writing. Thus, different results are obtained in regard to the impact of journal writing on students' grammar.

Furthermore, the current study's results significantly enhanced students' abilities in relation to their ability to argue and counter-argue properly in their essays. In the rubric used for scoring the essays, 30% was devoted to three essay elements: supporting evidence, counterargument, and overall argument effectiveness (criteria 3, 4, and 10 of the essay). The students demonstrated significant progress in all three elements, with improvements of 0.03, 0.007, and 0.05, respectively. This remarkable progress in students' abilities clearly confirms that the experimental group students' abilities to argue, counter-argue, and support their arguments with evidence in essay writing developed significantly compared to their mean score in the pre-tests. This result agrees with Chabeli (2001) and Rolfe et al. (2001) that journal writing is in great connection with a student-centred approach in a way that it increases students' critical reflective thinking, which consequently helps in making students self-confident. The questionnaire results further confirm the impact of journal writing on enhancing students' abilities to argue and support their claims with evidence. In this regard, statement 15 results (Figure 7) obviously demonstrate that 80% of the participants agree that journal writing increased their abilities to argue properly about argumentative topics. Hence, one significant finding of the current study is that journal writing is highly effective in improving EFL students' abilities to argue properly and support their arguments with evidence.

Additionally, concerning the students' attitudes towards journal writing, the current study's results (statement 6) demonstrate that 70% of the students have positive views about journal writing and enjoy it. This result is in congruence with several scholars' results that their students had a positive perception about journal writing effectiveness on their writing performance (Marefat, 2002; Hapsari et al., 2018; Tahseldar, 2018; Yulianawati et al., 2019).

Regarding the role of journal writing in enhancing students' motivation to write properly, statement 10 results (Figure 4) of the questionnaire distinctly demonstrate that 70% of the experimental group students agree that, after the implementation of journal writing, they feel more motivated to write. This result is in line with Tuan (2010) and Hashemi and Amerian (2011) that journal writing improves students' motivation to write successfully.

Concerning the impact of journal writing on students' confidence and self-reliance, statement 11 results (Figure 5) of the questionnaire clearly illustrate that after the journal writing implementation, the students feel more confident to write, and they depend on themselves while writing. This result is in agreement with a few previous studies (Huang, 2010; Barjesteh, 2011; Hashemi and Amerian, 2011) that journal writing increases students' self-dependence. Additionally, it is also compatible with Tahseldar (2018), who suggests that journal writing leads students to write independently and become independent writers.

Another important finding of the current study is related to the impact of teachers' feedback on students' journal writing. In this regard, statement 13 of the questionnaire results (Figure 6) demonstrates that 80% of the students agree that the teacher's feedback was effective in enhancing the students' quality of writing. This result contradicts the views of several scholars and researchers who define journal writing as a writing activity that is not evaluated by the teacher and consequently no feedback is given to the students (Richards, 1992; Porter et al., 1996; Johnson, 2002; Curtis and Bailey, 2009; Zittoun and Gillespie, 2011; Barjesteh et al., 2011). Contrarily, the current study recommends that while implementing journal writing, the teachers should evaluate the students' journals and give their feedback on the papers, and return them to the students to improve their writing performance.

In contrast to the majority of the previous studies, including the current one, Faqeeh's study (2014) did not find significant differences in achievement between experimental and control group students. Both groups progressed similarly. In conclusion, it can be stated that the current study's results are in congruence with the vast majority of the previous studies and existing literature that journal writing is of paramount importance in enhancing students' writing performance in general, and specifically argumentative writing performance.

6. Conclusion

As the results of the pre- and post-tests and the questionnaire clearly demonstrate, the journal writing technique was a very effective technique to enhance the participants' writing skill performance. The experimental group students who underwent the journal writing implementation outperformed their counterparts in the control group. Hence, the results answer the three research questions raised in the introduction. Firstly, the journal writing technique had a crucial impact on the experimental group students in a way that they significantly improved their argumentative writing skill performance. Secondly, the journal writing technique improved the students' motivation towards the writing skill. And thirdly, the journal writing technique also improved the students' confidence in their writing abilities. Thus, the three research questions that were raised in the introduction of the current study are answered one by one.

Limitations of the Research

The current study has a number of limitations. Firstly, the sample size of the study (40 students) is relatively small. Hence, this relatively small number of participants may not be a true representation of a larger population. Moreover, since the data is collected in only one institution (Charmo University), this may limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the participants were from the same age group, which may limit its generalizability over other age groups.

Pedagogical Implication

Due to the positive impact of journal writing implementation on enhancing Kurdish EF students' writing performance, including argumentative writing, the current study has a number of pedagogical implications. Firstly, the study suggests integrating regular journal writing in EFL classrooms by teachers. Moreover, curriculum designers at the university level may consider incorporating journal writing in the syllabi of English departments of Kurdistan universities. Furthermore, the study recommends that English department students practice journal writing regularly since it increases their writing accuracy and fluency; it also fosters students' autonomy in writing, which is in addition to reducing their anxiety.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Dear participants,

The current paper, entitled "Exploring the impact of journal writing on enhancing Kurdish EFL students' argumentative writing skill performance" is a study that attempts to reveal the impact of journal writing technique on developing the argumentative writing skill abilities of Kurdish EFL students. Please kindly read the following statements and tick the option that you agree with.

The result of this questionnaire will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only.

A- Demographic Information:

- 1- Age Group: a- 19-21, b- 22-24, c- 25+
- 2- Gender: a- male, b- female

B- Read the following statements and tick the option that you agree with:

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Before the journal writing programme, I was not interested in writing much.					
2	In the beginning, I did not like writing journals.					
3	Journal writing helped me in improving my grammar.					
4	Now I am interested in writing more than before.					
5	After journal writing implementation, I will continue writing journals regularly.					
6	I enjoy writing my journals now.					
7	Journal writing is helpful in improving my spelling, punctuation and capitalization.					
8	Journal writing helped me in applying the writing process stages better such as pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing and publishing.					
9	Now I can use linking words (connectors) properly and better than before.					
10	I feel more motivated to write now after the journal writing programme.					
11	Now, I am confident to write and depend on myself.					
12	Journal writing increased my interaction with my teacher.					
13	My teacher's feedback on my journals was useful and helped to improve the quality of my writing.					
14	Journal writing helped me think deeply about the topics, have good ideas and consequently argue better.					
15	Journal writing increased my ability to argue properly about topics worth of argumentation.					

Thank You

Appendix 2: Test Scoring Rubric

Excellent (4 points),

Good (3 points),

Fair (2 points),

Needs Improvement (1 point)

Note: *The rubric assesses the students' answers out of 40 marks. Then the result gained by the students, each element separately, is multiplied by 2.5 to make it out of 100 marks.*

Thesis Statement

4. A clear, short, and well-defined thesis that makes a strong case.
3. A clear thesis that makes the main point but may not be very specific.
2. The thesis is somewhat clear, but it might not be clear or fully developed.
1. Thesis is unclear, missing, or doesn't make a clear case.

Introduction

4. An interesting introduction that does a good job of introducing the topic and argument.
3. The introduction gives some background information and sets the stage for the topic.
2. The introduction is basic and doesn't grab the reader's attention or make things clear.
1. The introduction is missing or not enough.

Supporting Evidence

4. Gives strong, relevant, and convincing proof for all points.
3. Gives enough proof; most of it is relevant and convincing.
2. The evidence isn't very strong, is only somewhat relevant, or is less convincing.
1. There isn't much evidence to back up the claims; the arguments are weak.

Counterarguments

4. Effectively addresses and refutes opposing views.
3. Answers some counterarguments with a reasonable response.
2. Brings up counterarguments but doesn't do a good job of refuting them.
1. Does not respond to counterarguments or does so without giving a reason.

Structure and Organization

4. Ideas are well-organized, with clear paragraphs and transitions.
3. The whole thing is organized, with some logical flow and transitions.
2. Some structure; ideas may not fit together or flow well.
1. Not organized well, hard to follow, or doesn't have a clear structure.

Vocabulary /Lexical diversity

4. Using varied and sophisticated vocabulary in appropriate places
3. Using varied and sophisticated vocabulary but not in appropriate places
2. Using repetitive words.
1. In appropriate vocabulary, vague and misuse of words..

Language & Style

4. Uses clear, correct, and formal language with a variety of sentence structures.
3. The language is clear, and the sentences are structured in different ways.
2. Language can be unclear or too casual at times.
1. Language is unclear, informal, or inappropriate.

Grammar and Mechanics

4. There are no spelling, grammar, or punctuation mistakes.
3. There are a few small mistakes that don't make it hard to understand.
2. A number of mistakes that make it hard to read or focus.
1. Errors that happen a lot and make it hard to understand.

Conclusion

4. Effectively sums up the main points and strengthens the thesis.
3. Summarizes the main points; the thesis is restated.
2. The conclusion is weak or repeats itself a lot.
1. Not there or doesn't sum up or support the argument.

Overall Argument Effectiveness

4. A strong, well-developed, and convincing argument.
3. An argument that is convincing and makes sense.
2. An argument that is somewhat convincing but not well-developed or clear.
1. Argument that isn't convincing or well thought out.

ليكوليتيه وه له كاريگهري نووسيني ژورنال له سهر بهر وپيشبردني تواناي نووسيني مشتومر ئاميزي خويندكاراني كورد كه زماني ئينگليزي وهكو زمانكي بيگانه دهخوينن

الماس نصرالدين عبدالرحمان

بهشي ئينگليزي، كوليحي پهروهرد، زانكوي چهرموو
چهمچهمال، سلیماني، عيراق
almas.nasradeen@chu.edu.iq

چالاک علی محمداين

بهشي ئينگليزي، كوليحي پهروهرد، زانكوي چهرموو
چهمچهمال، سلیماني، عيراق
chalah.ali@chu.edu.iq

پوخته

بهره وپيشبردني كارامه يي نووسين ههميشه ئالنگاري بووه بو ئه و خويندكارانه يي كه زماني ئينگليزي وهكو زمانكي بيگانه دهخوينن. ماموستاياني زماني ئينگليزي و پهروهردكاران تهكنيكي جياوازيان بهكارهيتاوه به مبهستي بهره وپيشبردني كارامه يي نووسيني خويندكاران كه يهك له و تهكنيكانه نووسيني ژورنال (نووسيني رژهانه). ئه م تويزينه وهيه ليكوليتيه وهيه كوازي تافيكاريه كه له كاريگهري نووسيني ژورنال دهكوليتيه وه له سهر بهر وپيشبردني تواناي خويندكاراني كورد كه زماني ئينگليزي وهكو زمانكي بيگانه دهخوينن له نووسيني وتاري مشتومر ئاميزدا. بهشداربوواني ئه م تويزينه وهيه پيكهاتون له (40) خويندكاري قوناغي دووي بهشي ئينگليزي زانكوي چهرموو كه دابهشكارون به سهر دوو گروهدا، گروهبي ئاسايي و گروهبي تافيكاري. دوو ئامرازي كورده وهيه زانباري بهكارهاتون كه ئه وانيش تافيكورده وهيه پيشهكي و پاشهكي و راپرسيه. ئه نجامي تافيكورده وهكان شيكاري بو كراوه له ريگه يي (SPSS) وه. ئه نجامه كان جياوازي بهرچاو نيشانده دن له بهر ژوهندي گروهبي تافيكاري. جگه له مهش، ئه نجامي راپرسيه كهش به رووني نيشانده دات كه خويندكاران بوچووني ئه رينيان ههيه له سهر كاريگهري ژورنال له بهره وپيشبردني تواناي نووسينيان به شيويهكي گشتي، ههروهها بهره وپيشبردني تواناي مشتومر كردن (ئارگيومينت) و مشتومر كردني پيچه وانه. سه رهراي ئه مانهش، خويندكاران بوچووني وايه كه نووسيني ژورنال به شيويهكي كاريگه ر دهبيته هوي زيادبووني هاندان و بروابه خو بووني له نووسيندا.

وشه سه رهكيه كان: نووسيني ژورنال، وتاري مشتومر ئاميز، مشتومر پيچه وانه، هاندان، بروابه خو بوون، خويندكاراني كورد كه زماني ئينگليزي وهكو زمانكي بيگانه دهخوينن.

استكشاف تأثير الكتابة اليومية على تحسين أداء كتابة المقالات الحجاجية لطلاب الكورد الدارسين اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية

الماس نصرالدين عبدالرحمان

قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية، جامعة جرمو
جمجمال، السليمانية، العراق
almas.nasradeen@chu.edu.iq

چالاک علی محمداين

قسم اللغة الانكليزية، كلية التربية، جامعة جرمو
جمجمال، السليمانية، العراق
chalah.ali@chu.edu.iq

المخلص

كان ولايزال تطوير مهارة الكتابة يشكل تحديًا لطلبة اللغة الانكليزية غير الناطقين بها في دول واماكن مختلفة. وبهدف مساعدة الطلبة على تحسين مهارتهم في الكتابة بشكل صحيح، فقد تم استخدام تقنيات متعددة من قبل معلمي اللغة الانكليزية لغير الناطقين بها، ومن هذه التقنيات كتابة اليوميات. وهذه التقنية هي محور الدراسة الحالية اذ هي دراسة شبه تجريبية تسبر غور تأثير كتابة اليوميات على تعزيز أداء مهارة الكتابة الجدلية لدى الطلبة الكورد الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية. اشترك في الدراسة 40 طالبًا كورديًا من المرحلة الثانية في قسم اللغة الانكليزية بجامعة جرمو في مدينة جمجمال - السليمانية. وقد تم تقسيم العينة إلى مجموعتين: مجموعة ضابطة وأخرى تجريبية. وجمعت البيانات باستخدام أداتين وهما الاختبارات (قبلية وبعدي) والاستبيان. ومن ثم جرى تحليل نتائج الاختبارات باستخدام برنامج SPSS (الإصدار 26). كشفت نتائج الاختبارات عن وجود فرق كبير بين تقدم كلا المجموعتين لصالح طلاب المجموعة التجريبية (قيمة p = 0.0000001)، وكذلك أظهرت نتائج الاستبيان أن لدى طلاب المجموعة التجريبية آراء إيجابية حول تأثير كتابة اليوميات على تحسين أدائهم العام في كتابة المقالات وتعزيز أدائهم في كتابة الحجج والردود بشكل خاص. بالإضافة إلى اعتقادهم أن كتابة اليوميات قد عزز من تحفيزهم وتقنيتهم بأنفسهم في الكتابة بكفاءة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: كتابة المقالات، المقالة الجدلية، دحض الحجة، الدافعية، الثقة، الطلبة الكورد الدارسين اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية.