

Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Duhok
College of Languages/Department of English



**Evaluating Grammatical Competence in Kurdish EFL Junior
Students' Writings at the English Department, College of
Languages, University of Duhok**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL OF THE COLLEGE OF
HUMANITIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN TESOL

By

Hajin Ghazi Mohammed

Supervised by

Assist. Prof. Dr. Mohammed Salih A. Sulaiman

٢٧١٩ K.

٢٠١٩ A.D.

١٤٤٠ A.H.

I certify that this thesis was prepared under my supervision at the University of Dohuk as a partial requirement for the degree of Master in TESOL.

Signature:

Supervisor:

Date: / / ٢٠١٩

In view of the available recommendations made, I forward this thesis for debate by the examination committee.

Signature:

Name:

Date: / / ٢٠١٩

We, as an examining committee, certify that we have read this thesis, examined the student in its contents and that, in our opinion, it is adequate as a thesis for the degree of Master in TESOL.

Signature:

Name:

Member (Chairman):

Signature:

Name:

Member:

Signature:

Name:

Member:

Signature:

Name:

Member & Supervisor:

Approved by the Council of the College of Humanities

Signature:

Name:

Dean of the College

Date: / / 2019

Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation to...

My dear parents,

who have been lifting me up and encouraging me my entire life.

My wonderful husband,

for his endless love and support.

My beloved brothers and sisters,

*who supported me and always believed in me and what I could
achieve.*

Finally, this work is dedicated to

my loving friends,

for their help, motivation, and unconditional love.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the contribution which my supervisor, Dr. Mohammed Salih A. Sulaiman, made to this dissertation. His expertise in grammar and thesis writing, along with his unlimited advice, helped make this thesis what it is. I want to thank him for his guidance and support throughout the entire process of research and writing.

I would like to also thank Dr. Hallat Rajab for her classes in research methodology and all the material she provided me with, which were a big help in both the research part and the writing part of this dissertation.

I am incredibly thankful to my uncle, Dr. Nawzad S. Ahmed, for his contribution to the data analysis. Had it not been for him teaching me how to use the SPSS software, I would not have managed to learn on my own.

Finally, but most importantly, I want to state my gratitude towards my parents, husband, brothers, sisters, and friends for their endless love and support and being patient with me during this period of my studies. A special thanks to my wonderful husband, who not only encouraged and pushed me throughout the entire dissertation, but who also helped me in testing the students and collecting and analyzing data for my research.

Abstract

Writing is as important to master as other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. However, this is the skill with which most students have the biggest problem. This issue could be the fault of the teaching methods or techniques applied by teachers, the materials used in classrooms, or it could just be the fault of the students themselves. This research aims at evaluating the grammatical competence in Kurdish EFL students' writings after a three-year education. It also aims to point out those areas of grammar that need more focus to help students improve in writing and determine which teaching techniques are most suitable for helping students in developing their writing skills. Another aim of this study is to help teachers follow suitable techniques in teaching, and choose appropriate materials for their classroom instruction. To achieve these goals, this study has conducted an experiment by first evaluating students' grammatical competence using a test, and then evaluating their ability to apply grammar in their written essays. Ninety-three students from the English Department at Duhok University participated in this study. The researcher had hypothesized, before experimenting, that because of the teaching techniques used by teachers, in the English Department at College of Languages, the emphasis is more on learning grammar rules than being competent in using these rules in writing. Also, the researcher believed that students avoid applying complex grammatical structures in their writings so as not to make grammatical errors. The results of this study indicated that the students had struggled most with prepositions in the grammar exam and had the least trouble with pronouns. However, regarding the essay test, the majority of students made errors concerning articles, and the least number of errors were made regarding coordinators.

Table of Contents

Pages

Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Abbreviation.....	x

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1.1 Research Problem.....	1
1.1.2 Research Aims.....	2
1.1.3 Research Hypotheses.....	3
1.1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.1.5 The Scope of the Study.....	4
1.1.6 Procedures.....	5
1.1.7 The significance of the Study.....	5
1.1.8 Definitions of Basic Terms.....	6
1.1.9 The Structure of the Study.....	6

Chapter Two: Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction.....	8
-----------------------	---

۲.۱ Writing Skills.....	۸
۲.۱.۱ The Significance of Writing Skills.....	۱۰
۲.۲ Grammar.....	۱۱
۲.۲.۱ The Significance of Grammar in Developing Writing Skills.....	۱۳
۲.۳ Grammatical Competence and Grammatical Performance.....	۱۶
۲.۴ Approaches to the Teaching of Writing.....	۱۸
۲.۴.۱ The Product Approach.....	۲۰
۲.۴.۲ The Process Approach.....	۲۱
۲.۴.۳ The Genre Approach.....	۲۳
۲.۴.۴ The Process-Genre Approach.....	۲۴
۲.۴.۵ The Controlled-to-Free Approach.....	۲۵
۲.۴.۶ The Free Writing Approach.....	۲۶
۲.۵ Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar.....	۲۸
۲.۵.۱ Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Grammar.....	۳۱
۲.۵.۲ Focus on Forms and Focus on Form.....	۳۳
۲.۵.۳ Focus on Meaning.....	۳۶
۲.۶ Literature Review.....	۳۷

Chapter Three: Methodology and Analysis

۳.۱ Introduction.....	۵۷
۳.۱.۱ Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches.....	۵۸

3.1.2 Importance of Tests.....	59
3.2 Instruments.....	60
3.3 Participants.....	61
3.4 Data Collection	62
3.5 Procedures.....	62
3.6 Data Analysis.....	65

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction.....	67
4.1 Results and Discussion.....	68

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusion, Pedagogical Implications, Limitations and Suggestions Further Research

5.0 Introduction.....	89
5.1 Findings.....	89
5.2 Conclusion.....	90
5.3 Pedagogical Implications.....	97
5.4 Limitations.....	102
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research	102
References.....	104
Appendices.....	118

List of Tables

Page

<i>Table 1</i> Question 1 (Tenses) in Grammar Written Test.....	68
<i>Table 2</i> Student's Written Essays.....	69
<i>Table 3</i> Student's Written Essays (Tenses).....	69
<i>Table 4</i> Question 2 (Pronouns) in Grammar Written Test.....	71
<i>Table 5</i> Student's Written Essays (Pronouns).....	71
<i>Table 6</i> Question 3 (Prepositions) in Grammar Written Test.....	72
<i>Table 7</i> Student's Written Essays (Prepositions).....	73
<i>Table 8</i> Question 4 (Coordinators) in Grammar Written Test.....	74
<i>Table 9</i> Student's Written Essays (Coordinators).....	74
<i>Table 10</i> Question 5 (Concord) in Grammar Written Test.....	75
<i>Table 11</i> Student's Written Essays (Concord).....	75
<i>Table 12</i> Question 6 (Degrees of Adjectives) in Grammar Written Test.....	77
<i>Table 13</i> Student's Written Essays (Degrees of Adjectives).....	77
<i>Table 14</i> Question 7 (Quantifiers) in Grammar Written Test.....	78
<i>Table 15</i> Student's Written Essays (Quantifiers).....	79
<i>Table 16</i> Question 8 (Gerund/ To-Infinitive) in Grammar Written Test.....	80
<i>Table 17</i> Student's Written Essays (Gerund/ To-Infinitive).....	80
<i>Table 18</i> Question 9 (Articles) in Grammar Written Test.....	82

<i>Table ١٩</i> Student's Written Essays (Articles).....	٨٢
<i>Table ٢٠</i> Question ١٠ (Modals) in Grammar Written Test.....	٨٣
<i>Table ٢١</i> Student's Written Essays (Modals).....	٨٤
<i>Table ٢٢</i> Student's Written Essays (Singular/Plural).....	٨٥
<i>Table ٢٣</i> Student's Written Essays (Auxiliaries).....	٨٥
<i>Table ٢٤</i> Student's Written Essays (Word Order).....	٨٥
<i>Table ٢٥</i> Difference between the Results of the Grammar Test and the Essay Test.....	٨٧

List of Figures

Page

Figure ١: Approaches to the Teaching of Writing.....	١٩
Figure ٢: Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar.....	٣٠

List of Abbreviations

ALM = Audio-Lingual Method

B = Blank

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

Cltv. N. = Collective Noun

Cmpd. N. = Compound Noun

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELL = English Language Learner

ELT = English Language Teaching

EPPI = Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating

ESL = English as a Second Language

FoF = Focus on Form

FoFs = Focus on Forms

FoM = Focus on Meaning

F.P.C. = Future Perfect Continuous

GTM = Grammar-Translation Method

Indf. Prn. = Indefinite Pronoun

L¹ = First Language

L² = Second Language

M = Mean

N = Number of Students

N/A = Not Available

P.P.C. = Present Perfect Continuous

Pres. Perf. = Present Perfect

Pst. Perf. = Past Perfect

S. Future = Simple Future

S. Pres. = Simple Present

SPSS = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

S. Pst. = Simple Past

St. D. = Standard Deviation

Sum = Sum of Students with Correct Answers

TESOL = Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

It is believed that writing is one of the main pillars of language learning. Therefore, writing should be of major concern and interest to teachers, students, and researchers. All languages have grammar, and people who speak the same language can communicate because they instinctively know the grammar system of that language (Hajana, ٢٠٠٦: p.١٦). According to Hinkel (٢٠١٣, p.٣), different second language skills and language features have different levels of importance in academic writing. In ESL (English as a Second Language) education, the study of recognizing simple and complex grammatical constructions and vocabulary has been encouraged by the goal of aiding students to improve and develop the quality of their production and writing in a second language.

1.1 Research Problem

Knowing a language means knowing that language in terms of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. If students do not have enough knowledge about English grammar, they cannot convey their ideas clearly because they lack the grammatical competence which is necessary for the development of their writing skill. Hajana (٢٠٠٦: p.٣) states that writing skill is considered as a problematic area for learners of ESL in general and university students in particular.

According to Wang and Wang (٢٠١٤: p.٦٥), composition accuracy at the sentential level, also known as sentence grammar, is one of the hardest areas to address in required English classes in college for both students and teachers. Widodo (٢٠٠٦: p.١٢٤) believes that although students may become good at grammar, they usually make grammatical errors when told to write and speak, and this case is tough to resolve. Many students at the English Department in the College of Languages at the University of Duhok face the same problem. They are unable to use the correct tense, to use the right article, or even link ideas together (which is known as cohesion and coherence). In evaluating grammatical competence in Kurdish EFL students' writings, teachers can understand where students stand in terms of their grammatical competence. Once teachers evaluate their students' ability to write in English, they could decide on which teaching techniques they should follow in helping develop their students' grammatical competence or focus on integrating specific topics of grammar in their teaching methods in writing.

١.٢ Research Aims

This study aims at:

- ١- Suggesting different teaching techniques for developing students' grammatical competence in writing by evaluating Kurdish EFL students' level of grammatical competence in writing.
- ٢- Determining what areas of grammar need more focus so as to help students develop their writing skills regarding the students who participated in the experiment. An ESL/EFL teacher's main goal is to

develop their students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- ϣ- Helping the teachers at the mentioned college see how much of the language their students have grasped, what areas in grammar they excel in, and in what areas they need improvement in order to help them develop in writing. With this perception of students' grammatical competence, these teachers can change or develop their teaching techniques, should they need to.
- Ϙ- Aiding teachers in creating a syllabus which is beneficial to their students as well as helps them choose the appropriate materials and resources in their curriculum.
- ο- Helping make the students aware of their grammatical weaknesses in writing so that maybe they could choose the most suitable learning strategies for themselves in their learning process.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The teaching techniques used by a teacher is one of the factors which influence the performance of the students, and therefore, a teacher must be careful in selecting the techniques they wish to follow. The researcher hypothesizes that:

- ١- With the teaching techniques used in the English Department at the College of Languages, the focus is more on learning grammar rules than being competent in applying those rules in writing.
- ٢- Also, the researcher believes that students avoid using complex grammatical constructions in their writings for fear of making grammatical errors. Therefore, students cannot develop the ability to write well-formed pieces of writings in English.

١.٤ Research Questions

- ١- Is there any correlation between the students' grammatical competence and writing quality?
- ٢- What are the probable reasons behind the students' grammar and writing incompetence?

١.٥ The Scope of the Study

This research is a quantitative one, and it evaluates the grammatical competence of college juniors by first having them take a test which assesses their grammatical competence in writing and then collecting a written essay from each student. Spelling and punctuation have not been taken into account for this study. This is because this study has focused only on syntactic constructions related to tenses, pronouns, prepositions, coordinators, concord, comparative and superlative forms, quantifiers, gerund and infinitives, articles, modals, and other syntactic errors which have been found in the students'

essays, such as auxiliaries, word order, and incorrect application of singular and plural forms. This study has focused on all ninety-three juniors that study at the English Department at the College of Languages at Duhok University.

1.6 Procedures

For these hypotheses to be viewed as valid or invalid, an experiment has been conducted by first testing students' grammatical competence and then collecting essays written by college juniors from the English Department to check their grammatical performance in writing after three years of college instruction. From the results provided, teachers can decide with which teaching techniques they wish to proceed. If the hypotheses as mentioned above are proven to be correct, then the techniques for teaching, used in the English Department at the College of Languages, should probably change or improve.

1.7 The Significance of the Study

The researcher has suggested some teaching techniques for teachers to follow in the future. This research also aids teachers in creating a syllabus which can help improve their students' English writing skills as well as helps them choose and adopt appropriate materials and resources in their classrooms. After teachers evaluate their students' competence in writing in English, they could choose whether or not they should use different techniques in the teaching of writing skills. This study can help in the overall improvement in language learning as it evaluates students' errors and looks for ways to get rid of or, at the very least, diminish those errors. Observing the results of this research, teachers can review their teaching techniques which

may lead them to improve these techniques, more specifically, their teaching of English grammar and writing skills. This thesis would be of benefit to teachers, students, and course designers. The reason this research can benefit students as well as teachers is because the improvement of teaching on the part of the teacher can result in the improvement of learning on the part of the students. Because, as Adas and Bakir (٢٠١٣: p.٢٥٤) suggest, if a teacher continues to teach using the traditional method, the classroom activities become passive and dull, and therefore, the teacher should try different methods other than the traditional teaching methods and make the students better achievers.

١.٨ Definitions of Basic Terms

According to Hajana (٢٠٠٦: p.٦), writing is one of the ways to communicate with people, and it is closely related to reading. Therefore, weakness in reading will naturally lead to a similar weakness in writing and, at the same time, perfect reading leads to similar perfect writing. Grammar is the structure, sound, and meaning system of language (ibid). Yule (٢٠١٠: p.٨١) defines grammar as the process of illustrating the construction of phrases and sentences in a manner which all the grammatical series in a language are accounted for, and all the ungrammatical series are ruled out. According to Yule (٢٠١٠: p.١٩٤), grammatical competence involves the correct use of words and structures. Tanaka (n.d. p.٥١) believes that grammatical competence is undoubtedly the most important part of communicative competence.

١.٩ The Structure of the Study

This study is made up of five chapters. Chapter One consists of the research problem, research aims, research hypotheses, the scope of the study, procedures, the significance of the study, and definitions of basic terms. Chapter Two offers a theoretical background on writing, grammar, and some approaches to teaching writing and grammar. It also provides a literature review of studies related to this one. Chapter Three explains the methodology adopted in this study as well as data collection process. In Chapter Four, the results of the study are discussed. Finally, Chapter Five sums up the thesis with conclusions taken from the results, some pedagogical implications derived from the results of the tests, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an outline of the theoretical background of this study. This study will begin by examining the definitions of the main concepts related to the study. After that, some previous works which are related to this one will be reviewed in order to get a better understanding of this study.

2.1 Writing Skills

Knowledge about grammar helps in the development of speaking and writing. Many students are incapable of writing a meaningful piece of writing or conveying their message, whether in writing or orally because they lack grammatical competence even after years of training. Myles (2002: para.1) states that writing is not a skill which one is born with; it is learned and must be practiced through experience. According to Myles (2002: para.1), writing involves the ability to tell and retell information or put information into writing. Writing in a second or foreign language is difficult because, in addition to having writing skills, students must also be knowledgeable in the second/ foreign language and be able to analyze data and compose ideas and thoughts before putting them in writing (ibid).

According to Coulmas (2003: p.1), writing has at least six different meanings: (1) a system of language which is recorded by means of visible or

concrete marks; (ϣ) the action in which such a system is put to use; (ϛ) the outcome of such action which is known as a text; (Ϛ) the specific form of such an outcome which is a script style like block letter writing; (∘) creative composition; (ϛ) a professional career. According to Bennui (ϣ∘∘∘: p.ϣϣ), in helping ESL/EFL students write a productive paragraph, many teachers point out students' syntactical, lexical and discourse errors; yet, they overlook the role of the students' native language and culture in causing problems and interfering in their English writings. Yule (ϣ∘∘∘: p.ϣϣϣ) defines writing as the symbolic illustration of language by using graphic signs. It is a system which is not acquired but must be learned through conscious effort (ibid).

According to Adas and Bakir (ϣ∘∘ϣ: p.ϣ∘Ϛ), writing is a complex task and it is the most challenging skill, of all the language skills, to acquire. Dombey (ϣ∘∘ϣ: p.ϣϣ) states that writing is important and that it is a harder and more demanding process than reading, making it more challenging to learn. Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (ϣ∘∘ϣ: p.ϣϣϣ) mention that writing involves communicating a message by producing signs on a page, and in order to write, one needs something to communicate and a person to communicate to. What is also needed is the competence to form letters and words to make sentences which are linked together for our message to be communicated clearly (ibid). However, according to Dumbey (ϣ∘∘ϣ: p.ϣϣ), writing is not only about having spoken language put down on a paper or screen, but it is also about composition – construction of texts as well which can communicate without their authors being present. It can be concluded that mostly all of the previously mentioned researchers agree that writing is a complex task that must be learned. With continuous practice, students can gain the ability to

write competently. The researchers also agree that writing is a means of communication between the author and the reader.

2.1.1 The Significance of Writing Skills

It is argued that of all the language skills, the most challenging for language teachers is writing because students do not have much experience with written expression. Ariana (2010, p.134) states that because students are stimulated by audio-visual materials all through their lives, they are beginners when it comes to writing. Ariana's (2010) paper is written as a plea for writing and investigated issues regarding the teaching and evaluation of writing skills of students who are nonnative speakers. The teacher's expectations of the writing quality of nonnative speakers as well as their performance in writing proficiency exams were examined. In that paper, Ariana (2010) tries to shed light on this skill which has been neglected despite the fact that it is important in the acquisition of a foreign language. She believes that when writing is continuously taught in a foreign language acquisition class from the first day, it will help ensure students' success. According to Ariana (2010), writing skills help learners become (1) independent, (2) understandable, (3) fluent and creative in writing, and (4) it also helps them form their thoughts meaningfully on paper and properly grasp the message. In Ariana's (2010) study, a survey is conducted among 64 American companies, and it shows that half of them focus on writing when they consider a person for employment or promotion. That is why, today, the rising trend around the world focuses on establishing firmer standards of writing proficiency, an issue which affects students who are nonnative English speakers (ibid).

Ariana (۲۰۱۰, p.۱۳۰) suggests that whether a person is a businessperson, an English teacher, or a student, (academic) writing skills are essential in the world today because all kinds of papers, such as essays, presentations, research papers, reports, etc., must be written in the correct style. Usually, institutions have tried to deal with nonnative speakers' writing needs differently from native speakers', as it used to be possible to let nonnative students graduate without expecting them to write as well as native English speakers; however, today they are required to write with the same proficiency as native speakers. It is, therefore, suggested that writing activities should be designed in ways which help students learn to create cohesive and coherent discourse in order to become improved writers and better critics of their own writings. It is also suggested that the initial focus of writing practice must not be on the accurate word or phrase only, but on the whole communication process which helps develop the quality and image of the learner himself/herself (ibid).

Writing has a distinctive place in language teaching because its acquisition requires the knowledge and practice of the other three skills; listening, speaking and reading (Klimova, ۲۰۱۴: p.۱۴۷). Furthermore, it needs the mastering of metacognitive skills (ibid). According to Klimova (۲۰۱۴: p.۱۴۷), students should set an objective for their writing, carefully plan it out, think over its layout and its logical structure, and finally, revise it. During the process of writing, students need to use thinking skills; meaning that they should analyse their sources and then combine them into a piece of writing. Hence, knowing how to write in a second language is important in foreign language communication (ibid).

۲.۲ Grammar

There are many factors which affect students' ability to grasp the knowledge of grammar, whether it be the way grammar is taught, the teacher's disregard to students' grammatical errors, boring presentation of grammar rules which results in students' lack of interest in the classroom, students' psychological state of mind, or students' environment.

According to Thornbury (۱۹۹۹: p.۱), grammar is partially the study of what language forms or language structures are workable in language. Usually, grammar has been concerned with analysis at the sentence level, and therefore, it is a description of the rules which govern the formation of language sentences (ibid). Thornbury (۱۹۹۹: p.۲) also states that grammar is traditionally viewed as the study of the sentences' syntax and morphology, the study of linguistic chains as well as linguistic slots. This means that grammar studies the way in which words are bound together in a certain order, as well as the kinds of words which can fit into any one link in the chain (ibid). The capacity to identify the restrictions on how sentence items are chained and how sentence slots are filled makes a good grammarian (ibid). For instance, different languages have different limitations on the way in which slots are filled and chains are ordered; therefore, many second language learners make errors due to over-generalization of rules from their own language (ibid).

Ur (۲۰۰۰: p.۴) defines grammar as being the way in which language works and joins words to make longer units of meaning. According to Ur (۲۰۰۰: p.۴), in the grammar of any language, there are a set of rules that control how units of meaning are possibly created. Ur (۲۰۰۰: p.۵) also states that whether students should learn grammar rules through communicative activities or learn them through grammar exercises has been up for discussion

in recent years. However, she believed that when students cannot learn grammar structures efficiently through communication practices alone, teachers should try to progress to activities that use certain structures meaningfully so as to help students learn grammar (ibid).

Grammar is defined by Spratt et al. (۲۰۱۳: p.۸) as being a combination, organization, and modification of parts of words in order to form a meaning. People use grammar unconsciously when they use any of the four skills, and they also use grammar in order to describe language by turning to its forms and uses (ibid). Spratt et al. (۲۰۱۳: p.۸) also defines grammatical forms as referring to the way in which words are made up and displayed in speech and writing, such as: adding ‘s’, ‘-ing’, prefixes, suffixes and so on to base words in English. Grammatical uses are defined by Spratt et al. (۲۰۱۳: p.۱۰) as referring to the way people use grammatical structures in order to convey meaning, for example; the present continuous does not always give the same meaning since it depends on the context it is used.

According to Tanaka (n.d. p.۱), the status of grammar in the teaching of a second language had not been securely established. The word “grammar” often brings negative insinuations, such as: (۱) when one knows about grammar, it does not aid them in using the target language; (۲) explicit teaching of grammar even hampers the process of improving communicative competence; (۳) children use their native language unconsciously. According to these researchers, grammar is seen as the formation of sentences, phrases, and texts through combining words that go together.

۲.۲.۱ The Significance of Grammar in Developing Writing Skills

Hinkel (۲۰۱۳) researches the significance of Grammar in developing writing skills. He pointed out that teaching grammar is important for producing second language academic and formal prose. In his research, Hinkel (۲۰۱۳) focuses on certain grammar constructions, such as (sentence construction, verbs and the verb phrase, noun clauses in restatement and for paraphrasing, nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, adverb clauses and adverbs, exemplification markers, etc.) and their associated lexical elements which are important in teaching second language academic writing. These necessary elements of academic grammar skills are required for students who seek success in their university work. The lexical and grammatical features of academic text which are regularly taught in ESL classes but are probably insignificant are also briefly outlined. Hinkel (۲۰۱۳, p.۱۶) believes that although there is little doubt that the majority of second language learning students are subjected to academic reading and text for somewhat long periods of time and during their language-learning careers, it is not enough for those second language students to attain advanced academic proficiency which is important for producing competent second language academic prose. Therefore, second language curricula and teaching of students who are academically bound, need to focus on increasing their syntactic and lexical range (ibid).

In Zina's (۲۰۱۵) study, it is assumed that teaching writing has a great position in the education of a foreign language. Zina (۲۰۱۵: p.III) believes that grammar is a major area of writing and it is regarded as one of the most necessary elements for good writing. The main goals of the paper are to draw teachers' and learners' attitudes towards the method which is used in teaching grammar and to shed light on the possible relationship between integrative

grammar teaching and developing learners' writing. Another goal of the paper is to determine, to which extent, integrative grammar can improve academic writing. After analyzing the findings acquired from the teachers' and students' questionnaires, results show that students make a lot of errors in their writing and most of them do not make a balance between form and content (ibid). Zina (٢٠١٥: p.III) states that teachers and students both acknowledged that the way grammar is being taught has a role in this deficiency. Additionally, the experiment outcomes show a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables and the development of the experimental group after the treatment stage which means that students can decrease the number of errors they make in their writing, and they can also create a balance between form and content at the same time through integrative grammar instruction (ibid). According to Zina's (٢٠١٥: p.١٢٢) findings, teachers believed that integrative grammar instruction is beneficial and will ease their work in teaching writing and students believed that integrative grammar is expected to develop their writing. This expectation was proved through testing the efficiency of integrative grammar instruction with second-year students in which it showed a development at the grammar level which, therefore, lead to an increase in writing (ibid).

Another study was conducted in ٢٠١٦ by Robinson and Feng to investigate the effects of direct grammar teaching on the quality of the writing skills of the students. Robinson and Feng (٢٠١٦: p.٢) state that grammar teaching has an important part to play in aiding students in speaking and writing more effectively. The participants in Robinson and Feng's (٢٠١٦) study were eighteen students in the fifth grade and two fifth grade teachers. The results show that after four months of being taught direct grammar, half of

the students who partook in the study showed a large increase in their overall writing scores, and those students were able to make sufficient progress in enhancing their writing when grammar instruction was employed during writing instruction. Writing is a complex task for many students and that is why quality teaching is needed on a daily basis (ibid). Hence, the researcher believes that grammar instruction and writing instruction should be integrated.

۲.۳ Grammatical Competence and Grammatical Performance

Grammatical competence is one of the components of communicative competence, among others such as sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is the understanding of lexical items, morphological rules, syntactic rules, phonology, and sentence-grammar semantics (Canale and Swain, ۱۹۸۰: p.۲۹). Grammatical competence is of importance to any communicative approach in which the aim is to help learners understand how to determine and express the literal meaning of statements correctly (ibid). The term “grammatical competence” was introduced by Chomsky, which he defines as “the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language” (Chomsky, ۱۹۶۵: p.۴).

According to Millrood (۲۰۱۴: p.۲۶۰), grammatical competence can be seen as a set of rules and language skills which are needed for learners; (۱) to create correct sentences, (۲) to understand them, (۳) to check grammatical errors, (۴) to judge correct and incorrect linguistic forms, and (۵) to do language testing tasks. Millrood and Maskimova (n.d.) suggest that, usually, grammar is defined in literature as “declarative” and “procedural” (p.۱۱۶). While learning a foreign language grammar, procedural knowledge is usually preferred in most teaching cultures, that is, practical grammar skills which

learners show in speech activity (ibid). Nevertheless, in teaching, the principle of consciousness means that in order for learners to master the grammar of another language, they also acquire declarative knowledge which they show describing grammatical phenomena with the aid of rules (ibid). Millrood and Maskimova (n.d. p.١١٦) believe that rules are an important part of grammatical knowledge even though the path to this knowledge is possibly different: deductive, which is an explanation from rules to examples, or inductive, which is an explanation from examples to the rule. However, knowing the rules is not sufficient for gaining grammatical competence, and working on rules is always associated with intensive development of learners' grammatical skills (ibid). Also, rules and skills both are not enough to take into consideration the learners' grammatical competence (ibid). According to Millrood and Maskimova (n.d. p.١١٦), intuition is an important element of grammatical competence because grammatical intuition is reviewed in language education as a foundation for a grammar decision making, that is not developed from explicit knowledge of students and their views on the correctness or incorrectness of their or someone else's grammaticality. Knowledge of grammar depends on the grammar rules, grammar skills depends on the number of training exercises, and the intuition of grammar depends on the extensiveness and range of the students' communicative experience (ibid). By watching the students, one will see that the best outcomes are attained when students are given more training and, with the help of rules, language patterns are explained (ibid).

Tanaka (n.d. p.٥١) states that those who have good grammatical competence must; (١) be conscious of the basic rules of English, for instance, word order, agreement in number and verb conjugation; (٢) be capable of

constructing a series of chunks for the purpose of communication; (۳) be sensitive to the interrelatedness of various functions of a single form; (۴) retain a stock of constructions of conventional chunks which are related to ideas, such as negation, comparison, and modality; (۵) be capable of observing and judging whether or not a given grammatical deviation is acceptable in a natural discourse, and also (۶) be able to self-edit their English as needed.

Grammatical performance, like grammatical competence, was introduced by Chomsky. While competence is defined as the knowledge of a language, performance is defined as actually using that language in real situations (Chomsky, ۱۹۶۵, p.۴). Radford, Atkinson, Britain, Clahsen, and Spencer (۲۰۰۹: p.۳) state that competence is compared with performance, which is the perception and production of speech. Brown (۱۹۹۶: p.۱۲) also defines performance as the production and comprehension of speech. Students must be grammatically competent; however, their performance should also be given attention to and developed. In the next sections below, some approaches to writing as well as grammar which can help in the development of students' competence and performance will be discussed.

۲.۴ Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

There are many approaches and methods to the teaching of writing. According to Namoshi (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۲), the focus has moved from sentence structure and grammar drills to the use and organization of texts. Namoshi (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۲) believes that the understanding and use of writing are valued in every discipline, each requiring a specific teaching method. Teachers and students should be aware that writing takes certain conventional forms in different contexts. Therefore, many teaching approaches and methods have

come out (ibid). Even though none of these approaches can be measured as ideal, they have all been proven to be successful at one time or another (ibid). Some of the most researched approaches to writing include; The Product Approach, The Process Approach, The Genre Approach, The Process-Genre Approach, The Controlled-to-Free Approach, and The Free Writing Approach. These approaches will be discussed in detail in the sections below.

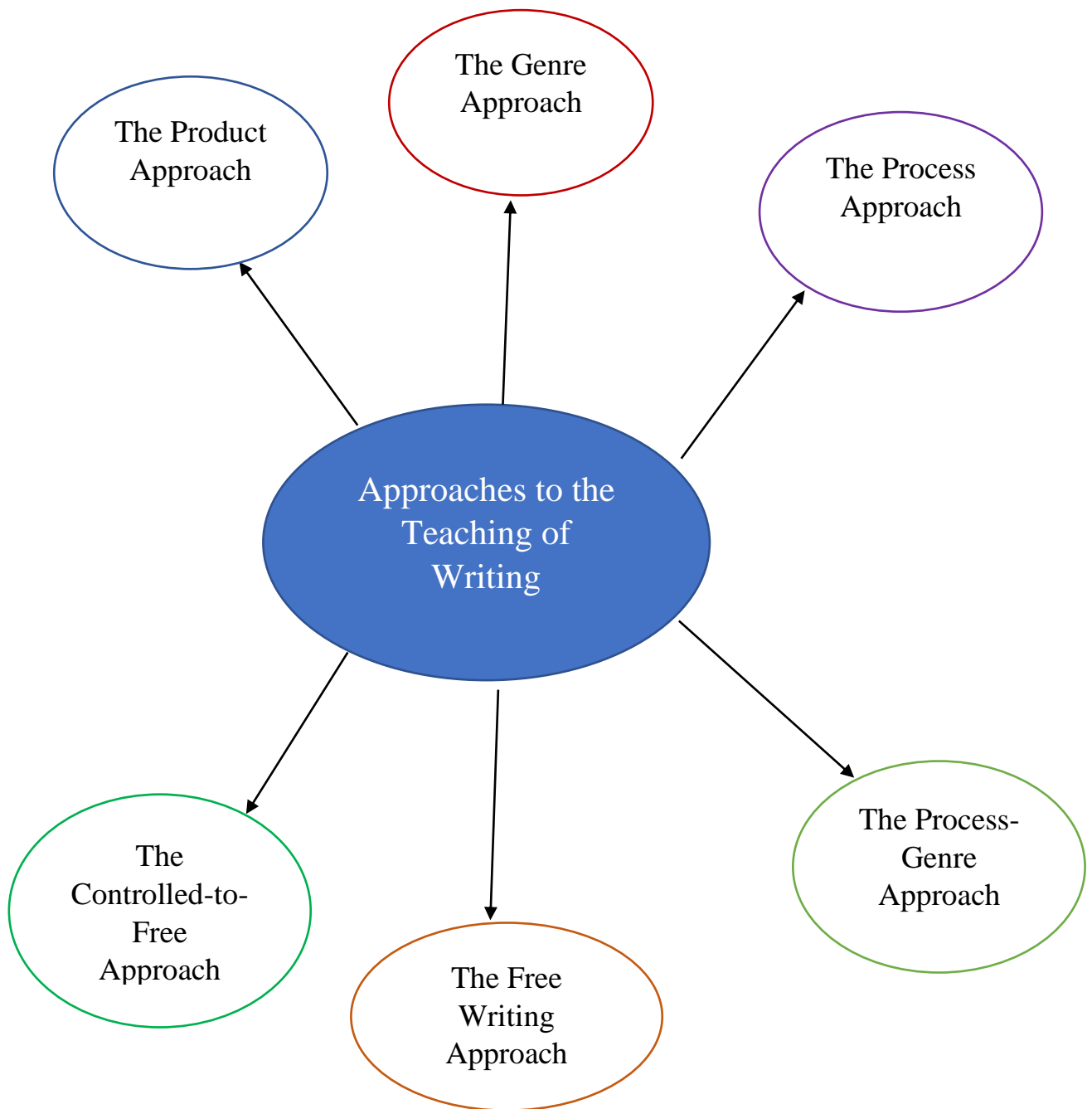


Figure 1: Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

2.4.1 The Product Approach

According to Tudor (2006: p.3), the product approach refers to valuing model texts, which means that students first read a model text and then they do exercises which concentrate on the language which was used in the model text, such as the present perfect and try to produce writing with similar language. In the product approach, the focus is on the accuracy of grammar. In the product approach, a model text is presented and then discussed and analysed (Klimova, 2004: p.148). With this model text, students can construct a similar text (ibid). Klimova (2004: p.148) believes that through the product approach, learners can figure out the structure of a writing, its linguistic features and how the ideas in that writing are organized.

According to Namoshi (2004: p.38), the product approach is concerned with the final outcome of the writing process. In the product approach, learners are required to imitate and transform model texts (ibid). Namoshi (2004: p.38) suggests that the product approach aims at helping students be aware of the text features. The product approach is used to analyse the students' writings for the purpose of identifying and measuring their strengths and weaknesses, and when this approach is adopted, it leads to accuracy (ibid). Before the start of the communicative approach, language teaching dealt with pre-specified objectives for the students. Syllabus designers had to carefully identify the students' needs and provide means which would enable these needs to be realized. The product approach came to an end and in the

teaching of writing, the focus was on language (ibid). In the past, writing was considered secondary and the main focus was on speaking because the emphasis was on correctness and copying models. The model text is considered a starting point, it is analysed from all points of view: grammatical structures, content, organization of sentences, and rhetorical patterns. After using these features, teachers give students a new topic and invite them for a parallel writing task (ibid). Namoshi (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۹) notes that the emphasis of this approach is on the correct use of form and it is important because it leads students from a departing point to an ending point with a task to copy. The model then comes first and offers a completed text as well. The advantages of the product approach cannot be denied because it supplies the learners with linguistic knowledge and it identifies and satisfies the needs of the students in terms of rules and structures (ibid). A model text offers an explicit idea about the organization of words and sentences, and imitation is an efficient way to help students learn and sometimes imitation is the only way to communicate some special structures. According to Namoshi (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۹), today it is realized that writing was assessed on the basis of the final product and accuracy of grammar, whereas little attention was given to the writing process. From this observation, some scholars began to debate on the failure of the product approach where the focus is on the form and neglects the content (the process skills and understanding of texts and the way in which they are organized) (ibid).

۲.۴.۲ The Process Approach

Tudor (۲۰۱۶: p.۳) defines the process approach as referring to planning and drafting before writing. The process approach, in contrast to the product

approach, focuses on the improvement of language use: brainstorming, group discussion, re-writing. Klimova (2014: p.148). Namoshi (2014: p.40-44) states that in the past forty years, significant changes have been brought to the approaches of teaching writing. The teaching of writing was based on the idea of guided composition; however, in the 1960s, teachers started to believe that guided composition was not enough (ibid). Most studies of writing were concerned with the written product until the 1970s. During this time, the focus moved from product to process and the primary reason for this change was the new knowledge that there was a separate history and developmental path for each piece of writing. In the 1980s, an important shift occurred from the product approach to the process approach (ibid). This new development in the teaching of writing consists mostly in emphasizing writing as a process and moving focus away from writing as a product. With the start of the process approach, the main focus is not on the finished text anymore, but on the steps in writing a text. Some of these steps include; setting goals, producing ideas, organizing information, choosing appropriate language, drafting, rereading, writing, editing, and publishing (ibid). At first these steps appear to be complicated activities; however, one should always remember that students must go through all of them in order to write a good paragraph. Namoshi (2014: p.40-44) continues that there are no definite number of stages; yet, the following are the most repeated ones: (1) *Prewriting*: where the writer collects information and tosses around ideas. Prewriting activities may contain drawing, thinking, talking, discussion, role playing, reading, listening to tapes, interviews, conducting research, problem-solving and decision-making activities, and so on. (2) *Drafting*: in which the writer develops their topic on paper. In the beginning it may be difficult for the students causing frustration. (3) *Revising*: where the writer makes any necessary changes. Revision may

include; adding and deleting, changing the syntax, the sentence structure, and the organization, or starting over completely. (ξ) *Editing*: in which the writer improves the draft. The writer pays attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting, and may also make small lexical and syntactic changes. (ο) *Publishing*: in which the writer delivers their writing to its intended audience. According to Namoshi (γ·)ξ: p.ξ·-ξξ), the main goal of the process approach is to teach students to produce ideas for writing, plan these ideas with the type of audience in mind, draft and redraft to produce a final writing which is likely to communicate their own ideas. Teachers who follow this approach give time to their students to produce ideas and get feedback on the content of their drafts. With the process approach, students should realize that what they think is a final product is actually just the beginning of the writing process (ibid). Students must always keep in mind that their writing can be improved and in order to do so, they need to go through different stages such as finding new ideas, words, or sentences, and revising before they write. In the process approach, students are not expected to write a final draft on a given topic and give it to their teacher to correct, instead, they write a first draft, show it to their teacher or another student, then they read it again, improve it, and revise it before they write their final draft (ibid). Therefore, when applying this approach, the teacher gives their students enough time to get more ideas and express them in new language forms. In the process approach, students revise their work by reading and rewriting, and they are given the chance to review, clarify, and reorganize their writing by themselves. In opposition to the product approach, the process approach inspires students to write as much as possible, not worrying about mistakes. Therefore, the emphasis is on fluency rather than accuracy (ibid).

٢.٤.٣ The Genre Approach

The genre approach refers to providing students with genre knowledge (Tudor, ٢٠١٦: p.٣). This means that if teachers want their students to write a business letter, then they would first give the students some business letters to read so that they know how a business letter is written and what kind of jargon is used in a business letter. The main concern of the genre approach to teaching writing is teaching certain genres that students need control of to succeed in certain situations such as an emphasis on the content of text and the context in which the text is written (Namoshi, ٢٠١٤: p.٤٤-٤٥). The main principle of the genre approach is that language is functional, which means that, through language, certain goals can be achieved. Another important feature of this view is the one that considers language as taking place in certain cultural and social contexts, and therefore, cannot be understood outside its context (ibid). According to Namoshi (٢٠١٤: p.٤٤-٤٥), certain genres are used to achieve certain social functions in certain context; thus, language should not be separated from the cultural and social context in which it appears. The aim of employing the genre approach is to help students use appropriate registers that are important for them. The advantages of the genre approach are that it acknowledges that writing occurs in a social setting and is a reflection of a certain purpose, and it understands that learning can occur consciously through imitation and analysis. It is crucial for teachers of writing to link these two elements in order to help students comprehend how and why linguistic conventions are applied for certain rhetorical effects. Furthermore, since genres display a cultural ideology, the study of genres also opens for students an awareness of the supposition of groups who use certain genres for certain ends (ibid).

٢.٤.٤ The Process-Genre Approach

Tudor (٢٠١٦: p.٣) believes that using any of these three approaches (the product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach) alone is insufficient for the production of a good writing. Therefore, he suggests another approach known as “The Process-Genre Approach”, which combines the key elements of all three approaches. This approach was introduced by Badger and White ٢٠٠٠ (cited in Tudor, ٢٠١٦: p.٣). The process-genre approach first puts the students’ focus on a situation taking place for which a text is needed (ibid). The students will identify why they will produce a text, to whom they will produce a text, what they will produce in a text, and how they will produce a text. Students are led through key processes, as well as planning and drafting, and peer input is believed to be of value at these stages for allowing the opportunity to share schemata. Furthermore, model texts that have the same genre can be presented to help the students investigate the genre. According to Tudor (٢٠١٦: p.٤), students may bounce between these stages, as necessary, when preparing for a final draft; also, an important feature which the process-genre approach possesses is that it does not follow inflexible, linear stages.

٢.٤.٥ The Controlled-to-Free Approach

In the ١٩٥٠s and ١٩٦٠s writing used to be taught only to reinforce speech; however, later on, the controlled-to-free approach emerged (Namoshi, ٢٠١٤: p.٣٢-٣٤). In this approach, teachers provide students with pieces of writing like sentences or paragraphs, and then ask them to make some lexical or grammatical changes such as changing the past tense to the present tense,

changing singular into plural, or change clauses into phrases or vice versa. This type of exercise helps students write frequently and offers them the chance to create their own writings without mistakes because their writings are strictly controlled (ibid). Only after improving this first type of controlled writing can the students shift to free compositions in which they communicate their own ideas. There are exercises where the students are given all or some of the needed language. The move from controlled-to-free writing occurs gradually as the teacher's assistance decreases slowly from the first exercise to the last. One of the most exceptional attributes of the controlled-to-free approach is that it focuses on accuracy more than fluency because it focuses on the language's structural aspect and neglects the language's communicative aspect (ibid). Namoshi (٢٠١٤: p.٣٢-٣٤) provides an example of a typical gradual shift from controlled to free writing: at first the teacher teaches the descriptive writing with a focus on the application of transitional expressions and new vocabulary. In the first exercise, the teacher supplies students with a small paragraph with some underlined words, in which the author is describing his partner. After reading and comprehending the text, the teacher gives the students a list of adverbs and adjectives and then asks them to use those adverbs and adjectives in four sentences which they take from the text. Then, after arranging the sentences, the teacher asks the students to combine the sentences by using transitions which they will choose from a list provided by the teacher (moreover, furthermore, however, but, besides, in addition to). Finally, the students are required to write a paragraph on a topic provided by the teacher, in which they are asked to, for example, describe their best friend. Here, students are encouraged to apply the transitional words, adverbs, and adjectives which they have studied (ibid).

2.4.6 The Free Writing Approach

According to Elbow (1981: p.13), free writing is the easiest way to put words on paper and is the best writing practice. To do a free writing exercise, make yourself write without stopping for ten minutes. Sometimes the writing you produce will be good, sometimes not; however, that is not the goal, and neither is speed (ibid). If you do not know what to write about, write about how that makes you feel, or write that you have nothing to write about. If you get stuck on a thought or phrase and cannot continue, just rewrite the last word continuously until something else comes to mind. The main point is to not stop writing. The aim of free writing is not in the product, but in the process (ibid). The aim is to help you write without wondering, worrying, having second thoughts, or crossing anything out. Free writing exercises help you learn to continue writing and not be held back by worries of whether or not certain words or phrases are good or right (Elbow, 1981: p.14). Therefore, free writing is the best approach to learn, in practice as well as theory, to separate the process of producing from the process of revising (ibid). Free writing helps in learning to write even when the mood for writing does not exist (Elbow, 1981: p.15). Free writing teaches you how to write without thinking about writing. It helps you to get the same energy which comes when you work fast under pressure (ibid). Free writing develops your writing, it does not necessarily produce good writing itself; however, it leads to powerful writing (ibid).

When one writes freely and frequently, they develop their ability in that language skill (Namoshi, 2014: p.34). Free writing refers to students writing without the teacher interfering, and it also refers to students being encouraged to focus first on content and fluency. Once students write their ideas on paper,

the teacher will then intervene and offer some help to improve the accuracy of grammar (ibid). According to Raimes, 1983 (as cited in Namoshi, 2014: p.30), there are two types of free writing: (1) when focused, it answers a topic or a question the students propose. The teacher's interference is very limited because the teacher gives students the instructions at the very beginning and then gives them the chance to write freely. Grammar and spelling are not of primary concern, and when the teachers reads the students' writings, only the ideas are commented on, not the grammatical mistakes. Content and audience are viewed as the most essential parameters in the free writing approach, and therefore, students are sometimes asked to read their writing aloud in order to be involved in writing for an audience. Because students are free to choose their own topic, they are motivated to write and they believe in what they write (ibid). (2) When free writing is unfocused, it turns into a personal activity which includes writing down the first idea that comes to mind. Sometimes students write short coherent passages; however, they generally write incoherent passages. Those who follow the free writing approach argue that despite the risk of students writing non-coherent passages, this approach has the advantage of making students write more spontaneously (ibid). Therefore, as Namoshi (2014: p.30) mentions, the interest is more on quantity than quality. Students write good compositions more easily when they know about the subject they are writing about. Free writing cannot be used with beginners successfully because it needs some basic ideas of writing (ibid).

2.0 Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar

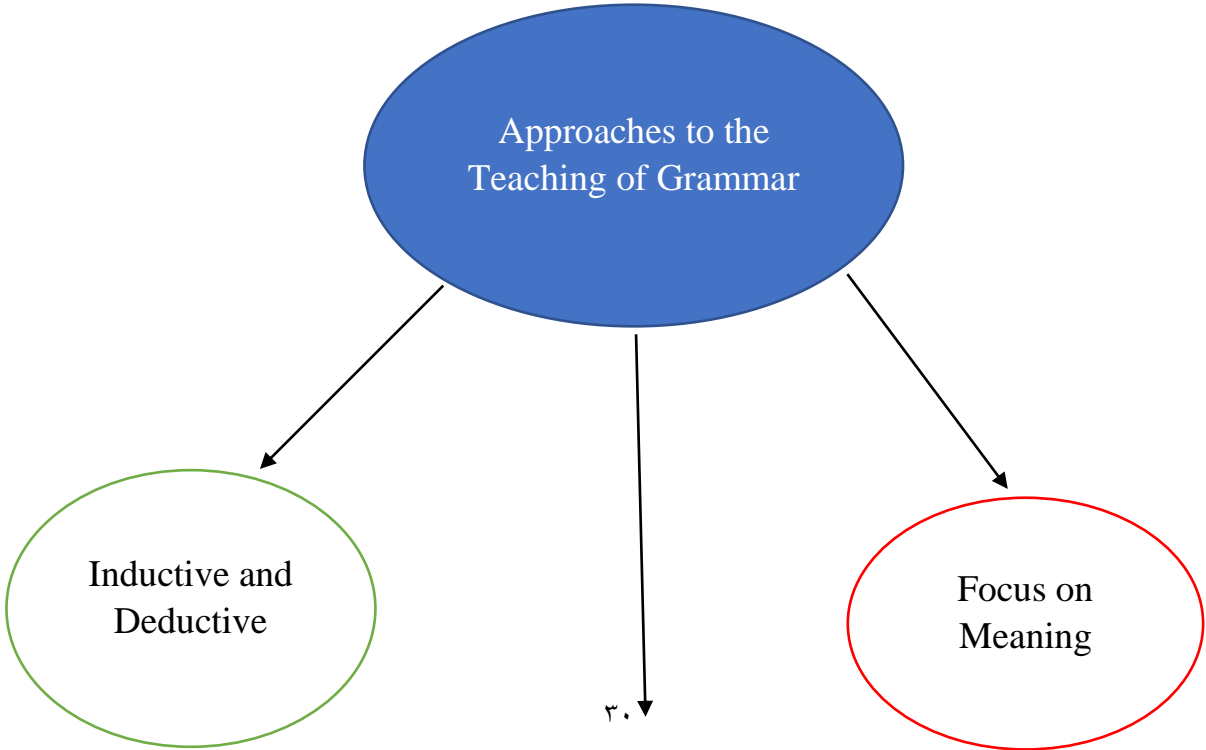
Grammar was initially at the front of foreign language teaching as teachers frequently used the grammar-translation method in the past; however,

the recently used methods in foreign language teaching have the opposite tendency because now the focus has moved away from grammar teaching (Kruzicova, 2010: p.11). The grammar-translation method (GTM) is extremely old and has been used by teachers for many years (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.11). According to Larsen-Freeman (2000: p.10), in the GTM, reading and writing are more important than speaking and listening. One of the goals of the GTM is to enable students to translate from the target language to their native language and vice versa; being able to communicate in a foreign language is not a goal of the GTM (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.10). In the GTM, grammar is taught deductively, which means that students are presented with grammar rules first, and then they are provided with examples (Richard and Rodgers, 2001: p.6 and Krashen, 1982: p.127). However, toward the mid-nineteenth century, the GTM began to be rejected, and new methods began to develop (Richard and Rodgers, 2001: p.7). These new methods included the direct method, the oral approach, the audio-lingual method, and communicative language teaching, among others.

The purpose of the direct method is to enable students to communicate in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.27). In the direct method and the oral approach, speaking is more important than reading, and it is suggested that the target language should be used in the classroom; therefore, translation is not permitted. Grammar in the direct method and oral approach is taught inductively, that is, students are provided with sentences and are expected to discover the rules from those sentences (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: pp.26-28, Richard and Rodgers, 2001: pp.39-41), and Krashen, 1982: p.130-137). Like the direct method, the purpose of the audio-lingual method (ALM) is to enable students to communicate in the target language and grammar is also taught inductively (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: pp.43-45). In the ALM, everyday speech

is emphasized (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.46). Currently, the most used teaching method is communicative language teaching (CLT), as it is seen as the most effective in language instruction. The goal of CLT is also to enable students to communicate in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: p.48). To do that, students must know the linguistic forms, meanings, and functions (ibid). Any grammar instruction, whether deductive or inductive, is permitted as long as it helps the students (Richard and Rodgers, 2001: p.106).

According to Hunt (2000: p.92), there are many techniques which language instructors can use, and there is definitely a method which goes with all styles of teaching and situations, such as inductive and deductive approaches and focus on form approach. There are also other types of instruction known as the focus on forms approach and focus on meaning instruction. In the following sections, the inductive and deductive approaches, the focus on form and focus on forms approaches, as well as the focus on meaning instruction will be discussed to understand better what they are and how they are employed.



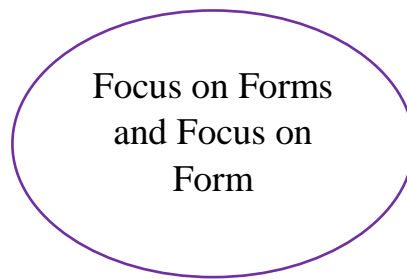


Figure ٢: Approaches to the Teaching of Grammar

٢.٥.١ Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Grammar

Ghazali (٢٠٠٦: p.٤) states that there are two ways for students to achieve an understanding of a rule and those two ways are through the inductive approach and the deductive approach. Both approaches allow students to continue practicing the rule until they are able to use them automatically. The best approach is the one that succeeds to have a permanent learning effect and that directs students to the natural and unconscious use of the rules which they have learned (ibid). This means that the approach a teacher decides to follow depends on their students.

An inductive approach is defined as one where students focus on the structure being learned, and they are required to develop the structures for themselves and then say them (Shaffer, ١٩٨٩: p.٣٩٦). Queutre (٢٠١٥: p.١) defines induction as the process of learning which moves from the specific to the general. According to Jean and Simard (٢٠١٣: p.١٠٢٤), this approach is also usually known as the finding or rule search approach. With the inductive approach, students are expected to find a rule through some guided questions, and then the instructor says it. One could find a kind of instruction in which the students find the rules by operating with language examples, and test their

hypotheses with increasingly more complex examples; however, the rules stay theirs, and they are never faced with the formal rules as located in grammar books (ibid). Sometimes there are also a lot of options in which students find rules from authentic examples with their teacher's or their classmates' assistance (Jean and Simard, ٢٠١٣: p.١٠٢٥). Mohammed and Jaber (٢٠٠٨: p.٣) state that the inductive approach means the way language context is introduced, which contains the target rules in which the students can induce using the context as well as practical examples. This means that the sequence in this approach shifts from making a situation and providing examples to the generalization that the students must find on their own or with the help of their teacher (ibid). According to Ghazali (٢٠٠٦: p.٥), inductive learning implements covert and implicit presentation of grammar rules. Inductive learning begins with some examples from which students infer a rule. Students study examples, and they have to find an understanding of the rule from these examples rather than being given ready-made patterns to memorize (ibid). Ghazali (٢٠٠٦: p.٥) believes that inductive learning elicits thinking activities like brainstorming and problem-solving through sequences of trial-and-error while the teacher gives them wise guidance and feedback.

A deductive approach is defined as an approach in which grammatical structures are given to students (Shaffer, ١٩٨٩: p.٣٩٦). Queutre (٢٠١٥: p.١) defines deduction as the process of learning that begins with the general and then moving to the specific. According to Jean and Simard (٢٠١٣: p.١٠٢٤), the deductive approach to the presentation of rules is usually linked to the presentation-practice-production approach. A language rule could be presented and then practiced in drill-type exercises, or a spoken or written text can be given to students where the target language feature is shown with a

particular incident and is highlighted (ibid). After that, the rule is presented and practiced in various types of exercises and activities which are meaning-focused, usually ending in a communicative task or unrestricted production when the teaching sequence comes to an end. Also, one could discover a sequence where the rule is presented, then practiced, followed by a reading or listening of texts with different levels of validity in which the targeted pattern is included (ibid). The quality which really differentiates the deductive from the inductive approach is the way in which the rule is handled: presentation of rules by the teacher without involving finding them out in deductive teaching, and students finding rules in inductive teaching (ibid). Mohammed and Jaber (٢٠٠٨: p.٢) state that the deductive approach to teaching the grammar of English indicates the way of teaching students, by first presenting grammatical rules to students, and then having the students apply them. In other words, a teacher goes from general to specific in deductive teaching which is also known as the top-down approach (ibid). Ghazali (٢٠٠٦: p.٤) states that deductive learning implements clear presentation of grammar rules for the purpose of assuring that the students have already understood the syntactic usage of a rule and also understood its semantic meaning as well. Deductive learning begins with the presentation of a rule, and then examples and exercises where this rule is applied follow this presentation. By using the deductive approach, teachers are spoon-feeding the students rather than having the students explore (ibid). In conclusion, there is no one approach which is preferred over the other, both approaches are believed to be effective. Teachers can apply both approaches depending on their students.

٢.٥.٢ Focus on Forms and Focus on Form

The difference between focus on forms (FoFs) and focus on form (FoF) has to do with the teaching of grammar; however, both teaching approaches can easily be adapted to the learning and teaching of vocabulary (Laufer, 2006: p.100). FoF teaches lexical items in a communicative task setting because those lexical items are needed in order for the communicative language task or authentic language task to be completed. FoFs approach, however, teaches separate lexical items in language tasks which are non-communicative and non-authentic (ibid). According to Laufer (2006: p.100), in a FoFs approach, students see themselves as language learners, and they see the language as the aim of study; however, in FoF approaches, students see themselves as language users, and they see language as a means of communication.

Focus on forms is a conventional way in which teachers help make students aware of grammatical and linguistic forms (Gao, 2009: p.46). In college English teaching, instructors use translation to focus on the clarification of words, sentences, and what a text means (ibid). And after comprehending the different structures in the text, students do not have an opportunity to practice speaking and listening. FoFs aims at placing more importance on language knowledge teaching than the comprehensive abilities of students when coming to use the foreign language. The current “dumb-and-deaf English” issue comes from the extensive application of this traditional grammar-oriented approach (ibid). Students were aware of grammatical structures; however, they were unable to use them in communication. Language forms is merely one part of the language knowledge that native speakers possess, and therefore, communicative competence should also have sociolinguistic competence and contextual competence along with

grammatical competence (ibid). In FoFs instruction, attention is mainly given to the targeted form, and a good example of this type of instruction would be using the presentation-practice-production method (Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen ۲۰۰۲: p.۴۲۰).

Focus on form refers to a certain type of form-focused instruction in which attention is mainly given to meaning (Ellis et al., ۲۰۰۲: p.۴۲۰). The attention to form results from meaning-centered activities which comes from the implementation of a communicative task. An example of a FoF lesson might be asking students to do an information-gap task, and while they are doing this task, their attention is moved to one or more linguistic forms that they need in order to perform the activity or that they have trouble with (ibid). FoF offers enough comprehensible input and interaction between students so that they could acquire a language naturally (Yu, ۲۰۱۳: p.۱۴). Farrokhi and Talabari (۲۰۱۱: p.۳۶) believe that FoF could be achieved by giving students opportunities to talk about topics that are meaningful to them. Teachers can apply focus on form teaching in their classrooms by applying principles of (CLT) whenever they want to create activities and do an evaluation (ibid). Rodriguez (۲۰۰۹: p.۲) believes that with the FoF instruction, teachers encourage students to concentrate on structures in numerous ways. FoF may be prearranged and focused on preselected forms, or it may be incidental, ascending suddenly at any time in a communicative activity. Teachers may create a task to encourage students to be aware of forms in the input, or they may openly teach these forms and give students chances for meaningful practice (ibid). According to Gao (۲۰۰۹: p.۴۷), FoF is practical and helpful in English teaching and learning in colleges. FoF should be used in English teaching and learning in colleges in order to develop the students' accuracy

and fluency and it needs to occur in a cultural environment which lets students actively take part in daily activities (ibid). According to Ellis (۲۰۱۰: p.۴), FoF gives learners the chance to take time out from concentrating on message construction to focus on certain forms and the meanings they understand. FoF also offers a solution to the type of top-down processing that learners of a second language adopt to deal with communicative needs by forcing learners to participate in bottom-up processing (ibid). Also, this approach allows teachers and students to focus on problems that are obviously problematic to students, and that is why FoF is fundamentally remedial and pedagogically efficient (ibid). In short, it can be said that FoF is teacher-centered, goes according to a syllabus, and is deductive, whereas FoF is learner-centered, occurs through communicative tasks, and is inductive.

۲.۵.۳ Focus on Meaning

While focus on form (FoF) develops the students' accuracy, focus on meaning (FoM) develops their fluency. Saeidi, Zaferanieh, and Shatery (۲۰۱۲: p.۷۲) state that the FoM instruction refers to purely communicative instruction. FoM instruction means spending little to no time on the isolated parts of language; instead, the attention is on the application of language in authentic situations (ibid). One of the characteristics of the natural approach, (an approach developed by Krashen and Terrell (۱۹۸۳)), is that instruction must focus on meaning rather than form because when learners are exposed to language in context and understand what it essentially means, they learn it better than when they are only taught the forms. In his study, Yu (۲۰۱۳: p.۱۶) suggests that according to the FoM instruction, a second language could be acquired naturally in spite of a learner's age once they are exposed to enough comprehensible input, similar to first language acquisition. Yu (۲۰۱۳: p.۱۶)

also states that learners and teachers should not consider a language as an object of study, they should consider it a medium of communication just like it is found in communicative language teaching methodologies like task-based instruction and content-based instruction. According to Chuang (n.d. p.٦), in meaning-focused instruction, learners are engaged in communication in which the main effort involves the exchange of meaning and which no conscious effort is given to achieve grammatical correctness. Furthermore, FoM instruction and FoF instruction differ concerning their communicative properties since FoM instruction gives learners more opportunities to listen to as well as perform more language functions than FoF instruction (ibid). However, according to Othman and Ismail (٢٠٠٨: p.١٠٩), while FoF instruction is not as overt as FoM instruction, it is more superior to FoM instruction in facilitating accuracy when using the targeted forms. Therefore, Shang (n.d. p.١٢٥) suggests that if teachers only use meaning-based instruction, then learners will not accomplish accuracy in their oral production of the foreign language. It is important that foreign language teachers develop useful teaching strategies in order to balance and mix both form and meaning (ibid).

While there are other approaches, the researcher believes that the previously mentioned are the most popular in teaching grammar. It is up to the teacher to decide which approach is suitable for them and their students. There are, however, factors that can help teachers in making this decision such as their goals and aims in teaching grammar, their students' competence level, and which approach their students seem to benefit from the most. It is important for teachers to know whether to use one or many approaches in their instruction in order to develop their students' grammatical competence and

performance in writing. In the next section, this study will discuss some other studies which have been done for the purpose of evaluating students' grammatical competence, writing skills, or both so as to recommend teaching activities or approaches for teachers of those participants to apply.

۲.۶ Literature Review

Below are just some of many research studies conducted by different researchers for evaluating students' grammatical competence as well as competence in writing and using English. The first of the many researchers that will be mentioned in this thesis are Mohan and Lo (۱۹۸۵), who state that organizational problems which second language learners face in academic writing are often attributed to negative transfer from the first language. However, according to current research, developmental factors might be relevant (Mohan and Lo, ۱۹۸۵: p.۵۱۵). Since it was found that the organizational patterns of Chinese composition are similar to that of English, language transfer helps, rather than interferes Chinese students in learning to write in English (ibid). Studies in first language composition suggest that the development of the organization is late and can be influenced by correct writing practices. In their study of a Chinese group, Mohan and Lo (۱۹۸۵), compare the writing practices in Hong Kong and British Columbia, which suggests that their school experience with English writing was more concerned with accuracy at the sentence level than with the development of accurate discourse organization. According to a survey of these Chinese students, it is suggested that they viewed their current problems in writing as sentence-level problems. The findings point to a need for a better understanding that the students' native literacy and experience in education

are factors which influence the development of their second language academic writing. Even if there are differences in Chinese and Western students' ability to organize English essays, the differences are most likely caused by the instruction programs of English language which students are exposed to, rather than anything else. Teachers in Hong Kong focus more on sentence correctness than on the writing organization. Therefore, the problems Chinese students face in writing in English may be comprehended better in terms of developmental factors: the ability to organize writing develops late, even with writers that are native speakers, and since this ability comes especially from formal education, earlier educational experience may help or delay the development of the ability to write academically (ibid). However, the researcher still believes that it would be better if students are taught the organization of writing early on in their composition classes.

In Shih's (1986) article, *Content-Based Approaches to Teaching Academic Writing*, she states that in teaching content-based writing, writing is connected to the study of certain academic subject matter and is seen as a means of encouraging understanding of this content. Shih (1986: p.117) presents a rationale for implementing content-based instruction to meet ESL composition aims; it is argued that such instruction improves thinking, researching, and writing skills which are needed for academic writing tasks more accurately than traditional instruction that separates rhetorical patterns and emphasizes writing from personal experience. In recent times, composition programs for native and nonnative learners have experimented with a variety of content-based approaches in the teaching of academic writing in which writing is connected, in one or more academic disciplines, to the concurrent study of specific subject matter. This may mean that learners write

about the material they are studying in an academic course at that moment or that the academic process is simulated by the language or composition course itself (ibid). Students write a number of different forms whether short-essay tests, critiques, summaries, or research reports to show their understanding of the subject matter and to expand their knowledge on new areas. Writing is incorporated with reading, listening, and discussion about the essential content and collaborative and independent research raising from the core material. Shih (1986) believes that instructors who choose to follow a content-based approach for teaching academic writing skills know that in the academic community, writing is used for assessing and promoting student comprehension and independent thinking on certain subject matter; they seek to offer developing student writers the similar experience of “writing to learn” (p.641). For all ESL students, who are academically oriented, who have passed an elementary competence level in English, there are ways to construct academic content-based instruction (ibid). To decide the most suitable approach for a certain group of students, a number of factors have to be taken into consideration. These factors are; (1) students’ status in knowledge, (2) academic interests shared by class members, (3) their English proficiency level, (4) their need or desire for intensive work on all the skills versus emphasis on reading and writing, (5) the types of cooperative arrangements with subject-area teachers which are possible, and (6) the language instructors’ subject-matter knowledge and interests (ibid). At the moment, content-based ESL curricula are still entirely new at the university level; however, empirical data are needed to support the idea held by many that content-based instruction is capable of helping ESL students to become more self-confident and competent when they take on academic writing. The researcher also believes that the content-based approach to writing would be

an effective approach to writing which will improve the students' writing performance.

Terry (١٩٨٩) conducted an experiment on teaching and evaluating writing as a communicative skill. He states that the writing tasks that students are asked to carry out are often no more than academic exercises which have slight or no communicative content or purpose. It is important for teachers to incorporate writing as a communicative act into their current use of writing as a supporting skill for preparing students for "traditional" homework assignments and the goal of evaluation on paper-and-pencil tests (Terry, ١٩٨٩: p.٤٣). He presents (١) the goal of writing in a second language classroom, (٢) the types of writing tasks, (٣) the proficiency levels in writing, (٤) the content of writing activities, (٥) sample writing activities, (٦) assessment of writing samples using both analytical and holistic scoring techniques, and (٧) a sample evaluation of writings of students. Terry (١٩٨٩: pp.١٣٣-١٣٤) mentions that Larson and Jones (١٩٨٤) categorized five areas of writing tasks which are faced by second language users. The first one is correspondence, which is a basic letter-writing that includes greetings, closings, and other arbitrary customs, as well as giving and asking for information. The second one is providing essential information, which is writing notes that require precision and abbreviated and telegraphic styles. The third one is completing forms, which is a necessary skill in many countries that usually requires a few stock phrases. The fourth one is taking notes, which is done for academic purposes or messages, reminders, and observations. The fifth and final one is formal papers which are written for certain academic regulations and literature courses that students will face at later stages of the study of a foreign language (ibid). Although some researchers such as Megnan, (١٩٨٥: p.١١٢) believe that

beginner-level is common in levels 1 and 2 of secondary school and first-year college courses, it is just an educated approximation as it should not be expected that all students write at the same level (ibid). The intermediate level of proficiency is often called the “ego level” as second-language learners readily tend to talk about themselves, and this is very understandable if teachers realize that the vocabulary which students are taught in lower-level courses focuses principally on the students’ immediate environment, containing lexical items that will allow them to speak specifically about themselves. Therefore, the students themselves can be a good source of content material and a fairly non-distracting topic for early writing activities. The texts that are produced will be meaningful as the students themselves create them (ibid). According to Terry (1989: p.40), it is not realistic to expect beginning-level students to do well on such an open-ended activity at early stages of learning a second language when they have not been exposed to many aspects of extensive discourse yet, such as paragraph development comprising of coherence and cohesive elements, as demonstrated through using (1) subject and object pronoun replacements, (2) relative pronouns, (3) conjunctions, (4) sequencing (temporal) adverbs, (5) compound and/or complex sentences, etc. Communicative writing activities should be arranged from the opinion of teacher control and of length and complexity of the required writing sample. Similarly, such activities should change from a focus on one or a number of points for formative evaluation, such as grammar, and thematic vocabulary, to more global activities for summative evaluation (ibid). Terry (1989: p.48) comments that once students have had practice in these prewriting phases of skill development, the ominous problem of evaluation is met and this is because many teachers are doubtful on whether to assign subjective grades to the students’ work since such grades are often based on

impressions. Discrete-point scoring is easy, quick and objective, and these grades can easily be accounted for and clarified. Also, teachers usually feel that written work needs careful correction; however, the excessive amount of time spent in correcting written work is rarely rewarded by improved student performance on following tasks. Research showed that holistic scoring of the written work of the students' can be as efficient or even more efficient than objective discrete-point scoring techniques, and research had also shown that it offers an extreme measure of reliability and validity, especially when overall achieved writing proficiency is to be assessed (ibid). There is another potential scoring technique for writing known as analytical scoring, which involves separating the many different features of a composition into individual elements for scoring purposes (Terry, 1989: p.90). There has to be a value in the writing task that teachers ask their students to perform, and this value has to go beyond wanting a high grade. Writing is done to communicate to both oneself and others, whether it be for social, business, or professional reasons, and therefore, information is needed to be given and found out. One is motivated to write when the need to write exists, and therefore, students should have a need to write in the target language (ibid). Terry (1989: p.91) suggests giving students realistic writing tasks, even in the pseudo-communicative environment of the classroom. These tasks should not go past the students' boundaries for self-expression in the second language, and also, they should not require students to write things which they would not usually be anticipated to say or to comment on things that they do not have any knowledge of (ibid). With these cautions in mind, teachers can begin integrating true writing skills into their curriculum, not only by adding on but by restructuring and rethinking activities to reflect real language use.

Therefore, teachers should probably only ask students to write about topics which they are comfortable with and have a knowledge of.

Writing expertise as well as second-language proficiency have both been investigated extensively in current years, as separate abilities, in different bodies of research. However, not much is known about how both of them are combined in writing performance in a second language (Cumming, 1989: p.82). The performance of twenty-three young adults in second-language writing on three composition tasks in relation to their expertise in writing and their proficiency in the second language was assessed. Both of the factors accounted for great proportions of variance in the qualities of the written texts as well as problem-solving behaviors in the second language (ibid). However, these factors exerted independent effects, suggesting that they are psychologically different. In Cumming's (1989) study, writing expertise is proven to be related to, (1) qualities of discourse organization as well as content produced in the compositions, (2) attention to complex aspects of writing throughout decision making, (3) problem-solving behaviors including empirical searches, and also, (4) well-distinguished control strategies used in a composition. Second-language proficiency has proven to be an additive factor, improving the overall quality of the produced writing, and interacting with the attention that the participants dedicated to aspects of their writing. However, the processes of composing were not visibly affected by second-language proficiency. In all analyses, more cognitively challenging argument as well as summary tasks produced considerably different behaviors from a less cognitively challenging letter task (ibid.). Because there were no major interactions between the two factors, these analyses show that expertise in writing and proficiency in the second language each contribute to the second-

language writing processes and productions quite differently (Cumming, 1989: p.118). Cumming (1989: p.118) states that indeed, it would seem that writing expertise and second-language proficiency are both psychologically different. In conclusion, it is not enough to be proficient in a language, one must know how to apply that language accurately in writing as well.

In a study, carried out by Davis (1996), the development of basic writing and grammar skills of fourteen developmental students of English were examined. The study determines whether or not a traditional rule-based, form-centered teaching approach, mixed with a limited writing-process approach, impacted significantly on the overall quality of writing and grammar skills (Davis, 1996: p.3). The investigation employed a quantitative, pretest/posttest quasi-experimental model to find answers for this question. The results of the study indicated that the students had benefited from both of the teaching approaches; the traditional form-centered, rule-based approach, and the limited writing-process approach, in the learning of procedural knowledge in basic writing and grammar skills for standard English. Students showed statistically significant growth in the overall quality of their writing between the pretest and the posttest essays after limited planning, outlining, writing, revising, and editing each of the essay assignments in the course, following a discussion of some standard types of the five-paragraph composition in narration, description, and exposition (ibid). Davis (1996: p.12) also concludes that students developed an organizational plan to write such a composition successfully in one hour. On the grammar tests from the course workbook, students experienced growth in grammar skills; however, this growth was not statistically substantial. However, the findings suggest that students benefitted from the grammar exercise drills and the course workbook

tests; therefore, increasing their procedural knowledge in using grammar rules and writing mechanics in their essays. The results of the study gave evidence that, by mixing methods from traditional form-centered, rule-based teaching in grammar and in writing, with various exercises in phases of the writing process, it can significantly benefit students' learning of standard English writing in the composition classroom (ibid). Davis' results are in line with what the researcher suggested earlier in this chapter regarding the application of mixed methods.

Yan (۲۰۰۷) conducted a study by assessing the grammatical competence of college seniors at the English Department at Benguet State University. The study examined the grammatical competence in relation to five areas of grammar (prepositions, subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, modals, and active and passive voices), and evaluated students' competence according to their age, their gender, and the school from which they graduated. "The T-test" and "The Normal Standard Scoring" were used to test the hypothesis (p.۱). Based on the results of the investigation, the students were grammatically competent except for in the use of prepositions. Yan (۲۰۰۷: p.۴۶) also concludes that neither the students' age, gender, nor the school which they had graduated from had an effect on their grammatical competence and performance. The overall performance of the students was competent. Yan (۲۰۰۷: p.۴۷) believes that students who plan to major in English should learn more about grammar in order to master it and need to practice English in their daily lives. Although, the results of Yan's study indicated that the school which the students had graduated did not affect their competence or performance, the researcher still believes that it can. Therefore, teachers

should have some background information as to where their students came from and the teachers' teaching ability from those schools.

In another study, Tonne and Sakshaug (۲۰۰۷: p.۱) state that international studies have concluded that teaching formal grammar does not develop students' writing skills. Tonne and Sakshaug's (۲۰۰۷) study takes a critical look at the main definitions of the concepts used in the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating (EPPI), which is a British center sponsored by British government bodies. The concepts viewed included "grammar" and "sentence combining", and the relationship between them was also viewed (ibid). The differences between grammar instruction and the instruction of sentence combining in terms of their effect on students' writing skills are also discussed. In their article, Tonne and Sakshaug (۲۰۰۷: p.۱) look closer at a review study, conducted by the (EPPI) center, which studied the effects of grammar instruction on students' accuracy and quality in writing. According to the (EPPI) review mentioned in the article, grammar is the principle which states something about the connection of words in a sentence, and therefore, grammar is not a method. The (EPPI) review did not define "grammar teaching" but rather "grammar" alone. Thus, that which is educational and that which is performed by the students practically as part of the grammar instruction is described as something other than grammar (ibid). However, according to the (EPPI) center, "sentence combining" is a method or technique used in teaching in order to emphasize certain sentence types. If teachers do not encourage students to practice the grammar being taught through activities in the classroom, the grammar instruction will not positively affect students' writing accuracy and quality. However, if the teachers' knowledge of grammar is translated into long, repetitive, and practical

activities for students, or sentence combining drills, the students become better in applying the new, complex sentence structures which they imitated in their previous practical activities in writing (ibid).

Biber, Gray, and Poonpon (2011) point out that modern practice in the assessment of the development of second language (L2) writing focuses mainly on grammatical features which are more common in conversation than in professional academic writing. This is because according to them, studies of the development of L2 writing normally measure T-units (a main clause followed by a subordinate clause which may be attached to it (Nordquist, 2011: para. 1)) and clausal subordination to evaluate grammatical complexity, presuming that increased subordination is the norm of advanced writing (ibid). The main goal in their study is to challenge this practice: first they surveyed present approaches to the study of complexity in the development of writing, presenting how they depend on conversational grammatical characteristics, and then they propose a different set of grammatical features which are more suitable for this purpose. In their study, they recorded the grammatical complexities of academic writing, treating conversation as a comparison register and their goals here are to examine whether or not the complexity features which were traditionally analyzed in studies of the development of writing are actually characteristics of professional academic writing. Their other goal is to find the alternative features that do normally occur in professional academic writing, offering the foundation for new approaches to the study of the development of writing (Biber et al., 2011: p.28). The findings of the currently mentioned research conclude that the types of complexity common in academic writing are essentially different from that in conversation, and therefore, complexity is not a single unified construct which

means it is not reasonable to presume that any single measure will sufficiently represent this construct (Biber et al., 2011: p.29). Since the T-unit measure (a measure developed by Kellogg W. Hunt (1964)) is used to capture the number of times a writer uses dependent clauses it misses out on the most important types of complexity devices in academic writing. Such devices are non-clausal features embedded in a noun phrase, and therefore, additional measures are needed to capture the development towards the kinds of grammatical complexities which are most important in academic writing (ibid). Another conclusion of their findings suggests that conversation is acquired first and the grammar of writing is acquired later, although not always successfully, because even native speakers of a language do not acquire many types of complex phrasal embedding naturally and many native English speakers rarely produce language of this type, and when these stages of acquisition do occur, they are acquired late, usually in adulthood (ibid). Based on the observed developmental patterns of L1 English learners, there is a similar series of developmental stages for L2 English learners mirroring the progression from competence in conversation to competence in academic writing. Some L2 learners never acquire skills in conversation, for being taught written rather than spoken English. Nonetheless, competence in English academic writing, even for those students, is developed late, and therefore, they will acquire the complexity features of academic writing in later developmental stages (ibid). For this reason, the researcher believes that it would be better if teachers focus on all four skills, rather than one, in their instruction.

Giridharan and Robson (2011: p.1) believe that there is growing evidence which proves that the lack of competence in academic writing of university ESL students affects their overall academic performance. Even

though many university ESL students have a general understanding of grammar rules, only a few are able to write academically at levels which are expected of them and this is further exacerbated when students are not aware of their own ability in academic writing. In their paper, Giridharan and Robson (۲۰۱۱) report on a case study done by Olivas and Li (۲۰۰۶) to find critical gaps in academic writing norms among ESL students in a foundation studies program. Olivas and Li (۲۰۰۶), as stated by Giridharan and Robson (۲۰۱۱: p.۲), linked low second-language proficiency levels in English with poor academic performance of international students which were studying at both college and university levels in the United States. Olivas and Li's (۲۰۰۶) paper investigated four important criteria for developing good academic writing skills: (۱) attitudes towards academic writing tasks, (۲) writing paragraphs and essays, (۳) planning, and (۴) evaluating one's own writing (as cited in Giridharan and Robson, ۲۰۱۱). They also investigated challenges faced by students in academic writing and identified common grammatical, structural and syntactic errors which are made in writing tasks. Giridharan and Robson (۲۰۱۱) state that the data from Olivas and Li's (۲۰۰۶) study showed that most students liked writing tasks and drafting essays as well as working with peers in brainstorming ideas and opinions for their drafts. Most of the students established that they were aware of the referencing system and the need to support their ideas with supportive evidence; however, many students were not able to assess their own work, and they admitted that many times their assessment did not match that of their instructors. Olivas and Li's (۲۰۰۶) work aimed at proposing interventions and techniques to reinforce student academic writing practices during the foundation year (as stated by Giridharan and Robson, ۲۰۱۱).) By including the fundamentals of English language improvement into teaching, adding vocabulary learning, and using targeted

instructional strategies, instructors could improve better writing skills in ESL learners and get them ready for tertiary levels and beyond. It is crucial to use targeted activities to develop grammar sentence and paragraph structures in ESL instruction, and it is also crucial for instructors to know individual ESL learner differences based on their previous knowledge and ability or the potential to improve academic writing capabilities. Giridharan and Robson (2011: p.12) state that numerous methods can be used to develop academic writing in ESL learners, such as supplying examples of strategies for developing planning and organizing, drafting, and editing. And another important thing is improving the ability to assess student work as well as exposure to different domain and discipline-based texts. In the process approach to drafting essays, teacher or instructor feedback is important for improving better content, structure and overall language competence in ESL learners. Giridharan and Robson (2011: p.12) hope that the usage of qualitative methodologies to test the ESL academic writing experiences and the data analysis which was taken from the study would further aid in the improvement of theories of second language writing. The results from the currently mentioned study may also aid in improving the teaching methodologies in ESL academic writing (ibid). Therefore, it could be concluded that the more students practice writing, the more competent they will become in writing.

In an attempt to better understand the writing needs of English language learners (ELLs) who are at an advanced level, getting ready to enter degree-granting programs at universities in the U.S., Russell (2014) carried out an experiment searching for the differences between the frequencies and uses of thirteen linguistic features in native English speakers' (L1) and English

language learners' (ELL) written essays. In the currently mentioned study, research essays were collected, some written by L¹ students from different departments at Portland State University, and the others written by ELLs from Portland State University's Intensive English Language Program. In Russell's research, it was found that L¹ students used the modal *would*, perfect aspect, reduced adjective clause, passive voice, and it-cleft more frequently than ELLs (Russell, 2014: p.69). The type/token ratio (the ratio which is obtained by dividing the total number of different words occurring in a text or utterance by the total number of words) also seemed to be significantly lower in ELL essays than in L¹ essays. According to Russell (2014: p.82), teachers should help students be aware of the previously mentioned features in their own writing by guiding students in recognizing grammatical and ungrammatical uses of these features as well as providing practice in distinguishing between uses which are standard in writing and uses which are only appropriate in conversation.

Another study was conducted, by Cubillo and Hernández (2010: p.107), in three English courses for B.A. in English as well as B.A. in English teaching at the University of Costa Rica. Their study aims to establish whether or not the teaching of grammar, according to the students' opinions, helped them improve the accuracy of their writing during their first two courses in composition (ibid). In order to determine whether the students' views were consistent with their grammar accuracy, they had to analyze some of the students' writing samples. The results indicate that there was no correspondence in some areas (ibid). According to Cubillo and Hernández (2010: p.119), even after having finished Grammar I, students still continued to make errors, which suggests that they had not quite acquired the grammar

structures. There is not enough time for students to practice the grammar structures in class and to internalize these structures and apply them accurately in their writings. Although students had passed the grammar course acceptably, they still made a great deal of errors in their compositions. Students believed the Grammar I topics to be beneficial; yet, they still composed incorrect sentences (ibid). For instance, there were students who failed the writing courses, after having passed the course in grammar with high marks. Students of the Grammar I course were able to identify the grammar structures which they had studied in class; however, they were unable to produce them appropriately in their writings. In the Grammar I course, teachers taught traditional prescriptive grammar and teachers, in general, use the same method in teaching grammar. Based on Cubillo and Hernández's study, the researcher believes that teaching grammar in isolation is not enough to improve the students' writing competence. There should also be time for writing activities, if not in the classroom, at least as homework.

In their experiment, Muhammed and Nair (۲۰۱۶) investigate the pragmatic competence of Nigerian undergraduates for ESL writing skills. The instruments used were descriptive essays and focus group interview questions. Four hundred and two undergraduates participated in the study which also contained a T-test. The results of the experiment indicate that more than half of the students had difficulty regarding pragmatic competence, which he implied could be because those students were unaware of the socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic practices in the skill of ESL writing. Students used writing mechanics, grammar, and the structuring of sentences incorrectly; therefore, they showed to have limited knowledge about pragmatics which hindered their socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic fluency in ESL writing.

Muhammed and Nair (٢٠١٦: p.٢٦٧) believe that the reason for their errors could lie in the learning aspects, cultural specification, and the academic situations which have had a serious effect on the Nigerian students' mastery of linguistic rules related to ESL writing skills.

Mahmood (٢٠١٦) conducted a study on evaluating EFL learners' writing skills using error analysis. According to Mahmood (٢٠١٦: p.١٤), on the writing skills and writing errors side, EFL is not studied enough in Kurdistan. The study aims at (١) identifying, analyzing, and evaluating errors made in writing, (٢) explaining the causes and sources for these errors, and (٣) discussing how the EFL materials have an effect on these writing errors. In the experiment, he used a Cambridge standard writing test to see the EFL learners' writing skills. Third-year students from two universities in Kurdistan were chosen, and in the experiment, it was found that students have a serious problem in (١) writing, (٢) grammar, (٣) vocabulary, and (٤) spelling, as well as (٥) pronunciation weaknesses. Like Bennui (٢٠٠٨), Mahmood (٢٠١٦: p.١٨) also states that EFL learners' L١ is one of the main causes of their writing errors. Simplification, omission and overgeneralization are other factors which cause students to make error in writing. Errors are made due to EFL learners' pronunciation and lack of spelling knowledge. Mahmood (٢٠١٦: p.١٩) believes that the source of students' punctuation errors is ignorance of the rules either from the teachers, learners, or the materials. Therefore, it can be concluded that when students are not fully aware of punctuation rules, whether it be the fault of the teachers, the materials, or the students themselves, they tend to make errors in writing. Another conclusion which can be made from Mahmood's study is that a students' first language interferes with their writing and is one of the main causes of their writing errors.

Another study was conducted by Singh, Singh, Razak, and Ravinthar (2017) on the educational system in Malaysia which demands students to be equipped with thorough grammar so that they can write good essays in the examination. Singh et al. (2017: p.16) believe that despite learning English in primary and secondary schools, in the higher learning institutions, students tend to make some grammatical errors in their writings. In their study, the grammatical errors made by junior students in their writing are presented in which the participants consisted of a group of Diploma students who took a university entrance exam. In this experiment, one hundred and forty-four essays written by the students were collected and analyzed by means of content analysis. The results of this study illustrate that the most common type of errors were subject-verb agreement and tense, among other not so common errors, such as noun, preposition, adjective, article, pronoun, adverbs and conjunctions, as students over-generalized and understood that the tenses could be used interchangeably (ibid). Singh et al. (2017: p.16) state that another common error which was found was the students' construction of complex sentences as they did not include essential (a clause needed for the sentence to make sense) and nonessential (a clause not necessary for the sentence to make sense) clauses. Although errors are expected in the process of learning, it is extremely important to identify the reason behind their occurrence, and if teachers do not teach strategies to help students understand the concept of subject-verb agreement, tenses, and essential and nonessential clauses, then these students will continue to make these errors in their tertiary education. Findings in the currently mentioned research may have useful implications for teachers of English language because understanding students' learning difficulties and giving them an appropriate grammar instruction is a key factor to effective teaching for ESL/EFL teachers. Teachers can have

students do in-class activities focusing on the features that most of them have trouble with.

While many researchers believe that grammar correction is vital in understanding the students' grammatical abilities, this next researcher believes it to be completely useless. Truscott (1996: p.360), who begins his experiment with a presentation of research on grammar correction, concludes that there is a great deal of evidence which stands against the benefits of correction, and there is no evidence for it. According to Truscott (1996: p.360), teachers should not correct the grammatical errors students make in their writings because he believes it is not effective or helpful in any way. Students could improve their accuracy through experience with the target language or in reading and writing. However, in a recent study conducted by Qosayere (2010), it is shown that grammar correction has a positive effect on the students' writing skills. The main goal of Qosayere's (2010) research is to examine whether grammar correction affects the development of students' writing skills positively or negatively, using a qualitative approach. The focus group was dealt out to first cycle students and the teachers were interviewed. The results suggest that the students, as well as the teachers, were aware of how important grammar correction is for the development of the students' writing. The literature basis of Qosayere's (2010) study was the claim that grammar correction does not affect students' writing courses; among scholars that agree with this claim is John Truscott, as mentioned previously. However, the findings of Qosayere's (2010) research show the opposite of what those scholars believed. The research tools used in Qosayere's (2010: p.260) study (focus group and interview) show that the teachers' feedback and correction of grammar both have a positive effect on the development of the students'

writing. The researcher also believes that teachers should correct their students' writings because it helps both the teachers and the students know what areas of grammar the students are weak in. However, the teacher should not be harsh in their correction and should let students know the aim of correcting their writings.

The studies mentioned above have been conducted to either evaluate students' grammatical competence or evaluate students' writing skills, or both, and each study has been done differently focusing on different parts of grammar. There was one researcher, (Truscott, 1996), who claimed that teachers should not correct the grammatical errors made by students in their writings, at all, because he believed that it is not effective or helpful in any way. This study aims at evaluating junior students' grammatical competence and their ability to apply grammatical features in writing in order to identify their areas of strength and weakness in grammar. It is not enough to know the grammatical rules; students must also be able to apply these rules in their writing. This study will focus on what is believed to be the most important aspects of grammar and will test the students accordingly. Most of the previous studies used both quantitative and qualitative approaches; however, this study will only use a quantitative one.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Analysis

3.1 Introduction

As writing is one of the important skills in mastering a language, students must be competent enough in that aspect of language because, in addition to its significance in education, writing is used as one of the main means of communication today. This study was designed to evaluate the grammatical competence of students in the English Department at the College of Languages at University of Duhok. In order for the hypotheses made at the beginning to be confirmed or refuted, an experiment was conducted by first testing college junior students' grammatical competence using a paper-and-pencil test and then collecting their written essays to check their grammatical performance in writing after three years of college training. From the results provided, teachers can decide with which teaching techniques they wish to proceed. If the previously mentioned hypotheses are proven to be correct, then the teachers in the English Department at the College of Languages should probably change or improve their teaching techniques. In this chapter, the methodology of this experiment will be explained, the way in which it was carried out, the instruments that were used, and the data which were collected for this research. This study will also discuss who the students that participated in the study were and where the study was conducted.

3.1.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Newman (2014) and many others agree that a quantitative approach means gathering data in numbers and a qualitative approach means gathering data in words or pictures. Researchers investigate hypotheses in a quantitative study by analyzing numbers from the trials, and the emphasis is on calculating variables and testing hypotheses accurately; however, in a qualitative study, researchers focus on carrying out detailed investigations of specific cases that occur naturally in life (Newman, 2014: p.46). According to Newman (2014: p.46), the investigation of a hypothesis can be more than a plain true or false answer because it includes the knowledge that some hypotheses are true in some cases or under specific circumstances and not others. This can be valid for every study that has been carried out in the past or will be done in the future, whether it is quantitative or qualitative. Some researchers use both approaches at the same time which is known as “mixed methods”. According to Wisdom and Creswell (2013: p.1), “mixed methods” refers to a developing methodology of research which progresses the systematic mixing of both quantitative and qualitative data in one study. The key evidence of this approach is that in applying it, more complete use of data is permitted than in collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data separately (ibid). Wisdom and Creswell (2013: p.3) present some advantages of integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study, such as (1) it compares the data of both approaches, (2) it displays the participants’ viewpoint, (3) it promotes academic interaction, (4) it offers methodological flexibility, and (5) it gathers data which is rich and comprehensive. However, it can also increase

the difficulty in assessment, it may need a multidisciplinary team of researchers, and it needs a lot of resources (Wisdom and Creswell, ۲۰۱۳: p.۴).

۳.۱.۲ Importance of Tests

Tests are important for assessing students' ability in language skills and according to Chung (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۶), teachers must develop test materials that have good quality. Leona (۲۰۱۷: para. ۱) states that since tests have such a big role at the entry and exit level of college, they cannot be ignored. Tests are very beneficial for students because they help them revise the ideas that they were taught during the whole term as well as help them understand ideas that they did not understand during the learning process (ibid). According to Chung (۲۰۱۴: p.۳۹), there are three types of academic grammar tasks in tests. The first one is fill-in-the-blank in which the teacher provides a sentence with a blank space, and the student is required to fill in that blank to complete the sentence correctly. This type of test is used to assess students' knowledge of English articles and prepositions which are misused by learners of English (ibid). However, other items of grammar can be assessed through fill-in-the-blank tests as well. The second type is when students are asked to use the given word(s) to change their form, which is done for the purpose of evaluating the students' knowledge of English tenses (ibid). The last type of task in a test is rearranging words correctly, in which the teachers provide jumbled words and the students are asked to put those words in the right order to make a complete and correct sentence, which is done to evaluate the students' skills in producing complex English syntactic structures like relative clauses and WH-questions (Chung, ۲۰۱۴: p.۴۰). There are some other types of tasks in tests according to Kitao and Kitao (۱۹۹۶), such as multiple-choice

tests, error correction, transformation items, and sentence combining. This study applied some of the test types mentioned above, not all of them.

۳.۲ Instruments

The only instruments required for this study were, a paper-and-pencil test, a classroom, and essays written by students, in addition to the participants who were junior college students. For the first part of the study, students took a grammar test on paper and handed them to the researcher when they had completed it. This test aimed at evaluating the students' grammatical competence, and it contained ten questions, each covering one aspect of grammar, such as tenses, pronouns, prepositions, coordinators, concord, comparative and superlative forms, quantifiers, gerund and infinitives, articles, and modals. The questions were in the form of either a multiple-choice question, fill-in-the-blank question, asking students to change the verb form, or asking them to change the adjective form (See appendix ۳ for more detail). For the second part, the students wrote a short essay for the final exam as required by their *Academic Writing* teacher. The topic of the essay was whether or not success is related to money. There was no fixed length for the essay. These essays were collected and corrected by the researcher to evaluate the students' grammatical competence in writing. The reason behind collecting essays written by students in their final exam was to investigate whether or not students could accurately apply the grammar rules they had learned in *Grammar* in writing. Another tool which this study used was a suitable software, known as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and it was used for the analysis of the data. The SPSS software

helped in calculating the mean value, the standard deviation, and the average mean.

۳.۳ Participants

The students who partook in this study were junior students at the English Department at the College of Languages at Duhok University, which was where the study took place. The University of Duhok is located in the city of Duhok, which is a city in Iraqi Kurdistan. The test was taken in a classroom in the English Department. The reason that only junior students were chosen for this research was that it was believed that since they were taking *Academic Writing*, they were more familiar with writing than freshmen and sophomores. Also, since seniors did not have a subject on writing, they were not suitable for this experiment because authentic essays, written by students, were required. All three junior groups were selected for this research, and there were ninety-three students in all. Twenty-eight students were from group A, thirty-one were from group B, and thirty-four were from group C. The sampling strategy used is known as “purposive sampling”, which according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (۲۰۰۷), refers to choosing participants because they meet particular criteria which you are seeking for your study. Whether the students were male or female was not taken into consideration for this research because it was believed that it would not affect the results. The experiment had a mixture of both male and female students, and therefore, were all treated equally gender-wise. It would have been fascinating to examine the results based on gender as well; nevertheless, this was not done in

this study, as it was not of importance to this study. The participants of this research had studied (۳) hours of grammar and (۲) hours of writing each week for the duration of their junior year, and they had also studied grammar their freshman and sophomore years.

۳.۴ Data Collection

This study employed a quantitative approach in analyzing its data. The data which the researcher collected for this study were the results of a grammar test taken by each third-year student at the end of the academic year and essays which each one of them had written for their *Academic Writing* final exam. These data were then taken to be corrected by the researcher and inputted into the computer which were later analyzed using the SPSS software. First, the researcher corrected all of the students' tests and essays and then recorded the correct and incorrect answers from the test as well as the grammatical errors made by students in their essays. The researcher then inputted these recorded data into the computer. The SPSS software analyzed all the correct and incorrect answers in the grammar test and all the grammar errors made by students in their written essay, which were then converted into tables. A descriptive analysis was used. Through the SPSS software, the researcher found the means value of the correct answers for each blank of each question of the grammar test as well as the average mean for the overall question. Similarly, using the SPSS software, the researcher was able to calculate the number of students who had applied certain grammar items correctly in their written essays, the number of students who had misused

certain grammar items in their written essays, and the means value of the correct use of a particular grammar item.

3.0 Procedures

The researcher first chose all junior students from the English Department at the College of Languages at Duhok University for the experiment and evaluated their grammatical competence using a paper-and-pencil test. This test was taken at the end of the academic year (2018) because the researcher thought it best to allow the students to finish their course in *Grammar and Academic Writing*. The test contained ten questions covering the most important aspects of grammar because they are considered the most relevant ones to academic writing (Ho and Duong, 2010; Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal, 2016; and Roshni, 2017). Students had studied these features during the past three years, and they include tenses, pronouns, prepositions, coordinators, concord, comparative and superlative forms, quantifiers, gerund and infinitives, articles, and modals. In order to verify the validity of the test questions, the researcher consulted three content experts. A pilot study was not carried out for this research as the researcher got the test questions from online English tests and an experienced lecturer in the English Department at the College of Languages at the University of Duhok who had used them many times to test his students' competence in grammar. Also, the common errors found in studies by Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016), Ho and Duong (2010), Roshni (2017), and Pesce (n.d.), are tenses, articles, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, incorrect use of word classes, singular and plural, sentence structure, the use of informal and spoken language, word forms, verb forms, collocations, spelling, punctuation, gerund and to-infinitive, misuse of

adverbs and adjectives, degrees of adjectives, omission of words, and word order, which seem like the most difficult grammatical items for any ESL/EFL learner. Therefore, the questions which were used to evaluate students' grammatical competence were believed to be reliable, as they covered most of the grammar items as mentioned earlier. This does not mean, however, that the other items are not relevant in writing. The students did not have any difficulty with understanding the questions as they were familiar with such tests regarding the form of the questions and the terms used. In the grammar test, students were required to fill in the blanks, choose an answer from multiple choices and accurately change the form of words. Each group of students was tested separately, nevertheless, all in one day. Then the researcher collected the tests on the same day that the students had taken them and took them to correct. The researcher manually corrected all of the students' answers to the grammar test using an answer key to each question. The correction process lasted for three days, the researcher spent one day correcting each group's tests, and three groups were participating in the study. The students were also each asked to write an essay for their *Academic Writing* class in the final exam which the researcher collected afterward. The topic of the essay was the same for all of the students (is success related to money?). The researcher did not collect the essays right away because the *Academic Writing* teacher was to collect and correct them first. Even though the teacher of the subject had corrected the essays, the researcher also corrected them afterward for research purposes. Again, the correction process lasted for three consecutive days. When correcting the essays, the researcher took into consideration all of the ten grammatical items used in the test, as well as any other grammatical item which may have surfaced. Because the students' written essays may not have contained all the important aspects of

grammar to be analyzed, a test focusing on those aspects was also given to students to take. These tests were to evaluate students' grammatical competence and see whether or not they can successfully apply what they know about grammar in their writing. Many students are aware of grammatical rules and structures; however, when it comes to using them in writing, they are incompetent. Therefore, teachers should plan practice activities for students to do in the classroom and even encourage them to do outside the classroom. After correcting both the grammar test and essays, the researcher entered all of the students' results into the computer. The researcher entered the students correct and incorrect answers into the computer by numbering them from (S¹-S¹³). The researcher named each blank by its order in a question, for example "blank 1" was given the code (B¹) and so on. This study used the SPSS software to analyze the recorded data in order to find out the students' areas of strength and areas of weakness in grammar. Finally, the researcher compared the results of the tests and the results of the essays to see whether students are only aware of grammar rules, or if they are also able to apply these rules in writing successfully.

3.6 Data Analysis

Using the SPSS software, the researcher was able to calculate the percentage of the most and least errors made by students, in the grammar test and their essays. The researcher inserted the students' correct and incorrect answers of the grammar test and the grammatical errors which they had made in their written essays into the SPSS software. Afterward, the SPSS software calculated the mean of the correct answers in the grammar test as well as the mean of the students who had applied grammatical items accurately in the

essay test. The software also calculated the sum of the students with the correct answers in the grammar test along with the sum of the students who had used certain grammatical items correctly and incorrectly in the essay test, and finally the standard deviation. These calculations were then displayed in numerous tables. However, only the mean value of the correct answers is of importance in this study as the purpose is to evaluate the grammatical errors made in the grammar test and the essay test so as to find out the students' areas of strength and weakness.

The results of the experiment show that the students had the most difficulty with prepositions in the grammar exam and the least difficulty with pronouns. In their essays, the majority of students made errors in using articles; however, the least number of errors were made in using coordinators. The overall results show that students made more errors in the grammar test than in their written essays. However, students had avoided complex grammatical items in their writing which is why they performed better in the essay test.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

As stated in the Data Analysis of the previous chapter, students made more errors in the grammar test than in their written essays. In this chapter, this study will discuss in detail the results of the students' grammar test and essay test. In the grammar test, students had the least trouble with pronouns, (90%) of students answered the question concerning pronouns correctly. However, only (19%) of students answered the question regarding prepositions correctly; this was the least correctly answered question in the grammar test. On the other hand, the least errors made in the students' essays were related to coordinators, (90%) of students did not make any coordination errors at all.

However, the same cannot be said for articles as only (32%) of students used articles correctly in their essays. In the tables below, *Valid* and *Missing* refer to the number of students who took the grammar test. The *Sum* refers to how many students answered a grammatical feature correctly in the grammar test. The *Mean* is the percentage of students who answered a blank correctly in the grammar test and who applied a grammar feature accurately in the essay test. The *Standard (Std.) Deviation* is the percentage of how much the students differed from the mean value for the group. The *Average Mean* refers to the percentage of the overall correct answers of all the students on the whole question of the grammar test. The *Correct Sum* is the total number of students, out of 93, who used a grammatical item accurately in their essay. The *Incorrect Sum* is the total number of students who used a grammatical item inaccurately in their essay. However, in this study, only the *Mean* value and the *Average Mean* will be considered and discussed.

4.1 Results and Discussion

The results for Question 1 of the grammar written test, which was about tenses, are presented in table (1) below, while table (2) below, displays the results of the essay test:

(B= blank, N= number of students, std. Deviation= standard deviation, Sum= sum of students with correct answers, S.Pst.= Simple Past, Pst.Perf.= Past Perfect, P.P.C.= Present Perfect Continuous, Pres.Perf.= Present Perfect, S.Futr.= Simple Future, F.P.C.= Future Perfect Continuous, S. Pres.= Simple Present)

Table ١: Question ١ (Tense) in Grammar Written Test

		B١	B٢	B٣	B٤	B٥	B٦	B٧	B٨	B٩	B١٠	B١١
		S.Pst	Pst.Perf.	S.Pst	P.P.C.	Pres.Perf	S.Futr	S.Futr	F.P.C.	P.P.C.	Pres.Perf.	S.Pres.
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣
	Missing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Mean		.٦٧	.٠٦	.٦٢	.١١	.٢٦	.٤٨	.٢٩	.٠٠	.٠٤	.١٠	.٣٥
Std. Deviation		.٤٧٤	.٢٤٧	.٤٨٧	.٣١١	.٤٤٠	.٥٠٢	.٤٥٦	.٠٠٠	.٢٠٤	.٢٩٧	.٤٨١
Sum		٦٢	٦	٥٨	١٠	٢٤	٤٥	٢٧	.	٤	٩	٣٣
Average Mean		.٢٧										

Table ٢: Students' Written Essays

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tenses	٤٩	٤٤	.٥٣	.٥٠٢
Pronouns	٦٩	٢٤	.٧٤	.٤٤٠
Prepositions	٥٣	٤٠	.٥٧	.٤٩٨
Coordinators	٨٨	٥	.٩٥	.٢٢٧
Concord	٣٤	٥٩	.٣٧	.٤٨٤
Degrees of Adjectives	٣٨	٥٥	.٤١	.٤٩٤
Quantifiers	٨٥	٨	.٩١	.٢٨٢
Gerund/To-Infinitive	٦٣	٣٠	.٦٨	.٤٧٠
Articles	٣٠	٦٣	.٣٢	.٤٧٠
Modals	٨١	١٢	.٨٧	.٣٣٧

Singular/Plural	٤٩	٤٤	.٥٣	.٥٠٢
Auxiliaries	٥٤	٣٩	.٥٨	.٤٩٦
Word Order	٨٢	١١	.٨٨	.٣٢٥
Valid N (listwise)				

The results for tenses which were used in the essays are demonstrated in table (٣) below:

Table ٣: Students' Written Essays (Tenses)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tenses	٤٩	٤٤	.٥٣	.٥٠٢

Table ١ shows that the students made many errors concerning tenses. There were eleven blanks in question one of the grammar test, and all of them were tenses. The first and third blanks were the only ones which more than half of the students got correct, (٦٧%) answered (blank ١) correctly and (٦٢%) answered (blank ٣) correctly. Blanks (١) and (٣) both regarded simple past tense, which almost every second language learner is familiar with. There are some tenses such as (future perfect continuous), which was used in (blank ٨) that is not that common for many second language learners, and for this reason, (٠%) of them answered (blank ٨) correctly. All together the students only got (٢٧%) of the first question correct. On the other hand, as *Table ٣* indicates, (٥٣%) of students used tenses correctly in their written essays. Although more students used tenses correctly in their essays than in the

grammar test, this does not mean that they do not know the grammatical rules of tenses but somehow subconsciously use them correctly in actual writing. The data suggest that they try to avoid using difficult tenses in their writings and only use simple tenses, such as simple present, simple past, and simple future, as opposed to the grammar test in which only five blanks were either simple present, simple past, or simple future tense. It was found that, in their essays, only (27%) of students had used tenses other than simple present, simple past, and simple future; however, the tenses that were used by those students were present perfect and present continuous, which still suggests that they were playing it safe with their usage of tenses. Even though more than half of the students used tenses correctly in their essays, (47%) of them did misapply them, which means that almost half of the students still do not understand how to use tenses properly in writing. A few other errors were found in the students' essays concerning tenses. (22%) of students had misused the present tense, (13%) of students had applied the passive voice inaccurately, and (6%) of students had incorrectly used the past participle. Similarly, in Singh, Singh, Razak, and Ravintha's (2014) study, it was found that students could not manage to use the correct tense when asked to write a report based on stimuli which they had been given. The students failed to change the verbs in the text into past tense (Singh, Singh, Razak, and Ravintha, 2014: p.22).

The results for question 2 about English pronouns are demonstrated in tables (4) and (5) below:

Table 4: Question 2 (Pronouns) in Grammar Written Test

		B ¹ & B ² Possessive- Personal	B ³ & B ⁴ Indefinite	B ⁵ & B ⁶ Reflexive	B ⁷ & B ⁸ Possessive- Personal	B ⁹ & B ¹⁰ Possessive- Demonstrative
N	Valid	93	93	93	93	93
	Missing	.	.	.	.	.
Mean		.80	.56	.86	.84	.42
Std. Deviation		.360	.499	.349	.370	.496
Sum		79	52	80	78	39
Average Mean		.70				

Table 9: Students' Written Essays (Pronouns)

N=93		Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pronouns		69	24	.74	.440

The data in *Table 8* and *Table 9* illustrate that most of the students are, to some extent, competent in the use of pronouns. There were (70%) of students who answered the questions concerning pronouns correctly in the grammar test, and (74%) who applied them accurately in the essay test. However, only (42%) of students answered demonstrative pronouns correctly, and (56%) of them answered indefinite pronouns correctly in the grammar test. Also, only (31%) of students used indefinite pronouns and (0%) used demonstrative pronouns in their essays. Similarly, according to the students' essays, no more than (37%) of students used the relative pronoun *Who*, while other relative pronouns were used by just (7%). There were also other pronouns used in the essays, although by a very small percentage, such as reflexive pronouns, which were used by only (6%) students, possessive pronouns, which were only used by (3%) students, and reciprocal pronouns, which were used by (1%) of students. While the data in *Table 8* and *Table 9* propose that only a small

percentage of students did not answer questions regarding pronouns accurately or use them in their essays overall, students should still be given more opportunities to practice pronouns so as to help the remaining students be competent because, as the data suggest, most of the students who were competent in the application of pronouns, were only competent in the use of personal and reflexive pronouns in the grammar test and were only competent in using personal and the relative pronoun *Who* in the essay test. This indicates that, when given a chance to write freely, these students tend to remain restricted in the usage of pronouns.

The results for prepositions of question ٣ of the grammar test and the students' use of those prepositions in their essays are shown in tables (٦) and (٧) below:

Table ٦: Question ٣ (Prepositions) in Grammar Written Test

		B١	B٢	B٣	B٤	B٥	B٦	B٧	B٨	B٩	B١٠	B١١	B١٢	B١٣	B١٤	B١٥	B١٦	B١٧	
		on	over	At	under	for	against	on	from	at	about	in	over	for	on	to	to	into	
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	
	Missing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Mean		.١٥	.١٧	.٧٦	.٢٠	.٢٦	.١٨	.٣٩	.١٢	.١٢	.١٤	.١٤	.٠٩	.٠٥	.٢٥	.٠٩	.١٣	.٠٠	
Std. Deviation		.٣٦	.٣٧	.٤٢	.٤٠٥	.٤٤	.٣٨٩	.٤٩	.٣٢	.٣٢	.٣٤٩	.٣٤	.٢٨	.٢٢	.٤٣	.٢٨	.٣٣	.٠٠	
		.	٩	٧	.	.	.	.	٥	٥	.	٩	٢	٧	٤	٢	٧	.
Sum		١٤	١٦	٧١	١٩	٢٤	١٧	٣٦	١١	١١	١٣	١٣	٨	٥	٢٣	٨	١٢	.	
Average Mean		.١٩																	

Table ٧: Students' Written Essays (Prepositions)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Prepositions	٥٣	٤٠	.٥٧	.٤٩٨

In *Table ٦*, the data indicate that the students' overall performance of prepositions was unacceptable as only (١٩%) of them answered questions regarding prepositions accurately. The only preposition which was correctly answered by (٧٦%) of students was the preposition of place *at*. The rest of the prepositions were only answered accurately by a very small number of students. The preposition of direction *into* was not answered correctly by any of the students. In their essays, (٥٧%) of the students used prepositions accurately; however, the types of prepositions in which they used were awfully limited, such as *in*, *with*, and *by*. There were other prepositions, such as *on*, *at*, *against*, *about*, *without*, *from*, *for*, *between*, and *after* which were applied by very few students. Some other students used *by* and *about* where *with* was supposed to be. Prepositions of direction were only used by (٣%) of students. From the data in *Table ٦* and *Table ٧*, it can be concluded that students are somewhat aware of the prepositions of place and time, as well as agent prepositions. On the other hand, they are very weak in the usage of preposition of direction because, as the data illustrate, not one student answered them correctly in the grammar test, and only two students used them in the essay test.

Question ٤ was about coordinators in English. The results for students' answers of coordinators in the grammar test, and the students' ability to use them correctly in their essays are shown in tables (٨) and (٩) below respectively:

Table ٨: Question ٤ (Coordinators) in Grammar Written Test

		B ^١ for/because/as	B ^٢ and	B ^٣ nor	B ^٤ but	B ^٥ or	B ^٦ yet	B ^٧ So
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣
	Missing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Mean		.٥١	.٣٧	.١٥	.٣٠	.١٠	.٠٩	.١٩
Std. Deviation		.٥٠٣	.٤٨٤	.٣٦٠	.٤٦١	.٢٩٧	.٢٨٢	.٣٩٧
Sum		٤٧	٣٤	١٤	٢٨	٩	٨	١٨
Average Mean		.٢٤						

Table ٩: Students' Written Essays (Coordinators)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Coordinators	٨٨	٥	.٩٥	.٢٢٧

The data in *Table ٨* display to what extent the students are aware of coordinators. It appears that out of the ٩٣ students, only (٢٤%) of them were able to answer the questions regarding coordinators accurately. In the grammar test, students were given a short passage in which the coordinators were missing, and they were asked to fill in the blanks; however, most of the students were unable to do so correctly. Half of the students answered the first blank correctly as the correct answer was the coordinator *because*. In contrast, only (٩%) of students answered (blank ٦) accurately in which the correct answer was the coordinator *yet*. Although (٩٥%) of the students used coordinators correctly in the essay test, as according to *Table ٩*, most of them used the coordinators *and*, *but*, and/or *because*. After careful analysis of the essays, it was found that very few students had used coordinators other than *and*, *but*, and *because* in their essays. The coordinators *or* and *yet* were used by only (٢%) and (٣%) of students respectively. While it is obvious that students

are competent in using some of the coordinators, teachers should help make them aware of other coordinators which they are weak in, such as *or* and *yet* so as to avoid repetition in writing as repetition can be boring for the readers.

The results for question ٥ of the grammar test which was about concord, and the students' competence in using concord rules in their written essays are presented in tables (١٠) and (١١) below:

(Cltv.N= Collective Noun, Cmpd. N.= Compound Noun, Indf.Prn= Indefinite Pronoun)

Table ١٠: Question ٥ (Concord) in Grammar Written Test

		B١	B٢	B٣	B٤	B٥	B٦	B٧	B٨	B٩	B١٠
		Double Title	Cltv. N.	Fraction	Proximity	Indf. Prn.	Cltv. N.	Indf.Prn.	Indf.Prn.	Cmpd. N.	Distance
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣
	Missing	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠
Mean		.٣١	.٦٢	.٣٠	.١٩	.٥٤	.٥٥	.٣٨	.٦٢	.٠٤	.٣٢
Std. Deviation		.٤٦٦	.٤٨٧	.٤٦١	.٣٩٧	.٥٠١	.٥٠٠	.٤٨٧	.٤٨٧	.٢٠٤	.٤٧٠
Sum		٢٩	٥٨	٢٨	١٨	٥٠	٥١	٣٥	٥٨	٤	٣٠
Average Mean		.٣٩									

Table ١١: Students' Written Essays (Concord)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Concord	٣٤	٥٩	.٣٧	.٤٨٤

According to the data shown in *Table 10* and *Table 11*, students performed very poorly in both the grammar test and the essay test regarding concord. In the grammar test, only (39%) of students answered the questions correctly, and only (37%) applied them accurately in the essay test. However, in the grammar test, (blank 2) and (blank 3) were both subject-verb agreement of collective nouns, and were answered correctly by (62%) and (55%) of the students respectively. Similarly, (58%) of students used the subject-verb agreement of collective nouns correctly in their essays. Moreover, (blank 4) and (blank 5) of the grammar test were both subject-verb agreement of indefinite pronouns, and were answered correctly by (54%) and (62%) of the students respectively. Yet, in their essays, only (33%) of students applied subject-verb agreement of indefinite pronouns accurately. On the other hand, (96%) of students had difficulty with (blank 6) of the grammar test, which was the subject-verb agreement of a compound noun, which was also not used by a single student in the essay test. Apart from the concord of collective nouns, almost half of the students had trouble with subject-verb agreement, especially the subject-verb agreement of a compound noun, which could be because of the conjunction *and* in the phrase *bread and butter* which can be tricky for ESL/EFL learners. This is the result of a lack of practice in and outside of the classroom. These results are compatible with the findings of a study conducted by Tafida and Okunade (2016: p.24) and Singh, Singh, Razak, and Ravinthar (2017: p.21), as they found that many ESL learners make errors concerning subject-verb agreement. Therefore, teachers should focus on this point in the grammar classroom and, in turn, students should practice as much as possible so as to develop their performance in using concord in writing.

Below, in table (١٢), are the results for the degrees of adjectives of question ٦ of the grammar written test:

Table ١٢: Question ٦ (Degrees of Adjectives) in Grammar Written Test

		B١	B٢	B٣	B٤	B٥	B٦
		Comparative	Same Degree	Comparative	Superlative	Comparative	Superlative
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣
	Missing	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠
Mean		.٧٠	.٠٥	.٨٢	.٤٢	.٨٣	.٢٥
Std. Deviation		.٤٦١	.٢٢٧	.٣٨٩	.٤٩٦	.٣٧٩	.٤٣٤
Sum		٦٥	٥	٧٦	٣٩	٧٧	٢٣
Average Mean		.٥١					

Below, in table (١٣), are the results for students' use of degrees of adjectives in their essays:

Table ١٣: Students' Written Essays (Degrees of Adjectives)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Degrees of Adjectives	٣٨	٥٥	.٤١	.٤٩٤

According to the data in *Table ١٢*, students were weak in using degrees of adjectives. (٥١%) of students answered questions regarding degrees of adjectives accurately in the grammar test. Blanks (١), (٣), and (٥) were questions about comparative adjectives, which (٧٠%), (٨٢%), and (٨٣%) of

students answered correctly respectively; however, only (42%) and (20%) answered blanks (4) and (6) correctly, which were superlative adjectives, and only (0%) of students answered the blank regarding adjectives to the same degree accurately. It seems that it is easy for students to add *more* before the adjective or *-er* at the end of the adjective, yet adding *the most* before the adjective or writing *the* + adjective + *est* or *as* + adjective + *as* appears to be a difficult task for them. Similarly, Table 13 illustrates that only (41%) of students applied degrees of adjectives accurately in their essays. After careful analysis of the essays, it was found that (1%) of them had used degrees of adjectives incorrectly, (47%) of them had not used any form of comparative/superlative in their essays at all, and only (2%) of the students had used adjectives to the same degree. It is imperative that students exercise degrees of adjectives regularly in order to be more familiar with their usage in writing because, like other grammatical aspects, inaccurate use of comparatives and superlatives makes writing appear strange and unnatural.

The results for question 5 of the written grammar test, about English quantifiers are demonstrated in table (14) below:

Table 14: Question 5 (Quantifiers) in Grammar Written Test

		B1 <i>few</i>	B2 <i>much</i>	B3 <i>much</i>	B4 <i>a little</i>	B5 <i>some</i>
N	Valid	93	93	93	93	93
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		.22	.83	.31	.46	.33
Std. Deviation		.413	.379	.466	.501	.474
Sum		20	77	29	43	31
Average Mean		.43				

The results for quantifiers which were used in the essays are demonstrated in table (١٥) below:

Table ١٥: Students' Written Essays (Quantifiers)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quantifiers	٨٥	٨	.٩١	.٢٨٢

According to *Table ١٤*, more than half of the students had trouble with quantifiers. A mere (٤٣%) of students were competent in answering questions regarding quantifiers correctly in the grammar test. (٨٣%) of the students answered (blank ٢) accurately in which the right answer was *much*; however, the right answer to (blank ٣) was also *much*, yet only (٣١%) of the students were able to get that one correct. This could be because students are taught that *much* comes with uncountable nouns, such as the sentence in (blank ٢): *We don't have (much) time left*. The word *time*, here, is an uncountable noun. In the sentence in (blank ٣): *He had so (much) on his mind that he couldn't concentrate on the exam*, the uncountable noun is not visible, and therefore, only few students were able to fill in that blank accurately. Similarly, in the essay exam, only (١٤%) of students applied the quantifier *much*, though, it was only used with a visible uncountable noun, such as in the sentence in (blank ٢) of the grammar test. Other quantifiers, such as *few*, *a little*, and *some* were only filled in correctly by (٢٢%), (٤٦%), and (٣٣%) of the students, respectively, in the grammar test. While (٩١%) of students used quantifiers properly in their essays, *some*, *many*, and *a lot* were the only ones applied, apart from *much*

which only (١٤%) of students used. It is important to mention that one student did manage to apply the quantifier *little* accurately in their essay. There were also few students who had used *much* instead of *a lot* and vice versa. Quantifiers can be confusing to non-native speakers of English, and therefore, they should be practiced as much as possible.

As for question ١ of the grammar written test which was about gerund / to-infinitive, and the students' ability to use those phrases in writing, the results were as presented in tables (١٦) and (١٧) below respectively:

Table ١٦: Question ١ (Gerund/To-Infinitive) in Grammar Written Test

		B١ To- Infinitive	B٢ Gerund	B٣ Gerund	B٤ To- Infinitive	B٥ To- Infinitive	B٦ Gerund	B٧ To- Infinitive
N	Valid	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣	٩٣
	Missing	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠	٠
Mean		.٨١	.٦٧	.٣٠	.٤٤	.٦٠	.٦٠	.٦٣
Std. Deviation		.٣٩٧	.٤٧٤	.٤٦١	.٤٩٩	.٤٩٢	.٤٩٢	.٤٨٤
Sum		٧٥	٦٢	٢٨	٤١	٥٦	٥٦	٥٩
Average Mean		.٥٧						

Table ١٧: Students' Written Essays (Gerund/To-Infinitive)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gerund/To-Infinitive	٦٣	٣٠	.٦٨	.٤٧٠

In question 1 of the grammar test, students were given a short paragraph missing either a gerund or to-infinitive in which they had to complete. As *Table 16* above shows, more than half of the students were competent in filling in those spaces accurately; however, there were (43%) of students who were unable to do so. It is clearly proven by the data that students are not better in using gerunds than in using to-infinitive, or vice versa, as (60%) of students correctly filled in (blank 1), which required a to-infinitive, and (blank 2), which required a gerund. Similarly, (67%) of students correctly filled in (blank 3), which required a gerund, and (63%) correctly filled in (blank 4), which required a to-infinitive. Relatedly, *Table 17* indicates that the results of the use of gerund and to-infinitive in the essay test were not too different from the grammar test. It is shown that (68%) of students were competent in applying gerund and to-infinitive accurately in their essays. According to the data of the grammar test, students made more errors concerning to-infinitive than gerund.

However, the data of the essay test suggest that students made more errors concerning gerund than to-infinitive. Although errors were made regarding one form more than the other in both the grammar test and the essay test, the number of errors was very close for both tests. There was a total of (138) errors regarding to-infinitive and (132) errors regarding gerund in the grammar test; also, there was a total of (16) errors concerning to-infinitive, in the essay test, and a total of (22) errors concerning gerund. In both tests, the difference in the total of errors was only (6). Therefore, stating that students are neither stronger nor weaker when it comes to using gerund or to-infinitive, is accurate. It can also be said that a good number of students do not know how gerund and to-infinitive are used.

Question 9 tested students' ability to use appropriate articles. The results in both the written grammar test and the written essays were as in tables (18) and (19) below respectively:

Table 18: Question 9 (Articles) in Grammar Written Test

		B1 the	B2 a	B3 Ø	B4 the	B5 Ø	B6 the	B7 a	B8 a	B9 Ø	B10 a	B11 the	B12 the	B13 the	B14 an
N	Valid	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93	93
	Missing	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Mean		.67	.73	.37	.09	.17	.29	.83	.20	.31	.69	.46	.03	.47	.74
Std. Deviation		.474	.446	.484	.494	.379	.406	.379	.434	.466	.466	.001	.002	.002	.440
Sum		62	68	34	00	16	27	77	23	29	64	43	49	44	69
Average Mean		.00													

Table 19: Students' Written Essays (Articles)

N=93	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Articles	30	63	.32	.470

Overall, students had difficulty with using English articles in the grammar test as well as in the essay test. *Table 18* shows that only (0%) of students were able to answer the question concerning articles accurately in the grammar test. Similarly, *Table 19* indicates that just (32%) of students were competent in applying articles correctly in writing. According to the data in *Table 18*, the article which students had the most trouble with was the zero article (Ø) and

the articles with which they had the least trouble were the indefinite articles *a*, *an*. Correspondingly, according to students' essays, students applied the zero article inaccurately the most and applied the indefinite article *an* incorrectly the least. Most of the students could not distinguish the use of the definite article and the zero article; they had used *the* where \emptyset was supposed to be and vice versa. The reason students had more difficulty with the definite article and the zero article than the indefinite articles could be because, as Miller (2000: p.82) stated in her study, the indefinite articles are less problematic to ESL students than the definite article *the* and the zero article because its use is limited to nouns which are singular and countable. According to Miller (2000: p.82), students do not apply articles randomly; instead, they choose articles depending on whether the noun is countable or uncountable.

Question 10 was about English modals. The results for students' understanding of the correct use of English modals in the grammar written test, and their actual performance in their written essays are demonstrated in tables (20) and (21) below:

Table 20: Question 10 (Modals) in Grammar Written Test

		B1 needn't	B2 must	B3 should	B4 may	B5 might
N	Valid	93	93	93	93	93
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		.33	.47	.48	.61	.34
Std. Deviation		.474	.502	.502	.490	.478
Sum		31	44	40	57	32
Average Mean		.44				

Table ٢١: Students' Written Essays (Modals)

N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Modals	٨١	١٢	.٨٧	.٣٣٧

The data in *Table ٢٠* indicate that the students' overall performance of English modals was weak. In the grammar test, students were given a multiple-choice question regarding modals, and only (٤٤%) of students answered them accurately. Though the data in *Table ٢١* show that (٨٧%) of students applied English modals correctly in their essays, *can*, *should*, and *will* were the only ones used by most of them. Nonetheless, *could*, *would*, and *might* were also correctly applied by (٦%), (٣%), and (٧%) of the students respectively. Similarly, in a study done by Russell (٢٠١٤), it was found that not many ELLs had used the modal *would* and L1 students had used it more frequently. Moreover, *must* and *may* were each used by (١) student. However, the low numbers indicate that less than (١٠) students, out of (٩٣), were capable of using modals, other than *can*, *should*, and *will*, in their writing. These findings match those by Kader, Begi, and Vaseghi (٢٠١٣: p.١٥٢), where college students were seen to have used the modals *can* and *will* the most in their writings, and furthermore, in choosing a modal of necessity, certainty, and/or obligation, *should* was used more frequently.

Other grammatical errors that were found in the students' essays which were not present in the grammar test are presented below in tables (٢٢), (٢٣), and (٢٤):

Table ٢٢: Students' Written Essays (Singular/Plural)

Table ٢٣: Students' Written Essays (Auxiliary)				
N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation

Table ٢٤: Students' Written Essays (Word Order)

Table ٢٤: Students' Written Essays (Word Order)				
N=٩٣	Correct Sum	Incorrect Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Word Order	٨٢	١١	.٨٨	.٣٢٥

There were grammatical errors found in the students' essays other than those present in the grammar test. According to the data in *Table ٢٢*, (٥٣%) of the students knew when to make nouns singular and when to make them plural; yet, the rest of them did not. Similarly, as *Table ٢٣* suggests, (٥٨%) of students used auxiliaries correctly, and the remaining misused them, whether it was in the incorrect form or the incorrect auxiliary entirely. According to *Table ٢٤*, word order was another error found in the essays. However, only (١٢%) of the students mixed up the order of the words in their essays, whereas the others did not seem to have any trouble in that area.

Similar errors were found in a study done by Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (٢٠١٦). The highest number of errors found in Fareed's et al. (٢٠١٦) research was made in grammar. The grammatical errors included incorrect use of word classes, prepositions, articles, tenses, subject-verb agreement, singular and

plural nouns, verbs, sentence structure, as well as the use of informal and spoken language (ibid). In another study conducted by Ho and Duong (۲۰۱۵), it was discovered that the most frequent errors found were tenses, word forms, verb forms, collocations, prepositions, spelling, subject-verb agreement, articles, and adjective & noun order. Similarly, in an article by Roshni (۲۰۱۷), it was found that the most common errors that students in India make, in writing, are incorrect use of verb forms, incorrect use of subject-verb agreement, not using commas with coordinators, not using punctuation and spelling correctly, and misplacing words, especially modifiers. In a website called *Busy Teacher*, an article was written by Pesce (n.d.), who had stated that many students make errors regarding tenses, prepositions, gerund and to-infinitive, articles, misuse adverbs and adjectives, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural nouns, degrees of adjectives, omissions of words, and word order. The common errors found in all of these studies, including this research, are tenses, articles, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions, which seem like the most complicated grammatical items for any ESL/EFL learner. This does not mean, however, that the other items are not difficult for second language learners or relevant in writing.

Table (۲۵) below, illustrates the mean of the students' correct answers to all the grammatical items of the grammar test and their accurate application of the grammatical items in the essay test. Since some items were found in the essay test which were not present in the grammar test, they were marked as N/A, for (not available), in the *Mean* column for the grammar test.

Table ٢٠ Difference between the Results of the Grammar Test and the Essay Test

Grammar Test	Mean	Essay Test	Mean
Tenses	.٢٧ %	Tenses	.٥٣ %
Pronouns	.٧٠ %	Pronouns	.٧٤ %
Prepositions	.١٩ %	Prepositions	.٥٧ %
Coordinators	.٢٤ %	Coordinators	.٩٥ %
Concord	.٣٩ %	Concord	.٣٧ %
Degrees of Adjectives	.٥١ %	Degrees of Adjectives	.٤١ %
Quantifiers	.٤٣ %	Quantifiers	.٩١ %
Gerund/Infinitive	.٥٧ %	Gerund/Infinitive	.٦٨ %
Articles	.٥٠ %	Articles	.٣٢ %
Modals	.٤٤ %	Modals	.٨٧ %
Word Order	N/A	Word Order	.٨٨ %
Auxiliaries	N/A	Auxiliaries	.٥٨ %
Singular/Plural	N/A	Singular/Plural	.٥٣ %

According to Table ٢٠, students performed better in the

essay test than the grammar test regarding all grammatical items, except for degrees of adjectives, concord and articles, which they did better in the grammar test. However, students' performance of pronouns and concord were very close in both tests with a difference of only (٤%) and (٢%) respectively. Even though it seems that students performed better in the essay test than the grammar test, after thorough evaluation of the students' essays, it was clear that students did not actually do better in the essay test than the grammar test, instead, it was found that students had avoided using difficult grammar items so as to evade grammatical errors in their writing.

Chapter Five
Findings, Conclusion, Pedagogical Implications, and
Suggestions Further Research

2.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a brief summary of the results found from the analyzed data. This study will suggest some pedagogical implications which may be of use to teachers of writing as well as teachers of grammar. This study will then conclude this chapter with a highlight of the main points of this research, a discussion of the limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research.

2.2 Findings

This study was initiated by a motivation to evaluate how competent students are in applying the grammar rules they have learned, in writing. Most EFL students in the Department of English are incapable of writing a well-formed essay, even though they are aware of grammatical rules, which can be the result of their mother tongue interference or a lack of practice of these rules. Furthermore, when students are asked to compose an essay, they tend to avoid complicated grammatical forms so as not to make any errors, as is seen in the results of this research. According to the findings of this study, students had the most difficulty with prepositions in the grammar exam (which is similar to an experiment done by Yan (2007)) and the least difficulty with pronouns. On the other hand, the majority of students made errors in using articles, in their essays, and the least number of errors were made in the use of coordinators. The results of the grammar test showed that only (19%) of students had answered questions regarding prepositions accurately; however, (70%) of students had answered questions regarding pronouns correctly. A

percentage of just (32%) students had applied articles correctly, in their essays; yet, (90%) of students had managed to use coordinators accurately.

Nonetheless, there were other grammatical items with which students had a great deal of trouble. It was found that more students had used tenses correctly in their essays (63%) than in the grammar test (27%). However, it does not necessarily mean that they are not aware of the grammatical rules of tenses but can apply them appropriately in actual writing. The data revealed that they try to avoid using complex tenses in their writings and only use simple tenses, such as simple present, simple past, and simple future, as opposed to the grammar test in which only five blanks were either simple present, simple past, or simple future tense. It was found from the data that, in their essays, very few students had used complex tenses such as progressive and perfective aspects (present perfect, past perfect, present perfect continuous and past continuous) which suggests that most of them are afraid of using complex tenses to avoid making errors. It is important to mention that among the 93 students, (47%) of them did not use tenses correctly in the essay test, which indicates that almost half of the students are not competent in applying tenses correctly in writing. Students were limited to using one or two tenses throughout their essays, and this could be the result of the way in which they are taught essay writing. Teachers of writing tell their students to use the same tense all through their essays because going back and forth in terms of tenses is not permitted in writing. While this can be true, students misconstrue this statement and stick to precisely one tense alone. It does not, however, seem plausible to use one single tense throughout an entire piece of writing. When a tense, such as the simple present tense, is used in any writing, other tenses,

such as the present perfect, the present continuous, or the simple past, will bound to be used as well.

It was shown that students did not have much difficulty with pronouns in either the grammar test (90%) or the essay test (94%). Though an extremely small number of students answered questions in the grammar test related to pronouns inaccurately and applied them incorrectly in the essay test or did not apply them at all, the researcher suggests that teachers provide more in-class activities which will enhance the students' performance in using pronouns. This is because the data propose that only personal and reflexive pronouns were used accurately by the students in the grammar test and only personal pronouns and the relative pronoun *who* were used accurately in the essay test. This shows that students are not creative when it comes to using pronouns in writing, either because they are not aware of all of them or because they do not know how they are applied in writing.

While pronouns are not a weakness for the students, the same cannot be said about prepositions. In the grammar test, very few students answered the question regarding prepositions accurately (19%), and only a few students were able to apply prepositions appropriately in their essays (67%). The data concluded that students were extremely incompetent when it came to preposition of direction as no one had answered it correctly in the grammar test and only two students had used them in their essays. This leads the researcher to believe that, when learning an aspect of grammar such as prepositions, students should be given opportunities to practice all of its types so as to be aware of their use in actual writing.

The data also indicated that students had performed poorly in the grammar test with regard to coordination (24%); yet, had performed

exceptionally well in the essay test (90%). However, like the previously mentioned grammatical items, students were very limited in the use of coordinators in their essays, in that, most of them had used *and*, *but*, and/or *because*, while other coordinators, such as: *or* and *yet*, *either...or* and *neither...nor* had hardly been used or not been used at all.

Similarly, when it comes to concord, students were weak in its use, equally, in both the grammar test (39%) and the essay test (37%). The data suggested that, overall, students had trouble with concord in both the grammar test and the essay test. The only subject-verb agreement in which many of the students did not have difficulty with, in either the grammar test or the essay test, was that of collective nouns.

Also, the students performed poorly in the grammar test as well as the essay test with regards to degrees of adjectives, (01%) and (11%) respectively. The data indicated that more than half of the students had been incapable of applying comparative and superlative adjectives and adjectives to the same degree correctly in both the grammar test and their essays. Students were most competent in the use of comparative adjectives and they were least competent in the use of adjectives to the same degree. On the other hand, many students completely avoided the use of comparatives and superlatives in their essays. Like other aspects of grammar, if degrees of adjectives are not appropriately used in writing, it makes the writing seem unnatural. Therefore, ESL/EFL students must practice using these degrees of adjectives in writing to avoid having their writings be considered unusual.

The data further suggested that more than half of the students had trouble with quantifiers in the grammar test (43%). Even though (91%) applied quantifiers accurately in their essays, it was because nearly half of them had

used *some*, *many*, and *a lot* correctly. There were, however, very few students who had applied *much* correctly and only one student who had applied *little* correctly. There were even a few students who had used *much* where *a lot* was supposed to be. Quantifiers such as *much* and *a lot* can be confusing to ESL/EFL learners, and therefore, they must practice using them as often as possible in order not to mix them up in writing.

Regarding gerund and to-infinitive, more than half of the students performed well in both the grammar test (67%) and the essay test (78%). According to the data of the grammar test, more errors were made concerning to-infinitive than gerund. The data of the essay test, on the other hand, showed that more errors had been made concerning gerund than to-infinitive. Yet, the difference in the number of errors between gerund and to-infinitive, in both tests, was close to nothing, and therefore, it can be concluded that the junior students are neither weaker nor stronger in using either form. Although, only a little more than half of the students were competent in their use overall.

When it comes to using articles, students had more difficulty with the definite article *the* and the zero article \emptyset than the indefinite articles *a*, *an* in the grammar test and their essays. Overall, (60%) of students answered questions concerning articles accurately in the grammar test and (72%) of them applied them accurately in their essays. There were also similar results which the researcher found in a study conducted by Miller in (2005: p.82) who suggested that ESL learners find the definite article and the zero article more difficult than the indefinite articles because they are not as restricted in their use as indefinite articles are. Articles are context-specific, which can cause confusion for EFL/ESL learners. Also, there is a difference in the English and Kurdish

article system, as the Kurdish language does not contain the definite article, which can be another reason behind student errors.

Concerning modals, students performed better in the essay test (87%) than in the grammar test (44%); however, in the essay test, only *can*, *should*, and *will* were used by most of the students. Almost all of the students completely neglected the other modals. There is a correlation between the students' performance in the grammar test and their performance in the essay test regarding all ten of the grammatical features, in that; in the essay writing, they avoided those grammatical items which they had not answered correctly in the grammar test.

There were also other errors which were found in the essay test that were not present in the grammar test, such as singular and plural nouns (47%) and auxiliaries (42%), which barely half of the students had applied accurately in their essays. Word order was another error found in the students' essay; however, only a few students (12%) made errors in that regard.

Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that, although some grammatical items were not used in the essays by the students, it is not sufficient to state that they are incompetent in using them in writing because no one can apply all the grammar items in one piece of writing. Therefore, future researchers can collect several essays written by each student. This point will be further discussed in the *Suggestions for Future Research* section. What does affect the quality of a student's essay, however, is when students misuse a grammatical feature or apply one grammatical feature where another is supposed to be used, which was found a great deal in this study.

٥.٢ Conclusion

Although many students are competent in skills, such as: listening, speaking, and reading, they have difficulty with writing. They tend to misuse tenses and articles, and they have trouble linking ideas together. Unfortunately, some teachers do not realize this issue with their students, nor do they feel they are responsible for addressing it. This study aimed at evaluating the students' grammatical competence in writing and seeing what their areas of strength and weakness are. This research also aimed to help teachers decide which techniques and in-class teaching practices are the most helpful and beneficial for the development of their students' writing skills. At the beginning of this study, the researcher hypothesized that the teaching techniques used in the English Department at the College of Languages at the University of Duhok put more focus on learning grammar rules than being competent in using those rules in writing. The researcher also hypothesized that students avoid using complex structures in their writing.

The results indicated that the students had struggled most with prepositions in the grammar exam and had the least trouble with pronouns. On the other hand, most of the students made errors concerning articles, in their essays, and the least number of errors were made regarding coordinators. This study concluded that:

- ١- After conducting an experiment and carefully analyzing the data, it was found that while students performed better in the essay test than in the grammar test, it does not necessarily suggest that they are capable of writing well-formed writings, because the researcher found that, in their essays, students only used those grammar items which they had answered correctly in the grammar test.

- ٢- Students stay away from using complex grammatical items in their compositions for fear of making errors, which is why the results of their essays were better than the results of their grammar test.
- ٣- There was a correlation between the students' performance in the grammar test and their performance in the essay test, as in the essay writing; they avoided the grammatical features which they had not answered correctly in the grammar test. This suggests that students are not aware of the application of many grammatical features, and when it comes to free writing, they are restricted in their use of grammar and only stick to what they know.
- ٤- Many different reasons affect the students' errors such as (١) interlingual (mother-tongue interference) and intralingual (rule learning, developmental errors), (٢) teacher's teaching methods or syllabus, or (٣) the materials used in the classroom.

Therefore, it can be said that the earlier made hypotheses have been verified, as the students avoid using complex sentence structures which proves that there is a lack of practice in using these constructions. Some teaching techniques and suitable materials are suggested by the researcher in the next section to help teachers in their writing instruction.

٥.٣ Pedagogical Implications

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001: p.20), back when the audio-lingual method was established, there was no agreement on what vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns were most important for learners to know whether they were beginner, intermediate, or advanced learners. Therefore, it can be said that students are expected to know the grammar which they have been taught along with its application in writing. Wei (2017: p.11) suggests two techniques that the researcher agrees with, which can be applied as strategies for writing for ESL students. According to Wei (2017: p.12), the first technique is planning what to write before writing, and this is important because the students would have more time and space in creating the structure of their writing, as well as have time to put together ideas in their head before writing. The second technique is revising and rewriting their texts, which can help ESL students to improve their writing by inspecting the grammar, the sentence structure, the organization of their paragraphs, and so on (ibid).

There are six popular approaches, among others, to writing which the researcher believes can be helpful in the instruction of writing, and they are known as “The Product Approach”, “The Process Approach”, “The Genre Approach”, “The Process-Genre Approach”, “The Controlled-to-Free Approach”, and “The Free Writing Approach”. The researcher also agrees with a suggestion made by Davis (1996) in which he states that mixing techniques from conventional form-centered, rule-based teaching in grammar and writing procedures along with everyday practice in the phases of the composing process can be very beneficial to students who are learning standard written English in the classroom (p.3).

There are other techniques which teachers can follow in order to help their students develop their writing. The researcher suggests that teachers try

and help their students understand that, in writing, while it is important to remain consistent in using a tense, changes should be made when appropriate. For example, when there is a time shift in their writing, then it would be appropriate to change the tense according to what timeframe they are describing in their writing, otherwise, they should stick to the tense they began with. This will make students' writings contain a more natural flow.

Teachers should also try to give their students more reading practices; when students read articles, books, and so on, they will be able to see and understand how certain grammatical items are used in writing; hence, their writing will improve. Using materials, such as newspapers, articles, a few pages from a book, short texts, and so on, is crucial in writing instruction because students need to observe carefully how different grammatical features are used in different genres. When choosing a topic for their students to write, teachers should choose topics which are realistic and relatable for students, or let the students choose their own topic so that they can be motivated to write.

Teachers can do as the teachers at the American University of Kurdistan do and have students submit a weekly essay. The teacher can give students a different topic each week with a different genre. However, before assigning students the task of writing an essay, teachers should teach their students English collocations and chunks related to that genre. For instance, if the teacher asks the students to write an invitation letter, they could first teach students phrases, such as: "*I would like to invite you to....*", "*would you consider coming to....?*", "*I would really appreciate it if you came to....*", and so on. This way, students would learn English in chunks as well as collocations and punctuation, which will aid them later on in their writing of the letter, essay, etc. with fewer grammatical errors.

Moreover, as Thornbury (1999) suggests, grammar can be taught through texts, which is another favorable approach to teaching grammar. An example is given in his book (*How to Teach Grammar*, p:177): the teacher presents the class with a story which contained passive voice and asks the students to read it carefully. Afterward, the teacher writes the first passive voice sentence from the text on the board and changes it to active voice. After helping students realize the difference between active and passive voice, the teacher asks the students to underline all the passive voice sentences in the text. Finally, the students are asked to write a story of their own using passive voice. This type of instruction can be done with many different grammatical items which are necessary for writing, and it can help in the developmental process of grammar and writing simultaneously. Writing classes should integrate grammar instruction within the teaching of writing without making it a grammar lesson, to help students be more aware of the application of grammatical features in writing, and avoid making grammatical errors as much as possible

One of the main issues with ESL/EFL students' writings is that, when they write, they do not think in English, they think in their native language and translate it into English; therefore, many of their sentence patterns are incorrect because of transference from their native language. To avoid this, the researcher recommends teachers to encourage their students to read a lot so as to be exposed to authentic English. Reading in English will help students be familiar with English expressions which they can use later on in their writing. In addition to reading a lot in English, listening to native speakers speak in English as well as communicating in English will facilitate the students' ability to think in English. Thinking in English while writing, makes the

students' writing seem more natural, as opposed to thinking in their native language and translating it into English. The researcher believes that helping students learn to think in English is extremely crucial in any ESL/EFL classroom because not only does it develop the students' writing ability, it enhances the fluency in their speech as well.

Prepositions can be taught in phrases to help them learn their application in sentences. Teachers can use their body or pictures in their instruction of prepositions because, with visual aids, learners will be able to memorize prepositions a lot easier. Another way to teach prepositions is by giving students a passage containing different prepositions and having them answer questions about the passage. Texts can be used to teach other grammatical features as well. For instance, below is a text sample, emphasizing tenses, retrieved from Lynch and Anderson (۲۰۱۳: p.۵۴):

During the cold war, Britain occupied a pivotal position in education and politics because it had collaborated with Bulgarian officials in placing UK teachers of English in English language medium schools throughout Bulgaria. After the dismantling of the former Eastern bloc, the UK (primarily through the British Council) continued to place the majority of its teachers in English language medium schools throughout Bulgaria. The British expanded their role in English language education to include teacher education and consultancy. In this way, they preserved their influence as curators of the institution of the English language - a valued linguistic currency both during and after the cold war.

Using the text sample above, teachers can explain to students when to use the simple past tense and when to use the past perfect. For example, after having presented a text containing the simple past and past perfect to students, teachers can describe to them that the action which contains *had* before it, such as (had collaborated) in the text, means that it has occurred before the action which only has an *-ed* attached to it, such as the word (occupied) in the

text. Afterward, the teacher could give students some exercises to do in class to practice the simple past tense and the past perfect in order to be more familiar with their application in writing. Also, through a text similar to the following sample text, articles can be taught to students:

I work part-time in a student counselling centre in Athens, where I have been a volunteer for the past three years. The centre has team of six staff, each of whom has their own consultation room. But most of my time I spend studying for my PhD in the Department of Psychology, which is on the main university campus. The Department is in two sections: the main building is in very poor condition but the annexe is much more modern. I share a workroom in the annexe with four other students, which is not very convenient.

Retrieved from Lynch and Anderson (۲۰۱۳: p.۱۴)

Using this type of text, a teacher can explain to their students how articles are applied in writing correctly. For example, the teacher could clarify to students how when first introducing a noun, the indefinite article *a* should be used, such as in the underlined part of the text *a student counselling centre*; however, when the same noun is mentioned a second time, the definite article *the* should be used, such as in the phrase *the centre*, in the second sentence of the text. The teacher should explain that this is because it is assumed that the reader already knows what the writer is referring to. The teacher could also explain to their students that the zero article is used before certain nouns, such as the proper noun, *Athens*, in the text. The teacher can provide activities where students can practice these articles and, later on, apply them in their own writing. Correspondingly, punctuation can also be taught along with other grammatical features through texts. Likewise, after explaining certain grammatical items in a grammar lesson, teachers should teach their students

how those grammatical items are used in writing as well, and give students many opportunities to practice those grammatical items in writing. The grammar lesson should depend on the students' areas of weakness, and therefore, it is crucial that teachers be aware of what their students need more practice in so as to base their classroom activities and lesson on it. Because the aim of this research is to evaluate the students' grammatical competence in writing and develop their writing skills, it is the researcher's hope that instructors and students of English as well as course designers find the results of this study helpful and useful in their instruction.

٥.٤ **Limitations**

This research is limited to only evaluating the grammatical competence in EFL students' writings from the English Department at the College of Languages at Duhok University, rather than evaluating the grammatical competence in EFL students' writings from the English Department at other colleges and universities. This study was also limited to only assessing EFL students' grammatical competence in writing, as opposed to other language skills as well. While in this research only one essay per student was collected for evaluation, the researcher believes it would be better to collect a few essays written by each student to obtain more data for a more accurate conclusion.

٥.٥ **Suggestions for Further Research**

The following are some suggestions made for future research:

- ١- Future researchers can collect a few essays written by each student on different topics with different genres. This way, the study will have more data to help them come to a better conclusion as to what grammatical features students are competent in applying in writing. This is because it is not possible to apply all grammatical items in one piece of writing.
- ٢- A researcher may also collect essays from students at the beginning of the academic year and teach them using their suggested teaching technique, afterward they could collect another set of essays written by the same students in order to see their improvement.
- ٣- This study can be further extended to evaluating the grammatical competence of EFL students outside of Duhok.
- ٤- Future researchers could interview both teachers and students; teachers, to get their view on what they consider to be “good” writing, and students, to see their opinion on how they are taught both grammar and writing and if the way they are being taught grammar helps in their development of writing. The opinion of students could be of value to grammar instruction.
- ٥- Researchers can also further extend this experiment by investigating students’ competence in other language skills, such as listening, speaking, or reading, as opposed to only writing. And by investigating the teaching techniques used for the instruction of those language skills, researchers can see whether they facilitate or hinder students’ development of the skills.

٦- Another study which can be conducted is investigating the reasons behind student errors.

References

- Adas, D. & Bakir A. (٢٠١٣). “Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to Improve Writing Abilities”. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, ٣(٩), ٢٥٤-٢٦٦.
- Ariana, S. (٢٠١٠). “Some Thoughts on Writing Skills” [online]. *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, ١(١), ١٢٧-١٣٣. Retrieved on ٠٧/١٩/٢٠١٨ from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.٨٣٨.٦١٢٩&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Bennui, P. (٢٠٠٨). “A Study of L١ Interference in the Writing of Thai EFL Students”. *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, ٤(١٥١١-٨٠٠٢), ٧٢-١٠٢.
- Biber, D. Gray, B. & Poonpon, K. (٢٠١١). “Should We Use Characteristics of Conversation to Measure Grammatical Complexity in L٢ Writing Development?”. *TESOL Quarterly*, ٤٥(١), ٥-٣٥.
- Brown, G. (١٩٩٦). “Introduction to Lyon’s Paper on Competence and Performance and Related Notions”. In Brown, G., Malmkjaer, K., & Williams, J., *Performance and Competence in Second Language Acquisition* (p. ٩-٢٠). Cambridge University Press.

Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing". [online] *Applied Linguistics* (p. 1-47). Retrieved on 08/06/2019 from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Merrill_Swain/publication/3126043^_Theoretical_Bases_of_Communicative_Approaches_to_Second_Language_Teaching_and_Testing/links/0c96017b1dadad70300000/Theoretical-Bases-of-Communicative-Approaches-to-Second-Language-Teaching-and-Testing.pdf

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. The MIT Press, Massachusetts.

Chung, Y. (2014). *A Test of Productive English Grammatical Ability in Academic Writing: Development and Validation*. [online] (Master's thesis, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa). Retrieved on 10/03/2018 from <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/13806>

Chuang (n.d.). "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Focus-on-Form and Meaning-Focused Instructions in the English Classroom". [online] *Journal of Dajiang University*, 4(2). Retrieved on 11/29/2018 from http://research.toko.edu.tw/ezfiles/9/109/attach/20/pta_6300_9499871_363_30.pdf

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. (7th ed.). Abingdon: Routledge.

- Coulmas, F. (2003). *Writing Systems: An Introduction to Their Linguistic Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cubillo, P. & Hernández, M. (2010). “The Influence of Grammar on English Learners’ Writing Accuracy at the School of Modern Languages”. *Káñina, Rev. Arts and Letters, Univ. Costa Rica* 39(2), 107-12.
- Cumming, A. (1989). “Writing Expertise and Second-Language Proficiency”. [online] *Language Learning. A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, 39(1), 81-130. Retrieved on 05/27/2018 from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1567-1170.1989.tb0092.x>
- Dombey, H. (2013). “What We Know about Teaching Writing”. [online] *Preschool & Primary Education* 1(1), 20-44. Retrieved on 07/10/2018 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/PPEJ.45>
- Davis, W. (1996). “Educational Implications of a Study on Grammar and Basic Writing Skills in a Developmental English Course”. [online] *Eric*, Retrieved on 11/29/2018 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED392067.pdf>
- Elbow, P. (1981) *Writing with Power*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Ellis, R. (2010). “The Importance of Focus on Form in Communicative Language Teaching”. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1(2), 1-12.

Ellis, R., Basturkmen, H., & Loewen, S (۲۰۰۲). “Doing Focus-on-Form”.
Pergamon, Elsevier ۳۰, ۴۱۹-۴۳۲.

Fareed, M., Ashraf, A., & Bilal, M. (۲۰۱۶). “ESL Learners’ Writing Skills: Problems, Factors and Suggestions”. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, ۴(۲), ۸۱-۹۲.

Farrokhi, F. & Talabari, F. (۲۰۱۱). “Focus on Form Instruction in EFL: Implications for Theory and Practice”. [online] *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning* (۲۲۲). Retrieved on ۰۹/۱۹/۲۰۱۸ from http://elt.tabrizu.ac.ir/article_۶۳۲_f۲۰۸f۸c۸۳۹ce۰۰۶۴e۷b۲۷bb۷d۶fc۴b۰۲.pdf

Gao, S. (۲۰۰۹). “Focus on Form in College English Teaching”. [online] *English Language Teaching* ۲(۲). Retrieved on ۰۹/۱۹/۲۰۱۸ from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ۱۰۸۲۳۴۸.pdf>

Ghazali, F. (۲۰۰۶). “The Presentation-Practice-Production Vs Consciousness-Raising: Which is Efficient in Teaching Grammar?”. [online] *The Centre for English Language Studies*. Retrieved on ۰۹/۲۲/۲۰۱۸ from http://usir.salford.ac.uk/۲۲۸۷۳/۱/The_PPP_Vs_Consciousness_Raising.pdf

Giridharan, B. and Robson, A. (۲۰۱۱). “Identifying Gaps in Academic Writing of ESL Students”. [online] Curtin University, Miri, Malaysia.

Retrieved on 03/20/2018 from
https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/11979/174721_174721.pdf?sequence=2

Hajana, O. (2006). "The Relationship between Grammatical Competence and Writing Quality" (Master's Thesis, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, Sudan). [online] Retrieved on 07/14/2018 from
<http://khartoumspace.uofk.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/11117/The%20Relationship%20Between%20Grammatical.pdf?sequence=1>

Hinkel, E. (2013). "Research Findings on Teaching Grammar for Academic Writing". *English Teaching*, 68(4), 3-21.

Ho, P., & Duong, P. (2010). "Common Errors in Writing Journals of the English Major Students at HCMC Open University". *Journal of Science Ho Chi Minh City Open University* 2(14), 02-11.

Hunt, J. (2010). "Approaches to Teaching Grammar". *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 06, 49-53.

Jean, G., & Simard, D. (2013). "Deductive Versus Inductive Grammar Instruction: Investigating Possible Relationships between Gains, Preferences and Learning Styles". [online] *Science Direct, Elsevier* 41(4), 1023-1042. Retrieved on 03/02/2017 from
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.10.008>

- Kader M., Begi, N., & Vaseghi, R. (2013). "A Corpus-Based Study of Malaysian ESL Learners' Use of Modals in Argumentative Compositions". [online] *English Language Teaching* 6(9). Retrieved on 11/11/2018 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n9p146>
- Kitao, K., & Kitao, S. (1996). "Testing Grammar". [online] *The Internet TESL Journal* 11(6). Retrieved on 10/14/2018 from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kitao-TestingGrammar.html>
- Klimova, B. (2014). "Approaches to the Teaching of Writing Skills". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 112, 147-151.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press Inc. California: University of Southern California.
- Kruzicová, M. (2010). *Different Approaches to Teaching Grammar at Lower-Secondary School Level* (Master's thesis, University of Hradec Králové, Hradec Králové, Czech). [online] Retrieved on 09/16/2018 from <https://theses.cz/id/tvfbp/STAG16309.pdf>
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Laufer, B. (2006). "Comparing Focus on Form and Focus on FormS in Second-Language Vocabulary Learning". [online] *The Canadian Modern*

Language Review ٦٣(١), ١٤٩–١٦٦. Retrieved on ٠٩/٢٤/٢٠١٨ from <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.٦٣.١.١٤٩>

Leona, K. (٢٠١٧). *Tests and Examinations Important at the College Level*. Retrieved from <https://www.fosteropenscience.eu/content/tests-and-examinations-important-college-level>

Lynch, T & Anderson, K. (٢٠١٣). *Grammar for Academic Writing*. English Language Teaching Centre, Edinburg. University of Edinburgh.

Mahmood, D. (٢٠١٦). “An Evaluation of Writing Skills of EFL Learners in Kurdistan Region of Iraq”. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, ٤(١), ١٤-٢٤.

Miller, J. (٢٠٠٥). “Most of ESL Students Have Trouble with the Articles”. *International Education Journal* ٥(٥), ٨٠-٨٨.

Millrood, R. (٢٠١٤). “Cognitive Models of Grammatical Competence of Students”. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* ١٥٤, ٢٥٩ – ٢٦٢.

Millrood, R.P. & Maskimova, I.R. (n.d.) “Cognitive Models of Grammatical Competence of Students”. [online] Retrieved on ٠٩/١٢/٢٠١٨ from http://journals.tsu.ru/uploads/import/١١٤٨/files/٢_١١٥.pdf

Mohammed, A. & Jaber, H. (٢٠٠٨). “The Effects of Deductive and Inductive Approaches of Teaching on Jordanian University Students’ Use of the Active and Passive Voice in English”. *College Student Journal* ٤٢(٢)

- Mohan, B. & Lo, W. (1980). "Academic Writing and Chinese Students: Transfer and Developmental Factors". *TESOL Quarterly*, 19(3), 510-534
- Muhammed, A. & Nair, S. (2016). "Evaluating pragmatic competence in Nigerian undergraduates' language errors within descriptive ESL writing". *International Journal of Instruction*, 10(1), 200-222.
- Myles, J. (2002). "Second Language Writing and Research: The Writing Process and Error Analysis in Students Texts". *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 6(2).
- Namoshi, A. (2014). *Approaches to Teaching Writing*.
- Newman, W. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Nordquist, R. (2018). *T-Unit and Linguistics: Measuring T-Units*. [online] Retrieved on 03/23/2018 from <https://www.thoughtco.com/t-unit-definition-1692404>
- Othman, J. & Ismail, L. (2008). "Using Focus on Form Instruction in the Teaching and Learning of Grammar in a Malaysian Classroom". *The Journal of Asia TEFL* 0(2), 93-110
- Pesce, C. (n.d). "10 Biggest ESL Grammar Mistakes and How to Keep Your Students from Making Them". [online] Retrieved on 11/24/2018 from

<https://busyteacher.org/18203-10-biggest-esl-grammar-mistakes-students-make.html>

Qosayere, I. (2010). "The Effect of Grammar Correction on Students' Writing". *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education* 4(1), 207-261

Queutre, C. A. Y. (2010). *Effectiveness of a Deductive Approach against an Inductive Approach in Teaching Passive Voice in English Grammar* (Master's thesis University of Chile, Santiago, Chile). [online] Retrieved on 02/16/2017 from <http://repositorio.uchile.cl/bitstream/handle/2250/136070/Effectiveness-of-a-deductive-approach-against-an-inductive-approach-in-teaching-passive-voice-in-english-grammar.pdf?sequence=1>

Radford, A., Atkinson, M., Britain, D., Clahsen, H., and Spencer, A. (2009). *Linguistics: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Richard, J. & Rodgers, T. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robinson, L., & Feng, J. (2016). "Effect of Direct Grammar Instruction on Student Writing Skills. Paper Presented at Eastern Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina". [online] Retrieved on 07/19/2018 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED064236.pdf>

Rodriguez, A. (۲۰۰۹). “Teaching Grammar to Adult English Language Learners: Focus on Form”. *Center for Applied Linguistics*.

Roshni. (۲۰۱۷). “۹ Common Grammar Mistakes that Make Students Lose Marks”. [online] Retrieved on ۱۱/۲۴/۲۰۱۸ from <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/grammar-vocabulary/story/common-grammar-writing-mistakes-۹۶۲۶۵۷-۲۰۱۷-۰۲-۲۰>

Russell, M. K. (۲۰۱۴). “A Comparison of Linguistic Features in the Academic Writing of Advanced English Language Learner and English First Language University Students” (Master’s thesis, Portland State University, Portland, Oregon). [online] Retrieved on ۰۴/۰۹/۲۰۱۸ from https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=۳۰۲۳&context=open_access_etds

Saeidi, Zaferanieh & S hatery (۲۰۱۲). “On the Effects of Focus on Form, Focus on Meaning, and Focus on Forms on Learners’ Vocabulary Learning in ESP Context”. [online] *English Language Teaching* ۵(۱۰), ۷۲-۷۹. Retrieved on ۱۱/۲۹/۲۰۱۸ from ۱۰.۵۵۳۹/elt.v۵n۱۰p۷۲

Shaffer, C. (۱۹۸۹). “A Comparison of Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Teaching Foreign Languages”. *Wiley, The Modern Language Journal* ۷۳(۴), ۳۹۵-۴۰

Shang, H. (n.d.). “A Dual Focus on Form and Meaning in EFL Communicative Instruction”. [online] Retrieved on ۱۱/۲۹/۲۰۱۸ from

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.013.2008&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Shih, M. (1986). "Content-Based Approaches to Teaching Academic Writing". *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)*, 20(4), 617-648

Singh, C., Singh, A., Razak, N., & Ravinthar, T. (2017). "Grammar Errors Made by ESL Tertiary Students in Writing". [online] *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 16-27. Retrieved on 03/02/2018 from <http://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10.n05p16>

Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2013). *The TKT Course Modules 1, 2 and 3*. (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Syversen, H (TR). Tonne, Ingebjørg & Sakshaug, Laila (2007). Grammatikk og skriveutvikling – hva sier den britiske EPPI-oversiktsstudien?, I: Synnøve Matre & Torlaug Løkensgard Hoel (red.), *Skrive for nåtid og framtid*, bind 1. Skrivning I arbeidsliv og skole. Tapir Akademisk Forlag. ISBN 9788201922109.

Tafia, A. & Okunade, S. (2016). "Subject-Verb Agreement Problem among English as Second Language Learners: A Case Study of One Hundred Level Undergraduates of Federal University of Technology, Minna". *International Invention Journals*, 2(2), 20-27.

- Tanaka, S. (n.d.). "Grammatical Competence in English. COCONE Institute for Language Education CIFLE Report No.9". [online]. Retrieved on 09/12/2018 from https://www.cifle.jp/news/cifle_report_009.pdf
- Terry, R. (1989). "Teaching and Evaluating Writing as Communicative Skill". *Foreign Language Annals* 22(1), 43-52.
- Terrell, T. (1991). "The Role of Grammar Instruction in a Communicative Approach". *The Modern Language Journal* 76.
- Thornbury, S. (1999). *How to Teach Grammar*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Truscott, J. (1996). "The Case against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes". *A Journal of Research in Language Studies*, 46(2), 327-369.
- Tudor, E. (2016). "The Process Genre Approach in Writing: An Alternative Option for the Modern Classroom". [online] Retrieved on 12/10/2018 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED051022.pdf>
- Ur, P. (2000). *Grammar Practice Activities: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, G. & Wang, S. (2014). "Explicit Grammar Instruction for EFL Writing and Editing: An Exploratory Study at a Korean University". [online] *Linguistics and Literature Studies* 2(2), 60-73. Retrieved on 09/12/2018 from <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20141005/LLS4-19301873.pdf>

- Wei, M. (2017). "Strategies for First-Year University ESL Students to Improve Essay Writing Skills". [online] (Master's thesis, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California). Retrieved on 11/24/2018 from <https://repository.usfca.edu/capstone/036>
- Widodo, H. (2006). "Approaches and Procedures for Teaching Grammar". [online] *English Teaching: Practice and Critique* 0(1). Retrieved on 09/19/2018 from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.110.3640&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Wisdom J & Creswell JW. Mixed Methods (2013): "Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis While Studying Patient-Centered Medical Home Models". Rockville, MD: *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality*. AHRQ Publication No. 13-0028-EF.
- Yan, J. A. (2007). "Grammatical Competence of Fourth Year English Majors of Benguet State University". Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet.
- Yu, M. (2013). *Teaching Grammar Using Focus on Form Approach in Communicative Language Teaching for Korean Middle School Students* (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin).

Yule, G. (2002). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zina, Z. (2010). "The Role of Integrative Grammar in Developing Academic Writing: Case Study Second Year Students of English at Biskra University". [online] (Master's thesis, University of Biskra, Biskra, Algeria). Retrieved on 07/19/2018 from <http://dspace.univ-biskra.dz:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/630/zarfaoui%20zina.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Appendices

Appendix ١ The Jury

No.	Name	Academic Status	University
١	Dr. Asma Ameen Hussein Bamerni	Lecturer	University of Duhok
٢	Dr. Saeed Idris Saeed	Lecturer	University of Duhok
٣	Dr. Haveen Mohammed Abdulmajeed	Assistant Lecturer	University of Duhok

Appendix ٢ The letter to the jury members

Thesis Validation Letter

Date:

Name:

Dear Participant,

I am an MA student in the TESOL program at the College of Languages at Duhok University. I am currently conducting a study entitled “Evaluating Grammatical Competence in Kurdish EFL Junior Students’ Writings at the English Department, College of Languages, University of Duhok “. The study aims at evaluating the grammatical competence of juniors at our college. We are, therefore, humbly requesting your expertise for the validation of our test questions. Your participation is of great importance to our academic endeavor and is highly appreciated. We are looking forward to your positive response.

Appendix ۳ Test questions

Q. ۱ Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the given verbs.

۱. When the old woman _____ (hear) that her grandson _____ (arrest) for robbery, she _____ (get) a big shock.
۲. We _____ (wait) for the bus for nearly half an hour, but it _____ (not arrive) yet so I don't think we _____ (be able to) attend the meeting on time.
۳. When Sarah _____ (graduate) from university next year, she _____ (study) English for nearly four years.
۴. Right now Susan is in the hospital. She _____ (treat) for a bad burn on her hand and arm.
۵. She _____ (always want) to be an actress but she _____ (get) distracted by alternative careers.

Q. ۲ Choose the appropriate options to complete the sentences.

۱. We all told the boss that we wanted to have _____ salaries paid in advance but he just ignored _____.
- A) ours / it
- B) his / we
- C) their / our
- D) we / his
- E) our / us
۲. Although _____ in the room seemed to follow _____ said by the speaker, he never intended to simplify his language.

- A) no one / anything
- B) anybody / anything
- C) nobody / nothing
- D) anyone / nothing
- E) someone / something

۳. I hope you will enjoy _____ at the re-union party this weekend because I won't be able to be there _____.

- A) you / myself
- B) yourself / mine
- C) yours / oneself
- D) yourself / myself
- E) you / me

۴. Thousands of children nowadays prefer doing _____ homework with a background of pop-music to doing _____ in a quiet room.

- A) theirs / them
- B) his / its
- C) them / it's
- D) they / them
- E) their / it

۵. Trademarks enable a company to distinguish _____ products from _____ of another company.

- A) their / it
- B) it / that
- C) our / this
- D) its / those
- E) my / these

Q۶. Fill in the spaces with appropriate prepositions.

A.

١. We are going _____ holiday next week.
٢. There is a bridge _____ the river.
٣. He screamed _____ me angrily.
٤. A small stream runs _____ that bridge.
٥. Did you vote _____ or _____ the suggestion?

B.

Late one evening ___ our way home ___ the studio, we pulled up ___ a red light. As we chatted quietly ___ the day's work, something suddenly kicked us ___ the rear and my feet went ___ my head. I reached out ___ Steve, screaming. I didn't know where down was, and my head wouldn't move ___ my neck. The car came ___ a halt. We had been knocked sixty feet ___ the opposite side of the highway ___ the path of oncoming traffic.

Q ٤. Complete the paragraph using the correct coordinators.

Fans love to watch Anna, ___ she dances beautifully. She performs with a fan, ___ people enjoy watching her. She hasn't taken dance lessons, ___ does she need to. Her technique is unconventional, ___ the effect is striking. She can fill an audience with joy, ___ she can bring people to tears. Other dancers try to imitate her style, ___ they have not succeeded. She is talented, ___ she will attract fans for many years to come.

Q ٥. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

١. playing sports such as tennis and basketball _____ (**require, requires**) not only mental ability but also physical strength.
٢. Everyone _____ (**have, has**) problems.

- ϣ. Half of the class _____ (**are, is**) from another country.
- Ϙ. Neither of those choices _____ (**appear, appears**) satisfactory.
- ο. Each of the cars in the street _____ (**is, are**) new.
- ϧ. The staff _____ (**was, were**) shocked by the news of their boss.
- ϣ. Every man and woman _____ (**is, are**) responsible for his actions.
- Ϡ. None of them _____ (**have, has**) shoes to wear.
- ϩ. Bread and butter _____ (**is, are**) our daily food.
- ϣ. Twelve miles _____ (**is, are**) a long distance to run.

Q ϧ. Fill in the blanks using the appropriate adjective.

- ϣ. My sister thinks she's (intelligent) than me, but I don't agree!
- ϣ. My house is almost (big) yours!
- ϣ. Do you think the *Harry Potter* films are (good) than the books?
- Ϙ. Who is (powerful) person in your country?
- ο. Is Angelina Jolie (old) than Sandra Bullock?
- ϧ. John is (nice) person that I know.

Q ϣ. Complete the sentences using one of the following words: **much, many, some, few, a few, little, a little.**

_____ students were able to pass the exam. It was rather disappointing. We need to teach them better, and fast because we don't have _____ time left. Ryan is among the students who had failed, he had so _____ on his mind that he couldn't concentrate on the exam. I think he just needs _____ push in the right direction, he'll be fine. He may also need _____ counselling from his teachers.

Q Ϡ. Complete the paragraph using the appropriate gerund or infinitive.

We are sitting in a restaurant and we have asked the waiter _____ (bring) the menu, though I'm thinking about _____ (ask) for a cup of tea only because I'm so sad, I miss _____ (be) with you so much. I hope _____ (be) strong enough _____ (resist) tomorrow's excursion. We will probably start _____ (drive) towards old eastern Germany early in the morning, since they say there are a couple of extraordinary things _____ (see) somewhere called Leipzig.

Q 9. Complete the letter using the correct article (a, an, the, Ø).

Dear Judy,

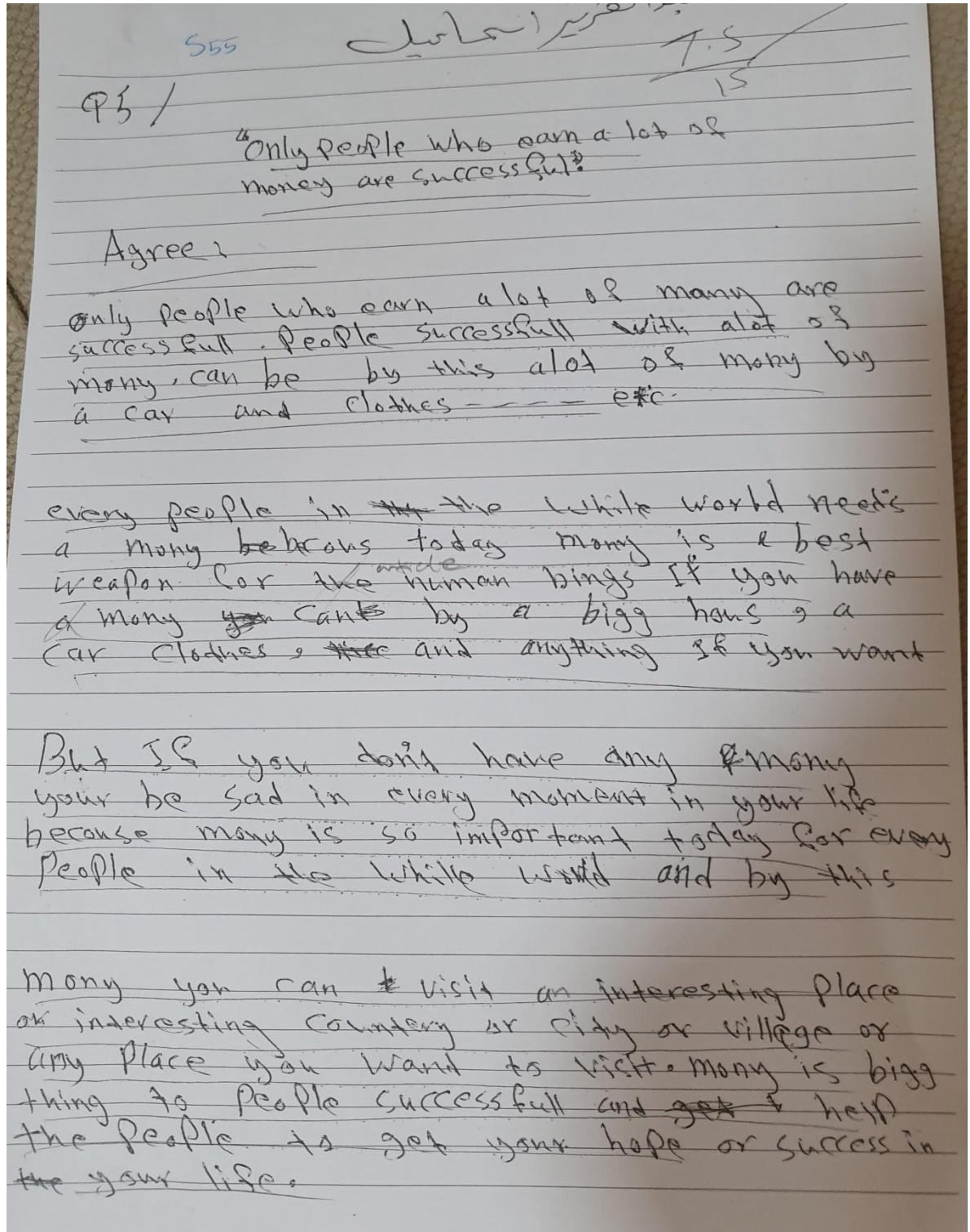
Sorry that I didn't email you earlier to tell you about ___ trip. We had ___ fantastic time in ___ South Africa. We began ___ trip in ___ Cape Town as you suggested. While we were taking in ___ spectacular views, we met ___ man who runs ___ lodge just outside ___ Kalahari National Park. We rented ___ car and slowly drove up ___ West Coast to ___ park and spent our time exploring ___ Kalahari Desert. What ___ adventure!

Q 10. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate modals.

1. It isn't cold outside. You _____ (*mustn't, needn't, shouldn't, can't*) wear a coat.
2. I can hear footsteps in the flat upstairs, so there _____ (*must, can, may, should*) be someone there.
3. My letter _____ (*must have arrived, may arrive, can't have arrived, should have arrived*) yesterday, but it didn't.
4. I'm not sure, but I _____ (*should have seen, may have seen, can see, must have seen*) Sue in town last night.
5. Judging by the state of the children's bedroom, there _____ (*might have been, may be, might be, has to be*) a riot in it.

Appendix 4 Two Essay Samples

Sample One



Sample Two

Q5/ 51 4

The idea of success with being successful both ~~and~~ ~~really~~ do not need money all the time. For example Shakespeare was a successful writer by working hard, writing Poems, being performed and he became a legend in the whole universe, yet no one mentioned any funds matter with him. So many singers were poor enough to an extent they were begging in streets to earn some money for living. For instance Ed Sheeran, a British singer who happened to be a unique singer by his amazing voice and that let him to be successful person without having money before he was successful. In this world, it has so many legends that have great

talents to show to people and help them discover new things and new way of living to lead them for a successful life even if those people have no money. By being a successful person ~~to~~ people need to earn courage, happiness and smart ideas to lead to a better life and take them away from the of earning money ~~and~~ is the way of a successful life only!

$\frac{625}{15}$