



A Study of Factors that Affect Learners’ English Writing Skill

Bestoon Saleh Ali

Department of English Language, College of Education and Languages, Lebanese French University, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

bestoon.saleh@lfu.edu.krd

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ABSTRACT

Writing proficiency is a crucial part of language learning and plays a vital role in professional and educational settings. Writing tends to be viewed as , perhaps, the most difficult and demanding of the four skills, while listening, reading, and speaking are all significant skills. This is due to the fact that writing demands a high degree of proficiency in language, vocabulary, and grammar, as well as an ability to organize and communicate ideas clearly and cohesively. The present paper attempts to study the factors that positively affect learners’ English writing skill in an academic context. It also aims to figure out the difficulties that students encounter in academic writing skill. This review study identifies a body of literature in terms of writing skill, writing problems, and writing-influencing factors. The review of the previous studies demonstrates that a few fundamental factors influence students' skill to write professionally. Furthermore, there are a few noteworthy factors that hinder their academic writing skills. According to the literature review, the learners' main goal is to boost their writing, and they require more time and attention. This study supports teachers as well as students in questioning the variables that strengthen writing skills.

1. Introduction

The four language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are mutually associated and supportive to one another. Generally, English language skills are either receptive skills or productive skills. Reading and listening are considered receptive skills since they entail gaining knowledge. On the other hand, because



speaking and writing include creating words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, they are referred to as productive skills. Writing is regarded as the most fundamental skill among all the skills. Writing in English is characterized as one of the essential academic skills and one of the most challenging to develop when compared to reading, listening, and speaking (Makalela, 2004). A great number of people think that writing is a talent, however Sokolik (2003) says that "writing is a teachable and learnable skill"(106). Furthermore, writing is a challenging task that relies on a multitude of skills, including critical thinking, planning, and language proficiency. It can be extraordinarily problematic for EFL learners since they must also manage the extra difficulties of learning a new language and comprehending various cultural conventions for writing. Students frequently attempt to improve their writing skills in English, but they are never completely successful since writing is challenging. Writing skills should be developed over a long time to become accurate, professional, and fluent. While writing, language learners should pay particular attention to sentence patterns, punctuation usage, acceptable vocabulary use, and paragraph organization. The majority of students do not properly understand the importance of writing skill. They continue experiencing numerous difficulties in English language courses, notably in writing (Ali et al 2017). According to Heaton (1991) writing is a complicated skill that may be challenging to learn. Furthermore, Richard and Renandya (2010) clarify that "writing is the most difficult skill for learners to master" (p. 303). In addition to mastering grammar, learners should also be expected to provide information and use writing components. The challenge is not only in developing and organizing ideas, but also in interpreting those thoughts into understandable language.

Therefore, the significance of this research paper is to reach the findings of earlier studies that were conducted to figure out the factors that impact the EFL learners write skill and the challenges that students experience when writing academically. It might be argued that these issues should not be ignored by the educational system. Language teachers should consider these main factors and difficulties for better education and productive classes.

This research paper attempts to analyse factors and difficulties affecting EFL learners' writing skills. So, the purpose of this research paper was to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the common factors that improve EFL learners writing skill?
2. What are the difficulties influencing learners' English writing skill?

A descriptive qualitative study approach is utilized to review a great number of research studies, including nineteen research papers on academic writing difficulties and factors that impact EFL learners' writing skills. The samples were deliberately picked for this. The data was gathered from secondary sources. Thematic analysis is utilized to analyze the obtained data to show how past researchers and academics have examined the influential aspects of writing skills.

2. The Common Factors that Improve the EFL Learners' Writing Skill

According to students, the hardest part of learning a language is writing Hidayati (2018). Students may lose interest in writing for a variety of causes, including an inherent fear of failing to create sentences properly on their first few efforts. Additionally, according to teachers, writing is apparently seemed to be quite difficult to teach and can only be "learned" under adequate supervision. According to Ahmed (2019), the student must deliberate and continuously attempt to write and practice. However, just like any other skill, writing may be "learned" by concentrating on the set of crucial factors in writing professionally.

Previous studies have concentrated on the root factors that impact the improvement of writing skill of EFL students. The sections that follow offer in-depth discussions of these factors.

2.1 Positive Feedback

According to the previous studies, positive feedback is ranked as the first factor in improving students writing skill. Generally, positive feedback helps students improve their language productivity. Feedback is essential for learners to improve their writing skills since it enables them to pinpoint areas that they want work and provides direction on how to do so (Hattie & Timperley 2007). Without receiving any feedback,

students would not know how to get better at writing, and their skills might slow down. Students can use feedback to identify patterns in their writing and fix areas of difficulty. For instance, if a student repeatedly has trouble with paragraph transitions, they may use feedback to pinpoint this weakness and focus on strengthening it. Feedback may also inspire students to keep improving their writing skills and can make them feel more confident about their potential. Dhanya and Alamelu (2019) conducted a study about factors influencing students' writing skills. The results were some key ingredients that were considered to enable students to write well. One of the results was about positive feedback. It has been acknowledged that feedback is crucial for improving students' writing skill since it enables them to determine their areas of weakness, and offers advice on how to do so.

2.2 Practice in Writing

Generally, practices in writing are essential to enhancing students' writing skills. According to Tuan (2010) EFL learners need to practice writing frequently to improve their writing skills. Writing regularly can help them to develop their ideas, organize their thoughts, and express themselves more clearly. Haerazi and Irawan (2019) acknowledged that there is no doubt that regular writing may increase learners' writing fluency, boosting their accuracy, organization, and coherence. As students get more experience, they may experiment with a variety of writing formats, voices, and styles. Furthermore, they can practice with a variety of writing styles, including expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative writing. By writing in various genres, a student may improve his/her ability to express themselves clearly in various situations.

Several research studies emphasized the importance of practice as a fundamental and influential factor in developing writing skill. For instance, Johnstone, Ashbaugh and Warfield (2002) conducted a study entitled 'Effects of repeated practice and contextual-writing experiences on college students' writing skills'. According to the findings, writing practice constitutes one of the most essential components in strengthening Undergraduate student's writing skills. Another study by Herdi (2015) concentrated on the factors that positively affect students' writing skill. Certain findings were addressed and one was about practice frequently in writing.

2.3 Materials

Writing skills may undoubtedly be influenced by the information a teacher provides. Students can improve their writing skills by receiving a range of reading resources, writing prompts, and homework from their teachers.

The material should be genuine, realistic, in context, and emphasising the learner. For instance, exposing students to a range of fiction and nonfiction literature can introduce them to various writing genres, styles, and strategies (Hiew 2010). It is quite important for the materials to be appropriate for students' past knowledge and connected to their life experiences. Students can establish links between what they are learning in the classroom and their surroundings. Students are more likely to be interested and motivated to study when they can relate what they learn to their own life. Also, it benefits in greater learning retention and application in daily life. Likewise, a study was conducted by Akdemir and Eyerci (2016) and the main focus of this study was on applying writing templates as materials to develop writing skills in EFL classes. And the result demonstrated that choosing suitable materials had a fruitful factor on students writing skill. Furthermore, it has been proven that writing templates can be used as writing materials to improve students' writing skills. Overall, the right materials that students use can greatly impact how well they write.

It's vital to acknowledge difficulties with writing so that one can pinpoint their areas of weakness and concentrate on strengthening them. Making significant progress in writing skill development might be challenging without pinpointing particular areas of difficulty.

Identifying writing challenges also assists students in setting reasonable objectives for themselves (Getzel & Thoma 2008).. They may create attainable objectives and track their advancement over time by being aware of their present skill level and the areas they need to improve in. Additionally, recognizing writing challenges might assist students in looking for the right tools to advance their abilities.

In general, noticing writing skills difficulties is a crucial initial step to strengthening writing skills and improving communication.

3. Difficulties in Writing Skill

Writing is a method of producing language and expressing ideas, feelings, and opinions. It signifies that writing is a skill that concentrates on generating words, and the writing skill involves an intellectual level or an expression level (Harmer, 2004). Writing is already taught in schools and universities. The most challenging aspect of language learning for students is writing, hence it is a skill that must be developed. This view that writing is a kind of thinking process is reinforced by Brown (2001). Before publication, writing might be prepared and given a limitless number of modifications. English communication skills, both oral and written, are demanded of the learners. Students feel that writing in an academic context requires more focus, critical thinking, and long-term learning than other skills, making it more challenging. Thus, according to Leo (2007), writing as a process of putting ideas or thoughts into words may be done in one's free time. This indicates that learning to write takes a lot of practice.

Nonetheless, there are various claims that writing is more challenging than other language skills. First, Ericson (1999) points out the need for writing words with precise spelling while discussing writing difficulty. Furthermore, Asmervik, Ogden, and Rygvold (1999) refer to writing challenges as a student challenge within writing. Then, according to Koutsoftas and Gray (2012), learners struggle with productivity, complexity, and grammar.

It is clear that writing in English is not a simple process. According to Al Mekhlafi (2011), students must create well-accepted written work that is readable and understandable, which means that this skill takes a great deal of practice and training. On the other hand, Researchers addressed the causes and primary difficulties of writing issues in previous studies. These issues have been thoroughly discussed in the sections that follow.

3.1 Word Choices

According to previous studies, choosing the proper academic words is categorized as the first most prominent challenge for students. Choosing the proper words when typing out a piece of writing is significant. Like most other types of writing, academic writing undoubtedly involves a variety of options. When it comes time to write, a



student must choose the words that best convey the concept before deciding how to reassemble them into phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs (Huang et al., 2012). Furthermore, readers are better able to comprehend an idea when powerful word choices are used. Conciseness and clarity are essential in academic writing. The word choices that the student selects are a major contributing factor to the difficulties teachers have understanding written content. They could have to do with using the wrong term, using too many words to convey a message, or employing cliches that not everyone would find understandable. It has been noted that students' awareness is necessary for language knowledge regarding word choice (Huang et al., 2012). Several researchers brought up word choices as a major difficulty in various contexts (Al-Khairy, 2013; Al Mubarak, 2017; Aldabbus, 2017). This indicates that when teaching writing, the aspects of word choices that frequently challenge students in academic writing should be prioritized.

3.2 Poor Background in Grammar

Writing is a fundamental skill regardless of the sort of writer you are. A good writer can create messages that are both coherent and clear. However, good writing consists of both small and large components. Generally, good grammar makes writing comprehensible since it adheres to the fundamental principles of sentence form, punctuation, and spelling. An indication of professionalism and expertise in writing is the use of proper grammar. Whatever you write, employing good grammar demonstrates to your audience how seriously you take your writing. Grammar is the main area of concern in student writing and it has been categorized as the second biggest challenge for students. Poor background of grammar often appears in the writing process for almost non-native students (Abdulkareem, 2013). Numerous research has been conducted with an emphasis on ESL learners' analyses writing difficulties in grammar. According to a study done on Chinese students by Darus and Ching (2009) the most frequent mistakes Chinese students encounter are poor grammar background in terms of subject-verb agreement, tenses, prepositions, and writing mechanics. According to a study by Javed and Umer (2014) students struggle significantly while writing academically because they lack the skills to properly use of grammatical structure, organize their thoughts, and use acceptable lexical

elements. This result is similar to a study conducted in Indonesia which aimed to investigate problems of Indonesian EFL students' writing skills, covering ability, problem and reason why they got problems in writing comparison and contrast essay. The findings from this study demonstrated that the writing skills of Indonesian EFL students were good. Some of them, meanwhile, struggle with writing elements like structure, mechanics, vocabulary, and grammar.

Basalama et al. (2019) stated that students must grasp both their immediacy in writing and the norms of grammar in order to write an excellent essay. By mastering grammar, students will be able to write with more clarity and readability and with more stylistic freedom. Many students struggle with grammar, which limits their ability to write a piece of writing. They frequently struggle with grammar and make grammatical errors that weaken the content of essays.

As a result, numerous researchers have discovered that most English language learners EFL struggle with writing in a second language due to their weak grammatical background.

3.3 Low Level of Motivation in Writing

The third challenge with EFL students' writing skills is the low level of motivation. The connection between motivation and writing skill has been the subject of various research. Writing is a fundamental academic skill for students at all academic levels. The strength of students' writing impacts their academic success across the curriculum (Hidi & Boscolo, 2007). However, the majority of professions demand strong writing skills, with some requiring even higher levels of proficiency. Ackerman (2006) emphasized the significance of motivation in writing and said that the learner would be unable to demonstrate significant growth and development in the absence of techniques to boost motivation. Likewise, a study was conducted by Gditawi, Noah, and Abdul Ghani (2011), which investigated the important relationship between motivation and learning reading and writing in one of the public schools in Jordan. The findings have clearly identified the effect of motivation on learning reading and writing.

Writing proficiency is influenced by the motivation to write (Pajares, 1996). Students who lack writing motivation are less likely to participate in academic writing



assignments. These students could thus experience high levels of anxiety, a lack of self-control, low levels of self-efficacy, and a lack of self-determination while writing. Similarly, Ismayanti and Kholiq (2020) conducted a study to identify the challenges involved in writing descriptive text as well as the elements that contribute to these challenges. According to the survey and observation, there were a number of elements that have influenced students' writing skills. The lack of motivation was one of the challenges.

The area of motivation is quite broad and well-researched. In fact, it is so vast that it may occasionally be challenging to draw connections between motivation and specific skills (Hidi & Boscolo, 2007). Because writing is such a vital element of human existence, it is fundamental that motivation and writing research be done. The fact that the results of these investigations have practical applicability is even more significant. It may be put into practice to improve the writing of all students.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Effective communication and critical thinking are both necessary for success in academic and professional contexts, and they both depend on this. Writing plays an essential role for students for plenty of reasons. It first enables students in developing a logical and cohesive organization for their thoughts and ideas. Second, writing fosters students' creativity and enables them to express themselves innovatively and uniquely. Students may experiment with language and style, explore unusual ideas, and uncover their own unique points of view with the help of writing. The third point is that writing is crucial for learning and academic achievement. It is easier for students to express their grasp of the course content and to convey their views clearly in assignments and tests when they are proficient writers. The current research paper aimed to study the factors that enhance students' academic English writing skills. It also sought to identify the challenges that students face when developing their academic writing skills. This study reviewed research identifies a body of literature. The review of earlier studies showed that a few key elements affect students' skill to write professionally: positive feedback, practice in writing, and educational materials. Additionally, there are a few notable issues that limit their academic writing skills: word choice, poor grammar background, and low motivation in writing.



Finally, it is suggested that the results of this study would be highly beneficial to English language teachers and curriculum designers in addressing the writing challenges that English language learners could have.

The researcher highly suggests conducting further study to better understand besides the aforementioned difficulties, what are other difficulties that students encounter in writing skill, how motivation might impact students' writing performance, as well as how feedback and evaluation tools are directly enhancing students' writing abilities in academic settings.

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لێکۆڵینه‌وه‌یه‌ک له‌سه‌ر ئه‌و هۆکارانه‌ی که کاریگه‌رییان له‌سه‌ر توانای نووسینی ئینگلیزی

فێرخوازان هه‌یه

پوخته:

پوخته‌ی شاره‌زایی نووسین به‌شێکی گه‌رنه‌ی له‌ فێرپوونی زمانیک و پۆلێکی گه‌رنه‌ی هه‌یه‌ بۆ شوێنه‌ بێشه‌یی و په‌روه‌رده‌یه‌کان. نووسین لایانی ئه‌وه‌ ده‌گه‌رێته‌وه‌ که پهنه‌ی وه‌ک قورسترین و داواکارترین کارامه‌یی له‌ چوار کارامه‌یه‌یه‌که‌دا سه‌یر بکریته‌، له‌ کاتێکدا گوێگرتن و خوێندنه‌وه‌ و قسه‌کردن هه‌موویان کارامه‌یه‌یه‌کی به‌رچاوان. ئه‌مه‌ش بۆ ئه‌وه‌ ده‌گه‌رێته‌وه‌ که نووسین پێویستی به‌ په‌له‌یه‌کی به‌رزی لێهاتوویی له‌ زمان و وشه‌سازی و پێزماندا هه‌یه‌، هه‌روه‌ها توانای رێکخستن و گه‌یانندی بێرۆکه‌کان به‌ شپۆه‌یه‌کی روون و یه‌گه‌رتوو. ئه‌م توێژینه‌وه‌یه‌ هه‌ولده‌دات ئه‌و هۆکارانه‌ ده‌ستنیشان بکات که کاریگه‌ری ئه‌رێنیان له‌سه‌ر فێرخوازان هه‌یه‌، لێهاتوویی نووسینی ئینگلیزی له‌ چوارچۆیه‌ی

ئهكادي ميذا. ههروهه ئامانجى ئهوهيه ئهوه بهربهستانه بدؤزيتتهوه كه خوئندكاران له تواناى نووسىنى ئهكادي ميذا تووشى دهبن. ئهم توؤزيتنهوهيه پئداچوونهوهيه كؤمه لئيك توؤزيتنهوهيه پئشوتترله رپووى لئيهاتووى نووسين، كئشهكانى نووسين و هؤكارهكانى كارىگهري نووسينهوه دهستنيشان دهكات. پئداچوونهوه به توؤزيتنهوهكانى پئشوودا ئهوه دهردهخات كه چهند هؤكارئيكى بنهههتتى ههن كه كارىگهرييان لهسهر لئيهاتووى خوئندكاران ههيه بؤ نووسىنى پئشهيهي. جگه لهوهش چهند هؤكارئيكى جئى سهرنج ههن كه رئىگرى له لئيهاتووى نووسىنى ئهكادي مييان دهكهن. بهپئى پئداچوونهوهيه ئهدهبيات، ئامانجى سهههكى فيرخوازان بهرزكردنهوهيه تواناى نووسينهكهيانه، ههروهه پئويستيان بهكات و گرنگيدانى زياتره. ئهم توؤزيتنهوهيه پئشتگيرى مامؤستايان و ههروهه خوئندكاران دهكات له پرسياركردن لهو گؤراوانهيه كه تواناكانى نووسين بههئز دهكهن.

دراسة للعوامل التي تؤثر على مهارة الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية للمتعلمين

المخلص:

تعد إتقان الكتابة جزءًا أساسيًا من تعلم اللغة وتلعب دورًا حيويًا في البيئات المهنية والتعليمية. تميل الكتابة إلى اعتبارها ربما أصعب المهارات الأربع وتطلبها، بينما تعد مهارات الاستماع والقراءة والتحدث كلها مهارات مهمة. ويرجع ذلك إلى حقيقة أن الكتابة تتطلب درجة عالية من الكفاءة في اللغة والمفردات والقواعد، فضلاً عن القدرة على تنظيم الأفكار وإيصالها بطريقة واضحة ومتناسكة. تحاول هذه الورقة دراسة العوامل التي تؤثر بشكل إيجابي على مهارات الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية للمتعلمين في السياق الأكاديمي. كما يهدف إلى معرفة الصعوبات التي يواجهها الطلاب في مهارة الكتابة الأكاديمية. تحدد دراسة المراجعة هذه مجموعة من الأدبيات من حيث مهارة الكتابة ومشكلات الكتابة والعوامل المؤثرة في الكتابة. توضح مراجعة الدراسات السابقة أن هناك عددًا قليلاً من العوامل الأساسية التي تؤثر على مهارة الطلاب في الكتابة بشكل احترافي. علاوة على ذلك، هناك بعض العوامل الجديرة بالملاحظة التي تعيق مهارات الكتابة الأكاديمية لديهم. وفقاً لمراجعة الأدبيات، فإن الهدف الرئيسي للمتعلمين هو تعزيز كتاباتهم، وهم يحتاجون إلى مزيد من الوقت والاهتمام. تدعم هذه الدراسة المعلمين وكذلك الطلاب في التساؤل عن المتغيرات التي تعزز مهارات الكتابة.