

The Effectiveness of Journal Writing and Sentence Combining Practice in Developing Female EFL Students' Writing

Dr. Ibtesam H. Aljiffri

Dept. Curricula & Teaching Methods
College of Education, Om Al Qura University
K.S.A.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the Effects of Journal Writing and Sentence Combining Practice on the Development of the Writing skill of Secondary School Students in English as a foreign language (EFL). A factorial design was manipulated, where 42 subjects, were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. Existing scores on the school's first semester writing achievement test were used to determine the writing proficiency levels of the subjects. Data were collected through administering two writing tests, a one-hour test and a 15-minute free writing test. The results of these tests were analyzed using t-test to assess the relationship between writing fluency, complexity and accuracy. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and two multivariate analyses of variances (MANOVA) were further run in order to address the questions raised in the study. Findings of the study showed that there was no significant difference between Journal Writing and Sentence Combining practice in improving the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of the students. The MANOVA test was run to test the interaction between the treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy showed no significant results. Recommendations were provided at the end of the study.

Introduction

Contemporary thinking about writing instruction calls for process teaching of the skill - an approach that involves generation of ideas,

accommodation of audience, multiple drafting and revising. The underpinning assumption is that writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, making them visible and concrete. Writing encourages thinking and learning, now that it motivates communication and makes thoughts available for reflection (Mekheimer, 2005). This approach allows students to manage the complexity of the writing task as they go through the different stages of writing, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, superseded, rearranged, and changed. Almost without exception, contemporary composing theories and research on the teaching of writing agree that writing needs to be taught as a process rather than a product (Hairston, 1992 as cited in Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Process writing is an approach to teaching writing that has been researched in depth over the past year and recommended for use with both English as a first language learners (L1) (Calkins, 1986, Emig, 1981; & Graves, 1983 as cited in Peregoy & Boyle, 1977) and English as a second language learners (L2), (Kroll, 1990 as cited in Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). According to Halliday MAK (1989) and Grabe & Kaplan (1996), it has been quite customary to think of writing as not being an innate skill or potential capacity or aptitude. It is rather a technology that has to be learned; that is, a skill that requires certain technical capacity which involves cognitive-psychomotor cooperation.

Huff and Kline (1987) present in their book *The Contemporary Writing Curriculum: Rehearsing, Composing, and Valuing* a writing model that includes three main components relative to rehearsing, composing, and valuing. The researchers maintain that...

“a writing curriculum must provide daily and systematically focused rehearsal of writing skills; it must incorporate a thorough, well grounded understanding of the composing process, and it must assist students in developing skills to value and judge their own and others’ writing” (p.1).

The present study was set to examine the element of rehearsing as it relates to the first stage of the writing process, the prewriting stage. One activity that can provide daily and systematically focused rehearsal of writing skills is maintaining daily Journal Writing. Journal Writing is one type of writing which provides learners with opportunities to write

freely from their own experiences. It gives learners the time they need to rehearse writing in a foreign language. Journal Writing is defined as a type of written interaction between teachers and students that focuses on meaning rather than form and is a means of developing student's linguistic competence, and their ability to communicate in written English (Peyton, 1990).

Writing in a daily journal format has many advantages. In fact, Huff and Kline (1987) have maintained that...

“..there is no replacement for the journal within the composing curriculum. It serves as an ongoing rehearsal of skills and ideas that interact to ignite the composing process, turning it into an act of discovery as opposed to the reduction of experience that characterizes the school-assigned essay”(p.49).

This is because Journal Writing affects learner's interactions with teachers, and it affects learner's language proficiencies. One reason for the popularity of journals is the flexibility it offers students and teachers. Journals can be used as opportunities for student-teacher dialogues; as places to record notes, gather materials, and plan writing. Another reason for the popularity of journal is that they engage students in non-threatening exploration and development of ideas; they are “the most consistently effective tool for establishing fluency” (Kirby, 1988 as cited in Reid, 1993, p.162).

Another advantage of using Journal Writing with students is the effect it has on their language proficiency (Peyton, 1990). Language proficiency can be defined in terms of accuracy and fluency. If a learner has mastered a language successfully that means he or she can understand and produce it both accurately (correctly) and fluently (receiving and conveying messages with ease). This applies to both reading and writing skills. When we talk about “getting the language right”, we are talking about accuracy; and when we are concentrating on the “message”, we are talking about the fluency (Brumfit, 1984).

Similarly, Casanave (1994) maintained that “we watch student's fluency and depth of thought increase as they manage to move away from dependency on dictionaries and translations. We watch them lose their fear and dislike of writing. We witness increasing number of

creative out-bursts and incidents of risk-taking. We notice that fewer students dwell on their grades and instead dwell on ideas. We sense that student's language and thinking both mature over time"(p.180).

Furthermore, Journal Writing is one of the pre-writing activities which allows student to overcome the frustration they face with the assigned weekly compositions where they can not come up with ideas to express themselves fluently and easily. It allows the EFL learners to experience what Janet Emig (1971) (as cited in Huff & Kline, 1987) calls the self-sponsored writing as opposed to the school-sponsored; that is the students will learn how to get involved in their own writing through creative pre-drafting, part of which is being the Journal Writing.

Finally, having students keep journals allows EFL teachers to discover that all students can write and that they are good writers. This is consistent with the premise of Macrorie (1976) who maintained that "we need to listen to what students say and look at what they write"(p.4).

On the other hand, Sentence Combining is one of the writing techniques which focuses on teaching writing as a language skill (Reid, 1993). The concept of Sentence Combining was developed by Francis Christensen (1967) and William Strong (1978) (as cited in Reid, 1993).

It is believed that "discrete instruction at the sentence level extends the cognitive strategies of students; improves the sophistication of their sentence structures, and eventually improves their compositions" (Johnson, 1992 as cited in Reid, 1993, p.28). The research on Sentence Combining practice seems to indicate that this practice in and of itself improves not only fluency but the overall writing quality (Zamel, 1980; & Kameen, 1978). The research into effect of Sentence Combining practice on student's writing ability has revealed and confirmed a number of important points concerning the value of Sentence Combining exercises in a composition curriculum. Miller and Ney (1967, 1968) (as cited in Kameen, 1978) have shown that the rapid syntactic gains brought about by a combination of oral and written Sentence Combining exercises correlate with improved writing quality; this is well documented in the following citation:

"For ESL students, Sentence Combining is certainly a very good way of introducing new language structures without going into complicated explanations and employing specialized termi-

nology while it does not give students the opportunity to formulate ideas and communicate something meaningful to a reader, it does provide plenty of practice with the syntactic structures that are more common in writing than in speech, and gives students the chance to use the grammatical knowledge they have to make choices about structure” (Raimes, 1983, p.107).

Sentence Combining involves giving students two or more short sentences and asking them to combine the information into a single sentence. Such activities bring out the important fact that there are always multiple ways of expressing an idea in English (Pearson & Camperell, 1981 as cited in Burns *et al.*, 1996). In this vein, “it is best to present sentences related to matters the children are studying, talking about or writing about, and then let them experiment with combining to achieve greater clarity, emphasis, focus on the image the writer desires the reader to have, ease of reading, or variation in style” (Petty *et al.*, 1994, p.260).

Here it is good to include examples of Sentence Combining exercises to give an idea about what this writing practice is all about. The first example is provided by Strong (1973) (as cited in Reid, 1993, pp.28-29).

- 1 - The writer is young.
- 2 - The writer is developing.
- 3 - The writer works with options.

Possible transformations or combinations:

- 1 - The young developing writer works with options.
- 2 - The young writer who is developing works with options.
- 3 - The writer who is young and developing works with options.
- 4 - Options are worked with by the young developing writer.

Context of the Problem:

As stated earlier, the present study was set to investigate the effects of Journal Writing, a prewriting activity focusing on writing rehearsal, on promoting the writing development of EFL students and the effects

of Sentence Combining which is another type of writing practice on promoting the writing development of EFL students in terms of writing fluency, complexity and accuracy.

Interest in carrying out this study was due to the fact that most of the studies reviewed in this paper looked at writing development in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy, but not necessarily in relation to the daily Journal Writing or the Sentence Combining practice with EFL learners. Therefore, there is a possibility of examining the relative effectiveness of these two techniques of teaching writing on the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of EFL learners.

The studies reviewed were all conducted either with adult learners or university students, so there is a lack of data from studies done with secondary level students. The reason why 2nd year secondary students were chosen in particular rather than lower or middle elementary classes had to do with the type of analysis used to measure the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy. The T-unit analysis, which was used to measure the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy, does not appear to be appropriate for the analysis of data from subjects with relatively low proficiency. It works better with learners with high degree of proficiency (Gaies, 1980). Therefore, secondary level students who have been studying English for 5 years seemed to be more suitable than elementary level students for this study especially that the Journal Writing and Sentence Combining activities are appropriate with any grade level.

The number of studies dealing with the effect of Journal Writing on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy is limited; however, researchers attribute a number of benefits to Journal Writing. For example, in a study conducted on five sixth-grade English as a Second language learners, Peyton (1990) reported that the linguistic complexity - the ability to use subordination and to produce complex sentences and clauses- was more developed in the students' journals than in their assigned writing.

Two longitudinal studies on Journal Writing of individual writers were reported in Casanave's (1994) work. In the first study, Elliot (1986) (as cited in Casanave, 1994) followed the writing development of a high-school speaker of Arabic learning to write in English for 6 months and found that "Nasr" used more subordination and more

accurate past tenses in later work in his journals. In the second longitudinal study, Hudelson (1989) (as cited in Casanave, 1994) observed and tutored two bilingual children for 1 year, and was struck by how greatly the children differed at the end of the 1 year of similar instruction, particularly in terms of their risk-taking behaviour.

On the issue of the effectiveness of Journal Writing, Peyton (1990) showed the effect of Journal Writing fluency, the ability to get words down on page easily, of a sixth grade L2 learner. In this case study, Peyton (1990) observed that as Michael, the L2 learner, continued writing in his journal, he began to display a sense of linguistic fluency, and his acquisition of written forms occurred in a natural way.

Along similar lines, an experimental study was conducted on six intermediate students from International College (IC), a Lebanese private high-school, showing that Journal Writing affected positively the writing fluency and the writing complexity, but not the writing accuracy of these intermediate students (Bazih, 1996).

Only one study attempted to combine different writing techniques with the writing process. In this study, Condrary and McIlvaine (1985) moved from the use of a traditional approach to an approach that reflects knowledge gained through research about the needs of basic writers in teaching a remedial course for educationally disadvantaged students at Slippery Rock University. Thirty students met six times a week for five weeks in one-and-a-half hour periods. Each day they practiced free writing, produced one or two pages of Journal Writing, and practiced Sentence Combining exercises. Evaluation was accomplished through teacher's written comments instead of grading, small group discussions, and short individual conferences. Pre and post-test measures, a Likert type attitude scale, a T-unit analysis, and a holistic evaluation on in-class essays demonstrated that at the end of the five week program students indicated that they felt more confident of their writing skills, varied their syntax effectively within their essays, and improved the overall quality of their writing through careful version.

Problem of the Study:

The present study aimed at investigating the relative effectiveness of Journal Writing practice and Sentence Combining practice in promoting

the writing development of 2nd year secondary EFL learners in terms of writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy. More specifically, the study addressed the following questions.

- 1 - Is Journal Writing practice more effective than Sentence Combining practice in developing the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of EFL student writers?
- 2 - Is there an interaction between the instructional method (Journal Writing and Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low and high) of the student writers?

Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were tested in the present study:

H_a 1: There is a significant difference in the writing fluency of 2nd year secondary EFL students instructed according to the Journal Writing technique and of those instructed according to the Sentence Combining technique.

H_a 2: There is a significant difference in the complexity level of the writing of 2nd year secondary EFL students instructed according to the Journal Writing technique and of those instructed according to the Sentence Combining technique.

H_a 3: There is a significant difference in the writing accuracy of the writing of 2nd year secondary EFL students instructed according to the Journal Writing technique and of those instructed according to the Sentence Combining technique.

H_a 4: There is a significant interaction between the writing teaching techniques and the writing proficiency levels of the student's writing.

Independent Variables:

Treatment: The treatment factor design is double-valued; the Journal Writing and the Sentence Combining. Journal Writing is one of the prewriting strategies which can be used in the process writing (Huff & Kline, 1987). Journal Writing is a type of written interaction between teachers and students that focuses on meaning rather than form and is a means of developing student's linguistic competencies and their ability to communicate in written English (Peyton, 1990). In this study, Sentence Combining is defined as a type of writing which provides plenty of practice with the syntactic structures that are more common

in writing than in speech, and gives students the chance to use the grammatical knowledge they have to make choices about structure (Raimes, 1983).

Writing Proficiency: In this study, students writing proficiency levels were determined based on students existing writing achievement scores on a writing test which was administered by the school at the end of the first semester. High proficient writers were the ones whose achievement scores were above the median which was 12; whereas, low proficient writers were the ones whose achievement scores were below the median score.

Dependant Variables:

Writing Fluency: It is defined as the ability to get words down on a page (Peyton, 1990). As the students write more they show more fluent writing than those who write less.

Writing Complexity: It is the ability to use subordination and to produce complex sentences and clauses (Peyton, 1990). The more the students use subordination, the more complex their writing becomes.

Writing Accuracy: In this study, it was defined as the ability to produce error free sentences except for spelling mistakes which were not counted as errors (Casanave, 1994).

Limitations of the Study:

A major limitation in the present study was the period of intervention since the treatment lasted for 10 weeks only. It is possible that the period of intervention was not long enough to bring significant changes in the writing of the 42 students participating in the study especially in terms of writing fluency, complexity and accuracy.

Another limitation was the number of students involved in the study. The 42 EFL learners enrolled in the 2nd year secondary school were divided into two groups receiving two different writing instructional techniques. The 42 students might not be the appropriate representative sample of the target population of 2nd year secondary EFL Saudi students in private schools in Makah.

Significance of the Study:

The present study represents an extension of earlier investigation of the Journal Writing practice and the Sentence Combining practice on

the writing quality of students. More specifically, the study looks at the relative effectiveness of the two writing instructional techniques; the Journal Writing and the Sentence Combining in promoting the writing development of EFL learners in terms of writing fluency, complexity and accuracy, a topic which was not addressed in previous research.

Therefore, the study seeks to provide information on (a) whether Journal Writing and Sentence Combining affect the writing development of 2nd year secondary EFL students in a Saudi private school, and (b) whether there is a significant interaction between the treatment (Journal Writing and Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low and high).

Review of Literature

In this review of literature pertinent to process writing and writing development, the researcher aims at presenting 1) views on the writing approaches, 2) views on the writing process, 3) studies related to writing development and Journal Writing, and 4) studies relate to Sentence Combining practice.

Writing is a complex process that demands continuous rehearsal for improvement. A common way to practice writing is to keep a journal. Journal Writing, which is one of the prewriting activities in the process writing approach, affects the writing development of students in terms of writing fluency, complexity and accuracy (Casanave, 1994; Peyton, 1990; & Kirby, 1988 as cited in Reid, 1993).

Another writing technique which affects the writing quality of students is the Sentence Combining practice (Kameen, 1978 & Zamel, 1980). Both writing techniques, the Journal Writing and the Sentence Combining, have effects on the overall writing quality of learners especially in relation to the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy.

Views on the Writing Approaches:

Writing is one of the language skills which occupies an important role in language learning and teaching. One of the many reasons why writing deserves attention in teaching language is because writing is the most common way of examining student performance in English. The ability to write itself may be associated with evidence of having learned the language. Although, writing has its place among the language skills,

there is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in ESL classes. Many approaches to teaching writing were developed since the 1950's and they continue to change as the needs of student change.

Under this section, six approaches to the teaching of writing based on Raimes' (1983) work are briefly summarized to present an idea on the developing and changing way of viewing writing since the 1950's till recently. The first approach reviewed is the controlled-to free approach. The controlled-to-free approach in writing is sequential; students are first given sentence exercise, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically. They might also change words or clauses or combine sentences. With these controlled composition, it is relatively easy for students to write a great deal yet avoid errors. This approach emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality.

The second approach is the free-writing approach which emphasizes that intermediate level students should put content and fluency first and not worry about form. Some teachers and researchers using this approach have stressed quantity rather than quality. They have approached the teaching of writing by assigning vast amounts of free writing on given topics with minimal correction of error.

Instead of accuracy of grammar or fluency of content, the paragraph-pattern approach, which is the third writing approach reviewed in this section, stresses on organization. Students copy paragraphs, analyze the form of model paragraphs and imitate model passages. This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures peoples construct and organize their communication with each other in different ways. So even if students organize their ideas well in their first language, they still need to see, analyze, and practice the particularity of "English" features of a piece of writing.

The fourth approach is the grammar-syntax-organization approach. Teachers who use this approach say that writing cannot be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned one by one. So they devise writing tasks that lead students to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. This approach, then, links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to convey the message.

The communicative approach, the fifth approach, stresses on the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it. Student writers

are encouraged to behave like writers in real life to ask themselves the crucial questions about purpose and audience. Why am I writing this? and who will read it?

Recently, the teaching of writing has begun to move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing which is the last approach reviewed in this section. In this approach, writers ask themselves not only questions about purpose and audience, but also the crucial questions: How do I write this? How do I get started?

Views on the Process Approach:

In the 1970's, the ESL profession gradually began abandoning structuralist views of language and grammar based methodologies in favor of approaches which focused on communication not grammatical accuracy, as the goal of language learning. ESL teachers and researchers especially interested in writing also shifted their perspective and began to examine native-speaker writing classes, already well engaged in the paradigm shift toward a process approach to teaching writing (Hairston, 1982; & Zamel, 1976 as cited in Leki, 1992). It was in the 1980's that increasing number of ESL conference papers explored the idea of using process approaches with ESL students (Leki, 1992).

The advantage in adopting the process approach is in developing the significance of the cyclical and recursive nature of writing, supposedly, employed by native writers, where 'ordinarily pre-writing, writing and re-writing frequently seem to be going on simultaneously' (Smith, 1982: 104).

As previously alluded, the most important principle of process pedagogy is that writing is the result of a very complex, highly individualized process. Therefore, the redirection to process-driven writing has arisen in opposition to the traditional method to writing instruction that mostly relied on:

- The three or five paragraph model;
- Simplistic assumptions about essay organization and ordering of data and information in the text of the essay;
- The typical one draft essay writing product;

- Individualistic approach to writing where each student writes to herself or himself and the only one to see or judge the writing is the teacher;
- Over-reliance on mechanics and lecturing method;
- Linear composing starting with outlining, writing and editing (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:86).

This change to process-based instruction into writing in English was first started in the US due to changes in linguistics and requirements of higher education (White and Arndt, 1991); however, the approach is contagious; it was transmitted to the EFL context. This led to the elaboration of a model of the composing processes of the writer which has had a major impact on the writing instruction in the English speaking world (Tribble, 1996), and one would say, to the EFL contexts around the world. The composing processor is described as having three operational processes; i.e., planning, translating and reviewing which are controlled by a monitor. The task environment and the writer's long term memory provide resources and stimuli which are utilized by the composing processor. In this way, the ideas in the planner are changed into language on the page by the interpreter and then reviewed.

Thus, the process approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes. The teacher's role is to help students develop viable strategies for getting started (finding topics, generating ideas and information, focusing, and planning structure and procedure), for drafting (encouraging multiple drafts), for revising (adding, deleting, modifying, and rearranging ideas), and for editing (attending to vocabulary, grammar and mechanics). From a process perspective, then "writing is a complex, recursive, and creative process or set of behaviors that is very similar in its broad outlines for first and second language writers" (Kroll, 1990, p.16).

One of the researchers who were interested in studying the use of process-oriented writing with ESL learners was Zamel (1982) who studied the writing of eight university-level "proficient" L2 writers, one of whom was a graduate student. Her data consisted of interviews about her subject's writing experiences and behaviours, which were

retrospective accounts of writing processes and the students multiple drafts for the production of one essay. Zamel (1982) found that the writing processes of her L2 subjects were like those of the subjects described in L1 studies. She conducted that L2 composing processes indicate that L1 process-oriented writing instruction might also be effective for teaching L2 writing (Zamel, 1982).

Zamel conducted another study related to the issue of using process writing with L2 writers. Zamel's (1983) study of six advanced L2 students provided more support to a theme that was developing among L2 writing process studies that L2 writers compose like L1 writers. Giving a summarized review of the history of the writing approaches developed since the 1950's and after talking in detail about the process writing and its relation to second language writers, a section on studies related directly to the present study follows. Some of the studies are related to the prewriting stage of the writing process as it relates to the Journal Writing practice. Other studies are related to the effect of Journal Writing and Sentence Combining practices on the writing development of ESL writers.

Studies related to Writing Development and Journal Writing:

Many studies have looked at the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy in terms of the T-unit analysis. One such study was conducted by Bardovi-Harlig and Bofman (1989). The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between syntactic development or complexity, and overall accuracy evidenced in the written English of 30 advanced learners of English as a foreign language. The 30 learners participating in the study were representatives of 5 native languages: Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Malay and Spanish. The 30 students wrote on topics about "advice to Americans visiting your country", "how the women/family has changed in your country", "the person who influenced your life", and "national characteristics". The essays were scored along two parameters: syntactic complexity and surface errors. Syntactic complexity was calculated as the number of clauses per T-unit. The complexity data and the analysis of errors using the T-unit measures showed that the inter-language of the 30 advanced EFL learners exhibited relatively strong syntax but incomplete and variable acquisition of grammatical morphemes (Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman, 1989).

In the area of second language writing, current research documents the similarities in the writing processes of first and second language writers. For example, second language writers make use of their budding knowledge of English as they create texts for different audiences and different purposes, just as first language writers do (Ammon, 1985; Edelskey, 1981a, 1981b as cited in Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). In this context, researchers note that...

“It makes sense that the task of English writing should be similar for both first and English language learners. After all, the problems writers face are either specific to the convention of written English, such as spelling, grammar, and rhetorical choice, or they relate to more general aspects of the writing process, such as choosing a topic, deciding what to say, and tailoring the message to the intended audience-elements that go into writing in any language”(Peregoy & Boyle, 1997, p.185).

The focus in the classroom turned away from the final product, the structuring of essays and correction of errors to concentrate on creativity and self-discovery through the use of journals, in which students write freely without the consequences of grammar evaluation, teacher imposed topics and structures, critical comments, and grades (Elbow, 1973; Macrorie, 1970, 1976; & Moffet 1968 as cited in Reid, 1993). It is important here to say that the kind of Journal Writing to be emphasized is that which aims at building the writing skills of the students. A skill-building model of Journal Writing is appropriate for the writing classroom. In this theory of curriculum, the journal becomes the place where basic writing skills can be developed and where observations and experiences can be accurately recorded. The skill-building model depends on an intensive and ongoing interaction between the writer and the material in the journal (Huff & Kline, 1987).

The number of studies conducted on the effect of Journal Writing on the writing development of EFL learners in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy is limited. However, all of the students reviewed here have one thing in common and that is they measure the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy using T-unit analysis as the main analysis technique which is the case in the present study.

One study by Kintsch (1986) examined the effect of Journal Writing on the writing of elementary native speakers. In the 4 years study of the

process of Journal Writing with native speakers at Springside, an elementary school in Philadelphia, Kintsch (1986) reported that the children seem to use richer vocabularies in their writing than they did under traditional writing programs and that they write more easily and cogently as they move into the middle school:

“The most outstanding development at Springside during the 4 years of dedication to Journal Writing is the abundance of eager authors. Students write fluently and easily. They take risks with paper and pencil because they have years of experience in building confidence. They are fearless and imaginative when it comes to written communication”(p.172).

Another study conducted by Casanave (1994) emphasized the benefits of Journal Writing in terms of language acquisition, building cognitive growth, and fostering self-confidence of ESL learners. In her analysis of 16 ESL student's journals, Casanave (1994) concluded that the Journal Writing provided a window into student's cognitive processes, sense of fluency, and depth of treatment. The purpose of Casanave's study was to identify how the language in the 16 student's journals changed over three semesters in a setting where the journal was used extensively in a content-based class. The writing themes for the journals included cross-cultural conflict/prejudice and discrimination, human relationships and issues in law. The majority of analyses in Casanave's study consisted of various T-unit counts. The kinds of counts had to do with T-unit length, complexity, and accuracy. Length, as measured by number of words per T-unit. Complexity, as measured by number of clauses per T-unit and percentage of complex T-units (those with at least one subordinate or embedded clause). Accuracy, as measured by percent of error free-T-units and length of error free T-units (EFT's). The T-unit analysis demonstrated that the writing of all the students changed over time. The analysis showed that 45% of the students did not progress in the area of error reduction while 55% did. The findings showed also that all the students wrote more fluently, thoughtfully and insightfully.

The last study reviewed on the effect of Journal Writing on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy is that of Bazih (1994). Bazih (1994) examined change in the writing of six intermediate ESL students during their remedial course at IC, a private school in Lebanon. The

purpose of the study was to test the generalizability of some of the linguistic and rhetorical gains attributed to Journal Writing, namely fluency, complexity and accuracy. Students were expected to write daily journal entries for a period of nine consecutive weeks. T-unit analysis and three paired sample t-tests showed that the student's writing improved in the areas of fluency and complexity but deteriorated in accuracy.

Finally, theoretical support for the use of journals in teaching writing is derived from Vygotsky's (1962) views on the interactions of thought and language. Britten, Burgess, Martin, Mcleod, and Rosen (1975) (as cited in Stevenson & Jenkins, 1994) drew on the work of Vygotsky in claiming that the style of writing used in journals (expressive writing) "maybe... the kind of writing best adapted to exploration and discovery. It externalizes our first stage in tackling a problem or coming to grips with experience." (p.197). By bringing thoughts further into consciousness and objectifying them, Journal Writing helps individuals to connect new formation with what they already know, and, thus, promotes better learning (Fulwiler, 1982; & Lund, 1984 as cited in Stevenson and Jenkins, 1994).

Studies on Sentence Combining Practice:

Under this section, studies related to Sentence Combining practice are reviewed. Hillocks(1987) reviewed nearly 2,000 articles on the teaching of writing and compared results of over 500 empirical studies of native-language writing practices. On the effectiveness of Sentence Combining for teaching writing, Hillocks (1987) found that the practice of building complex sentences from simpler ones has been shown to be effective in a large number of experimental studies. His research showed Sentence Combining, on the average, to be more than twice as effective as a means of enhancing the quality of student writing.

Views about Sentence Combining practice differ among researchers. Some researchers consider Sentence Combining as a practice that improves not only syntactic fluency but the overall quality of compositions (Mellon, 1967; & O'Hare, 1973 as cited in Zamel, 1980). Zamel (1980) suggests that Sentence-Combining cannot and should not be expected to improve the syntactic writing skills of students if the linguistic ability does not already exist especially with ESL students. To

illustrate, if students have learned about subordinating conjunctions and how they can be used to join clauses, they can make an attempt to solve the Sentence-Combining puzzle and then check the correctness of the solution by referring to their prior knowledge about subordinate clauses. So Zamel (1980) advocates the use Sentence-Combining exercises with ESL learners who have the appropriate linguistic ability to solve these Sentence-Combining problems. It is important also to differentiate among the different types of Sentence-Combining exercises in the ESL composition classroom, Kameen (1978) have classified the Sentence-Combining exercises into three distinct types according to Paulston's (1970) (as cited in Kameen, 1978) sequencing of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative Sentence-Combining exercises.

The mechanical Sentence-Combining exercises are the most highly controlled and least difficult exercise. They require only one correct solution from students. These exercises can best be used to familiarize the students with the overall goals of Sentence-Combining practice. The second type of exercise is the meaningful exercise which is characterized by much less control, fewer signals, and by the fact that there are few correct solutions, not just one. These less controlled exercises encourage the students to insert and delete items of their own choice and permit them to use a wider range of structural and stylistic variants in arriving at a correct solution. The third type of exercise is the communicative exercise which is characterized by the least control, the absence of signals, and by the fact that there is a wide range of correct solutions. Communicative exercises encourage the students to explore structural and stylistic variants, to rearrange the given sentences as they choose, and to select what they feel is the most effective expression of the given information (Kameen, 1978). When preparing Sentence-Combining exercises to ESL or to EFL students, it is important to select the type of Sentence Combining exercises which is the most appropriate to the level and the needs of those students.

Stewart (1978) conducted a study to test whether the use of Sentence Combining practice materials increase the syntactic development and influence the writing quality of first-year university Education students over a period of six weeks. Stewart's main hypothesis was that students exposed to Sentence Combining practice during an intensive six-week period would score higher than a corresponding reference

group not exposed to the same intervention on both free writing exercises and a syntactic maturity test. The reference group was enrolled in the same “Communications” course; however, students were taught according to Flannigan’s (1974) (as cited in Stewart, 1978) *Patterns of Exposition: What, How, and Why* consisting of instruction and practice in the preparation and presentation of expository reports. Another hypothesis was also generated in this study stating that students in the treatment group would write free compositions not inferior in quality to those produce by the reference group.

These two propositions were based on the review of literature on different views on Sentence Combining activities instruction. These views were then based on the question of developing syntactic maturity in children’s and adult’s writing which has been of great concern in the writing research and more specifically research on Sentence Combining. Strong and Marzano (1976) (as cited in Stewart, 1978) who are advocates of Sentence Combining activities encouraged their use with school age children. Cooper (1973) (as cited in Stewart, 1978) utilized *Strong’s Sentence Combining: A Composing Book* in his search for suitable materials to teach his freshman students, but he encouraged his students to experiment, to evaluate, to rewrite, and to compose on their own. Moreover, Hunt (1965, 1970) (as cited in Stewart, 1978) developed T-units as an index of syntactic maturity which was based on an investigation of student’s free writing in grades 4, 8 and 12 along with an investigation of the writing of skilled adults. With these views in mind, Stewart (1978) wanted to come up with a teaching strategy that “might make for a relatively rapid increase in student’s syntactic capabilities” (p.258). A pretest-posttest control group design was used to address the hypotheses generated in the study. There were eight class sections of Education students at the University of New Brunswick involved in the study wherein four classes were randomly assigned to a treatment group and four classes to a reference group. The treatment group received Strong’s (1973) Sentence Combining exercises based on Christensen (1976, 1978) models; while, the reference group used Flannigan’s (1974) patterns of expository writing.” Each student was involved in 18 hours of in-class activity (three hours per week) and at least 18 hours of out-of-class writing. At the beginning and the end of

each six-week period block, in two specially designated period, all eight class sections did the O'Donnell-Hunt Syntactic Maturity Test (Hunt, 1970) and provided 300-word samples of informal free writing.”(p.259). The researcher himself taught the two groups consisting of 160 students using Sentence Combining and free writing activities from which the writings of 60 students were chosen to be closely examined. Then, for the 60 students thus selected, the pre and the post free writing samples and the “aluminum” paragraphs resulting from the O'Donnell-Hunt test were analyzed under the direction of the researcher for words-per-T-unit (W/T) and words-per-clause (W/C) following procedures described by Hunt (1970, p.4) and O'Hare (1973, pp. 47-49). The assessment of writing quality was scored holistically by two experts, heads of English departments, as adjudicating raters. It should be noted here that the dependent variables in the study were two-factors of syntactic maturity and holistic ratings of writing quality. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) to compare the pre and post treatment mean scores on the two factors of syntactic maturity for the two groups on free writing and syntactic maturity test were computed. In addition, t-test and covariance analysis of variance were used to address the hypotheses in the study (for a detailed description of the statistical analysis, see Stewart, 1978, pp. 263-266).

Results led to a general conclusion that both free and controlled writing of the treatment group was syntactically more mature than that of the reference group and also syntactically more mature than that at pre-test time. Moreover, it was concluded that...

“the examination of writing quality differences indicates that these freshman students could concentrate on Sentence Combining and related writing over a six-week period and raise their technical level of syntactic maturity while still maintaining, and even raising, the average level of the quality of their writing as judged by trained and experienced raters.”(p. 266).

Methodology:

Subjects and Sampling:

Subjects for this study were 42 second year secondary female EFL students studying in a private school in Alaziziah, Makah. The school

enrolls 600 students all of Saudi nationality. The language of instruction in all subjects matter areas is the Arabic language except for the English language which is taught in English.

Teachers in the school are employed on the basis of their educational degrees and backgrounds. Teachers of the English language are well trained because they attend workshops inside and outside the school to keep them informed about new teaching and evaluation strategies.

The school was informed about the researcher's job and purpose of study before the school year started. So, permission was given to the researcher to randomly assign the students in the 2nd year secondary classes into 2 groups at the beginning of the school year 2008. The 42 students who were currently enrolled in the 2nd year secondary classes were randomly assigned using a table of random numbers to two classes. One of the classes was randomly assigned to receive the Journal Writing practice, and the other class would receive the Sentence Combining practice for ten weeks, the period of intervention.

The 2nd graders are all Saudis. Their native language is Arabic. Their age ranges between 16 and 17 years old. They have been studying English for 5 years in the same school.

Instrumentation:

The 1-hour Writing Test: At the end of the 10 weeks of intervention, a writing test was administered to both groups receiving the Journal Writing practice and the Sentence Combining practice. The topic for the writing test was provided by the researcher. The students were told to write about The Tree's Day which was the special occasion for that week. The students were given a whole hour to write about this topic. They were told to pay attention to spelling mistakes and grammar mistakes. They were told also to write developed essay including a good introduction, body, and conclusion.

At the end of the hour, the tests were collected by the researcher. The researcher analyzed the essays written by the students using the T-units analysis, First of all, the researcher counted the words in all of the essays for the 42 students. Second, the researcher counted the T-units for each essay considering every short complete grammatical sentence as a T-unit. To get the mean T-unit length which measures fluency, the

researcher divided the total number of words in each passage by the number of T-units. As for complexity, the researcher counted the number of complex sentences by the number of T-units. Finally, to measure accuracy, the number of error-free-T-units (except for spelling mistake which were not counted as mistakes) was divided by the number of T-units.

The 15- Minute Free Writing Test: The second test administered to both groups receiving the Journal Writing practice and the Sentence Combining practice was a free writing test. The students were told to write for 15 minutes on a topic of their own choice. There was no restriction on how and what to write. Students were not given directions to pay attention to grammar or spelling or anything else. They just wrote on a topic of their own choice. At the end of the 15 minutes, the researcher collected the tests. The tests were analyzed on the same basis of the 1 hour writing test. The writing fluency, complexity and accuracy were measured using the same T-unit analysis used in the 1 hour test.

The Checklist for the Journal Writing: A checklist designed by the researcher for the Journal Writing activity was used to make sure that all the students who were receiving the Journal Writing practice did not miss any Journal Writing activity. The checklist was stapled on the front page of the copybooks where the students did their Journal Writing. Every checklist included the name of the writer, the number of the weeks of the period of intervention, and a place for the researcher's signature. The checklist served the purpose of keeping the researcher informed about the Journal Writing activity to make sure that there was an accumulation of 20 journals for every student receiving the Journal Writing practice at the end of the 10 weeks of treatment.

Design: A factorial experimental design was employed in this study. Twenty 2nd year secondary EFL students were randomly assigned to receive the Journal Writing practice, and 22 2nd year secondary EFL students were randomly assigned to receive the Sentence Combining practice. The subjects who received the Journal Writing practice wrote twice per week for 15 minutes in their journals for the 10 weeks of intervention. The other group did not practice this 15-minute writing. Rather, they worked on another type of writing which is the Sentence-Combining practice.

The writing proficiency levels of the subjects were determined by

dividing them into high and low proficient writers based on the median score on their writing achievement test for the first semester of the year 2008. This achievement test is administered by the school and is corrected according to specific criteria. This system of correction is shared among all the English teachers in the school. The writing achievement test is administered three times during the school year at the end of every semester to check the student's writing levels at the end of a specific period of instruction where certain specific writing competencies need to be acquired by the students. These three achievement tests are corrected according to the following basic competency criteria: content, organization, language and mechanics. Five points on any of these criteria mean an excellent performance, 4 points mean good, 3 points mean average, and 2 points on any of the above criteria mean a poor writing performance. An excellent grade on the writing achievement test would range between 17 to 20, a good grade from 12 to 16, an average grade from 9 to 11, and a failing grade would be 8 points and below. Therefore, the existing scores on the first achievement writing test for this school year served as the base scores and helped the researcher to determine the writing proficiency levels of the students prior to the intervention period.

At the end of the period of intervention, two writing tests were administered; one test was a writing composition test given to both groups on a topic chosen by the researcher related to a specific occasion that of The Tree's Day. Students were given 1 hour to write on this topic. The second writing test was a 15-minute free writing test. The two tests were analyzed on the basis of writing fluency (number of words in a passage divided by the number of T-units), complexity (number of complex sentences per T-units), and accuracy (number of error-free T-units) using the T-units analysis. Two experienced independent raters scored a sample selected randomly from the two writing tests of both groups. A high level of inter-raters reliability was ensured for the writing fluency, $r = 0.96$, the writing complexity, $r = 0.95$ and the writing accuracy, $r = 0.92$.

Procedure: As indicated earlier, the present study employed a factorial experimental design. There were two groups randomly assigned to two different treatments, one group consisted of 22 students and the other of 20 students. The researcher handled the execution of

all the activities given to both groups throughout the 10 weeks of the period of intervention. The students in both groups received the feedback on their Journal Writing and Sentence Combining activities from the researcher who worked as the coordinator of the English language for the secondary classes. The researcher's direct intervention in the classes started at the beginning of the second week of February and lasted till the third week of April 2008.

Subjects who received the Journal Writing practice were instructed to keep a journal for a 10-week period where they wrote twice per week for 15 minutes during the English writing periods on topics from their daily observations and experiences. The 20 students in this group got copybooks labeled Journal Writing where they did all their Journal Writings. The researcher explained to students how to handle their Journal Writing copybooks. They were told that they are expected to write per week for 15 minutes in their journals at the beginning of the English writing periods. At the end of the period of intervention, there were an accumulation of 20 journals for every student doing the Journal Writing. A sample of 2 students journals done inside the classroom are included at the end as an example of what the students were doing.

The students receiving the Journal Writing treatment wrote in response to different stimuli. The design for the weekly journal assignment developed by Huff and Kline (1987) was modified to meet the needs of second year secondary EFL students. Huff and Kline (1987) proposed a sequence of writing in response to a stimulus on Monday (it could be story, poetry, etc.), select an idea from Monday's entry and develop it on Tuesday. On Wednesday, to write a careful description of an object, scene, person, etc. On Thursday, to write a letter and on Friday, to rethink one of the week's journal entry. Saturdays and Sundays entries are optional but provide the writers the opportunity to write anything they choose (Huff & Kline, 1987). The researcher provided 10 stimuli throughout the 10 weeks of the period of intervention to students doing the Journal Writing. For every stimulus, the students had the opportunity to write twice on the same stimulus in order to improve their writing from the first to the second time. For example, students wrote for the first time in response to a story which was read out-loud twice by the researcher in the classroom. After receiving feedback in the form of comments on content of their first

journal, students were asked to rewrite for a second time on the same topic making the necessary changes according to the researcher's feedback. The researcher used a checklist for the Journal Writing activity to make sure that all the students who received this practice wrote 20 journals and that no one skipped the Journal Writing activity. The journals were not corrected like an ordinary composition with grades and marks all over the pages. They were treated differently.

After every writing period, the journals were collected and turned back at the beginning of the next writing period so that the students can read the researcher's feedback before they write for the second time on the same stimulus. Students were expected to make the necessary changes for their writings to make them better according to the feedback they receive. The researcher followed suggestions made by Raimes (1983) and Vanett and Jurich (1975) (as cited in Peyton, 1990) in responding to students journals through comments. The researcher focused in the comments on what the students wrote by paraphrasing the understanding of the main idea, pointing out sections that were very well written, and asking for clarification about parts that were not very clear.

Students in the other group did not practice this 15 minutes writing, they worked on another type of writing in the form of Sentence Combining exercises. In the 10 weeks of intervention, the subjects receiving the Sentence Combining practice worked on 20 worksheets of Sentence-Combining exercises related to the different grammar lessons in their English books. The extra practice exercises in their grammar book were used to write the Sentence Combining exercises (Stewig & Haley-James, 1990). Sometimes, the researcher used items from the second secondary grammar book to make the Sentence Combining exercises more challenging. In every writing period, students worked for 15 minutes on the Sentence Combining exercises, 10 minutes were spent on solving the Sentence Combining exercises and the remaining 5 minutes were spent on the oral correction of the exercises through eliciting the responses from the students themselves.

The students doing the Sentence Combining exercises were told to put a check mark beside the correct answers. After correcting the Sentence Combining exercises orally with the students inside the class-room, the researcher used to collect all the worksheets to check whether

all the students put the right marks beside the correct or wrong answers then the worksheets were returned back at the beginning of every English period.

Throughout the period of intervention, both groups continued to do what they were doing in the 2 hours of writing compositions. The teacher explains a new type of writing (narrative story, cause/effect relationship, comparison/contrast...) through a reading selection. After explanation of the reading-writing lesson, the teacher provides a topic where in students practice writing a narrative composition, a cause/effect composition.... students write during one of the two hours on the topic assigned then they hand in their compositions.

Two writing tests were administered to both groups at the end of the 10 weeks of intervention, a regular 1 hour composition test and a 15-minute free writing test. The two tests were analyzed for both groups on the basis of writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy using the T-unit analysis.

Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations were computed and two Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests were run in order to address the questions raised in the study.

Results of the study

The present study raised two questions concerning the relative effectiveness of Journal Writing practice and Sentence Combining practice on the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of second year secondary EFL Saudi students. In order to answer the first question concerning which of the two practices (Journal Writing or Sentence Combining) is effective in improving the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of the students writers, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test was run to check the effect of the treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) on the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of the students writers.

Answering the first question: Q-1. Is Journal Writing practice more effective than Sentence Combining practice in developing the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of EFL student writers?

The mean scores and standard deviations of the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of both groups on the first 1 hour writing test (post-test) are shown in table 1 below:

Table (1): Descriptive Statistics of the 1 Hour Writing Test Scores by Treatment

Treatment	n	Fluency 1		Complexity 1		Accuracy 1	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
jw	20	10.5843	2.4719	0.4081	0.1642	0.5281	0.1997
sc	22	9.9700	2.5273	0.3873	0.1645	0.4200	0.2186
Total	43	10.2700	2.4900	0.3974	0.1627	0.4728	0.2142

Note: Fluency 1 = fluency on the first 1 hour writing test, Complexity 1 = complexity on the 1 hour writing test, Accuracy 1 = accuracy on the 1 hour writing test, jw = Journal Writing, sc = Sentence Combining

The mean scores and standard deviation of the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of both groups on the free writing test are shown in table 2 below:

Table (2): Descriptive Statistics Free Writing Test Scores by Treatment

Treatment	n	Fluency 2		Complexity 2		Accuracy 2	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
jw	20	11.8719	2.6940	0.4057	0.2053	0.4805	0.1877
sc	22	11.8823	2.5431	0.4655	0.1537	0.3695	0.1762
Total	43	11.8772	2.5864	0.4363	0.1811	0.4237	0.1883

Note: Fluency 2 = fluency on the 15 minutes free writing test, Complexity 2 = complexity on the 15 minutes free writing test, Accuracy 2 = accuracy on the 15 minutes free writing test.

The second statistical analysis run to answer the first question in this study was a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test with the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy as dependent variables and the treatment (Journal Writing practice and Sentence Combining practice) as independent variable. This test was run in order to determine the effect of the treatment on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of the student writers.

Table (3): F Values for the Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance of the Writing Tests by Treatment

Multivariate ANOVA (a)			Univariate ANOVA (b)		
Source	F		Fluency 2	Complexity 2	Accuracy 2
Treatment	1.79	F	0.52	1.17	3.99*
			Fluency 1	Complexity 1	Accuracy 1
			0.64	0.17	2.85

a dfs = (3,39), b dfs = (1,43), *P < 0.1, **P < 0.05, ***P < 0.01

The results in table no. 3 showed that the multivariate analysis of variance revealed no significant difference between the Journal Writing practice and the Sentence Combining practice by treatment $F(3,39) = 1.79$, $P < 0.05$. The univariate analysis of variance showed that there is a significant difference on the writing accuracy 2 $F(1,43) = 3.99$, $P < 0.01$.

The statistical analysis computed and reported in this section showed no significant difference between the Journal Writing practice and the Sentence Combining practice in improving the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of the student writing.

Answering the second question: Q-2. Is there an interaction between the Treatment and the Writing Proficiency Levels of EFL student writers?

In order to answer the second question related to whether there is an interaction between the writing teaching technique (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) of the students, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) test was run. The treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) was considered as a fixed independent variable in the analysis. Existing scores on the school's first writing achievement test were used to get the high and low levels of proficiency. These existing scores were divided into low and high based on the median score which was computed to be 12. The writing proficiency was considered as a fixed independent factor. The writing fluency, complexity and accuracy on the 2 different writing tests, the 1 hour and the 15 minutes writing tests, were considered as dependent variables.

The mean scores and standard deviations of the writing fluency on both tests (the 1 hour writing test and the 15 minutes free writing test) by treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) are shown in the table 4. The mean scores and standard deviations of the writing complexity of both tests (the 1 hour writing test and the 15 minutes free writing test) by treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) are shown in table 5. The means and standard deviations of the writing accuracy of both tests (the 1 hour writing test and the 15 minutes free writing test) by the treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and proficiency levels (low vs. high) are shown in table 6.

**Table (4): Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Fluency Scores
by Treatment and Writing Proficiency**

Proficiency	Treatment	n	Fluency 1		Fluency 2	
			M	SD	M	SD
Low	Jw	11	10.3922	3.0943	11.0600	2.3773
	Sc	15	9.2700	1.6933	11.4720	1.5665
	Total	26	9.7719	2.4335	11.2889	1.938
High	Jw	9	10.8311	1.4109	12.9544	2.8402
	Sc	7	11.4700	3.4375	12.7614	3.9480
	Total	16	11.1106	2.4280	12.8700	3.2475

**Table (5): Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Complexity
by Treatment and Writing Proficiency**

Proficiency	Treatment	n	Complexity 1		Complexity 2	
			M	SD	M	SD
Low	jw	11	0.3992	0.2045	0.3592	0.2070
	sc	15	0.3567	0.1539	0.4427	0.1324
	Total	26	0.3756	0.1758	0.4056	0.1714
High	jw	9	0.4200	9.823E-02	0.4678	0.1972
	sc	7	0.4529	0.1790	0.5143	0.1941
	Total	16	0.4344	0.1351	0.4881	0.1907

Table (6): Descriptive Statistics for the Writing Accuracy by Treatment and Writing Proficiency

Proficiency	Treatment	n	Accuracy 1		Accuracy 2	
			M	SD	M	SD
Low	jw	11	0.4550	0.1932	0.4825	0.2093
	sc	15	0.3827	0.2293	0.3533	0.1749
	Total	26	0.4148	0.2132	0.4107	0.1982
High	jw	9	0.6256	0.1723	0.4778	0.1666
	sc	7	0.5000	0.1835	0.4043	0.1878
	Total	16	0.5706	0.1828	0.4456	0.174

Table (7): F Values for the Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance of Treatment and Writing Proficiency on Writing Development

Multivariate ANOVA (a)			Univariate ANOVA (b)		
Source	F		Fluency 1	Complexity 1	Accuracy 1
Treatment	0.224	F	1.22	0.51	0.17
			Fluency 2 0.13	Complexity 20.10	Accuracy 20.22

a dfs = (6,34), b dfs = (1,43), *P < 0.1, **P < 0.05, ***P < 0.01

The results in table no. 7 revealed that the multivariate analysis of variance showed no significant difference between the treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) $F(6,34) = 0.224, p < 0.05$

Summary of results

The statistical analyses computed to answer the two questions raised in this study showed that there was no significant difference between the effect of Journal Writing practice and Sentence Combining practice on the writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy of the 42 2nd year secondary EFL Saudi students writers. The statistical analyses used also showed that there was no significant interaction of the treatment factor (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) on the writing fluency, complexity and

accuracy on both writing tests (the 1 hour writing test and the 15 minutes free writing test) of the 42 2nd year secondary EFL Saudi student writers.

Discussion of the results:

Statistical analyses showed no significant difference between the two writing instructional techniques on the writing development of second year secondary EFL students. These results might be due to many factors.

First, the intervention period lasted for 10 weeks at the rate of 15 minutes twice per week. As such, it could be argued that this period was not long enough to bring about significant changes in the development of the writing of the students especially in terms of writing fluency, complexity, and accuracy. The Journal Writing practice was a new practice for the students. As such, a period of 10 weeks might not be a significant period to promote the writing development of 2nd year secondary EFL students. Similarly students who received the Sentence Combining exercises treatment may not have gotten the chance to practice many sentence exercises on the paragraph level, which means that they did not get the opportunity to practice challenging Sentence Combining exercises due to the time factor.

Second, another factor which might have affected the writing performance of students in both groups is that they were concerned with whether their work will be evaluated for a grade or not. Chastain (1990) examined the effects of grading compositions on the quality of student writing. Chastain's study examined the compositions of 14 advanced undergraduate Spanish students, most of whom were majors in their third or fourth year and who were characterized by the researcher as having "good" language skills and high motivation. The course emphasized process over product, and students were expected to write second drafts before turning in composition for a grade. Compositions in this experiment were written in clusters of three, the first two of which were ungraded and the third one is graded. Near the end of the semester, Chastain examined one ungraded and one graded composition for each of the 14 students in the class. The researcher reported that students wrote significantly more for the graded composition than for the ungraded and used significantly longer and more complex sentences.

Therefore, it could be that the type of feedback played an important role in the present study. The student practicing the Journal Writing might have expected grades on their works and not comments on content. Although, the type of feedback for the students doing the Sentence Combining practice received did not bring changes in their writing, it was more rewarding for those students who did the Journal Writing because the students doing the Sentence Combining exercises received immediate feedback in the form of oral correction.

Another factor needs to be considered concerning the writing habits of the student involved in this study. The students have been trained and expected throughout their school learning to produce a one shot well develop written product. They do not have training in producing multiple drafts or in coming up with topics for their own writing, they do not have enough experience with prewriting strategies especially the Journal Writing activity. They are used to the routine of being assigned topics by the teacher to write about. They perceive writing as a task that ends once they finish writing about an assigned topic during a specified time. Therefore, the students might have needed more explanation and more practice in different prewriting strategies including the Journal Writing practice before being expected to come up with topics for their own writing.

Finally, the fact that the students doing the Journal Writing were getting training only in one prewriting strategy of the writing process might be another factor which affected the results of the present study. The students did not go through the writing stage where they could have gotten the chance to write more than 2 drafts on a specific topic. Going through multiple drafting might have given the students sense on how to go about improving their writing from one draft to another. The above information aimed at clarifying why the first three hypotheses related to the first question raised in this study were rejected.

In what follows the results related to the second question are discussed in light of the intervention that took place in the present study. Thus, concerning the interaction between the treatment and the writing proficiency levels, it was expected based on Rivers'(1979) distinction between skill-getting and skill-using activities and based on the research done by Haswell (1981), Fisher (1973) and Steadman

(1971) (as cited in Evans et al., 1986) that the Sentence Combining practice will be more effective in bringing about changes in the writing of students with low writing proficiency levels than with students with high proficiency levels. Such expectation was not made for the Journal Writing practice in any of the studies reviewed in this paper; therefore, it was expected that the Journal Writing practice would be an effective practice for students with different writing proficiency levels.

However, the statistical analyses showed no significant interaction between the treatment (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high). These results might be due to the fact that more than half of the students participating in this study were already placed above average in writing performance prior to the treatment based on the student's school records and on their achievement tests. The student's achievement tests which are corrected according to the following basic competency criteria: content, organization, language and mechanics showed that most of the student's grades were above average at the onset of the study. To clarify how the grades were obtained on the achievement tests, a brief explanation follows: five points on any of the previously cited criteria mean an excellent performance, 4 points mean good, 3 points mean average, and 2 points on any of the above criteria mean a poor writing performance. An excellent grade on the writing achievement test would range between 17 to 20, a good grade from 12 to 16, an average grade from 9 to 11, and a failing grade would be 8 points and below.

Thus, as Haswel (1981) argues concerning the syntactic gains attribute to Sentence Combining exercises that such practice with above average students show a minor gain in T-unit length and a drop in clause length; the same might have occurred in the present study that is since most of the students were placed on an average writing proficiency level, no gains were observed in the writing of these students.

Another factor which might have affected the interaction between the treatment and the writing proficiency levels was the time factor. The treatment might have been more effective in bringing about changes in the writing of the students with different writing proficiency levels if the period of intervention was longer than 10 weeks.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, the results of the present study showed that both writing techniques, the Journal Writing and the Sentence Combining, had no significant differential effects on the writing of the 42 2nd year secondary school EFL Saudi students involved in this study. The two writing techniques did not differ statistically in their effect on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of the students instructed according to the Journal Writing and the Sentence Combining practice. The results also showed that there was no interaction between the treatment factors (Journal Writing vs. Sentence Combining) and the writing proficiency levels (low vs. high) on the writing fluency, complexity and accuracy of the students.

Investigation of other effects of both writing techniques on the writing of EFL students is subject to future research studies. Other studies need to take into consideration all the factors that might have influenced the results of the present study. Secondary level students need more explanation and more practice in different prewriting strategies including the Journal Writing practice before being expected to come up with topics for their own writing.

فاعلية التدريب علي أساليب الكتابة التعبيرية و ضم الجمل في تطوير مهارة الكتابة لدى طالبات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية

د. ابتسام حسين الجفري

قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس - كلية التربية

جامعة أم القرى - مكة المكرمة

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلي الكشف عن أثر التدريب علي أسلوب الكتابة التعبيرية (من خلال مناشط "كتابة الحوارات اليومية Journal Writing Activities وأنشطة تركيب الجمل في تطوير مهارة الكتابة لدى طالبات الصف الثاني الثانوي اللاتي يدرسن اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من (٤٢) طالبة تم اختيارهن بطريقة عشوائية، واستخدم منهج التصميم العاملي ذو المجموعتين (الضابطة/ والتجريبية. وتم استخدام درجات الطالبات التحصيلية في اختبار الكتابة للفصل الدراسي الأول لتحديد مستويات إتقان أفراد العينة في مهارة الكتابة. كما تم تطبيق اختبارين للكتابة أحدهما يستغرق ساعة واحدة والآخر يستغرق ١٥ دقيقة لقياس الكتابة الحرة (غير المقيدة). وقامت الباحثة بتحليل نتائج الاختبارين باستخدام اختبار (ت) في تحليل الوحدات لقياس مستوى الطلاقة، والتركيب، والدقة اللغوية في الكتابة لدى أفراد عينة الدراسة. استخدم الإحصاء الوصفي (المتوسطات والانحرافات المعيارية)، وكذلك استخدم تحليل التباين متعدد المتغيرات للإجابة عن تساؤلات الدراسة. أثبتت نتائج الدراسة عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين أثر كل من أسلوب التدريب علي الكتابة التعبيرية وأسلوب ضم الجمل لتطوير مستوى الطلاقة والتركيب والدقة اللغوية في الكتابة لدى الطالبات. وباستخدام تحليل التباين متعدد المتغيرات للتعرف علي مدي التفاعل بين أسلوب (الكتابة التعبيرية وضم الجمل)، ومستويات الكفاءة (المهارة) في الكتابة (منخفض، مرتفع) وأثر ذلك علي مستوى الطلاقة والتركيب والإتقان في الكتابة لدى الطالبات، أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود تفاعل دال إحصائياً. هذا وخرجت الدراسة بعدد من التوصيات والمقترحات لدراسات مستقبلية.

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