

Original Paper

Teachers and Students' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of the Writing Task in the Foundation Year at the ELI

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Abstract

The current study investigated the perceptions of Saudi female teachers and their preparatory year students on the Writing Task (WT) used in the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, KSA. To obtain a deeper insight, mixed methods were used through quantitative questionnaires and qualitative semi-structured interviews. While quantitative data were analysed using a descriptive SPSS analysis, qualitative data were analysed using a thematic analysis by NVivo. The sample consisted of 50 students (mean age: 19) and 6 teachers with different qualifications and years of experience. First, a questionnaire was distributed to elicit student's perceptions on the WT then the 6 teachers were interviewed. The results indicated that the students had negative perceptions towards the effectiveness of the WT and that it was not beneficial in developing their writing skills, unlike some of the teachers who expressed positive views towards the WT. The findings offer future instructional implications that will help in enhancing the WT of the ELI. Some of these implications indicate that extensive writing classes must be given to students to improve their writing skills and that the writing topics must be contextualised and taken from the students' daily life to keep them interested.

Keywords

EFL writing, writing tasks, students' perceptions, teachers' perceptions, feedback

1. Introduction

Writing is regarded as an essential skill that all EFL learners should effectively learn, an orientation that has driven extensive investigations of teaching EFL writing in different contexts (Zhu, 2004; You, 2004; Chuo, 2007; Klimova, 2014; Ibrahim AlHashemi, AlSubaeie, & Shukri, 2017). Writing instruction should be delivered effectively to preparatory-year students as it is considered one of the literacy skills

that would assist students in their future academic subjects (Zhu, 2004; Deqi, 2005). Moreover, writing materials and tasks should be best designed and delivered to improve students' English proficiency and their academic writing skills. The rationale of the current study comes from a suggestion that EFL teachers and students' perceptions on the effectiveness and quality of writing tasks offered to foundation-year students might have an impact on students' achievements as well as its influence on teachers' instructional practices during writing lessons. Therefore, the present study aims at exploring female teachers' perceptions on Writing Task (WT) offered by the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdul-Aziz University (KAU) to female preparatory-year students. The study also aims to view the preparatory-year students' opinions and satisfaction on the WT. Exploring students and teachers' opinions and considering their suggestions concerning WT will help curriculum designers strengthen the positive aspects presented in the WT besides improving aspects that might not satisfy the ELI students and teachers. Some aspects of the WT will be explored which are: topics and strategies presented in the WT, interaction and collaboration during WT, the usefulness of the ELI Writing Booklet, and teacher's feedback during WT. There are three research questions pursued in the current study which are:

- 1- From teachers' perceptions, how can the WT offered by the ELI best be designed to improve students' levels in writing?
- 2- Is giving appropriate feedback important for improving the students' writing?
- 3- How can it be provided? From teachers and students' perspectives, in what way do WT need enhancements?

1.1 Background

The ELI at KAU provides the preparatory-year students with four English courses that aim to improve students' reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills. The integrated courses of English skills are delivered to students as a system of four modules in their preparatory-year. For the writing program, teachers and students at all the ELI levels are provided with assistive writing materials such as, Students Handbook, Writing Composition Booklet, and the Instructional Pack for each level, that serve as a guide for them during the instructional writing process. Students at the ELI level three and four are expected to work and be assessed on two WTs in each module. The WTs provided to students are based on the learned writing skills during class instruction. The ELI teachers are required to give the students a proper feedback that follows their first writing draft and that the final draft should receive a mark. The aim of the WT is to develop the students' writing skills using a process approach in which they are guided through all the writing process to help them produce initial and final drafts. Finally, writing teachers as well as students are expected to refer to the Writing Pack and Composition Booklet designed by the ELI to check writing materials and instruction that need to be covered.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teachers and Students' Perceptions on EFL Writing Activities

Several research studies investigate the teachers and learners' views on some aspects and issues related to English writing activities. As previously stated, students' interactions and teacher's feedback during writing lessons are prominent factors in developing students' writing skills. Therefore, teachers and students' perceptions on the students' needs, some issues faced by writing teachers such as time limitation, and the role of collaboration and feedback in the process of teaching English writing are observed in different contexts (Storch, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Shehadeh, 2011; Cummins, Gass, Hudelson, Hudson, & Master, 2013; Veiga et al., 2016).

Adopting a collaborative writing approach in teaching allows students to improve their writing abilities by gaining knowledge and assistance from a model text. Storch (2005) tries to investigate the technique of collaboration during writing and students' perceptions on pairs and individual writing. The study compares the text quality written collaboratively with individually written texts to examine the effectiveness and the drawbacks of both writing activities. The comparison drawn between pairs and individual writing reveals that the pieces that are written by pairs are stronger and more complex even though it was short texts. Consequently, the students express their positive views on the collaborative writing technique as it offers them with the opportunity to explore others' opinions and to have constructive interaction during generating ideas.

Shehadeh, (2011) similarly finds that collaborative writing positively influences students' writing, but the effects of collaborative writing vary according to the students' proficiency levels in English. Students with low proficiency levels may not benefit from collaborative writing as they are unable to offer accurate assistance for other students due to their low levels of English. To sum up, although some students reveal that they were not accustomed to writing collaborative texts in their previous learning experiences, they express their positive opinions about collaborative writing as they gradually realize its numerous benefits. The students declare that the collaborative tasks offer them several benefits that positively influence their final writing product, such advantages can be in terms of cooperation, motivation, and feedback presented during collaborative writing tasks (Storch, 2005; Shehadeh, 2011).

Further, a study by Cummins et al. (2013) analyzes students' writing needs and their opinions on different aspects of the writing instruction to efficiently address their requirements into writing tasks. The study reveals that most students face difficulties during writing lessons because of the lack of the topic knowledge of the task, lack of confidence and motivation, and their limited English proficiency. The study also discusses the importance of increasing the students' confidence and awareness besides training them on how to successfully analyze and deals with difficult writing assignments. To sum up, research centred on the EFL/ESL writing instruction and related approaches are carried out mostly to provide new pedagogical insights and suggestions for resolving related issues and enhancing learners' writing skills.

2.2 EFL/ESL Writing Instruction: Process and Product Approaches to Teaching Writing

As it has been argued that writing is a significant aspect that governs EFL students' future achievements and success in different disciplines (Deqi, 2004; Zen, 2005), writing instruction and teaching EFL writing skills have received considerable attention from researchers (Silva, Reichelt, & Lax-Farr, 1994; You, 2004; Storch, 2005; Ibrahim AlHashemi et al., 2017). Due to the importance of writing, most EFL teachers and curriculum designers attempt to help student to be sufficient writers during their foundation year by providing them useful writing instruction that involves offering beneficial materials and applying different approaches to teaching writing. In fact, writing instruction mainly delivered using two main teaching approaches that are: process and product approaches. According to Klimova (2014), process approach to writing focuses mainly on the students' processes used during writing such as, planning and brainstorming, negotiation, collaboration and discussion stage, and finally writing. Moreover, the process-oriented approach is described as the teacher's role to assist students in understanding and developing the process of writing that comprises of different stages starting with brainstorming, reading, multiple drafting, revising and seeking feedback, and finally approaching the final product (Widiati, 2016). Therefore, following the product approach involves focusing on the form and the final product rather than the composing process in which students are asked to write a text following a model text that was presented and analyzed beforehand. The main differences between the two approaches is that the process approach focuses on planning and generating ideas before writing whereas the product approach puts emphasis on the organization and the structure of the text being imitated from a model. Another main difference is that while the product approach requires submitting the final individual product (Hasan & Akhand, 2011), different types of interactions and collaboration are involved when using the process approach.

Several articles discuss the previously-mentioned common approaches to teaching writing skills and explore their implementation in the EFL writing classes along with some of its limitations and associated problems (Susser, 1994; Kroll, 2001; Deqi, 2005; Storch, 2005; Hasan & Akhand, 2011; Shehadeh, 2011; Klimova, 2014; Widiati, 2016). For example, Klimova (2014) conducts an experiment to study the effectiveness of both approaches to writing instruction on the development of the students' writing skills. The study involves two experimental groups where group A are taught writing through the product approach and group B instructed through the process approach. The study concludes that teaching writing through the product approach leads students to achieve higher scores which is indicated by the total scores of the individual criteria and students. Moreover, the t-test employed in the study reveals that both approaches to the writing instruction are parallel and can similarly improve students writing skills.

In spite of this, Klimova (2014) finds that students' development and comprehension of writing skills are mainly influenced by their English proficiency levels rather than the teaching approach. In contrast, Deqi (2005) declares that the process approach does not clearly help students solve their writing issues because it mainly emphasizes the process of writing over the other associated factors that are

significantly involved in EFL/ESL writing. The process approach might not provide students with adequate knowledge on how to successfully do writing tasks as it focuses on the experiences of students and the cognitive processes while composing texts. The study concludes that EFL/ESL writing teachers should seek a balanced approach to teaching writing that considers all interrelated factors and issues that might affect students' writing performance.

Similarly, Hasan and Akhand (2011) attempt to provide instructional insights on implementing both writing approaches to help students achieve the desired writing goals in each stage of writing and to eventually produce an excellent product. Therefore, the study examines the effects of both approaches to teaching writing on EFL/ESL students' writing performance by providing two groups of students with writing instruction through the process as well as product approach simultaneously. The results reveal that implementing a new approach to writing instruction that combines both approaches can be effective.

2.3 Feedback on L2 Students' Writing

Feedback is one of the prominent elements in EFL/ESL writing instruction as it noticeably influences the development of the students' writing skills. Thus, to develop effective writing task, teachers should employ efficient and suitable techniques to successfully feed back students and increase their achievements. English teachers depend greatly on employing different types of feedback as an assistive educational tool to increase students' understanding of writing techniques and genres as well as to promote different types of interaction and collaboration during writing lessons. Also, different types of feedback among the writing teacher and students as well as among students themselves, pair feedback, can increase students' motivation during writing in English. Several research studies explore the influence of feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing performance, collaboration, and motivation (Zhang, 1995; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Rollinson, 2005; Yu & Lee, 2014).

Hyland and Hyland's (2006) article explores the common feedback types given to English students during writing instruction. The paper discusses three types of feedback writing teachers usually employ, conferencing and oral feedback, written feedback, and finally peer and self-evaluation. Most writing teachers utilize at least one of these types of feedback to properly react to different writing tasks and to raise the students' awareness of the required writing skills by providing them constructive explanations on their written assignments. Many studies investigate the usefulness of teacher written feedback on the students' progress in English writing as it has been the dominant type of feedback used by EFL/ESL teachers (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). It also has been found that most EFL students misunderstand the teachers' comments on their writing drafts and sometimes even though they understand what has been written by the teacher, they might be unable to correct their mistakes. Instead, some students find self-evaluation more effective as they feel more comfortable to evaluate and monitor their writing (Thomas, 2011).

Another study finds that the combination of different types of writing feedback, full, explicit, and conference feedback, can be effective as it is found to have positive impact on students' use and

perception of the past simple tense and some kinds of articles (Bitchener et al., 2005). The study reveals that providing indirect feedback can effectively increase students' critical and analytical thinking besides the levels of the accuracy in their writing. Furthermore, Yu and Lee (2014) suggest that L1 and L2 are significant during the EFL writing process and that they can be used as teacher and peer feedback tools. The authors justify their perspectives by highlighting the useful role of the L2 in form-related feedback and that the L1 can mediate students' writing in problems related to content and organization of texts.

However, some studies examine the drawbacks of feedback on writing performance of students and its various negative consequences, such as, writing apprehension (Hassan, 2001; Cheng, 2002; Asmari, 2013; Pimsarn, 2013; Troia, Harbaugh, Shankland, Wolbers, & Lawrence, 2013; Alrabai, 2014, 2015; Dewaele & Al-Saraj, 2015). A study examined the types and sources of apprehension of EFL writers finds that most participants face the fear of teacher's negative comments on their writing tasks which directly causes the writing apprehension (Pimsarn, 2013). The participants also expressed their fear of being evaluated unfairly by the writing teachers, peers as well as their worries about self-evaluation which result in making them avoid writing. Therefore, Cheng (2002) notes that writing teachers should increase EFL students' self-confidence and foster their positive perceptions of their writing competence which can highly encourage students to overcome issues related to writing practices thus, improve their writing skills. Also, Asmari's (2013) paper finds that the effective use of writing strategies by EFL students before, during and after composing an English text can noticeably reduce their levels of anxiety during writing tasks besides it has a significant impact on their writing achievement.

To address gaps in the literature, the current research explores the perceptions of the ELI teachers and the preparatory-year students of the efficiency of the WT by illuminating the teachers' suggestions and students' experiences during writing lessons. The literature on the writing tasks lacks the research on the present topic especially in the Saudi, Arabic, context and that minor investigations have been done to view the English teachers and students' opinions and experiences. With the analysis of the current ELI writing instructions, the study aims to provide new insights into elevating writing skills of students in a Saudi context. Considering the various approaches to teaching writing, some factors for improving students' English writing skills, will be identified to help them achieve future academic success.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The sample consisted of 6 ELI experienced teachers who teach level 4 English to preparatory year students and some of them were members of other institutional committees. Those teachers were chosen purposively for being teaching English for over 6 years and for being both BA and MA holders as to have different responses according to their qualifications and years of experience. Among the participants were 50 students (mean age: 19) who were studying level 4 English in ELI. They have a daily English class that lasts for about 3 hours. All participants were Saudis. The student sample was

chosen randomly from different classrooms and not only one or two to elicit various responses from different participants.

3.2 Research Method

This paper aims to examine the usefulness of the Writing Task (WT) used in ELI and find ways of improving it. To better achieve this aim, the sample of teachers was interviewed in a semi-structured manner that continued for about thirty minutes per participant. The questions were adapted and modified to suit the main purpose of the study (Chuo, 2007). The rationale behind using this particular instrument is to obtain a rich description of the problem and access things that cannot be directly detected, such as beliefs and attitudes, through more controlled methods (Dörnyei, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

In addition, an adapted and modified questionnaire was given to the student-participants as a way of triangulation to reach a deeper understanding and to collect rich data (Chuo, 2007). The content of the instruments corresponds appropriately to the questions raised earlier; the interviews and the questionnaires help to obtain a detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the WB which leads to content validity. See Appendix for the interview questions and questionnaire used.

3.3 Procedure

The interviews were conducted in a quiet study lounge to control other distracting variables such as noise. Before starting, the participants were informed about the main aim of the research and that their contribution was completely voluntary. The researcher has obtained consents from the participants as it is considered a cornerstone in the ethical matters concerning human subjects (Mackey & Gass, 2005). A greater validity was achieved by keeping their names and responses confidential. On the other hand, the questionnaire that was used to elicit the students' perceptions towards the WT consisted of 17 closed-ended questions and was distributed online to 50 students.

3.4 Analysis of Method

The interviews were recorded and transcribed then they were carefully read for several times to look for salient and recurring opinions and analysed into themes generated from the participants' responses. With the use of the software program NVivo 11, which is designed to analyse qualitative methods, data were coded into common major themes together with corresponding subthemes to accurately track findings and report results. On the other hand, statistical analysis using SPSS was applied to evaluate the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire. A five- points Likert scale was used to collect the participants' data.

For the validation of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was tested by TESOL experts for suitability and clarity. According to their recommendations, some items in the piloted questionnaire were modified. Also, all items have statistically significant correlation $p < 0.0005$ and all themes of the scale are significantly correlated to the total sum of the scale $p < 0.0005$ which asserts the validity of the scale with an internal consistency.

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each theme as well as for the total scale to test the reliability of

the questionnaire which shows excellent consistency with Cronbach's Alpha = 0.9 and makes the scale excellent as a measuring tool.

4. Results & Discussion

A. Qualitative data

The results obtained from the qualitative data demonstrate four major themes contributed in answering the earlier raised research questions. These themes are "*Feedback*", "*Solutions to improve WT*", "*ineffectiveness of WT*" and "*Advantages of WT*". Under these main themes were other several related subthemes. Each major theme will be displayed in a separate table with quotations from the participants and the number of times it has been mentioned. Based on the findings, the significant themes generated from the results corroborate the research questions.

4.1 Feedback

This major theme is displayed in Table 1 below and considered an efficient answer to the second research question:

2- Is giving appropriate feedback important for improving the students' writing? How can it be provided?

Table 1. Feedback

Themes	Quotation	References
Individual feedback from teacher with focus on common errors	"I would say one to one feedback is the best feedback in writing"	6
The need of extra time for feedback	"we don't have enough time sometimes"	4
Teacher's written comments on mistakes	"I correct with them by writing comments at the end of their booklets"	3
Students' level determines individual or group feedback	"It largely depends on the students' levels"	2

Interviewing the six teachers revealed interesting opinions about their perceptions on the role of feedback in writing. All teachers insisted that individual feedback should be given to each student separately as the most useful way. Maybe because by doing this, the teacher can make the student aware of her mistakes and the areas where she needs extra attention. It also gives the student a chance to ask the teacher about any misunderstanding she may have but did not have the courage to ask about in front of the class.

Although individual feedback is beneficial, sometimes it is hard to provide due to the limited class time. For that, teachers are forced to give general quick feedback to the class as a whole and are unable to sit with each student one at a time which was a complaint mentioned by four out of five teachers. On the

other hand, some teachers stated that the students' proficiency level can determine the type of feedback that needs to be given. To put it simply, weaker students most probably need individual feedback whereas more advanced learners can do fine with holistic feedback given to the class.

As a way of displaying errors and mistakes, half of the teachers like to do that verbally while others as a written form. Considering the students' level and linguistic ability, highlighting the mistakes and writing the correct utterances on the side serves as a good documentation to refer back to and learn from. Several studies in the literature have investigated the usefulness of the teachers' written feedback on the writing texts of the students as it has been the dominant type of feedback used by EFL/ESL teachers. Hyland and Hyland (2006) have explored three kinds of feedback usually used by instructors and on top of them was the written feedback which supports the results attained in the current study. In addition, some teachers tend to display the most recurring mistakes done by the majority of students to the rest of the class. This can definitely raise the students' understanding of the mistake and helps them to avoid repeating it.

4.2 Solutions to Improve WT

The following Table 2 illustrates the second major theme that corresponds to the third research question:

3- From teachers and students' perceptions, in what ways does the WT need enhancements? Refer to Table 2 below;

Table 2. Solutions to Improve WT

Themes	Quotation	References
Teaching different writing strategies	"To teach the writing skills, Brainstorming—mind-mapping"	3
Selection of engaging topics	"a free topic where the students can choose the topic they like"	2
Extra time for writing	"If time allows, more practice would help students to improve their writing skills"	2
The need of a separate writing class	"should be with another teacher in order to focus on teaching the writing only"	1

After taking a deeper look at the table, it illustrates that teachers have come up with several ways to improve the WT. Half of the teachers have mentioned that there must be a new focus on teaching writing strategies to enhance this skill. It is most likely that the students have not been introduced to any kind of instruction to foster the skill of writing through the writing booklet as the latter only consists of general questions on a certain topic where the answers can form the writing passage required. By answering these questions, the students are only guided to write what is asked from them

without activating their higher thinking processes. From this point, teaching them new writing strategies may improve their performance greatly. Several studies in the literature are in line with the current findings. Klimova (2014) and Widiati (2002) advocate the importance of teaching students the writing skill through multiple process approaches such as planning, brainstorming, negotiating, collaboration and discussion. The urgent need of considering these writing approaches in the classroom corroborate the current teachers' opinions.

In addition, it is logical that the students can produce better outcomes in writing if they were interested enough in the topic presented. This could be the reason that made the teacher-participants ask for engaging and exciting topics that can motivate the students and fill their curiosity in order for them to perform better. Topics such as women driving in KSA, the opening of cinemas in Jeddah, the latest makeup products and lasting friendships may be more suitable to the students' needs than perhaps global warming or the solar system.

Two subthemes of solutions to improve WT can be merged together as they call for a similar suggestion. Some teachers were asking for extra time to spend on the writing booklet while others suggested to specify a separate writing class beside the regular English class. Teachers' need for extra time on writing may be a result of the poor performance of the students or their actual need for extra training in writing. Since the students are writing in English which is a foreign language and not their mother tongue, it requires effort, instruction, training and drafts. All these steps need sufficient time for explanation and proper feedback. This complaint was also received from the participants of Veiga et al. (2016) who were teachers as well and calling for extra time to devote in teaching writing in their classes.

4.3 Advantages of WT

Similarly, this theme is demonstrated in Table 3 and is considered as a possible answer for the first research question:

1- From teachers' perceptions, is the WT offered by the ELI effective and useful in fostering students' writing?

Table 3. Advantages of WT

Themes	Quotation	References
Students knowing their mistakes through error codes	"students will be able to understand based on the error codes"	3
Documenting ideas	"to document the ideas of the students in a logical order"	2
WT as a reference for feedback	"The booklet also is used as a reference by the teacher so she can easily give them the feedback"	1

4.4 Ineffectiveness of WT

The following Table 4 explains this theme which can be an answer to the first research question:

1- From teachers' perceptions, is the WT offered by the ELI effective and useful in fostering students' writing?

Table 4. Ineffectiveness of WT

Themes	Quotation	References
Memorizing texts	"Unfortunately, students just copy what they memorize from the first draft"	3
Insufficient error codes	"Error codes are not enough"	2

Interestingly, the last two subthemes can be discussed together as they are contradictory in nature. When asking the teachers about the usefulness and effectiveness of the WT, two opposing opinions were revealed. A couple of teachers stated that students can actually learn from the writing booklet and know their mistakes as usually it is attached with error codes. If the teacher has explained what these codes mean, the students will be familiar with them. Furthermore, other teachers found the writing booklet to be a good source for documenting the students' progress when they move gradually from the first draft to the final paper. It can also be considered as a feedback reference for the learners in which they can refer to and avoid repeating their mistakes. This finding can be supported by the claim of Thomas (2011) who finds using writing materials and self-review develop the learners' ability to learn from their previous attempts and evaluate their own work.

On the other hand, a few teachers asserted on the insignificance of the writing task as some students depend on memorizing the texts they were introduced to and tend to write them automatically on the assessment day. As a possible solution to this dilemma and in order to develop critical thinking abilities within the students, the topics that they will be assessed on should be different than the ones they have taken in class. This way the students would be more focused on learning new writing skills to achieve better outcomes. If the topics were constantly varied, students will not rely on memorizing. In addition, two of the teachers mentioned another drawback for the WT which is the limited number of error codes that come along the writing booklet. In their opinion, it may not cover all the areas where the students usually make mistakes. Having a varied amount of codes that are explained to the students before submitting a graded assignment could serve to raise their understanding of these linguistic features. These drawbacks of the WT may be a reason for its deviation from following the process-oriented approach that focuses on teaching some effective writing strategies that enables the students to be creative and improve their writing skills.

B. Quantitative data

Findings based on students' perception towards the WT and the level of agreement for each theme and item are presented below.

Table 5. Using the Writing Task Improves Skills Related to Writing

Theme-items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
My English writing skills have improved as a result of the WT	14	28.0%	6	12.0%	9	18.0%	16	32.0%	5	10.0%
My selection of words in English writing has improved as a result of WT	15	30.0%	10	20.0%	3	6.0%	15	30.0%	7	14.0%
My organization in English writing has improved as a result of WT	8	16.0%	8	16.0%	16	32.0%	12	24.0%	6	12.0%
The content in English writing has improved as a result of WT	10	20.0%	7	14.0%	13	26.0%	13	26.0%	7	14.0%
My grammar accuracy in English writing has improved as a result of the WT	11	22.0%	5	10.0%	9	18.0%	15	30.0%	10	20.0%
Mean Theme1-Using Writing Task improves skills related to writing										

Table 5 displays the students' beliefs about the effectiveness of the writing task on improving their writing skills. While 32.0% of students believed that their skills improved as a result of the WT, 30.0% of students strongly disagreed that the WT has improved their selection of words.

Table 6. Appropriateness of Topics Included in Writing Task

Theme-items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The topics provided by the WT are appropriate to my English proficiency level	18	36.0%	14	28.0%	9	18.0%	7	14.0%	2	4.0%
The writing tasks in the WT are related to my real-life experiences	15	30.0%	9	18.0%	11	22.0%	7	14.0%	8	16.0%
Mean Theme2-Appropriateness of topics included in Writing Task										

Table 6 shows the appropriateness of the topics selected in the WT to the students' level and real life. Most students strongly disagreed and found that the topics were inappropriate to their level and real-life experiences.

Table 7. Interaction and Collaboration in Writing the Writing Task

Theme-items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Individual writing in the WT is helpful for my writing	19	38.0%	8	16.0%	6	12.0%	10	20.0%	7	14.0%
Pair writing in the EWT is helpful for my writing	4	8.0%	6	12.0%	8	16.0%	19	38.0%	13	26.0%
Collaborative writing in the WT is helpful for my writing	4	8.0%	6	12.0%	6	12.0%	20	40.0%	14	28.0%
I have plenty of interaction with my classmates in the WT	9	18.0%	10	20.0%	11	22.0%	12	24.0%	8	16.0%
I have plenty of interaction with my teacher in the WT	9	18.0%	5	10.0%	9	18.0%	18	36.0%	9	18.0%
Mean Theme3-Interaction and collaboration in writing the Writing Task										

Table 7 displays students' perceptions about the interaction and collaboration when doing the WT. While 54% of students agreed that both pair writing and collaborative writing was helpful when performing the task, 22.0% of students were not sure if they had enough interaction with classmates. Similarly, 18% of students were not sure if they were having time to interact with their teacher for feedback purposes.

Table 8. Benefits and Drawbacks of Writing Task

Theme-items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Agree		Strongly agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The WT is helpful for me to generate ideas for writing	12	24.0%	6	12.0%	9	18.0%	15	30.0%	8	16.0%
I enjoy the WT	20	40.0%	6	12.0%	7	14.0%	13	26.0%	4	8.0%
I like the writing instruction in the WT	10	20.0%	8	16.0%	9	18.0%	20	40.0%	3	6.0%
I frequently come across difficulties in writing the assigned topics	7	14.0%	6	12.0%	15	30.0%	13	26.0%	9	18.0%
I feel nervous when writing the graded task (final draft) in the WT	9	18.0%	10	20.0%	4	8.0%	11	22.0%	16	32.0%

Table 8 reveals the students' views concerning the benefits and drawbacks of the writing task. 40% of students agreed that they liked the writing task; however, 32.0% of the participants strongly agreed that

they feel nervous when writing the graded draft which accordingly explains why 40% of the students said they don't enjoy the task.

This section includes relatable answers for the research question: *Are the ELI writing tasks effective and meet students' needs?* from students' perceptions towards the WT. Remarkably, the 50 students participating in the study seem to hold similar perceptions regarding the WT in the ELI. According to the quantitative data, all students were not sure whether or not the writing task improves their writing skills. They were also uncertain of the effectiveness of the writing task on their selection of vocabulary, organization, content, grammar and accuracy. As for the appropriateness of the topics in the WT, participants agreed that the task topics were not appropriate in terms of real life experiences or proficiency level. Most of the learners expressed that they believed in the effectiveness of interaction and collaboration in fostering the WT which is a practice usually done in class. In alignment with the findings of Storch (2005), collaborative writing offers students an opportunity to explore others' opinions and to have interaction in generating ideas. Conversely, most of the students asserted that they feel nervous when they start to write a graded task which makes them unable to enjoy writing in general. In their studies, Cheng (2002) and Asmari (2013) noted that teachers should increase students' confidence and foster their positive perceptions of writing competence that can highly motivate them to reduce issues related to writing anxiety. A good example is when some teachers employ effective writing strategies before, during and after composing the text which is much needed in our context.

5. Conclusion and Implications

As previously presented, opinions about the significance of the writing booklet from both participants: teachers and students were varied. From now on, teachers should improve their instructional practices in the classroom to raise the students' writing performance a level up. Based on the current findings, policy makers in language institutes and curriculum designers are encouraged to devote sufficient time for teachers to give proper writing instruction to their students. Moreover, the selection of the writing topics should be done accurately in a way that engages the students and makes them more motivated. In addition, employing web tools and technology may enhance the writing outcomes as they involve innovative ways of learning that attracts the students' attention. Increasing the idea of collaboration among the students in generating ideas before starting the first draft can make the task more creative and enjoyable. Moreover, changing the exam regulations while writing the graded task can be helpful in reducing anxiety.

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Appendix

Adapted and Modified Interview Questions and Questionnaire

Background Questions:

Name:

Age:

Qualifications:

Years of teaching:

Experience:

1- In your opinion, what are the advantages of teaching the students how to write using the writing booklet? How effective is it in facilitating writing?

2- Were there any challenges you or the students faced while using the writing booklet to enhance writing skills? Kindly list them.

3- In your opinion, what are the suggestions or ways to improve the effectiveness of the writing instruction in ELI?

4- How do you provide the appropriate feedback to your students?

The following section consists of 18 statements concerning perceptions about Writing Task (WT) at ELI. Please choose the most applicable answer to you by circling whether you (1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) not sure (4) agree (5) strongly agree. Take your time to answer the questionnaire and try to be as honest as possible.

1-My English writing skills improved as a result of the WT.

2-My English reading skills improved as a result of the WT.

3-My selection of words in English writing improved as a result of WT.

4-My organization in English writing improved as a result of WT.

5-My content in English writing improved as a result of WTP.

6-My grammar accuracy in English writing improved as a result of the WT.

Using WT improves skills related to writing.

7-The topics provided by the WT are appropriate to my English proficiency level.

8- The writing tasks in the WT related to my real-life experiences.

Appropriateness of topics included in WT.

9-Individual writing in the WT is helpful for my writing.

10- Pair writing in the WT is helpful for my writing.

11- Collaborative writing in the WT is helpful for my writing.

12- I have plenty of interaction with my classmates in the WT.

13- I have plenty of interaction with my teacher in the WT.

Interaction and collaboration in writing the WT.

14- The WT is helpful for me to generate ideas for writing.

15- I enjoyed the WT.

16- I like the writing instruction in the WT.

17- I frequently came across difficulties in writing the assigned topics.

18- I felt nervous when writing the graded task (final draft) in the WT.

Benefits and drawbacks of WT