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THE EFFECT OF JOURNAL WRITING ON WRITTEN PERFORMANCE, WRITING APPREHENSION, AND ATTITUDES OF EGYPTIAN ENGLISH MAJORS

A Thesis in
Curriculum and Instruction

by
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Abstract

Title: The Effect of Journal Writing on Written Performance, Writing Apprehension, and Attitudes of Egyptian English Majors

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This study investigated the effect of journal writing as a communicative technique on written performance, writing apprehension, perceived sense of writing abilities, and attitudes of Egyptian EFL English majors. It also explored the relationship between L1 (Arabic) and L2 (English) writing performance. The initial number of participants in this study was 50 third-year English Department male students in the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. They were randomly selected and assigned into the treatment groups; the experimental group included 25 whereas the control group included 25 students. Both groups studied an Essay and Composition course for a semester. For the purpose of this study, the experimental group did an extra assignment in which each student wrote a minimum 200-word journal entry on topics that interested him once a week for ten intermittent weeks.

The treatment was administered voluntarily by an associate professor in Applied Linguistics who commented on the experimental group’s journal entries by focusing on meaning and content and ignoring surface structural features such as grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Instruments included a writing test graded by two independent raters using Jacobs et al.’s (1981) Composition Profile, the Writing Apprehension Test prepared by Daly and Miller (1975) and adapted to L2 by Gungle
and Taylor (1989), and attitude questionnaires developed by the researcher. In addition, tutor interview, participants’ written comments, and their perceived sense of writing abilities were utilized as qualitative data collection techniques. The pre- and posttest data from 41 students were analyzed using means, t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Content analysis was used and categories were created for the themes students raised while writing their impressions on the treatment.

The findings revealed significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in written performance in favor of the experimental group. This result was supported by qualitative evidence showing that the final journal entries of six students randomly selected from the experimental group indicated development in ideas, coherence, cohesion, and voice. Moreover, journal writing had positive effects on decreasing writing apprehension and developing students’ perceived sense of their writing abilities. Analyzing the attitude questionnaires revealed that the experimental group had strong positive attitudes toward journal writing whereas the control group had neutral attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. However, the qualitative analysis showed positive attitudes toward journal writing and negative attitudes toward traditional writing teaching. Results were interpreted considering the context in which the study was conducted. The study concluded with discussing the findings reached, presenting implications, and suggesting topics for further research.
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CHAPTER ONE
RESEARCH PROBLEM and HYPOTHESES

1.0 Introduction

Educators agree that writing is a complex activity essential to the development of second language and foreign language learning. Composition research suggests that writing is a highly dynamic process. Zamel (1983) views the process of writing as non-linear, exploratory, and generative whereby writers discover and generate ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. This process involves the sub-processes of planning, collecting data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing. These sub-processes need not to be seen as sequential stages; they are rather highly dynamic, non-sequential, and interactive processes. Our conception of writing should incorporate these sub-processes together with the other dimensions of effective writing such as audience, purpose, and text structure.

Writing is a challenging task requiring much mental effort. In order to communicate our opinions and ideas, we engage in many conscious cognitive processes simultaneously. We encode the meaning in our minds into words and sentences while also attending to grammar, vocabulary, coherence, audience, and appropriateness of the text for the task at hand. In some cases, we may struggle thinking out the meaning we want to share with our audience. This process becomes more challenging in second and foreign language situations where a writer has limited vocabulary, idioms, cultural knowledge, and less experience with L2 rhetorical strategies.
Writing is also an unnatural skill because it does not develop automatically, even in the first language. Although children acquire speaking through their interaction with other people around them, they, in most cases, need to be taught to learn how to communicate via writing. It takes more mental effort to write than to speak because writing is more formal and thus we need to write something that represents us in order to be well judged and clearly understood by the audience. Similarly, it is only through the text itself that we can communicate with our audience. In other words, the lack of paralinguistic cues in writing compared to speaking places much more burden on the writer in communicating his/her ideas to the audience. Additionally, in speaking, we typically share the context of the situation with the audience, but in writing we need to make an extra effort to create a context.

Haring-Smith (1994) describes writing as a social activity: a process of sharing thoughts and opinions with someone else. Students form ideas by being a part of a thinking, talking, and writing community. Similarly, Silva and Leki (2004) describe writing as a sociocultural as well as a cognitive process. Teaching students to write competently in a new language is a complex task that involves socialization. However, it can be achieved through providing learners with the cognitive skills needed for writing in their new language along with opportunities to try out those skills in a variety of social contexts.

1.1 Context of the study

In Egypt English is taught as a foreign language in primary, middle and high schools. Students study English in three or four 45-minute classroom periods a week in
the primary and middle school. This goes up to five or six periods in the high school. In this context, students learn English not for communication but for the ability to pass exams. Despite the fact that the goals of the English language curriculum aim at developing language skills, most teachers’ main concerns are to teach students how to pass final exams with high scores. To meet exam requirements, most class time is devoted to teaching vocabulary along with grammar rules through rehearsal and repetition. Little or no attention is given to practice in communication.

In the elementary school, teaching writing is confined to presenting the orthographic representation of the English alphabet, separate words, and simple expressions. In the junior and senior high schools, however, teachers focus on teaching students how to write a few sentences to form a paragraph. They focus mainly on correcting students’ grammatical mistakes and give minor attention to meaning. Focusing on the sentence level, of course, encourages students to emphasize mechanics and disregard important elements in writing such as content, organization, consideration of audience, purpose, and the context of writing. Some teachers encourage students to memorize some sentences, which I describe as “generic”, in order to use them, with slight or no modification, in writing any paragraph, regardless of the context. In doing so, teachers try to guarantee that their students will compose something in the writing part of the exam, even if they do not know what the topic is about, so that they may be credited for what they write. As a result, exam raters may find something written that is completely irrelevant to the purpose of a writing task. Students are sometimes encouraged to memorize complete paragraphs to use in the writing section of the exam.
In addition, they routinely memorize some mechanical expressions to use in writing the introduction or the conclusion of any paragraph. Before they enter university, Egyptian students will have studied English this way for at least eight years.

After passing the General High School Certificate Examination (Thanaweya Ammah) students send their college applications to a Central Bureau (Maktab El-Tansiq), and according to their grades, they are assigned a college in a certain university. Because their graduates have better job opportunities, colleges of education are considered among the top colleges in Egypt. Any student aiming at entering the college of education must get a high score on the General High School Certificate Examination. Colleges of education offer teacher education programs for preparing teachers of various subject areas such as Arabic, English, French, history, geography, mathematics, and science. English majors in the college of education study academic courses other than education and psychology courses so as to be prepared as future teachers of English in an integrated way. Among the academic courses students study are English literature, translation, grammar, phonetics, linguistics, conversation, reading comprehension and writing.

A review of the coursework plan for English Department students at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt revealed that the time allocated for teaching reading comprehension and essay writing is two hours a week throughout the four years of students’ academic preparation program. Based on my teaching experience in that context, I would describe the teaching methods used as grammar–based, specifically a mixture of the Grammar Translation and the Audiolingual Methods. Most
instructors provide students with handouts including a number of reading comprehension passages as well as a theoretical framework about writing and how to compose in L2. Moreover, instructors require students to compose on a few topics throughout the academic year. However, students rarely receive any written feedback on their essays. When the instructor wants to give students feedback, he calls on one of them to read his essay out loud and interrupts him highlighting his writing problems, focusing mainly on structural and vocabulary errors. This process is very threatening to students’ self-esteem and attitudes toward writing. Some students prefer not to get feedback on their essays in order to avoid those face-threatening situations. In addition, the number of enrolled students is so large that professors may not have the chance to give each student feedback. Composition courses focus mainly on theoretical aspects of writing. They also include a group of passages for reading comprehension and a group of essays to work as models that students can follow when they want to write expository, narrative, descriptive, or argumentative essays.

In the final exam of the reading comprehension and composition course, students are usually asked to write on one of the topics that they have already composed during the semester in addition to reading a comprehension passage and answering a few questions accordingly. Some instructors, however, may also require students to write on an unseen topic. Twenty percent of the course grade is based on students’ class participation and 80% on the final exam which is a closed book sit-in exam. Students’ grades are based on their aggregate performance on both reading comprehension and
writing. Therefore, students have the chance to pass the course even if they do not perform well on the composition part.

The description of the English language program I have provided may or may not be typical of teacher education programs in Egypt in general. However, the literature in L2 writing in that Egyptian context indicates that writing a composition constitutes a problem for a large number of the undergraduate students who major in English. Most students feel overwhelmed when they are required to write on a certain topic. They may not know how to start, how to develop their ideas or how to conclude the essay. They also lack the technical skills of writing an acceptable composition in English. They often repeat their ideas, report few if any valid points, make serious mistakes in grammar and punctuation, and include irrelevant information (Sahakian, 1989; Desouky, 1990, 1995; Abdel-Fattah, 1995; Abdel-Rehim, 1997). Moreover, those studies indicate that the traditional method of teaching writing does not encourage students to interact with their instructors or their classmates. As Raimes (1984) nicely puts it while describing a similar L2 composition context, students “produce dry, flat, mechanical prose, full of unsupported generalizations, repeated concepts and errors” (p. 81).

In my opinion, composition instruction is given sufficient time in the English majors’ preparation plan. Students are also provided a sufficient cognitive background about L2 writing. However, they have been socialized in an educational context where they never write unless they are required to do so in order to achieve a certain pedagogical task. Students, therefore, feel pressurized to write which, in turn, makes writing a terrifying experience for them. What makes them even more nervous is the fact
that they may be graded on assignments they submit without having the chance to get the instructor’s feedback on what they write. This process gets more complicated when we consider the linguistic and the rhetorical constraints that L2 writers face in communicating their ideas.

What seems to be lacking, however, is providing students with authentic opportunities where they feel the need to write in English. Teaching writing should not be limited to teaching students how to write but also should include creating situations where students feel the need to write to communicate ideas to an interested audience. This may help to inspire inexperienced writers to write on a regular basis and to overcome writing anxiety. As clearly put by Gradwahl and Schumacher (1989), writing about content teaches thinking and thus may develop performance.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most English Department students in colleges of education in Egypt lack the writing skills required for the student-teachers of English (Sahakian, 1989; Abdel-Fattah, 1995). With specific reference to the College of Education Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Desouky (1990, 1995) and Abdel-Rehim (1997) report that many third-year English Department students are incompetent writers and lack the ability to write fluently in English. In my own experience as a teaching assistant at Al-Azhar University, I have found that some students are unable to write even a one-page essay on a given topic. They lack the skills and confidence to write in the foreign language. Some ask their high school teachers or more competent friends to help them complete the assignment.
Most current Egyptian English language programs do not provide students with opportunities to practice writing in a communicative context where they feel the need to write and become confident in their abilities to communicate in writing. Students usually do not write unless they are pressurized to do so and are given a specific topic to address. Their writing is, therefore, decontextualized since it has no definite purpose other than completing the assignment. This makes the writing task artificial and thus it will lack voice or have an unauthentic one. It also positions students as repeaters of others’ ideas or as novices who lack the authority to voice out their opinions. Learners need to feel confident in communicating through writing in the foreign language that they will teach to their future students. In order to develop their writing competency, they should be encouraged to write freely without fear of making mistakes. Communicative competence in both speaking and writing requires communicative confidence and can be attained only through participation in communication, the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning (Savignon 1972; Canale & Swain 1980; Savignon, 1983, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2005; Swain 2005).

Raimes (1984) suggests that “communication must surely be as important in the composition classroom as it is now becoming in the spoken classroom” (p. 83). Britton (1982) also advocates that dummy exercises should not be used in the writing classroom. Rather, students should write about something interesting to them for someone who is willing to read and respond to what they communicate. In that context teachers should not sacrifice their role as readers for that as writing instructors and correctors. Likewise, Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) argue that composition instruction should provide novice
writers with opportunities for practicing writing in a meaningful social context in which teachers are more interested in the meaning of the communicated message than in its correctness. Moreover, Silva (1990) proposes that L2 writing instruction should be approached as “purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge” (p. 18). Equally important is the fact that writing apprehension is a problem facing many L2 writers (Rose, 1980, 1984; Zamel, 1982; Raimes 1984; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Al-Ahmad, 2003). L2 writers experience high levels of anxiety, which tends to cause writing block and hate of writing. A number of studies have shown that writing apprehension negatively affects L2 students’ written performance (Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Hassan, 2001). However, the field lacks studies adopting interventionist approaches to alleviate this problem.

To sum up, language is a social phenomenon that is acquired through meaningful communication between individuals. To help L2 writers develop their communicative competence, we need to provide them with a viable context within which they can achieve this goal. One of the techniques that can provide a purposefully meaningful communicative context between participants is journal writing. Peyton and Staton (1991) argue that using journal writing in adult literacy contexts is based on the idea that language acquisition is a process of social interaction. Journal writing is one way of making writing a negotiated language interaction in which meaning is developed through exchanging comments, questions, and clarifications. The present study attempts to investigate the effect of journal writing (see 1.7 below) on EFL English majors’ overall
written performance, attitudes toward journal writing, level of writing apprehension, and perceived sense of writing ability. The study asks the following questions:

1.3 Questions of the study

1. What is the effect of journal writing on students’ overall written performance?
2. What is the effect of journal writing on reducing students’ writing apprehension?
3. What are the experimental group students’ attitudes toward journal writing?
4. What are the control group students’ attitudes toward traditional writing instruction?
5. Is there any relationship between written performance in L1 and that in L2?
6. What challenges to journal writing implementation can be identified in this context?
7. Is there any difference in students’ perceived sense of writing ability before and after the treatment?
8. Is there any development in the experimental group students’ writing over time?

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

1. There will be a difference in overall written performance at the .05 level of significance between the experimental group (journal writing) and the control group in favor of the experimental group.
2. There will be a difference in writing apprehension reduction at the .05 level of significance between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group.
3. The experimental group will express positive attitudes toward journal writing.
4- The control group will express negative attitudes toward traditional writing instruction.

5- There will be a positive correlation between L1 writing and L2 writing.

6- Implementation of journal writing will not be without challenges.

7- There will be a difference in students’ perceived sense of their writing abilities before and after the treatment.

8- The written performance of the experimental group will develop over time.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is fourfold:

1- To investigate the effect of journal writing on English majors’ composition performance, writing apprehension, perceived sense of writing ability, and attitudes toward journal writing.

2- To help college students write communicatively.

3- To give students the opportunity to write without fear of being graded.

4- To identify obstacles to the implementation of journal writing in the study context.

1.6 Significance of the study

1- This study will provide students with a communicative technique for practicing writing in context.

2- This study will provide the English majors with experience in a new avenue to writing that they can use in language teaching when they start their careers as teachers of English.
3- Since the use of journal writing is not common in the Egyptian context, it will be interesting to see how students learn from the communicative interaction with their instructor.

4- It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage teachers in the Egyptian context to use communicative techniques in teaching writing.

5- While previous studies have focused on designing programs for developing EFL/ESL writing abilities, this study is interested in the purposeful social context in which writing occurs.

6- Identification of the obstacles to implementation of the unfamiliar practice of journal writing in that context may help in making proposals for curricular reform.

1.7 Operational definition of terms

Attitudes: Students’ positive or negative feelings about their EFL writing. In this study, students’ attitudes will be limited to their responses to Likert-type scale format questionnaires as well as their written impressions about their writing experience in this treatment.

Attitude toward journal writing: Students’ positive or negative views of journal writing.

Attitude toward traditional writing instruction: Students’ positive or negative views of writing instruction without practicing journal writing.

Writing: It is the ability to compose in written English through generating, organizing, and supporting ideas in response to a given prompt. In this study, students’ writing will
be limited to their performance on the pre- and posttests in response to an assigned topic as measured by the ESL Composition Profile of Jacobs et al. (1981).

**Journal Writing:** For the purpose of this study journal writing will be defined as a communicative technique that students will adopt to write a portfolio of structured short essays about topics that interest them. Students will be required to write a minimum 200-word journal entry at least once a week. It should be noted that students’ writing in their journals will be structured in that they will be writing formally. This type of writing will not be too private since students will share their journal entries with their tutor. The tutor will provide feedback directed to the content and meaning. He will not comment on mechanics or grammar errors.

**Writing Apprehension:** The tendency to experience high levels of anxiety when required to write, resulting in the individual’s approach to avoid writing, which in turn affects the writer’s behavior, attitude and written performance (Daly, 1978; Faigley et al., 1981). In this study, participants’ writing apprehension will be limited to their responses to the Writing Apprehension Test; developed by Daly and Miller (1975) and adapted to L2 writing by Gunge and Taylor (1989).

### 1.8 Final comment

The present study is different from the previous studies that used journal writing in how journal writing was operationalized. In the present study, journal writing is defined as a collection of short written compositions on topics that interest learners. Each journal entry includes minimum 200 words. In the previous studies, however, journal writing was viewed slightly differently. For example, in some studies students
were required to comment on essays that they read in their courses and thus their journal entries served a reflective function. In other studies students were asked to practice freewriting and thus they wrote a few sentences, a short paragraph, or long pieces not structured in paragraphs or essays.

While previous studies viewed journal writing as a form of written conversation, journal writing will be done in a formal genre in this study since participants rarely have had any access to informal English. Fortunately, this is more appropriate for the composition class in which the journal writing is embedded. Another important difference is that participants in this study are post-intermediate learners majoring in English education, while participants in most of the previous studies were ESL or EFL learners who were either less or more competent than those included here.

1.9 Overview of thesis chapters

CHAPTER ONE is an introduction to the study. It has presented the context in which the study will be conducted, statement of the problem the study investigates, the questions it asks, and the hypotheses it tests. It has also highlighted the purpose and significance of the study. Furthermore, this chapter has presented operational definitions of the terms used in the study as well as a brief overview of the thesis chapters.

CHAPTER TWO presents a theoretical framework for the study. It briefly reviews the grammar-based and communicative approaches in teaching L2 writing and highlights how writing may be assessed. The chapter also reviews the literature on journal writing and how it can be effectively implemented in the classroom, highlighting the types of journals, the advantages, and disadvantages of journal writing. It reviews
previous studies that investigated the effect of journal writing on L2 writing. It further reports the literature on writing apprehension in L1 and L2 writing contexts. The chapter concludes with discussing grammar-focused and meaning-focused feedback and reviewing the research investigating the effect of feedback on L2 writing.

CHAPTER THREE is allocated to the discussion of the study method and procedures. It describes the research design and the study variables. It reports on the participants included in the study, their selection, and the data collection techniques: the writing test, the writing apprehension scale, the attitudes questionnaires, students’ written comments, their self-evaluation of writing ability, and the tutor interview. It also highlights the administration procedures used with both the experimental and control groups. The chapter concludes with a description of the data analysis techniques used in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR is devoted to the presentation of the quantitative results of the study and their interpretation. It presents both the descriptive and differential statistics used. This study has used means, standard deviations, correlation coefficient, t-test and one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

CHAPTER FIVE presents the results of the qualitative analysis of the study. It highlights the advantages and disadvantages of both journal writing and traditional writing instruction. It also presents the challenges that faced journal writing implementation in the study context. It further presents the results of analyzing students’ written journal entries.
CHAPTER SIX presents a summary and a discussion of the study results and highlights the study limitations. It also presents some pedagogical implications as well as recommendations derived from the results reached. The chapter concludes with presenting some suggestions for further research.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has served as an introduction to the study. It has introduced the reader to the context of the study, its problem, questions, and hypotheses. It has also laid out the purpose and significance of the study. Furthermore, this chapter has highlighted the operational definitions of the terms used in the study, presented an overview of the thesis, and discussed some aspects that distinguish the present study from the previous studies. Chapter Two will be devoted to discussing the theoretical framework of the study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction
The present study aimed at investigating the effect a communicative teaching technique; namely journal writing on tertiary level Egyptian EFL English majors’ written performance, writing apprehension, attitudes toward journal writing, and perceived sense of writing ability. This chapter reviews the literature on the use of journal writing in developing second language writing. It also reviews the literature on the phenomenon of writing apprehension as well as the literature regarding the effect of grammar versus content feedback on L2 writing.

2.1 Grammar-based and communicative approaches
Grammar-based approaches have dominated the field of EFL/ESL for a long time. These approaches include the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audiolingual Method, and the Cognitive Code Method (Richard-Amato, 2003). Grammatical patterns are the main focus of these methods where students are usually given fragmented sentences that have little or nothing in common but the illustration of a certain grammatical rule. Of these approaches, the Audiolingual Method which is based on the behaviorist psychology has been the most widely used in the past fifty years. This method is still predominant in many EFL/ESL teaching contexts.

The Audilingual method views language as primarily what is spoken and secondarily what is written. Language teaching, therefore, should focus on mastery of
speech whereas the teaching of writing should be “withheld until reasonably late in the language learning process” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 56). Proponents of this method adhere to the theory that language is acquired through stimulus-response association. Language is taught through having students parrot dialogues so that they may acquire the correct habits of the foreign language. Native speakers are models to be imitated in order to achieve mastery of different aspects of the language. In teaching writing, for example, teachers present students with conceptual as well as procedural knowledge about writing and then provide them with well written essays as models for them to follow. The rationale is that students’ writing skills will develop through following the rules and imitating writing styles. Teachers may also assign specific topics for students on which they can write essays. These topics might not be familiar to students and thus they feel lacking the purpose and interest in writing on them. As a result, practicing writing is decontextualized since students write for no purpose but to complete the assignment.

In a communicative approach (Savignon, 1972, 1983, 1997), however, the context is highly valued without denying the importance of grammar and vocabulary. Students do not write in a vacuum but in a social context to convey a certain message to a specific audience. The goal of the communicative approach is to help students communicate in realistic situations. Therefore, students’ needs, interests, and attitudes are taken into consideration. Students may be particularly interested in what they are writing when topics emanate from them.
2.1.1 Communicative Competence

According to Savignon (1997), “communication is the continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning” (p.14). The theoretical foundation for the communicative approach to language teaching is the construct of communicative competence. Communicative competence is a construct that includes grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is the ability to use the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language through using it in context to form phrases and sentences. Discourse competence is the ability to integrate or interpret a series of words or utterances in order to form a coherent text in a certain context. Sociocultural competence means understanding the social context in which the language is used. This involves knowing when, how, where, and why to say or write something in a certain setting. Strategic competence is the individual’s ability to use strategies to compensate for the lack of any of the other competences due to any constraints (Canale & Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1997, 2002, 2006).

Communicative competence has the following characteristics (Savignon, 1997, pp.14-15):

1- it is dynamic and interpersonal;

2- it applies to both written and spoken language;

3- it is context specific;

4- there is a difference between competence and performance. Competence is the ability to do something while performance is doing it;
2.2 Teaching L2 writing

Despite the fact that there is a growing body of research in the field of second language writing, Ferris and Hodgcock (2005) state that L2 writing lacks a coherent conclusive theory on which teaching and learning practices could be based. “The field can boast of an impressive body of research, yet a single, comprehensive theory is perhaps a long way off – if, in fact, a singular theory is even a suitable aim” for those working on this area (p. 3). Teaching L2 writing, therefore, has depend on L1 writing theory and the growing research in L2 contexts. In this section, the researcher is going to briefly discuss some approaches for teaching L1 writing that have been extensively utilized in L2 practices. It is worth mentioning that the use of most of these approaches has been predominantly limited to the western language contexts. Many of the non-western contexts in exam-oriented cultures have been mainly focusing on the product approach (Casanave, 2003). In those contexts, writing has been decontextualized in that learners write on some assigned topics just to complete the assignment and pass end-of-semester exams.

2.2.1 The controlled writing approach

This approach belongs to the Audiolingual methodology which was widely prevalent in the in the second half of the last century. As previously stated, the Audiolingual method focuses primarily on speaking and secondarily on writing to strengthen speech through mastering grammatical forms. According to Silva (1990), the controlled approach is an accuracy-focused model that teaches writing through
introducing L2 learners to model paragraphs and asking them to modify them by changing pronouns, and tenses. In addition to playing with the sentence tense or aspect, learners may also adapt those paragraphs by adding, combining, replacing or deleting some sentences. In that approach, students are encouraged to focus on writing error-free sentences while the teacher’s job is to mark students’ papers and correct any errors.

Although there is no question about the importance of the correctness of written products, good writing involves more than correct spelling and punctuation. In some cases, a learner may compose an error-free essay that is semantically flawed because it does not serve the purpose for which it is written. Moreover, learners do not learn writing by achieving mastery of written forms. Rather, they learn to write through practicing writing in a meaningful situation where they feel the need to write and develop confidence in their own writing abilities.

2.2.2 The freewriting approach

The free-writing approach aims at developing students’ ability to express themselves and generate ideas without worrying too much about errors which are considered natural (Raimes, 1983; Grabe & Caplan 1996; Elbow, 1998b). In other words, this approach values writing fluency over accuracy. Learners are encouraged to compose on topics that interest them while teachers read students’ products, commenting on the content without providing any structure or mechanical corrections. To help their students learn free-writing, some teachers ask students to write continuously, in class, on any topic of their choice for a certain period of time (Elbow, 1998b; Hacker, 2004). At the beginning, students find it difficult to decide on a topic, but they eventually become
used to it. Students also learn to consider their audience, who are most likely their teachers or classmates.

### 2.2.3 The paragraph-pattern approach

This approach is based on the fact that writers from different cultures organize discourse differently. Students are required to copy model paragraphs, analyze them, and write their own paragraphs following the organization of those models. They may also write topic sentences for the analyzed paragraphs, delete sentences, add others, or write a conclusion to make the text more coherent (Raimes, 1983). The paragraph-pattern approach seems to be nothing more than a revised version of the controlled writing approach in that it focuses on paragraphs not sentences. It stresses that proficient writing depends on the writer’s ability to imitate previously prepared models, which does not encourage students to be creative. Writing is a process that should emanate from the writer’s own background knowledge, needs, and interests.

The abovementioned approaches focus, in one way or another, on the final product. Little if any effort is dedicated to teaching students strategies or any cognitive operations involved in composing a coherent piece of connected discourse. Williams (2005) argues that writing is not just a production of text. Rather, it is a learning process in which writers may discover what they want to write as result of composing.

### 2.2.4 The process approach

This approach flourished in L1 writing contexts in the 1960s-1990s and then was soon after adopted in L2 writing pedagogy. In the process approach the emphasis is shifted from the product to the process through which writing is produced. Proponents of
this approach believe that the finished product is a result of complex nonlinear processes of prewriting, writing, and post writing activities (Casanave, 2003; Hyland, 2003). Williams (1989) points out that effective writing instruction in the process approach focuses not on the finished product but on helping students go through the overlapping stages in which that product is composed (p. 8). It noteworthy that these processes are intertwined rather than sequential since writers do many things simultaneously. Thus they may go back and forth between those processes while they are writing. The biggest challenge for writers lies in producing the first draft that can be revised through receiving feedback from teachers and colleagues. Hyland (2003) states that in the process pedagogy, writing is learned not taught in an environment where the teacher is expected to work as a writing facilitator; assisting learners to express their ideas rather than correcting their errors.

2.2.5 The communicative approach

The process approach for teaching writing has been criticized for focusing on the internal psychological processes of individual writers and overlooking the social context in which writing is produced though writing can not be separated from the situation in which it gets done. The process view, therefore, has little to say about how the social context affects what writers create (Williams, 1989; Atkinson, 2003a; Atkinson, 2003b). The communicative approach, however, focuses on the context of writing through emphasizing the importance of the authenticity of the message to be communicated, the purpose for writing, and the social environment in which writing is initiated. Student writers are encouraged to behave like real writers and write to achieve certain purposes
(Raimes, 1983). The communicative approach does not aim at replacing the process pedagogy. Instead, it broadens the process perspective and builds on it by considering the social nature of writing. Writing is thus viewed as a socially situated process in which the product is shaped. In addition, the communicative approach highly values the functional aspect of the written discourse and advocates the idea that written performance develops when the writing process is meaningful.

Fulfilling the assignment should be accompanied by a true will to communicate. It is believed that communicating meaning encourages writers to learn how to write through writing. In addition, writers learn to take their audience into consideration while composing for a purpose rather than for just completing the assignment. Oftentimes, the audience may be the teacher or classmates. However, with the development of the means to communicate, students can target audience outside the classroom context. For example, learners may be encouraged to use the internet for exchanging writing with students in other classrooms, schools, districts or even countries. This gives students the opportunity to learn how to consider their audience through active purposeful communication.

Adopting a similar communicative perspective on language learning and use, Hyland (2002) describes writing as a “social practice” embedded in the cultural context in which it is produced and the uses that are made of it. When we write, we are always influenced by the elements that represent the social context such as purpose, audience, and our relationship with that audience. Likewise, a sense of power contributes to shaping our writing in a communicative situation. Therefore, every act of writing is
interactional and social (p. 48). Even when writing is done for personal interests, the writer will be the audience for his or her own script and in this sense writing is still a communicative act.

One of the techniques that have been used to help students write for communication is journal writing. This activity can make writing a social process that is based on authentic communication between two or more individuals, and give learners a purpose for using the language. Learners also may feel the need to use the language to express themselves or to ask for information. Each individual’s response helps the other write in order to comment on, negotiate, support, or refute what has been posted. Furthermore, journal writing provides students with chances to use the foreign language beyond the realm of the classroom context. Savignon (2002) states that “regardless of the variety of communicative activities, their purpose remains preparing learners to use the second language in the world beyond” (p.15). Moreover, journal writing gives EFL students the chance to express themselves freely without being afraid of making mistakes. This section will be devoted to shedding some light on journal writing, its advantages and disadvantages, and how it can be effectively implemented in the writing classroom.

2.3 Journal writing

Journal writing is a learning as well as a communication technique in which students reflect on their reactions, ideas, and observations about topics that appeal to them and initiate them to write. Depending on the purpose of their writing, students may write to think through their ideas before sharing them with others. When it is not graded,
journal writing gives students the chance to write freely without being too anxious about their performance. This helps them capture their feelings, thoughts and emotions. According to Peyton and Reed (1990), journal writing can be a special type of written interaction between two students or a student and a teacher. It is a communicative means of interaction as students shift their focus from the sentence level to the content level. Both writers and audience are more concerned with meaning than grammatical errors. Journal writing is different from other types of writing in that it takes place regularly and continually over a school year or an academic semester, where students select topics that they would like to write about according to their interests and needs. On the other hand, the teacher is an active partner who responds to every journal entry that a student posts. If the response time is going to burden the teacher, he or she can comment on students’ journal entries once a week or every other week, as convenient.

In their journal entries, students can write about topics that are important to them or things that they experience in their daily lives without being restricted to topics assigned by their teacher. Moreover, they can write descriptions, explanations, arguments, narratives, or complaints. There is no specific limit for the length of each journal entry which may vary from few sentences to few pages (Peyton, 1987). Teachers are not expected to correct grammatical mistakes or spelling not to violate the rules of journal writing or to provide evaluations such as “good”, “great.” Rather, they are expected to respond by providing open ideas based on their understanding of the student’s needs, interests, and writing abilities. The value of the journal lies in the exchange of communicative ideas between the student and the teacher. Similarly, the
feedback that students receive motivates them to write more and provides them with
other points they can address (Peyton & Reed, 1990, pp 3, 4). In most cases, teachers
comment through asking questions related to the topic, agreeing, disagreeing, and
proposing suggestions. However, they can indirectly correct through recasting or
rephrasing what students have written.

The purpose of journal writing is to express meaning without worrying too much
about form. This might make less skilled writers focus more on developing the ideas
they want to address. Fuhler (1994) states that journal writing gives students more
freedom of expression than the traditional writing tasks do. As teachers do not grade
journal entries, students feel more relaxed when they write, which encourages them to
express themselves in a friendly context without fearing to lose points of their total
course grade. As a result, writers of various writing abilities can express their thoughts,
self-assured that they will get responses from the teacher (Fuhler, 1994). In addition,
journal writing may provide L2 learners with the confidence they need to write.

2.3.1 Types of journals
Tompkins (2004) classifies journals into six categories: personal journals,
dialogue journals, reading logs, learning logs, double-entry journals, and simulated
journals. These types of journals can be described briefly as follows (Tompkins, 2004,
pp. 193 - 210):

1- Personal journals: Students write about events that take place in their personal
lives and about the topics that represent a personal interest to them in order to
record their reactions to those topics. Students’ journals in this case are mostly private though they may choose to share them with people close to them.

2- Dialogue journals: Students write about personal things as well as topics that interest them in order to share their writings with someone else. This indicates that this type of journal is meant to be communicated to others. Students can communicate with their classmates or their teachers through this type of journal.

3- Reading logs: Students write in order to respond to a short story, poem, and/or informational books that they are reading in their syllabus. They relate what they read to their own experiences. Students write in the writing logs as a part of theme cycles in their subject matter.

4- Learning logs: Students write as a part of their subject matter assignments. They take notes, write vocabulary words, create timelines, and draw diagrams and maps.

5- Double–entry journals: Students divide each page in their journals into two columns and write different types of information in each column. For example, they can write quotes from a story in the left column and relate each quote to their life experiences in the right column.

6- Simulated journals: Students play the role of a book character or a historical personality and write journal entries from that person’s viewpoint.

The type of journal writing this study adopts is dialogue journals with slight modifications (see 3.1.5.2.2).

Hiemstra (2001, pp. 20-23) describes yet additional types of journals:
1- Dream book: Some people keep a book beside their beds at night so that they can record their dreams as soon as they get up before the dreams fade from their memories. Similarly, some students keep a notebook to record the insights that come to their minds concerning a certain learning issue with which they are struggling.

2- Autobiographies and life stories: Autobiography is the process of assessing one’s life while life story is assessing someone else’s life.

3- Spiritual journal: It is a notebook including one’s reactions to spiritual and religious events.

4- Theory log: It is a type of journal in which adult students record their questions, interpretation of terminology, and conceptual framework of a theory that they are studying.

5- Electronic journal: Any of the abovementioned journals can be electronic when its writer chooses to record it online or on his/her webpage.

Journal writing in its various forms is a means of recording personal thoughts, interests and daily experiences. In this sense it involves written interaction between the writer and him or herself, another person, or even an imagined individual (Hiemstra, 2001, p. 19). The purpose of this interaction could be communicating with others through sharing opinion and ideas, seeking others’ help, or negotiating meaning on paper with the self.
2.3.2 Journals as written interaction between learners and teachers

Journal writing that is a written interaction between teacher and students has the following characteristics (Staton, 1987b; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1992):

1- The journal is kept separate from other classroom assignments:

   Journal writing provides both teachers and students with an open channel of communication through which they can get to know each other. This communication is usually kept in a notebook or a file in order to be separated from the other classroom homework.

2- Writing is done regularly:

Throughout the school year, students should write frequently in their journals at least once a week. This turns writing to a habit and enhances participants’ writing fluency.

3- Writing is student generated:

   The journal is a chance for students to write and express themselves freely. Students write about topics that they like and activities in which they participate. They are allowed to write on topics of their choice to the length they think is appropriate. The teacher can also suggest topics if students are unable to come up with their own. It is optional for students to use the suggested topics or to think of other ones. What is important is that each student should have something to write about.

4- Writing is functional:

Journal writing gives students the chance to share their experiences and feelings with somebody else. However, students can also give their opinions, request an opinion, seek clarifications, directions or complain about a specific issue.
5- Writing displays the characteristics of oral conversation and written text:

    Journal writing is similar to oral conversation in that it contains questions, answers, and seeks clarification when something is not clear. The teacher is more concerned with communication and encouraging students to write than with correcting their errors. On the other hand, journal writing is similar to the written text in that it does not contain non-verbal cues. The writer should make him/herself understood only through the use of words.

6- Writing is varied in terms of topic and genre

    Although students often write about personal topics in their entries, they can write on any topic that appeals to them. For example, they can write in response to some issues related to their curriculum, or some articles they read in newspapers. In addition, students can use the genre they prefer to express themselves.

2.3.3 Effective implementation of journal writing

    For the effective implementation of journal writing, the teacher should take the following suggested steps into consideration (Peyton, 1993; Montgomery, 2001; Cooper & Kiger, 2003):

    1- The teacher should explain the idea of journal writing to students.
    2- He or she writes a journal entry in the classroom in order to show students how this process is done.
    3- With students, the teacher sets how frequently they should write in their journals and how often they should turn in their journals so that he or she can read and comment on them.
4- Students should be free to write on any topic that interests them.

5- During the initial stages of journal writing, teachers should set some group processing sessions in order to evaluate how the process is going and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of journal writing. Teachers should also help students solve problems that they face during the writing process.

2.3.4 Advantages of journal writing

Journal writing is beneficial for both teachers and students. For teachers, it provides them with opportunities for increased communication with students and gives them access to information that can assist in lesson planning and teaching. For students, journal writing facilitates their language learning where the instructor’s comments serve as an input that is slightly beyond students’ current proficiency level. It also provides them with a chance to use writing for genuine communication as well as an additional opportunity for reading (Staton, 1987a; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton, 1993; Peyton, 2000). Fuhler (1994) and Hiemstra (2001) also highlight the benefits that students derive from journal writing stating that journal writing can be beneficial to students in different ways. First, it encourages thoughtful and personal engagement. Second, it allows students to monitor their learning through making them independent learners and thinkers. Third, students become active participants in the learning process. Finally, it can enhance students’ personal development and self-expression and promote their problem-solving skills. Similarly, the findings of Mayo (2003), Ibarreta and McLeod (2004), and those of Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005) revealed that journal writing can be an effective learning tool for developing students’ critical literacy,
intellectual challenge, and creative expression. Likewise, Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) state that journal writing is beneficial to students in various respects: a) it serves as a permanent record of thoughts and experiences, b) it works as a safe outlet for students’ concerns and frustrations, and c) it serves as a dialogical teaching tool. Furthermore, Strange (2001) showed that journal writing enabled students to understand their learning process through reflection and to integrate information from a variety of resources. It also can help them master a metacognitive lifetime process of thinking about their thinking. Additionally, the results of (Brady & Sky, 2003) revealed some psychological benefits of journal writing. First, journal writing helps students cope with the daily life problems through offering a venue for sorting out issues in relationships. Second, journal writing helps students achieve the joy of discovering themselves through observation and reflection. Third, journal writing nurtures students’ voice and power, which, in turn, makes them feel confident enough to express their ideas. In the same way, the results of Haraway (2003) showed that journal writing had positive effects on reducing students’ anxiety and anger.

Gardner (1999) discusses the importance of journal writing for incompetent writers. She states that the expressive writing that the journal writing encourages helps unskilled writers consider their thoughts as important. It gives them the chance to write down their thoughts so that they can revise them afterwards. Journal writing can also provide a chance for those writers to work on developing their writing fluency. Through journal writing, incompetent writers will use narrative structure to describe their experiences, which may help to develop their writing ability (p. 3). Journal writing also
makes students feel confident as writers and enables them to develop control over their writing (Alm, 1999). In addition, journal writing makes students experience what writers actually do when they write. Writing journals gives students the chance to move beyond the five paragraph essay format to express themselves in a more intimate and exploratory way. More importantly, students’ attitudes toward writing improve when they start to think of themselves as meaning makers (Dickerson, 1987).

One of the main advantages of journal writing is its flexible applicability. It can be used with native speakers of English, ESL or EFL learners from kindergarten to college level. Children and adults who are not literate enough in the second language can use simple sentences besides drawings to express themselves. By the same token, advanced L2 students can use journal writing to argue for or against a certain viewpoint (Staton, 1987b; Peyton & Reed, 1990). Teachers’ response to students’ journal entries is important as it can enhance students’ motivation and provide them with models to express their thoughts and reflections. Likewise, responding to students’ journals may provide the teacher with a source of real joy (Staton, 1987b). Additionally, the response keeps the journal writing ongoing. If students write without receiving any responses from their teachers, they may become less motivated to write.

Lazarus (1999) reports that journal writing helps students develop their academic essay writing skills. “With the practice of recording their thoughts in journals, students find essay writing becomes easier for them, and their essays become more complex and thoughtful. They become more fluent writers in academic language” (p. 17). Although journal writing is characterized by being less formal than some other writing genres, it
trains students to express themselves. Step by step unskilled writers take the risk and become self-confident to map out their thoughts. After thinking out their ideas, students can develop them and work on editing their written products. They can also work on the genre to make their writings more academic. In addition, journal writing trains students to integrate their ideas in some related journal entries to form one cohesive essay.

Journal writing is an interactive writing technique where topics are generally not assigned by the teacher. Rather, students select topics that interest them. Journal entries are neither corrected nor graded. This encourages students to write freely without feeling being under pressure. However, this might raise some thorny issues related to accuracy with adult L2 learners (Peyton & Staton, 1991). Writing teachers should realize that a journal writing activity may not be the right task to work on accuracy. Rather, more emphasis should be given to content and coherence of text.

Second language learners may resist writing due to its complexity. Peyton and Staton (1991) observe that journal writing can help to demystify the writing process. Through writing periodically in their journals, students become engaged in the process slowly, which may motivate them to write longer and more developed journal entries. Likewise, Raimes (1984) is of the opinion that journal writing can help students generate ideas and develop their writing fluency.

2.3.5 Disadvantages of journal writing

Despite the abovementioned benefits, journal writing as a pedagogical practice has some disadvantages. According to Peyton (1987; 1993), one of the major drawbacks of journal writing is that it is time consuming. In order to provide appropriate comments,
the teacher should carefully read what students have posted in their journals. The larger the number of the class, the more time the teacher needs. It gets more complex when we consider the other things that the teacher should do such as correcting homework, exams, and designing various class activities. However, teachers who are successful in using journal writing indicate that the time in this process is well spent.

In my opinion, this problem can be solved through decreasing the number of journal entries that each student should post every week. Instead of posting an entry every day, each student can write two or three entries weekly. For the sake of time, the teacher can collect these journals once a week and respond to only one of the posted entries. If the teacher has large numbers of students, he or she can divide students into pairs or small groups so that they can exchange comments on one another’s entries. However, this will necessitate training students in how to respond to their colleagues journals in a meaningful way. This may, to some extent, alleviate the pressure placed on the teacher. At the same time, the teacher can comment on one journal entry for each student once every fifteen days or monthly.

Another problem with journal writing is that it may be characterized as an informal type of writing. In my opinion, the communicative aspect of journal writing can be used to develop students’ writing fluency. Staton (1987b) states that journal writing can be a helpful written communication technique for students who disliked writing the most (p. 56). Furthermore, the genre depends on how the teacher wants to use the journal process. In other words, it can be less formal or more academic. It can also be used in
academic writing classes with less competent writers, as shown above by Lazarus (1999), to train them to express their ideas and acquire self-confidence.

2.3.6 Research on journal writing and L2 writing

A considerable number of studies have investigated the effect of journal writing on students’ writing. However, few studies have been conducted in L2 contexts, and the findings of those studies are inconclusive. This section will be devoted to a review of studies in EFL and ESL writing.

Martinez-Lage (1992) conducted a one semester (15 week) study to investigate the effect of journal writing, based on students’ personal selection of their writing entries versus teacher – assigned compositions, on students’ writing in Spanish L2. Participants of this study were 23 undergraduates at Penn State University, enrolled in a second year Spanish composition class. They were assigned to two groups; one of them used the dialogue journal while the other wrote on the topics assigned by the instructor. Written samples from the beginning, middle and end of the semester were collected and analyzed in terms of quantity, syntactic complexity, and grammatical accuracy. Quantity was measured in terms of the number of words as well as the number of T-units per text. Syntactic complexity was measured in terms of: a) the average length of T-units, b) the number of clauses to the number of T-units, c) the proportion of simple T-units to complex T-units, d) the percent of coordination to subordination in T-units, and e) the number of T-units without errors. Grammatical accuracy, however, was measured in terms of the number and type (morphological, lexical, and syntactical) of errors. The T-
unit was defined as a main clause plus all subordinate clauses and non-clausal structures attached to or embedded in it.

The statistical techniques utilized were two-tailed t-tests to compare the journal writing to teacher – assigned composition, and analysis of variance to examine the development of journal writing. In terms of complexity, results revealed that there was no difference between journal writing and teacher – assigned compositions. However, the T-units were significantly higher in the teacher – assigned compositions. On the other hand, there was a significant difference in favor of the journal writing group in the accuracy ratio in terms of the error-free T-units and the number of morphological and syntactic errors. Furthermore, the journal writing analysis over the semester showed that the length of entries, the number of T-units and the number of subordinate conjunctions increased significantly. In addition, the number of error-free T-units increased significantly from the beginning to the middle of the semester.

An academic qualitative study was conducted by Gallagher (1997) to explore the effect of journal writing on cohesion of technical college students’ writing. Data for this study were collected from a writing course that was part of a two-year project for developing the EFL level of Japanese college students. The data were analyzed within the systemic functional grammar framework (Halliday, 1994). Learners were enrolled in the Cabin Attendant Program of the Air Travel College in Tokyo. The purpose was to prepare students for positions in airline companies. Students were taught reading, listening, and writing each for an hour daily by native speakers of English. On the other hand, three hours were devoted to practicing speaking skills. Based on their level in
English, students were assigned to four classes; (A / B / C / D) each of which included 30 female students.

L2 Writing was taught according to the process approach with an emphasis on developing students’ language use related to the travel and tourism industry. As an activity for practicing writing in this class, students were required to write three or four journal entries a week. The teacher collected students’ journals fortnightly to comment on them. Comments focused on the content of the journal entries, not on the linguistic or editing features. Topics were left open for students but they were developed according to the teacher’s feedback. Of the participants in this project, six students from the D class were randomly selected to participate in this study. The data analyzed in this study were collected at the beginning, middle, and end of the treatment. Learner anxiety and competitiveness over obtaining positions in the airline companies were recurrent themes of students’ journal entries.

In this study, the researcher was mainly concerned with conducting a qualitative analysis of students’ use of cohesion in writing. In the first collection of journal entries, the researcher noticed that students’ writing lacked cohesion devices. The second data collection phase was six months after the beginning of the project. Findings showed that students used more conjunctive adjuncts such as “then, after that, again”, substitution, ellipsis as well as anaphoric and cataphoric pronoun referents. The last phase of data collection revealed more sophisticated use of lexical cohesion, repetition, ellipsis, and substitution. Furthermore, students used more sentence connectors as well as lexical chain of adjectives and modifiers plus nouns. Additionally, students’ writing seemed to
be more organized in the late phase of data collection in that it had a beginning, middle, and end.

Song (1997) investigated the effect of using journal writing in a reading course on EFL students’ reading comprehension, writing quality, and writing apprehension. Participants of this study were 207 female Korean college freshmen studying English as a foreign language in a private South Korean university context, where admission is limited to those scoring highly on the nationwide standardized entrance exam. Two faculty members were paid to participate in this study. The researcher asked each of them to use the experimental method with some students and the traditional method with the others. The experimental group students practiced journal writing and received responses from their teachers over a period of 14 weeks. Each student wrote 6 journal entries as a response to 6 reading chapters. On the other hand, the control group students met with their teacher over the same period of time and responded to the assigned readings through providing written answers to comprehension questions. In this study writing quality was operationalized as students’ overall performance on the writing test that is administered before and after the experiment.

This study used the experimental design known as Pretest – Posttest Control Group Design. Instruments of this study included a writing test for measuring writing quality, the reading part of the TOEFL for measuring reading comprehension, and the Daly & Miller (1975) survey for measuring writing apprehension. The findings of this study revealed that the dialogue journal writing group outperformed the control group in writing quality. On the other hand there were no statistically significant differences
between the experimental group and the control group in reading comprehension or writing apprehension.

Another variable that might have interfered with journal writing in this study was the assigned readings. In other words, students did not generate topics for their journal entries. Rather, they wrote in response to six chapters assigned for reading comprehension. Therefore, the assigned readings should be considered a part of the treatment while looking at this study or trying to replicate it.

Campbell (1998) explored the effect of journal writing on second language learners’ development of oral and written communication. The study also investigated the effect of journal writing on the learners’ understanding of their second language learning and their progress in written and oral skills. Participants in this study were four adult immigrants in Canada. Two of them (a male and a female) were Russian in their mid- to late 30s and worked as electrical engineers. The third was a Chinese female in her early 40s who finished high school 23 years ago but had never entered college. The fourth participant was a 24-year-old Vietnamese male who did not finish high school. All of them participated in a 10-week interaction with the researcher through journal writing. Additionally, they participated in face-to-face conversations with the researcher once every two weeks.

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Two questionnaires were designed and administered to the participants before and after the study. The first questionnaire focused on the participants’ attitudes toward learning English as a second language and required a response on a Likert type scale format ranging from 1 to 6. The
second questionnaire required participants to complete unfinished statements concerning their interest in, use, and self-evaluation of reading, writing, and speaking in the second language. The qualitative analysis was based on the researcher’s readings of the participants’ journal entries and transcriptions of oral conversations.

The quantitative analysis of learner attitudes did not reveal significant differences as participants had high motivation and positive attitudes both before and after the study. Similarly, there were no significant differences in students’ perceptions of their reading, writing and speaking abilities. Moreover, words used in the oral conversations varied with each participant before and after the study. By the same token, the percentage of correct vocabulary increased with some participants and decreased with others. As for writing, text length decreased by 35 words in length in the second half of the study compared to the first half of the study period. In contrast, the qualitative analysis showed that participants took more risks in speaking and writing in English. They also used some of the vocabulary items and structures that the instructor used in her communication with them. They started to transfer the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax used in their written journals to their oral production of English.

A very rich ethnographic teacher-research study was conducted Mlynarczyk (1998) conducted to gain some insights on how students, in her classroom, viewed journal writing, and find out how journal writing affect students as writers and thinkers. Participants were 37 students enrolled in an ESL writing course at a large urban university in the US in the spring of 1992. That course was the last in an ESL program that students took before they joined the regular college program. Participants, who were
from different socio-cultural backgrounds, had immigrated to the US a few years prior to taking part in this study. All participants were required to write about themselves as readers and writers for 10 to 15 minutes five times a week. The teacher collected students’ journal entries every two or three weeks to comment on them. The feedback was predominantly related to the meaning without highlighting any grammatical errors. Near the end of the semester, students responded to a questionnaire measuring their attitudes toward journal writing. The majority of students indicated that journal writing was helpful to them as L2 writers. In addition, over half of them reported that they will continue to write journals in the future. Academically, students participating in this study exceeded the department average on the final writing exam. For the purpose of the ethnographic analysis, the researcher focused only on five out of seven students who turned in their journal entries three times or fewer. The teacher interviewed those students two or three weeks after the course was over in order to gain insights into their feelings about and attitudes toward journal writing. Each of the five students interviewed represents a unique case study that adds to our understanding of those students’ reaction to journal writing. However, those students shared some communalities that could be summarized in this literature review. Most students indicated that they used journal writing to validate themselves, work on personal problems, and express their deeply felt ideas. Some students reported that they used their journal entries to reflect on their reading and writing processes, communicate with the teacher, and prepare for their final exams. Students also reported that journal writing helped them improve their writing fluency in English as a second language. The researcher concluded that students will be
truly engaged writers when they consider writing as a personally satisfying means of
communication, not just something done to fulfill the course requirements.

Hirose and Sasaki (2000) investigated the effect of metaknowledge about writing
versus metaknowledge accompanied by journal writing on the expository writing of
Japanese college students who were studying English as a foreign language. Participants
in this study were 83 Japanese university freshmen (20 males and 63 females), majoring
in British and American studies. Intact groups were used as participants were studying in
four classes in two universities. Basically, participants were classified into two groups;
metaknowledge group and metaknowledge journal writing group. In the metaknowledge
group, students studied various aspects of rhetoric and analyzed some essays that were
provided in their textbooks. In the second group, they did the same activities in addition
to writing journal entries. Students in both groups practiced those activities once a week
for 90 minutes over a 12-week semester.

Through using t-test, findings revealed that there was a significant difference
between the pretest and the posttest scores of the metaknowledge group in their
knowledge about composition writing. In contrast, there were no significant differences
in their written performance in terms of content, organization, language use, vocabulary
and mechanics. This indicates that the verbal knowledge that students had about writing
was not represented in their written performance. For the journal writing group, there
was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest scores only in
mechanics. There were no significant differences in other aspects of rhetoric such as
content, organization, language use, or vocabulary. There were no significant differences between both groups in EFL expository writing.

Chung (2001) explored the effect of journal writing on developing writing fluency in Korean as a foreign language and creating a positive attitude toward writing. Writing fluency was defined as the length of the written entries while attitudes were defined as students’ reactions to the writing through journal writing technique. Participants in this study were undergraduate college students studying Korean II at the University of Southern California where the researcher was the instructor of that class. Most of the participants were second generation Korean Americans who were born in the US or immigrated at an early age. They were required to write reflective journals on a weekly basis as a part of their homework assignments in a one-semester Korean class. About one-third of the topics were assigned by the instructor while the rest were chosen by students. The instructor corrected students’ expressions and spelling using a green pen. Additionally, she gave marginal comments related to the topic being discussed, not to the grammatical mistakes, and returned them to students. Students’ journal entries ranged in length from three sentences to half a page. The findings of this study revealed that reflective journal writing helped to improve students’ writing fluency in Korean, and created a positive attitude toward writing in Korean. Journal writing also helped to build a personal bond in the classroom between students and the teacher.

Duppenthaler (2002) investigated the effect of different types of feedback used with journal writing on the writing improvement of second language learners’ journal entries. In addition, this study investigated the effect of various types of feedback on
students’ in-class compositions and motivation to write. The researcher utilized three types of feedback: 1) meaning-focused feedback in which the researcher was engaged in an interactive dialogue with participants commenting on the content of each entry as well as asking questions for clarification, 2) positive comments in which the researcher only responded with short positive comments such as “well done”, “that is interesting”, and 3) error-focused feedback in which the researcher corrected all types of mistakes in students’ journal entries using a red pen.

In this study, improvement was operationalized as the significant increase over time in quantity, quality and accuracy of student writing. Quantity was defined as the number of words per journal entry. Quality was operationalized in terms of the number of clauses per entry, readability as measured by the Flesh-Kincaid Readability Index, and vocabulary as measured by the Lexical Frequency Profile. Accuracy was defined as the number of error-free clauses per entry.

Participants in this study were 99 second-year high school girls studying English as a foreign language in Japan. They were divided into three groups each of which included 33 students. The time span for this study was 40 weeks but students were involved in journal writing for only 22 weeks due to either preparing for exams or being on vacations. The analysis of written samples performed in the class during the second week of the study revealed no significant differences between groups prior to the study. Students were required to write at least one entry weekly. Although the researcher did not teach students included in the experiments, he commented on their journal entries every weekend. He also developed a scale for measuring students’ motivation.
The statistical techniques utilized in this study were FA, MANOVA and descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the meaning-focused group outperformed the other two groups in journal writing improvement. In other words, group 1 significantly outperformed groups 2 and 3 in writing quantity. Similarly group 1 significantly outperformed group 2 in writing accuracy. As for writing quality, group 1 significantly outperformed the other two groups in the number of clauses per entry. However, no group was significantly different from the others in terms of readability or vocabulary. Concerning the in-class compositions, no significant differences were found between the three groups. The researcher attributed the lack of improvement in the in-class composition to the time constraint which was 35 minutes for each assignment. Additionally, the post treatment questionnaire revealed that both of group 1 and 2 outperformed group 3 in motivating students to write. The researcher attributed the positive effect of the error correction on motivation to the cultural aspect of the Japanese students in that they like to be corrected.

The results of this study lend support to focusing on meaning while commenting on students’ journal writing. This strategy was found to be the most effective in developing students’ written performance in journal writing. On the other hand, there were no significant differences between the effects of the three feedback techniques on students’ written composition. This study had no control group to account for the effect of journal writing in general. Rather, the researcher compared the three types of feedback to one another.
2.3.6.1 Discussion

Studies reviewed under this core idea were conducted in different contexts; ESL (Campbell, 1998; Mlynarczyk, 1998), EFL (Gallagher, 1997; Song, 1997; Hirose & Sasaki, 2000; Duppenthaler, 2002), Spanish as a second language (Martinez-Lage, 1992), and Korean as a foreign language (Chung, 2001). Results of an overall review of these studies were inconclusive as to the effect of journal writing on writing skills. The findings of Martinez-Lage (1992) revealed that journal writing had significant effects only on reducing the number of grammatical errors students made in writing Spanish. On one hand, journal writing had no significant effects on syntactic complexity or writing quantity. On the other hand, the teacher-assigned composition group outperformed the journal writing group in increasing the writing quantity as measured by T-units. Similar results were reached by Duppenthaler (2002) which revealed that using different types of feedback (meaning-focused, positive comments, and error-focused) in response to journal writing did not have significant effects on writing quality, quantity or accuracy of EFL students’ in-class written composition. However, the meaning-focused group outperformed the other groups in the accuracy and quantity of the written journals. The findings of Gallagher (1997) revealed that journal writing practice developed cohesion and text organization among the Japanese students studying English as a foreign language. Similar results were found by Song (1997) which revealed that journal writing developed writing quality of Korean students studying English as a foreign language. However, journal writing had no significant effects on either reading comprehension or writing apprehension. The quantitative analysis of Campbell (1998) showed no positive effects of journal writing on second language students’ reading,
writing, speaking or attitudes toward writing. On the other hand, qualitative analysis revealed that students achieved positive transfer through journal writing as they used some of the vocabulary and grammatical structures that their instructor used. Similarly, the findings of Mlynarczyk (1998) showed that journal writing has positive effects on L2 students’ attitudes toward journal writing as well as their written performance. In the same way, Hirose and Sasaki, (2000) revealed that journal writing had significant effects on mechanics of the EFL students’ written composition. However, journal writing did not have significant effects on content, organization or language use in students’ written products. In contrast, Chung (2001) showed that Journal writing had a positive effect on writing skills and attitudes toward writing among college students studying Korean as a foreign language in the USA.

In terms of the research method, four studies used the quantitative method (Martinez-Lage, 1992; Song, 1997; Hirose & Sasaki, 2000; Duppenthaler, 2002), three studies used the qualitative method (Gallagher, 1997; Mlynarczyk, 1998; Chung, 2001), and only one adopted the mixed method design (Campbell, 1998). In addition, the treatment time span ranged from ten weeks (Campbell, 1998) to two years (Gallagher, 1997).

2.3.6.2 Conclusion
This literature review revealed inconclusive results as to the effect of journal writing on L2 writing. However, those studies are relatively few compared to those conducted in L1 contexts. This may require conducting more studies on journal writing in L2 writing contexts to resolve the conflict in the literature. In addition, meaning-
focused feedback should be utilized while commenting on journal writing entries as it was found to be the most effective response strategy.

2.4 Writing assessment

Assessment is an integrative part of teaching and learning L2 writing. It is sometimes used for diagnostic, formative, and most often for evaluative purposes. Writing instructors should use assessment techniques that suit the context in which writing is taught. According to Cumming (2001; 2003), the approach we adopt in L2 writing instruction determines how writing is assessed. For example, instructors who teach writing for specific purposes use straightforward criteria and specific methods of evaluation while those adopting general goals for their writing courses use a diverse array of evaluation methods. As it was interestingly put by Cumming and Riazi (2000), evaluating L2 writing is influenced by the contextual factors that dominate in the society where writing is taught. In her seminal article on the history of writing assessment, Yancey (1999) divided writing assessment into three distinct though overlapping phases; indirect assessment (testing), direct assessment, and portfolio assessment. In what follows, the researcher is going to highlight each of those types of assessment.

2.4.1 Indirect assessment

The focus in this phase, which extended from the 1950s to 1970s, was on evaluating writing skills through using objective tests. Test takers were required to answer multiple choice questions about grammar, usage, and punctuation. The way writing was assessed reflected educators’ conceptions of what constituted writing ability at that time. Those tests were used to identify which students needed writing courses
before entering college and those who would be excused from such courses (Hamp-Lyons, 1991a; Yancey, 1999). That assessment was widely adopted because it was easy to administer, less costly, and reliable. However, it lacked validity as it was not measuring what it was supposed to measure. The score a student had on an objective test on grammar or usage did not in any way reflect his or her writing ability (Lippman, 2003).

2.4.2 Direct assessment

Despite the fact that some institutions continued to use the indirect assessment, writing assessment depended mainly on essay tests that test takers performed in a single session during the 1970s through 1980s (Hamp-Lyons, 1991a; Yancey, 1999). This type of assessment is sometimes characterized as impromptu writing where students are required to write on a certain topic for a specified length of time. Each student is given a short writing prompt that includes the topic to write about and the time he or she should take to finish. In the testing environment, students are denied access to any available resources or interaction with one another (Wolcott & Legg, 1998). The prompt also directly or indirectly specifies the writing mode (narrative, argumentative, persuasive, or expository) that test takers should follow in composing their ideas. Writing tasks vary depending on the age of the learners and the purpose of the exam.

2.4.2.1 Advantages of direct assessment

Direct writing assessment has many advantages. First, all students take the exam under similar controlled conditions, which makes it easier to make comparisons across classes, schools, and districts in order to take decisions accordingly. Second, this
controlled procedure guarantees that the products to be graded are actually written by students themselves. In some cultures exams scores are the only criterion for admission into colleges and other higher education programs. If direct exams are not used in such cultures, parents may hire someone else to write for their kids to help them get higher scores, which will ruin the purpose of testing and violate fairness. Third, from a feasibility perspective, it is easier and less costly to use direct assessment to rate hundreds of students. Finally, direct assessment reflects students’ fluency level in L2 writing. Wolcott and Legg (1998) state that direct assessment reveals many aspects of students’ writing abilities; it shows how students can think through a specific topic in a limited time, develop and express their ideas, and control their sentence structure and mechanics.

2.4.2.2 Disadvantages of direct assessment

Despite the abovementioned advantages of direct assessment, it has some limitations. The most serious drawback is that this type of assessment lacks authenticity as it is conducted under artificial conditions that do not exist outside the testing situation. For example, no one is required to write an impromptu essay in real life situations. Similarly, the writing prompt may fail to motivate students to write something that actually reflects their writing ability, either because they did not feel the ownership of the topic or lacked the interest to write on it. Another objection to the direct assessment is the fact that it is limited to a certain mode of discourse; narrative, persuasive, descriptive, or expository. This makes it hard to generalize the results of the assessment done on a particular mode to other modes. Finally, direct writing assessment usually uses
one writing sample which raises some questions regarding the reliability of student’s performance on other samples (Wolcott & Legg, 1998). Consequently, some educators suggest using an alternative kind of assessment.

2.4.2.3 Scoring direct assessment

There are three common ways for scoring students’ written products within the direct assessment: primary trait scoring, holistic assessment, and analytic assessment. In this section, the researcher is going to discuss this point since the current study will adopt the direct assessment procedure.

2.4.2.3.1 Primary trait scoring

“Primary trait scoring is based on the idea that different discourse modes place different demands on the writer in terms of purpose and audience” (Wolcott & Legg, 1998, p. 100). In this type of scoring the writing scale is tailored for every writing task to test to what extent students’ writing meets some criteria in terms of specific audience and purpose (Lloyd-Jones, 1977). The scoring rubric should include: a) the writing task, b) a statement of the primary rhetorical trait, c) a hypothesis about the expected performance of the task, d) a statement of the relationship between the task and the primary trait, and e) the levels of performance, f) sample papers, and g) an explanation of scores on the sample papers (Hamp-Lyons, 1991b, p. 246; Weigle, 2002, p. 110). The main advantage of the primary trait scoring lies in the fact that it can provide rich information about students’ success or failure to achieve the purpose of a certain writing task. In addition, the clarity of the primary trait scoring scale strengthens its validity and makes it easier to achieve inter-rater reliability. However, preparing this type of scoring
is very time consuming as it requires creating a rubric for every single writing task. For this reason, primary trait scoring is not widely used in L2 contexts.

2.4.2.3.2 Holistic scoring

Holistic scoring is the process of assigning a single score to each writing script through judging it against a scoring rubric. This type of assessment is based on the Gestalt principle that the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts. The writing script is not evaluated in terms of specific features related to development, content or mechanics. Rather, it is scored in terms of the reader’s overall impression in the light of either some subjectively created criteria or a preset scoring rubric (Wolcott & Legg, 1998). An example of a holistic scoring rubric is the TOEFL Writing Test.

There are many advantages to holistic scoring. First, it is faster to use and thus it does not cost much money especially for rating a large number of papers. Second, it focuses the raters’ attention on the strengths of writing so that the writers may be rewarded based on what they do well. Finally, holistic scoring is characterized by its high validity because it reflects the rater’s reaction to the text as a whole. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages to holistic scoring in L2 contexts. One of these disadvantages is that a single score does not provide useful information about students’ writing abilities. Similarly, it is hard to explain holistic scores to any of the stakeholders affected by the test. For example, a rater may give a script a 3 because it has some problems in development while another rater may give the same score to another script due to the lack of sophisticated lexical use (Hamp-Lyons, 1991b; Weigle, 2002).
2.4.2.3.3 Analytic scoring

Analytic scoring is based on analyzing writing into some basic elements such as content, development, and vocabulary so that students can receive feedback regarding the strengths as well as the weaknesses of their writing (Wolcott & Legg, 1998). A well known example of analytic scoring is Jacobs et al.’s (1981) ESL Writing Profile. This scale is subdivided into some features against which students’ written scripts are evaluated depending on the assessment purpose. Weigle (2002) observes some advantages of the analytic scoring techniques. First, inexperienced raters can easily apply it through making use of separate criteria. Second, analytic scoring is more useful for second language learners as it provides them with comprehensive feedback about their writing ability. Students, therefore, can have some useful diagnostic information about the points of strengths and weaknesses in their writing. As a consequence, they can know what the score means, and what they need to work on to improve their writing. Finally, reliability tends to be higher in the analytic scoring since adding up the score of each individual feature improves the total reliability of the scale. However, the major disadvantage of the analytic scoring is that it takes more time and effort to apply than the holistic scoring does because raters have to take different rating features into account while reading students’ papers.

2.4. 3 Portfolio assessment

The traditional assessment is one way but certainly not the only way to assess L2 writing. Other alternatives can be used to meet students’ needs and to appropriately assess curriculum goals. One of the widely used alternatives is portfolio assessment
(Tierney et al., 1991; Hamp-Lyons, 2003, Ferris & Hodgcock, 2005). A portfolio is a folder including samples of a student’s writing produced over time, under a variety of conditions (White, 1994) in which the student attaches what best represents him or her as a writer. This assessment has been used side by side with direct assessment since the 1990s (Yancey, 1999). Portfolio assessment is occasionally used by some institutions as the sole evaluation technique for measuring students’ writing abilities. It provides instructors with a developmental profile of students’ achievement and progress over time, which makes it possible to compare learners’ current levels with their previous levels.

Grabe and Kaplan (1996) reported a number of advantages for portfolio assessment. It allows for students to be evaluated on the best that they could achieve and gives them the chance to be in charge of choosing the writing samples that represent their performance. It also gives students a better chance to succeed through assessing their writing abilities based on their performance on a number of samples produced without time constraints or under test anxiety conditions. Similarly, the findings of Jones (1995) revealed that adult ESL students evaluated by portfolio assessment did significantly better than students evaluated by the regular writing assessment test.

Despite its advantages, portfolio assessment has been seldom used in the Egyptian context. This is probably due in part to the lack of well-trained raters. Moreover, the nature of Egyptian context may not encourage using portfolio assessment. To achieve fairness, for instance, instructors at all levels are supposed to grade students’ papers anonymously. Using portfolio assessment may open the door for discrimination
and bias for or against certain students. Furthermore, students may cheat by submitting essays that they did not actually write in order to get higher scores. In some colleges, however, 20% of the total grade is determined based on students’ participation in the classroom activities. Portfolio assessment can be used for evaluating classroom participation assignments within that 20% value. Workshops should be held to train composition teachers in how to make the best use of portfolio assessment. It is hoped that writing instructors will become more familiar with and comfortable enough to use portfolio assessment in the upcoming years.

Finally, it goes without saying that no writing assessment technique is free from disadvantages. Each type of assessment has some drawbacks that writing instructors should be aware of and try to overcome or, at least, minimize by following certain procedures. In addition, L2 writing instructors should use alternative assessment techniques that best help to evaluate their goals without limiting themselves to perpetually using one form of assessment.

### 2.5 Writing Apprehension

#### 2.5.1 Writing apprehension in L1

Writing apprehension is the individual’s tendency to avoid a situation that is perceived to potentially require doing writing assignments that may be accompanied by some form of evaluation (Daly & Miller, 1975c; Daly & Wilson, 1983). Highly apprehensive writers view writing as an unrewarding experience. They fear the evaluation of their writing as they expect to be negatively rated. Consequently, they avoid writing as much as they can in order to maintain their self-esteem. They also
exhibit high levels of anxiety when forced to write and tend to apply for the jobs that require little writing (Daly & Miller, 1975c). Writing apprehension affects students’ expectations of success in writing and their willingness to study future writing courses. Daly and Miller (1975b) found that high apprehensives had less success expectations and were less willing to take future advanced writing courses than low apprehensives. Similarly, high apprehensives felt significantly less successful than low apprehensives. The results of Daly (1978) showed that high apprehensives scored lower than low apprehensives on writing tests. By the same token, Faigley, Daly & Witte (1981) found that low apprehensives outperformed high apprehensives in writing competency (represented by how much a student can recognize what is correct and what is incorrect in writing samples) and written performance of only narrative/descriptive essays. In the same way, the results of Daly and Miller (1975a) showed that high apprehensives wrote less successfully than low apprehensives. There were some studies that adopted interventionist approaches to alleviate writing apprehension in L1. For example, Barnett (1994) investigated the effect of journal writing on writing apprehension of elementary school students. Results showed that journal writing had positive effects on decreasing students’ writing apprehension. Participants also expressed more positive attitudes toward writing. Likewise, Matthews (2001) investigated the effect of a pedagogical approach based on providing a non-threatening writing environment on L1 college freshmen writing apprehension. Findings showed a reduction in participants’ writing apprehension as measured by Daly and Miller Writing Apprehension Test (1975).
addition, participants’ comments indicated that they viewed the writing process more positively at the end of the semester than they did at the beginning of the semester.

2.5.2 Writing apprehension in L2

Writing apprehension has been a tremendous challenge for both first language and second language writers and has therefore negatively affected their writing (Al-Ahmad, 2003). It is more complex in L2 contexts where learners write in language systems that may be completely different from their first language systems. This in turn makes the writing process more challenging for L2 writers, which may cause them to adopt some reactive defensive mechanisms such as avoiding writing, deferring the task, or doing the task only when they have to, which places them under a high degree of stress and anxiety.

Despite the complexity of writing apprehension in second language, there is relatively little research that investigated this problem in L2 (Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Cornwell & McKay, 1999; Al-Ahmad, 2003) compared to the number of studies conducted in the first language contexts. Yet the results of the L2 studies corroborate those in L1 contexts. Taylor, Johnson and Gungle (1987, cited in Gungle and Taylor, 1989) found a significant negative relationship between L2 learners’ writing apprehension and their desire to enroll in an advanced writing courses. Similarly, the results of Gungle and Taylor (1989) showed a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension in L2 and the students’ perception of the writing requirements of their majors. High apprehensives perceived the writing requirements of their majors as low, while low apprehensives tended to perceive the writing requirements in their majors
as high. Furthermore, there was a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and L2 students’ interest in advanced writing classes. By the same token, there was a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and L2 learners’ “concern with content and ideas” while they are writing. Surprisingly, there was no significant positive relationship between writing apprehension and L2 learners’ focus on grammar and form during writing. Researchers attributed this to the way they worded statements in the scale they used, which may have caused students to misunderstand those statements.

Previous studies attribute much of writing apprehension in L2 to the feedback learners receive from their teachers, which in turn shapes their experiences about writing. When teachers focus too much on the correctness rather than encouraging students to generate ideas, students feel blocked. Raimes (1984) states that, “we have trapped our students within the sentence. They worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and go back and check it for inflections, word order, spelling, and punctuation, and go on to attack the looming giant of the next sentence” (p. 83). She recommends that we should emphasize the composing processes believing that “when we do so, much of the necessary work on grammar, sentence structure, and rhetoric begins to take care of itself” (p. 91). Additionally, the findings of Hassan (2001) showed that writing apprehension negatively affected the writing quality and quantity of the Egyptian EFL college students. The study further revealed negative correlation between writing apprehension and self-esteem; low apprehensives had higher self-esteem while high apprehensives had lower self-esteem.
2.5.3 Discussion
A number of studies have been conducted on writing apprehension in L1 (Daly & Miller, 1975a; 1975b; 1975c; Daly 1978; Faigley, Daly & Witte, 1981). Results of those studies show that that high apprehensives fear evaluation and exhibit high levels of anxiety when they are forced to write (Daly & Miller, 1975c). They are less willing than low apprehensives to take future advanced writing courses (Daly & Miller, 1975b). Writing apprehension also causes students’ self-confidence to decrease, which in turn negatively affects their written performance. Consequently, high apprehensives perform less successfully than low apprehensives on writing tasks (Daly and Miller, 1975a; Daly, 1978; Faigley, Daly & Witte, 1981). Writing apprehension also affects students’ choice of future careers. The results of Daly & Miller (1975c) show that high apprehensives tend to apply for jobs that do not require much writing. Adopting an interventionist approach, Barnett (1994) showed that journal writing had positive effects on decreasing students’ writing apprehension and developing participants’ attitudes toward writing. Similarly, Matthews (2001) revealed that the positive learning environment reduced writing apprehension among college freshmen.

A few studies have been conducted in L2 contexts (Taylor, Johnson & Gungle, 1987; Gungle & Taylor, 1989; Hassan, 2001). Results of those studies are in line with L1 studies. There is a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and students’ desire to take advanced writing courses (Taylor, Johnson & Gungle, 1987; Gungle & Taylor, 1989). The findings of Gungle and Taylor (1989) reveal significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and the perceived writing
requirements of students’ major. The study further shows a significant negative relationship between writing apprehension and focus on content and ideas during writing. Writing apprehension negatively affects the writing quality and quantity of L2 writers (Hassan, 2001). In addition, there is a negative correlation between writing apprehension and L2 written performance and self-esteem of Egyptian students (Hassan, 2001).

To sum up, there is a negative correlation between writing apprehension and written performance: the more apprehensive the writer is, the less successful his or her written performance will be. Despite the fact that writing apprehension is a detrimental factor that negatively affects students’ written performance, their attitudes toward writing and their selection of jobs that require written communication, this phenomenon has not yet been given appropriate attention in research in L1. This is probably due to the fact that researchers’ attention is more directed to cognitive variables than the affective ones. Most of the studies conducted on this area were in the late 1970s or early 1980s. Technological facilities have been adopted in education as it is the case in other fields of knowledge and science. As a result, written communication is more extraordinarily used than before in the academic as well as professional contexts. This requires conducting more research to further investigate writing apprehension in L1 contexts to explore whether there is a correlation between writing apprehension using paper and pencil and writing apprehension when utilizing online communication via the internet.

Studies on writing apprehension in L2 are by no means in a better shape. They are even more scant when compared with those conducted in L1. However, L2 studies
seem to be more recent than those in L1. This is probably due to the fact that investigating some variables in L2 contexts is usually delayed until L1 research shows that those variables are at least significant enough to be studied. L2 researchers depend on the L1 research studies until sufficient evidence is established in L2 context to be independent on its own. Further research is, therefore, needed to investigate writing apprehension in L2 contexts. Furthermore, the review of studies both in L1 and L2 show that most research was confined to investigating the correlational relationship between writing apprehension and written performance, and writing related activities. However, little attention has been directed to helping students reduce their writing apprehension. Interventionist research investigating the effect of some variables on decreasing writing apprehension is highly recommended both in L1 and L2 contexts. In addition, causes and affects of writing apprehension need to be further investigated to enrich our understanding of this phenomenon.

2.6 Feedback in L2 writing

Teachers’ feedback on students’ written products should not be viewed as an end in itself, as something that indicates that teachers have done their jobs. Rather, it should be viewed as a means for developing students’ writing (Sommer, 2003). Written comments reflect teachers’ beliefs about teaching composition (Riames, 1984). Teachers who believe that teaching composition should focus on structure provide error-focused feedback while those who are more concerned about ideas direct their comments to the content of the message at hand.
There has been a prominent debate on whether L2 writing teachers’ comments should focus on the form or the content (Bitchener et al., 2005). For many L2 writing teachers, the process of calling students’ attention to error is the most common procedure in responding to L2 writing (Zamel, 1985; Leki, 1991; Ferris, 1995). Some teachers feel morally obligated to do so lest students’ errors should fossilize (Kepner, 1991). In addition, many L2 writers prefer to have their errors marked (Leki, 1990) so that they can correct and avoid them in their future writing. This is probably due to cultural reasons as well as a lack of understanding the nature of writing, which causes students to preoccupy themselves with the surface features and pay less attention to meaning.

In his seminal paper, Truscott (1996) points out that corrective grammar feedback never helps students develop their writing accuracy and should therefore be abandoned. Moreover, he points out that error correction is harmful as it diverts attention away from more productive aspects of the writing curriculum. In her response to Truscott, Ferris (1999) stated that his arguments were premature and overly strong if we consider the research evidence that showed that error correction does help some student writers. In response to Ferris (1999), Truscott (1999) defended his argument supporting the abandonment of error correction. He went a step further stating that grammar correction should be seen as a bad idea until research shows the other way. However, he indicated that it is premature to make general sweeping statements that error correction will not be beneficial under any circumstances. The results of Sheppard (1992) showed that content-focused feedback is as effective as error-focused feedback in developing
Moreover, content feedback was more effective than error feedback in developing punctuation.

2.6.1 Research on feedback and L2 writing

In this section, the researcher is going to review some studies investigating the effect of feedback on L2 writing in order to have a better understanding of the effect of error-focused feedback on L2 writing. This may help to resolve the heated debate between the opponents and the proponents of error feedback. In an attempt to do so, Fathman and Whalley (1990) investigated the effect of the teacher feedback focusing on content versus that focusing on form on L2 writing. Participants were 72 students, from mixed language backgrounds, enrolled in intermediate ESL college composition classes. Students were required to write, for 30 minutes, a story about the sequence of events in eight pictures after the teachers had shown them those pictures and given them a summary of the content. Those students were randomly assigned to one of four groups: group 1 received no feedback, group 2 received grammar feedback only, group 3 received content feedback only, and group 4 received both content and grammar feedback. A few days later, the compositions were returned to students, each with a specific type of feedback depending on the group to which the student was assigned. Students were required to rewrite their essays in light of the feedback they received. The original compositions as well as the revised ones were both scored by two independent raters, and assigned separate scores for grammar and for content. Paired t-tests showed that all groups significantly developed the writing content of their revised essays regardless of the type of feedback they received. However, the grammatical accuracy of
students’ revised essays improved only when they received grammar-focused feedback. Authors concluded that L2 students’ revision of their writing is effective even if they do not receive any feedback and that the teacher’s intervention may not always be necessary for writing improvement to occur. However, the results of this study should be taken with caution, especially in pedagogical practices. This study was a one-shot type of design that was limited to one composition. Results might have been different had those feedback strategies been used for a longer period of time.

Kepner (1991) investigated the effect of feedback (meaning related comments versus surface error correction) and the level of verbal ability on L2 writing. The emphasis in this study was on communicating meaning, not on how the writer was communicating it. The assumption was that the need to communicate meaning is the motivating force for language learning. Participants in this one-semester long study were 60 students drawn from 4 sections in Spanish 201 at Wheaton College. Students were classified into high- and low-verbal ability levels based on their previously ranked grades before they were randomly assigned to one of two groups, each of which contained 30 students. Each group had 15 high- and 15 low-verbal ability learners and was taught by a different teacher. This study depended on the posttest only in measurement. Each participant wrote eight journal entries in Spanish over the semester, one every two weeks. Instructors collected journal entries whenever they were due and gave them to the researcher who provided each group with its designated feedback type. In the meaning related feedback group, the researcher responded only to the content of the journal. In the other group, the teacher corrected mechanical errors of grammar, and
vocabulary, providing students with the rule behind each correction. Journal entry number six which was written in the 12th week was analyzed through using the higher-level propositions count and the surface-level errors count which were both modified by the researcher. The higher-level propositions count is a tally of propositions within the student text which exemplified the cognitive processes of analysis, comparison/contrast, inference/interpretation, and/or evaluation. The surface-level error count was a tally of all incidences of sentence-level mechanical errors of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax within student journal texts. Through using two-way factorial analysis of variance, the results of this study revealed that students receiving the meaning related feedback comments produced significantly greater number of higher-level propositions than the students receiving error focused feedback. In addition, high-verbal ability students produced a significantly greater number of higher-level propositions in writing than did their counterparts with lower-verbal ability. More surprisingly, the group receiving error feedback comments did not produce significantly fewer errors in writing than the group receiving meaning feedback. Nor did the higher-verbal ability students produce smaller number of surface-level errors than the lower-verbal ability students. There was no significant interaction between the type of feedback and the level of verbal ability.

In a similar study, Sheppard (1992) compared coded error correction versus meaning –focused feedback on the grammatical accuracy and complexity of L2 writing. Participants in this study were 26 upper-intermediate ESL college level learners from a variety of cultural environments divided into two groups of 13 students. The researcher taught both groups a writing course for 35 hours in which he made every thing identical
except for the feedback that each of them received. In Group A, the teacher coded all errors students had in their essays. Students corrected those errors after discussing them with the teacher in individual conferences. In Group B, the teacher disregarded any errors students made and provided them with content-focused feedback. The teacher’s comments on the essays were topics for discussion in student-teacher conferences. All participants wrote nine essays over a ten-week period. The first and the last of those essays were written on personal topics and were compared to each other to provide the data for this study. The other essays were responses to two novels that students read in that course. The data for this study were analyzed in terms of accuracy and complexity. Accuracy was measured by: (1) the percentage of correct verb forms (person, tense, aspect), and (2) the percentage of correct sentence-boundary markers (periods, semicolons, and question marks). On the other hand, complexity was measured by calculating the ratio of subordinations to the total number of sentences.

Through using t-test the results of this study showed that both groups made significant progress in accuracy. Interestingly, Group B (receiving meaning-related feedback) significantly outperformed Group A (receiving error-focused feedback) in punctuation. In addition, there was a decrease in writing complexity for students in Group A.

Frantzen (1995) provides further evidence supporting the positive effect of grammar instruction on L2 grammatical accuracy. This study investigated the effect of daily grammar review and corrective feedback on L2 writing. Participants were 44 students enrolled in four sections (11 in each) of an intermediate Spanish content course
(Hispanic Culture and Conversations) at Indiana University. The primary goal of the course was to familiarize students with the Hispanic culture while using Spanish as the medium of instruction. Two graduate students, with five years of teaching experience each, worked as instructors in this study. In order to control for any effects that might have been due to the teacher variable, each instructor taught one grammar supplement and one non-grammar class. Students had classes three times a week throughout a 15-week semester for 45 minutes per class period. Both instructors provided the grammar review group with grammar instruction for 10-15 minutes in each class and gave them error correction feedback on their written essays.

All classes were required to write four in-class essays. The first and the fourth essays were not returned to students because the first was considered a part of the pretest while the fourth was considered a part of the posttest. On the other hand, the second and the third essays were returned to students with grammatical errors corrected for the grammar supplement group and only indicated but not corrected for the non-grammar group. In addition, all participants were required to write five outside of class compositions each of which ranging from 200-250 words in length. The topics of those essays were selected by both instructors. Instructors corrected all the grammar errors made by the grammar supplement group and explained the rules behind those errors when necessary. They indicated but did not correct the grammar errors of the non-grammar group.

Two types of pre- and posttests were administered in this study: 1) a discrete-point grammar test which was the written part of the Modern Language Association
Cooperative Foreign Language Test for Spanish, focusing on grammatical accuracy, and 2) an integrative essay test represented in in-class compositions. Through using multivariate analysis of variance (MVANOVA) results revealed that there were significant differences on the posttest compared to the pretest of the discrete-point-test and the essay test when both groups were combined and treated as a whole, regardless of the treatment group. The grammar supplement group showed significant improvement in grammatical accuracy on the MLA discrete-point measure than did the non-grammar group. However, there was a significant difference between both groups on the essay measure in favor of the non-grammar group.

Another study was conducted by Polio et al. (1998) to examine the effect of time and editing instruction on the linguistic accuracy of ESL learners. Participants were 65 graduate and undergraduate ESL students enrolled in an English for academic purposes composition class at Michigan State University because they failed to score 550 on the TOEFL. That course lasted for 15 weeks where students were distributed to 4 classes. The majority of participants in this study were Asian. At the beginning of the semester, students who agreed to participate in this study were randomly assigned to one of two groups. Those in the control group (n=31) were required to write four journal entries a week for seven weeks without receiving any type of feedback. The experimental group (n=34), however, did the following: 1) regular journal entry, 2) grammar review and editing exercises, 3) regular journal entry, 4) revision of one of the two entries. Students’ errors on both the journal entries and editing exercises were corrected. Before the treatment, both groups were required to write for 30 minutes on one of two topics
randomly selected from 13 topics. Students’ compositions were photocopied, and two
days later, each student was given one hour to make any changes in his or her essay.
They were told that they would be evaluated on both essays. At the end of the study, the
same procedure was repeated over again by asking students to write on one of two topics
for 30 minutes and modify their essays in one hour. However, the researchers made sure
that each class was given two topics different from the ones given for the pretest. Each
student therefore, had two pretest samples (a 30-minute composition plus the 60-minute
revision) and two posttest samples (a 30-minute composition plus the 60-minute
revision). In this study, linguistic accuracy was measured in terms of error-free T-units
(EFTs) per total T-units (EFT/TT) and number of words in EFTs per total words
(EFT/TW). Grammatical, lexical, and punctuation errors but not spelling errors were
counted. Each essay was coded blindly by two coders. Any essay that differed in
EFT/TT by 10 points was coded by a third rater and the score of that coder was used.

Through using ANOVA, results of this study showed significant differences in
students’ linguistic accuracy on the posttest as compared to the pretest. Similarly, there
were significant differences in linguistic accuracy on the revised forms (60-minute
compositions) as compared to the first drafts (30-minutes compositions). However, there
was no significant effect for the element of time on the accuracy increase from the first
draft to the revised composition (comparing the pretest essay to the posttest essay). The
most surprising result was that there were no significant differences between the
experimental group (receiving additional instruction in grammar and editing) and the
control group (receiving nothing) in linguistic accuracy.
Similar results were reached by Fazio (2001) while investigating the effect of corrective feedback, content-based feedback, and a combination of both on accuracy of journal entries. Participants were 112 fifth graders who came from francophone and minority-language backgrounds and enrolled in four classrooms in two French-language schools in Canada. All students practiced in-class journal writing in French in their free time in their designated classrooms for about four months. All types of feedback were given by an independent elementary school teacher who was teaching none of the four participating classes. In this study accuracy was viewed as the percentage of correct grammatical spelling in participants’ writing.

For the statistical analysis, the researcher compared the accuracy average mean score of two journal entries written by each student in the second month of the treatment to that of the two journal entries posted in the last month. Through using MANOVA results showed no significant effect for any type of feedback in developing accuracy in French.

The counter evidence, however, is provided by Ferris and Roberts (2001) which examined the effect of the level of explicit feedback strategies on the ESL students’ abilities to self-edit their own texts. Participants were 67 students enrolled in ESL classes at California State University. They were randomly distributed to three feedback groups. Group A (n=28) had all their errors underlined and coded by the researchers (under five main categories; verb errors, noun ending errors, article errors, wrong word, and sentence structure). Group B (n=25) had all their errors underlined but not coded while group C (n=14) did not receive any feedback at all. All participants were required
to write a 50-minute essay during the first week of classes, expressing their opinions regarding a reading assignment. Researchers collected students’ handwritten essays and typed them to make them easier to work with, without changing anything students wrote. Two weeks after they wrote their essays in class, students received their typed essays with the coded feedback depending on their group and worked for 20 minutes to edit their errors. After this editing session, researchers rated students’ revisions of errors by dividing the number of errors corrected by the number of errors marked.

Through using ANOVA and t-test, results of this study showed that the two groups that received feedback (underlined and coded, or just underlined) significantly outperformed the group that did not receive any feedback in writing accuracy. However, there were no significant differences between the group that received underlined and coded feedback and that which received only underlined feedback. Students were more successful in editing the “treatable” errors (ones that were related to certain rules such as verbs, noun endings and articles) than the “untreatable” ones (such as word choice and sentence structure). Surprisingly, the no feedback group was more successful than the other two groups in editing untreatable errors.

Similar results were found by Chandler (2003) which investigated the effect of error correction on L2 writing accuracy. Participants were first or second year music majors at an American conservatory who were taking an ESL class taught by the researcher. The experimental group included 15 students while the control group included 16 students. Both groups were required to write five autobiographical papers each of which consisted of five double-spaced pages, submitting one every two weeks.
The teacher-researcher gave both groups error feedback represented by underlining their grammatical and lexical mistakes. The only difference was that the experimental group was required to edit and revise every autobiography before moving to the next one while the control group were asked to postpone revising their errors until the data collection process ended by submitting the first draft of the fifth autobiography. Students’ errors were categorized based on a guide modified by the researcher. Through using analysis of covariance, results showed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in writing accuracy on the last piece of writing they performed. Furthermore, the researcher compared the ratio of errors in the first autobiography to those in the last one that each group produced through calculating the number of errors that each student made in every 100 words (number of errors / total number of words × 100). Results showed that there was a significant difference in the reduction of the ratio of error rate in favor the experimental group (through comparing the ratio of errors of each group on the first assignment to that on the last assignment). In addition, students in both groups reported that they became more fluent by the end of the study in that they produced the same amount of writing in much less time than they did at the beginning of the semester. The researcher concludes that error correction did not have a negative effect on fluency.

The study also reported another experiment done in the same course using the same assignments utilized in the experiment above but in another year with a different sample. The purpose was to investigate the effect of different types of feedback (the teacher corrects the error, the teacher underlines and describes the error, the teacher only
describes the error, and the teacher only underlines the error) on writing accuracy, fluency, and writing quality. Participants were 36 students divided into four groups. Results showed that there was a significant difference in writing accuracy for the strategy where the teacher marked and corrected the error. Results also showed that fluency of all students improved regardless of the type of feedback. Students took significantly less time to write the same amount of text in each subsequent chapter – from 37 minutes in the first assignment to 15 minutes per 100 words in the last assignment. However, there was no significant change in the holistic ratings of students’ writing quality over the 10-week period of this study.

Bitchener et al. (2005) aimed at investigating the effect of different feedback strategies on the accuracy of students’ writing. Participants were 53 post-intermediate migrant learners enrolled in a post-intermediate ESL program in a New Zealand University to develop their language skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They were divided into three groups based on whether they decided to study in a full-time class for 20 hours a week, a part-time class for 10 hours a week, or a part-time class for four hours a week. All classes received the same amount of time and attention to grammar and writing. However, listening, speaking, and reading activities varied based on the total class time. There were three treatment conditions: group 1 (full-time 20 hours, n = 19) received written corrective feedback plus five-minute individual conferences with one of the researchers after each piece of writing. Group 2 (part-time 10 hours, n = 17) received written feedback only. Group 3 (part-time four hours, n = 17) received no feedback of any kind.
Students were required to complete four informal writing assignments of approximately 250 words each during the 12-week treatment time, in weeks two, four, eight, and 12 respectively. The researchers selected the three most frequent grammatical errors in the first assignment (prepositions, 29.23 %, past tense, 11.96 %, and the definite article, 11.45 %) to be the linguistic categories under investigation in this study. Two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used for the statistical analysis of the results. This study showed that there were no significant effects for any of the feedback strategies on linguistic errors when they were all treated as a single group of errors instead of three categories (prepositions, the past simple tense, and the definite article). Further, the researchers looked at the effect of each of the feedback strategies on each of the three separate grammatical categories, and the effect of the interaction between strategy type and time on each individual linguistic category. The results related to this section can be summarized as follows:

1- Prepositions: There were no significant effects for any of the feedback strategies on prepositions. There were significant effects due to the interaction between the type of feedback and time on prepositions. Group 1 (receiving written feedback and individual conferences) was different from the other groups particularly between weeks four and eight.

2- The past simple tense: Accuracy differed according to the type of feedback provided. Group 1 (receiving written feedback and individual conferences) outperformed group 2 (receiving written feedback only). There were no significant effects due to the
interaction between strategy type and time. Accuracy improvement in the past tense was similar across all the three groups over time.

3- The definite article: Accuracy differed according to the type of feedback provided where group 1 (receiving written feedback and individual conferences) outperformed group 3 (receiving no feedback at all). There were no significant effects due to the interaction between strategy type and time. Accuracy improvement regarding the definite article was similar across all three groups over time.

2.6.1.1 Discussion

Studies reviewed in this section were predominantly conducted either in second language contexts (Fathmanand & Whalley, 1990; Sheppard 1992; Polio et al., 1998; Fazio, 2001; Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003; Bitchener et al., 2005) or foreign language contexts, specifically Spanish (Kepner, 1991; Frantzen, 1995). The overall analysis of the results of those studies shows that grammar-focused feedback is of little importance in L2 writing contexts. The findings of Kepner (1991) revealed no significant differences between the error-focused feedback group and content-focused feedback group in writing accuracy. Furthermore, students receiving the meaning feedback produced significantly greater number of higher-level propositions than those receiving error-focused feedback. Similar results were found by Sheppard (1992) which showed that communicative feedback was as effective as error-focused feedback in improving L2 writing accuracy. Surprisingly, the communicative feedback group outperformed the error-focused feedback group in punctuation. On the other hand, the writing of students who received error-focused feedback showed a significant decrease
in complexity. Further evidence is provided by Frantzen (1995) which revealed that the group that did not receive corrective grammar feedback significantly outperformed the grammar feedback group in writing accuracy. Likewise, Polio et al., (1998) showed that there were no significant differences in writing accuracy between the group that received error feedback and the group that received no feedback at all. Moreover, Fazio (2001) revealed no significant differences between error-focused feedback and content-based feedback on L2 writing accuracy.

Counter evidence is provided by Ferris and Roberts (2001) which revealed that the two groups that received corrective feedback (underlined and coded, or just underlined) significantly outperformed the group that did not receive any feedback in writing accuracy. Students were more successful in editing the “treatable” errors than the “untreatable” ones. Moreover, the no feedback group was more successful than the other two groups, receiving corrective feedback, in editing untreated errors. However, the results of this study should be taken with much caution as there was a great variance in the number of the control group compared to that of each of the two experimental groups. The number of the “underlined and coded feedback” group was 28 (twice as much as the “no feedback” group; n=14) and that of the “underlined feedback” was 25 (almost twice as much as the “no feedback” group), which in turn may have affected the statistical analyses. The higher the number of participants in a specific group, the higher the possibility of having statistically significant difference in favor of that group. Therefore, it might be interesting to replicate this study using larger sample in the “no feedback group.” Similar results were found by Fathmanand and Whalley (1990) which
showed that grammar-focused feedback had positive effects on students’ writing accuracy.

In investigating the effect of editing the corrective feedback, the results of the first experiment of Chandler (2003) showed that the experimental group (who edited their own errors) significantly outperformed in writing accuracy the control group (who did not edit their errors). The most important finding in the second experiment was that there was no significant change in students’ writing quality over a 10-week period. On the other hand the results of Bitchener et al. (2005) showed no significant differences in writing accuracy between the corrective feedback group and the no feedback group when linguistic errors were all treated as a single group of errors. When the linguistic errors were treated in separate categories, the feedback groups outperformed the no feedback group in treatable (past tense and the definite article) but not in untreatable (prepositions) errors.

In terms of the research methods used, all studies were quantitative in nature. Some studies used the pre- and posttest design (Fathman and Whalley, 1990; Sheppard, 1992; Frantzen, 1995; Polio et al., 1998; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Chandler, 2003), one study used only the posttest design (Kepner, 1991), and one study used a series of consecutive observations (Bitchener et al., 2005). The time-span over which those studies were conducted ranged from two weeks (Ferris & Roberts, 2001) to 15 weeks (Kepner, 1991; Frantzen, 1995; Polio et al., 1998).
2.6.1.2 Conclusion

Most of the studies reviewed in this section found no significant differences in developing writing accuracy between error-focused feedback and meaning-focused feedback or no feedback at all. On the other hand, some studies showed that meaning-focused feedback was more effective than error-focused feedback in developing punctuation and decreasing untreatable errors.

In L2 writing assessment, content, organization, language use, development of ideas, and communicating meaning to the target audience are given much heavier weight than accuracy. In fact, accuracy has little to contribute to the total quality of the text. As Raimes (1984) clearly puts it, grammatical accuracy has “little force if the piece of writing is not expressing the writer’s ideas clearly and forcefully” (p. 83). Consequently, L2 writing teachers should focus more on how to help students develop the total quality of their writing rather than worry too much about accuracy. Focusing too much on accuracy can divert L2 learners from attending to meaning. In addition, learners may become demotivated to write due to being unable to write error-free English and/or losing their self-esteem. This should not be interpreted to mean that accuracy is not important or should be totally disregarded. In fact accuracy is important and may be treated when it impedes understanding meaning, and this can be done through providing meaning-focused feedback. Accuracy, therefore, should not be overemphasized at the expense of text development and quality.

To conclude, providing students with corrective grammatical feedback is time consuming and it does not have tangible pedagogical results. From a pedagogical perspective, the researcher agrees with Truscott (1996) that corrective feedback is of
negligible benefit to L2 writers. L2 writers need to focus more on writing as a means for communicating their ideas to their audience and less on the issue of accuracy. Therefore, focusing on conveying a coherent meaningful message should be the top priority in L2 writing pedagogy. It is believed that grammatical accuracy can improve over time when teachers provide meaning-focused feedback. Further research investigating the effect of meaning-focused feedback on L2 writing quality is recommended to fill an important gap in the literature and to increase our understanding of this phenomenon.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework for the study. It reviewed the grammar-based and communicative approaches in teaching L2 writing and highlighted how writing may be assessed. It also reviewed the literature on journal writing in L2 contexts, reported the studies investigating the effect of journal writing on L2 writing, and commented on how those studies could enlighten the present study. It further reviewed the literature on writing apprehension in L1 and L2 writing contexts. The chapter concluded with discussing grammar-focused and meaning-focused feedback and reviewing the research investigating the effect of feedback on L2 writing.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY and PROCEDURES

3.0 Introduction
The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of journal writing as a technique for practicing writing in a communicative context on students’ written performance, attitudes, writing apprehension, and their perceived sense of writing ability. It also aimed at exploring the relationship between L1 and L2 writing performance. This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study; it further highlights the instruments, the procedures, and data analysis.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Method
Since each research method “highlights reality in a different, yet complementary, way” (Lazaraton, 2005, p. 219), this study used a mixed-method research design. It utilized the quantitative method to explore the relationship between L1 and L2 written performance and to investigate the effect of journal writing on students’ written performance, attitudes, and writing apprehension. At the same time, the qualitative method was used to explore learners’ attitudes toward journal writing and the traditional writing instruction, to investigate the difference in students’ perceived sense of writing ability, and to analyze participants’ writing development over time with respect to development of ideas, coherence, cohesion, consideration of audience, and voice.
3.1.2 Research design

This study utilized the experimental design known as the Pretest/Posttest Control Group Design. This design was selected because it potentially controls for most of the threats directed to the internal validity of the study (Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Trochim, 2005). Specifically, this design potentially controls for single group threats such as history, maturation, selection, testing, mortality, and regression. It also potentially controls for most of the multiple group threats represented in selection-history, selection-maturation, selection-instrumentation, selection-mortality, and selection-regression. The limitation of this design lies in its inability to control for the effect of the pretest on participants. Although both the experimental and control groups were exposed to the pretest in this study, it may have primed them differently. To control for that potential threat, the pretest was considered a part of the study treatment. Yet, the study may still be subject to some other social threats that exist in any research involving social interaction.

3.1.2.1 Variables of the study

a) The independent variables
The independent variable is writing practice with two levels:

1- Journal writing.

2- Traditional essay writing.

b) The dependent variables
This study has the following four dependent variables:

1- Overall written performance.
2- Writing apprehension.

3- Attitudes toward journal writing and traditional essay writing instruction.

4- Students’ perceived sense of their writing ability.

c) Relational variables
   First language (Arabic) and L2 (English) writing performance.

3.1.3 Participants
   It is worth mentioning here that this study was originally designed to be administered on a randomly selected sample of freshmen in the English major at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. The average number of students who are annually admitted to the English major where this study was designed to be tried out is 300-400 students. However, in 2005/2006 academic year the number fell to below one hundred. At the same time, the collaborating colleague who worked as a tutor in this study did not have any previous interaction with the first year students, and thus he was not positive about the possibility of their commitment to fulfill the treatment requirements. In addition, the admission process was somewhat delayed that year, resulting in a more than two- month postponement of the actual start of the first year students’ semester. Those factors made it difficult to recruit participants from the first year students. A possible alternative was to select the sample from any other population studying composition in the first semester of the academic year 2005/2006. The only class taking a writing course in the first semester was the junior class (the third-year students). After consulting his advisor, the researcher decided to select participants from the third-year students.
Participants in this study were 50 third-year English Department students at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. One of the faculty members in the English Department (a colleague of the present researcher who voluntarily worked as a tutor and data collector in this study treatment) met the third-year English Department students as an entire group and invited them to participate in a study intended to develop their writing abilities. They were told that participation would be limited to a specific number of students. Fifty students were randomly selected from those who showed interest in participating in the treatment. They were given further information about the study and were required to sign informed consent forms (see appendix A). After gaining more information about the treatment, two of the 50 students withdrew from the study at the very beginning and thus two other students were randomly selected. The tutor randomly assigned the participants into one of two groups, the experimental group containing 25 students and the control group containing 25 students. It should be noted that results from seven students in the experimental group and two students in the control group were eliminated from the quantitative data analysis because they did not complete all the pretest/posttest materials. Therefore, the final sample included 41 participants, 18 in the experimental group and 23 in the control group.

3.1.4 Instruments
The study utilized a number of tools in the data collection process. Specifically, the study used the following instruments: 1) a writing test, 2) a writing apprehension
scale, 3) two attitude questionnaires, 4) written comments, 5) self-evaluation, and 6) tutor interview. A detailed description of each instrument is provided below.

3.1.4.1 Writing test

It is pertinent here to shed some light on the prompt used to elicit the writing sample from the participants in this study. The researcher suggested some possible writing prompts and exchanged them with the faculty member who later worked as the tutor in the experiment. He recommended using the prompt (see appendix D) utilized in this study indicating that it was straightforward and relevant to students’ experiences and thus would inspire them to write. The same prompt was used for collecting data about participants’ composition performance in Arabic. The time allowed for the writing test was 30 minutes when writing in Arabic and 60 minutes when writing in English. The English test was rated using Jacobs et al.’s (1981) Composition Profile. Jacobs et al.’s (1981) is a composition profile that was designed to measure L2 writers’ ability to effectively communicate through writing. Authors of this profile reported its face validity, content validity, concurrent validity, construct validity, and predictive validity (pp. 73-75). Those types of validity except for the predictive validity measure turned out to be high enough to make it acceptable to use this scale in evaluating L2 writing.

Scoring the test

Two Arab instructors (one of them is a PhD candidate at The Pennsylvania State university while the other is a PhD candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania) of ESL composition blindly and independently rated the pretest and the posttest data of this study. Both instructors had similar characteristics in terms of culture, expertise, and
education. They read the scoring guide in order to understand how it is used and received training from the researcher in how to apply the scale to rate L2 students’ writing. The researcher also responded to raters’ questions about the scale. Before starting the actual rating process, raters were required to rate several writing samples accompanying the scale and compare their ratings to those provided by four ESL experts for the same samples to make certain that raters had similar understanding of the scale’s criteria. Each rater’s scores had to be within 10 points of those scored by the four ESL experts. When the raters’ ratings differed by more than 10 points, they had to review the scale again and repeat the rating process. Having done so, raters graded some anchor samples randomly drawn from the pre- and posttests to demonstrate familiarity with the scale. After becoming thoroughly familiar with the scale and with the sample papers, scorers rated the actual test papers. The researcher ran a correlation between the scores given by both raters to calculate the interrater reliability of the scale. The interrater reliability value was .89 on the pretest and .96 on the posttest. Scores given by both raters were added together and divided by two to obtain the average score for each student before analyzing the data statistically.

The purpose of the Arabic test, however, was to collect baseline data about students’ writing ability in their L1. Their compositions were scored by two independent raters (both are faculty members of Curriculum and Methods of Teaching Arabic at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo) using a scale designed for measuring Arabic composition among L1 writers (Abdel-Wahab, 1999). Inconsistent scores were resolved by a third rater. The ratings of both scorers were added together
and divided by two to obtain the average score for each student. Based on their scores, students were classified into two categories: a) high-ability writers, and b) low-ability writers.

3.1.4.2 Writing apprehension scale

This scale was developed by Daly and Miller (1975) and adapted to L2 by Gungle and Taylor (1989). Initially, the scale included 63 items in Likert-type scale format, representing possible sources of writing apprehension in L1. Items were modeled after those used for measuring communication apprehension in that they asked students to express to what extent they agreed to each statement on a five-point continuum that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale was administered to 164 undergraduate students enrolled in basic composition courses and interpersonal communication courses at West Virginia University in 1974. Daly and Miller analyzed the data using the principal components factor analysis of all the scale items and dropped all items not loading above .57. They ended up having 26 items loading above .60. This 26-item questionnaire measures students’ conscious feelings about their apprehension, or lack of it, in writing. This questionnaire has been widely used and found to be accurate in identifying students’ level of writing apprehension. The questionnaire addressed four categories: 1) writers’ enjoyment of writing, 2) their self-perception of their own writing abilities, 3) their attitudes toward evaluation, and 4) their willingness to show their writing to others. The presence of some of those categories along with the lack of some others was considered to be an indicator of writing apprehension.
The reliability of this scale, as reported by the authors, was .94 through the split-half technique and .92 through the test-retest method over a 1-week time interval. Authors of this scale also achieved its construct validity. To use it with L2 writers, Gungle and Taylor (1989) modified the Daly Miller Writing Apprehension Scale in two ways. First, they revised the 26 items of the scale to include references to writing in English. Second, they provided students with a six-point scale rather than a five-point scale in order to avoid noncommittal responses. The present study has utilized the modified version of Gungle and Taylor (1989). The scale was translated into Arabic (participants’ L1) and then administered in both English and Arabic to a group of seven Arab students (see 3.1.5.1 below). After modifying the scale based on the results of the pilot administration, it was administered as a pretest both in Arabic and in English to participants in this study. The researcher ran a correlation between students’ scores on both versions. The correlation coefficient was .97, which tended to be very high. As a result, the researcher believed that it would not have made noticeable difference had either version been used, but he preferred to use the one in English to avoid the problem of back translation. Participants in this study were both pretested and posttested on the apprehension scale. Internal consistency of the pretest and posttest apprehension scores was examined using Cronback alpha. The pretest score of the 26 items (n=41) had a Cronbach alpha value of .93. As for the posttest score, the Cronbach alpha value was .94.

It should be noted that in the proposal meeting, one of the committee members suggested that baseline data about students’ writing apprehension in their L1 (Arabic)
should be collected. Five items measuring writing apprehension in Arabic were designed in a Likert-type scale format and administered to the participants in this study. It turned out that both the experimental group and the control group had very low apprehension scores in L1 writing.

3.1.4.3 **Attitude questionnaires**

Questionnaires are data collection techniques that are widely used in education as well as applied linguistics research. To collect data for this study, the researcher developed two attitude questionnaires. The first was designed to measure the experimental group students’ attitudes toward journal writing. This questionnaire initially included 38 items of Likert-type scale format that were designed around five main dimensions: 1) like or dislike of journal writing, 2) attitudes toward feedback, 3) realization of personal development in writing, 4) motivation to write in English, and 5) preference for future practice of journal writing. The second questionnaire was designed to measure the control group students’ attitudes toward traditional writing instruction in the writing course. It initially included 30 items focusing on four core ideas: 1) like or dislike of writing, 2) attitudes toward feedback, 3) realization of personal development in writing, and 4) motivation to write in English.

3.1.4.3.1 **Validity**

Content validity refers to how well a test measures what it is supposed to evaluate (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brown & Hudson, 2002). To judge the content validity of the attitude questionnaires, they were given to a group of six experts in Education and Applied Linguistics. They were requested to read each item and give their
opinions regarding the appropriateness of each item to measure students’ attitudes toward journal writing or traditional writing instruction under each particular core idea. They were also asked to judge the clarity of each item to the respondents who are considered to be post-intermediate L2 learners of English. Furthermore, they were requested to add any items that they thought needed to be included and to underline any word that they thought to be ambiguous, unclear, or confusing to the respondents. Meanwhile, these questionnaires were also piloted on a sample of ESL Arab students (see 3.1.5.1 below).

Based on the feedback obtained from the experts and the pilot study, the researcher added, deleted, and reworded some items. The revised form of the journal writing attitude questionnaire included 26 items (see appendix B) collecting information about five dimensions: 1) like or dislike of journal writing (items 1, 7, 10, 11); 2) attitudes toward feedback (items 6, 16, 18, 24); 3) realization of personal development in writing (items 2, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15); 4) motivation to write in English (items 3, 4, 19, 21, 22, 26); and 5) preference for future practice of journal writing (items 5, 17, 20, 23, 25). The revised form of the second questionnaire (measuring attitudes toward traditional writing instruction) included 21 items (see appendix C) collecting information about four main core ideas: 1) like or dislike of the course (items 1, 6, 10, 15, 17, 20, 21); 2) attitudes toward feedback (items 3, 4, 11, 12); 3) realization of personal development in writing (items 2, 5, 7, 13, 14, 16) and; 4) motivation to write in English (items 8, 9, 18, 19).
3.1.4.3.2 Reliability

After administering the questionnaires to the participants in the actual study, the internal consistency was examined through Cronback alpha. Reliability was found to be .92 for the journal writing questionnaire and .82 for the traditional writing instruction questionnaire.

Although questionnaires are frequently used in education, they have some limitations that should be attended to whenever they are used. One possible limitation is that they will initiate respondents to provide information only related to the items included. In other words, they collect data based on the researcher’s subjective conception of the construct in light of which the questionnaire is designed. Thus, questionnaires may not detect how respondents conceptualize the construct to be measured. Another serious limitation is the social desirability. Respondents may manage to guess what is socially acceptable or what the researcher would like to hear, and tend to respond to the questionnaire accordingly (Abdel-Al, 2002). As such, their response to the questionnaire will represent what the examiner would like to find not what they actually feel. Similarly, questionnaires may be mechanical and artificial in that some respondents may respond to the item just to fill out the questionnaire though the item might not be applicable to them. Finally, questionnaires must be simple and clear because there will be no opportunity for further clarifications or explanations as it is the case with other data collection techniques (Brown, 2001). Those limitations may be partially controlled through carefully designing as well as piloting the questionnaires. In addition, other data collection techniques might be used to triangulate the questionnaire.
To control for the possible limitation of the questionnaires used in this study, they were carefully designed, piloted and modified in light of the obtained feedback. The researcher also triangulated the questionnaire data with students’ written reports about the advantages/disadvantages of each treatment.

3.1.4.4 Written comments

The rationale behind utilizing this data collection technique was to give each student a further chance to express what he actually felt about each treatment condition. Students were openly told that the experiment was just for research purposes; their feedback as participants was crucially important and would be considered in making decisions regarding the future use of this experiment to highlight the advantages and overcome the disadvantages. Because students have been raised in a sociocultural context where they should accept what their teachers present to them without questions or criticism, there was a concern that they might give socially accepted reports or write what they thought would please their tutor rather than what they actually felt about the treatment. In that context, students tend not to be critical or negative in their responses. In an attempt to create an environment where the participants would feel comfortable in expressing their positive as well as negative true opinions, specific steps were followed. First, the tutor held a session in which he encouraged participants to verbally express their viewpoints within a group setting. The purpose of this session was to make students feel that it was completely acceptable to criticize the treatment. They were also told that their feedback would not affect them in any way. The session was very fruitful in that students felt comfortable to criticize and express their viewpoints. They had the
opportunity to voice their concerns about journal writing, the traditional writing instruction, and how we could heighten the positives and minimize the negatives of journal writing. Second, on the following day, the tutor asked participants to document in writing whatever they wanted to say about the overall experiment. All in all, the researcher and the tutor believed that this activity helped to create a climate where students realized that they could express their views and be critical of the process without penalty.

3.1.4.5 Self-evaluation of writing ability

It is worth mentioning here that students in both the experimental and the control groups were requested to evaluate their writing abilities prior to and after the experiment. Simply, while writing their names on the apprehension scales in the pre and posttests, students were requested to rate their perceived sense of their writing abilities: whether they felt themselves to be very poor, poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent. Those ratings were analyzed qualitatively.

3.1.4.6 Tutor interview

As this study investigated the use of journal writing as a technique for practicing writing, it was important to get the reactions of the tutor along with those of the participants to have a realistic picture of how this technique worked in the actual classroom environment. To do so, the researcher conducted a semi-structured online interview with the tutor who carried out this study to get his impression on journal writing, the pedagogical challenges that it entails, and the difficulties that may hinder its implementation. Specifically, the tutor was requested to give his opinion regarding the
advantages/disadvantages of the treatment, factors leading to the success or failure of the treatment, what was useful, and what needs to be highlighted /avoided to make it more effective. Information obtained through this interview formed a part of the qualitative analysis.

3.1.5 Administration procedures

3.1.5.1 Pilot study

Due to the difficulty of piloting the apprehension scale and the questionnaires to a sample from the population where this study was carried out, the researcher identified four Arab students studying for the TOEFL in the Language Institute at The Pennsylvania State University. Those students were judged to have a level of language ability fairly similar to that of the participants in this study. They were asked to complete the questionnaires, to write on the writing prompt from the perspective of students, and to give their comments about any difficulty they had in understanding any terminology. They were also requested to underline any vague or confusing words. The purpose of this administration was to recognize any possible problems the subjects may have in understanding and responding to the scale. Participants provided valuable comments that the researcher took into consideration in revising the instruments. They voiced that they did not understand what journal writing was, but that was to be expected as they did have any previous experience with the concept.

3.1.5.2 Treatment

This study aimed at investigating the effect of journal writing, as a communicative writing technique embedded in a writing course, versus the traditional
writing instruction (without journal writing) on the EFL students’ written performance, attitudes, writing apprehension, and perceived sense of writing ability. This section describes in detail the treatment received by each of the two groups included in this study.

3.1.5.2.1 Traditional writing instruction

The experiment started with randomly assigning participants into two groups. They were not told that they were receiving different treatments. Both groups studied an Essay and Comprehension course taught by the same professor who did not have the opportunity to meet students except for a few times during the semester. Specifically, he asked students to write essays on five topics that he assigned and told them that they will be required to compose on one of them in the final semester exam. The professor provided students with a textbook that included compositions that worked as models for them to imitate. The textbook also provided vocabulary items that students might use while writing each composition. Moreover, the professor gave students ideas to address in each composition. This might have inhibited students from expressing their ideas and made them limited to those raised by the professor. Some students turned in their compositions, but they did not get any feedback from the professor. Students interested in getting feedback had to read their essays aloud in the classroom and received oral comments from the professor who focused mainly on correcting grammar errors. This process was limited to a few students due to time constraints. As students did not have to turn in their compositions, there was no way to ascertain that all students wrote on the assigned topics. The approach that the professor used to teach writing seems to be
closely related to the controlled composition technique discussed in the literature review of this study. The control group, therefore, did nothing more than completing their class assignments.

3.1.5.2.2 Journal writing

In the same way, the experimental group was exposed to the same conditions mentioned above (see 3.1.5.2.1) in addition to practicing journal writing intermittently for ten weeks. To learn how to write journal entries, students in the experimental group attended an awareness-raising session about journal writing and its basics. More specifically, the tutor presented guidelines to students covering what journal writing is, why they should keep a journal, how often they should write, how often they should turn in their journal entries, how lengthy their entries should be, and what they should focus on in their writing (ideas, not grammar, personal feelings, sharing experience, and thoughts). The tutor provided each student in the experimental group with a notebook in which to write their entries. Then, the tutor asked participants in the experimental group to write on topics that interested them. To show their instructor that they had a good command of written English, a large number of students copied essays from other resources and claimed that they wrote them. After discovering this, the tutor told students that he was interested in having them write their own compositions regardless of the mistakes they might make. In order to ensure comparability, to create a real communicative motive that energizes students to write, and to maintain interest and motivation, students of the experimental group were given the opportunity to identify or define a number of topics they wished to write about. A process of give and take started
until a consensus was reached on the topics that most of the students would write about. However, it might be worthy mentioning here that students were not deprived of the right to write on topics of their own choice; some participants preferred to write about certain topics in both their L1 and L2 in an attempt to overcome the linguistic gap they felt they were suffering. Most participants wrote their journal entries as short compositions to express their ideas about the topics they selected. In their response to the tutor’s comments; a few students wrote journal entries as letters to their instructor addressing him as “dear Dr.” at the beginning of their messages and concluding with “Assalamu Alykum” (peace be upon you), which is the greeting of Muslims whenever they meet or leave each other.

3.1.5.2.2.1 Feedback

The process of journal writing commenced and students started submitting their entries to the instructor for feedback. Because of schedule constraints, the instructor commented on each student’s journal entries every other week, focusing exclusively on meaning. The feedback was similar to a collaborative process that aimed at building a good rapport and helping to create a supportive and non-threatening environment where students feel secure to write whatever they want to. Indeed, this process was intended to establish communication between the instructor and the students and eventually it accomplished that goal. In their communication, the focus was to identify mechanisms of building students' self-confidence, encouraging them to express their ideas without worrying about form, removing anxiety, and dispelling apprehension of writing in L2. The instructor would read through the entry and award praise, capitalize on good ideas
and then start the dialogue by asking the student to take undeveloped ideas further or to clarify vague and ambiguous issues. The aim was implicitly to attract students' attention to the need for developing ideas rather than voicing them and leaving them at the crude level. Although it was done implicitly, it showed its benefit when students began to realize the underlying principle.

Focusing comments on the content does not mean that accuracy is not important or should be disregarded. Accuracy is of particular importance for the population of this study who are expected to work as teachers of English after graduation. However, it is believed that students are more in need of content-related comments so that they could develop their ideas without worrying about correctness. Furthermore, focusing on the form could have blocked students and made them more anxious, given the fact that they wanted to keep their self-esteem by showing their instructor that they were competent writers. Furthermore, the tutor tried not to make students anxious about their writing performance lest they should copy some compositions from other resources or ask more competent friends to complete the task for them. It is believed that editing errors can be postponed to a future stage as students may correct them on their own when they revise their writing.

To conclude, message related comments were used in this study. In other words, the interest was on “what the writer was saying” not on “how he wrote it.” This went beyond the sentence surface-level skills to the global meaning of the text that the writer was trying to convey. Therefore, the ultimate focus was on communicating meaning (Savignon, 1997) with the assumption that students’ learning is governed more by
communicative need (Kepner, 1991) than by the artificial writing task that they are required to perform.

3.1.5.2.2.2 Frequency of writing

For the sake of controlling intervening variables, learners were required to write a journal entry that included 200 words at minimum every week. The tutor told them that they should focus on communicating their ideas rather than worrying about correctness and neatness of writing. Due to their varied levels of commitment, most of participants submitted their journals on time while a few took an extra week to complete the assignment. Similarly, the majority of participants wrote the 10 journal entries agreed upon at the beginning of the experiment while a few posted eight or nine entries.

3.1.5.2.2.3 Duration

The experiment was carried out over two academic semesters though the actual time during which students practiced writing journal entries was ten weeks. The treatment started at the beginning of November, 2005 and continued until the beginning of December, 2005. Then it was suspended in December, 2005 and January, 2006 because of the final semester exams and the mid-year break. After break, the experiment resumed in the middle of February, 2006 till March 7, 2006 when it had to be suspended again as the tutor traveled to the US as a visiting scholar for three weeks. It resumed again on April 7, 2006 and continued through the end of that month.

3.1.5.3 Order of data collection

During the first week of the treatment, students completed pretests of composition in L1 (Arabic), and composition in L2 (English) using the same prompt but
differing in the amount of time allotted to finish the composition, 30 minutes to compose in Arabic and 60 minutes to compose in English. They also responded to a five-item questionnaire measuring writing apprehension in L1 followed by responding to the 26-item modified version of the Daly and Miller Writing Apprehension Test (Gungle & Taylor, 1989). For the composition pretest in both Arabic and English, students were required to write an essay about the reasons for which they entered the English Department.

Instruments were administered in the same order mentioned above. The rationale was to give students the feeling and taste of going through a writing task first so that the responses to the questionnaires would reflect their actual evaluation of their perceived writing abilities. In principle, it was assumed that when students had the experience and feeling of the demands writing as a cognitive process posits, it would be more realistic to respond to the writing apprehension questionnaires (L1 and L2). They were given the writing pretest in their L1 and then in their L2. This order might have had an impact since writing is not only a matter of technicalities but is also a thought process and it requires much effort to organize one's thoughts. Definitely, when students write first in their L1 (Arabic) and then compose in English, the task becomes easier for them. At least they can take the same train of thought they started and see how they can express it in L2. Students were also asked to rate how they perceived their writing skills in L2. After the pretesting sessions, the experimental group received their treatment as highlighted above and the control group was left to the course they studied with the professor.
Posttesting was done in the same order as the pretesting, but the composition in L1 and the writing apprehension in L1 were not administered as they were used only in the pretest to collect baseline data. The posttest also included two questionnaires that were not used in the pretests, one for measuring experimental group students’ attitudes toward journal writing and the other for measuring the control group students’ attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. Both questionnaires were completed after the other tools had been administered. Also the tutor held a session for discussing the pluses and minuses of the experiment after the experiment was complete. Participants were also given the chance to write how they felt toward the treatment they received in their respective groups.

3.2 Data analysis
To answer this study questions, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used as briefly discussed below.

3.2.1 Quantitative analysis
There is a consensus that one should have at least 25 participants in each treatment group to have robust inferential test results (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) argue that the minimum is 20 participants. When the group number is below 20, it is especially important to carefully check the statistical assumptions of normality, equal variance and the absence of outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007). The researcher checked for normality using the skewness value, the equal variance using Levine’s test, and the absence of outliers using the Explore program in the SPSS (version 14) and found that those assumptions were met.
In the analysis, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) was used to examine the experimental group students’ performance on the questionnaire measuring their attitudes toward journal writing and the control group students’ performance on the questionnaire measuring their attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. Furthermore, independent t-test was used to examine the differences between the experimental group and the control group in composition performance and writing apprehension. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to measure the effect of journal writing versus traditional writing instruction on students’ overall written performance. In addition, Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to investigate the relationship between L1 and L2 writing performance.

3.2.2 Qualitative analysis

Since participants had not experienced journal writing before taking part in this study, the researcher was interested in investigating their attitudes toward that writing experience. Thus, a questionnaire was designed to measure their attitudes toward journal writing. In the same way, another questionnaire was designed to measure the control group attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. Since questionnaires may represent the researcher’s subjective ideas about what aspects of journal writing/ traditional writing instruction may be more useful or less beneficial, and that it was impossible to write items to measure what students actually experienced, it was necessary to give participants the chance to openly express their opinions in the treatment. After the experiment was complete, participants in the journal writing group were required to write their impressions about journal writing as a technique for practicing writing in their
context, focusing on the positives and negatives of that writing technique. Students in the control group were also requested to report on the advantages and the disadvantages of the traditional writing instruction. Most of the participants in the experimental group expressed their opinions in both Arabic and English while a few of them were restricted to using only Arabic. On the other hand all participants in the control group wrote their comments exclusively in Arabic. Students in the experimental group indicated that journal writing had positively influenced their attitudes about writing in English. Interestingly, participants addressed some issues that never came to the researcher’s mind while preparing the attitude questionnaires used in this study. Therefore, using more than one data collection technique in this research was found to be very useful. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to share with the audience in the results section all points students raised while expressing their impressions about journal writing/traditional writing instruction, analysis will be limited to some of the themes students addressed based on doing a content analysis (Huckin, 2004) of their comments. To achieve reliability, two strategies were used. First, the researcher triangulated the patterns found through creating categories only for themes supported by evidence from at least two students. Second, the peer review strategy was also utilized where the researcher had another researcher examine the data collected from students and read findings. He also determined that there was evidence for the listed categories in the data, suggested modifying a few categories to be more representative of what they describe, and added some new categories.
The researcher was also interested in analyzing the experimental group students’ written performance over the experiment. The purpose of this analysis was to qualitatively examine students’ actual writing in their journal entries. Because it was difficult to analyze all journal entries the participants provided over the experiment, this analysis was limited to the journal entries of six randomly selected participants. Specifically, the researcher compared the first journal entry of those students to the last one that they posted in their journals in terms of development of ideas, coherence, cohesion, consideration of audience, and voice. To achieve reliability, data were also analyzed by another independent researcher who determined similar results.

3.3 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the method as well as the procedures followed in this study. It introduced the research design and variables. It presented the participants included and the instruments used in the study. It further reported on the procedures used for administering the treatment and collecting the data from both the experimental and the control groups. The chapter concluded with highlighting the data analysis techniques used in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS of the QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This study aimed at investigating the effect of journal writing as a technique for practicing writing in a communicative context on students’ written performance, attitudes, writing apprehension level, and their perceived sense of writing ability. Since this study used a mixed method design, it may be more helpful to report findings in two chapters. Chapter Four presents the quantitative analysis whereas Chapter Five highlights the results of the qualitative analysis.

4.1 Written performance

In this study written performance was operationalized as students’ writing in response to a prompt assigned by the researcher. Students’ writing was measured using Jacobs et al.’s (1981) ESL Writing Assessment Profile. Reported below are the results of participants’ performance on the pre- and posttests.

**H1:** There will be a difference in overall written performance at the .05 level of significance between the experimental group (journal writing) and the control group in favor of the experimental group.

Both analysis of variance (ANOVA) and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to examine the effect of the treatment on participants’ written performance.
Table (1) Showing Information regarding Written Performance Values
by Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test by Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>70.06</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>49.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>62.20</td>
<td>11.06</td>
<td>40.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.22</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60.83</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>42.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values of the composition profile could range from a low of 34 to a high of 100 points.

The above table shows the raw means and standard deviations in written performance of both the experimental group and the control group on the pretest and the posttest. A general review of that table indicates that there were about eight points difference between the mean of the experimental group (70.06) and that of the control group (62.20) prior to the beginning of the treatment. This requires further investigation to check the significance of those differences (see table 2 below). On the posttest the difference between both groups increased to approximately 25 points, the experimental group mean was 85.22 while the mean of the control group was 60.83.
Table (2) Showing Analysis of Variance Results Regarding the Differences on the Pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>623.81</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3634.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that there were significant differences prior to the beginning of the treatment between the mean score of the experimental group (70.06) and that of the control group (62.20) in favor of the experimental group (p < .01). This means that both groups started the treatment from two different points, which requires taking that difference into consideration when analyzing the posttest results. In addition to the significant difference between the experimental group mean and the control group mean, there is also a fairly high correlation between the pretest score and the posttest score: r = .69. This justifies the use of analysis of covariance to adjust the posttest mean scores of both groups.

Table (3) Summary of Analysis of Covariance Results When Adjusting the Posttest Scores on the Pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Unadjusted Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjusted Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>85.22</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>82.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60.83</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>62.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) above shows the unadjusted as well as the adjusted means of scores for both the experimental and the control groups on the posttest. The unadjusted mean of the
experimental group was 85.22 whereas the adjusted mean was 82.62. As for the control group, the unadjusted mean score was 60.83 whereas the adjusted mean was 62.87. The difference between the experimental and the control group was 25 points when using the unadjusted means. This difference went down approximately five points when using the adjusted means. This means that the two groups were about 20 points apart after the experiment.

**Table (4) Showing the Analysis of Covariance Results Comparing the Pretest with the Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups Posttest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3362.14</td>
<td>146.60</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups Pretest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1269.44</td>
<td>55.35</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>871.48</td>
<td>22.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) shows the analysis of covariance comparing the results of the journal writing group with those of the traditional group on the pre- and posttests. It reveals that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in written performance on the pretest in favor of the experimental group (p < .001). Taking the initial pretest differences into consideration, the posttest analysis shows a significant difference in written performance when comparing the treatment groups in favor of the experimental group (p < .001). This means that the result went on the predicted direction and H1 above was accepted.
Figure (1) above graphically displays the unadjusted mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in written performance before and after the treatment. The graph shows that both groups started the treatment with having two different levels of written performance (the mean of the experimental group was 70.06 while the control group mean was 62.20). On the posttest, the figure illustrates that there
is a more noticeable difference between both groups. The control group seems to end up being slightly lower than where they started (mean = 60.83). In contrast, the experimental group tends to score remarkably higher on the posttest (mean = 85.22). The difference between the mean of the experimental group and that of the control group is approximately 25 points. This suggests that journal writing has had a positive effect in developing the written performance of the experimental group.

Several interpretations could be given for the superiority of the experimental group over the control group in written performance. One interpretation may lie in the fact that practicing journal writing over ten weeks has developed students’ performance. As stated in Chapter Three, students’ journal entries were more or less short compositions including a minimum of 200 words. As such, those journal entries were somehow similar to the writing task on which students were assessed on the pre- and posttests. This means that students were using cognitive processes during journal entry writing similar to those utilized in the testing situation, which might have influenced their performance. A second interpretation of this result may lie in the feedback that the experimental group received. The tutor provided them with a meaning-focused feedback that may have encouraged them to express themselves in the foreign language.

This result can be further attributed to the amount of motivation that the experimental group may have had. Initially, both groups were motivated by participating in the study to develop their writing abilities. At the same time, the tutor provided participants with some instructional materials to help them learn English and promised to grant each participant a certificate in appreciation of his participation. Thus we can
assume that both groups were initially motivated by taking part in the study. Through writing, receiving feedback from the tutor, and having to write back in response to that feedback, the experimental group maintained and probably managed to increase their motivation. In contrast, the control group might have failed to maintain their initial level of motivation. More importantly, the experimental group students might have been internally motivated to write by participating in selecting the journal writing topics at the very beginning of the treatment. They also wrote on some topics such as “Islam, the West, and the freedom of Speech” and “The Bird Flu” that came up as hot issues during the treatment. Graves (1981, cited in Gradwahl & Schumacher, 1989) highlights the positive effect of involving students in selecting their writing topics indicating that it provides them with a sense of ownership and independence, helps them write in their own voice, and makes them more able to handle the topic.

4.2 Writing apprehension

H2: There will be a difference in writing apprehension reduction at the .05 level of significance between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group.
### Table (5) Showing Information Regarding Writing Apprehension Values by Treatment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test by Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Range Low</th>
<th>Range High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apprehension Pretest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>73.89</td>
<td>21.69</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71.21</td>
<td>20.39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apprehension Posttest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.52</td>
<td>18.83</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>72.26</td>
<td>22.03</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The apprehension test values could range from a theoretical low of 26 to a high of 156, whereas the theoretical midpoint is 91.

Information in table (5) above indicates that prior to the treatment, the apprehension level for the experimental group (mean = 73.89) was similar to that of the control group (mean = 71.21). The raw means of both groups show that the apprehension level of both groups was fairly low to begin with since both of them were less than the theoretical midpoint of the scale (91). On the posttest, there was a big difference between the experimental group mean (54.52) and that of the control group (72.26). This shows that the means of both groups were approximately 18 points apart after the treatment.
Figure (2) Showing the Mean Scores of the Treatment Groups in Writing Apprehension on the Pretest and the Posttest

Figure (2) above graphically displays the raw mean scores of the experimental group and the control group in writing apprehension before and after the treatment. The graph shows that both groups started the treatment with having fairly the same apprehension level (the mean of the experimental group was 73.89 while the control group mean was 71.22). On the posttest, however, that figure illustrates that there is a
noticeable difference between both groups. The control group seems to end up being slightly higher than where they started (mean = 72.26). In contrast, the experimental group tends to score remarkably lower on the posttest (mean = 54.52). This means that the writing apprehension level of the experimental group has noticeably decreased after the treatment, while the apprehension level of the control group has slightly increased.

The results of t-test in table (6) below reveals that there is a remarkable decrease in apprehension (19.37) for the experimental group and a very slight increase in apprehension (1.04) for the control group when comparing the pretest results with the posttest results. There is a significant difference between the mean scores attained by the experimental group on the pretest and those on the posttest in favor of the posttest (p<.001). On the other hand, there is no significant difference between the pretest and the posttest scores of the control group (p = .755).

**Table (6) Showing Apprehension Dependent t-Test Results by Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td>73.89</td>
<td>21.69</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.52</td>
<td>18.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.22</td>
<td>22.40</td>
<td>-.317</td>
<td>.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td></td>
<td>72.26</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (7) Showing Independent t-Test Results Comparing Change in Apprehension from Pretest to Posttest by Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Change Value</th>
<th>S.D. Change Value</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.37</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td>15.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equal variance assumption was checked using Levene’s test. Equal variance assumption was met (Levene F = 1.39, P = .246).

The results of t-test (table 7) reveal that the experimental group change is significantly greater than the control group apprehension change (p<.001). This result means that the outcomes went on the predicted direction and thus hypothesis H2 was accepted.

Two possible interpretations may be provided for the significant reduction in writing apprehension of the experimental group compared to that of the control group. One significant interpretation is that journal writing has helped students develop and maintain self-confidence in their writing abilities. Through focusing on meaning and ideas without worrying too much about surface features, students felt that they could write and communicate their ideas to an interested reader. When they discovered that they can communicate their messages to their audience, students may have become less anxious about their writing in L2 and how the tutor would view their writing. Consequently, their writing apprehension level decreased. This interpretation is
supported with qualitative evidence from participants who stated that journal writing helped to provide them with self-confidence to write and share their entries with their tutor (see 5.1.1.3 in Chapter Five below).

This result can be also attributed to the type of feedback students received in the treatment. The tutor directed his comments mainly to meaning, ignoring grammar and mechanics. The tutor well understood that the experiment was a fluency-focused activity and did not bother correcting structural mistakes assuming that students’ accuracy will develop through frequent practice of writing in the foreign language. This created a positive learning environment which might have enhanced students’ self-esteem and helped them overcome their fear of writing. This interpretation concurs with Gungle and Taylor’s (1989) observation that providing structural corrective feedback threatens students’ self-esteem and causes them to be highly anxious when they write, which may block them. On the other hand, commenting on the content gives students the impression that the content is more important than being correct and encourages them to address the purpose and meet audience expectations. This interpretation is also supported by the qualitative evidence which showed that students liked the meaning focused-feedback that helped them overcome the fear of writing. (see 5.1.1.6, and 5.1.1.8 below).

4.3 Attitudes

**H3:** The experimental group will express positive attitudes toward journal writing.

**H4:** The control group will express negative attitudes toward traditional writing instruction.
Table (8) Showing the Descriptive Statistics for the Attitudes of the Experimental Group (n = 18) toward Journal Writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cores</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Like/dislike of journal writing</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Feedback</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Motivation</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Self-perception of personal development in writing</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Preference for future use of journal writing</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response scale values range from a low of 1 to a high of 5 points.

Table (8) shows the five core ideas around which the journal writing questionnaire was designed: 1) like/dislike of journal writing, 2) feedback, 3) motivation, 4) self-perception of personal development in writing, and 5) preference for future use of journal writing. The raw means of those cores tend to range approximately from 4.2 to 4.5, while the total mean is 4.4 on the questionnaire used for measuring the experimental group students’ attitudes toward journal writing. This indicates that generally across all cores of the questionnaire the experimental group students have expressed relatively strong positive attitudes toward journal writing. This means that H3 is accepted.
Table (9) Showing the Descriptive Statistics for the Attitudes of the Control Group (n = 23) toward Traditional Writing Instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cores</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1- Like/dislike of traditional writing instruction</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Feedback</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Motivation</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Self-perception of personal development in writing</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The response scale values range from a low of 1 to a high of 5 points.

Table (9) above shows the four core ideas around which the traditional writing questionnaire was designed: 1) like/dislike of traditional writing instruction, 2) feedback, 3) motivation, 4) self-perception of personal development in writing. The means of those cores tend to range approximately from 3.2 to 3.5, while the total mean is 3.4 on the questionnaire used for measuring the control group students’ attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. This indicates that generally across all cores of the questionnaire the control group students have expressed fairly neutral attitudes toward the traditional writing instruction. This means that H4 above is rejected. Although this study does not aim at comparing the performance of the experimental group to that of
the control group on the attitude questionnaires, examining the total means of both groups reveals that those in the journal writing group (mean = 4.4) are one point higher than those in the control group (mean = 3.4). This result will be further clarified by the qualitative analysis in Chapter Five where students comment on advantages and disadvantages of both types of treatments.

**Figure (3) Showing Comparison of Subscale Means by Group**

![Figure 3](image)

Figure (3) above graphically illustrates the experimental group attitudes toward journal writing compared to the control group attitudes toward traditional writing instruction. This figure simply summarizes the information provided in tables (8 and 9).
concerning the joint core ideas used in measuring students’ attitudes toward journal writing and traditional writing instruction.

4.4 The relationship between L1 and L2 written performance

Reviewing the relevant literature concerning the relationship between L1 and L2 writing revealed inconclusive results. The findings of Uzawa (1996), for instance, showed that writers used similar processes in L1 and L2 writing while those of Devine, Railey, and Boshoff (1993) revealed that L1 and L2 writers adopt different cognitive models. The present study tried to further explore the relationship between L1 and L2 writing performance. The following hypothesis was examined:

H5: There will be a positive correlation between L1 writing performance (Arabic) and L2 writing performance (English).

Examining the correlation between the L1 writing performance of all participants on the pretest and the L2 writing performance of the same group on the pretest revealed a positive moderate correlation (r = .60, p < .001). An analysis of the relationship between L1 writing and L2 writing by groups (experimental/control) showed a similar pattern of relationship. The correlation for the experimental journal writing group was .60 (p = .007) while the correlation for the control group was .55 (p = .006). This means that those who scored high on the Arabic writing test tended to score high on the English pretest.

When students in the experimental and control groups were further divided into high-ability writers and low-ability writers based on their performance on the Arabic pretest, the correlation between the L1 writing performance and the L2 writing
performance was low. For those with high ability in Arabic, there was a significant positive correlation between their Arabic pretest score and their English pretest score ($r = .63, p = .002$). Nevertheless, there was no correlation between their Arabic score and their posttest English score ($r = .11, p = .64$). For those with low ability in Arabic, there was no significant correlation between Arabic score and English pretest score ($r = .44, p = .055$). By the same token, there was no significant correlation between their Arabic score and their posttest score ($r = .31, p = .18$). However, the same type of relationship existed. In other words, those who scored above the mean and median in Arabic tended to score above the mean and the median in English. This indicates that there is a general positive connection between L1 writing and L2 writing. Those who are better writers in Arabic tend to be better writers in English. Therefore H5 was accepted.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter highlighted the results of the quantitative analysis of the study. It examined the effect of the treatment on written performance, writing apprehension reduction, and attitudes. Findings showed a significant effect for the treatment on developing written performance and reducing writing apprehension. Further, the experimental group students had strong positive attitudes toward journal writing. On the other hand, the control group had fairly neutral attitudes toward the traditional writing instruction. It will be interesting to qualitatively explore participants’ attitudes toward the treatment and examine the development of their written performance to determine if the quantitative results are supported or contradicted. A comparison of the qualitative data with the qualitative analyses will help to establish the effect of the treatment.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS of the QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative analyses of the data. These include the analysis of students’ written comments about both journal writing and traditional writing instruction as a representation of their attitudes, the analysis of a tutor interview, and the linguistic analysis of students’ journal entries. From the students’ written comments, I tried to discover what participants actually felt about the treatment: its advantages, disadvantages, and how it could be improved were it to be applied in the future. The tutor interview aimed at getting the instructor’s reaction to the treatment as a faculty member fully aware of the context in which the experiment was conducted. The linguistic analysis of the journal writing consisted of a qualitative comparison of the first and last journal entries of six randomly selected students in terms of ideas development, coherence, cohesion, consideration of audience, and voice.

5.1 Students’ written comments and tutor’s interview

Data collected from the tutor’s interview and students’ written comments about the treatment were examined for categories of themes representing participants’ attitudes toward the treatment. Each theme reported here was created only when supported by at least two examples from the students’ or the tutor’s comments about the treatment. To avoid repetition, only samples of quotations of students echoing the same theme will be cited while reporting the results. To preserve confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used when citing students’ comments. Themes raised by each of the treatment groups are
discussed in the following sections, starting with data collected from the journal writing group and followed by those collected from the control group. In addition, direct quotes from the tutor interview will be cited whenever they are relevant to the theme discussed.

5.1.1 Perceived advantages of journal writing
Participants were consciously aware of the advantages of the intervention. While describing the advantages of journal writing, Nasser said, “No one can underestimate the role that this course have done. It is really provided us with many benefits that can not be limited” (1). Students in the experimental group have highlighted many advantages of journal writing, the most important of which will be reported below.

5.1.1.1 Providing a communicative writing context
As indicated in their comments, students hardly had any communicative writing in English before participating in this study project. Previously, their writing experiences were mainly focused on fulfilling their exam requirements, which are always closed-book, sit-in exams, and on doing their writing assignments in the courses they were taking. As highlighted in the context for the study (see 1.1), the major emphasis in foreign language education is on accuracy and vocabulary instruction. Instructors usually adopt a prescriptive approach in language teaching. In their posttest comments, students stated that the lack of communicative writing experiences in the regular classroom environment made them fear writing. On the other hand, they indicated that practicing journal writing in a less threatening communicative environment encouraged them to

(1) Students’ quotations written in English will be quoted as exactly as students wrote them though they may sometimes include spelling or structure mistakes. Quotations provided in Arabic were translated into English and typed in italics.
discover themselves as writers and aided them in overcoming their fear of writing in English.

Journal writing has provided students with a communicative environment for practicing writing. Students, therefore, became interested to write about topics such as “Islam, the West and freedom of speech”; and “Bird flu” –topics they may have not thought about in a normal classroom context. This idea was voiced by many students. For example, Ali said, “Journal writing enables me to write communicatively… It enables me to communicate with others effectively.” Ismaeil touched on the same point when he said, “It enables me to communicate with others effectively.” Assem stated how he perceived what the purpose of journal writing was when he said, “Through this process I can communicate my ideas and opinions to others in English.” Tareq added, “It enables me to communicate with my fellow effectively.” The tutor also reported that journal writing helped students write for a certain purpose. He said, “You know they have a purpose for writing… Journal writing gave them an arena to find an opportunity to write and share their feelings, views and perceptions.”

In this experiment, participants wrote to communicate with an interested audience, rather than to simply complete course assignments. The tutor was a participant rather than an evaluator mainly focusing on correcting students’ errors. In order to facilitate communication with students, the tutor attempted to adapt his responses to the students’ proficiency level. Participants reported that they considered their writing in their journal entries as communication with their tutor who showed a great interest in commenting on their writing. This made their writing purposeful in the sense that they
were writing to share their ideas with the tutor with no fear of losing their self-esteem. Ahmad, for example, said: “Journal writing encourages exchanging ideas and experiences with the instructor. In fact this project has given us a chance to approach our instructor and communicate with him, with no fear, in a very respectful way.” The tutor also emphasized the communicative function of practicing journal writing when he said:

The most important advantage was that the course and journal writing made from the process of writing an enjoyable communicative task; it set a dialogue with the tutor and gave the students an outlet to voice their concerns, feelings and emotions.

This is in line with Staton’s view that journal writing provides students with opportunities to engage in purposeful communication with their teachers (Staton, 1987a). Despite the fact that students were required to share their journal entries only with their instructor, qualitative evidence showed that they also shared those entries with their colleagues. They read through one another’s entries and benefited from exchanging as well as negotiating ideas with one another. This idea was addressed by Hussein when he said, “Journal writing made me get in dialogue with other friends. We met and exchanged our journal entries with one another. In this way, we benefited from one another.”

5.1.1.2 Offering opportunities for reflection

Journal writing provided students in the experimental group with opportunities to reflect on topics of interest to them. Although students as a group decided to write on some topics throughout the experiment, everyone addressed each topic from his own perspective. Meanwhile, each student reflected on some other topics that he felt inclined
to write about. Magdy described the writing process in journal writing as “highly reflective.” Similarly, Mustafa said, “It enables me to write … reflectively.” It encouraged some students to reflect on the problems they had in their teaching practice. For example, Hussein said, “I started writing about the challenges and difficulties facing in while teaching practice. Also, I reflected on my strengths/weakness while teaching.” Furthermore, Ayman stated that practicing journal writing on a regular basis “is the first step towards self-criticism and reflection.” In addition, journal writing encouraged students to reflect on their personal thoughts and feelings. Wael said, “In journal writing I think expressing my personal thoughts, feelings and ideas.”

5.1.1.3 Developing self-confidence and overcoming the fear of writing

Another advantage of journal writing is that it helped students feel confident in their own abilities as writers, which motivated them to write in English. This is probably due to the friendly environment in which the experiment was conducted. As the tutor tried his best to understand students’ journal entries and provide them with relevant feedback, participants felt they could get their messages across despite their limited vocabulary. In spelling out the positive effect of journal writing on developing self-confidence, Hany said, “Journal writing has made me feel confident enough to write about any topic at any time.” Salah added, “Journal writing provided me with the required self-confidence to write in English.” Ahmad also echoed this idea in the following statement:

There are so many pluses which I got from This course. Firstly, I’v got great self confidence. I can write on whatever I want, with no fear of exam. It enabled me to get rid of the fear of writing.
While enumerating the pluses of journal writing, Salem reported that “providing self-confidence” was one of the significant advantages of this experiment. Students’ self-confidence was reflected in how they perceived themselves as writers since they thought that they should always express themselves and voice out their ideas even if they were not competent writers. Mustafa said, “You don’t have to be a good writer to have a journal and express your view thoughts.” Hady attributed the development of his self-confidence to the feedback he received from the tutor on his journal entry. He said, “Giving feedback in J. W. increased my self-confidence and encouraged me to write more and more without feeling of fear from making mistakes in grammar or spelling.”

As stated previously, students have been socialized in a context that focuses on writing accuracy. This causes students to be highly anxious whenever they are required to write in their L2 lest they should lose face before their colleagues or instructor. Journal writing helped students overcome the fear of writing by providing them with a less threatening atmosphere where they could make mistakes in writing without losing their self-esteem. This meaning was clearly expressed in a quote from Hany who said, “Through regular practice, journal writing has helped me to get rid of the fear of writing and to be less anxious about making mistakes during writing.” Participants also reported that journal writing helped them overcome the debilitating anxiety that they used to have whenever they wanted to write through encouraging them to express their ideas freely without fearing making mistakes.

Ramy added:

It removes frustration and terror about writing, If I need to write and I don’t prepared my self to this situation, whereas, I offered a general idea
about the topic, If I forget the main points or topic as well. By trial and wrong, I form a good experience, (1) How to write well-prepared topic, (2) To chose suitable word in a suitable place.

Salah also said, “Journal writing helped me to get rid of the state of anxiety that I used to have whenever I wrote in English.” “Journal writing helped me to break my fear factor to write my thoughts with self-confidence”, Ali added.

5.1.1.4 Participating in selecting topics

In traditional Egyptian writing instruction students are not usually given the chance to select the topics they write about. Rather, the instructor assigns a few topics about which students should write. In journal writing, students participated in the selection of their composition topics, which encouraged them to write. Most of the participants reported that one of the positive aspects of the treatment was that they had a say regarding the topics covered in the experiment. For instance, Atta said while listing the positives of journal writing practice, “We always chose the title of the topic to be written.” This gave them a sense of ownership as the topics emanated from inside them as a group rather than being forced on them. Ali said, “Selecting the topic depends on the writer’s desire and interest. This encouraged us to write on each topic.” “Writing in the subject I choose allowed me to be more creative in my writing”, Hany added. This idea was also expressed by Hussein as he said, “I have the right to choose the topic in which I will write. Therefore, I have a great motivation to write over and over.”

5.1.1.5 Changing students’ beliefs about writing

Changing beliefs is probably the first step toward adopting alternative teaching and learning strategies. One of the advantages of this intervention is that it has changed
students’ beliefs about how L2 is learned. Through encouraging students to write according to their individual abilities, journal writing helped to change the composing strategies of students from the experimental group students. Salah, for instance, reported that participating in the experiment encouraged him to change his L2 writing strategies. Previously, he would compose first in L1 and then translate into L2. Through practicing journal writing, he learned how to write directly in L2. He reported:

Before the participating in this experiment, I used to write the essay in Arabic first and then translate it into English. This concept has now changed and I write directly in English. I even plan my ideas in English. This is probably the most important benefit I learned from this program.

Likewise, Hussein indicated that the intervention resulted in changing his ideas about writing and helped him overcome the fear factor. He said, “Journal writing changed my thoughts about writing from another perspective. So I broke the factor of fear. It enabled me to know that writing is a process not an arbitrary task.”

A few students stated that journal writing changed their view of writing as it made them perceive writing as a process. Salem, for instance, directly stated this idea as he said, “It gave me another way to think about writing as a process.” Hady added, “J.W. made me see or able to see writing as a process that enabled me to write communicatively.” This idea was also demonstrated by Tharwat as he said, “It gave me another way to think about writing that is to say, not to write for the sake of exam but to improve my ability and also evaluate my writing.”
5.1.1.6 Focusing on meaning

The majority of students indicated that journal writing helped them focus mainly on meaning and the generation of ideas rather than on grammatical rules. This point was voiced out by Hany when he said, “Journal writing has encouraged me to focus on meaning. It helped me to focus on ideas rather than sentence form or spelling.” The same point was addressed by Ali who reported, “I just take my thoughts and ideas from my mind and put it on paper without thinking about spelling and grammar.” Participants have realized that the purpose of writing is to communicate meaning. Ramy said:

It’s remarkable, that the aim of any essay to send message to reader clearly so writer tries to collect an important information, at the first and after this stage He can modify and prepared his topic and put grammatic rule in its position.

Furthermore, some students indicated that focusing on meaning and disregarding grammar encouraged them to write. For example, Adel said: “Not paying much attention to grammar and punctuation made me write freely and comfortably.” Similarly, Ismaeil expressed this meaning as he said, “It inspires me to write more and more without giving much attention to grammar.” He further described his writing processes as he said, “At first, I write without giving much attention to grammar but vocabulary and the meaning and then gradually I begen to focus on grammar.” In addition Ramy reported that focusing on grammar is a detrimental factor as it interrupts the train of thoughts. He said:

If I bear in mind to revise every line I write and correct the mistakes, of course, it’s more difficult, Because thought train may interrupt and I can’t write what I want. In addition that I take more time to prepare topic by this way.
Hany added, “As for the grammar’s role during the writing, I think that these tactics (grammar, tactics and techniques) may restrain and confine the writer about his thought by his own manner.” Nasser also referred to the detrimental effect of focusing on grammar as he said, “The focus on journal writing was not on grammar and punctuation which represent restrictions for many people.” Ramy suggested that grammar can be taken care of at the editing stage when he said, “As a result of that, it’s more easier to you as writer to write, After that, you can correct or add what you wan,t.”

5.1.1.7 Developing writing through practice

As stated in the introduction to Chapter One of this study, participants have been socialized in a context that encourages them to memorize expressions and even entire texts to pass exams. As a consequence, students may depend on others’ writing as they do not trust the correctness of their own writing. Many students reported that journal writing changed their ideas about learning how to write fluently in L2. They came to realize that learning how to write can be done through meaningful practice. Tharwat, for instance, said when reporting on the advantages of the intervention, “It helps me to keep in my mind that I ‘m gonna learn by trial and error not by memorizing the prescribing text and then recite it.” Hady observed that journal writing created in them more interest to practice writing than to read about how writing is done. He said, “J. w. interest in making us write more than taking information about writing.”

Journal writing has helped to enlighten participants’ pedagogy about how writing is learned and how it should be taught. Students came to understand that writing can be developed through consistent practice for a purpose. Tareq raised this idea when he said,
“In this course I know the rule that said ‘practice makes perfect’.” This idea was also expressed by Adel when he stated: “This course has made me convinced that the best way for learning writing is by practicing writing.” By the same token, Nasser said, “This task have already made me realize that the best way to learn writing is to write.” “I can’t write about any topic perfectly from the first time. My ability to write will improve time after time gradually and that will make me a good writer at the end”, Sameh concluded. Students’ understanding of how writing should be developed is in line with the main tenet of communicative language teaching that communicative competence can be developed through negotiation, expression and interpretation of ideas (Savignon, 1971, 1983, 1997, 2003, 2005).

Students reported that journal writing provided them with a channel to express their opinions and ideas regardless of how others received them. For instance, Ismaeil said, “Journal writing gave us an opportunity to express our opinions and thoughts regardless of other people’s attitudes toward what we may write.” Students liked that channel through which they expressed themselves and shared their ideas with their instructor. They believed that being committed to practicing journal writing would improve their writing ability. Ayman said:

“As the time goes,
-Style of writing gets more creative.
-One’s point of view and thoughts get plainer and unvague.
-One becomes more able to express his thoughts and ideas easily and smoothly.
-Writing process is developed and its technicalities are improved.”
Realizing that their written performance had developed through the intervention, students expressed their willingness to maintain journal writing in the future in order to record the important events in their lives and to practice writing in a meaningful way. When expressing his readiness to practice journal writing in the future, Ramy said:

This is natural thing, because I always will face set of important and happy events that I like to remember from time to time, on the one hand. On the other hand, it may consider be a good benefit to me in the future. As you know that language need practice and to use it continuously. So this is high motivation to write.

Ali added while addressing the tutor:

You put us on the right track and we have to pursue what we started, otherwise it would be in vain and waste of time and effort. I think I will have a journal in which I will write in English all about my day and how I perceive it and how well/bad I did and what I could have done to perform better.

5.1.1.8 Feedback

The tutor collected and commented on students’ journal entries once every other week. As stated earlier, his feedback was mainly focused on meaning. Nearly all participants indicated that they liked the tutor’s feedback and reported it as one of the positive aspects of the experiment. Participants were consciously aware of the essential importance of written feedback for them as writers. In their comments, they highlighted the significance of feedback. Ramy said:

In fact It’s very important, special for the beginners, Because I can prepared, modify, add, organize, in the topic, in addition that I can
discover the faults and correct it at once. This is on the one hand, On other hand, I benefit from time to time to try to avoid the faults.

“Feedback is very important for the writer when takes feedback from the others because it give him important points of his subject as advantages or defaults”, Wael added. Salah stated that the tutor’s feedback “focused more on processing ideas and thoughts and communication rather than writing grammatically correct but not meaningfully.” Since students had never received any written feedback on their writing, the intervention was the first time they felt that an interested audience read and cared about their writing.

When spelling out his impression about the feedback, Samy said, “It gave me a feeling that is a person who is interested in my writing and wants to teach me. …. I know by feedback my real strength and weakness of my writing”, he added. Tareq expressed the same idea when he said, “In this course, I had a feeling that some one was interested in me and gave me his attention.”

A number of students indicated that they appreciated the feedback very much because it was directed to meaning and ideas. For example, Mustafa said that he liked the feedback because it “focused more on processing ideas and thoughts and communication rather writing grammatically correct.” Ayman reported that he appreciated the instructor’s feedback as it was positive and meaning-focused. He said, “It focused on the train of thoughts rather than on writing technicalities.” Mahmud, however, criticized the negative feedback saying, “When the feedback is negative it make the writer don’t write again.”
5.1.1.9 Motivation

The majority of students indicated that journal writing motivated them to write and exchange ideas in a communicative context. It provided them with an internal need to write in L2 in order to convey their ideas and respond to the tutor’s comments. All participants started the treatment with a certain level of motivation to develop their writing abilities. Journal writing helped students maintain and even increase their initial motivation by providing them with a purpose for writing. When expressing this idea, Ahmad said, “It gave me a reason to write, another way of thinking not just writing for The academic sake. This way encouraged and inspired me to write more and more without giving much attention to grammar.” Furthermore, Mahmud directly reported the motivating effect of journal writing saying, “Journal writing motivates my write and express my thoughts at any given point in time. It gave me another way to think about writing and encouraged me to write on a daily basis.” By the same token, Hady said, “Because of J. W. I was motivated to write and express my thoughts at any time and in any place.” “Expressing my thoughts freely gave me motivation to write without restriction”, Atta reported. Salem added, “It inspired us to write more without giving much attention to grammar.”

5.1.1.10 Enjoying the process

Students reported that journal writing helped them view writing as a positive and interesting experience and thus they enjoyed it. In the traditional academic contexts, students often write for artificial purposes to do their assignments. Through the experiment, participants felt that they were writing for authentic purposes. Mahmud spelled out this idea reporting that participating in this study was the first time he
experienced writing for something other than passing exams. He said, “Frankly, it’s the first time in our college to write not to pass exam. And it’s enough to satisfy us.” Assem directly attributed the joy he felt during journal writing to the interesting topics he wrote about when he said, “Expressing ideas about interesting topics made me enjoy the writing process and motivated me to write more about any topic related to policy, sports, ..etc.” This idea was supported by another quotation from Atta as he said, “The topics are very interesting and enjoyable.”

Participants directly stated that they liked journal writing practice because it encouraged them to write for a purpose. For example, Hussein said, “Frankly, it’s the first time in our college writing to write not to pass exam, and it’s enough to satisfy us.” In addition, some students expressed their satisfaction with the course and stated that they wanted more practice in writing about similar topics. Nasser said, “Ten topics were not really enough to be written at this fabulous and motivating course.”

5.1.1.11 Developing literacy

In order to collect information about the topics that they were writing about, students had to refer to some resources such as textbooks and newspaper articles. This provided them with new expressions and vocabulary –which, in turn, enriched their reading and writing skills. Students reported that journal writing helped them develop their literacy skills. In expressing this idea, Musa’d said:

Journal writing gives me eagerness of writing and also reading in other books to get information that helps me in the topic which I write it. It has provides me with some new expressions, and words which help me to improve my writing.
The same idea was addressed by Ramy who indicated that he had to read extensively about issues that came up as hot topics during the treatment. He said, “It gives us high motivation to make further reading and research about the topic in that I want to write either this topic is usual or one of the current affairs, for example sinking furry, bird flu…..etc.” “It made me read freely about topics I have not much more information about them, though I have not read anything freely except my university private books before”, Nasser reported. Likewise, Ismaeil said, “It encourages us to read in other books to get more information that helps me in the topic which I am asked to write it.” Ayman added, “Journal writing enhances the cultural background of individuals.” In the same way, Adel said: “This course raised my attention to do free reading without limiting myself to the assigned textbooks that I have to study.” Hussein also reported, “It improves my reading skills because when I want to write about any topic I must read well about it otherwise, I can’t write exact topic.” This idea was also expressed by Hady as he said, “J. W. made me look for information to support my writing and this increased my culture personally.” Moreover, the tutor reported that students read a few online articles written by Robert Fisk, whom they thought to be objective and fair while addressing issues related to the Middle East, in order to write on topics such as “Islam, the West and freedom”

With specific reference to writing, some participants stated that the journal writing fostered their writing abilities. For example, Adel said, “This course has developed students’ writing abilities in general. This is in addition to developing each individual student’s writing since some students told me that their writing levels
In addition, Assem reported that journal writing helped to develop his vocabulary in English. He said, “One of the main advantages of this course is that it developed my vocabulary. When I write, I find some difficult words that I do not know. I look them up and learn them. That developed my vocabulary.” Musa’d added, “It gives me much vocabulary through what I hear from Professor… and reading in other books to get information that helps me in the topic which I am asked to write it.” This is in line with the finding of Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005) that journal writing is effective in developing students’ literacy.

5.1.2 Perceived disadvantages of journal writing

Participants referred to some potential problems that should be taken into account when utilizing journal writing in composition courses. It is worth mentioning that participants have viewed those disadvantages as limitations that could be attributed to the constraints of the context in which the study was carried out. For example, Taha, said, “In fact, they are not negatives in the literal sense of the word, but I can say that they are a number of limitations that are due to context-related constraints.” Indeed students were aware that the negatives of journal writing are much less than those in the traditional writing context. Hany said, “As for, the disadvantages of journal writing, they are very few because it has many advantages. In fact, if we compare between J. W. and T. W., we would find that the minuses of J. w. are not much.” Hussein attributed some of the negatives of this experiment to the fact that the tutor was very busy. He said while addressing the tutor, “I have many justifications for many minuses, because you was
very busy.” The disadvantages that the students identified can be categorized into the following themes:

5.1.2.1 Limited choice of topics

Quite a few students stated that requiring them to write on the same topics made the journal writing practice somewhat similar to the traditional writing context, where the instructor assigns one topic for the entire class. Ahmad voiced out this concern in his statement below:

I think we all write in the same topic. This is most likely, the formal writing. You have to write in a specific topic. You may have some problems in collecting your ideas…. My point is in journal writing you have to write in whatever you want.

Hussein added that writing on a specific number of topics restricted his writing performance. He said, “The topics are more limited so that I can’t go over these topics.” Hany highlighted the point that asking all participants to write on the same topics might have put some of them at a disadvantage as they may not have had sufficient knowledge to write about such topics. He said, “Make the writer write in the same topics or subjects which may be isn’t a suitable to his experience.” As reported in Chapter Three, students as a group selected the ten topics they wrote about in the experimental treatment condition. This procedure was followed in order to control the writing process and prevent students from copying essays from textbooks assigned in other courses and claiming that they wrote them on their own. The written comments of some students showed that they did not always like the topics selected by the group, which is natural and healthy. Participants recommended that in future applications of journal writing each
student should be allowed to write on any topic he likes. In contrast with most students, Hady viewed writing on the same topics as an advantage. He said, “Writing the same topics was a good idea because this will indicate the level of everyone in our group.”

5.1.2.2 Insufficient feedback

As stated in the Chapter Three, the tutor collected students’ journal entries every other week to provide comments. This was not sufficient from the perspective of some participants who reported that one of the disadvantages in their experience with journal writing was the lack of extensive feedback from the tutor. Taha directly raised this point when he said, “There was no feedback immediately after writing each journal.” Similarly, Ismaeil said, “It lacked feedback which enables me to avoid mistakes in the following times.” Furthermore, this idea was indirectly indicated by Tharwat as he said, “The process of communication between lecturer and students hasn’t undergone regularly.” This might have been due to the fact that the instructor was under unusually high –academic and professional– pressures and did not have enough time to respond to students’ writing as often as they expected.

Participants suggested that more attention should be paid to feedback. For example, Adel said, “Feedback must take more consideration.” “Feedback should be provided on a daily basis”, Salah proposed. In addition, Hussein stated that the written feedback is not sufficient and suggested that teacher-student conferences should be also utilized. He said, “Although there is a good feedback but it is a written one and so that it is not sufficient but it must be followed by a meeting with a supervisor.” Similarly, Wael
suggested devoting some time to holding teacher-student meetings. He said, “The factor of time is more important than any other factor for the meetings.”

5.1.2.3 Lack of focus on writing skills

A number of students criticized journal writing for not providing them with sufficient declarative knowledge about writing skills. This meaning was stated in Ali’s quote: “The lack of lectures which we took from him (referring to the instructor) and it does not enable me to know a lot of writing skills.” Wael put it more clearly when he said, “The course gives not any information about writing skills.” Sayed suggested that journal writing “must focus on skills students in writing.” Students expected the instructor to provide them with cognitive features of the writing process and skills. It seems that they have perceived journal writing as an independent teaching method rather than as a technique for practicing writing. In this study, journal writing was by no means meant to be a teaching method on its own. It was embedded in a writing course to work as a channel through which students can practice writing.

5.1.3 Challenges for journal writing practice

**H6: Implementation of journal writing will not be without challenges.**

The tutor who carried out the treatment as well as the participants reported some challenges that may face the future use of journal writing in the study context. This section will be devoted to highlighting those challenges.

5.1.3.1 Writer’s block

Students indicated that they suffered from the “writer’s block” at the beginning of the experiment because they were not used to practicing writing on a regular basis.
Ahmad spelled out this feeling when he said, “What bothered me was that I sometimes could not write anything about the topic at hand.” Salem attributed this to the lack of sufficient background knowledge. He said, “There is a weak cultural background due to the lack of reading.” Hady also referred to the participants’ lack of background information needed to write on the selected topics. He said, “Weak cultural background appeared as a problem during writing.” To overcome this problem, students used different strategies. For example, some of them stated that they adopted affective strategies such as self-encouragement while others avoided focusing too much on grammar. Other students indicated that they had to read extensively about the topic to be addressed. Doing extra reading activities was directly highlighted in the following quote by Sameh: “We suffer from poor background when we write about some topics. We had to do some searches about what I gonna to do which improve our knowledge and helped us to write.”

5.1.3.2 Lack of clarity in writing

An important challenge that students had while practicing journal writing was that they sometimes failed to convey the meaning they were trying to communicate. This required the audience to tolerate ambiguity and fill in the gaps on his or her own. Participants were aware of this issue and indicated that they could not write as freely in L2 as they did in L1 because they felt that they had problems expressing their thoughts clearly. For example, Abbas said, “Many times we could not express our thoughts clearly.” Likewise, the tutor addressed this problem as he said, “…the other thing is sometimes the meaning of the message (written text) was unworkable and I think you
got through the same problem in the content analysis.” Participants were not only aware of this issue but also realized that they had some problems with word choice due to their limited vocabulary. In an attempt to bypass this problem, some of them occasionally resorted to writing in L1 (Arabic) whenever they thought that they could not handle the idea or the topic in L2. For example, Qassem wrote the following on a topic entitled “Islam, the West, and the freedom of thinking”:

الإسلام والغرب وحرية الفكر

إنما نشر في أوائل الشهر الماضي - فبراير 2006 - بالصحف الدنماركية والدنماركية والرواحية كانت صدمة وهجمة عنيفة تعرض لها المسلمون جميعا، حيث قدمت هذه الصحف ونشرت رسوما كاريكاتورية أساءت للرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم، وقد اعتبرت الصحف الدنماركية والرواحية إنما نشرته إلا من باب إبداء الرأي وتعبيرًا عن حرية الفكر والاعتقاد مختبئين وراء قولهم الأساسي بأنها حرية صحافة.

5.1.3.3 Overloading the tutor

The use of journal writing overloaded the tutor with extra work that he needed to handle. He had to read all students’ entries and provide each of them with feedback. That was too much on the tutor, who had to cope with other academic and professional responsibilities, given the fact that every faculty member in that context has to have a part-time job in addition to his full-time low-paying position as a professor in order to be able to fulfill the financial needs of his family. The tutor referred to the overload placed on him when he said, “... one other issue is the time duration and the frequency of responses overloaded the tutor.” To alleviate this challenge, the tutor suggested engaging the teaching assistants in responding to students’ journal entries and helping them make sense of the feedback. He said:

... But we need to intervene. I mean we need to enable the work of the assistant staff especially with the meetings. I mean the demonstrators and
assistant lecturers can work hand in hand with the tutors in terms of the meetings and helping students make sense of he feedback.

It may be also helpful to train competent students to comment on their colleagues’ writing and to make use of the internet in journal writing practice. Both ideas were voiced out by the tutor when he said:

…One other potential issue which needs to be enabled and capitalized is successful and proficient learners can be of great help. Students who are proficient can help sort this out. One other issue is to set it on-line where it will be more convenient for the tutor and to the students.

The participation of teaching assistants and proficient students will help professors make use of the journal writing technique with large numbers of students. This is, in fact, in accordance with the current development in communicative language teaching (Ho & Savignon, 2007)

5.1.3.4 Intermittent practice for a short period of time

Students reported that the time span in which they practiced journal writing was not long enough for them to benefit from the experience as much as they expected and wished had they been exposed to the experiment for a longer period of time. For instance Hussein said, “It does not take its true time to achieve its goal or purpose. The factor of time was not more sufficient.” Ismaeil also said referring to the shortness of the experiment time-span, “The time is limited and short to exchange with Dr. … and get enough writing skills from him.” “Time allocated for the course is short and also disorder in its time”, Salem added. Hady also said, “The course was fast and very short time.” “… the time was not sufficient to achieve benefiting from the course to a great degree”, Sameh reported. Some students suggested that more time should be devoted to
journal writing in their program in the English major. For example, Salah said, “More time should be given to this program so that we can benefit more from it.” In addition, students’ practice of journal writing was interrupted twice during the experiment (see 3.1.5.2.2.3 for more details).

5.1.3.5 Expecting correction

Despite their high appreciation and admiration of the meaning-focused feedback (see 5.1.1.8), it was very evident that students were much influenced by the context in which they were socialized, as they expected the tutor to respond to their grammatical mistakes when commenting on their journal entries. A few students expressed their dissatisfaction with the feedback for not highlighting grammar mistakes so that they could avoid them in their future writing. They further recommended that attention should be given to grammar mistakes in journal writing practice. Said, for instance, said, “It must interested in grammar in writing and it must include all weakness sides in writing.”

Seeking grammatical feedback may be considered a natural demand of learners socialized in an instructional context where the teacher’s job is to correct mistakes and prescribe rules that should be followed. Some students, however, think that disregarding grammar was one of the great benefits of journal writing because focusing on grammar restricts their writing performance. This idea was highlighted by Sameh when he said:

I like to write without limitations with grammar or technicals through writing process and that make me free and write freely. If I care of grammar or technicals, I will write good and perfect topic, but that is obstacle for me to some extent and may make me stop during writing or don’t write absolutely.
5.1.3.6 Lack of commitment on students’ part

Because participating in this experiment was voluntary, some students did not take it as seriously as they could have. This idea was raised in Hussein’s quote when he said, “Some of us thought it was not a serious task, so they were lazy most of the time.” Taha echoed the same point as he said, “Some students did not take it seriously and they were lazy.” Salem attributed participants’ lack of commitment to the fact that this experiment was entirely voluntary and had nothing to do with their final exam. He says, “Because the course was not for the exam, many students were lazy and did not pay attention.” This is natural since many students tend to focus on formal academic requirements that count toward their graduation and give little attention to voluntary activities. If journal writing is formally included in the writing course, students will take it more seriously and thus it may turn out to be more effective.

5.1.4 Perceived advantages of the traditional writing instruction

It should be noted that the traditional writing instruction was not without advantages. However, participants reported that those advantages were not so many. Khalid, for instance, said, “The course did not have many advantages.” Abdul-Majeed added, “As for advantages, they are not so many. Nonetheless, this course, to some extent, has improved our writing.” The positive points raised by participants can be categorized into the themes highlighted below.

5.1.4.1 Learning new vocabulary and structures

A number of students reported that the course provided them with new vocabulary. For example, Farag stated that the “only benefit of that course lay in
presenting new vocabulary, expressions, and language patterns.” Similarly, Othman indicated that the main advantage of the course was that it provided them with some generic mechanical expressions, such as “proverbs,” which can be used while writing about different topics. He said, “This course has provided us with some expressions that can be used in writing on any topic.” Maher expressed the same idea as he said, “Actually, the most important advantage of this course, in my opinion, is presenting new vocabulary items.” “This course has helped to develop our vocabulary”, Tawfeeq added.

5.1.4.2 Receiving oral feedback

As previously highlighted, the professor who taught the traditional writing course to both the experimental and control groups gave students oral feedback, mainly focused on grammar. Students considered this oral feedback one of the strength points because it met some of their expectations about teaching and learning L2 writing. Maher said, “Another advantage of this course was that the teacher orally corrected pronunciation and structures in class, which helped me to know my mistakes.” In addition, this type of feedback is in line with the way students were culturally socialized in terms of teacher/students roles. However, this feedback was sharply criticized by some participants. For example, Hady said, “I did not like the feedback in T. W. because it represents in telling me the mistakes in writing whether in grammar or in spelling. It ignored my thoughts and ideas. Tell me if passed the exam or not.”
5.1.5 Perceived disadvantages of the traditional writing instruction
Participants in the journal writing group as well as the control group cited some disadvantages of the traditional writing instruction they had in the writing course. This section will be devoted to highlighting a number of those disadvantages.

5.1.5.1 Anxiety provoking
The traditional writing course raised students’ anxiety. A number of participants attributed this to the fact that the writing topics were mainly assigned by the professor. For example, Hany said, “When the teacher assigns me a topic to write about, I feel fear and anxiety, which makes me unable to write anything.” The way students received feedback from the instructor may have been another source of anxiety. The instructor most often provided oral feedback which focused on correctness rather than meaning, which may have caused students to feel embarrassed before their classmates. Students’ anxiety can also be attributed to a lack of self-confidence in their written performance. The lack of self-confidence negatively affects students’ communicative competence. As a result, they become afraid to express themselves in the foreign language. Magdy said, “It make our self-confidence disappear… I be very afraid to write any time or any place.”

5.1.5.2 Writing for passing exams
Writing practice in the traditional writing course was exam-oriented. This did not appeal to participants who reported that the traditional writing course did not encourage them to write for a communicative purpose. The only purpose students had for writing was to do their assignments in order to pass exams. While reporting the disadvantages of
traditional writing instruction, Magdy said, “The purpose of writing was only to pass exam.” “I was never asked to write except in exam”, Hady added. Wael also said, “We habit in the traditional course to write for examine only not to express our ideas.” Furthermore, Tawfeeq criticized the writing course for being exam-oriented by saying:

The main disadvantage of this course lay in asking students to write on certain topics and using some of them in the final semester exam. This simply has limited students’ writing to those topics and encouraged them to cheat from one another.

In conclusion, students did not like the way they practiced writing in this course and suggested that they should be trained to write to convey their ideas to the reader.

5.1.5.3 Being limited to memorization

As stated in Chapter One, in the traditional writing instruction students were assigned to write about a few given topics over the semester and they were asked to write on one or two of them in the final exam. This technique encouraged students to memorize most of the essays they wrote in order to reproduce them in the final exam. Rae’d reported, “This course encouraged students to memorize because they knew that they would write on some of the assigned compositions in the final exam. Consequently, this encouraged students to memorize those compositions.” Abdul-Rahman further touched on this point as he said, “Assigning specific essays for the test motivates students to prepare ahead and memorize those essays instead of writing spontaneously in the exam situation.” This, in turn, represents a major threat to the validity of the composition test since it does not measure what it is supposed to measure. Instead of measuring
students’ writing skills, the test measures their ability to memorize and rewrite previously prepared writing passages.

Similarly, this approach encouraged students to cheat by getting ideas from their colleagues or asking more competent friends to write essays for them. Tawfeeq wrote, “Assigning students to write on a few topics and asking them to write on one of them in the exam encourages students to memorize compositions and cheat through exchanging essays with one another.” Mua’tazz also echoed this perception as he said, “Studying essay in this course was but a mere memorization of compositions to pass the exam.” This meaning was further pointed out in the quotes by Ramy: “I haven’t to do anything but to know by heart and copy in the exam” and Atta: “After taking the course, our writing skills are the same as before taking it.” The above quotations indicate that students were aware that the approach used for teaching writing did not help them develop and improve their written performance.

Students expressed their dissatisfaction with the traditional writing course because they did not think it could help them develop their L2 writing performance. As previously stated, they were required to write about five topics and be prepared to write about any of them in the final semester exam. This is perfectly described in the following quote from Wael: “I took the essay course but I learnt nothing more than writing five compositions and memorizing one of them that I wrote in the final exam. However, memorization is in the lowest level of mental processes.” Furthermore, a number of students indicated that the course did not teach them how to write: rather, it provided them with some essays to imitate. For example, Usama stated, “This course did
not train us in how to write in English...It was not appropriately taught. Nor was the textbook explained.” In the same way, Taher added, “This course did not provide us with composition strategies, or show how to use cohesion devices, or teach us how to make our essays coherent.” In addition, Solyman interestingly summarized his impression about the effectiveness of the course as he said:

I think that the course was useless. However, not to underestimate the efforts of our professor (Dr. ...) I can say, and Allah knows best, that the only benefit of that course was that we learned some new vocabulary. As for the disadvantages, they are so many. The professor assigned some compositions for us to write about, but we never got feedback on any of them. He used to begin the lecture with reading some vocabulary that might help us in writing the composition at hand without training us in how to write or providing any constructive criticism that may have helped us to develop ourselves. For these reasons, I can say that those lectures were useless for us.

When they realized that the traditional writing instruction did not assist them developing their writing skills, a number of students preferred not to attend the course though they were registered for it. To underscore this view, Islam said, “Many students used not to attend the course because they did not see any benefit in attending the class. Therefore, I myself stopped attending the class.” Sameir added, “I did not benefit that much from the course and thus I did not bother to attend the class.”

5.1.5.4 Insufficient feedback

One of the most critical disadvantages of traditional writing instruction in the study context was that students did not receive sufficient feedback on their writing. Whenever offered, feedback was given only orally. Atta said, “It did not provide any
kind of feedback and that matter did not help me to know my mistakes to avoid them next.” In order to express his dissatisfaction with the feedback provided, Ra’fat said, “The main disadvantage of this course is that it, by no means, provided neither the feedback nor the constructive criticism that we needed.”

Students’ dissatisfaction with the feedback they got from the professor may be due to the focus he placed on the surface features of their writing. The majority of participants indicated that traditional writing instruction focused on the surface linguistic features and neglected the content since accuracy dominated instructor-students’ discussions. This meaning was spelled out by Salah when he said, “It emphasizes grammar rules and neglects content.” Islam added, “We used to focus on grammar when we discussed any topic without paying attention to meaning.” Although grammar-focused feedback may have appealed to some students who liked to be corrected, the course did not even meet the needs of those students because it was impossible to correct all mistakes they made since it was too demanding and time-consuming. For instance, Ra’fat said, “This program did not offer the correction that we expected.”

More surprisingly, participants indicated that the instructor did not pay due attention to the essays that they wrote. They never received any comments on the essays they submitted. This idea was echoed by Mousa as he said, “The instructor did not evaluate any of the compositions that we turned in.” Hady said, “In my point of view, in T. W. (traditional writing) there is no feedback.” As reported in 5.1.5.3 above, Solyman said, “He assigned us to write some compositions, but we never got any comments on them.” In the same way, Abdul-Majeed thinks that the main disadvantage of this course
lay in “disregarding commenting on students’ compositions.” This is probably because there were so many students, which made it impossible for the instructor to respond to each of their essays. This, in turn, had a negative effect on the students who felt that it was useless to turn in their compositions so long as they were not getting the due attention on the part of the professor. Students suggested that their essays should be evaluated and returned to them with comments.

5.1.5.5 Lack of motivation

Writing is a complex process that requires time and effort. Traditional writing instruction did not motivate participants to go through the challenging stages of the writing process. Ramy voiced out this issue when he said, “It does not give motivation to look up and collect information about the topic, in sometime, it’s easier and easier to forget the meaning.” Students were also required to write about specific topics, which they did not like to do. Hady said, “We write about topics very dull and we can not be creative in writing it.”

Traditional writing instruction did not encourage students to reflect on their own experiences to write on topics that made sense to them. Instead, they wrote about artificial or hypothetical incidents in order to complete their classroom assignments. This point was further highlighted by Salah when he said, “Writing process was unreflective and just organizing thoughts and translating them into sentences.” Consequently, students stated that the traditional writing course decreased their motivation to write. Wael, for instance, said, “The traditional course make one less motivation to write correctly or to express about his thoughts and ideas.” Fareid attributed the lack of
motivation to write to the professor’s behavior in the class as he tended to focus on some of the students while neglecting the others. He said, “Focusing on a group of students and neglecting the rest of the class resulted in demotivating the majority of students.”

It is remarkable that the abovementioned themes were based on students’ personal views on how they perceived both journal writing and the traditional writing practice. Those views may be biased for or against the experiment. They also may have been subject to exaggeration. However, they still represent a customer-oriented feedback on the treatment and how it was taken by participants. What gives credibility to what students have mentioned is that we have evidence from more than one student supporting the categorized themes. Multiple evidences help to achieve triangulation and, in turn, corroboration of the results reached. This qualitative evidence in general corroborates the quantitative results highlighted in Chapter Four. However, participants’ comments should be taken with caution. In other words, when they state that their journal writing developed their writing performance, it should not be taken for granted that their writing actually developed since there is a difference between how participants’ feel about their writing abilities and whether or not their writing skills actually improved. Further evidence will be needed to accept students’ comments. All in all, the most beneficial aspect of this study may simply lie in the fact that it helped some students become more positive about L2 writing, feel confident in their abilities, and believe that they can communicate their ideas regardless of the problems they may have in accuracy.
5.2 Students’ perceived sense of writing ability

\textbf{H7: There will be a difference in students’ perceived sense of their writing abilities before and after the treatment.}

Participants in both the experimental group and the control group were required to rate their perception of their writing abilities before and after the treatment. Before the treatment, in the experimental group one participant perceived his writing ability as “very poor”, six as “poor”, five as “fair”, and six as “good.” On the posttest students’ ratings indicated development in their perceived sense of the writing ability. The student who perceived his writing ability as “very poor” on the pretest rated himself as “good” on the posttest. Of the six who rated themselves as “poor” on the pretest, four perceived their writing abilities to be “good” and the other two as “very good” on the posttest. For the five who rated themselves as “fair” on the pretest, three turned out to rate themselves as “good” and two as “very good” on the posttest. This result shows that all participants in the experimental group perceived development in their writing abilities at the end of the treatment. This can be attributed to the communicative confidence students have gained through participating in the treatment.

For the control group on the pretest ratings, five students perceived their writing abilities as “poor”, eight as “fair”, nine as “good”, and one as “very good.” Students’ self-ratings of the writing ability on the posttest showed little development. Of the five students who rated themselves as “poor” on the pretest, three rated themselves as “poor” and two as “fair” on the posttest. Of the eight participants who rated themselves as “fair” on the pretest only three students rated themselves as “good” on the posttest. The
remaining five reported no change. Likewise, of the nine who rated themselves as “good” on the pretest, three rated themselves as “very good” while the remaining six reported no change. The student who rated himself as “very good” on the pretest gave himself the same rating on the posttest.

The overall analysis shows that from the pretest to the posttest all participants in the experimental group perceived development in their own writing abilities. In the control group, however, the picture is different: eight participants reported to have perceived development in writing ability while fifteen reported no change at all.

5.3 Journal Analysis

**H8: The written performance of the experimental group will develop over time.**

The purpose of this analysis was to qualitatively investigate students’ written performance in their journal entries. Specifically, the journal entries that a random selection of six students wrote in the first week of the experiment were compared to those they posted during the final week in terms of development of ideas, coherence, cohesion, consideration of audience, and voice.

5.3.1 An overarching issue

It should be noted that religion played a significant part in students’ discourse. Many of the topics that students selected seemed at first glance to be religious in nature (e.g. “Equality in Islam”, “Islam, the West, and freedom of speech”, “Islam in the eyes of the West”, “The Islamic nation future”, “The past, present, and future of Islam”, and “Science and faith.” Students very frequently built their rhetorical arguments on religious foundations. For example, in their argument against co-education (mixing both
genders together in the educational system) some students referred to the fact that this
type of education will lead to out-of-marriage man-woman relationships, which is
prohibited for Muslims. Muhammad, for instance, said, “… but dealing between men
and women under other conditions or places directly and without limits led to a lot of
problems… and illegal relationships between man and woman and illegal marriage.”

Similarly, Arafa wrote while discussing the dangers of co-education at the college level:

Still the most dangerous stage of education and it is in the university. I
will not explain, but I will take you in a short visit to one of our
universities who apply co-education. What will you see? Boys and girls
are mostly doing things that do not completely agree with our Islamic
teaching and satisfy our God (Glory be to Him).

Another example can be found in Shakir’s journal entry about “Love and
friendship.” While discussing various types of love, Shakir said, “There is love which
every youth seek and I’m one of them, it is love between man and woman. This should
be based on Allah’s decree and doctrine. This relation must lead to marriage according
to Allah’s way.”

The abovementioned quote obviously reflects the student’s religious reasoning
since he stated that any romantic relationship between a man and a woman should lead
to marriage. Otherwise, it should be terminated. When commenting on this entry, the
tutor asked Shakir how he would react if his sister disclosed to him that she has a boy
friend. Shakir responded:

If my sister came and told me that she has a boy friend. Indeed, I don’t
exactly know what I should do. But in my imagination, I’ll try to meet
this person in order to know what which he want from my sister, then I
demand to cut his relation with my sister until he come for doing the
matter which he was had to do and it is the demand for her marriage.
Shakir further stated that the best type of love is that between a servant and his/her Lord
or prophet. He said, “Let’s now turn to the superior love, it is love between worshipper
and his God and also between person and his prophet (peace be upon him).”

Those quotations well explain how participants used Islamic religious principles
in order to support their arguments. Students also used a number of citations from the
holy Qura’an and the Sunnah\(^{(2)}\) of the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moreover, they wrote an entire journal entry mainly for a religious reason in order to
express their anger against the cartoons lampooning the prophet Muhammad (peace be
upon him) that were published by a Danish newspaper in September of 2005, resulting in
outrageous feelings among Muslims worldwide. This comes as no surprise since
participants in this study are enrolled in Al-Azhar University which is considered to be
one of the top prestigious religious universities over the Muslim world. As such, students
have a sufficient religious background at their disposal to support or refute their
arguments. In addition, the use of religious discourse is one aspect of taking the audience
into consideration when writing inasmuch as the associate professor who administered
this treatment and represented the audience for students’ writing is a religious person.
One can easily recognize this professor’s religious perspective on life which influences
how he perceives and actually establishes his relationship with students and colleagues.
Thus it was no wonder that students used religion in their discourse to make their writing

\(^{(2)}\) The Sunnah includes all that the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said, did, or approved.
appealing to their audience. Students’ arguments and rhetorical perspective might have been different had they been writing for a different audience.

5.3.2 Development of ideas

One of the main areas of improvement that can be noticed in the final journal entry compared to the first entry is development of ideas. In the first entry, most students had relevant ideas but they did not develop them appropriately. In his entry entitled “What is after my graduation”, Khalid mentioned three ideas in the introduction, but he limited himself to developing only one of them in the body of his composition. He said:

What is after my graduation? It is a difficult question and come in my mind a lot. When I think about this stage in my life, it makes me puzzled and come in my mind a lot of questions. what can I do in my life generally? what can I do about work? Can I find a job after my graduation? How can I be effective member in society and depend on my self?

In that introduction, Khalid raised three ideas represented in what he can do in his life in general, how he can get a job, and how he can be an effective member in his society. However, in the body of his journal entry, Khalid limited his discussion to the idea of how he can get a job and left the other ideas totally untouched. In many cases, students had valid points to build on, but they did not elaborate on them. Instead, they mentioned those ideas and left them at the crude level. For example Waleed said at the beginning of his journal entry:

Every one planning to his future as he wish, but how in over world by problems, and no free jobs. For example: After I graduation I will look after in a suitable work for me. This work helps me to start a good life,
and I hopes work in faculty of Education in section English. So I study hard to join this pure job.

After graduation, Waleed plans to work as teaching assistant which is a prestigious full-time junior faculty position in Egypt. Upon completing their PhDs, teaching assistants are promoted to full-time faculty members at their universities. That was an important point on which Waleed could have elaborated giving the reasons for hoping to get such a position or how he can get it. Rather, he abruptly moved to another point stating what he will do if he becomes a teacher. He said, “But If I fall in as a teacher, but not any teacher as we see in our schools todays. So I must training my self on skills communication to be a good teacher.” Again, Waleed did not develop that idea explaining in what terms he will be different from the mainstream teachers, why he wants to be different, or what characteristics a good teacher should have. He did not even elaborate on how to accomplish that goal. He simply mentioned that the way to be a good teacher is through training on communication skills, and then immediately moved on to discuss another point. This result is in line with Khuwaileh and Al Shumali’s (2000) finding that the Arabic EFL college students had interesting ideas but they did not develop them.

In the final journal entries, however, most students had more developed ideas. In the body of the entry, they developed the main ideas that they presented in the introduction. This might be attributed to the effect of the feedback they received on their journal entries. The tutor frequently asked them to elaborate on ideas they addressed whenever he felt that the meaning was not clear. Genuine questions, in contrast to display questions, that the teacher asked while commenting on students’ journal entries,
initiated long answers on the part of the students and made the situation more communicative.

5.3.3 Coherence

Coherence refers to organizing the discourse in a way that makes all elements fit together logically (Hinkle, 2004) so that the audience can easily follow and understand the argument. Each paragraph should develop the thesis sentence stated or implied in the introduction of the essay. More importantly, the conclusion should be consistent with the both the introduction and the body of the essay. Therefore, a coherent essay will be consistent, well developed, and logically organized. According to Widdowson (1978), the text is coherent when the attentive reader can see the function of each unit of the text in the development of its overall meaning.

In the 19th century, the term coherence was confined to sentence connections that helped to create structured paragraphs, connected together by transition devices. In the 1960s, however, discourse analysis research shifted the emphasis to the elements that make the text appropriate in the context where it is written. Coherence can be internal to the text or internal to the reader. Whether coherence is regarded as text-based or reader-based, it is important to note that the writer, the text, and the reader all interact in the construction of coherence (Lee, 2002). When a text lacks coherence, the audience will find it more challenging and difficult to digest, and thus they have to invest much time and effort in order to understand the writer’s point. Nevertheless, most L2 writing teachers focus on surface accuracy issues and give less attention to achieving overall text coherence.
Analysis of students’ journal entries revealed differences between the first and the final entries in terms of coherence. In this section, I have limited myself to discussing the logical sequence of ideas participants raised. In the first entry, most students did not present unified pieces of writing as they frequently made sudden shifts without preparing the reader for doing so, which negatively affected the overall meaning. An example of this can be found in Hythem’s entry. He said:

No one can deny that the job is the first thing that will think in it. The student after graduation, but the graduate faces many difficulties such as lack of job opportunities so that, find almost all the youth sitting at coffee shops.

In this quote Hythem indicated that the goal everyone wants to achieve after graduation is to find a job. He did not explain to the reader why it is difficult for graduates to get jobs, why it is important for them to get jobs, or why he criticizes spending time at coffee shops. Hythem abruptly shifted to another point proposing what the graduates should do to be qualified for better jobs without setting the floor for such a shift. He said:

The graduate should improve his abilities and talents by learning the computer and the internet to be the best in his field. The graduate should know requirements job market to find the proper job quickly. The graduate should invest his spare time in good things such as his doing researches in his field and increase his skills and knowledge.

Despite the fact that Hythem proposed vital suggestions that may make the new graduates more qualified for jobs, he moved to that point without preparing his audience for doing so. Having finished that, Hythem immediately made another shift to a totally
new issue as he said, “On The oTher hand the graduate will Think in marriage quickly. So That The graduate should afford all the difficulties to achieve goals and don’t lose hop quickly.” The occurrence of these shifts sounds confusing to the readers as it distracts them from understanding the point that the writer is highlighting. This finding is in accordance with the results reached by Shakir (1991) that the Arabic EFL college students shifted between points they raised and deviated from the ideas they discussed.

Another example can be found in Eid’s first entry entitled “What is after graduation.” Eid directly stated that his main goal is to become a great writer. He said, “As a matter of fact that any one has his personal target which He goes for it. So My target is good writer that I always trys to achieve it.” Instead of building on that idea, Eid began to discuss another idea as he said:

Until when I meet My friends and tell me about some problems which face him and He suffers from that so much, I do the best, Make use of My abilities to understand the topic very well and at the end, I treat it as much as possible, I’m preferring social causes too much especially.

In the next paragraph, Eid goes back to discuss how he can achieve his goal; to become a great writer. He said:

For example:- Lets us discuss the topic which it is among us at one & at this moment, it’s impossible to discuss it, let’s see that and you that My styles in writing is argumentative, wholly , The Topic is My future target & means.

In the final journal entries, students tended to show logical sequence in presenting their arguments. Their writing sounded more coherent in that they started with an argument and supported or refuted it by giving examples before they raised
another issue. This made their entries develop sequentially while their arguments appeared more organized and convincing to the reader.

For example, Eid began his final journal entry on the topic, “Equality in Islam”, with the following paragraph:

Islam, in fact, was and still the only religion that calls for Equality among the various classes as all, whether the white and black or the rich & the poor and made the real criterion by that people are measured, is piety and good deeds. Islam gives good examples in this matter.

In the subsequent paragraphs, Eid discussed some aspects of equality in Islam. He devoted the second paragraph to explaining how Islam enjoins parents to be fair to their kids and avoid favoring one of them over the others. He said:

Parents’ treatment with their children, As we see, this is in Education, love, even the kiss. As the kid who have feeling of distinguish between him and his brothers & sisters, increase the extent of hatersed and abhorrence in himself and feel that he is less than his brothers. So Islam reach to this danger of this matter and focus on equality among them on one hand.

In the third paragraph, Eid discussed equality between diverse people in society giving examples of the disciples of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Then he explained how Islam managed to achieve equality between man and woman. He concluded his entry with commenting on how people in the West misjudge Islam assuming that it favors men over women.

Another example can be found in Waleed’s entry entitled “Islam in the past, present and future.” He started his entry with a brief introduction about Islam. The
second paragraph summarized how Islam spread peacefully in the past due to the good manners of the early Muslims who abided by the principles of Islam. He said:

In the past, Islam spread secretly because the first Muslims were weaker and fewer. After Hijrah (immigration to Medina) Muslims became stronger and more. Therefore, they enabled to control the Arabian Peninsula. They had spread Islam and constructed a huge empire from the Arabian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. In those times, Muslims applied Islam’s rules in all field’s life. They knew their enemies and prepared themselves to fight their enemies in any time. They were always ready for their tasks.

The third paragraph discussed the dilemma Muslims have nowadays as they are attacked by others in many parts of the world. Waleed attributed this to Muslims’ prioritization of trivial worldly affairs over more essential issues. Waleed concluded his entry with stating his personal opinion about the future of Islam in the world.

5.3.4 Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the connectivity of a discourse in a text that creates a sequential flow of information. It also means connecting paragraphs in text together to make a unified whole (Hinkle, 2004). Cohesion devices tie parts of the text together and make the text more coherent and comprehensible. Consequently, a cohesive composition will be easier to understand than one that lacks cohesion. If we do not use cohesion devices in our writing, texts we produce will be messed up and the reader will have difficulty understanding the message we are trying to communicate. However, Witte and Faigely (1981) observe that cohesive text is not necessarily coherent (p. 200) as coherence involves much beyond using some text features to connect sentences together.
Coherence has much to do with the logical sequence of ideas that are relevant to a certain topic in a specific context. A text, therefore, may be cohesive but lacks coherence if it addresses some fragmented ideas.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) pointed out five types of cohesion: reference, conjunction, substitution, lexical cohesion, and ellipsis. Analysis of students’ first entries revealed that their writing lacked cohesion devices. More specifically, students rarely used transition markers which resulted in making their writing less connected. There were many sentences and paragraphs that would have been easier to follow had students used some simple devices such as, “for example, similarly, moreover, additionally, on the other hand, and however.” Hythem, for instance said:

The graduate should improve his abilities and talents by learning The computer and The internet to be The best in his field. The graduate should know requirements job market to find the proper job quickly. The graduate should invest his spare time in good things such as his doing researches in his field and increase his skills and knowledge. The graduate should search for proper job and don’t accept any job.

The above excerpt from Hythem seems to lack transition devices. He tends to start every sentence with the same noun phrase “the graduate.” It would be more cohesive if he instead replaced “the graduate” with the subject pronoun “he” or “she.” Similarly, connecting sentences with using transition markers such as likewise, in addition, and moreover makes the text more coherent. Furthermore, using enumeration devices such as first, second, third, finally, makes text more cohesive and easier to understand. This result is in line with that reached by Khuwailah and Al Shoumali (2000) showing that the writing of the Arabic EFL college students lacked cohesion.
In the final entry, students used more cohesion devices that made their writing more tied together and, in turn, coherent. An example of a cohesive excerpt from the final entries can be found in Waleed’s entry where he used some cohesion devices such as the in the past, after, therefore, and in those times. He said:

In the past, Islam spread secretly because the first Muslims were weaker and fewer. After Hijrah (immigration to Medina) Muslims became stronger and more. Therefore, they enabled to control the Arabian Peninsula. They had spread Islam and constructed a huge empire from the Arabian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. In those times, Muslims applied Islam’s rules in all field’s life. They knew their enemies and prepared themselves to fight their enemies in any time. They were always ready for their tasks.

Another example can be reviewed in Hythem’s entry about the Islamic nation future. Hythem depended mainly on using enumeration devices to connect his ideas together. He said:

The Islamic nation should be interested in several things to flourish. The first, the responsibility of the youth are the backbone of any society. They should take part in planning and decision making which should precede an action. The second, spare time, time lost never comes back. So we should spend our time wisely, beside reading books, stories, magazines and so on.

Since it was too laborious and time consuming to analyze all cohesion devices students’ used, analysis was limited to transition markers such as “on the other hand, on the contrary, in fact, in addition, after all, as a result, for example, for instance, in addition” and enumeration devices like “firstly and finally.” Results revealed that the six students included in the analysis used a total of 13 transition markers in the first
journal entries and 25 markers in the final entries. The average number of transition devices each student used in the first entry was 2.2 compared to an average of 4.2 in the final entry. This means that the number of the transition markers used in the final entries was almost twice as much as the number of those used in the first entries.

### 5.3.5 Consideration of audience

There are, at least, two approaches in composing ideas to audience. The first is the “audience-oriented” approach where the author is tailoring his or her writing to meet audience needs. The second is the “get-it-right approach” where the writer is more concerned about his or her personal satisfaction than about meeting audience’s needs. Writers adopting this approach free themselves from audiences’ expectations and write what they think is original and authentic. However, thinking about audience makes the writer nervous, and thus may hinder his or her abilities to write (Elbow, 1998a).

One may disagree with Elbow’s opinion in the debilitating effect of considering audience as we often tend to think of our audience, whether we like it or not, in all purposeful communicative activities. On the other hand, Elbow views audience-oriented writing as composing something that appeals to audience, but one may argue that being audience-oriented does not necessarily mean that we always have to please our audience. There should be no problem in writing something that may not appeal to our audience as long as it is intended to communicate a certain meaning. For example, we may write a message in a certain way to correct some misconceptions or adjust behavioral practices of our audience. This does not mean that we disregard our audience. In fact, audience is at the core of our attention because we try to change his or her behavior to what we think
is better. In this case, our message is, indeed, audience-oriented though the reader may dislike or resist it. At the same time, we should not think too much about our audience to the extent that makes us too nervous to write.

The writer’s consideration of audience plays an important role in communication success. This issue becomes crucially important in writing where the audience has to rely on the context set by the writer to understand the encoded message. Williams (2005) has stated that in order to accommodate their readers, L2 writers need to ask themselves some questions about the nature of the audience, their backgrounds, attitudes, expectations, and their possible reactions to what is being communicated.

Kroll (1984) pointed out three influential perspectives of audience: the rhetorical, the informational, and the social. The rhetorical perspective is the most dominant view in writing in the field of composition. It is a persuasive approach adopted by the writer to make his or her ideas appealing to the intended audience. To do so, the writer must analyze the audience’s beliefs, traits, and attitudes in order to adapt the encoded message accordingly. One possible limitation of this perspective is that the writer usually tries to be persuasive in communicating the message which creates a sense of viewing audience as an opponent.

From the informational perspective, Kroll views the act of writing for an audience as “a process of conveying information, a process in which the writer’s goal is to transmit as effectively as possible, a message to the reader” (p.176). “Many composition theorists continue to view writing as a process of conveying information, a process in which the writer’s job is to produce messages that facilitate processing and
comprehension” (p. 178). To effectively convey a message, the writer should follow the old information with new information, use cohesion devices, and organize his or her message. This perspective is also limited in that it does not acknowledge the active role the audience plays in constructing the intended message.

According to the social perspective, writing for an audience is “a fundamentally social activity, entailing processes of inferring the thoughts and feelings of other persons involved in an act of communication” (Kroll, p.179). This requires writing not in vacuum but within a context to achieve authentic communication with others. Through receiving other people’s responses to their writing, authors develop a sense of audience expectations that may motivate them to adjust their writing and at the same time shape their future writing. Opponents of this perspective argue that the audience seems to be vague in this perspective, which will add to the difficulties the writer usually encounters while writing.

Together, the three abovementioned perspectives provide an overall integral picture of the writer/audience relationship in writing. In my opinion, we can not depend on just one of those perspectives and disregard the others when we think about the act of writing. A writer can not be limited to utilizing only one perspective in all communicative situations. Rather, he or she may adopt any of the abovementioned perspectives while communicating depending on the purpose of writing. For example, the writer may adopt the rhetorical perspective when trying to convince someone of an idea, and the informational perspective when conveying information. However, the
social perspective tends to be involved no matter what the purpose of writing may be since we always write for a real or imagined audience.

In this study, it was clear to students that the main audience for their writing was their instructor though they occasionally shared their journal entries with their colleagues. Students reported that they considered their writing in their journal entries as communication with their tutor who provided them with insightful comments. As a result, they tailored their writing to meet the instructor’s expectations. As it was previously discussed, knowing that the instructor is a religiously practicing professor, participants oftentimes built their arguments on religious foundations. For example, Hisham said:

After graduation, life will be completely different than before. I know that and also I will face more than a trouble. What I expect to face at first is the problem of unemployment. But I will not be afraid of or worried because I follow the equation of the success of mine and it is as follows: Doing the best → depending upon Allah → optimism = success. I will search for an optimum job meeting my needs. If Allah “glory be to Him” helps me to find it, I will be in executing my own equation of success in order to achieve my dream.

However, this does not rule out the fact that students’ religious socialization has considerably shaped their thinking and reasoning. In addition, the instructor frequently encouraged his students to develop their professional skills through broadening their professional background and doing professional training. In an attempt to meet their tutor’s expectations, some participants highlighted the need for them to develop their professional skills in order to be qualified for reasonable jobs. Khalid, for instance, said:
In my mind that study in college is a traditional study and don’t make me habiliated to work market after my graduation, but I should interested in it for getting a high grade only. On another side, I should be aware of many books in all branches of language and have a different courses in language that make me good in language that make me pass any test when I apply in a job

Regarding Kroll’s (1984) classification of approaches of audience consideration, students utilized the three perspectives depending on the purpose of their writing. Occasionally, students directly addressed their instructor by his title while responding back to his comments on their journal entries. As for comparing the early journal entries to the final ones, there was no clear evidence for differences between the first and final entries regarding consideration of audience. In other words, it was clear that both the first and final journal entries posted by participants in this study were tailored to appeal to the tutor and meet his expectations.

5.3.6 Voice

Voice is an “exceedingly complex” concept that is hard to investigate (Atkinson, 2001). Thus it might be useful to review first how voice is defined in the literature. Elbow (1998a) defines voice as “what most people have in their speech but lack in their writing – namely, a sound or texture – the sound of ‘them’ ” (p. 288). It “implies words that capture the sound of an individual on a page” (p. 287). Elbow emphasizes the fact that every human being is distinct from others due to the special history that everyone has and the unique context in which he or she is raised. This is a positive aspect as it results in having different viewpoints, which is a source of power. On the other hand, “writing without voice is wooden or dead because it lacks sound,
rhythm, energy, and individuality” (Elbow, 1998a, p. 299). Bowden defines voice as a metaphor that reflects the person’s unique individuality and thus distinguishes him or her from other people, behind the written words (Bowden, 1999). This metaphor enables us to write about abstract concepts that are difficult, if not impossible, to discuss in any other way. Some other terms such as stance, style or tone may be used interchangeably with voice. Voice encourages writers to focus on the expression of the self while writing whether it is an authentic self or a constructed one. In other words, voice is the personal stamp that the writers have on prose passages that they produce (Bowden, 2003).

Elbow (1998b) takes this issue further in the following citation:

In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, texture, a rhythm – a voice – which is the main source of power in your writing. I don’t know how it works, but the voice is the force that will make a reader listen to you, the energy that drives the meaning through his thick skull. Maybe you don’t like your voice; maybe people have made fun of it. But it’s the only voice you’ve got. It’s your only source of power. You better get back into it, no matter what you think of it. If you keep writing in it, it may change into something you like better. But if you abandon it, you’ll likely never have a voice and never be heard (pp. 6-7).

Individuality is a fundamental characteristic of human beings and thus every person should write what makes him or her unique (Atkinson, 2001). Some people may feel so dominated by others that they try to imitate them, which may cause them to lose their personal voices as they always try to be someone else. In the above quote, Elbow advises writers to be patient and to work on developing personal voices as they are their
sources of power. If writers keep abandoning their own voices assuming that they do not like them, they will lose their sources of power and will never be heard by others.

Elbow (1995) emphasized the importance of learners’ voice when they write and that each student should write about topics as if he or she was the only individual to address them. He said:

I invite them to write as though they are a central speaker at the center of the universe – rather than feeling, as they often do, that they must summarize what others have said and only make modest rejoinders from the edge of the conversation (p.80).

This requires writers to express their authentic ideas in a way that is individualistic and expressive. To do so, writers need to have a sufficient background about what they write as well as whom they are addressing.

Knowing the expected audience contributes positively to the development of voice. When they know for whom they are writing, writers form a better sense of audience and express their individualized voices (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996) because writing is an interactive and socially embedded process. When writers have an idea about the expected audience, they try to adopt a voice tone that appeals to that particular audience. In this sense, writers select the appropriate discourse register from a myriad of voiceful possibilities.

Personal voice can be developed in various ways. For example, Elbow (1998b) suggested using timed freewriting, where the writer jots down whatever comes to his or her mind without thinking about the audience as a technique for empowering the writers’
sense of voice. Another way to develop one’s voice is to practice writing in an authentic communicative context. In so doing writers express their own viewpoints, which will make them distinct from others who may have similar views. Elbow (1998a) attributes the lack of voice in writing to the artificiality of the writing situation where writers write only to complete assignments.

According to Elbow (1998a), students’ writing does not have to be well organized to reflect their voices. On the contrary, it may have some errors, lack coherence but still expresses a voice that empowers writing and makes the reader feel how individualistic the writer is. Developing students’ sense of voice makes them “begin to like writing more, to write about things that are more important to them, and thus to feel a greater connection between their writing and themselves” (Elbow, 1998a, p. 284). This will require the encouragement of devoted teachers who respond to meaning and ideas rather than focus on correcting grammatical errors.

With special reference to the present study, journal writing was an appropriate context for developing the students’ voices. The tutor focused on commenting on the ideas students raised, and occasionally asked them to elaborate on some points on which he needed further clarifications. This, in turn, encouraged participants to express their ideas freely in a way that rarely, if ever, exists in a regular educational environment. This is probably due to the development of a special dialogic relationship between the tutor and students, based on mutual confidence and respect. The instructor respected learners as humans and thus they trusted him and did not feel embarrassed to share their ideas with him.
In their initial entries, participants tended to tell stories and write from their own experiences. Their writing seemed to lack the tone that grasps the reader’s attention. In other words, the writers’ voices were not clearly evident. For example, Shakir said while writing about “love and friendship”:

Love and friendship are the essence of life. They somewhat have the same meaning. It is impossible that the man lives without both it. Imagine what will life be unless they are? I think that it won’t carry any sense of life.

In relation to the meaning of love, it is a strong romantic feeling for someone or something. Love generally includes different kinds; love of country, family, and Muslim to his Muslim brother. This love has to be without any benefit.

In the first paragraph the writer touched on the meaning of love and friendship stating that they are the essence of life that no one lives without. The second paragraph presented different kinds of love based on the writer’s view. These seem to be mere statements without any clear voice. Similarly, Hosni wrote in his first entry:

What a hard question it is! This question worries the minds of those who joined the education way. What will his destiny be after graduation? What the situation of his dreams that he tempted to do will be in the world of reality?

The final entries participants posted were privileged over the early ones in terms of voice. The tone students used in the final entries represented how confidently they expressed their ideas and how much they liked their personal voices. Each student uniquely addressed the topic as if he had been the only one writing about that topic. For example, Hosni wrote his final journal entry about “Islam, the West and, the freedom of
speech” and confidently raised some causes of the distorted image the West have about Islam, showing how Islam as a religion respects and appreciates everyone’s freedom of speech as long as they do not misuse this freedom in defaming others. He said:

Why does the west hate Islam? Why regards it as its moral enemy? This is because the west alligate that islam is the religion of terrorism. And that all Muslims, young, old or even children are terrorists. This west which does not know any thing about Islam calls it the religion of terrorism. This west which claims that it calls for freedom with its all kinds especially the freedom of worship, but vice versa they were the first to prosecute the others.

Hosni’s tone reflects how much he is angry and disappointed because the West labels “all Muslims” as terrorists until they prove the otherwise. In the next paragraph, he discusses how the West “claims” to be calling for human rights and the freedom of speech, but they renounce that if it goes against their interests. In his defense of Islam against the claims of the West, Hosni said:

Islam was not never religion of Terrorism, and the Muslims were not never Terrorists. It is the religion of Peace, freedom, Safety and respect for others. But the west always regards who demands his rights, except for them, is a Terrorist, must be stopped or even killed.

The above excerpt from Hosni’s entry shows that he has developed his own voice and wrote an essay to defend Islam. Orthographically, it can be noticed that Hosni started some words (Terrorism, Terrorist, Peace, and Safety) with higher case letters in order to put emphasis on those words. This could be considered a paralinguistic feature that writer utilized to further express the writer’s tone.
It should be noted that the nature of the topic could be one of the variables that influenced students’ voice in this study. The topic for the first entries, “What is after graduation,” seemed to be a somewhat traditional one, whereas topics for the final entries were more relevant to participants. In other words, topics for the final entries focused on religion, the Arab Israeli conflict, and the future of Islam. Those issues are considered to be more relevant to students’ emotional conditions than those covered in the first entries. This might have had an impact on students’ voice.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the results obtained from the qualitative analysis of students’ written comments about their attitudes toward the treatment, the tutor interview, participants’ perceived sense of writing ability, and participants’ journal entries. The results from students’ written comments provided a detailed picture of their attitudes toward the treatment. Participants’ comments showed that the advantages of journal writing outweighed the disadvantages. On the other hand, the disadvantages of the traditional writing instruction outweighed the advantages. Similarly, the results from the students’ written comments along with those from the tutor interview provided valuable insights of the challenges facing journal writing implementation. The results from the analysis of students’ perceived sense of their writing abilities showed to what extent participants in both treatment groups were aware of their own writing development. Furthermore, the results from the analysis of the actual journal entries showed to what extent students’ writing improved over the experiment in terms of ideas development, cohesion, coherence, consideration of audience, and voice. The results of
the qualitative analysis provided in this chapter provide thorough explanations of the quantitative results provided in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, and CONCLUSIONS

6.0 Introduction
This concluding chapter begins with presenting a brief overview of the study; it revisits the findings of the study by repeating the study questions and their related answers. It also discusses some of the essential issues that emerged in the study and highlights the implications as well as the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

6.1 Overview of the study
The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of journal writing on Egyptian English majors’ composition performance, writing apprehension, perceived sense of writing ability, and attitudes toward journal writing. The study further explored the relationship between L1 and L2 writing, tried to help college students write communicatively without fear of being graded, and identified the obstacles to the implementation of journal writing in the study context.

In an attempt to establish the theoretical framework of this study, Chapter Two reviewed the relevant literature on journal writing, grammar and content-focused feedback, and writing apprehension. The literature review showed inconclusive evidence regarding the effect of journal writing on L2 written performance. Despite the debilitative effect of writing apprehension on L2 written performance and learners’
attitudes toward writing, there is a scarcity of research addressing this phenomenon. The chapter concluded with a review of the literature on feedback and L2 writing. Content-focused feedback was found to be more effective than grammar-focused feedback in L2 writing.

Chapter Three presented the methodology and procedures used in this study. It introduced the reader to the design of the study, its dependent and independent variables, and the sample. More emphasis was given to the instruments and administration procedures. The chapter ended with highlighting the qualitative as well as the quantitative methods used for data analyses. The results reached were presented in Chapter Four and Chapter Five and will be briefly summarized in the next section.

6.2 Findings

6.2.1 The effect of journal writing on written performance

1- What is the effect of journal writing on students’ overall written performance?

There was both quantitative and qualitative evidence supporting the positive effect of journal writing on L2 written performance. The quantitative analysis revealed that there were significant differences between the experimental group using journal writing and the control group, who were not using journal writing, in favor of the experimental group (p.<.001). Likewise, the qualitative analysis of the first and the final journal entries of six randomly selected participants indicated that the final entries were more privileged than the first entries in terms of development of ideas, coherence, cohesion, and voice. This, again, supports the positive effect of journal writing on participants’ written performance. The findings of this study are in line with those

The inconsistency between the results of this study and those of the previous studies concerning the effect of journal writing can be accounted for in a number of ways. First, journal writing was operationalized differently in this study (see 1.8). Second, the present study participants did not have access to informal English, which contributed to keeping their writing as formal as possible, though sometimes ungrammatical with mechanical and spelling errors. Third, the resemblance of the test situation to the process of writing a journal entry may have helped participants use similar cognitive processes in the posttest, which may have helped them attain higher scores. Moreover, practicing writing over ten weeks may have developed the self-confidence of the experimental group and made them psychologically well-prepared to write in English.

6.2.2 The effect of journal writing on writing apprehension

2- What is the effect of the effect of journal writing on reducing students’ writing apprehension?
The findings of this study revealed that there were significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in writing apprehension reduction in favor of the experimental group (p<.001). This result is in line with those reached by Barnett (1994) showing that journal writing had a positive effect on decreasing writing apprehension and developing participants’ attitudes toward writing. It also concurs with Matthews’ (2001) finding revealing that the positive learning context reduced writing apprehension among college freshmen. On the other hand, this result is inconsistent with that reached by Song (1997) showing that journal writing had no significant effects on reducing writing apprehension.

6.2.3 The effect of journal writing on participants’ attitudes

3- What are the experimental group students’ attitudes toward journal writing?

The quantitative analysis showed that the experimental group participants had positive attitudes toward journal writing. Students’ means of scores on different core ideas ranged from 4.2 to 4.5 while the total mean of students’ attitudes was 4.4 out of five on a Likert-type scale format. This result was also supported by strong evidence from the qualitative analysis of the experimental group comments on journal writing. Participants highlighted many advantages of journal writing such as providing a communicative writing context as well as opportunities for reflection, developing writing through practice, enhancing motivation and literacy, giving meaning-focused feedback, changing beliefs about writing, fostering self-confidence, and overcoming fear of writing. The disadvantages of journal writing included asking everybody to write
about the same topics, providing insufficient feedback, and offering insufficient emphasis on writing skills.

6.2.4 Attitudes toward traditional writing instruction

4- What are the control group students’ attitudes toward traditional writing instruction?

The quantitative analysis showed that the control group expressed fairly neutral attitudes toward the traditional writing instruction. Means of students’ scores on various core ideas ranged from 3.2 to 3.6 while the total mean was 3.4 out of five on a Likert-type scale format. The qualitative evidence on the other hand showed that students had negative attitudes toward writing instruction offered at their context. Control group participants referred to the following disadvantages of traditional writing instruction: encouraging memorization, providing insufficient feedback or no feedback at all, writing for no purpose but passing exams, provoking students’ anxiety about writing, and demotivating participants. Advantages of the traditional writing instruction lay in providing students with oral feedback and enhancing their vocabulary and structure.

6.2.5 The relationship between L1 and L2 writing

5- Is there any relationship between written performance in L1 and that in L2?

Findings revealed a positive moderate relationship between L1 and L2 written performance (r = .60, p < .001). In other words, those who wrote better in Arabic wrote better in English and vice versa. This result is consistent with those reached by Kamimura (1996) Kubota (1998) showing positive correlations between L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English). On the other hand, this result is inconsistent with that reached by
Hirose (2003) showing no significant positive correlation between L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English).

6.2.6 Challenges to journal writing implementation

6- What challenges to journal writing implementation can be identified in this context?

Based on the tutor’s as well as participants’ feedback on the treatment, the study has demonstrated some challenges that may arise while adopting journal writing in the context of an Egyptian college English program. These included: writer’s block since students were not used to writing as frequently as they did in the experiment, lack of writing clarity, lack of commitment on the part of students, and expectation of getting corrective feedback. Furthermore, the treatment overloaded the professor who administered the study and commented on every student’s journal entries. Another context related challenge was the intermittent administration of the treatment over a short period of time. These challenges should be taken into consideration in the future use of journal writing in similar contexts.

6.2.7 Perceived sense of the writing ability before and after the treatment

7- Is there any difference in students’ perceived sense of writing ability before and after the treatment?

The study also explored participants’ perceived sense of writing abilities before and after the treatment. Students in both the experimental group and the control group rated their perception of their writing abilities before and after the treatment. The
findings showed that all participants in the experimental group reported a perception of development after the treatment. On the other hand, about two-thirds of the control group reported no change while one-third reported development in their writing abilities.

6.2.8 Development of Students’ writing over time

8- Is there any development in the experimental group students’ writing over time?

As discussed above (see 6.2.1), the qualitative analysis of the first and final journal entries six randomly-selected participants indicated that that students’ writing developed over time in terms of ideas development, cohesion, coherence, and voice.

6.3 Discussion

This section will be devoted to highlighting some points that have been prominent in this study.

6.3.1 Writing for communicative purposes

From a communicative perspective, writing should be taught within a social context where students write to convey a certain message to a specific audience. The goal is to help students communicate in realistic situations (Savignon, 1972, 1983, 1997, 2001, 2003). Indeed, L2 learners learn to write when they are involved in a communicative context. The findings of this study provide support for that argument. Before taking part in this study, participants hardly wrote for any communicative purpose. Most often they wrote on pre-assigned topics as a class assignment and did not receive any communicative feedback. In the current study, it was noteworthy to observe the communication process between students and their tutor. Students wrote to communicate their ideas to their instructor who provided them with a meaning-focused
feedback. This atmosphere had a positive impact on their overall posttest writing performance. In their comments on the treatment both students and their tutor highlighted the value of the communicative environment the experimental treatment provided. The tutor, for instance, emphasized the communicative function of practicing journal writing when he said:

The most important advantage was that the course and journal writing made from the process of writing an enjoyable communicative task; it set a dialogue with the tutor and gave the students an outlet to voice their concerns, feelings and emotions. You know they have a purpose for writing… Journal writing gave them an arena to find an opportunity to write and share their feelings, views and perceptions.

Participants reported that they considered their writing in their journal entries as communication with their tutor who showed an unusual interest in reading and commenting on their writing. This concurs with Staton’s (1987a) view that journal writing provides students with opportunities to engage in purposeful communication with their teachers. Consequently, students’ writing became purposeful in the sense that they wrote to share their ideas with the tutor with no fear of losing their self-esteem. Ahmad, for instance, said: “Journal writing encourages exchanging ideas and experiences with the instructor. In fact this project has given us a chance to approach our instructor and communicate with him, with no fear, in a very respectful way.”

This is also in line with Zamel’s (1976, 1983, 1991, 1992) belief that L2 writers need to practice writing as a means of making meaning and communicating genuine thoughts and experiences. She explicitly argued that:
“language should be viewed as a capacity for making meaning rather than an assemblage of constituent skills. While it is certainly true that language allows for the expression of ideas, it is also true that a search for and commitment to ideas can generate language” (Zamel, 1991, p.12).

This concurs with Grabe and Kaplan’s (1996) argument that involving writers in a communicative context initiates writing and creates sources for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This recognition of the importance of meaning making in writing is in line with the increasing popularity of communicative language teaching among L2 educators (Savignon, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2005).

The results of this study are also in accordance with Taylor’s (1981) observation that the need to discover and express meaning is the driving force in language learning in general and L2 writing in particular. He stresses that “the writer must have something to say” (p. 10), and that form will arise and develop out of the attempts to communicate meaning. In this study, writers were viewed as cognitively engaged participants trying to make meaning in order to communicate a message to an interested audience. Moreover, the results fit nicely with Silva’s (1990) argument that L2 writing instruction should be approached as “purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge” (p. 18). In addition, the improvement in students’ perceived sense of their writing abilities after the treatment provides further evidence in support of the positive effect of communicative writing activities on developing participants’ communicative confidence. This is in line with Savignon’s (1972, 1983, 1987, 2003) observation that learners’ communicative confidence is essential to the development of their communicative competence.
6.3.2 Developing writing through writing

In many contexts, writing instruction today is based on methods that focus on introducing learners to theoretical concepts of the writing skills besides exposing them to samples of written essays, assuming that this will help to develop learners’ written performance. However, the literature indicates that that writing can be developed only through meaningful practice of writing. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005), for instance, argue that composition instruction should provide writers with opportunities for practicing writing in a meaningful social context in which teachers are more interested in the meaning of the communicated message than in its correctness.

With specific reference to the present study, the qualitative evidence has shown that students’ writing improved through practice in writing for meaning. They came to realize that writing can be developed through meaningful practice not through reading about writing or imitating other texts. For example, while describing his experience with journal writing Tharwat said, “It helps me to keep in my mind that I ‘m gonna learn by trial and error not by memorizing the prescribing text and then recite it.” Another student observed, “In this course I know the rule that said ‘practice makes perfect’.” This is in line with the main principle of communicative language teaching that communicative competence can be developed through negotiation, expression and interpretation of ideas (Savignon, 1971, 1983, 1997, 2003, 2005).

6.3.3 Meaning-focused feedback

Providing error-focused comments is the most common type of feedback in L2 writing (Zamel, 1985; Leki, 1991; Ferris, 1995). In some contexts teachers prefer this
feedback because it accommodates the cultural expectations of the students’ and the teachers’ roles. Bitchener et al. (2005) observe that there has been a heated debate over error-focused versus meaning-related feedback. In his seminal paper Truscott (1996) argued for the ineffectiveness of the corrective feedback and called for focusing on meaning.

A review of the literature on feedback in L2 writing (see 2.6) has revealed that meaning-focused feedback is more effective than corrective feedback on L2 written performance (Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; Frantzen, 1995; Polio et al., 1998). In contrast, counter evidence is provided by Ferris and Roberts (2001) in support of the grammar-focused feedback. The findings of the experimental part of the present study provide no support to either type of feedback due to the lack of control of feedback. However, the qualitative evidence strongly supports the value of the meaning-focused feedback. For example, Mustafa said that he liked the feedback because it “focused more on processing ideas and thoughts and communication rather writing grammatically correct.” Ayman reported that he appreciated the instructor’s feedback as it was positive and meaning-focused. He said, “It focused on the train of thoughts rather than on writing technicalities.” On the other hand, Mahmud criticized the negative feedback saying, “When the feedback is negative it make the writer don’t write again.”

Focusing feedback on meaning also enhances students’ self-confidence in their writing abilities. Participants in this study reported that the meaning-focused feedback increased their self-confidence and helped them overcome writing anxiety. This, in turn, may have decreased their writing apprehension. The literature review showed that there
is a negative relationship between writing apprehension and students’ focus on meaning (Gungle and Taylor, 1989). Moreover, focusing on surface linguistic features may increase students’ anxiety and hinder them from expressing their ideas.

6.4 Implications

The results of this study have provided a number of implications for EFL writing learning, teaching, and researching. These implications can be subdivided into pedagogical implications and context-related implications, and they will be discussed in this section.

6.4.1 Pedagogical implications

This study has added to the body of literature supporting the positive effect of journal writing on developing L2 written performance. Journal writing, therefore, may be used as a supplementary writing activity in writing classes. This will require writing instructors to devote sufficient time to commenting on students’ writing. They can also make it a more collaborative activity by asking students to share and comment on one another’s journal entries. So as not to undermine the purpose of journal writing, it is necessary to remind students to direct their comments to the content and ideas.

Another important pedagogical implication is the positive effect of journal writing on alleviating writing apprehension, a problem facing many L2 writers. Writing journal entries helped the learners develop their self-confidence and trust their own abilities to compose in L2. This confidence can be seen in the change in participants’ perceived sense of their writing abilities. A comparison of the experimental group students’ perceived sense of writing abilities before and after the treatment revealed that
all participants reported a positive change in their writing abilities. This means that they realized a change in their writing abilities after the treatment. The positive effect of journal writing on reducing writing apprehension may suggest using journal writing with highly apprehensive writers as a strategy to help them attain self-confidence and rid them of the fear of writing in the L2.

It is important for writing instructors to motivate their students to write. The traditional group reported that the course did not motivate them to write in the L2. They wrote about a few topics just to do the assignment and pass the test. Writing was for them a boring activity to be done at the last moment with high degrees of anxiety. On the other hand, the experimental group reported that the journal writing practice motivated them to write and share their ideas with an interested audience without focusing on grammar. When expressing this idea, Ahmad said, “It gave me a reason to write, another way of thinking not just writing for The academic sake. This way encouraged and inspired me to write more and more without giving much attention to grammar.” Even the mere practice of writing motivated some students to write. Atta observed, “Expressing my thoughts freely gave me motivation to write without restriction.”

6.4.2 Context-relevant implications

Participants in the control group reported that they did not receive any written comments on the compositions they submitted to the professor. Whenever given, feedback was limited to oral comments directed mainly to the surface features of writing, which did not appeal to most participants. It is crucially important to provide L2 writers with written feedback so that they may develop their written performance.
Feedback also makes students appreciate what they write and realize that there is someone who is interested in reading their essays. In addition, individual or small group writing conferences should be held to make sure that students understand the feedback and know how to make use of it in improving their written products. This may sound overwhelming given the number of students enrolled in each writing course, but professors can assign teaching assistants to help with accomplishing this job. Feedback should focus on meaning as it encourages students to write and gives them an impression that the content of the message is more important than how it is communicated. Structure as well as mechanical errors can be dealt with in the final editing stage.

Results of the experimental study demonstrated that journal writing had positive effects on participants’ written performance and their perceived sense of their writing ability. Likewise, it had a positive effect on decreasing their writing apprehension. The findings of the qualitative analysis supported the quantitative findings. In addition, students showed positive attitudes toward journal writing and referred to a number of its advantages. This may make journal writing a viable alternative for practicing writing in the Egyptian EFL teacher education context.

As stated in the introduction to the study (see 1.1), students in the Egyptian EFL teacher education context write only when they are required to do a class assignment or take a test which results in limiting their writing opportunities and decontextualizing their writing. In their comments on the experiment, participants reported that they enjoyed the treatment because it encouraged them to write for communication in authentic situations. Composition instructors, therefore, should try to make the teaching
of writing as authentic as possible. This requires allowing students to come up with their own topics or, at least, involving them in the process of selecting the topics.

6.5 Limitations

In this study there were a number of limitations that should be taken into consideration while generalizing its results. Those limitations can be subdivided into the sample, methodology, and data collection. Discussion of those limitations may open up ideas for future studies in order to avoid such limitations or use some of them as variables.

6.5.1 The sample

The initial sample for this study included 50 students, 25 in each treatment group, majoring in English at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. That number had some limitations in terms of size, gender, background, and major, which, in turn, will affect the generalization of the findings. As for the size, the number of participants was small to start with, but the researcher had to restrict it in order to make it more convenient for the tutor to administer the study, given the fact that tutor did that voluntarily while surrounded by several academic and schedule-related constraints. It was greatly desirable to recruit a larger number of participants; yet, it was not logistically feasible given the treatment context.

In terms of gender, participants were all male since it was a male-college context. The literature indicates that there are differences between the sexes in a number of features including leaning strategies, communication, language learning and use. What works out with males may not necessarily appeal to females. However, there is no
reason to assume that journal writing will not be effective in mixed-schooling contexts since the heterogeneous environment may be a motivation in itself. Therefore, further research is encouraged to investigate the effect of journal writing on written performance with EFL teacher education majors in female and mixed contexts.

A further limitation that may have affected the results reached is the participants’ religious background. All participants in this study were Muslims enrolled in a prestigious Muslim University and wrote mostly on religion-oriented topics. Very frequently, students founded their arguments on Islamic principles, besides writing a few essays to defend their religion. This might have further motivated students to write journal entries and feel inspired to communicate their ideas. This variable should be taken into consideration while applying the treatment in hetero-religious or non-religious schooling contexts.

Participants’ major is another limitation that should not be overlooked. All students were majoring in English to be teachers of English, which may have increased their motivation to participate in a project for developing their written performance. The findings may be different if the treatment is administered to students of other majors.

One last sample-related limitation was the fact that seven participants in the experimental group and two in the control group were excluded from the final quantitative analysis, because they did not complete the posttests of writing, writing apprehension, or attitude questionnaires. This constitutes a threat to the study results, but it was beyond the researcher’s control.
6.5.2 Methodology

It is worth mentioning that the researcher did not have the chance to visit the field where this study was carried out. The study was voluntarily administered by an associate professor who tutored students and commented on their journal entries. This can be a positive aspect of the study since the tutor could be viewed as a neutral instructor who was biased neither for nor against the treatment. Nevertheless, different findings might have been reached had the treatment been administered by the researcher or by two independent tutors. A negative aspect lay in the fact that the researcher did not have a firsthand experience of the treatment and had to view the experiment through the tutor’s as well as participants’ lenses. This, of course, has had an effect on the interpretation and discussion of results.

Another important methodological limitation is that the findings reached can not be attributed to a specific variable such as motivation, feedback, or practice because the study did not control for any of those variables. Given the study context, it was not feasible to use feedback, for instance, as a variable because it would have required increasing the number of participants as well as tutors. This might open the door for future research to investigate the effect of those variables on developing written performance and reducing writing apprehension through journal writing practice. As a consequence, results reached in this study should be attributed to the treatment as a whole.

This study used participants’ comments to explore their attitudes toward both treatment conditions; journal writing and writing instruction without writing journal
entries. Since students in the study context were not used to critiquing their educational system, there was a concern that they would write socially desirable comments. In an attempt to encourage them to criticize the experiment and express their actual opinions, the tutor interviewed participants and asked them to voice out the advantages and disadvantages of both treatment conditions. On the next day, students wrote out their feedback on the treatment. There is a possibility that students’ written comments were affected by what was discussed in the oral interview. This has resulted in similarities between the ideas students raised while commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of the treatment. This may be a limitation threatening the validity of that data collection technique.

A further limitation lies in the intermittent implementation of the study. The experimental treatment was administered over a period of ten weeks (see 3.1.5.2.2.3) during which it was suspended twice; the first time for almost two months and the second time for three weeks. That suspension might have had a positive or negative impact on the study, yet it was beyond the researcher’s control.

6.6 Suggestions for further research
In the light of the results reached, the study offers some suggestions for further research:

1- This study recruited a small sample due to a number of experimentation constraints; future research is needed to recruit a larger sample in order to make the findings more generalizable.
2- Given the fact that the available literature gives inconclusive evidence concerning the effect of journal writing on L2 written performance, a replication of this study may be tried to either support or refute the findings reached.

3- The context in which this study was conducted seems to be unique in terms of participants’ gender, religion, and socio-economic backgrounds. Studies are needed with students at other, more heterogeneous, universities.

4- This study investigated the effect of journal writing on written performance and writing apprehension among English majors. Other researchers may investigate the effect of journal writing on developing written performance among college students in different majors.

5- In terms of gender, participants were exclusively males. Future researchers should include journal writing with English majors from both sexes.

6- This study focused on the composing nature of L2. Other researchers may want to investigate the effect of using journal writing as a reflective tool on written performance.

7- This study was limited to an EFL college context. Future research should investigate the effect of journal writing on written performance among middle school and high school students.

8- This study was conducted on a randomly selected sample of mainstream students. Further research can investigate the effect of journal writing on decreasing writing apprehension among highly apprehensive L2 writers.
9- This treatment was conducted using handwritten journal entries and teacher comments. Further research could investigate the effect of using online journals and feedback on written performance and writing apprehension.

10- The literature provides inconclusive evidence regarding the relationship between L1 and L2 written performance. Additional research is needed to further investigate this issue.

11- This study was conducted for ten weeks. Future research using both shorter and longer periods of time is needed to determine if the experiment duration makes a difference.

12- This study was concerned with written performance. Research is needed to investigate the effect of journal writing on other skills such as reading and speaking.

6.7 Conclusion
This study was motivated by the lack of writing competence of the Egyptian English majors. The study aimed at investigating whether providing a communicative context will contribute to developing the L2 written performance. As the findings have shown, writing is a communicative process; consequently, written performance can be improved when learners participate in a communicative practice where they feel the need to write to convey their ideas. In this sense writing would be a truly purposeful activity that is done to make meaning. This, in turn, requires focusing more on the meaning of the communicated message than on its structural accuracy. Similarly, written feedback is particularly important for L2 writers to make them feel that their writing is
noteworthy. When directed to content, feedback motivates L2 learners to write and improves their self-confidence in communicating their ideas.

This study has provided evidence to support previous studies that showed positive effects for journal writing in developing written performance. It further revealed that writing apprehension can be reduced by the continuous practice of journal writing. Moreover, journal writing had a positive effect on developing students’ perceived sense of their own writing abilities. Not only did participants have positive attitudes toward journal writing, but they also realized that it developed their perception about their L2 writing abilities. In addition, the study showed that journal writing practice changed students’ beliefs about the writing process and how it should be learned. Equally important is the fact that the study has changed participants’ beliefs about how writing should be taught. This means that the treatment contributed to improving students’ written performance along with their pedagogical understanding. This may have its impact on participants’ pedagogical practices when they teach writing in EFL classes. To conclude, this treatment is not without challenges, but the merits that are gained from the study outweigh those challenges.
REFERENCES


*College Composition and Communication*, 50, (3), 483-503.


**Appendices**
Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Principal Investigator:  Muhammad Salem
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  State College PA 16801
  E-mail: mss299@psu.edu
  Tel. # (814)237-2398

Advisor:  Dr. Sandra J. Savignon
  Professor of Applied Linguistics
  Address: 305 Sparks Building
  University Park, PA 16802
  E-mail: sjsavignon@psu.edu
  Tel. # (814)865-6229

Dear student,

I am Muhammad Salem, an assistant lecturer at the College of Education, Al-Azhar University. Currently, I am a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University. To fulfill the requirements of my PhD degree, I am conducting a study on second language writing. You are kindly invited to participate in this study which will be conducted in the fall semester of the academic year 2005/2006. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be randomly assigned to one of two groups in order to practice writing in English for a semester. In both groups you will be requested to write two essays, one in Arabic and the other in English, at the beginning and end of the study. You will be assigned 30 minutes to finish the essay in Arabic and one hour to write the one in English. In addition you will be requested to respond to a writing scale and an attitude questionnaire, each of which will take about 10-15 minutes. A few months after the study is over, you will be given a feedback on your writing ability and information about the findings of my study. Also, you will be given an appreciation certificate indicating that you have participated in this academic project in second language writing.
Your participation in this research study is absolutely voluntary. You have the right to stop participating in the research at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions without penalty. This study involves no risks to your physical or mental health beyond those encountered in the normal course of everyday life. If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher or his advisor through using the contact information listed above. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please call the Office for Research Protections at Penn State University at (814)865-1775.

Any information or data that you will provide in this study will be confidential. No identifying information will be used in any reporting of my findings. I will use pseudonyms (names other than your real names) while presenting the findings of this study. No personal identifiers will be associated with individual response. Only the researcher and his advisor will have access to the confidential data. The data that you provide will be destroyed within four years of the completion of the project, i.e. September 2009.

Because the validity of the results of the study could be affected if the purpose of the study is fully divulged to you prior to your participation, the details of the study cannot be explained to you at this time. You will have an opportunity to receive a complete explanation of the study's purpose following your participation in the study.

Note:
You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study.
You will receive a copy of this document to keep for your records. If you would like to participate, please sign your name and provide the date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Salem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigator’s Name</td>
<td>Date</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX B**

**Attitudes toward Journal Writing**

Dear student,

Below is a group of statements about attitudes toward journal writing. Please read these statements and indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by putting a tick (✓) along the response that shows whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. There is no right or wrong answer. Take your time to read through and respond to these statements. Please try to be as honest as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<td>1-I liked journal writing.</td>
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<td>2- I think that practicing journal writing has helped me write longer essays in English.</td>
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<td>3- Journal writing gave me an opportunity to write on a variety of topics.</td>
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<td>4- Journal writing encouraged me to write for a certain purpose.</td>
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<td>5- I would like to write journals in my future writing courses.</td>
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<td>6- I didn’t like the teacher’s response to my journals.</td>
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<td>7- Journal writing is a waste of time.</td>
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<td>8- Journal writing made me feel comfortable when I write in English.</td>
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<td>9- I feel that my writing in English has developed over time through practicing journal writing.</td>
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<td>10- I enjoyed sharing my ideas with the teacher.</td>
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<td>11- Journal writing is not an efficient technique for practicing writing in English.</td>
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<td>12- I do not fear writing in English.</td>
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<td>13- I think that practicing journal writing has developed my confidence to write</td>
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<th>Statements</th>
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<td>14- I feel confident to give my written essays to the teacher to comment on them.</td>
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<td>15- Journal writing helped me see writing as a creative process.</td>
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<td>16- The teacher’s feedback motivated me to write in English.</td>
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<td>17- Journal writing should be used in most writing courses offered in the English Department.</td>
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<td>18- The teacher’s feedback made me focus on the content of my writing.</td>
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<td>19- Journal writing motivated me to write more than I used to.</td>
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<td>20- I will write journals regularly in English after this study project is over.</td>
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<td>21- Participating in selecting topics to write about motivated me to write in English.</td>
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<td>22- Journal writing provided me with an opportunity express myself.</td>
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<td>23-I would recommend journal writing to other colleagues majoring in English.</td>
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<td>24- I could easily understand the teacher’s feedback.</td>
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<td>25- I would motivate my future students to practice journal writing in English.</td>
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<td>26- Journal writing encouraged me to write in English on a regular basis.</td>
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APPENDIX C

Attitudes toward the Traditional Writing

Dear student,

Below is a group of statements about attitudes toward the writing course that you studied in the first term in this academic year; 2005/2006. Please read these statements and indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by putting a tick (✓) along the response that shows whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement. There is no right or wrong answer. Take your time to read through and respond to these statements. Please try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<td>1- I liked this writing course.</td>
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<td>2- This writing course made me feel comfortable when I write in English.</td>
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<td>3- The teacher’s feedback motivated me to write in English.</td>
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<td>4- The teacher’s feedback made me focus on grammar rules.</td>
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<td>5- This course helped me see writing as a creative process.</td>
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<td>6- I liked the topics that the teacher assigned for us to write about.</td>
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<td>7- I feel that my writing in English has developed after taking this course.</td>
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<td>8- Practicing writing in this course motivated me to write more than I used to.</td>
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<td>9- This writing course gave me an opportunity to write on a variety of topics.</td>
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<td>10- This writing course was a frustrating experience for me.</td>
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<td>11- I liked the feedback I received from the teacher.</td>
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<td>12- The teacher’s feedback made me focus on the content of</td>
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<td>13- I don’t fear writing in English.</td>
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<td>14- This writing course helped me write for a certain purpose.</td>
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<td>15- I didn’t have enough information to write on the topics selected by the teacher.</td>
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<td>16- Even after taking this course, I still feel confused when I am writing down my ideas.</td>
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<td>17- I think that I can write better on topics that I choose.</td>
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<td>18- This writing course encouraged me to write in English on a regular basis.</td>
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<td>19 This course provided me with an opportunity to express myself.</td>
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<td>20- I would recommend this writing course to other students.</td>
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<td>21- Taking this course was a waste of time.</td>
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APPENDIX D

The Writing Prompt

Dear student,

Write an Essay in English about “The reasons for which you have entered the English Department.” You have one hour to write this essay.
Appendix E

Samples from Students’ Journal Entries
WHAT AFTER GRADUATION

Every one planning to his future as he wish, but how this in over world by problems, and no free jobs.
For example is After I graduation I will look after in a suitable work for me. This work helps me to start a good life, and I hopes work in Faculty Education in section English, so I study hard to join in this pure job.

But If I fail in, I will as a teacher, but not any teacher as we see in our schools today. so I must training myself on skills communication to be a good teacher.

After I settle in a teacher job, I will thinking about to open house, but this stop not come before my travelling to abroad Egypt. I will find job in this foreign country to help my self and help my family which suffering about me, To make me a man, so I am trying to make them very happy.

But how can I do this something and I still as as student with money, so # I must be study hard to make this dream into realistic world, full in war and poverty.

Dear Muhammed

1. Do you think it is easy to get a job nowadays?

2. What will you do to be a good teacher, mom?

3. Why do you think of travelling abroad, mom?
As a matter of fact that any one has his personal target which he goes for. So my target is a good writer that I always try to achieve it. Because I lend of analysing problems and actions which are in daily life happily as the great writer does in magazines.

Until when I meet my friends and tell me about some problems which face him and he suffers from that so much, I do the best, make use of my abilities to understand the topic very well and at the end, I treat it as much as possible. I'm preferring social causes too much especially.

For example: let us discuss the topic which it is among us. Ourselves and this moment. It is possible to discuss it. Let's see this and you that my styles of writing is argumentative. whole, the topic is my future target it means.

Have you asked aims which you hope to do. What is it? or to live useless in this life? of course we see more.
more generations have ambitions and hopes, some of them want to be doctor or other to be engineer etc.

* As result for that, we can advice that you must set to bear in mind, and around and makes it for you, like huge knowledge about your field. At this time, you are right.

It's doubt that patient's role is very important to attend their youth's behavior. For what it benefit them what is bad. Because of their experience higher.

It's worst that we see more of graduates are no coffee and other satisfying their classes, and they are careless except for their selves, without think of others.

such as this persons, the death is better than life; why it does he look at animals and birds even the plants, some of them lay eggs and others brand their babies. why they do that? This is their own life? Look at the famous scientist who got Dr. Do think of to believe them, we must start now, and stop with your self and wonder what's my answer.
Muhmoud

I. A great idea on an excellent analogy---
You compare yourself to a writer in
the sense that both of you monitor daily
events, analyze them. --- But
what do you do to attain this goal;
to make it come true ---

first, I try to read writers' essays and learn new something besides
what I read about writing; discuss
current affairs as much as possible and
attempt to seek aid solutions. As I see.

II. Are you crying that these graduates who
sit passively, lose hope, play cards or
sleep, or worse than animals---
are you saying they are "waiting for God"?
would you tell me in more detail how
they can regain their self-trust once again ---

III. Yes, because the animals' goals are known for them and they achieve
these goals, but the persons who
have no goals don't equal 5th to these
animals

IV. Yes, I send solution to graduates
"How to set clear goals and to achieve it"
What's after graduation?

No one can deny that the first thing will think in it the student after graduation. But the graduate faces many difficulties such as lack of job opportunities, so that almost all youth sitting at the coffee shops. The graduate should improve his abilities and talents by learning the computer and the internet to be the best in his field. The graduate should know requirements job market to find the proper job quickly. The graduate should invest his spare time in good things such as doing research in his field and increase his skills and knowledge. The graduate should search for proper job and don't accept any job. On the other hand, the graduate will think in marriage quickly. So that the graduate should afford all the difficulties to achieve goals and don't lose hope quickly.

The graduate can teach illiterate people how to read and write. They can turn the desert into green land. They should be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their country.

Dear

Why in particular the graduates should improve their skills in computer.

Can't illiterate people turn desert into green land? What are you trying to say here?
The graduates should improve their skills in computer because the computer became the most important set in our life and all the companies depend on computer and internet.

The people turn desert into green land because the future in the desert. All the people escape into the desert away from crowded.
"The benefits of life"

Human walk little ways with hope has happiness ask and answer. But not answer about one question what’s the benefit of life? This is controversial question every human think in it, but he hasn’t constituent of answer. When you go become and what you do in the past in youth period as actual train to face the end of life cannot.

Benefits of life not illusion but it nuclear fact work behind human and work him succeed. In any period of life you make benefits from your industry or from other. In Islam religious benefits of life represented into Basic Points; the first Point is Islam work "religious work" included worship, obedience, commitment, beliefs, faith, prayer, fasting, Zakat, Pilgrimage. The second Point represented in human behaviour to him self and deal with the other. That in the end achieve the benefits and succeed.

Now as point of my life explain advanced in many matters I under and solve the problems, in any time with a brave mind and brave heart
This words said by great author. He said I’ll give advice to any human if one, you must divided
your life to many things first you must think what work you will do, what's the result of this work how you deal with people, animals then you must face every period with her require Tive you must look every period achieve your aims and drive you to any benefit. All of that make you aware of sides of life and answer about the benefits of life.
Faith and Science

The knowledge and experiences of human history were never to develop without the firm faith and the desire for science. But sometimes, many people think that there is a contrast between faith and science and it's impossible to come together. So we have to talk about the connection between them.

Simply, science lead to faith and in turn you can not reach the complete faith without science. In another words, you can say that science is apart of faith and it's impossible to separate between them. In addition, there is another important point that the human mind is limited and the science will never enable it to realize all things in our universe. If he did, he wouldn't realize the other side of the universe. For example: How the death come to man? Can our science prevent this death? another question: Where the time go? From where we come and where we will go? and why? All these questions and others the science until now can't answer it. So we need something that is more ability to tell us and relax our minds, this thing is the faithfulness.

In the course of time, many stories occurred, for example, the story of Karoon, who was given a great fortune, then he said that he got it by his science and knowledge. The result was that his science and knowledge didn't protect him from the punishment of Allah and if he had a little of faith, all this wouldn't happen. Another example that was in recent time, It was The Soviet union. when they affected by Communism
and Marxism system. Hence, they became irreligious and unfaithful and don't believe in anything but Materialism. It's true that they achieved a great progress in short time but they lost the important thing, it was faith. So it didn't take long before they separated.

At last, there was never contrast between science and faith. On the contrary, each one is integrated to the other. Thus, science is the weapon for everyone who want to arm by faith.
Equality in Islam

Equality, at first, is one of the most important teachings of Islam. Islam outlines away of life based on faith and good deeds. One of these deeds is Equality. Faith is not merely a proclamation in the existence of Allah—Glory be to Him—and the truth of his prophet and Messenger Muhammad—peace be upon Him—but also, the putting of our beliefs into practise by fulfill our obligations to Allah and to men in order to keep up with the teachings of Islam.

Islam isn't concerned with the relationship between the man and His God, but his relationship with his society and his family. So, Equality in Islam was made one of the greatest acts according the Structure of Islam, because it's basic pillar and central idea which Islam is depended.

Now, let's know what are the sides of Equality: firstly, Equality between man and woman. Islam ordered us to be fair and just in all dealings which collect between them. For example, Marriage, Islam give a woman the perfect right to select and choose the suitable husband. Also, Divorce and No-fault divorce, as justas the man has the right to divorce his wife, also the woman has the right to submit a No-fault divorce her husband. No-Fault divorce means a divorce at the instance of the wife who must pay a compensation.
In addition to Equality in inheritance, Islam's Laws Limited and privatize a Certain Share in according to her state and circumstances. Equality between sons and daughters, secondly, Islam ordered us to be fair in dealing with them in life like "Love, giving money even if a kiss". Equality between sons is a necessary issue which parents should be careful when they deal with. Islam banned and forbided us to make a discrimination between them.

Finally, Allah-Glory be to Him- says in his Holy Qur'an "Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa".
In the opening of my speech, I would like to remember what does co-education mean? I think that it means schools and colleges which males and females study together. But in this essay, I will speak only about co-education in universities. Many students in our universities deal with this matter, and especially in Al-Azhar University, why do we say specifically? Because there is no co-education. So we must speak about the problems which are caused by co-education as we see in our current time. When the student joins in its college, we now speak about other universities and not Al-Azhar University. Wishes to know a girl and forms a love story with him. Where the student in his mind searches for a girl and not for learning. This which a lot of youth do in these universities. So youth is busy all the time in this matter or in Al-Azhar University, student joins with its college and always thinks in its studying. They don't mean that most students do that, but a lot of them.

These are advantages and drawbacks of co-education: In relation to its advantages, we shall find that young men will be able to treat with the other sex better by co-education. And also by that youth men will understand many things about woman. And about its drawbacks, did you hear about illegal relationships which happen among youth and in particular what it is called with traditional marriage and spread horror in that days. There is also what
we remembered in the previous word that the
Youth raise their arms in matter which is at
ted with love.

Finally, we pray for Allah to guide us and protect us
from our enemies.

is there any advantage for Co-education
at any stage? Tell me your view.

How can we solve the problem of
Co-education in Egypt given that
some people say it motivates students
to be competitive?
Faith and Science

Faith and Science go always side by side. They never contrast each other or being incompatible, but vice versa, each of them completes the other and all of them require the others. Science, for example, requires faith to be based on strong and correct basis, and to increase belief in the heart in suitable way. The holy Quran stressed this meaning when it says that the scientists fear Allah more than the other People. That is because they discover the mysteries of the universe which all witnesses and stress the oneness of Allah, and that he is the Creator of the world and its organizer.

On the other hand, faith also requires science. Because of without science, believer is subject to doubt which may lead him to apostasy.

In addition to this, science enables one to preserve his religion and defend it as possible, and to upgrade his nation in order to keep pace with the other developed countries.

The best example of gathering up both science and faith and the result of them, we can see in our ancient Muslim Scientists. So that they became a pride to all the Islam nation, through ages.

One of these Scientists is Abu Bakr El Raziy, who was nicknamed “the miracle of medicine.”

Also Ibn Sina, who was nicknamed “the father of medicine.”

Ibn El Haytham, who discovered the blood circulation in the body.

These Scientists and many others whom the history glorified eternally their names. Faith can be regarded as one the most reason important reason of their knowledge, that all
of them began to learn the science of the Islam Sharia. So they became leaders whether in science and faith. Then we can say that faith and science are the most important pillars on which creation can be built.

Give me an example of how faith is compatible with science?

There is no doubt that faith is compatible with science, that many issues that relating to unseen matter for example (Paradise and Hell or the soul) was existed before the 18 modern age that many discoveries in these years clarified these matters and asserted them. For example, gravity is a fact but it is unseen, the brain is also fact but unseen. So there is no contrast between faith and science.
Love and Friendship

Love and friendship are two essential values which are established, supported, and promoted by Islam.

Love, however, is attached more attention by the two authentic sources of Islam, the Holy Quran and the prophetic tradition. Love's complete belief is to be the main target of the prophetic mission. That is to make morality and virtue prevail; the prophet were sent to establish real love relationships. Love should prevail amongst human beings to respect human rights.

Islam orders not to mock, humiliate, and be unkind with others, but to be frequently greeting others for peace. Love's directions are many. Love between Allah and His slaves, an unqualified sort of love by another sort. Secondly, love between human beings. Islam describes this sort as a brotherhood love sort. This is a brotherly relationship amongst human beings.

In accordance with the Islamic teachings, love is not fully identified with another loving brother in Islam. In terms of love between males and females, love is barred except the one between husbands and wives.

According to friendship, this term friendship is more similar to the brotherhood love. But it is more specific. It may connect some persons participating the same interests and ideas together. They may share each other the same career. Friendship is stronger than being colleagues. So, males and females must not be friends.

To sum up, Islam doesn't prohibit love and friendship on the contrary, Islam supports them and rewards because of them and rewards a great deal but in their correct concepts.
I. Are you talking here, in general or in particular? Meaning, are you talking about love or friendship in Islam or love/friendship as human features?

II. I totally agree with you that the Prophet's mission was to foster love—_but how could you prove such a claim to an atheist?_ or someone who knows nothing about Islam!

III. What do you mean here, Islam, by saying that “love between male and female is banned”? Would you please elaborate on this issue? A what about sisters' love? Ma is love—grandmother's love.!

III. Islam, you are making a strong analogy between friendship/brotherhood. Do you think I can love non-Muslims as brothers? Please clarify this issue!
I mean by love and friendship those two values which foster the human relations and collect human beings together. Especially mean, to human beings are expected and had better tackle and deal with each other by the way which is the most beloved. All above is conditioned by what Allah dictated or banned as them.

Well, the prophetic mission is concerned with equality between human beings and the only discriminating element is how and to which somewhat someone is pious. So, our good deeds are our only hope to be at a higher rank in the Day of Judgement. So, one has nothing to do with irregulars and that is what should be. As a result, we should and had better deal with each other in the way which is the most beloved, hoping others the same I hope ourselves.

Oh, I'm not meaning one to love only men, sisters or family. But I mean love between male and female who could marry each other. Meaning, those who are closest not unmarriageable.

There is also different between loving others and dealing with them in the friendly way. We should love each other as Muslims, but deal with non-Muslims by in the way which is the most beloved.
Adolescence

God created human in abib of moids--and him, by nature, undergoes many stages to reach the climax of adult hood. One of these stages is adolescence. This period is like the others, that’s why a person who passes through it suffers so much. It has its own features and characteristics which make it the hardest one in one’s life.

It involves a dramatic physical development which makes the adolescent grow bigger and stronger due to Certain genetis. Development is not confined into physical development, it also include emotional development. Adolescent uncertainly consciously widen his emotional circle via direct contact with others. There is also emotional development. This may be seen in his behaviour. As he grows up, he sees the whole world from the largest perspective rather than small one.

This period comes with some arrogance in part of adolescent which makes him challenge his parent’s control. He always seeks for independence. Sense of criticism appears clearly in his personality. Furthermore, he always tries to make his opinion the dominant one and begins to shape his attitudes towards life.

Being involved in this period makes adolescent identify his personality and makes his passes through many experiences which lead him to the adult hood stage.
What should we do to make this stage pass calmly and safely and positively affect children? The prominent role lies on the part of parents and also on the society as whole.

Parents should deal patiently with adolescents. Take care of their behaviour and kindly advise them. Doing their best to make them away of irrighteous companions and teach them how to correctly choose their friends.

Finally, adolescence is a period in which adolescents choose their own way, to be an man or to be nothing. That is to say, it is the basic stage in human’s life.

What bit of advice could you give for parents about how to deal effectively with their sons’/daughters during the stage?

You talked much of the mental and emotional development. Do you think adolescents are more subject to brain washing during that stage?
Parents, in this stage, should respect the teenagers' point of view and give them the opportunity to express themselves. They need to establish a strong bond between them and their children. They should also deal kindly with them and take care to be away of offending them or making them feel that they still kids not responsible adolescents.

On the other hand, parents should watch them secretly and also correct their mistakes kindly.

Adolescents are more subject to brainwashing at that time. Friendship may affect him badly from one hand, or he may receive an accepted customs, saying and behavior. It's fairly safe to say that peer group is the chief way of washing his brain. On the other hand, there is also envious friends who lead him to filled.

Another way of washing is the internet or the use of the internet. So parents should watch him carefully. He may log on to the internet and watch blue films and any other prohibited scenes only by pushing the button of the computer.

All these and others affected his behaviour greatly.
Love and friendship

This topic is very important and represent a major part in our life. There is a powerful relationship between love and friendship because without love there isn't friendship and without friendship there isn't love.

Love means all beautiful things in life; it is the secret of a happy life. I don't mention love between man and woman but all kinds of love, love Allah, worship, work, life, friends and another things just in the way of Allah. Love is a natural disposition born with mankind consists of inside feelings and senses.

Love is very important to aperson as energy to machines because as energy help machines to work, love help aperson to do his/her best towards what he/she do and. If he/she love what he/she do he/she will do her/his best to be the best.

Friendship is a nice concept. I can't describe correctly what it means? Only is a wonderful word even if I try to describe it. I can't describe it as it should be.

Friendship built on sincerity and trust between one and another we should respect this word because it is the highest mean of life.

What I want to discuss here is an effective issue that stimulate most of degrees of society. This issue is the relationship between man and woman. I personally think that
If this relationship decorated by truth and respect to each other, will be useful to both, because I think that it help them to deal with each other or to deal with others.

But, we notice parents and other people who look at this relationship with negative vision. Says that relation is very dangerous and will finished to bad. Finally, on another hand, if they give their children the confidence they will be useful to themselves and their society.

Finally, this is my vision about love and friendship and someone persistent on my opinion.
I will believe that there is a powerful relation between love and friendship and each other complete together.

-- Mahmoud

[1] You say, "Love as friendship are inseparable" how is it would you take it a little bit further.

I couldn't get what you mean by "love is an innate disposition" could you explain it for me? You mean man is born to love or what?!?

Friendship is a beautiful concept, right? You are, I'd like to know what criteria you use to select your friends.

-- Mahmoud
Vita

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Muhammad was born in Itay El-Baroud, Boherah, Egypt on August 29, 1972. In June 1990, he got his high school diploma from Itay El-Baroud Al-Azhar Institute. In May 1994, Muhammad got his B.A. in English Language Education with distinctive honor from the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. In October 1996, he got a Special Diploma in Education and Psychology from the College of Education, Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. In September 1999, Muhammad was awarded his Master of Arts in Curricula and Methods of Teaching English as a foreign language. His Master thesis was entitled “The Effect of Two Cooperative Learning Strategies on Developing Reading Comprehension among Prospective Teachers of English at the Colleges of Education.” In January 2003, he received a scholarship from the Egyptian government to pursue his PhD in Language and Literacy Education in USA. In August 2007, Muhammad was awarded his PhD in Curriculum and Instruction (Language and Literacy Education) from the The Pennsylvania State University.