The Effect of Vocabulary Strategy Training on EFL Majors' Quality of Writing

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ABSTRACT:

The present research aimed at investigating the effect of vocabulary strategy training in developing writing quality among third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University. To fulfil the purpose of the research, the quasi-experimental method was adopted (pretest - posttest control group design). A vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire and a writing quality test with a scoring rubric were developed by the researcher for collecting the target data after assuring their validity and reliability. The participants, totalling (64), were randomly selected form the third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education in Dakahlia, Al-Azhar University. They were assigned into two groups: An experimental group (N= 32) and a control one (N=32). The statistical analysis of the elicited data using independent samples t-tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores attained by the experimental group and the control one underscoring the effectiveness of the explicit vocabulary strategy training in developing writing quality as the effect size was large (Cohen's d = 1.84). The research recommended utilizing vocabulary strategy training as a framework for developing students' writing quality and other language skills.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Strategy Training, Quality of Writing.

أثر التدريب على بعض استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات في تنمية

جودة الكتابة لدى طلاب شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية

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ملخص:

تمحور الهدف الرئيس للبحث الحالي حول استقصاء أثر التدريب على بعض استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات في تنمية جودة الكتابة لدى طلاب شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية - الفرقة الثالثة بكلية التربية جامعة الأزهر. وقد تبنى البحث المنهج شبه التجريبي لتحقيق أهدافه من خلال استخدام تصميم المجموعة الضابطة ذي الاختبارين القبلي والبعدي، وتمثلت أدوات البحث في استبانة لاستراتيجيات تعلم المفردات، واختبار لجودة الكتابة ملحق به نموذج تقدير متدرج لجمع البيانات؛ حيث تم تطبيقه قبليًا وبعديًا على الطلاب عينة البحث بعد التأكد من صدقه وثباته، كما تمثلت عينة البحث في عدد 64 طالبًا من الفرقة الثالثة بشعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية بالدقهلية، جامعة الأزهر، تم اختيارهم وتوزيعهم عشوائيًا إلى مجموعتين: المجموعة التجريبية وبلغ عدد طلابها 32 طالبًا، والمجموعة الضابطة وبلغ عدد طلابها 32 طالبًا، ولقد أسفر التحليل الإحصائي للبيانات عن وجود فرق دال إحصائيًا بين متوسطي درجات مجموعتي البحث لصالح طلاب المجموعة التجريبية مما يؤكد فاعلية التدريب على استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات في تنمية جودة الكتابة؛ حيث كان حجم الأثر كبير طبقًا لمعادلة كوهين ($d = 1.84$)، وفي ضوء النتائج، أوصى البحث بضرورة توظيف استراتيجيات تعلم المفردات في تنمية مهارات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، وبخاصة الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات، تعلم المفردات ، جودة الكتابة.

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Introduction

The process of writing is rarely easy even for the professional writers. Writing is among the most complex human activities. It is an important component not only in education, but also in life especially for those people who do not know how to express their feelings verbally. Learning to write especially in a FL/L2 is not simply a matter of writing things down. It is one of the most cognitively demanding skills to learn. Writing is not only a way of expressing ideas and exchanging information or a way of using words to express oneself, but also it is a social activity in which people interact with their partners in effective ways. Over and above, writing is the outcome of the interaction between writers and their surrounding environment. It is a socially constructed process not only because it reflects thinking, but it shapes it as well.

In the field of language learning the role played by writing in developing the overall language proficiency cannot be denied or even ignored. It is a central skill not only in itself, but also it affects the other language skills. This crucial role is now well demonstrated in second language research as Dietsch (2009) argued that writing well is a skill that can sharpen thinking skills, open new opportunities to learn, nurture personal development, help establish relationships, and foster success in college and the workplace. Moreover, writing encourages thinking and learning, motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection (Mekheimer, 2005). When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, superseded, rearranged and changed (Abdel-Haq & Ali, 2017). Further, Jahin (2012) clarified that enhancing writing quality has become central in today's schools and universities as a measure for academic success.

Accordingly, learning how to write with quality is an intricate and challenging process in learning a foreign language. Moats, et al., (2006) revealed that the positive effects of higher quality instruction were observed primarily in the area of compositional fluency as the higher quality instruction have nurtured higher levels of self-efficacy in the students who write more texts. Jagaiah, et al., (2020) clarify that achieving mastery in constructing syntactically complex sentences requires considerable effort because it involves a synchronized process of selecting the appropriate words, sentence structures, rules of

mechanics and grammar while ensuring that the writing quality is maintained. Also, Austin (2020) highlights that taking care in choosing one's words can be both illuminating and inspiring in quality writing. For Crossley (2020) the analysis of linguistic features in writing can help EFL learners not only better understand writing quality and development but also improve the teaching and learning of writing skills and strategies. Alotaibi (2015) clarified two important factors that influence the writing quality regarding its relation to the lexical cohesion; the use of the lexical item of the same type, and the location of that lexical item.

With the increased emphasis on EFL writing quality, much revived writing research has been conducted to determine the factors that could contribute positively or negatively to the development of EFL writing quality (Casal & Lee, 2019; Kent & Wanzek, 2016; Kim & Crossley, 2018; Nagy & Beers, 2007; Noblesa & Paganucci, 2015; Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014; Wahyuni, 2017; Xue, et al, 2021; and Yoon, 2018). On the one hand, many researchers oriented directly to develop EFL writing quality using various approaches and strategies. For example, Kim & Crossley (2018) developed a model of second language (L2) writing quality in the context of a standardized writing test (TOEFL iBT) using a structural equation modeling approach. Moreover, Kent & Wanzek (2016) investigated the relationship between multiple proposed component skills (i.e., handwriting fluency, spelling, reading, and oral language) and writing outcomes assessing the quality of students' written composition and their amount of writing produced. The primary findings confirmed moderate, significant correlations between individual component skills and students' writing quality.

Furthermore, Noblesa & Paganucci (2015) suggest that students perceive their writing to be of higher quality when writing with digital tools versus using a pen/pencil and paper and that writing in online environments fosters enhanced writing skill development. Wahyuni (2017) investigated the effect of different feedback provision on the writing quality of students having different cognitive styles. The results showed that students who are field dependent or field independent can improve their writing quality when they get feedback on their writing. Yoon (2018) explored how L2 learners receiving intensive ESL instruction develop their writing proficiency (writing

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quality from an analytic rubric) across two writing tasks (narrative and argumentative writing). The results revealed that vocabulary scores of narrative and argumentative writing were best predicted by different combinations of lexical sophistication measures.

Stevenson & Phakiti (2014) in a critical review showed positive effects of computer-generated feedback, known as automated writing evaluation on the quality of students' writing texts. Results of Casal & Lee s' (2019) study assured a positive relationship between syntactic complexity and writing quality in assessed source-based research papers that produced by ESL undergraduate writers in a first-year writing course through a combination of holistic and fine-grained measures of complexity. Nagy & Beers (2007) revealed that syntactic complexity is related to text quality for adolescent writers. Also, Xue, et al (2021) provide evidence that more syntactic variety and transformation are key features of high-quality argumentative writings at college-level.

On the other hand, other research paid attention to the difficulties that prevent developing the quality of writing among EFL learners, such as: difficulties in writing English composition in terms of style, grammar, spelling, punctuation, lexical choice, vocabulary usage variations, content, lexical competence, organization, idea and paragraph development, and mechanism that have a negative impact on the content and the general comprehension of texts (Abbuhl, 2005; Alotaibi, 2015; Austin, 2020; Chen, 2019; Crossley, 2020; Dastjerdi & Samian, 2011; Graham, 2006; Jagaiah, et al, 2020; Lin & Chen, 2020; McNamara, et al, 2010; McNamara & Crossley, 2014; Moats, et al, 2006; Mostafa & Crossley, 2020; Noblesa & Paganucci, 2015; Valizadeh, 2021; and Wingate, 2010). Further, the study of Graham (2006) showed that lack of mastery in constructing syntactically complex sentences may inhibit students' ability to effectively translate thoughts and ideas into high-quality writing. Other studies illustrate that negative perceptions of writing can slow production and hinder feedback retention in the writing process (Wingate, 2010; Noblesa & Paganucci, 2015).

Adding to the previous studies on writing which pinpoint that EFL writing quality is important yet demanding and challenging to non-native speakers of English, various studies have shown that lexical problems frequently interfere with language learning. That is, language

learning can be obstructed when learners lack vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, there is an increased interest in vocabulary as an important element of language learning (Asgari & Mustapha, 2011; Huy, 2015; Milton, 2009; Nation, 2001; Nyikos & Fan, 2007; Saengpakdeejit, 2014; and Soureshjani, 2011).

Being a fundamental language component, vocabulary also plays an essential role in language learning. As pointed out by Asgari & Mustapha (2011), vocabulary has been recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning. Additionally, mastering vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks that any learner faces while acquiring another language (Nyikos & Fan, 2007). In his study Soureshjani (2011), assures that words are extremely important in language learning because they are the basic building blocks of language and they are the units of meaning from which the larger structures of language such as sentences, paragraphs, and whole texts are formed. According to Saengpakdeejit (2014), students still encounter problems in their learning and they generally see the limitation of vocabulary knowledge as the first problem to overcome. Huy (2015) highlighted that one of the most serious problem that EFL students often have is lacking of vocabulary. He concluded that lack of vocabulary is the biggest problem that most students usually have when they study writing skill. This affects students' study result and generates many difficulties in studying writing skill.

Based on reviewing all the previous literature, it seems that in order to develop EFL learners' quality of writing, there is a need for a comprehensive framework that provides a reasonable basis for choosing from the different wide range of strategies and approaches to develop writing quality. Taking the importance of vocabulary as it plays a key role in the whole process of second language learning and of its critical importance to the learners; scholars highlight the importance of vocabulary strategy training. Vocabulary language learning strategies are used with the explicit goal for helping learners improve their knowledge and understanding of a target language. They are the conscious thoughts and behaviors used by students to facilitate language learning tasks and to personalize the language learning process (Boonkongsaen & Intaraprasert, 2014; Namaghi & Malekpur,

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2015; Nation, 2001; Qoura, 2014; Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Schmitt, 2008; Siriwan, 2007; and Zayan, 2015).

According to Schmitt (2000), scholars' interest in L2 vocabulary strategy training stems from the movement to get away from a predominantly teacher-oriented pedagogical philosophy to a more leaner-centered ideology that includes an interest in how learners themselves can manage their own language learning. For Namaghi & Malekpur (2015) vocabulary strategy training moves learners towards autonomy; hence, teachers should shift away from teaching towards strategy training. Moreover, Sarafianou & Gavriilidou, (2015) highlight that vocabulary strategies enable learners to take an active role in the learning process by helping them to monitor and evaluate the way they learn. Also, it allows them to gradually take responsibility for their own learning by fostering their autonomy and self-direction (p. 22).

By the same token, designing programs for developing pre-service teachers' EFL teaching skills is highly recommended in related studies (Abdel-Haq, et al, 2020; Essousi, 2016; Hassan, 2008; Gohar, 2014; and Zayan, 2015). Such programs would be more effective if they rely on a systematic model or approach that provides assistance and modeling in the different skills needed for pre-service teachers. In order to address these different skills and to meet pre-service teachers' different interests and learning styles, it is important to provide instructional materials and use new approaches that help maximize students' learning opportunities and experiences. Consequently, the present research used the explicit approach as a main foundation for designing a proposed program for developing third year EFL majors' writing quality.

Research Purpose

The present research aimed to explore the effect of vocabulary strategy training on developing quality of writing among third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University. Through the analysis of a diagnostic test completed by (30) third-year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education in Dakahlia, Al-Azhar University, it was revealed that the most of those students often repeated their ideas. The main points of topics were poorly supported. A great deal of the content was irrelevant. They lack organisation and coherence in their writing. Serious errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation were

detected. Their writing style was incomprehensible in place and they did not write the conclusion properly. Thereupon, the research sought to answer the following key research question:

What is the effect of vocabulary strategy training in developing the writing quality among third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University?

Research Hypotheses

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students on the pre and post administration of the writing quality test in favor of the post test.

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of the control one on the post-administration of the writing quality test in favor of the experimental group students.

Research Instruments

To accomplish the purpose of the research, the researcher developed and used the following two instruments:

1- The Vocabulary Learning Strategies Questionnaire that aimed at determining the most essential vocabulary learning strategies appropriate for the (experimental group) third year EFL majors and consequently determine the strategies to be integrated in the program of the research.

This questionnaire was designed in the light of related studies of (Milton, 2009; Mutalib, et al, 2014; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000; and Zayan, 2015). The questionnaire consists of five main cores which are determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Under each core, there are some sub-strategies. The questionnaire was submitted to a jury of professors and specialists in the field of TEFL (N= 7). The jury members examined the validity of the questionnaire. They were requested to respond to every strategy in accordance with a Likert type scale that ranged from "mostly relevant" to "irrelevant" as follows: (Mostly relevant was given (5), relevant was given (4), partially relevant was given (3), fairly relevant was given (2), and most irrelevant was given (1) according to how relate the jurors think the strategy can develop EFL majors' quality of writing. After analyzing the jury responses, the strategies that had the highest

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percentage, were agreed upon at least 80% or more by jury members were selected. Therefore, three vocabulary learning sub-strategies were selected to be developed in the present research as follows: (synonyms and antonyms strategy, collocation use strategy, and word family strategy).

2- The Writing Quality Test that aimed at measuring the students' writing quality before being exposed to the proposed training program and after the experiment. The pre-test was administrated at the beginning of the second semester of the academic year (2020-2021), while the post-test was administrated at the end of the second semester of the academic year (2020- 2021). This test was designed in the light of the following sources (Abdel-Rehim, 1997; Essousi, 2016; González, et al, 2017; Hyland, 2003; and Younes & Albalawi, 2015). Three tasks for writing two complete essays were chosen to achieve the aim of the test. Participants were to write at least (250) words in each task and give reasons and examples when relevant. The total score of the test was 40 marks (20 marks for each task). The researcher developed a scoring rubric for correcting the test according to the four dimensions of the writing quality identified in the rubric that include (content, organization, vocabulary use, and mechanics of writing) (See Appendix A).

To measure test content validity, the test with the scoring rubric were submitted to EFL professors and staff members (N=7) to judge the test questions and the dimensions included in the scoring rubric. The test proved to be valid as the jurors approved most of the questions with the four dimensions of the rubric and the jury members suggested few changes that were modified.

To check the test reliability, the researcher administered the test to a sample of students other than the participants of the study (N=30). Those students were randomly chosen from the third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education in Dakahlia, Al-Azhar University during the first semester of the academic year (2020-2021). The purpose of piloting the test was to find out whether the assigned topics were interesting to the students, whether the instructions of the test were clear and sufficient as well as how much time is recommended for students to complete the test. Reliability coefficient was calculated using Alpha-Cronbach formula. The results of the analysis showed that

the test reliability was (0.86) referring that the test was highly reliable and ready to be administered to the research participants.

Methods and Procedures

Design and Treatment Material

The current research adopted the quasi-experimental design (pretest - posttest control group design) to investigate the effect of vocabulary strategy training on third year EFL majors' writing quality. The participants were assigned into two groups: an experimental group (n=32) and a control one (n=32).

The treatment material of the present research was a vocabulary strategy training based program to develop third year EFL majors' writing quality. The program consisted of (10) sessions, each one took 2 hours (totaling was 20 hours). Four sessions included an introductory metacognitive knowledge unit to prepare students for the active and interactive roles they are expected to play in the training strategies. Four sessions for the three selected strategies that are (synonyms and antonyms strategy, collocation use strategy, and word family strategy), and two sessions for revision. Each session had its own objectives, time, materials, and procedures. Besides, each session in its procedures followed five main stages as follows: Presenting and naming the strategy, modeling the strategy, practicing the strategy, checking the strategy, and evaluating the strategy effectiveness. The program was submitted to a jury of EFL professors and staff members (N= 5) to determine its validity. All suggestions and recommendations of the jury members were put into consideration during modifying the program that helped the researchers in administering the program.

Research Participants

The current research participants were (64) third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education for Boys in (Dakahlia), Al-Azhar University during the academic year (2020-2021). They were randomly selected and assigned into two groups, namely an experimental group (32 students) and a control one (32 students). All students were male and their ages in the two groups ranged from 20 to 21 years. They have received writing instruction at the university classes during the first and second years, and the first term of the third year through the essay course.

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Initially, the writing quality test was administered to the experimental group and the control one. The students' written product was assessed and analysed according to the developed scoring rubric. The pre-test score was to be used as a baseline for comparing the participants' performance. The experimental group had received the teaching content via the vocabulary strategy training program as planned and the control group received the usual content via the usual model of teaching. The instructional process was managed by the researcher via the vocabulary strategy training program accompanied by worksheets and handouts, which were prepared within the outline materials. The students' performance moved from the guided writing to the free one and feedback was provided for their written outputs.

After completing the implementation of the treatment material, the writing post-test was administered for both the two groups. Responses of the research groups were assessed and statistically analysed versus their scores in the pre-test to explore the effectiveness of the vocabulary strategy training program in enhancing the research participants' writing quality. The attained data were analysed statistically. The results are then briefly highlighted with discussion of the findings obtained in the research.

Research Results

The research question was used as a guide to highlight the data analysis, the descriptive and inferential statistics, and explanations of the yielded results.

To answer the research question, the subsequent hypotheses were posed:

Hypothesis One

1- There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students on the pre and post administration of the writing quality test in favor of the post test.

To investigate the first hypothesis, the researcher used a paired sample t-test to investigate the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students on the pre and post administration of the writing quality test. The following values are the results of the t-test comparing the mean of the students' scores in their writing quality

before and after the administration of the program as listed in the following table:

Table 1

Paired sample t-test results (Experimental group pre/post writing quality test).

The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Error Mean	t.value	Sig.
Content	pre	32	2.06	.669	.781	.140	5.577	.01
	post	32	2.84	.447				
Organization	pre	32	1.81	.644	.593	.184	3.221	.01
	post	32	2.40	.614				
Vocabulary Use	pre	32	1.46	.507	1.09	.129	8.425	.01
	post	32	2.56	.564				
Mechanics of writing	pre	32	1.43	.504	.843	.135	6.226	.01
	post	32	2.28	.522				
Task (1)	pre	32	6.78	2.011	3.31	.488	6.779	.01
	post	32	10.09	1.59				
Content	pre	32	1.71	.683	1.09	.121	8.979	.01
	post	32	2.78	.552				
Organization	pre	32	1.50	.622	.843	.156	5.400	.01
	post	32	2.34	.601				
Vocabulary Use	pre	32	1.25	.567	1.25	.134	9.280	.01
	post	32	2.50	.567				
Mechanics of writing	pre	32	1.12	.491	1.09	.129	8.425	.01
	post	32	2.21	.490				
Task (2)	pre	32	5.59	2.10	4.28	.447	9.572	.01
	post	32	9.84	1.72				

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The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Error Mean	t.value	Sig.
The Total Degree of Writing Quality	pre	32	12.34	3.50				.01
	post	32	20.56	5.30	8.22	1.18	6.966	

Results in table (1) indicated that the t-value is statistically significant at the level (0,01) and that the mean scores of the experimental group students at the writing quality post-test was (20.56) in the total score and reached (10.09, 9.84) in the sub-dimensions respectively. On the other hand, their mean score in the pre-writing quality test was (12.34) in the total score and reached (6.78, 5.56) in the sub- dimensions respectively. Also, the calculated t-score value was (6.93) for the total score, and it was (6.77, 9.57) in the experimental sub-dimensions higher than the tabulated one at the level of (0.01) where it was (2.44), which indicated that there was statistically significant difference in the four dimensions and in the total score of the writing quality test. These results indicated that the higher mean is for the post administration of the writing quality test. Therefore, the experimental group students' writing quality has improved after being taught the proposed training program. Hence, the first hypothesis of the study is accepted. The following figure (1) illustrates the yielded results.

Figure 1

The experimental group (writing quality test pre/posttest).
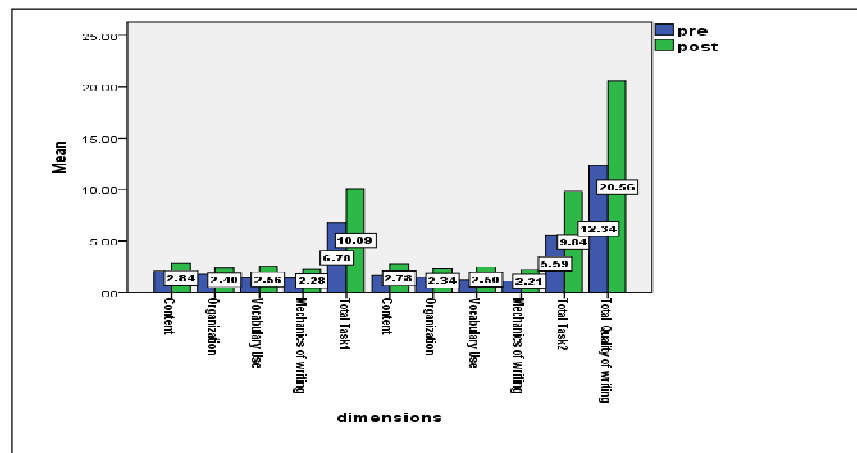
To calculate the effect size, the mean pre and post scores, the effect size for Cohen and the ETA square for training on the proposed program based on the vocabulary training strategies were calculated for developing the writing quality as a whole and its dimensions among the experimental group students before and after their exposure to the proposed training as listed in the following table:

Table 2

The effect size for the experimental group (writing quality test pre/posttest).

The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t.value	effect-size (η^2)	Cohen's (d)
Organization	pre	32	2.06	.669	5.577	.56	1.37
	post	32	2.84	.447			
Content	pre	32	1.81	.644	3.221	.42	.937
	post	32	2.40	.614			
Vocabulary	pre	32	1.46	.507	8.425	.72	2.05

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The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Test	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t.value	effect-size ($^2\eta$)	Cohen's (d)
Use	post	32	2.56	.564			
Mechanics of writing	pre	32	1.43	.504	6.226	.64	1.65
	post	32	2.28	.522			
Task (1)	pre	32	6.78	2.011	6.779	.67	1.82
	post	32	10.09	1.59			
Organization	pre	32	1.68	.644	8.979	.67	1.83
	post	32	2.78	.552			
Content	pre	32	1.50	.622	5.400	.56	1.37
	post	32	2.34	.601			
Vocabulary Use	pre	32	1.25	.567	9.280	.74	2.20
	post	32	2.50	.567			
Mechanics of writing	pre	32	1.12	.491	8.425	.75	2.22
	post	32	2.21	.490			
Task (2)	pre	32	5.56	2.06	9.572	.72	2.04
	post	32	9.84	1.72			
The Total Degree of Writing Quality	pre	32	12.34	3.46	6.966	.67	1.84
	post	32	20.56	5.30			

It is clear from table (2) that the value of Eta square for the total score was (.67) and for the sub-dimensions (.67, .72) respectively, and these values indicate that a large proportion of the differences that are attributed to the vocabulary training strategies in developing the writing quality and its sub-dimensions among the experimental group students. This significant improvement achieved by the experimental group can be attributed to many explanations that could be given for their superiority on the post administration as follows:

The first explanation may lie in the fact that the proposed program had a positive effect on developing the writing quality among the experimental group students. This could be attributed to the emphasis placed, during the implantation of the proposed program, on the stages of the writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), a fact that highly contributed to developing students' written production. In addition, making students aware of the writing process stages necessary for them and according to which their writing was evaluated might have contributed to developing their quality of writing.

This interpretation is in conformity with El-Mistikawy (2016) who indicated that focusing on the process approach to writing might be useful and could enable teachers to focus on stages of the writing process that give more freedom to students to express their language through writing. Besides, this agreed with Essousi (2016) who showed that facing and modifying the problems of the student writers during the stages of the process approach and trying to solve them are better than delaying those problems till the end. By doing so, student writers avoid doing the same problems in the following stages and in the final product as well. This -in turn- leads to improving the writing quality among students.

The second explanation is related to the organized explicit instruction as the instructor clearly outlined what the learning goals are for students, and offered clear, unambiguous explanations of the selected strategies and information structures they are presenting. Therefore, the explicit instruction significantly improved the production of students' writing. This interpretation may be in line with the results obtained by Abdel-Rehim (1997) who recommended that explicit presentation and practice of writing technicalities of content and organization should be stressed in the preparation program of English language teachers so that they are capable of writing effectively. Moreover, this agreed with Yoon (2018) who revealed the development of ESL writing quality and a significant increase in three subscale scores (content, organization, and vocabulary) via the explicit instruction.

The third explanation for the superiority of the experimental group students in the post administration of the writing quality test lies in using three of the memory strategies which are (synonyms and

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antonyms strategy, collocation use strategy, and the word family strategy) that maintain successful learning and assure autonomy, and help learners for relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge. This led the students to be more motivated to learn the language by lowering the anxiety and feeling more self-confidence. It has been proved that memory strategies help learners to remember and retrieve the new words and use them meaningfully in the writing tasks.

This interpretation is in conformity with Sozler (2012) who revealed that using memory strategies as a vocabulary learning technique is more effective and helpful in learning new vocabulary items and remembering them in the long term. He added that with the help of strategy training, the more students learn the vocabularies on their own, the better attitudes they have and the more motivated they are towards the language. Also, Nosratinia, et al (2013) explored the correlation between learner autonomy and vocabulary learning strategies. The results illustrated those memory strategies were the most salient indicators of learner autonomy. Furthermore, Kocaman, et al (2018) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies employed by 155 international students studying Turkish preparatory year program at the Turkish Language Learning Centre of a state university in Turkey. The results indicated that learners preferred memory strategies most frequently as the memory strategies had the highest scores of all the vocabulary learning strategies.

Hypothesis Two

2) There was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students and those of the control one on the post-administration of the writing quality test in favor of the experimental group students.

To investigate the second hypothesis, the researcher used an independent sample t-test to investigate the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group and those of the control one on the post administration of the writing quality test. Following are the results of the t-test comparing the mean of the students' scores in their writing quality after the administration of the writing quality post-test as listed in the following table:

Table 3

Independent sample t-test results (Experimental and control groups writing quality posttest).

The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Error Mean	t.value	Sig.
Organization	Exp.	32	2.84	.447	.687	.128	5.36	.01
	Cont.	32	2.15	.574				
Content	Exp.	32	2.40	.614	.437	.157	2.78	.01
	Cont.	32	1.96	.646				
Vocabulary Use	Exp.	32	2.56	.564	.625	.148	4.22	.01
	Cont.	32	1.93	.618				
Mechanics of writing	Exp.	32	2.28	.522	.750	.143	5.24	.01
	Cont.	32	1.53	.621				
Task (1)	Exp.	32	10.09	1.59	2.50	.426	5.86	.01
	Cont.	32	7.59	1.81				
Organization	Exp.	32	2.78	.552	.781	.147	5.31	.01
	Cont.	32	2.00	.622				
Content	Exp.	32	2.34	.601	.562	.144	3.90	.01
	Cont.	32	1.78	.552				
Vocabulary Use	Exp.	32	2.50	.567	.906	.140	6.47	.01
	Cont.	32	1.59	.559				
Mechanics of writing	Exp.	32	2.21	.490	.750	.139	5.39	.01
	Cont.	32	1.46	.621				
Task (2)	Exp.	32	9.84	1.72	3.00	.426	7.04	.01
	Cont.	32	6.84	1.68				
The Total Degree of Writing	Exp.	32	20.56	5.30	6.13	1.09	5.62	.01
	Cont.	32	14.43	3.22				

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The Dimensions of Writing Quality	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences Mean	Std. Error Mean	t.value	Sig.
Quality								

Results in table (3) indicated that the t-value is statistically significant at the level (0,01) and that the mean scores of the experimental group students at the writing quality post-test was (20.56) in the total score and reached (10.09, 9.84) in the sub-dimensions respectively. On the other hand, the mean scores of the control group students at the writing quality post-test was (14.43) in the total score and reached (7.59, 6.84) in the sub-dimensions respectively. Also, the calculated t-score value was (5.62) for the total score, and it was (5.86, 7.04) in the experimental sub-dimensions higher than the tabulated one at the level of (0.01) where it was (2.37) or at the level (0.05) where it is (1.66), which indicated that there was statistically significant difference in the four dimensions and in the total score of the writing quality test in favor of the experimental group students. Hence, the second hypothesis is accepted. The following figure (2) illustrates this:

Figure 2

Experimental group versus the control one (writing quality posttest).
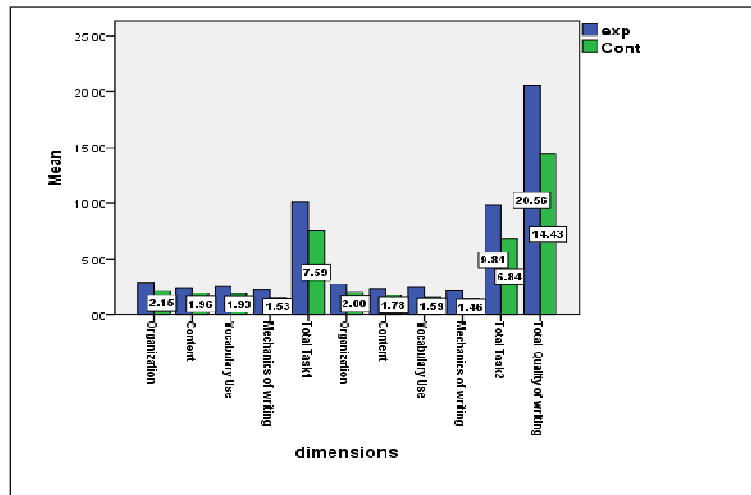
The above-mentioned results reveal that there is an obvious development in the experimental group students' writing quality on the post administration of the writing quality test. The significant improvement achieved by those students can be attributed to many explanations that could be given for their superiority on the post administration as follows:

The first explanation is related to the organized five steps of introducing the three vocabulary training strategies (synonyms and antonyms strategy, collocation use strategy, and the word family strategy) to students that included the steps of (presenting and naming the strategy, modeling, practice, checking, and evaluating the strategy) which seemed to have a motivating and influential effect on students' progress and raising their awareness for using new efficient learning strategies. Students claimed that modeling and practice gave them enough time and opportunities to assimilate and apply the strategies in real writing tasks.

This interpretation is in accordance with the view of Attia (2002) stressing that providing students with modeling of strategies by the researcher as well as by some students is an important factor helped them in reshaping their perceptions about some highly important concepts such as learning and the learner's role. He added that extensive practice that provided within each unit as well as in the consolidation units enabled students to learn, practise, revise, and consolidate each strategy.

A second explanation for the superiority of the experimental group students lies in the variety of means for delivering content using different techniques that employed in the training program. Examples to those techniques include: using think-aloud protocols and writing with wow words for building vocabulary. Such techniques motivated students to take part in learning and become more reflective, creative and responsible for their learning.

This explanation is consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Trapsilo (2016) and Agustiara (2017) in which they proved that using think-aloud protocols help EFL students in learning to write well, interest, and be active, so that their ability in writing can be improved. Also, this interpretation is in accordance with the recommendations of (NBSS, 2013) that maintained getting students to

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think of wow words in their reading or in speech, as well as in their writing, are ways to deepen their understanding of language as well as develop their written work.

The third explanation is related to exposing the experimental group students to the training strategies that might have had a great impact on developing their repertoire of strategies which helped them better learn, retain, and expand their vocabulary knowledge. This interpretation is in conformity with Zayan (2015) who showed that exposing students to the vocabulary training strategies might have helped them become more active and self-independent learners, the thing which might have triggered them to go for discovering more vocabularies and contributed to fostering their feeling of success.

Discussion of the Results

The main purpose of the present research was to investigate the effect of vocabulary strategy training in developing writing quality among third year EFL majors at the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University. The results of the research revealed that the mean scores improved from the pretests to the posttests among the experimental group students. That is, the proposed training in that group had a significant impact on the participants' writing quality.

It is worth mentioning that students in the experimental group experienced a new learning situation where they were intrinsically motivated to learn and to play an active role in their own learning. That is why they perceived the program as a good and successful experience. Moreover, they perceived the objectives, content, procedures, materials, and duration of the program as relevant with appropriate sequence. They also were conscious about their writing quality improvement; a central objective in the program. This significant improvement is due to administering the proposed program for that experimental group. Consequently, it can be concluded that the program was a successful one according to students' results and their positive perception.

In addition students' willingness to improve their writing quality played a crucial role in engendering their motivation to engage the sessions of the program. The clear and systematic procedures of the proposed explicit approach made it easy for EFL third year students to follow the instructor's model and to know exactly what they were

supposed to do in each session. This contributed to fostering their feeling of success and to their awareness of the good experience they were passing through. The instructor highlighted during the training sessions of the program that the successful processes lead to a successful product. That is why students did their best throughout the writing tasks and activities which led to significant final results.

With this in mind, the results of the present research are in line with the results of the studies conducted by, Alharthi (2014), Atay & Ozbulgan (2007), Fan (2003), and Yang (2007) in that they proved that by applying vocabulary learning strategies as a specific domain appropriately, language users can make progress in their use of language as well as in communicative competence. Also, successful vocabulary learners were found to be active strategy users who were conscious of their learning and took steps to regulate it. Therefore, a learner needs to be given explicit instruction to become more aware of the broad range of strategies that can be employed during the learning process.

The results of the present research are also in accordance with the results of the studies that handled learner-centered techniques and autonomy. These include the studies conducted by Abdel-Haq, et al (2020), Attia (2002), Bouwer, et al (2017), Hassan (2008), and Rahimi (2014). Furthermore, the findings of the present research affirm the assumption underlying other studies, that writing quality improves with systematic practice through intended treatment. Examples of these studies are those conducted by Abdel-Haq & Ali (2017), Adas & Bakir (2013), and Khalafallah (2017).

Based on the above-mentioned interpretation of the data, it can be concluded that the proposed vocabulary training strategies (synonyms and antonyms strategy, collocation use strategy, and word family strategy) based program to the experimental group students was effective in improving students' writing quality in general, and its dimensions (content, vocabulary use, organization, and mechanics of writing). This improvement can be attributed to the effectiveness of the proposed program in teaching that was adopted in the present research and was evident in the positive results of the research.

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Conclusions

Based upon the results obtained, the following conclusions have been reached:

1- The present research proved the effectiveness of using the vocabulary strategy training in developing third year EFL majors' writing quality at the Faculty of Education, Al-Azhar University.

2- The present research highlighted the significant relationship between enhancing vocabulary and writing production that having a repertoire of vocabulary is an essential prerequisite for the success of the writing process.

3- The present research provided evidence that explicit teaching integrates so many aspects that enhance active learning and positive attitude towards writing production. It encompasses learner autonomy, learners' affect and social interactions, and collaborations in working together.

Recommendation

Based on the previous results and conclusions of the present research, the following recommendations seem pertinent:

1- More studies are recommended to investigate the effectiveness of other innovative vocabulary teaching strategies and techniques.

2- Explicit presentation and practice of writing technicalities of content and organization should be stressed in the preparation programs of English language teachers so that they are capable of writing effectively.

3- The proposed vocabulary strategy training program is recommended to be used as a framework for developing students' writing quality and it can be adopted to develop other language skills.

4- Writing lectures are recommended to positively handle students' diversity of the composing processes starting from their writing strengths and moving to the skills they need to improve.

Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the results attained, the present research proposes the following suggestions for further research:

1- Examining the relationship of writing quality to many other factors, including grammatical complexity, lexical richness, accuracy, sociolinguistics, fluency, etc.

2- Investigating the applicability of the proposed programs in improving writing quality of other EFL students at different instructional stages (e.g. secondary and preparatory stages).

3- Designing other vocabulary strategy training based programs for enhancing other language skills than writing.

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Appendix (B)

The Writing Quality Test

Dear student,

In the following test you have three tasks for writing two complete essays. You should read the questions carefully to understand and answer the test in order to measure your quality of writing. Before starting, you will be given some general instructions about the two tasks of writing.

General instructions:

Time Duration.....

- Begin each task of writing in a separate sheet of paper.

- You will be notified when there are 10 minutes remaining.

-You should write at least 250 words in each task and give reasons and examples when relevant.

....
....

Task: 1   (.... Marks)

Most world countries suffer from unemployment, terrorism, food shortage, and pollution. Choose one of the previous problems that you believe could be solved. Write about it, suggest and explain possible solutions for it.

....
....

Task: 2   (.... Marks)

"Hard work is the only key to success." To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion? Give reasons and examples where relevant.

....
....

Task: 3   (.... Marks)

Describe an interesting person of your parents, leaders, teachers or professors. Be specific in describing his/her special characteristics that you think make him or her an interesting person.

A Scoring Rubric for the Writing Quality Test

Student's   name: ....
Number: ....

Band	Content	Organization	Vocabulary Use	Mechanics of Writing
6	- The content is communicated effectively and well-developed at appropriate length. Content is relevant to the task. Main ideas are developed with logically compelling reasons and examples.	- The text is well- organized, unified, coherent, using a variety of cohesive devices. The student manages paragraphing skillfully. Organizational skills are present in the text making flow and coherence of ideas smoothly.	- The student demonstrates a broad use of vocabulary appropriately with control of lexical features. Effective use of idiomatic expressions that shows awareness of connotations and their meaning; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'.	- The task consistently demonstrates appropriate style and register for the text. The task exhibits high level of grammatical accuracy. Text shows mastery of punctuation and spelling conventions. Fully addresses all parts of the task. Errors are rare (1-2) that do not impede communication.
5	- The content is generally communicated clearly. Content is developed at appropriate length. Content addresses a	- The text is organized and coherent, using a range of cohesive devices. Using paragraphing appropriately. Arranging information and	- The student uses an adequate and sufficient range of vocabulary for the task to allow some flexibility and precision. He	- The task generally demonstrates appropriate style and register for the text type. The task exhibits good level of grammatical accuracy of

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	clear claim, provides evidence to support the claim.	ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression.	uses less common lexical items. He may produce occasional errors in word choice, /or word formation.	language throughout. - Errors do not generally impede communication.
4	- The content is communicated but may lack clarity in some places. Content is developed to some extent, although in places it may be incomplete or repetitive.	- The student presents information with some organization, but there may be a lack of overall progression. The student makes inadequate, inaccurate or over use of cohesive devices.	- The student uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task. He may make noticeable errors in word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader.	- The task reasonably demonstrates appropriate style and register for the text type, although this may not be consistent. The task exhibits reasonable level of grammatical accuracy of language. - Errors may impede communication in places and cause some difficulty for the reader.

Band	Content	Organization	Vocabulary Use	Mechanics of Writing
3	- The content is communicated limitedly as it lacks clarity in places. - Content is developed limitedly as there may be gaps, irrelevance or repetition.	- The student presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is no clear progression in the response. The student uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive.	- The student uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task. He has limited control of word formation; errors may cause strain for the reader.	- The task may only be incompletely fulfilled. The student uses limited structures.
2	- Irrelevance and misinterpretation of task may be present. There is little support for main ideas. Target reader is minimally informed.	- The student does not organize ideas logically. He may use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas.	- The student uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation.	- The student uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses.

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1	- The content is totally irrelevant. Reasons, examples or details are lacking or inappropriate. Target reader is not informed.	- The student has very little control of organisational features.	- The student can only use a few isolated words.	- The student attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning.
0	- The student does not attempt the task in any way. - There is no response worthy of credit.	- The student does not attempt the task in any way. - There is no response worthy of credit.	- The student does not attempt the task in any way. - There is no response worthy of credit.	- The student does not attempt the task in any way. - There is no response worthy of credit.