A Case Study to Compare Collaborative vs. Individual Essay Writing in Saudi Male EFL Learners

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Abstract

This research is set in the Saudi Arabian third level context and investigates the impact on English language (L2) academic essay writing of writing collaboratively compared to writing individually. In the field of Applied Linguistics, to date, little attention has been paid to the role of collaborative writing in improving writing in the English as an L2 classroom, in this or indeed other international contexts. However, it is particularly relevant to the KSA context where improving academic writing among students is a current concern in the drive to grow educational and economic links internationally. The participants in this study were 20 L2 male students in Level 3 majoring in English at the Imam University College of Languages and Translation in Saudi Arabia.

The research study used a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis. To collect data, the researcher utilized five researcher-designed instruments: an EFL essay writing test, an error-correction writing test, a questionnaire with open-ended questions (practitioners and students), semi-structured interviews (students), and think-aloud protocols. Qualitative data were collected through the open questions in the pre- and post- questionnaires, interviews, and think-aloud protocols. The quantitative data were collected through the pre- and post- questionnaires, the error-correction writing test, and the writing pre- and post-tests. The results of this study show a positive impact of collaborative writing, which was manifested in improved essay writing performance, motivation, attitudes towards collaborative writing, and peer feedback in improving writing skills.

The findings of this study were found to be very significant for the adoption of collaborative writing in teaching EFL writing. While the study expands on and confirms previous research study in the field of TESOL, specifically methods for teaching writing, it also stresses the need for further research into new pedagogical methods such as online and outside class collaborative writing and peer feedback training.
List of Public Talks


Mansour Alammar (2016) “The Effectiveness of Work Group vs. Individual Writing A Case Study to Compare Work Group vs. Individual Writing in Class to Improve Essay Writing for Saudi Male ESL Learners”, Poster presented at The Postgraduate Community within the AHSS Faculty at UL, a one day postgraduate conference, 19 May 2016


Attended the University of limereick, Faculty AHSS conference in May 2018
Declaration

I declare that the work presented here is original and a result of my own work.

__________________________________________
Mansour Alammar
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Abbreviations
ANOVA: The One-way Analysis of Variance
CF: Corrective feedback
CL: Collaborative Learning (CL)
CLT: Constructivist Learning Theory
CLE: Collaborative Learning Environment
CW: Collaborative Writing
EA: Error Analysis
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELT: English Language Teaching
ESL: English as a Second Language
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
L1: Arabic Language
L2: English Language
MHE: Ministry of Higher Education
MELAB: Michigan English Language Assessment Battery
MOOCs: Massive Open Online Courses
SES: Saudi Educational System
SLA: Second Language Acquisition
TAPs: think aloud protocols
TL: Target Language
TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language
TWE: Test of Written English
UAE: United Arab Emirates
USA: The United States of America
ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1: An Overview of the Education System in Saudi Arabia

This research study is set in Saudi Arabia and focuses on third-level Saudi students. The study investigates the impact of collaborative writing compared to writing individually on L2 learners. Until recently, applied linguistics literature has paid little attention to the role of collaborative writing in improving writing in English in an L2 classroom. However, research on this topic is particularly relevant to the SA context in which the improvement of academic writing among the students is an on-going concern. This section provides the education context for this research, before introducing the specifics of the study (section 1.3).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) greatly values education, as evidenced by the fact that King Abdul-Aziz founded the Directorate of Education in 1925, seven years prior to the official unification of the country in 1932 (Leatherdale, 2012, p. 7). Successive governments have continued to accord a high priority to education, which is acknowledged to play a crucial role in the country. The Saudi government is cognizant of the need for knowledgeable learners who will support the development and growth of the country. Since 1925, the education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has been transformed, in part due to the government’s significant investment in learning. As a rich oil-producing country, Saudi Arabia has had the resources to build a substantive educational infrastructure within a very short period of time and bear the cost of a high education budget. Since 2000, the budget has increased for education, indicating the strong support for the development of this field. For example, in 2013, the amount allocated for learning was 25% of the country’s total annual budget (Ministry of Finance, 2013). While the 2017 budget allocation for Health and Social Development was SAR 120,419,691,000 (€27,540,200,378) and for Military was SAR 190,854,490,000 (€43,648,765,862) the funds allocated for education was a staggering SAR 200,329,066,000 (€45,815,618,471) (Ministry of Finance, 2017, p. 22). In addition, the government offers Saudi learners free education at all educational levels, encourages Saudi students to pursue higher study, and offers scholarships for international study.
In terms of the organization of the education system, the Ministry of Education administers both publicly and privately funded schools and universities. This Ministry supervises the Directorate of Education for both boys and girls. As Saudi education observes the strict segregation of males and females, a separate female education system offers free schooling from primary school to the postgraduate level (Sabbagh, 1996). The education system for both boys and girls consists of the following: primary school for six years; intermediate school for three years; and high school for three years. Established in 1975, the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) is charged with developing and coordinating the Department of Higher Education. The MHE manages higher education learning in KSA and is responsible for all Saudi Arabian universities and institutes. The Council of Higher Education is the highest authority in Saudi higher education with a remit to devise educational policy and implement admission rules in education (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2006). The MHE also supports and manages international academic relations, scholarships, and educational offices abroad. The Directorate of Curricula carries out the function of developing and implementing curricula. These extensive activities reflect the Saudi government’s recognition of the importance of education in sustaining the development of the country (Bashehab & Buddhapriya, 2013).

1.2: Issues in English Education

1.2.1: The English Language Situation in Saudi Arabia

Arabic is the official language of Saudi Arabia, and as such, is used throughout the country. However, English is also widely used in industry, business, and many other fields, particularly for communication with non-native speakers of the Arabic language (Habbash, 2011). English is therefore the ‘lingua franca’ for communication between Arabic speakers and speakers of other languages. Moreover, English is considered by the government of Saudi Arabia as the medium for bringing new technology to the country and for establishing diplomatic relations with developed countries. The need to use the English language reflects the strength of the trade relationship between the country and the United States and European countries, especially in terms of education and arms (Habbash, 2011). As well as functioning as a lingua franca, English is widely used in diplomacy, international trade, contracts, economics, international aviation, higher studies, research, and affairs of international cooperation across the world, as well as for peace talks (Liton, 2012).

Hence, the English language has assumed very important status among Saudis, which ultimately necessitates the teaching of the English language in Saudi Arabian schools and
universities. The aim of such teaching is to enable learners to be familiar with the language and support them, especially in the fields of education, business and trade.

1.2.1.1: English in the Education Curriculum

English as a foreign language (EFL) was selected to be taught in Saudi Arabian schools and universities because, as noted above, it is the dominant lingua franca of the region. During the twentieth century, foreign language curricula and pedagogies at all levels of education in Saudi Arabia changed dramatically. As a result, the English curriculum being developed in Saudi Arabia is more reflective of Saudi culture. Different paradigms, cultures, and ways of thinking and behaving have been carefully introduced to align with differences between sociocultural practices (Elyas 2008). Thus Saudi English curriculum focuses on local cultures and excludes habits and customs such as dating and drinking alcohol (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Developing a standardized, culturally-grounded English teaching curriculum for Grades 4–12 in KSA elementary, intermediate and high schools has become an important issue. Revenues from oil production account for a significant percentage of the financial support for the Kingdom’s educational system and help it to provide services, opportunities and development. Recently, the Tatweer Company for Education was founded (see Teaching English in Saudi Public Schools below) with programmes that include textbook development, English proficiency testing, and effective training of teachers of the English language. Responding to the issue of developing the education curriculum, the Ministry of Education and Tatweer (via the Tatweer Company for Educational Services) customized the KSA English language teaching textbooks and the accompanying supplementary materials to reflect Saudi Arabian culture. In this way, a standardized, comprehensive national curriculum grounded in Saudi Arabian culture has been established.

1.2.1.2: English in Higher Education

English writing is now a common and central gauge for universities’ learning success (Jahin, 2012) and is a medium of instruction in many Saudi universities (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996). Habbash (2011), for instance, observed that the majority of universities are changing their instruction from Arabic to English, thereby increasing the importance of the English language. This in turn highlights the importance of teaching English as a compulsory module in many courses in Saudi universities. As government, teachers, and students are aware of the standing of English in Saudi Arabia, this English language is considered one of the major subjects in the
education system plan and is consequently a compulsory subject from primary school to the university level (Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). For example, English, in addition to Arabic subjects, is compulsory for undergraduate students at universities such as Imam and King Abdul-Aziz. All students must pass general English courses in the preparatory year, if needed, before they can enrol for the following year in different colleges.

Until 2006, there were only eight universities in Saudi Arabia. However, by the end of 2009, this number had increased to 26 (Ministry of Education, 2017). This substantial increase in the number of educational institutions has had an effect on English language teaching (ELT). Now, there are English language centres and departments across the universities which offer intensive courses to learn English. For instance, at Imam University, where the researcher teaches English, the English Department offers two courses aimed at training students in the four major skills (namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as a course aimed at improving vocabulary. All new students spend one year taking these courses before going to study in the college as students majoring in English language. This type of programme training is offered in all public Saudi universities. Furthermore, English is the medium of instruction in engineering, medical, and other science schools (Faruk, 2013).

**Teaching English in Saudi Public Schools**

Since 1970, English as a foreign language has been taught to Saudi students as a compulsory subject in public schools at intermediate and high school level (Mahboob & Elyas, 2014). Saudi public schools provide six years of education. English is the only foreign language taught in Saudi public (state) schools. English as a foreign language was introduced at Grade 6 (11 years old) in 2003 and later introduced at Grade 4 (nine years old) in 2012 (Faruk, 2013). The English component is intended to improve overall student skills in English and enable them to use it as a knowledge tool in addition to the Arabic language.

School English courses aim to help students attain the required proficiency in the English language to equip them to continue their education in universities. First, the schools enable students to acquire the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Second, the programme prepares students to gain the important linguistic knowledge for communicative situations. Third, the English programme in public schools aims to allow school students to develop positive attitudes towards learning the English language (Al Zayid, 2012; UrRahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). It is also notable that the Public Education Development Project (Tatweer)
is an official system that was introduced in 2009 to 200 high schools in the Kingdom. Teachers in these schools were trained and instructed to use technological environments in their classrooms (Tatweer Project, 2009). The main aim of the project was to integrate the use of communications technology into education and improve student language skills, analytical thinking, and creativity as a means to fulfil student needs in this stage of their studies (Oyaid, 2009). This project helped students improve their knowledge of the English language as one of the mandatory subjects in public schools.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two (section 2.2), while there is a great effort to develop English courses within the public school system, the majority of students have not met the required proficiency level to be admitted to Saudi universities and recent performance of Saudi students on English proficiency tests shows unsatisfactory results. For example, Saudi students’ English proficiency is relatively low compared to that of students from other countries (Carfax Educational Projects, 2017). In fact, as shown in Table 1.1, Saudi Arabia ranks 72nd out of 80 countries on the EF English Proficiency Index (EF English Proficiency Index, 2017).

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<td>26 out of 44</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>50 out of 52</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>59 out of 60</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>59 out of 63</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>68 out of 70</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>68 out of 72</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>72 out of 80</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (EPI, 2017)

In addition, according to the IELTS statistics published in 2017, the scores from 2017 indicated that Saudi students’ performance on the academic test ranked 39th out of 40 countries. Academic writing remains the weakest skill for IELTS test takers (Table 1.2). This confirmed
that the Saudi students were still weak in English language proficiency performance in 2017, especially in writing skills. Two factors that continue to affect students’ English proficiency are the qualifications of the teachers and the availability of textbooks with high-quality content.

**Table 1.1: Saudi Arabian students’ IELTS Academic and general training test performance (2017)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IELTS</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank Globally</td>
<td>38 out of 40</td>
<td>38 out of 40</td>
<td>37 out of 40</td>
<td>39 out of 40</td>
<td>39 out of 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General training</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank Globally</td>
<td>40 out of 40</td>
<td>40 out of 40</td>
<td>40 out of 40</td>
<td>40 out of 40</td>
<td>40 out of 40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (IELTS, 2017)

**Qualified Teachers**

Almost all teachers of the English language in KSA are native Saudis who have studied English at universities in Saudi Arabia for four years (Faruk, 2013). The qualification for Saudi teachers is a degree in English, but the fact that no previous training or experience is required to teach English in schools contributes to the problem of the students’ poor proficiency in the English language (Elyas, 2008). Training teachers to teach English requires more effort and support from the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE):

*In-service training programmes are currently conducted on a limited scale via the local education departments that are scattered all over Saudi Arabia and are handled in a poor manner. Another disturbing observation is that some English teachers have received almost no in-service teaching training.*

(Al-Seghayer 2014, p. 146)

More details can be found in Chapter Two (sections 2.2 and 2.5).

**Textbooks**

Factors contributing to poor student outcomes on English proficiency measures include not only marginally qualified and unprepared English teachers but also poor-quality textbooks which fail to improve language teaching and learning or support the social purpose of the
community (Liton, 2012). As noted above, the Ministry has expended a great deal of effort to improve the English language curriculum. However, while the quality of the new textbooks has somewhat improved, the modifications have proved unsatisfactory (Elyas, 2008; Alrabai, 2016). See Chapter Two (section 2.2) for more details.

English textbooks in education play a prominent role in instructing ESL/EFL learners as they are one of the main vehicles of conveying knowledge to students. One of the fundamental functions of the textbooks is to make the existing knowledge apparent to learners in an easy, organized way. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) argued that textbooks have a critical part to play in teaching English and maintained that textbooks should provide the necessary input to classroom activities. The content of textbooks influences what teachers teach and students learn. According to Brown (1995, p. 139):

...any systematic description of the techniques and exercises to be used in a classroom teaching [should be] ...broad enough to encompass lesson plans and ...accommodate books, packets of audiovisual aids, games, or any of the myriad types of activities that go on in the language classroom.

As suggested by Matsuda (2012) the aim of teaching EFL learners is to help them to utilize English as a communicative tool within a competitive and globalized world which is diverse in both cultural aspects and linguistic capacities. Gray (2002, p. 116) suggested that there is a need for a “global coursebook” that provides leaners with a ‘better fit’ in terms of connecting them with the global world of English. In Saudi Arabia, however, the quality of such textbooks is insufficient (Liton, 2013). To this end, as previously mentioned, the Ministry of Education is currently striving to revise and develop high-quality, culturally-sensitive textbooks for both schools and universities. It is worth mentioning that the issue of sociocultural identity needs more attention in using a foreign language in classrooms in KSA. The Ministry of Education’s change to the Tatweer programme is clearly motivated by the need to develop textbooks that will result in the teaching/learning English language outcomes it deems desirable for the Kingdom.

1.3: Rationale for the Thesis

As has been shown above, Saudi Arabia is among the countries in which English is taught as a foreign language. In recent years, the importance of the English language in politics and economics has raised awareness among Saudi Arabians of the need to learn English (Faruk, 2013). However, Saudi learners find English as a foreign language particularly difficult to
Several hindrances to developing proficiency in English have been identified in the Saudi context. These barriers include: (1) rigid teaching methodologies, low levels of motivation, poor student attitudes towards learning English, and the overuse of Arabic in the teaching of English (Nayef & Hajjaj, 1989; Massialas & Jarrar, 1983); (2) little or no teacher training in English teaching methods in general and writing skills in particular (Al-Seghayer, 2005, 2011, 2014; Khan, 2011a; Zohairy, 2012); and (3) flawed curriculum design (Al-Hakami 2011; Al-Hazmi, 2003, 2017). However, due to the importance of the English language in the Saudi Educational System (SES), it needs more targeted support, specifically in further curriculum development and teacher training (Faruk, 2013; Khan, 2011a; Ur Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013; Zohairy, 2012). Therefore, research on new pedagogies for teaching English, such as the collaborative writing examined in this study, has increased. Collaborative learning (CL) has now become an essential issue in the field of education (Kohonen, 1992; Schnackenberg & Mcwhaw, 2003; Nunan, 1992) and is a widespread activity in most English as a Foreign or Second Language writing classes. Collaborative learning is considered one of the most important and widely adopted active pedagogical methods (Tsay & Brady, 2010) and found to be useful in many different areas of education. For instance, it has been shown to have a positive impact on achievement, productivity, motivation, and peer relationships (Ashman & Gillies, 2003).

Collaborative strategies afford opportunities for learners to work together to achieve common goals (Kessler, 1992). In general, collaborative learning methods encourage learners to pool their resources and complete specific tasks which they are not capable of doing alone. For example, practising through group dialogues with peers assists the learners in achieving good work in a specific activity (Bruffee, 1984; Hirveila, 1999). Such an activity emphasizes how learners can help each other to attain the required skills (Schmuck, 1985). The way in which the concept of collaborative learning is applied in this thesis will be fully discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.9) but in brief, it refers to participants working together in groups on specific activities. For the purposes of this study, this collaborative activity is writing, with each participating student required to take an active part in the writing process.

This study will focus exclusively on the development of writing skills. At the tertiary level, composition has become an important aspect of a university education as a part of rhetorical studies (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). However, developing sound English writing skills is difficult, especially for learners studying English as a foreign language (Negari, 2011). The range of
necessary skills involved was highlighted by Grabe and Kaplan, who noted that ‘students in English as a foreign language contexts will need English writing skills ranging from a simple paragraph and summary skills to the ability to write essays and professional articles’ (2014, pp. 24–25). Learners must therefore master all types of writing skills, since in addition to learning how to compose argumentative, expository, and narrative texts during courses and exams, students must also learn a variety of writing genres, such as lesson plans and reports (Al-Hazmi & Scholfield, 2007).

Mastery of writing skills demands a great deal of work because they combine linguistic knowledge, affect, critical thinking, and social interactions (Perin, 2013). As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two (section 2.6), mastering English writing skills presents a challenge for Arab students and for Saudi students in particular (Al-Khairy, 2013; Al Fadda, 2012). Although the improvement of writing skills receives relatively little attention compared to other skills, especially in Saudi universities, there has been increased interest in developing writing activities for the language classroom. For example, there is an effort to use different methods such as collaborative writing, pair writing, and peer feedback, for teaching writing in this context (Al-Besher, 2012; Al-Nafiseh, 2013; Grami, 2010).

It is common for writing teachers in a Saudi university to emphasize the final product and its linguistic features and to follow a traditional teaching approach (individual writing in class) whereby practitioners occupy the centre of the teaching process as they control students and the writing process (Al-Hazmi, 2006). Saudi teachers often rely on the prescribed textbooks, and do not embrace more interactive methods (Zohairy, 2012). As such, teachers usually decide the structure to be used by their students and provide key words, phrases, and a model text using the genre approach, which is “a technical term for a particular instance of a text type” (Christie, 2005, p. 233) in which students follow teacher instructions to produce a piece of individual writing. While this method of teaching (individual writing) can produce positive effects, it can also have a number of negative consequences for students. The negative impact of this method of teaching has been noted in both critical thinking (Al-Hazmi, 1998, 2017) and in learner attitudes towards writing in English (Al-Seghayer, 2014; Faruk, 2014). New methods for teaching students are therefore needed to help students improve their writing. The current study offers collaborative writing as one of those new methods.
The theoretical and pedagogical reasons for the use of group work in education (section 2.5) have become interesting issues of research in respect of both social psychology and education. While from a purely theoretical perspective, the tenets of social constructivism (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978) see the development of knowledge as taking place in social situations (section 2.5), from a pedagogical angle, small-group work is based on using a communicative approach that pays special attention to helping the learners to use the L2 (Storch, 2005). It has been claimed that there are numerous pedagogical benefits of collaborative learning (section 2.9.1), such as, for example, that it may help weak students to interact effectively when sharing the task of learning with more-skilled partners (Gabriele, 2007; Schmitz & Winskel, 2008). It also enables the students to develop many skills such as critical thinking, leadership, building self-esteem, and increasing motivation (Garibaldi, 1979; Hill & Hill, 1990).

As will be discussed in Chapter Two, relevant research has shown that collaborative writing (CW) has a positive effect on students’ improvement in writing. Storch (2002), for instance, claims that CL in the form of CW might help learners to write actively. She suggests that teachers should encourage their learners to be involved in group activities which enhance interaction and learning. Graham (2005) also supports this issue, finding that CW helps learners develop new ideas and encourages them to debate, discuss, agree, or disagree, and help each other through different opinions or feedback. As will be shown in Chapter Two, considerable research has demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative learning in the form of collaborative writing in pairs or small groups in classrooms in different areas of writing (Graham, 2005; Grami, 2010; Noël & Robert, 2003; Storch, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2007; Williams, 2003).

It seems, then, that the collaborative writing strategy might be a very effective way of teaching writing to students in Saudi Arabia and may be an alternative way to boost student achievement levels in writing. This issue prompted the researcher to apply collaborative learning or more specifically collaborative writing (CW) to Saudi students. This yielded significant findings as discussed in Chapters Four (Findings) and Five (Discussion).

1.4: Aims and Objectives of the Study

Previous research in this field has educated a number of interesting issues which relate to the current study. For instance, as just mentioned and as will be further discussed in section 2.9.3, collaborative writing has a positive effect on learners (Al-Besher, 2012; Al-Nafiseh, 2013;
Shehadeh, 2011), and peer feedback plays a significant role in student progress in writing (Grami, 2010). This study investigates the role of collaborative writing versus writing individually in class through the application of five data collection instruments (section 3.4.5).

The research study then aims to determine the effectiveness of collaborative writing in developing L2 learner skills in essay writing as compared to traditional individualized methods. In an attempt to breach the identified gap in the literature on collaborative writing in the research context of Saudi Arabia, four research questions have been formulated for this research as follows:

1. **Which is more effective in improving learners’ essay writing, collaborative writing or writing individually?**

The main aim of this question is to find out whether collaborative writing in essay writing provides more benefits as compared to individual writing, and it includes the following three sub-questions:

2. **Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?**

3. **Are student perceptions and attitudes positively affected by collaborative writing learning settings?**

4. **What are the practitioners’ perceptions of collaborative writing?**

These questions aim:

- To elicit whether the collaborative writing strategy offers more benefits for students and is more effective in reducing errors in writing and improving writing than writing individually in class.
- To compare the effectiveness of writing essays between students who work individually and those who work in groups
- To determine which areas need strengthening to improve learner skills in essay writing
- To elicit student attitudes towards collaborative writing in class
- To open up the debate for further study and suggest various strategies which may be used to improve essay writing by students who work in groups.

The research study is also intended to offer ideas for practical applications of CW that could be used in the professional development of English writing teachers in Saudi universities, and indeed, in other third level contexts.
1.5: Outline of This Thesis

Chapter One provides the context of the study, namely, the current English language learning situation in Saudi Arabia. Following this, it outlines the aims and describes the rationale for conducting the study. The aims of the research study are also set out.

Chapter Two provides a literature review, which pays special attention to:

- The nature and process of writing
- Teaching EFL writing to Saudi learners
- Theories which specifically relate to collaborative writing
- Factors that frequently affect Saudi learners’ academic writing
- Frequent errors often made by EFL/ESL learners and Saudi/Arabic speaking learners
- Approaches to teaching writing
- Collaborative writing and peer feedback

Chapter Three presents the research methodology developed for this study. This chapter elucidates the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches used in conducting the research. As such, it describes the research design, the study setting, the participants, and the selection of instruments required to collect data. The data collection instruments comprise:

- Questionnaires
- Writing Tests
- Identifying Error Tests
- Semi-structured Interviews
- Think Aloud Protocols.

This chapter also presents the methods used for the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter Four presents the results and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data. This reveals information on the backgrounds of both teachers and student participants and their perceptions of collaborative writing through their responses to the first of the data collection instruments. During the interview (the second research instrument) participants gave positive responses about collaborative writing. The Think Aloud protocol (a qualitative data collection instrument) provided much evidence for the benefits of CW, while the Error Tests demonstrated that students who were writing collaboratively made fewer errors. Finally, the overall writing performance of the participants after they had utilized collaborative writing in their treatment study is discussed based on the pre- and post-treatment error-correction and essay writing tests specified above. Chapter Five summarizes the research study findings and
discusses their relationship to extant research and theories related to the study in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Chapter Six presents conclusions of the research study, discusses and justifies some implications of the findings, and suggests how they may be applied in other geographical contexts. The limitations of the current study and some recommendations for further research are also considered.

1.6: Definition of Terms

The key terms and concepts used in this thesis are listed and briefly defined as follows:

**Approach:** a set of assumptions on the theories on language and language learning representing the “belief system’ that a method reflects (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, p. 22).

**Collaboration:** “a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (Friend & Cook, 2007, p. 7).

**Collaborative learning:** refers to learners working in small groups to solve problems or complete particular tasks (Artz & Newman, 1990; Graham, 2005). See detailed discussion in section 2.9.

**Collaborative writing:** refers to two or more students working together to plan, draft, and/or revise their compositions (Graham & Perin, 2007). See detailed discussion in section 2.9.3.

**Curriculum:** “a plan of instruction that details what students are to know, how they are to learn it, what the teacher’s role is, and the context in which learning and teaching will take place” (North Central Regional Educational Library, 2002, p. 1).

**Grammatical error:** an error which arises from violations in the “productive rule of the language” (Henry & Roseberry, 2007). See detailed discussion in section 2.8.

**Method:** the overall plan for classroom teaching involving different techniques, for example the teaching content and the order of content. This general term includes the approach, design and procedures in Richards and Rodgers’ (2014) model.

**Methodology:** “…can be identified with design defined by Richards and Rodgers (1986). It involves content, objectives, materials, procedures and assessment which ‘constitutes the practical level of the general model for second language teaching” (Stern, 1983, p. 44).

**Participant:** refers to the practitioners and the Saudi EFL students who took part in the questionnaire survey.

**Peer:** students of the same class level learning within the same classroom.
Peer Review: simply “the process of having students critique each other’s papers” (Brammer & Rees, 2007, p. 71). See detailed discussion in section 2.9.3.2.

Perception: a “physical sensation as interpreted in the light of experience; the integration of sensory impressions of events in the external world” (Freeman, 1981, p. 565).

Positive interdependence: refers to an entire group working together effectively and successfully (Kagan, 1994). See detailed discussion in section 2.9.2.

Process approach: writing as related to the mental processes inherent in writing in the mother-tongue; namely, planning, drafting, rethinking, revising, etc. (Jordan, 1997, p. 164) See detailed discussion in section 2.7.3.

Product approach: as the name indicates, this focuses on the finished product or text (Jordan, 1997). See detailed discussion in section 2.7.2.

Rater: in this thesis this term refers to a person who conducts a writing assessment.

Reliability: refers to the consistency of the results obtained from an assessment (Bailey, 1998). According to Carmines & Zeller (1979, p. 11), “Fundamentally, reliability concerns the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials”.

Respondent: in this thesis this term refers to the Saudi EFL students who participated in the questionnaire.

Speaker: in this study this term refers to students who talked out loud in the experimental group while writing collaboratively.

Task: “a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed” (Ellis, 2003, p.16).

Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs): refers to a type of research data used in empirical translation process research. The data elicitation method is known as ‘thinking aloud’ or ‘concurrent verbalization’ and requires subjects to perform a task and to verbalize whatever crosses their minds during the task performance. Written transcripts of these verbalizations are called Think-Aloud Protocols (TAPs) (Jääskeläinen, 2010, p. 371).

Validity: “the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure” (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008, p. 2278).

Writing assessment: a measure used to represent a level of writing achievement or ability a student has acquired (Sainsbury, 2009).

Writing development: changes which take place in students’ strategic writing behaviour, knowledge and motivation (Harris et al., 2006).
Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): the area of learning which resides between what the student can do independently and with the help of a more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1978).
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW: Collaborative Writing

2.0: Introduction
This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature in order to establish a theoretical framework for learning and teaching writing skills through the collaborative writing strategy used in the current study. To this end, it is divided into a number of sections. Section 2.1 considers the nature of writing while section 2.2 provides an overview of writing and Arab-speaking learners of English. Micro and Macro levels in writing are presented in section 2.1.2 while Teaching EFL writing to Saudi learners is presented in section 2.2.2. Section 2.3 presents the L2 writing theories which specifically relate to this study. Section 2.4 discusses writing strategies. Section 2.5 explores a number of problems and factors that frequently affect Saudi learners’ academic writing. The process and main approaches of teaching writing are illustrated in sections 2.6 and 2.7. The frequent errors often made by EFL/ESL learners of English language are also presented in section 2.8. Section 2.9 reviews the literature concerning the benefits and drawbacks of collaborative writing and also presents research on collaborative writing in EFL for Arabic speaking contexts which directly related to this study. In addition, this section discusses various feedback types, with particular focus on the role of peer feedback in academic writing.

2.1: The Nature of Writing
In this section, the researcher offers a background to the nature of writing, elements of writing, and micro and macro levels of writing. Writing skills are clearly extremely important within academic settings, institutions and universities where learners are required to write, explaining their ideas in English in different courses such as Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In addition to the importance of writing, as it is a skill which has been neglected by some academic programmes, it is described by many scholars and researchers to be a very complicated cognitive task which requires careful and intense practice as opposed to a mere direct production of text (White & Bruning, 2005; Widdowson, 1983). However, as shown by this study, and as has been noted by researchers, acquiring writing skills is apparently more difficult and laborious than acquiring the other language skills of speaking, listening and reading. Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 303) argue that “there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master”. This difficulty stems from different aspects, such as being a foreign language, the stages of the process, and the difficulty that could relate to psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors, which will be discussed in the coming
sections. Numerous scholars and researchers concur that writing is an extremely complex cognitive skill and is more complicated for EFL learners who must demonstrate control over content, syntax, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling, as well as managing the discourse level (Kroll, 1990; Smith, 2001; Hyland, 2003b; Grami, 2010). It is therefore necessary to further explore and define writing skills.

The complex skill of writing has been defined from different perspectives. Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 366) maintain it is “best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing”. According to this definition, it is useful to observe the effect of group work through the thinking processes as discussed in section 2.9 on collaborative writing. Zamel defines the writing process as a “non-linear, expletory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning’ (1983, p. 165). Abu Ghararh (1998, p. 87) meanwhile defines writing as "the logical organization and arrangement of the written sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within the units of discourse […] and the expression of the ideas.”

**Academic Writing**

Nowadays, researchers have seen increasing attention given to academic writing and its application in education and teaching. The members of academic communities are expected to be able to produce articles, academic essays, books, presentations, assignments, etc. within their fields of study. The term “academic writing” is often used narrowly to mean writing journal articles (Bloor, 1996, p. 59), which is indeed an emphasis for professors, as the number of their scholarly publications is a criterion for tenure. In the case of students, however, it has a wider meaning. Students must be trained to communicate in the language of their disciplines as well as other languages most appropriate to their audiences. In the computer science discipline, for example, students must learn to communicate in the language of professional texts (e.g., computer manuals, operating instructions) and in the language of academia (e.g., essays, journal articles). Students are trained to write in various genres such as essays, examination responses, assignments, theses, reports, presentations, newspaper editorials, and letters (Bruce, 2008). Therefore, writing in the academic context involves tackling a range of different genres, each of which has distinct features and special characteristics.

It is assumed that the goal of academic writing is clarity. In academia, writers are most effective when they employ language that other readers in the community find clear, familiar, and
Researchers have argued that writing in an academic setting involves the command of linguistic practices based on complex sets of viewpoints, purposes, values, beliefs, and rules of using language (Taki & Jafarpour, 2012). Academic writing is considered to be an endeavour aimed at initiating a dialogue with readers (Hyland, 2005). In other words, producing well-written academic writing demands not only writers’ linguistic competence but also their awareness and understanding of rhetorical features accepted by their readers.

Academic writing is seen as transformation of knowledge, a process through which a writer brings his/her readers to an understanding of his/her work’s significance and values (Taki & Jafarpour, 2012). Therefore, it is through both linguistic and socio-political processes that writers try to be recognized and acknowledged by the communities for which they write (Casanave, 2003). As stated by Hyland (2006), “academic writing is certainly not a creative act of self-discovery in most disciplines, but it does involve making rhetorical choices which best express the writer’s sense of self and his or her engagement in a community” (p. 35). Accordingly, professional researchers and students need to select their words in order to engage with others and present their ideas in ways that make the most sense to their audience or readers. Hyland (2004) explains that a writer acts “as a primary-knower in assisting novice readers toward a range of values, ideologies, and practices that will enable them to interpret and employ academic knowledge in approved academic ways” (p. 121).

Reducing academic writing to essay writing ignores the larger context of academic practices (Kamler & Thomson, 2014). In the current empirical study, a course training was provided to students to teach them how to write a short academic essay (see Appendix 9). The students were taught how to write narrative, descriptive, opinion, cause and effect, and comparison and contrast essays during the study (see section 3.4.4.1). Thus, academic writing requires that students become familiar with types of essays (narrative, descriptive, etc.), use several approaches (genre, process, and product), and perform some activities (e.g., critical thinking, paraphrasing sentences, giving and receiving feedback). The participants’ writing (academic essay writing) is an essential activity in the current study aimed at determining how much students’ writing improves when writing in class, either individually or collaboratively.

The mastery of academic prose requires novice writers to develop discourse competence (Bruce, 2008). This competence involves integrating a range of different types of knowledge in order to produce an extended written discourse that is socially appropriate and linguistically
correct. Within the complex academic context, the study examined written texts submitted by participants to determine the effect of collaborative or individual writing on academic essay writing.

In academic writing, there are different types of genres, such as description, advice, report, analysis, discussion, and argument (Lock & Lockhart, 1998). Martin (1989) suggests that there are different patterns for text structuring. These include procedure, recount, report, judgement, description, and explanation. Novice writers need to know how to use the conventions of the different genres and communicate effectively with various audiences for different purposes. For example, case studies, critical reviews, and research reports are among the genres that Grabe and Kaplan (1996) suggest are suitable for advanced learners. Students need to have some control over their written texts using structural conventions and linguistic forms that are considered sociolinguistically appropriate when performing writing in an academic context.

Genre knowledge in academic writing, as in this study, refers to a sense of the conventions of vocabulary, grammar, organisation, etc. which allow readers to express the identities and values that relate to a particular discipline. In particular, academic writing can be recognised, in large part, by its genre structure (Martin, 1989). In the current study, the participants were involved in the writing process. They were instructed on the production of a written text, the relationship between grammar and writing, text types and genres, and characteristics specific to the second language. The students received instruction on the text types and linguistic features that they needed to use in their writing.

However, in the academic sphere writing is less “a standardized system of communication” (Weigle, 2002, p. 5) than a necessary skill ‘through which learners organize and demonstrate their proficiency, and through which teachers evaluate the learners” (Ibid.). Kern (2000) argues that writing is “functional communication, making learners possible to create imagined worlds of their own design” (p.172).

It is self-evident that writers should know why they write. Bailey (2017) states that the most common reasons include reporting on a piece of research the writer has conducted, answering a question the writer has been given, discussing a subject, and/or synthesizing research undertaken by others on a specific topic. Regardless of the reasons why we should write, it is important to be mindful of the reader and how ideas can be conveyed effectively. Academic
writing arguably aspires to accuracy and objectivity and incorporates annotation, the writing of essays, reports, projects, papers, dissertations and theses. Numerous researchers have specified the purposes of academic writing. Torrance et al. (1994, p. 379), for instance, described academic writing as a "complex combination" of choosing and generating ideas to produce a proper text, and assert that academic writing is intended to advance new knowledge. Similarly, Irvin (2010, p. 8) claimed that academic writing “demonstrate[s] knowledge and show[s] proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting”. Irvin also points out that writers should remain aware of reader expectations in order to achieve success in the writing task. Thus, one of the core aims of this research is to evaluate how well the students deal with the aspects of academic writing discussed previously, such as objectivity, ability to interpret and present knowledge, and so on.

2.1.1: Elements of Writing in L2 Contexts

In this section, different views on the main elements of L2 writing will be presented. Different researchers focus on different aspects and levels. Silva (1990) characterizes second language writing "as purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction, which involves both the construction and transmission of knowledge" (p.18). Referring to Silva, the main elements of writing in second or foreign language learning contexts include the following:

- The learner’s personal knowledge, characteristics, attitudes, cultural orientation, motivation, language proficiency, etc.
- The L1 reader (audience)
- The target text (in terms of genre, modes, discourse structure, aims, syntax, lexis, etc.)
- The context for the target language (cultural, political, economic, social, physical, and situational)
- The interaction of the elements in different authentic ESL settings (p.18).

Breland et al. (1982), on the other hand, maintain the writing process involves three main elements: organization of essay; development; and the use of supporting material. These were applied to this research, wherein a monitoring process for each of these elements was built in to the study. According to Unger and Fleischman (2004), process writing also encompasses other main stages: namely, planning; organizing ideas; translating the ideas into texts; and reviewing and revising the texts. They categorized the instructions into five stages of the writing process:
1. the prewriting task  
2. the initial and creating draft  
3. the revising task  
4. the editing task  
5. the polished last draft  

(Unger and Fleischman 2004).

A number of studies have explored learner perceptions of the many aspects of the academic writing experience (Appendix 18 and sections 5.4.2.1 & 5.4.2.2). For instance, Cooley and Lewkovicz (1995) reported that the primary concerns of the students in their study were the organization and the development of ideas. On the other hand, Cai (2013) and Yeh (2010) respectively attest that their study participants experienced problems with structure and content. A further study conducted by Al-Hazmi and Schofield (2007) paid particular attention to aspects such as the mechanics of writing, content, organization, grammar and vocabulary. Paulus (1999), on the other hand, focused on categories in order to reflect on what was taught in the course study, and assessed global and local aspects of writing to evaluate students’ improvement in each category. Paulus suggested that teachers should look at one or more samples of students’ writing, become familiar with the kind of linguistic errors they typically make and to ascertain the order in which those errors need to be addressed (global and local). In global writing concerns, the focus is on clarity of purpose, ideas, content, thesis, organization, development, and so on, while in local writing concerns, the focus is on the paragraph, sentence, and word levels. Paulus’ study with undergraduate students on a composition writing course in the USA aimed to investigate whether training them in practicing feedback would be effective in developing their writing.

Paulus (1999) focused on development, organization, cohesion/coherence, structure, mechanics, and vocabulary. When the participants finished the first draft, they received oral and written feedback from their peers. After revising the second draft, the students received further feedback from their teacher. Finally, the students were asked to submit the final revised draft. The researcher found that 62.5% of the students’ feedback focused on structure and spelling, while 37.5% emphasized meaning. She found that both teacher- and peer-feedback helped learners to improve their writing. Paulus’ essay evaluation for her participants was meant to measure the students’ improvement in writing, and as such she employed the scoring rubric used by Lundstrom and Baker (2009) which “allowed for an analytical assessment of both the global and local aspects of writing, in addition to providing a holistic, overall final
assessment score” (p. 34). Paulus’ rubric (2009) has subsequently been used by many researchers such as Al-Besher (2012); Grami (2010); and Lundstrom and Baker (2009). The researcher found Paulus’ rubric and categories suitable for the approaches of writing adopted in this study, and appropriate to measure aspects of the participants’ performance in writing (see Chapter Three for further details). Therefore, the researcher decided to adopt Paulus’ categories and scoring essay, since they were found to be very useful in investigating the extent to which the students who were writing collaboratively improved themselves, as compared to those writing individually.

2.1.2: Micro and Macro Levels in Writing
Writing a short essay requires skills ranging from micro-skills such as sentence-level writing and orthography, to macro-skills such as paragraph and whole text organisation. Therefore, in the learning process, micro activities are focused on accurate sentence structure and appropriate vocabulary, while macro activities focus on the complete text level. L2 students need to show their progress in essay writing in both micro and macro features as a sign of improving writing quality.

An important and useful conceptualization in developing writing skills is conceiving the process on Micro vs. Macro levels. Brown (2004, p. 221) summarizes these levels into the following two groups:

**Micro skills:**
1. Produce orthographic patterns and graphemes of English.
2. Produce writing at a sufficient rate of speed to cope with the purpose.
3. Produce an acceptable range of appropriate word order patterns.
4. Use correct grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization etc.) and correct patterns and apply grammatical rules.
5. Explain a particular meaning using different grammatical forms.
6. In written discourse, use cohesive devices.

**Macro skills:**
1. Use conventions of written discourse and the rhetorical forms.
2. Appropriately apply the communicative functions of a written text according to purpose and form.
3. Connect events as main ideas, with supporting ideas providing related information, generalization, and exemplification.

4. Distinguish between implied literal meanings of writing.

5. Properly provide references in the context of the text.

Taking the above taxonomy of writing subskills formulated by Brown (2004) into consideration, we conclude that micro skills apply more appropriately to intensive and imitative types of writing performance, such as using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of writing, and that macro skills cover expanded areas of writing, such as developing the purposes of a written text, main and supporting ideas, and organization. Table 2.1 below shows Cumming’s categorization of micro and macro levels of (Cumming, 2001):

Table 2.1: What does a person learn when writing in a second language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro</th>
<th>Macro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Morphology , Syntax and Lexis</td>
<td>• Planning and revising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Syntax and words</td>
<td>• Learners develop individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ideas</td>
<td>• Self-image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners develop individually</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At a macro-level of structure, Cumming (2001, p. 3) concluded that learners “become more adept at signalling a hierarchy of related ideas at the beginning, end, or throughout a text, specifically by using cohesive, functional-semantic, or various stylistic devices”. Macro-level skills cover wider areas of writing, such as the communicative purpose of a text, main ideas and supporting ideas, the text’s implied meaning, etc.; these skills fundamentally relate to the rhetoric of the entire text. Micro-level skills cover forms, grammar, appropriate words, phrases, and meaning. According to Cumming, L2 learners improve the accuracy and complexity of the
syntax and use a greater range of vocabulary in their writing as their L2 proficiency develops in the micro levels.

Considerable research has measured academic writing improvement in terms of features of the texts that second language learners produce. At a micro level, diverse studies have shown second language learners to improve the accuracy and complexity of morphology and syntax in their texts (Bardovi-Harlig, 1997; Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Weissberg, 2000). A related aspect is the ability of the learners to use a range of vocabulary in their writing as their proficiency increases (Engber, 1995; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Reid, 1986).

On the other hand, at the macro level of text structure, the learners become more adept at linking a hierarchy of related ideas from beginning to the end throughout a text (Connor & Connor, 1996; Tedick & Mathison, 1995), specifically by using cohesive devices in their texts (Grant & Ginther, 2000; Hyland & Milton, 1997). Such developmental levels have been documented in discourses featured in particular text types, such as argumentative essays (Connor & Farmer, 1990; Grant & Ginther, 2000) and narrative essays (Albrechtsen, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig, 1995), across different kinds of writing tasks (Cumming, 1989; Cumming & Riazi, 2000).

At the macro-level of elements, learners tend to work more at the macro-level than the micro-level in using main ideas and use supporting evidence and examples (Connor & Conner, 1996). For example, in classroom writing and discussion, students on the macro-level of writing a text will discuss features such as the organization of the text and the development of ideas. In terms of the important issue of peer feedback explored in this study, many researchers have paid more attention to macro-level features (Al-Hazmi & Schofield, 2007; Min, 2006). In the current study however, the researcher focused on the features of both levels of writing. Taking all aspects of writing into consideration then, the researcher paid special attention to the ways students improve at both the micro- and macro-levels through collaborative writing.

2.2: Writing and Arabic-speaking Learners of English

Although a number of extant studies assert the similarity of writing processes for first and second language learners (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008), there are actually many differences
between the first and second languages in academic writing. These will be discussed briefly here before moving on to issues specific to Arabic-speaking learners of English.

The literature of EFL/ESL writing, as represented by some scholars, including Hedgcock and Ferris (2013), Hinkel (2013), and Zhang (1995), draw attention to the many differences between L1 and L2 teaching/learning contexts which can be attributed to the distinctive pedagogical / social features of a language. In terms of the L2 writing process there are some controversial issues in second language (L2) writing. For example, commentators such as Bitchener & Basturkmen (2006), Hinkel (2013), Lee (2005), McCarthey et al. (2005), Martínez (2005) and Silva (1993) contend that the L1 writing process differs from the L2 writing process, while others such as Schoonen et al. (2003) entirely disagree. In the same way, while Stapleton (2002) claims the differences between L1 and L2 academic writing are often over-stated and misrepresented, Wang (2012) disputes this, and actually categorizes the differences into three strands: the level of lexicon; the level of sentence; and the level of passage. In addition, Silva (1993) applied a study in the US on college students in advanced levels of English proficiency. He compared L1 and L2 writing by examining 72 reports. Silva’s findings indicated that L1 and L2 writing exhibit differences in terms of features of written texts and the composing processes.

Thus, research indicates that the literacy and linguistic skills required for writing by L1 and L2 speakers are different. Zhang (1995), for example, refers to various differences between L1 and L2 teaching contexts which can be attributed to the diverse pedagogical and social features, aside from the differences of learners in linguistic competence and in literacy skills as well. The second language learner is exposed to a new culture through its beliefs, ways of life, and societal norms. In this view, the second language learners must also become learners of the new culture since language cannot be understood and learned without understanding the cultural context in which the language is used. In writing, for example, learners with diverse social and different cultural backgrounds tend to respond to writing tasks differently. Kaplan (1966) stated that Arab students transfer chosen patterns from their language (mother tongue) into English writing. In addition, Kaplan stated that the differences between writing in different languages are not simply surface matters or grammatical, but also rhetorical differences, such as “paragraph order and structure” (1987, p. 277).
It has been established that learning to write in English as a foreign language is quite different from writing as a native Arab speaker. This is one of the factors which problematize the learning of writing tasks for Arabic speakers, and which therefore requires considerable practice and guidance. On this issue, many studies have been conducted from the point of view of teachers and learners in Saudi Arabia and the other Arab countries with different views on this problem (Akasha, 2013; Al-Khatib et al., 2013; Khan, 2011b). A study conducted by Javid et al. (2013) in Taif University, KSA, which included 180 male participants, showed that university Saudi EFL learners face serious problems in academic writing due to the weaknesses they have in utilizing appropriate organization of ideas, lexical items, and grammar. Additional weaknesses include spelling, incorrect use of prepositions, articles, punctuation, suffixes and prefixes, and irregular verbs. Broadly speaking, a characteristic of writing in Arabic is that Arabic writers typically provide information rather than synthesizing knowledge into critically rich meaningful text (Dujsik, 2008; Shukri, 2014). Section 2.2.1 offers a more detailed account of the characteristics of Arab writing. According to Nayef and Hajjaj’s study (1997), Arab EFL learners experience severe problems with syntactical errors such as prepositions. The most recent studies conducted by Arab researchers confirm that Arab learners face particular syntactic problems in the use of prepositions and verbs. Students, for instance, find difficulty in using the propositions “at” and “in”, as in the example “I will meet you in 9.00 pm”, because the preposition “in” is used in the Arabic language instead of “at” (section 2.8.4).

As discussed in section 2.2.1, when writing in English, Arab students focus on surface-level writing issues, rather than more fundamental aspects. In fact, EFL learners in general appear to be more concerned with grammatical errors rather than on expanded global issues (Grami, 2005; Tahaineh, 2010). More specifically, Arab learner writing concerns fell mainly into the categories of syntax and grammar (Grami, 2005; Nayef & Hajjaj, 1997; Tahaineh, 2010). Nayef and Hajjaj (1997) concurred with these findings and confirmed Arab learners’ writing difficulties in terms of syntax, especially in the use of prepositions. Comparable studies also revealed that Arab learners struggle with grammar, particularly in the use of verbs and prepositions (Mourtaga, 2004; Mahmoud, 2005; Zahid, 2006). Discussion of more studies can be found in the section Previous Studies on Collaborative Learning in L2 Writing (section 2.9.3).
2.2.1: The Characteristics of Writing in Arabic in General

In Saudi Arabia, the Arabic language is the official language used in all governmental institutions and offices. Some of the features of writing in Arabic create a major challenge to Arabs learning English writing. This is partly attributed to the cursivity of both its printed and handwritten forms. Arabic script is semi-cursive in the sense that a single word can be composed of one or sub-words. Each sub-word is divided into one or more characters and normally connected with a baseline. When Arab learners write a passage, they expect readers to make sense of the given text rather than “taking responsibility themselves for mapping out ideas in a clear, coherent, and linear manner” (Farrell, 2006, p. 58). Thus, Arab writers devote little attention to clarifying their thesis statements or arguments for the reader.

A study conducted by El-Aswad (2002) presented some different findings about writing in Arabic and English by Arab students. The study was conducted on third-year L2 students in a Libyan university. The participants were asked to verbalize their writing and thinking while writing in Arabic and English. The data were collected through TAPs, questionnaires, interviews, written products, and observation. Findings of the study yielded several interesting issues:

- While most of the participants had a purpose while writing, they gave little consideration to their audience.
- There were differences in the process of writing between writing in Arabic and English related to planning and organizing the subject. At the revising stage, for example, when the students wrote in Arabic (L1) they focused on content and organization, but in English (L2), they focused on grammar, form, and vocabulary.
- The use of redundant and repetition of ideas was obvious in L2 essays.
- The participants used L1 in order to facilitate the interaction in the written process in English.

The study also revealed that the students had limited linguistic knowledge in writing proficiency, which affected their mastery of L2. El-Aswad (2002) concluded that the students transferred their L1 writing knowledge and strategies to their L2 writing and maintained that the less-skilled students tended to use their first language strategies more frequently in L2 than did the skilled ones (El-Aswad, 2002).
A study conducted by Al-Jarf (2010b) with the aim of identifying the major spelling errors Saudi learners make and the causes of such errors attempted to collect spelling error corpora of Saudi students (high school seniors and undergraduate students). Data were collected from students’ homework, written essays, dictations, test translations, and lecture notes and the spelling errors classified into the three types of “whole word errors, faulty phonemes and faulty graphemes”. She further classified spelling errors into orthographical and phonological. For instance, when a learner fails to hear the final syllable of the word “country” and hears only “×cont”, it is considered a phonological error since the learner mishears the word, in whole or in part. If, however, the learner reduces the double consonant of “middle” into “×midle”, it is considered an orthographical error because the learner misspells words that have the same sound. Al-Jarf also indicated that Saudi students misspell words due to intra-lingual or inter-lingual problems. Errors stemming from inter-lingual problems occur due to the students’ inappropriate transfer of first language knowledge to the target language, while intra-lingual errors occur due to insufficient student knowledge of the target language.

**Differences between Arabic and English Writing**

When the text organization of the first and second languages are the same, the first language works better for acquiring the target language (Ellis, 1985). For example, French and English are both derived from the Greek or Latin language families. However, Arabic and English lack a common ancestor. Therefore, the Arab learners have difficulty in transferring their knowledge to the new language which inevitably impacts and influences their writing competency in communicative English. The differences between Arabic and English writing clearly present a significant challenge for L2 Arabic learners and neither fluency nor competency of L2 writing are being achieved through the learning of English writing in the Arab-speaking world. That could partially relate to the differences between the writing of L1 and L2 as explained below. The direction of writing in both languages is also different. English writing goes from the right, while Arabic does the reverse. English and Arabic languages are derived from different linguistic, historical, and cultural backgrounds. Watson presents some main differences between English and Arabic:

*Arabic is written from right to left, whereas, English is written from left to right. The actual forming of the letters also presents difficulties for Arab learners. In Arabic, letters are formed by a series of strokes, unlike the continuous flow of the Roman alphabet used for the English script. There is also difference between the printing and script of Arabic (Thompson-Panus and Thomas Ruzic, 1983:609). Moreover, Arabic writing conventions and spelling systems are vastly different from those of English. For example, there are*
no capitals in Arabic and prepositions are joined to the word that follows them. Arabic is also a very phonetic language and the variations in vowel sounds found in English (for example, the sound of the vowel “a” in car, make and bat) and in diphthongs cause difficulties for the Arab learner.

(Watson 2004, pp. 42-43)

There are notable differences between the writing systems of English and Arabic. In contrast to English, the Arabic writing system has 28 Arabic alphabets that represent a single consonant. The Arabic language is a morphologically complex language that has many differences in linguistics as compared to English (Alotaiby et al., 2014). This makes it challenging for Saudi learners to learn the English language, especially when learners are required to write by hand, as they often are in classes. Learners also face difficulty in spelling. Upon a comparison of English with Arabic, it becomes obvious that there are many linguistic basics which distinguish each language.

**Learning to Write in a Second Language**

There are big important differences between English and Arabic academic writing (see section 2.2.1), which causes severe challenges for L2 students learning to write in the second language. Many studies have addressed the writing difficulties Arab learners face in developing L2 academic writing skills, but the challenges Saudi learners face in particular have not been investigated in depth. There are differences between L1 and L2 writing that present special problems for Saudi learners of academic writing in a second language. These problems arise from several factors, such as the orthography of Arabic writing, L1 transfer, cultural resistance to self-expression, religious conformity, fulfilment of teacher expectations based on stereotyping, and the learning background embedded in Saudi culture.

In contrast to native speakers, L2 learners face problematic issues in the areas of grammar, rhetorical patterns, mechanics, vocabulary, organisation, development, cohesion, and coherence in academic writing. According to Byrne (1988), the challenges that L2 students face in L2 writing arises from psychological, cognitive, and linguistic issues. He adds that academic writing becomes more complex, while at the same time there is inadequate feedback from teachers concerning organisation, process, and cohesion.

Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) note that common challenges in L1 and L2 writing performance arise in areas such as paragraph unity, coherence and cohesion, emphasis on
certain tenses, subject and verb agreement, irregular past tense forms, and writing compositions in L1 with no appropriate linking and organisation of ideas. Similarly, Ahmed (2010b) investigates cohesion and coherence challenges in EFL essay writing. He reports that the students had difficulty with thesis statements, topic sentences, organisation and development, and transitioning and sequencing of ideas. Therefore, it is quite hard for L2 learners to be good writers unless they are given the correct instruction and environment (Hyland, 2003).

2.2.2: Teaching Writing

It has been observed that the approaches to teaching EFL writing skills are different in variable academic contexts due to diverse cultures and circumstances. Therefore, the teaching process for English L2 writing necessitates an understanding not only of teaching methods, strategies, and approaches, but also of EFL learners' perceptions of and backgrounds in learning writing. Writing is considered one of the most challenging skills, and many processes are required to trace learners' writing texts and practices. Therefore, a variety of approaches and methods are used to help learners organize their work in writing, choose proper lexis and structure, as well as specify their options and ideas. The current study examined how group work was effective for this. In respect of the writing process, Rohman (1965) claims that writing is a linear process where students follow fixed steps; they pre-write write, and rewrite (cited in Silin & Chan, 2015). On the other hand, others claim that writing is a recursive process (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Zamel, 1983) which permits learners to go back and forth in order to support their initial ideas.

In fact, writing is based on mental processes which result from the interactions of writers’ cognitive sub-processes of implementing, expressing, generating, and refining ideas, while producing a text (Berninger, 1994; Flower & Hayes 1981; Hayes 2012). For instance, students review and discuss what they have written and might alter words, phrases, sentences or even paragraphs, to properly suit their developing concept of the produced text. Flower and Hayes (1981) noted that writers monitor their improvement by deleting awkward ideas and adding stronger ones as they write.

Teaching English writing in Saudi Arabia does not prepare students to be good writers since writers are judged more on their knowledge of vocabulary rather than their other writing abilities. Students are required to memorize an extensive list of vocabulary so as to be able to speak, listen, read and write, while scant focus is placed on the other important writing
strategies and techniques including organization and planning. For this reason, Saudi students are commonly preoccupied with surface aspects such as choosing vocabulary, spelling words, and correcting grammatical errors when writing their essays (Grami, 2005). Al-Khairy (2013) investigated writing difficulties of university Saudi students through a survey of 75 English-major undergraduate students. The data results revealed that writing an argumentative essay was very difficult for the Saudi EFL students. In this regard, a reconsideration of how to teach and practice writing skills, and specifically make use of the adapted approaches with different methods, is much needed.

2.3: Theories of L2 Writing
Many highly regarded theories have been used to support the idea of group work in learning and teaching of writing skills, and researchers have demonstrated the correlation between learning and teaching to group work. This section will discuss the learning theories relevant to the concept of group learning of a second language and how group work is relevant to learning.

2.3.1: A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing
The theory of the cognitive process of writing describes the various parts of the writing system and how the parts work together. “Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing.” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 366). Simply, the best way to model the writing process is to study a learner in action (ibid.) which also encourages the study of group work in action. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), the task of writing involves three main components: the writer's long-term memory; the task environment; and the writing process. The cognitive process theory as stated by Flower and Hayes therefore needs to fulfil the following steps:

- A set of distinctive thinking processes when learners work
- Hierarchically embedded organization
- The act of composing (a goal-directed thinking process guided by learners)
- Learners creating their own goals (by generating high-level goals and supporting sub-goals).

2.3.2: Vygotsky’s Socio-Cultural Theories and Constructivism
Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory has had an enormous impact on the professional methods of learning and teaching. In regard to L2 acquisition, these theories play a vital role in arguing
that social activities are essential in improving learning and teaching. It is believed that learning in the target language context should be collaborative rather than a mere effort of individuals (Turuk, 2008). Vygotsky’s (1962) sociocultural theory asserts that education should be concerned both with theories of instruction and with learning how to develop strategies and skills through making learning activities and experiences meaningful to the students. With the help of teachers, the dynamic nature of the interactions between learners and tasks provide an atmosphere of developing learning which stems from the interactions between the learners. According to Ellis (2000), the sociocultural theory claims that the process of learning first succeeds when learners help each other in performing a new activity or task such as collaborative writing in class. The learners internalize this task by helping each other and then can perform the task on their own. Therefore, social interaction is commonly understood as mediated learning.

Scholars such as Vygotsky, Piaget, and Dewey have shown the development of Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) in learning. This theory seeks to answer the question of how learners assimilate and retain their knowledge. Constructivism is a theory that discourses on both knowledge and learning; the theory explains what knowledge is and how a learner comes to know (Fosnot, 2013). Constructivism is the leading metaphor of learning since the 1990s (Liu & Matthews, 2005) In general, CLT focuses on identifying how to implement learning processes in the classroom and how information (knowledge) is constructed (Butler & Griffin, 2010). The theory of constructivism says that learners construct their knowledge and understanding of the world by experiencing and reflecting on their experiences (Bereiter, 1994). The theory suggests that individuals construct meaning and knowledge from their personal experiences. Constructivism as an approach to teaching and learning is based on the assumption that learning is the result of “mental construction”. In other words, learners experience the process of studying by fitting information together with what they already know. This gives rise to the point that constructivist learning requires a suitable learning environment. One of the central issues of constructivist learning is that it has to be active; educators therefore must provide an active environment for students to learn (Tam, 2000).

The Collaborative Learning Environment (CLE) is an improved system which is used to encourage the participation and collaboration of a classroom to achieve a shared goal (Zaraté et al., 2008). Collaborative learning occurs in an active environment as a pedagogical application of constructivism. In focusing on group work in class in order to understand the
concepts of a CLE, this study takes account of the social factors which impact on collaborative action such as current relationships between learners and existing organizational structures. In the case of group work, teachers encourage learners to participate in collaborative learning since teachers in collaborative learning classrooms act as facilitators who provide suitable opportunities for problem solving and collaborative work. According to Ndon (2010), a teacher is a facilitator who should provide suitable environments, activities, and experiences for the process of learning. The teacher needs to incorporate opportunities for collaborative work on problem solving and authentic tasks. According to Zhan’s elucidation of constructivism (2008), collaborative learning activities engage learners’ interaction and participation by working together to achieve a common goal. Moreover, collaborative learning is known to consolidate emotional bonds and the level of satisfaction within the classroom community. The following section will further elucidate writing strategies.

2.4: Writing Strategies

Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as certain actions used by a learner to make learning faster, easier, more effective, more self-directed, more enjoyable and more transferable to new opportunities or situations. Following thirty years of efforts accumulated to investigate language learning strategies in deeper depth, Oxford (2011) concluded that strategies help learners control and regulate their own learning, which makes it more effective. Since learning strategies are strongly connected to writing strategies EFL essay writing teachers could deploy a variety of teaching strategies which promote learners self-improvement in EFL essay writing. Oxford (2003) outlines the classification framework of learning strategies which enable the progress and improvement of participants working in groups to be monitored and observed through empirical study as listed below:

- **Memory strategies**: such as grouping and structure reviewing.
- **Cognitive strategies**: such as summarizing, analyzing, and general practicing.
- **Metacognitive strategies**: such as when participants guess meanings, plan for language tasks, evaluate other’s progress, pay attention, or self-evaluate.
- **Compensatory strategies**: such as when students guess meanings from context, using gestures, or synonyms.
- **Affective strategies**: such as self-encouragement, anxiety management, and self-reward.
• **Social strategies:** such as asking questions, cooperating with each other, and increased culturally awareness.

SLA scholars and researchers have investigated the role of learning strategies in the development of EFL language learning, including the writing skill, and how these strategies are linked to learning styles (Chen, 2009), motivation (Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Wharton, 2000), performance (Rahman, 2010) and language proficiency (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Lai, 2009; Park, 1997). One factor which affects writing skills and develops learners’ skills is the development of writing strategies such as social strategies (section 2.4.3), as was noted when the students who were writing collaboratively co-operated with each other and asked questions. There are many previous research studies which encourage teaching such strategies to manage learners’ text production, and these strategies are effective ways of improving learners’ skills (Fidalgo-Redondo, 2008; Graham et al., 2005; Lei, 2008).

A number of writing strategies are used when students participate in Think Aloud Protocols and interviews (section 2.7.3.1) which is why TAPs were chosen for the present research. According to the researcher, planning involves strategies by which learners talk about upcoming ideas and explicitly state the objectives, organization, and procedures of their work. This is followed by monitoring strategies through which learners check and verify the writing process to solve any problems encountered. The third type is the evaluating strategies used to reconsider the written texts of the learners and fourth is the resourcing strategies whereby learners use external references to focus on the target language. For example: when the learners use dictionaries to look up and confirm spelling, lexicon, grammar, etc., they use resource strategies. Fifth are the repeating strategies, which are utilized when students review their texts or transcribe their ideas. The sixth is the reduction strategies to remove extraneous ideas through paraphrasing and summarizing their work. The final type is the use of L1 (first language), which is useful for generating ideas. The aforementioned strategies are expected to be of significant assistance in applications of the collaborative writing approach.

**2.4.1: Meta-cognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategy is defined by Lv and Chen (2010) as “a term used in information-processing theory to indicate an “executive” function and it refers to the strategy that is used by learners as the means to manage, monitor and evaluate their learning activities” (p.136). Wenden (1991) defines them as “mental operations or procedures which learners use to
regulate their learning” (p. 302). He describes them as used in writing activity as planning, evaluating, and then monitoring.

There are several reasons for introducing learners to metacognitive strategies. These include the opportunity to enhance learning, perform certain ideas, solve problems, make learning more enjoyable, faster, and easier, and to compensate for a deficit in language learning proficiency (Cohen, 2014). Among the strategies Oxford (2011) devised, she included those of planning, organizing, monitoring, which enable learners to manage and control how to use the strategies in each situation. Metacognitive strategies are classified to include using schemata1, focusing, goal setting, planning on writing activity, preparing for action, monitoring, and finding suitable opportunities for practice (Ehrman et al., 2003; Oxford, 2003). Thus these strategies are composed of a variety of actions, approaches, skills and thinking which learners can apply to control the learning process and cognition. Many researchers (O’Malley et al., 1990; Wenden, 1991) share similar views regarding the function of metacognitive strategies and assert that the essential function of metacognitive strategies is to allow learners to plan, organize, and evaluate their own work in learning.

2.4.2: Cognitive Strategies
Cognitive strategies enable learners to apply L2 knowledge, transform and construct knowledge to transform and process information (Oxford, 2011) and as such are actively engaged in the knowledge acquisition process (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995, p. 170). The use of dictionaries is an example of an activity which requires cognitive skills (Oxford, 1990). The three types of cognitive strategies are: organization strategies which re-organize knowledge and information; rehearsal strategies which include the repetition of that information to be understood; and elaboration strategies which link new knowledge to previously acquired information (McCrindle & Christensen, 1995). Through strategy instructions, learners are encouraged to take control of learning following a series of stages to retain, organize and express content knowledge (Katims & Harmon, 2000).

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1 Schemata may be thought of as “interacting knowledge structures” Rumelhart & Ortony (1977, p. 100) stored in hierarchies in long term memory (Carrell 1983, p. 82).
2.4.3: Social Strategies

Social strategies help the learners with identity, sociocultural contexts and communication (Oxford, 1990). The social context of learning is prerequisite for understanding how a student’s work in the learning process affects performance and learning (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). Social strategies include asking for help, correction, and entail peer development and awareness of the feelings and thoughts of the learners (Shapira & Lazarowitz, 2005).

Social interaction between learners is a useful opportunity to improve their skills (in this case, writing) by enhancing knowledge through critical thinking and problem-solving. This happens when writers share collaborative writing, whereby peers read what writers produce and solve problems through the cooperative discussion. Probst (2007, p. 43) states, “it’s the student who should be doing most of the work”. Through active social interaction then, the learners share the responsibility for improving their writing, and being writers, readers, listeners, speakers and thinkers in the classroom (Alvermann et al., 2013).

2.4.4: Affective Strategies or Socio-affective Strategies

Affective strategies as stated by Oxford (1990) promote positive learners attitudes and emotions and encourage learners to keep motivated. Affective and social strategies play an important role in indicating one's academic achievement and success, by means, for example, of working closely with groups in the class, working frequently with learners, sharing strategies to overcome difficulties in class with both teachers and students, identifying classmates for help, establishing a level of communication with the teacher and the students, and having a level of confidence to present and discuss the topics (Rastegar & Karami, 2013). Affective strategies can be seen as important in group writing in particular where peer relationships are at stake (sections 4.2.5 and 4.3.5). The previously discussed strategies will support Saudi student teachers of English to practice, reproduce and identify different features of learner texts both cohesively and coherently. Hence, students should learn how to write in groups as the aspect of social interaction which reinforces writing, teaching/learning skills through co-operative learning.

2.5: Factors Impacting Writing in the Saudi Context

The low achievement of Arab learners in English language, especially in their writing skills, has been attributed to a number of factors. It is therefore important to address such matters and seek practical solutions, such as the collaborative writing proposition of the current study.
Factors stem from both learner-related variables, such as gender, anxiety, and motivation, and from sociocultural variables such as the influence of the home culture and pedagogy, the L1, religion and society. In addition, EFL instruction variables such as individual teacher practices and behaviour, teaching method and curriculum, and others related to issues such as teacher training and overcrowded classes within the Saudi educational system also have a bearing. In fact, such factors appear to play a significant role in developing different aspects of writing skills. A considerable amount of literature has been written on the factors which affect the quality of Arabic speakers’ writing in English (Abdel Latif, 2015). According to the literature review, among these are cohesion and coherence, strategy use, linguistic knowledge, and first language transfer. It is agreed that the success of learning a foreign or second language (L2) rests on multiple factors, such as the intensity and duration of language courses, the abilities and characteristics of teachers, teaching methodology, quality of textbooks, size of learners’ groups, volume of the target language practice, and, last but not least, the characteristics of language learners (Cohen, 2010).

Many studies conducted in the Arab region, and specifically in Saudi Arabia, revealed that Arab learners experience severe problems in their writing (Grami, 2010; Ezza, 2010). However, far less emphasis is placed on the arguably more important writing strategies and techniques, such as organization and planning. When Saudi students, for example, write their essays, they are commonly concerned with superficial considerations, such as vocabulary choice, spelling, and correcting grammatical errors (Alnofal, 2003 cited in Al-Besher, 2012).

The problems of EFL in the Saudi context are divided into six categories:

- Pedagogical
- Linguistic
- Legislative and Administrative Policy
- Cultural
- Sociocultural
- Psychological

### 2.5.1: Pedagogical Factors
Socio-cultural problems include a tendency towards the heavy reliance on teachers, lack of motivation, no obvious link between English ability and communicative needs, and lack of using English outside class (Grami, 2010). Saudi learners’ lack of motivation negatively affects
learning English, because learners have no real opportunity to use English outside the classroom (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Another problem is the insufficient quality of authentic textbooks (section 1.2.1), although they are a highly significant factor to improve language teaching-learning and to support social purpose of the community (Litton, 2013). A curriculum generally plays a crucial role in the process of learning in the educational system. Therefore, the teaching/learning courses should be properly designed to serve learners’ needs. Relevant pedagogical factors include teachers, teaching resources, teaching strategies and administration (Khan, 2011a).

2.5.2: Linguistic Factors

Difficulties for Saudi learners writing in English arise from different factors such as L1 transfer (Shukri, 2014) and learners directly translating their ideas from Arabic into English. Tied to this factor is a kind of negative transfer which results in unsatisfactorily written texts. Hussein and Mohammad (2012) conducted a study that showed Arab learners tend to compose in their L1 and then translate the ideas into the L2 (cited by Shukri, 2014) (section 2.2). Liton (2012) maintains that is why Arabic language becomes a matter of interference rather than a helpful assistance in learning the target language is basically because these two languages are antithetical in many respects, such as linguistic elements, grammatical functions, sentences, phrases, idioms, semantic and syntactic differences, and different socio-cultural background. L1 interference makes learning and developing the target language in writing more difficult which is why the researcher adopted group work to overcome the problem. Most of the barriers that Saudi learners face in the study of English depend on the degree to which the Arabic language differs from English.

As stated by Khan (2011b), it has been noticed that most English language EFL learners often commit linguistic errors of syntax as an effect of the interference of L1. Actually, it is generally agreed among linguistics scholars and researchers that the differences and similarities between two different languages such as Arabic and English decide the nature and degree of positive or negative transfer (Odlin, 1989; Ellis, 1985). Certain factors may negatively affect Saudi learners may arise from L1 transfer and the historical background of learning writing (Shukri, 2014), insufficient proficiency and the educational system (Grami, 2010), the number of learners in class and the number of weekly writing courses (Ezza, 2010), and/or a lack of balance between the objectives of the curriculum and the needs of the learners (Al-Seghayer
2014). Such problems underscore the need to devise improved methods of teaching as group work as in the present study

2.5.3: Legislative and Administrative Policy Factors
These can be attributed to insufficient support systems or training programmes, a scarcity of qualified English teachers, and teachers who insist on traditional teaching approaches (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Syed, 2003). A further problem is that expatriate teachers, for example, are less motivated to deal with existing systems, and have little desire to change or innovate in teaching (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Syed 2003; Shaw 1997) (section 1.2.1.2).

2.5.4: Cultural Factors
There are many factors which affect Saudi learners, one of which is culture (Ullah, 2017). Elyas and Picard argue that "teaching and learning language is morally and ethically influenced by the culture of a society, so like other languages, English should not be taught separately from its culture" (2010, pp. 136-145). In fact, when learning a second language, its social context inevitably affects the attitudes, beliefs, and motivations of a learner, particularly if there are significant cultural differences between the belief systems of learners coming from different backgrounds (Richards & Lockhard, 1994). KSA culture is traditionally resistant to English-speaking cultures. This makes the learning of the English language a more challenging task for Saudis (Ullah, 2017) as cultural awareness is one of the most significant steps towards assimilating any language. In fact, Fageeh (2011) asserted that cultural awareness is axiomatic to effective communication and underscored the need for enhanced cultural awareness of the differences between Arab and English cultures. The new culture confronting Saudis learners is all too apparent in the Oxford textbook series which is predicated on the hegemonies of Western traditions, life-styles, and a number of global themes (Shukri, 2014). As we now live in the globalized world of instant technological connection, Saudi learners are becoming more accustomed to greater cultural diversity. Yet the embedded cultural differences between Saudi and Western people remain obvious in Saudi students’ continuing reluctance to engage with the contested topics of politics, religion, and other ‘taboo’ topics. Nonetheless, Hyland (2003b) explains that cultural differences are reasons for writing differences, and that there are many ways to form meanings.
2.5.5: Sociocultural Factors
Using the first language in the classroom has been criticized as it perpetuates students’ tendency to translate their thoughts from the first language into the target language (Shaikh, 1993; Richards & Rodgers 2014) and ultimately gives rise to deficiencies in learning the target language. Nevertheless, this situation prevails in many Saudi EFL classrooms causing the Arabic language to interfere extensively during the teaching of English (Alkhatnai, 2011; Alhawsawi, 2014; Almutairi, 2008). The lack of exposure to and inadequate practice of English is primarily due to the dominance of Arabic language in Saudi Arabia. Khan (2011b) reported that the English language is treated purely as an academic subject studied in schools, and most Saudis communicate with classmates, families and friends through their native language. Alharbi (2015) added that the absence of practicing English outside the classroom is a major obstacle for the fluent assimilation of the language.

2.5.6: Psychological Factors
There are a considerable number of psychological factors which affect EFL learners, such as writing anxiety, students’ motivation, and issues with self-confidence (Ahmed, 2010a).

Anxiety
While writing anxiety is known to negatively affect learners’ academic achievement and motivation (ibid.), learners experience less anxiety when they are working in groups (Khan, 2008). Anxious writers frequently choose not to write with other students as they fear the potentially negative results or failures of such interactions (Kurman, 2001). It is therefore essential to devise methods or strategies to reduce learners’ anxiety. This, of course, affords an interesting opportunity to ascertain whether engaging learners in CW would reduce anxiety. When the students work together they have the chance to share peer evaluation, which generates more positive attitudes towards writing (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Min, 2005), and this, in turn, fosters the supportive atmosphere conducive to minimizing anxiety and boosting confidence (Lockhart & Ng, 1995).

Motivation
Motivation is recognized as a critical factor for learner performance within academic contexts (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000; Hulleman & Barron, 2015). That EFL learners can sometimes lack motivation in writing was revealed during the open-ended question interview phase of a study conducted by Ahmed (2010a). While the study demonstrated that learners were not motivated
to write essays in class, it confirmed that cooperative learning (CL) enhanced motivation of second language learners (Dörnyei, 1994). Research shows that EFL learners’ attitudes play a vital role in language learning improvement and positive attitudes toward different dynamic methods of L2 learning/teaching ensued. On the other hand, decreasing motivation, which is attributed to negative attitudes, makes learning the language all the more difficult (Gürsoy, 2011). Writing as a complex process requires much more than just teaching in class. Therefore, it is strongly maintained that the positive attitudes of EFL language learners play a significant role in making this difficult task and process very effective (Dörnyei, 2003). Davies (1998) states that learners only feel encouraged to write when they find something motivating to write about.

**Self-confidence**

Self-confidence is inherent to learners’ writing development. Albertson (2006) asserts that learners with strong confidence in their ability to learn do so and assimilate faster than those with less confidence in their capacities. A number of methods are available to stimulate learner self-confidence. Crandall (1999) contended that cooperative learning can increase motivation and self-confidence while also reducing anxiety. In this study, collaborative writing is one of the methods through which students may enhance their self-confidence as they share a collaborative task to achieve a specific goal. According to a study conducted by Yang (2006), for example, a group experience of text chat increases learners’ confidence to write. A study undertaken by Shehadeh (2011) also confirmed that the majority of the participants agreed that collaborative writing had enhanced their self-confidence when sharing the role of peer feedback.

**2.6: The Process of Writing**

The writing process is far from linear. The different stages of writing, such as planning, drafting, reviewing and redrafting, are pursued in a recursive way (Figure 2.1), and writers loop backwards and move forwards among these stages. Writing, rewriting and revising play a central role in this work or process.
During the process of collaborative writing, learners share content information. Moreover, writing in itself is a useful activity for thinking and exploring ideas (Lane et al., 2006; Malloy, 2007). In this vein, Graham et al. (2005) discuss the requirement of various writing strategies, noting that learners usually need to communicate, persuade and inform each other. They also need to assimilate the content material and reflect on their writing to demonstrate knowledge. In addition, learners of academic writing need to generate significant ideas which require planning, organization and revision across the overall writing process (Baradaran & Sarfarazi, 2011; Kellogg, 2008). Furthermore, learners must also specify goals for the writing task and produce effective responses to problems which arise while writing (Ravelli & Ellis, 2005).

It is evident that writing, as a process of thinking, expressing ideas and learning content (Foster, 2008), is regarded as an essential skill for learning through communication (Tynjälä et al., 2001; Weigle, 2002). However, Hudelson (1988) stresses that L2 learners can learn how to improve their language through their own language output. According to Hinkel and Fotos (2001), the role of output in learning is equally important to that of input, as a learner must both be understood and understand when communicating.
Swain and Lapkin claimed that “sometimes, under some conditions, output facilitates second language learning...” (1995, p. 371). Cumming (1990), for example, examined second language writers and used the Think Aloud Protocols. He stated that instances in which the writers who appeared to be attending to meaning and form simultaneously hold potential for language acquisition. According to Swain (1985), in SLA, output has three important functions. Firstly, the output promotes noticing. When producing the target language for example, learners become aware of what they can say and what they want to say. This enables them to pinpoint their weakness by identifying what they only partially know or do not know. The benefit to learners here is the trigger of a cognitive process that may generate some of the linguistic knowledge learners have not previously known or discovered. Hypothesis testing is the second function. Producing the output is one way of testing knowledge and thus erroneous output can indicate that a learner has formulated an (erroneous) hypothesis of how one structural feature of the language works. This sometimes provokes feedback, which leads learners to modify their output. The third function is when the learners reflect on their target language, so that the output serves as what is known as metalinguistic knowledge which enables learners to internalize and control linguistic knowledge.

Critical Thinking
Many scholars have proposed simple definitions of the term “critical thinking”, which are similar in content. Fischer and Spiker (2000) found that the majority of the definitions include elements of questioning, judgement, reasoning/logic, reflection, metacognition and mental processes. One of the most simple definitions formulated by Halpern (2013) refers to critical thinking as “the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome” (p.8).

A number of collaborative learning proponents argue that changing ideas actively by small groups not only enhances interest among learners but also supports critical thinking (Gokhale, 1995), while Johnson and Johnson (1987) maintain there is strong evidence that cooperative learners achieve a higher level of thought and gain and retain information longer than learners who undertake tasks on an individual basis.

2.6.1: Essay Writing
Essay writing occupies a central place within higher education studies and given the above discussion of output it is clear that it acts as an avenue to learning. In consideration of all these
factors in the process of writing, we now focus on the genre of writing most prevalent in academic settings; namely, the academic essay. Essay writing is a type of performance or assessment through which learners activate their linguistic knowledge in a given context to express ideas, opinions and feelings and thus develop their critical thinking and skills (Applebee, 1984). Student essay writing is one of the pivotal tasks used to showcase the knowledge they have acquired. However, essay writing constitutes a problem for many ESL/EFL learners worldwide and is a major challenge for many teachers, especially in Saudi Arabia. Dülger (2011) indicates that the process of writing requires a higher level experience than the mere recognition of certain stages. A number of definitions of essays have been put forward over the years, many of which are understandably similar. Shipley (1972) describes an essay as “a composition, usually in prose, of moderate length and on a restricted topic” (p. 145) while Abrams (1985) defines an essay as “any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, expresses a point of view or persuades us to accept a thesis on any subject whatsoever” (p. 56). McLaren (2004) provides a slightly different perspective, describing an essay as “a sustained argument developing or weighing the evidence about an idea or question, and creating a full and satisfying conclusion” (p. 21).

2.6.1.1: Essay Writing Difficulties

Due to the complexity of writing academically, writing activities make specific demands upon L2 learners and present them with unique challenges (Barber, 2002; Krause, 2001; Mahfoudhi, 2003; Ryu, 2003). EFL learners encounter difficulty on a number of levels when they write since the process requires an integration of different skills including the gathering of information, generating ideas, paraphrasing, organizing ideas, and proofreading and editing (Fukao & Fujii, 2001). Walvoord and Smith (1982) state that a learner should employ two kinds of skills to write: (1) composing, which requires the selection of proper words, use of correct grammar and integration of ideas in an organized manner; and (2) transcription, which is achieved through the use of correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization and legibility in meaningfully sequenced paragraphs. In this study, the researcher attempts to identify the areas of difficulty and determine how collaborative writing as opposed to individual writing may help reduce these difficulties.

Elements of Difficulty in Essay Writing for Arab Learners

Much research has revealed that students’ problems with writing are basically the requirement to write academic essays in English before they have achieved a sufficient level of proficiency
to do so (Javid et al., 2013; Rababah, 2003). A number of studies have emphasized that Arab students encounter different difficulties in English writing (Al-Buainain, 2007; Al-Ghonaim, 2005; Kamil & Trudi, 2008; Latif, 2009; El-Hibir & Al-Taha, 1992; Sa’Adeddin, 1989). These difficulties can occur in prewriting (Fakhri, 1995; Hinkel, 2011; Rao 2007), in cohesion (Al-Sharah, 1997; Qaddumi, 1995), in coherence (Al-Sharah, 1997; Elkhatib, 1983), in technical areas, such as vocabulary and grammar (Latif, 2009; Al-Sharah, 1997; Elkhatib, 1984), in revision and editing (Atari & Triki, 2000; Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000; Scordaras, 2003), in punctuation (Mourtaga, 2004), and in spelling (El-Hibir & Al Taha, 1992; Salebi, 2004).

Furthermore, Crompton (2011) and Kharma (1981) found that Arab learners face difficulty when using definite and indefinite articles. Nayef and Hajjaj (1997) noted that Arab learners encounter greater difficulties with the irregular spelling of English compared to the difference in the phonetic script of Arabic. Ahmed (2010b) also investigated cohesion and coherence as a problematic issue in EFL writing and reported that learners faced significant obstacles in essay writing areas such as thesis statements, transitioning of ideas, and the sequencing and organization of ideas. According to Byrne (1979), such difficulties stem from linguistic, cognitive and psychological issues. One of the main problems is that L2 learners originate from different cultures and backgrounds which may not value critical thinking in education. Hence, they may need a lot of training to comprehend and use critical thinking when writing (Chou, 2016).

Writing involves generating content and finding ways of explaining and expressing ideas, which depend upon learners’ ability to deploy language skillfully enough to articulate their argument (Hyland, 2003b; Liu & Braine, 2005; Torrance et al., 1994). Since writing involves a complex relationship between writers, the audience or readers, and the text and the reality of the text (Matsuda & Silva, 2014), learners need to consider a number of issues when writing academically (Paltridge, 2004). These include the discipline, the audience, the expectations and values of the community at which the writing is aimed, and the purpose of the production of the text (Carvalho, 2002; Paltridge 2004). This complex relationship is what makes essay writing so demanding. The discussion of an academic text and social construction of knowledge between learners, for instance, highlights the rhetorical and interactive engagement inherent in academic writing. Thus, in order to facilitate and support L2 learners in learning academic writing, it is important to develop the process of teaching and learning writing
through a variety of methods and instructional approaches, one of which is collaborative writing.

2.7: Approaches to Teaching Writing

2.7.1: Historical Background

Few studies have investigated how to teach L2 writing. On the contrary, research interest has mainly concentrated on how to teach L1 writing. Zamel (1976) noted that when teaching EFL writing it was disappointing to find only one pilot study on how to teach composition to students of a second language. However, the situation has now changed, with studies increasingly enquiring into innovative techniques of teaching L2 writing. Since the 1980s, EFL/ESL writing has become an area of research that has attracted much interest.

Hyland (2003b), for example, claimed that new theories on how to teach L2 writing have been put into practice in classrooms, replacing traditional teaching methods. Hedgcock and Ferris (2013) also maintained that it was too early to say whether any comprehensive theories had been established. However, since their 2004 review there have been significant advances in methods to teach L2 writing as a cognitive process. As Hyland points out, “writers approach a writing task as a problem and bring intellectual resources to solving it. This view of writing has developed a range of sophisticated investigative methods, generated an enormous body of research and was, until recently, the dominant research to teaching writing” (2015, p. 14).

Cumming and Riazi (2000) noted that the field of teaching L2 writing needs to be better understood. They claim that students still have much to learn about L2 writing and teachers still have poor knowledge of how to best teach writing skills. This, of course, merely confirms that much research needs to be done on how EFL/ESL students can be supported when learning L2 writing and how teachers can teach writing skills better.

In recent decades, the teaching and learning of ESL/EFL writing has evolved into an important and rewarding research area. In this section, different approaches to teaching writing will therefore be examined. Numerous researchers (e.g., Harmer, 1991; Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Hinkel, 2003; Hyland, 2015; Raimes, 1983a; Susser, 1994) have emphasized that while there are different approaches to teaching the skill of writing in the classroom, there is no “best” or “right” approach to doing so. In fact, the appropriate approach very much depends on the type of learner, the type of text being studied, the learning system, and many other variables. Raimes (1991) distinguishes between three main writing approaches: the product approach, which
focuses on form; the process approach, which privileges writers; and the genre approach, which concentrates on readers. As all three approaches significantly help learners to improve their writing in L2 contexts (Hyland, 2003a), they are discussed with a view to integrating them into the collaborative writing method used in this study. The researcher will therefore detail the process, product and genre approaches in the following sections.

2.7.2: Product-Oriented Approach

The product approach was commonly used in the 1960s (Silva, 1990) and is considered to be the most traditional compared to other approaches. It focuses on learners' finished written texts and the correct usage of linguistic knowledge therein, stressing the proper use of syntax, vocabulary and cohesive devices (Yan, 2005; Pincas, 1982; Badger & White, 2000). Pincas (1982) regards writing skill as primarily dependent on such linguistic knowledge being used correctly. She separates the product approach into distinct four stages:

1. **Familiarization**: which aims to make learners aware of features in a chosen text
2. **Controlled writing**: where learners practice the skill
3. **Guided writing**: where learners are guided while writing
4. **Free writing**: where learners use the skill as a genuine activity

The product approach facilitates the teaching of the mechanics of writing, such as spelling, punctuation and correct usage. Time is allotted to exercises and drills in these areas and in grammar. The core rationale here is that correct writing is good writing. This approach deems language proficiency to be the most important aspect of writing (Sommers, 1982). Therefore, reading and familiarity with different genres are the foci of the product approach. Learners are encouraged to copy, imitate and transform different models of writing provided by textbooks or teachers. Accordingly, the final written text, which reflects the learners' linguistic knowledge, is most valued by teachers. This approach purports that learners’ writing progress mainly results from teachers’ input (Badger & White, 2000) and that teachers play a fundamental role in terms of guidance and examination of learners’ texts (Zamel, 1987).

According to the product approach, corrective feedback is given on the final draft or text. This can take the form of oral or written comments, which are usually provided by teachers (Yan, 2005). The focus of feedback on learners’ writing in this approach is on the lexis and structure.
Both Lyster (1997) and Swain (1995) concur that such focus on form can help learners improve their performance.

**Advantages and Limitations of the Product Approach**

There are a number of advantages to the product approach, such as improved grammatical accuracy, especially of lower level learners, and enhanced vocabulary use (Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1991). Since the primary yardstick of this approach is form, it is easy to teach a large class via this strategy. It is also a simple task to direct learners’ attention to their errors while correcting their texts. Therefore, as far as form is concerned, this approach helps learners with lower proficiency in writing to eliminate or correct their errors. According to Zamel (1983) and Badger and White (2000), the product approach particularly assists lower level learners to improve grammatical accuracy. However, this approach also has several shortcomings. Although the product approach aims to produce ‘correct’ texts (Richards, 1990), it is traditional in that lower level learners are advised to imitate a text that is usually presented and analysed (McDonough & Shaw, 2012). Furthermore, it does not afford learners the opportunity to plan and revise (Badger & White, 2000). Rather, it teaches them which rules to apply which can lead to learners becoming frustrated and less motivated. Therefore, learners get few opportunities to write creatively, and when they do, they tend to look at the final draft or text (Zamel, 1992). Hairston (1982) argues that adopting the product approach does not encourage learners to practise writing because it does not show how writing works. For example, such an approach does not offer much of a role for text planning, nor for other stages of writing. Therefore, Hairston (1982) contends the best way to teach students is to set tasks which require them write about something they experience in their daily life; in other words, to engage with a real situation, where there is a need for writing a text, and which requires the students to provide more than a set of writing rules.

Silva and Leki (2004) argue that this approach does not pay attention to readers (teachers), the goal of writing, or focus on the context (classroom). Hasan and Akhand (2010) asserted that most teachers approach writing instruction with the emphasis on the final product. As such, they focus primarily on sentence structure and little on critical thinking. However, Gardner and Johnson (1997) argue that “writing is a fluid process created by writers as they work….In actuality, the writing process is not a highly organized linear process, but rather a continual movement between different steps of the writing model” (p.36). In addition, this approach privileges technical accuracy rather than engaging learners in a negotiation with
communication (Sadek, 2007). The approach also neglects aspects of the writing process, such as collecting and outlining ideas, and does not afford teacher or peers an opportunity to give feedback except on the final work or product (Yan, 2005). Formative feedback is neglected in this approach and, of course, that is one of the main issues in this study. In terms of the traditional product approach, researchers have turned their attention to exploring what individuals are doing while they are composing (a “process” approach). This, in turn, may lead to a shift from the view of writing as a linear process to one of a recursive nature, which involves pre-planning and revising as ongoing activities. Therefore, the researcher pays more attention to the process approach, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.7.3: Process Approach

The process approach has been defined as "an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models" (Tribble, 1996, p. 160). While the product approach sees writing as being dependent on linguistic knowledge, this approach views writing as a process through which learners improve linguistic skills, acquiring them unconsciously (Badger & White, 2000; Zhang, 1995).

*Process approaches focus on the writer, the creativity and individualism of writing, and the process of writing as a whole, starting from the generation of ideas through to the editing of work, as well as following studies of how successful writers write.*

(Muncie 2002, p. 180)

What is most interesting when applying this approach in teaching writing is that it views writing tasks as an opportunity to practice linguistic skills in stages (Grami, 2010). In this study, these stages, which will be discussed in greater detail later, make it more straightforward to track the participants’ writing development when cooperating in small groups. When learners work in small groups to complete a particular writing task using the process approach, they actively collaborate, sharing ideas to discover solutions and create knowledge (Damon, 1984; Graham et al., 2005). According to Storch (2002), small group writing tasks rely on communication between learners, which encourages them to use writing actively in the classroom. Since writing is a recursive process which entails prewriting, planning, drafting, revising and editing stages (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983; Hyland, 2003a), use of the process
approach to monitor and observe the improvement of the learners when they work in small groups is appropriate.

2.7.3.1: Stages and Activities of the Process Approach to Writing

As previously stated, there are three important stages in the writing process: pre-writing, writing and post-writing; and these stages are supplemented by a range of activities, as shown in Figure 2.2. Learners can greatly benefit from these writing stages to improve their writing. They can also make use of collaborative writing at each stage.

*Figure 2.2: Process Approach to Writing (adapted from Coffin et al., 2003, p. 34)*

As shown in Figure 2.2, learners need frequent stages to master the writing skills involved in different tasks. In this vein, it is very interesting to compare the stages of writing when learners are writing collaboratively to those who write individually.
**Prewriting**

What happens in the processes of pre-writing is characteristic of the writing process as a whole (Hedge, 2001). It recurs throughout the writing process, with learners continuously thinking then writing and rewriting (Zamel, 1982; White & Arndt, 1991). Planning differs in relation to the type of writing task. Hedge (2001) states that planning requires learners to think about the main purpose of the writing task. Learners have the opportunity to brainstorm and explore ideas on a given topic in the pre-writing stage and then to debate and discuss them with others. Then they can make notes on which they base their writing (Johns, 2003). Brainstorming is a crucial aspect of the writing process as learners produce words, sentences, phrases and ideas which represent the foundation of their writing. At the brainstorming stage, students are able to produce relevant words or vocabulary, ask different questions, and make various comments freely in a specified time without worrying about correct spelling, grammar, organization, or even the quality of the different ideas put forward (Raimes, 1983a). As such, the pre-writing stage is used to generate as many ideas as possible within a determined time. In sum, this initial stage is for exploring ideas and formulating a plan. This activity can be conducted in collaboration with peers as the experimental group does in this study. During this stage, learners can make observations, on which basis they can proceed to the next stage (Krapels, 1990).

**Drafting**

In the drafting stage, learners are presented with different tasks. They then try to determine the identity of their writing. During the drafting stage, students begin the process of deciding what to include in or exclude from the text and make decisions about how their ideas will be organized. In this stage, learners start to use formal writing. They also begin to develop ideas that do not reflect their own experiences (Matsuda, 2003). At this stage, learners determine what they need and identify the purpose of their writing. Next, learners can organize their ideas, create some sort of sequence and make notes when brainstorming. Then they begin to draft and redraft the ideas. During this process, form is not a primary consideration; rather students engage in formulating the content. However, as in the pre-writing stage, learners in the drafting stage need sufficient encouragement and enough time to engage in this activity in a productive way (Silva, 1990; Ferris, 2003) as they attempt to exchange words for more suitable ones, build phrases and fragments to produce complete sentences, and organize their work into paragraphs to form a complete piece of writing.
Reflecting and Revising
Writing is a continuous thinking activity throughout which learners write and rewrite to compose a text (Hedge, 2001). In the revising or post-writing stage, learners revise the content, refining the grammar and ensuring their meaning is manifestly clear. Revising throughout the writing process involves amending and making changes; for example, adding something new, deleting a fragment or a whole sentence, correcting, etc. (ibid.), making whatever changes they feel necessary. Feedback produced by peers during the revision stage is generally regarded as important and helpful (ibid.).

Editing
At this stage learners need direct instruction from each other. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) refer to techniques that may be used to include direct instruction from the learners (meta-cognitive strategy), and assert that direct instruction occurs when students interact in order to guide the revising stage of writing and provide direct feedback during the writing process. In this stage, editing focuses on linguistic accuracy including grammar, punctuation and spelling (Kinkead & Harris, 1993). Thus, the polishing of the final draft occurs during the editing stage. According to the foregoing stages, learners can use such activities as many times as required in order to complete their writing task (Tribble, 1996).

2.7.3.2: Feedback in the Process Approach
Throughout the pre-writing, writing and post-writing stages, learners receive feedback (section 2.9.3.1) from a number of sources, including their peers and teachers to develop their writing. This consists of a number of types, such as one-to-one conferencing and audiotaped feedback (Flower, 1989; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hyland, 2003b). Feedback is a crucial element of the process approach (Wallace & Hayes, 1991) as it encourages students to evaluate their work and make any required changes to their text. Paulus (1999) claims that, as with the case of teacher feedback, peer feedback motivates learners to revise and improve their writing. The findings of various research studies including Berg (1999), Paulus (1999) and Hyland (2003b), confirm that feedback supports learners’ critical thinking skills and helps them to better evaluate their own work.
2.7.3.3: Advantages and Limitations of the Process Approach

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, by using the process approach learners are able to plan, outline, collect ideas, brainstorm, revise and edit (Rice & Huguley, 1994). Jordan (1997) further purports that this approach enables learners to decide upon the progress and direction of their work and allows them to feel responsible for developing their own work “by means of discussion, tasks, drafting, feedback and informed choices” (p. 168) while Silva (1993) observes that this approach is useful in collaborative workshops where learners can work with others to compose their writing. In addition, the process approach is non-linear, generative and exploratory with learners creating and reformulating ideas as they try to express meaning (ibid.).

Three key aspects of the process approach render it very important. First, it helps learners to gain a good understanding of their own writing process. Second, it helps them to develop various strategies to pre-write, draft and re-write. Third, as this method gives feedback to the writers (students) as they write to help them better express themselves, they can amend their writing to get closer and closer to what they intend to say (Brown, 2007).

The researcher deems this approach appropriate to the aims of the current study for a number of reasons as supported by Grabe and Kaplan (2014):

- Learners can write on an interesting topic rather than the topic assigned by the teacher
- Learners plan their ideas in writing, with an explicit goal instead of writing freely
- Learners can be imaginative and creative during pre-writing activities, making various drafts based on different feedback, instead of writing immediately without previous planning or helpful advice
- Learners can get helpful feedback from peers in small groups or teachers
- Learners are able to focus on the content from the planning to the final draft rather than the final product, usage and grammar
- Learners can approach a writing activity as a recursive rather than linear process
- Learners can develop an awareness of the issues pertaining to the writing process, such as the audience
While this approach receives much support in the literature, critics also highlight a number of disadvantages. According to Horowitz (1986), the process approach should be used with caution because:

1. an emphasis on many drafts can leave students unprepared for exams
2. peer evaluation may lead learners to question their own ability
3. this approach does not suit all learners and is not suitable for all academic writing tasks.

2.7.4: Genre-Based Approach

First, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of the term “genre” in this context. Swales claimed that “a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style” (1990, p. 58). Genre therefore refers to “abstract, socially recognised ways of using language” (Hyland, 2007, p. 149). Genre is a general term that refers to a category for works of art, such as film, music, literature, etc., but in the area of composition, “a genre is a technical term for a particular instance of a text type” (Christie, 2005, p. 233). Therefore, Thoreau (2006) explained that genre writing is a type of writing which has a particular target of readers, a typical style, and a specific purpose. In this regard, Hyland (2003a) implied that the aim of genre writing is not only to support a writer to write, but also to enable writers to pursue certain goals. For example, genre writing enables writers to retell, report, or describe how something is done or carried out. In this case, students (writers) need to use the linguistic features and rhetorical structures which are appropriate to the genres of their texts. This approach therefore encompasses includes descriptive, argumentative, narrative and expository writing as events with social aspects (Grami, 2010).

According to the categorizations of rhetorical types, Tribble (1996) lists description, expositions, examples, cause and effect, narration, definitions, compare and contrast, division and classification, and argumentation and persuasion as commonly taught text types, while Bloor (1998) describes them as language styles. Bazerman (2005) claims that such entities are merely patterns of semantic organization which dominate passages of a text which require longer than a mere sentence.
In a genre approach to writing students study texts in the genre they are going to be writing before they embark on their own writing. Thus, if we want them to write business letters of various kinds we let them look at typical models of such letters before starting to compose their own. If we want them to write newspaper articles we have them study real examples to consider facts about construction and specific language use which is common in that genre.

(Harmer 2001, p. 259)

As with the product approach, students most often write a text based on the genre suggested by their teacher since it is believed that learning writing takes place through exploration and imitation of different models of writing (section 2.7.4). For this reason, students should be exposed to a variety of examples of the same genre in order to develop their skills in writing a particular way. Through sustained exposure to similar texts, the students can detect and activate their experience of prior reading or writing whenever they write in a familiar genre (Badger & White, 2000, pp. 155-156).

Regarding this approach, it is useful for learners to identify features of different genres and typical models of each. Through reading and discussion with their teacher, they can acquire more knowledge about genres relevant to their writing. In this way, the genre approach is a ‘shortcut’ to the production of successful texts (Johns, 2003). This approach is also particularly useful with low level and less skilled learners. Using the genre approach in the early learning stages improves learners’ awareness of recurring textual structures (Ahn, 2012). Kress (1993) also notes that it is used to better understand texts and how learners can benefit from them. He argues that grammar makes meaning in culturally and socially significant ways. Therefore, genre, he explains, is a device that analyzes the nature of interactions in linguistics. Martin (1993) claims that students require direct instruction in order to master the written genres. Genre forms should therefore be explicitly taught through the learning of genre elements and the analytic study of models. It is important to note is that while each of the approaches has its strengths and weaknesses when isolated, they complement one another when used together (Badger & White, 2000; McDonough & Shaw, 2012).

2.8: Errors in Writing

Errors are defined as a “deviation from the norms of the target language” (Ellis, 1994, p. 51). Errors in student writing provide evidence of the learner’s level (Gass & Selinker, 1983) and valuable information which can help researchers and teachers improve learning methods and
strategies (Abisamra, 2003; Richards, 1989). Indeed, Ancker (2000) claims that errors are a natural part of the learning process, and as such are both normal and unavoidable.

**Table 2.2: Distinction between Errors versus Mistakes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Mistakes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competence errors are more serious in that they reflect insufficient learning</td>
<td>If a learner sometimes uses both the correct and incorrect form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Corder (1967) there are two sorts of errors: performance and competence (Table 2.1). The first kind is not serious and occurs when learners are hurried or tired. Competence errors, however, are more serious in that they reflect insufficient learning. However, the common distinction is between errors and mistakes, which are “technically two very different phenomena” (Brown, 2000, p. 226). While “errors are morphological, syntactic and lexical forms that deviate from rules of the target language, violating the expectation literate adult native speaker” (Ferris, 2011, p. 3), Norrish (1983, p.8) clarifies that “a mistake is an inconsistent deviation that sometimes the learner ‘gets it right’ but sometimes wrong” or “a mistake is made by a learner when writing or speaking which is caused by a lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or other aspects of performance” (Richards et al., 1985, p. 95).

Ellis (1997) offered two ways to distinguish between a mistake and an error. Firstly, by checking the consistency of a student’s performance. If a learner sometimes uses both the correct and incorrect form, then it is a mistake. However, if the student always uses the form incorrectly, it is an error. According to Brown (2000), “A mistake refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner” (p. 216).
A learner’s errors...are significant in that they provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language.

(Corder 1967, p. 67)

According to Corder (1973), errors fall into the following further categories: (a) omission of required elements; (b) disordering of some elements; (c) addition of incorrect or unnecessary elements; and (d) selecting incorrect elements. Corder added that this classification is not exhaustive, and so added sub-categories for the errors in the linguistics areas of syntax, lexicon and morphology. Ellis (1997) argues that classifying errors in this way can help researchers and teachers to diagnose learner difficulties at various junctures of their development. Corder maintains that systematic errors reflect a defect in knowledge (linguistic competence) (1974, p. 83). In the same vein, Chen (2006) confirmed that error analysis comprises four steps: “1. Data collection, 2. Identification of errors, 3. Classification of errors into error types, [and] 4. A statement of error frequency” (p. 85). Clearly, identifying and classifying errors is deemed important. Corder also emphasized the importance of errors made by learners, saying, “The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process” (1974, p. 125). Based on Corder’s (1974) classification of errors, Chen (2006) then developed the categories into 15 categories2. A linguistic taxonomy includes categories based on the descriptive grammar of the language, for example, “basic sentence structure, the verb phrase, verb complementation, the noun phrase, prepositional phrase, adjuncts, coordinate and subordinate constructions and sentence connection” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 60). In Chen’s taxonomy, errors are classified into the following categories: (a) the misuse of articles, nouns and pronouns (missing possessives, incorrect case forms); (b) verbs errors (subject-verb agreement, tense, verbs omitted, and auxiliary verbs); (c) prepositions (wrong prepositions, prepositions omitted, unnecessary prepositions); and (d) conjunctions (subordination, coordination, missing conjunctions).

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2 Categories are errors in (a) nouns, (b) articles, (c) pronouns, (d) verbs, (e) prepositions, (f) adjectives, (g) adverbs, (h) conjunction, (i) sentence fragments, (j) syntax, (k) lexicon, (l) punctuation, (m) spelling, (n) capitalization, (o) subject omission (Chen, 2006).
According to Myles (2002), focusing on the writing process as a teaching tool is only appropriate where the linguistic development of the learners receives ample attention from the teacher and they are provided with an adequate amount of specific, overt feedback on the content, form and structure of their writing and the related errors; otherwise, their writing will not improve (ibid.). Indeed, Lee maintains that learners expect teachers to identify their errors and give feedback that could help them improve their writing (Lee, 2004). Gass and Selinker (2001) stated that students inevitably make errors during the learning process which are “likely to occur repeatedly, as they “are not recognized by the learner” (p.102). However, in his 2000 survey Ancker found that although 143 students (76%) believed in correcting all errors, the impact of correcting all the errors would negatively affect students’ confidence and motivation (Ancker, 2000). Nonetheless, studying the nature of writing errors can help researchers gain a better understanding of the areas where learners of the target language have the most difficulty while writing (Abushihab, 2014; Abushihab et al., 2011).

2.8.1: Error Analysis
The field of error analysis is associated with the work of Corder (1967, 1974), who first argued that errors had the potential to offer insight into the learning process. This researcher therefore draws on the work of Corder and a substantial number of other scholars who have studied error analysis (Corder, 1974; El-Hibir, 1976; El-Hibir & Al-Taha, 1992; James, 2013; Richards, 2015) in efforts to identify the different types of errors made by EFL learners in order to elicit a clear picture of how writing development in the second language can be fostered through collaborative writing.

2.8.1.1: Error Analysis in L2 Writing
Attention to certain types of errors and an understanding of the misuse or violation of specific grammar rules offer practitioners a means of helping learners to improve language usage and deal with problems. Gass and Selinker (2008) outlined six steps in conducting error analysis: collecting different data; identifying specific errors; classifying the errors; quantifying the errors; analyzing the source of the errors; and the remediation of the errors. The grammatical errors learners make can be classified according to different models by dividing them into several categories, such as the addition or omission of an element and the misordering of elements. Error analysis can help researchers identify the types of cognitive strategies used to process knowledge.
2.8.1.2: Benefits of Errors and Error Analysis

EA is a significant procedure used by scholars and researchers which require the collection of samples from learners in order to identify, describe and classify the errors according to their causes and nature (Corder, 1967). In the field of EA, identifying EFL learners’ writing errors and their origin enables researchers to identify learner weaknesses when writing in the target language and should ultimately help the learners make better progress.

*Error analysis enables teachers to find out the sources of errors and take pedagogical precautions towards them. Thus, the analysis of learner language has become an essential need to overcome some questions and propose solutions regarding different aspects.*

*(Erdoğan, 2005, p. 262)*

EA benefits teachers and researchers alike by providing them with “concrete ways of addressing some of the differences between good and poor writing” (Witte & Faigley, 1981, p. 199). James (2013, p. 129) discusses the levels and classification of errors and provides examples such as the following:

- **grammatical:** articles, prepositions, singular/plural, irregular verbs, tenses, and adjectives
- **syntactical:** word order, nouns and pronouns
- **lexical:** word choice
- **substance:** capitalization and spelling

As noted in the current study, EA is a useful tool for researchers to determine the frequency of common errors in writing which are made by EFL learners, since the systematic analysis of such learner errors makes it possible to determine the areas which require teaching reinforcement (Corder, 1974). In this regard, researchers use a variety of methods to solve problems related to language teaching. The identification of errors benefits both teachers and learners as information is gained that can be used to correct the errors, improve teaching methods, and focus on the weaknesses of learners (Alhaysony, 2012). In addition, identifying errors provides evidence of the learner’s level in the target language (Gass & Selinker, 1992). The following section presents collaborative writing as one of the methods the researcher used to investigate learners’ progress in reducing the previously discussed errors in writing.
2.8.2: Sources of Error

When learning a second language, the interference of the first language is one of the major sources of learner errors in writing. In discussing interlingual errors which stem from the interference of the L1, Brown explains that interlanguage refers to the “separateness of a second language learner’s system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages” (Brown, 1994, p. 215). The “interlingual” is conceptualized as “a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language” (Brown 1994, p. 203). In this regard, Brown (1994, p. 205) considered an error to be “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner”. According to him, errors may occur as a cause of transferring patterns of L1. Lee (1968) claimed that the interference of the mother tongue is responsible for many difficulties encountered when learning a second language. Learners have a tendency to transfer the rules of their first language onto the second or target language (TL). Therefore, interference of the first language is deemed to be a major source of problems facing learners of a second language (Alamin & Ahmed, 2012). A study by Noor (1996) also supports this claim as he found that the main cause of the errors made by the participants in his study was the interference of the first language (Arabic), with 67% of the total errors stemming from L1 transference (Noor, 1996). Similarly, James (2013) highlighted two major causes of errors. Like Lee (1968), James (2013) identified the first cause as interlingual interference. He claims that the second cause is intralingual interference, with errors stemming from the TL. A study conducted by Alamin and Ahmed (2012) reinforced this view, reaffirming that learners’ basic English grammar errors were due to intralingual interference. In addition, learners’ errors may stem from many other factors, such as the complexity of the target language, overgeneralization, L1 interference, affective and cognitive variables and fossilization (Ancker, 2000; Brown, 2000). A study conducted by AbiSamra (2003) also revealed that one third of the participants’ errors were due to mother tongue interference, while Abuhakema et al., (2008) argue that the source of errors could include features of novice writing, and interference of the L1 and L2 proficiency in terms of structure and vocabulary. Richards (1971) classified errors in writing as follows:

1. **Interference**: resulting from the L1 interference
2. **Intralingual**: reflecting the incorrect understanding of how to apply rules in the target language
3. **Proficiency level**
2.8.3: Common Errors in EFL Writing

This section provides examples of the most common errors that EFL learners make with a view to investigating how collaborative writing might help to reduce the number of such errors made by Saudi learners. Errors are an inherent part of the learning process, and all EFL learners make them in their writing. Hence, researchers and teachers are constantly trying to identify new ways of helping learners to reduce such errors through the use of new teaching methods, such as collaborative writing.

A plethora of research studies have investigated the type and extent of errors made by learners of English as a foreign language. In particular, much research has been conducted to identify the most common errors in academic writing made by EFL learners. For example, the misuse of the preposition is an error common among Korean, Chinese, Thai, European, and Malaysian learners. In a study conducted by Zheng and Park (2013) (Appendix 19) on Chinese and Korean university students (39 males and 129 females) to investigate the most common errors made by the students, a total of 168 written essays were analyzed and the errors coded using NVivo. The findings confirmed that errors in preposition use were among the most common errors.

Tse and Yau (2014) conducted a study on 40 undergraduate Malay-speaking students. The researchers focused on the grammatical errors made by Malaysian students. The students were asked to write an argumentative essay, with writing in the form of paragraphs. An EA analysis of 80 scripts revealed that the students experienced severe problems in writing and made sustained grammatical errors, including the misuse of prepositions (Appendix 19).

Researchers from numerous countries also investigated frequent errors of the misuse of tense. These errors frequently occur among Iranian, Turkish, Chinese, Korean, and Thai learners (Appendix 19). The aim of Phuket and Othman’s (2015) study on third year undergraduate Thai students was to identify the most common errors made by the students and was conducted on 40 university students majoring in English Language. Using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the research revealed that that incorrect verb form and tense were also frequent errors.

As a result of “L1 transfer”, confusion between the definite and indefinite article are known to be among the most common errors made by EFL learners. For example, Turkish, Iranian, Malaysian, Korean and Chinese learners are among the students who make frequent errors in this area (Appendix 19). Kirmizi and Karci (2017) conducted a study on Turkish university
students to investigate the most significant errors in writing. The students were given written essays and a statistical analysis of the data confirmed that misusing articles were amongst the major frequent errors.

A further common error which occurs in writing is in spelling. This is particularly associated with Thai, Iranian, and Turkish learners (Appendix 19). Omidipour (2014) carried out a study on Iranian students in order to identify the most common errors made by the students in their academic writing. The participants comprised 40 students studying English at a language institute in Bavanat. The data was collected from an analysis of the errors found in specifically prescribed English writing and revealed spelling errors to be one of the most frequent errors made in this study.

In addition to the aforementioned errors, frequent EFL/ESL learners errors in the use of punctuation marks is one of the common errors made by Thai, Korean, Chinese and Iranian students (Appendix 19). Nezami and Najafi (2012) conducted a study on University Iranian students in order to identify the most common errors students make in academic writing. The study comprised 103 student participants majoring in English who undertook a test of Written English. This study concluded that punctuation mark errors were among the most common made by the students. For more details about other common errors made by EFL learners, see Appendix 19. As will be shown in the next section, the errors made by learners of the different nationalities discussed above and those made by Arab learners are revealingly similar in nature.

2.8.4: Common Errors Made by Arab Learners

There have been a number of research studies into the writing errors made by speakers of Arabic. The following have been found to be the most common errors made by Arab learners:

- spelling
- punctuation marks
- articles
- subject-verb agreement
- verb tense
- prepositions
- word order
- sentence fragments
- singular/plural form
Spelling has been found to be one of the major and frequent problem areas for Arab learners (for example, Omani, Iraqi and Jordanian learners) (Appendix 19). Arab learners commit both intralingual and interlingual spelling errors: the former are due to the obvious difference between the English and Arabic languages; and the latter to the irregularities of English spelling (Mahmoud, 2013).

In a study carried out by Subhi and Yasin (2015) (Appendix 19) to explore the spelling errors made by 30 undergraduate Iraqi students, the data was collected through questionnaires and a writing task. The findings of the study indicated a high percentage of spelling errors in the Iraqi students’ writing composition. The common errors made by Arab learners are parallel to the errors made by Saudi learners. Spelling has been found to be one of the major writing errors in the writing tasks of Saudi learners. Several studies have investigated this issue (Alsaawi, 2015; Al-Jarf, 2010a; Al-Jarf, 2010b; Khan & Itoo, 2012).

Khan and Itoo (2012) conducted a study on undergraduate Saudi learners in order to ascertain whether improved writing strategies could help Saudi preparatory year college students to reduce English spelling errors. In an aim to identify the precise causes of these problems among the learners, the researcher applied a paragraph writing test to a sample of 36 students. The findings revealed that the participants experienced severe spelling problems including the deletion of vowels, consonants, suffixes or syllables, substitutions, reversals of two vowels or consonants, and the addition of extra vowels. These findings were corroborated by another spelling study carried out on 26 intermediate high school Saudi students by Alsaawi (2015). Using a spelling test that contained a list of some common spelling errors, the findings confirmed that incorrect spelling was a major concern in their writing. Particularly prevalent were errors in the use of final e, silent letters, consonant doubling, and vowels. A number of additional Saudi researchers interested in this area (Al-Jarf, 2010a; Al-Jarf, 2010b) further attest that spelling errors is one of the most problematic writing issues for Saudi learners.

Errors in the correct use of prepositions is another frequent problem for Arab learners, as confirmed by a number of Arab researchers (Al Khotaba, 2013; Al-Bayati, 2013). In the same vein, Tahaineh’s (2010) study of 162 undergraduate Jordanian students majoring in English concentrated on the use of prepositions in academic writing. An analysis of the relationship
between the average of the number of errors and length of compositions found that the students frequently used improper prepositions such as at, by, on, with, to, from, of, and in their writing.

As described above regarding EFL learners in general, the misuse of articles has also been established as a major error made by Arab learners (Bakhshayesha, 2015; Crompton, 2011; Yacoub, 2015). Yacoub’s (2015) research study of ESL undergraduate students, for instance, required 20 Arab undergraduate student participants with an advanced level of English proficiency to write essays of approximately 400 words as a means to identify error patterns. The subsequent analysis confirmed that the correct use of articles presented significant difficulties for these participants. Saudi learners are among Arab learners who make frequent errors in the use of the “article” (Alahmadi, 2014; Alhaisoni et al., 2017; Khan & Khan, 2016; Sawalmeh, 2013). For example, a study conducted by Alhaisoni et al. (2017) aimed to provide comprehensive data of the use of “article” by undergraduate Saudi learners in their preparatory year programme. The data, collected from 150 students, was derived from written samples and was based on the Surface Structure Taxonomies of errors. The study revealed that the omission of the indefinite and definite article was more frequent and higher than the substitution or insertion of one for the other. Moreover, the study confirmed that the incorrect use of a was more frequent than that of an.

The findings of several additional Arab researchers (AbiSamra, 2003; Mohamed & Zouaoui, 2014; Mustafa, 2017) reaffirmed that other common errors which frequently occur in the academic writing of Arab learners include punctuation, grammatical tense, syntax, run-on sentences, and the misuse of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. Mustafa (2017), for example, conducted a study on prep-year students of Jubail University College in order to ring-fence the syntactical writing errors most likely to be made by Arab learners. The data was derived from written samples and questionnaires, along with interviews with the participants. Mustafa’s findings verified that Arab students experience severe grammatical confusion resulting in frequent errors in all of the aforementioned areas.

In the same vein, a number of Saudi researchers (Othman, 2017; Eltayeb & Ahamed, 2016; Khan & Khan, 2016) focused on additional error categories which included use of tenses, particularly the omission of be and the misuse of verb tenses, omission of third person singular marker s, and the general misuse of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. Eltayeb and Ahamed (2016) investigated common error patterns in the academic writing of
undergraduate from the College of Science and Arts Saudi students at King Khalid University in 2014/2015. The study sought to pinpoint both the errors and their causes in order to suggest suitable solutions to the problem. The study sample included 20 Level Four students along with a number of teachers from the same college. The researchers adopted an analytical descriptive approach to handle the study with a focus on the grammar, spelling, lexicon, punctuation, and discursive errors in the composition of the learners. Using the data instruments of questionnaire, testing, structured interview and researcher observation, the study found that the students made numerous errors across all the aforementioned error categories. These were attributed to several factors, including the interference of the mother tongue. For more details about the previous studies, see Appendix 19. While this section provides detail about the common errors made by Arab learners, the following section will discuss collaborative learning.

2.9: Collaborative Learning

The previous sections examined L2 writing and the types of errors learners habitually make. The hypothesis of the present study is that L2 writing is enhanced and errors reduced by using a collaborative learning methodology. Thus, this section considers the theoretical framework for collaborative learning as a strategy which has been found to be beneficial in many different areas of education. For instance, it had a positive impact on achievement, productivity, motivation, peer relationships, and so on (Ashman & Gillies, 2003).

Collaborative learning provides opportunities for learners to work together to achieve common goals and contrasts with traditional, individualistic classroom environments (Kessler, 1992). In general, collaborative learning encourages learners to pool their resources and complete specific tasks which they are not capable of completing alone. For example, learning and practicing through dialogue with peers assists the learners in achieving a specific activity in a certain manner (Bruffee, 1984; Hirvela, 1999).

2.9.1: Theoretical Frameworks for Collaborative Learning

The main theoretical perspective of collaborative work and learning in small groups originates from Vygotsky’s social constructivist view. Vygotsky’s (1986) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is the theoretical background for peer collaboration in second-
language writing. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was formulated by Vygotsky as follows:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

According to ZPD, there are two levels of development: the actual level, which can be determined when a learner is able to do something individually; and the possible level, in which a learner completes a task with the help of more advanced learners (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000). In this vein, Kessler (1992) confirms that the collaborative process plays an important role in solving problems effectively during dialogues amongst learners.

2.9.1.1: Collaborative Learning Pedagogies

Collaborative learning is heralded as one of the most important commonly used ways of active pedagogy (Tsay & Brady, 2010) as it requires learners to work together to achieve a common goal. This type of learning activity has been given different names such as collaborative learning, collective learning, cooperative learning, learning communities, and team learning which include peer learning and peer teaching (Dillenbourg, 1999). Therefore, what learners have in common is the shared group work. Collaborative writing is a useful activity for learners to benefit from engagement with each other. Research on collaboration in academic writing is necessary since learners can come together to write and to facilitate their learning of writing. By so doing, learners can improve their quality of writing by pooling their experiences and knowledge of local and global aspects of writing. The efficacy of this approach has been supported by many researchers (Bremner, 2010; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). More importantly, it means that the learners bear the responsibility of teaching one another and attaining a goal. Reaching the goal indicates that the learners have helped each other in the process of learning. In collaborative learning, the learners are actively negotiating, exchanging, and debating their ideas in groups which incentivizes overall student motivation and interest in learning. More importantly, by engaging in sharing discussions about different ideas and taking responsibility for their own learning, the students are encouraged to become both critical writers and thinkers (Golub, 1988; Noël & Robert, 2004).
2.9.2: Elements of Collaborative Learning

Collaboration means sharing the work with others in a group and using various elements of collaborative learning successfully (Graham, 2005). According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), five elements of collaborative learning may assist learners in boosting their ability to perform a specific task: positive interdependence, individual accountability, interpersonal interaction, interpersonal interaction and social skills.

Positive Interdependence

The success of each learner in a cooperative group depends on all the members of that group. Therefore, strong positive interdependence occurs when the group works effectively and successfully in ways that benefits the whole group (Kagan, 1994) and when all learners are motivated and encourage other members to do well. It also facilitates the development of individuality and social identity amongst learners (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Positive interdependence creates mutual benefits for the members of the group and a sense of shared responsibility, which reflects the strong relationships among members of the group for the success of all members. Moreover, it supports the social environment and helps in raising motivation, building confidence and actuating progress in academic achievement (Nunan, 1992; Kohonen, 1992).

Individual Accountability

The individual accountability element is important as it helps the team members to identify each other and the areas in which other members need additional assistance. One of the main goals of learners working together is to support and strengthen each and every learner in the group (Graham, 2005).

Interpersonal Interaction

Interpersonal interaction is reinforced by positive interdependence. It encourages members to assist each other and helps them to do so (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Face-to-face interaction generates a number of positive effects on collaborative learning group members as follows:

- Facilitation of information exchange among members
- Disclosure of feedback that helps learners to effectively improve their work
- Presentation of challenges to each individual, which assists in developing the quality of decision-making
• Encouragement of learners’ motivation
• Reduction of stress and anxiety levels (ibid.).

**Social Skills**
Learners learn more successfully when they trust each other, support each other, communicate clearly, resolve any conflicts, and solve any problems that arise (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Therefore, the teacher needs to develop the social skills students require for collaborative learning, such as conflict management, leadership, decision-making and trust-building (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1994, 1999). The more social skills the members have, the more useful the feedback they will gain or provide in a collaborative learning environment, and thus the better their progress will be (Graham, 2005).

**Group Processing**
Group processing involves all the members reacting to and reflecting on the collaborative learning tasks to ascertain whether the actions of the members are useful or if there is a need to make any changes. Group processing provides the learners with an opportunity to evaluate their social skills and provide mutual feedback on their work during the activity. At this stage, the teacher plays an important role in helping the students to collaborate with others successfully. For example, through observation the learners may understand and follow the elements of collaborative learning (Graham, 2005).

**2.9.3. Collaborative Writing**
In collaborative writing, learners work as a pair, a team or a small group in order to complete and produce one piece of written work. According to Noël and Robert (2003), CW helps learners to express and share their ideas and viewpoints, and save time and effort in accomplishing a task. Storch (2013) defines collaborative writing as “the co-authoring of a text by two or more writers” (p. 2) while Lowry et al. (2004) define collaborative writing as “[a]n iterative and social process that involves a team focused on a common objective that negotiates, coordinates and communicates during the creation of a common document” (p. 72). Meanwhile, Allen et al., (1987) define it as “collaborators producing a shared document, engaging in substantive interaction about that document, and sharing decision-making power and responsibility for it” (p. 70). These definitions were selected as they exemplify the
necessity for collaborative communication and shared decision-making by learners within the overall writing process.

Collaborative writing has been a focus of attention in second-language teaching (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Storch, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Yeh, 2014), with both L2 researchers and teachers taking an interest in the issue (Nixon, 2007). It is seen as a relatively new writing method in language-learning classes (Storch, 2005). In producing a piece of writing, learners working collaboratively may discuss and arrive at decisions on numerous issues, such as selecting the title, agreeing on key messages, determining how to proceed, deciding on an audience and/or the purpose of the piece, the order of ideas, sub-headings and paraphrasing, underlining, the use of punctuation marks, selecting vocabulary, the correct use of spelling and grammar, shared reading, and revisions to add, delete and/or change (Dobao, 2012; Ferris, 2003; Memari Hanjani, 2013; Niesyn, 2011; Noël & Robert, 2003). Learners who write collaboratively may be motivated by this approach to work more effectively and improve their writing skills. Since this study focuses on collaborative writing (CW), it is necessary to fully understand its conceptualization.

**Forms of Collaborative Writing**

Various scholars and researchers have identified different types of collaboration in writing. For example, Jones (2005) identifies three types of collaborative work in writing: contextual collaborative; hierarchical collaborative; and group-oriented collaborative. Contextual collaborative writing is “[a] less overt and often complex interaction, contextual collaboration involves the context of the organization itself” (Jones, 2005, p. 451). Hierarchical collaborative writing, is “carefully, and often rigidly, structured, driven by highly specific goals, and carried out by people playing clearly defined and delimited roles” (Ede & Lunsford, 1990, p. 133). Group-oriented collaborative writing, as explained by Ede and Lunsford (1990), “involves a collection of people who largely plan, draft, and revise together” (p. 454). The current study will focus on group-oriented collaborative writing, wherein a small cohort of learners work on a piece of writing across the planning, drafting and revising stages.

According to Cooper (1986), writing is a cognitive and social activity. Nunan (1992) maintains that the pedagogical activity of writing is a social act, and learners should be provided with an opportunity to write collaboratively to prepare them for the real world. This view endorses the
importance of collaborative work in English-language learning in general and writing in particular. Collaborative writing within the classroom is not a new method. However, it is rarely used in Saudi Arabia as it is not popular among writing teachers at Saudi Universities (Al-Ismaiel, 2013) (section 2.9.3). Collaboration is usually limited to the planning stages, in which learners are asked to ‘brainstorm’ ideas as a group in spite of suggestions that introducing more opportunities for collaborative writing in the classroom could lead to greater cooperative work and resolve many linguistic problems in writing (Dobao, 2012).

Trimbur (1989) observes that the collaborative learning process begins with an in-depth discussion in pairs or small groups, proceeding on to discussion between the groups in the classroom, and finally between the teacher and the class. Recent studies which have been built on this framework have investigated the techniques which might support learners in the writing process and examined how this process might be improved. The current study uses the same approach to investigate collaborative essay writing.

Dobao (2012) claims that collaboration should extend further into the writing process in order that the students develop better communication and a better understanding of the writing task. When working in small groups and engaging in dialogues, learners synthesize information from each other. In so doing, students engage in a process that demands they clarify meaning, deliberate over grammatical or lexical choices, discuss structure, and make choices to produce the text (Storch, 2005). Dobao (2012) focused on group activity by having learners engage in small group activity. All of these activities included varying types of collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and synthesis, as fundamental to the collaborative writing process. While it may be true that experienced or professional individual writers are quite capable of producing a text individually, without the assistance of others, it is equally true that learners can support and assist one another if they cooperate when writing.

Writing has traditionally been viewed as a solitary, cognitive activity, and writers in the traditional classroom where writing is taught tend to work silently as isolated individuals, regardless of whether the context is L1 or L2. However, Cooper (1986) argues that writing is both a social and a cognitive activity, and a number of teachers and researchers have become more interested in the social aspect of writing collaboratively. This kind of learning can occur both inside and outside the classroom (Speck, 2008). Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, it is important for teachers to identify and use effective methods to teach writing
inside the class and to encourage learners to practice writing outside the class. In shedding light on the importance of cooperation in learning, Nunan (1992) claims that team learning can enable learners to improve in terms of academic progress and in the development of both social and learning skills.

Many researchers have investigated the utilization of different tasks in a collaborative learning environment in the social context of the classroom (Storch, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2013; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Swain & Lapkin, 2008). Collaborative writing out-of-class supports learners to work more effectively. For example, collaborative writing tasks help L2 students to expand their practice through discussion and negotiation making use of a wide range of technology (Zhou et al., 2012). However, considerable scope remains for complementary research into the potential benefits of collaborative writing beyond the context of the classroom.

**2.9.3.1: Feedback**

According to Hattie (1999), feedback is one of the most effective influences on guiding students in learning. He attests that “The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback” (Hattie, 1999, p. 9). As feedback, and in particular peer-feedback, is a key variable in the present study, it is further explored and defined in this section.

Feedback is specific information prepared and provided by an agent (e.g., a teacher, peer or book) regarding one’s performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Ur (1996) defines feedback as “information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objectives of improving his performance” (p.142) while Sadler (1989) states that feedback provides “information about how successfully something has been or is being done” (p. 120).

**Corrective Feedback**

Corrective feedback (CF) is known as grammar correction (Ferris, 2010; Truscott, 2007), and has been one of the most controversial issues in second language teaching for many years. Lightbown and Spada (1999) defined CF as “an indication to the learners that his or her use of the target language is incorrect” (p. 172). Long (1996) further elaborates on CF, defining it as the input language learners gain which may be categorized as either “positive evidence” or “negative evidence”. Positive evidence provides learners with some examples of what is
grammatically acceptable in the target language (TL). However, negative evidence provides learners with explicit or even implicit information regarding what is not acceptable and “ungrammatical” (p. 413).

Formative Feedback
According to Shute (2007), “formative feedback represents information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify the learner’s thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning” (p. 1). Effective formative feedback must therefore be simple, descriptive, specific, and focus on the task at hand. This enables students to be clear in work and make decisions that influence success in their learning (Shute, 2007; Stiggins, 2008).

Summative Feedback
Summative feedback yields information which demonstrates the standing of individuals with subsequent evaluation and a set of criteria for individual overall success or failure (Groen et al., 2007; London et al., 1999). Therefore, this type of feedback can be provided in intervals, and not only at the conclusion of instructional interventions (Thelwall, 2000).

Feedback in Writing
An extensive body of research literature makes it clear that feedback is an essential teaching tool in writing. It can be used by teachers to help learners improve their writing skills. Positive feedback builds learner confidence, making them more comfortable with the process of writing. In addition, it encourages students to revise and edit their work. Feedback should be seen as an inherent part of the writing activity from which both teachers and students can benefit. It has been suggested that teachers’ feedback can contribute to improving the quality of learners’ texts on a number of levels by helping to improve grammar, content, organization, development of ideas and overall clarity of the writing (Ferris, 2003).

Feedback offers essential information to students about their writing performance (Zamel, 1985). Good feedback helps learners improve their performance, facilitates reflection and provides high quality information to the learners about their learning achievement (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Good feedback not only helps students to self-evaluate and decide where they are in learning terms but also provides them with an indication of their progress and where to proceed next (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).
While written commentary may take different forms, remarks which take the form of brief instructions, questions and suggestions are more useful and productive than comments such as “fair” or “good” (Raimes, 1983a). Systematic directions, specific suggestions and thought-provoking questions are more beneficial in that they guide learners, helping them to revise and amend their writing more effectively (Raimes, 1983b).

Providing feedback to learners on their performance is an important aspect of teaching. Feedback may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate.

(Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p. 188)

In fact, feedback is now acknowledged to be essential for developing second language writing skills and for motivating learners to improve these (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Classifying Feedback

There are two types of feedback: local and global. While local feedback focuses on errors associated with mechanics, vocabulary and linguistics, global commentary conversely concentrates on clarity, content, ideas and organization of a text (Montgomery & Baker, 2007). L2 writing practitioners are aware of their students’ perceptions and attitudes towards written feedback and try to provide helpful feedback to the students, which may focus on local matters of grammar, punctuation, and spelling or global issues of content, ideas, and organization (ibid.). The obvious distinction between local and global feedback is that while local feedback only involves the sentence level aspects of a text (Zhu, 2001), global feedback is concerned with the discourse-level and “adding, deleting, or rearranging the ideas” (Paulus, 1999, p. 275).

Feedback can be delivered either directly or indirectly. Direct feedback is provided, for example, when a teacher identifies a linguistic error in a learner’s paper and corrects it. Direct feedback may take different forms, such as insertion, substitution, reformulation or deletion, requiring students to transcribe corrections into their revised work. This has traditionally been the accepted way of delivering feedback. However, in recent years, indirect feedback has proven more popular. This entails the teacher informing the learner that an error has been identified but not corrected, thus giving the student responsibility for amending the error (Bitchener et al., 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Ferris, 2006; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Less explicit or indirect error correction of this kind is recommended as it engages learners in “guided learning
and problem-solving’’ and thereby promotes the sort of reflection which is more likely to foster long-term development (Lalande, 1982, p. 141).

**Selective vs. Comprehensive Feedback**

Teachers also need to consider whether they to be selective or to offer comprehensive feedback when dealing with learner errors. Many advocates of error correction claim that a selective approach to correcting errors might be more beneficial for both teachers as learners correcting every single error can prove counter-productive. When teachers choose certain types of errors in a learner’s paper, for example, those that impede meaning or are of a specific grammatical nature, rather than correcting all the errors, they should be able to focus on certain language areas when teaching the student. In addition, through selective feedback, learners are better able to focus on specific aspects of their work without feeling either emotionally or cognitively overwhelmed at dealing with a potentially demotivating array of errors, (Ferris, 1995, 2007; Hendrickson, 1980; Lee, 2008). Considering the viewpoints of all sides and bearing in mind that selective feedback normally requires a longer period of time, a comprehensive approach is found to be more suitable for the purpose of the current study. The students need an overview of all types of errors they have made in writing so that they can share and discuss their errors in detail as peers in the collaborative writing revision sessions.

**2.9.3.2: Sources of Feedback on EFL Students’ Writing**

As previously noted, feedback is seen as a crucial tool for guiding and supporting learners. Writing scholars agree that the feedback of learners’ writing could come from many sources. The efficacy of the feedback may depend on its source. In different contexts, five sources can provide feedback, namely: the supervisor; the formal organization; co-workers; oneself; and the task (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001; Greller & Herold, 1975). While a total of five sources of feedback have been identified (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) namely teachers, parents, peers, books and computers, three of these are most relevant to collaborative writing in the classroom; namely, teacher, peer, and self-feedback.

**Teacher Feedback**

Teacher feedback on learners’ writing work appears to be the predominant type. Students tend to accept and respond to teacher feedback on their writing which is regarded as a reliable source of trusted information. Teacher responses to learners’ writing provide students with supportive comments on their progress and helpful suggestions to guide them to improve their texts in

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subsequent drafts. While Zhang (1995) contends that learners prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback, other studies (Grami, 2010; Yakame, 2005) including the present one, indicate that learners also appreciate peer feedback.

Keh (1990) states that some writing teachers agree that making comments on learners’ work causes frustration. She adds that the teachers worry whether their comments and corrections will be understood or even read. When learners are asked to produce several drafts, they tend to get impatient. Furthermore, it has been found that "students claim to prefer comments on ideas and organization in earlier drafts and on grammar in later drafts" (Hyland, 2003b, p. 179). Therefore, Leki (1995) maintains that teachers should not be the only ones evaluating learners’ texts and learners themselves should be proactively involved in the progress of the writing task.

Although L2 learners are positive about teacher feedback, its value in actually helping learners to develop their writing skills remains unclear, both in terms of the immediate impact on the first draft and the long term development of their writing. Studies show that learners may misuse, ignore or misunderstand teacher feedback (Ferris, 1995). In the case of teacher comments regarding revisions to the drafts, while learners may understand the problems pointed out, they may be unable to come up with a proper solution or suitable revision (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999). It is teachers should arguably provide supportive feedback across all the stages of writing, including planning, drafting, revising and editing. The following section compares teacher feedback with peer feedback.

**Peer Feedback**

Collaborative writing obviously rests on the involvement of peers, and thus peer feedback warrants a detailed discussion at this stage. Peer feedback is provided through a communication process whereby learners enter shared dialogues related to standards and performance (Liu & Carless, 2006). Peer assessment on the other hand is defined as learners grading the performance of the peers using certain relevant criteria (Falchikov, 2001). Peer feedback is defined as “the process of having students critique each other’s papers” (Brammer & Rees, 2007, p. 71).
The rationale for peer evaluation is that by reflecting critically on the abilities of other learners on a shared goal, learners are involved in the assessment of those linguistic or communicative parameters which are relevant to their performance. Peer evaluation is, thus, a practical form of learner training which develops learners’ understanding of language usage and the type of difficulties which they are likely to experience in their language production, which can then be used to inform their self-assessment skills. 

(Tudor 1996, p. 182)

The focus of the current study is collaborative writing. In this situation, peer feedback is key to the drafting and revising stages before the final text is produced. Peer review within class has increasingly been of interest to researchers as it has been found to be an effective tool for enabling L2 learners to improve their writing skill (Corbin, 2012). Also known as peer response, peer evaluation and peer editing, peer review is regarded as useful at all stages of the writing process approach (Zamel, 1985; Leki, 1990). In fact, research has shown that learners work more enthusiastically in this way, enjoying interacting with their peers, sharing information and ideas, and reacting to a variety of questions and feedback from their peers (Watkins-Goffman, 1989). During the writing activity, they become more objective critics of their own work and more aware of the process of writing when reading their texts. Learners therefore become more experienced and confident. Urzua (1987) maintains that peer feedback is crucially important in the writing process and offers a number of suggestions on how to train learners to construct and give feedback.

Research which has centred on the general role of peer feedback in writing has triggered in-depth investigations into whether the advantages of peer feedback could improve academic writing for EFL learners. The studies of both Grami (2010) and Yakame (2005) specifically engaged with this issue to produce a number of interesting findings. Yakame’s (2005) study shed much light on peer responses in writing. The researcher applied his study to 26 first-year undergraduate Japanese students in order to ascertain the various roles played by peer responses within the process of writing. Each student was asked to write a paragraph and the students were then divided into small groups of five or six to discuss and comment on each other’s work. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of these comments concluded this was perceived as a positive student experiences since the peer responses helped them in revising drafts and becoming more knowledgeable about improved processes of writing.

Grami’s (2010) study educed more details about peer feedback in improving writing. The researcher conducted his study on 73 male intermediate level undergraduate students over a
three-month project. Divided into three stages, the aim of the study was to investigate the benefits of peer feedback in improving academic writing. To do so, Grami used three types of instruments: pre- and post-test questionnaires, and interview. Moreover, he also applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches to the data. The first stage of the study suggested that the students were apprehensive about the use of peer feedback.

During the continual stages, however, the students began to change their attitudes towards peer feedback and their overall perception became more positive. Students in both groups performed better in the writing test, but the members of the peer feedback group outperformed the control group in almost all aspects of writing. The students were highly impressed by the potential benefits of the peer experience on their ESL writing. Based on the above-mentioned studies, collaborative writing clearly plays a significant role in improving the writing of ESL learners. However, any study of specific learners in a specific area may differ from another, depending on the first language of the learners and their culture. Therefore, the present study was applied to undergraduate Saudi learners in Saudi Arabia, and provided significant results across the different categories of academic writing.

**Student Perceptions of Collaborative Writing**
Shehadeh (2011) conducted his study on 38 first year undergraduate students in UAE with the expressed aim of determining the effectiveness of collaborative writing and student perceptions about the experience. The students were therefore split into a control group who wrote individually and an experimental group who wrote in pairs. The researcher used a pre- and post-test which was holistically graded to obtain the data. The study measured the improvement of the students in terms of organization, content, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. While the findings proved to be significant for organization, content, vocabulary, this was not the case for grammar and mechanics. In this research study, and as also noted in Storch’s study, the majority of the students who worked in pairs stated that they had enjoyed the experience.

All of the above studies investigated pairs as opposed to writing individually. The current study however, expanded to collaborative writing in small groups compared to individual writing. Moreover, while Storch and Wigglesworth’s (2007) studies revealed positive findings in terms of grammatical accuracy, the current study includes ten criteria for the improvement of essay writing through CW. While Shehadeh’s (2011) investigations found no significant difference between the two groups in terms of grammar and mechanics, the current study revealed
significant improvements for the students who were writing collaboratively (see Ch4). As observed in the previous studies, most of the participants in this study who wrote collaboratively in small groups expressed their enjoyed of the task. Both Al-Besher (2012) and Al-Nafiseh (2013) also investigated the issue of collaborative writing on their students in terms of learner perceptions and improved overall writing. Al-Nafiseh’s study aimed to evaluate the impact of collaborative writing on the writing skills of second-year Saudi students at the Teachers College of King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. The researcher gathered the data using quantitative and qualitative approaches via the three instruments of samples of participant edited drafts, questionnaires, and teacher observations. The study concluded that peer editing and collaborative writing enhanced in-class interaction and helped to improve the overall writing of the students. Peer editing was perceived as enjoyable and helpful for the majority of the students in a number of areas, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization and content. However, the researcher’s positive assumptions regarding the benefits of peer-editing were not met for a number of reasons:

- The inappropriate length of the study course
- Lack of learner motivation
- Having mixed-ability students
- The majority felt peer feedback was too time-consuming

The Al-Besher (2012) study was conducted in more detail and took place over 11 weeks at Al-Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. It was applied to 48 male students majoring in English in the second year with the purpose of examining the practices of various stages of the process approach through collaborative learning to determine whether it would be more effective for Saudi learners than writing individually. The researcher adopted a mixed method approach and collected the data through samples of writing essays tests, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. While the researcher used qualitative and quantitative analysis, his findings were mainly derived from quantitative data which revealed that the students involved in collaborative learning had improved in all aspects of writing, including organization, coherence, development, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. The perceptions and attitudes of the participants were also positive regarding their improvement following the treatment study. Interestingly, the students in the control group also improved in all aspects of their writing. However, their attitudes did not change for the better. Al-Besher noted that his students were active in the pre-writing and revising stages, but not in the editing stage.
2.9.3.3: Advantages of Peer Feedback

Much research has discussed the advantages of peer feedback. These include cognitive (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009; Zeng 2006), affective, e.g. confidence building (Mittan, 1989; Yakame, 2005), linguistic (Grami, 2010; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009; Zeng, 2006), and social benefits (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Leki, 1990; Zeng, 2006).

...in recent years, the use of peer feedback in ESL writing classrooms has been generally supported in the literature as a potentially valuable aid for its social, cognitive, affective, and methodological benefits.

(Rollinson, 2005, p. 23)

In collaborative writing, receiving and giving feedback among peers is crucial in terms of improving the skills of writing when learners participate in judgment, responsibility and autonomy (Magin & Helmore, 2001). As discussed in section 2.5, numerous theoretical stances, such as the writing process, collaborative learning, interactionist theories of L2 acquisition and Vygotskian learning theory, provide convincing arguments for using peer review (Liu and Hansen, 2002). Peer review is seen as a crucial guide when drafting and redrafting in the writing process approach (Zamel, 1985; Mittan, 1989). With regard to the linguistic benefits, learners gain experience through collaborative writing which leads to improvement in their skills as they read, share ideas and write. Wigglesworth & Storch (2009, p. 447) support this claim, stating that “working collaboratively allows learners to pool their linguistic resources”. In terms of potential cognitive benefits, Zeng explains that peer feedback can compel learners to exercise their skills and think creatively rather than passively receiving feedback from a teacher. In relation to its social benefits, it is evident that student relationships and communicative power encourage them to express, negotiate, ask, gain confidence and reduce anxiety while writing collaboratively on a given subject (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Leki, 1990).

Peer feedback plays an essential role in the process of writing. Peer feedback and response activities give the learners various ways to discover and explore ideas, to find the proper words to express those ideas and to negotiate with one another. Mittan (1989) claims that peer feedback gives learners a sense of confidence and guidance, increasing motivation to write. It also helps the learners to evaluate their own work and improve it. Zeng (2006), for example, states that peer feedback has linguistic, cognitive and social benefits. He explains that peer
responses to a learner’s L2 writing can motivate him to exercise his thinking, thus benefitting him cognitively. Concerning the linguistic benefits, through peer feedback in a collaborative production, the learners get valuable opportunities to develop their ability to write and read. Therefore, collaborative work enables them to strengthen and improve their knowledge of L2 writing. Regarding the social benefit, communicative power can encourage learners to negotiate aspects of the writing and express their ideas. Therefore, peer feedback helps the students to gain confidence and reduces apprehension.

Bruffee (1984), for example, encourages learners to query the extent to which they are prepared to use peers’ notes and comments in their writing and revisions. According to Mendonca and Johnson’s (1994) study, learners are very selective when using peers’ feedback, while Liu and Littlewood (1997) found that L2 learners are more motivated and positive about peer responses after a course experience.

Bartels (2003) identified similar benefits of using peer feedback. Written peer feedback is appropriate and useful in a communicative writing situation. The feedback is instant so the learners are able to request clarification, ask questions and even argue about the produced text immediately. This, of course, leads to a more successful language learning process in L2 writing.

Responding to peer work will also involve students in each other’s writing; in that process students can learn the language of, and uses for responding to texts. From this experience, students would then begin to see similar problems and weaknesses in their own writing as well as use innovative and creative ideas to which they are exposed.

(Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 379)

2.9.3.4: Disadvantages of Peer Feedback

Although peer feedback has several advantages as discussed in the previous section, it is by no means free from criticism. Leki (1990), for instance, identified some problems with peer feedback and comments. For example, learners tend to comment and give advice on things that do not require revision. A number of scholars and researchers (Amores, 1997; Leki, 1990; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Hyland & Hyland, 2006) have observed that learners have problems determining errors and providing good quality feedback and occasionally give inappropriate feedback or make incorrect comments on each other’s work. Nonetheless, since these collaborative writing groups were comprised of more than two
participants, it still proved more useful than cases of two students working together. As was particularly notable in the context of the “Think Aloud Protocols”, if one student provided unhelpful or inaccurate feedback, the other members of the group immediately intervened to correct him. Learners, with some justification, have difficulty deciding whether their peers’ advice is valid. Nelson and Murphy (1993) state that L2 learners may not trust their peers’ feedback since they are not native speakers. In addition, L2 learners are usually from cultures that see teachers as the only trusted source of feedback as the peers are not knowledgeable enough to give correct feedback on writing. A study conducted by Nelson and Carson (1998) in which L2 students were interviewed found that students prefer teachers’ feedback. This is not surprising bearing in mind that peer feedback is not as established as teacher feedback, and it is understandable for learners to doubt the efficiency of peer feedback.

Tsui and Ng (2000) conducted a six week comparative study on 27 Chinese pre-university students in Hong Kong. The study placed particular emphasis on grammatical accuracy in writing. Using the data instruments of a survey and an interview the researchers found that the students preferred feedback to originate from teachers who was regarded as a “figure of authority that guaranteed quality” (p. 149), and were reluctant to trust their own peers. However, despite these negative issues, peer review is still important and very useful, and many researchers, teachers and course designers incorporate it into their work and subsequently report positive experiences of the learners. In relation to this view, Celce-Murcia (2001) states that because ESL learners lack the language proficiency of native speakers, peer feedback and responses in the classroom must be controlled and taught. Most certainly, the above problems do not reduce the importance of peer feedback in collaborative writing. They merely show that learners should be trained to give appropriate and useful feedback. This encourages the researcher to posit that collaborative writing should be taught as a module on academic writing courses, and that students taking that module should be taught how to give feedback to their peers.

2.9.3.5: The Need for Feedback Training

For peer editing to be more advantageous, the learners must know how to conduct peer editing properly. Like any classroom task, students must be prepared through training before engaging in a task such as collaborative writing.
Students learn from editing others’ papers and from having their papers edited. Students who become good editors generally become good writers. Editors begin to look at their own papers differently and more carefully. After a time, peer editing can contain a self-evaluation component also. (Hafernik, 1984, p. 55)

One important research issue has been identifying how to improve the quality of peer feedback through preparation and training. In this vein, learners must be trained how to respond and give feedback effectively when they write collaboratively (Covill, 2010). Rollinson (2005) reinforces this issue, observing that “training students in peer response leads to better revisions and overall improvements in writing quality” (p. 24).

Some studies have suggested that careful training and preparation are essential for successful peer feedback and responses. Stanley (1992), for example, found that a group of undergraduate ESL learners who were trained in peer feedback and evaluation provided more valuable and useful feedback than an untrained group and that the learners were more likely to benefit from the feedback on their writing and revisions.

2.9.3.6: Advantages of Collaborative Learning for Writing

Previous studies have indicated that collaborative writing (CW) has a positive effect not only on grammar but also on discourse. According to Williams (2003), small groups are beneficial in most learning activities, including writing. Ashman and Gillies (2003) state that compared to traditional approaches such as individual learning, the collaborative learning approach has a positive effect on a considerable number of dependent variables, for example: productivity, achievement, motivation, overcoming adversity and relationships with learners. In fact, ‘collaborative writing is a highly salient area of collaborative research and practice that has significant impact on academia, industry and government’ (Lowry et al., 2004, p. 68).

According to Kagan (1994), collaborative activity helps learners: (1) to increase academic work achievement; (2) to increase the competitive level of learners; (3) to encourage learners to become involved in effective social settings. Collaborative writing has been shown to enhance learners’ writing quality (Abt-Perkins, 1992; Dix & Cawkwell, 2011; Nixon & Topping, 2001), increase learners’ interest in writing (Dale, 1994; Louth et al., 1993), enhance learners’ motivation to write (Abt-Perkins, 1992; Ballinger, 2009; Kohnke, 2006) and help learners develop a relationship of ownership with their writing (Gere & Abbott, 1985; Louth
et al., 1993; Wagner et al., 2001). Many of the features of collaborative writing have been described as having considerable advantages in terms of learning:

1. Affective Factors

Affective factors, such as reliability, trust, respect and commitment, are important and necessary in a collaborative environment (Dale, 1994; Tocalli-Beller, 2003). Coleman, (2008) particularly highlights the importance of trust between learners in the collaborative learning context for the following reasons:

- trust is seen to improve performance and increase competence
- trust reduces fear and increases confidence
- trust supports relations among members
- trust makes it easier to discuss work issues more openly

2. Shared Expertise

Another useful feature of collaborative learning is the sharing of expertise. Different members bring a variety of skills to the group writing task. Different learners, for example, may have strong writing abilities, be capable of generating ideas, be experienced in organizing ideas or may be effective in time management. Therefore, when these learners work in a group, their writing talents can be put to good use in order to produce a better quality essay than individual writing would produce (Dale, 1994). According to Fung (2010) “the pooling of diverse abilities provides interdependence for learners to co-construct knowledge and improve their writing skills to a greater extent than what they could achieve individually” (p. 23).

3. Mutual Interaction

Mutual interaction is crucial to the success of collaborative writing (Dale, 1997). The thinking processes involved in writing, such as generating, gathering and reflecting on ideas, are enhanced through collaborative or group writing (Daiute & Danton, 1993; Vass et al., 2008). These processes help learners to fully comprehend the task because they are able to interact with and respond to each other (Dale, 1994).

4. Negotiation

According to Breen and Littlejohn (2000), negotiation is an important feature of collaborative writing. It occurs when learners share work and interact with each other. They modify and restructure their writing as they negotiate various aspects of it with others in their group.

5. Conflict

It has been noted that conflict is unavoidable when a group of people with very different opinions work together (Dale, 1997). However, a number of researchers claim that conflict
plays an important role in the learning process (Allen et al., 1987; Dale, 1994; Ede & Lunsford, 1990; Storch, 2002; Tocalli-Beller, 2003). Conflict is not always negative. It could be significant in enhancing the practice of composition (Durst, 1999). When learners share responsibility for a piece of writing and they disagree on a certain aspect of it, then conflict may take place, but this could lead to enhanced writing.

6. Backtracking
This feature refers to the process whereby learners move back and forth in planning, writing, rewriting and revising a text (Silva, 1993).

Writers can benefit from backtracking because it enhances familiarity with tasks, provides internal feedback, focuses attention on specific problems, and helps writers to identify broad categories before minor details.

(Fung, 2010, p. 26)

Observing the backtracking of students who engage in collaborative writing is useful as it enables teachers to follow each learner, which further aids in identifying areas where the students require some practice and improvement and in turn helps learners to produce better and clearer pieces of writing (ibid.).

Previous Studies on Collaborative Learning in L2 Writing
As previously discussed in this section, there is a body of research demonstrating that when students write in collaboration with others rather than alone, they achieve better academic results such as in grammatical accuracy, positive perceptions about collaborative writing and peer feedback. Indeed, this is one of the factors that triggered the current researcher’s interest in this area.

A number of studies, for example, have shown an improvement in the final product in terms of grammatical accuracy (Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007). Storch (2005) conducted her study on 23 EFL students and asked the participants to choose to write either individually or in pairs as she audio-taped their work. All the participants were interviewed and the researcher compared the writing texts of those who opted to write in pairs to those who wrote individually. The findings revealed that the text produced by the students who were writing in pairs was shorter in length but better in terms of grammatical accuracy. Most students who worked in pairs expressed a positive attitude about the experience. This study derived
significant findings concerning the advantages of working in pairs in a certain areas of academic writing such as grammatical accuracy.

Similarly, but on a larger scale study, Storch and Wigglesworth (2007) compared the compositions produced by 24 pairs of students (48 students) and 24 individual students. The researchers analyzed the student writing both in global units and in terms of accuracy measured (error free clauses and error free T-units). The findings revealed a measurable difference in grammatical accuracy for the students writing in pairs (see Appendix 18).

2.9.3.7: Disadvantages of Collaborative Learning in Writing

While the previous section discusses some benefits of collaborative writing, this section will shed light on some potential disadvantages. Although some researchers see conflict in collaborative writing environments as an advantageous factor as noted above, others see it as having a negative impact on group work and collaboration, especially when an issue remains unresolved (Dale, 1994; Storch, 2002; Tocalli-Beller, 2003). In addition, and according to Tian (2011), some learners do not enjoy writing collaboratively and provide valid justifications for this position as follows:

- all learners are not equal in proficiency
- collaborative writing wastes time
- collaborative writing increases anxiety
- some learners feel embarrassed to work with peers
- some learners do not trust peer feedback

In another study by Rieber (2006), some learners were averse to peer review because they felt they were wasting time by working with lower proficiency writers, while other learners felt embarrassed to be corrected by colleagues. Student aversion to the concept of peer feedback along with perceptions of time-wasting seems to be core and will be further discussed in the next section.

The examples given regarding some common disadvantages of collaborative writing do not reduce the importance of collaborative writing in this study. On the other hand, it encourages wider research into the manner in which learners can become more familiar with collaborative writing. As noted above, one of the central issues researchers have found respecting the
proponents of individual writing is that EFL learners tend not to trust peer feedback and working in small groups. Storch (2005) noticed that some participants were hesitant and remained unconvinced about writing in pairs. Rather, they preferred to perform their writing tasks individually instead of collaboratively.

As noted by Tian (2011) collaborative learning may not reduce learners’ apprehension and anxiety. Murau (1993) investigated the role of peer review and its effect on writing anxiety. His questionnaires concerning the participants’ feelings and attitudes revealed that all the participants agreed that peer review was useful. However, with regard to their feelings on the process, the majority of responses were negative. Nevertheless, such a study is interesting because it draws attention to the fact that EFL learners must develop trust while working with peers, and to do so, peers should be trained before working collaboratively.

Another aspect is that some students are hesitant about collaborative writing and the students argue that writing in small groups may distract learners and waste time. According to the study conducted by Storch (2005), some students believe that writing is a skill that is a solitary and individual activity. If students are distracted due to collaborative work, this position may be valid if the learners are not assigned specific tasks equally, and instructed, controlled and guided by their teacher.

However, as discussed in section 2.9.3.3, collaborative writing inherees several advantages regardless of the few negative aspects, as is common in any educational situation. Regardless of the linguistic knowledge of learners who write collaboratively or in groups, an interesting observation by Donato (1994) states that learners are “at the same time individually novices and collectively experts” (p. 46).

2.10: Chapter Summary
This chapter aimed to provide an overview of the literature related to the collaborative writing strategies and introduce the theoretical CW framework in order to illustrate that while collaborative writing is by no means a new concept, it is one that may be very beneficial to the EFL classroom. While a growing number of related studies have been undertaken in the ESL/EFL context to probe certain methods of teaching writing, such as CW, this is particularly the case in terms of the role of collaborative writing and peer feedback in improving all areas of academic writing. As discussed in this chapter previous research suggests that CW exerts a
positive influence on EFL learners and is a useful strategy to enhance problem solving skills and critical thinking. The core aim of the current study is to investigate the effectiveness of CW as opposed to the individual writing in improving writing. Chapter Three will provide a detailed discussion of the methodology used in the current study and will include consideration of appropriate approaches to the research questions, with particular focus on the research design, procedures, and the participants of the study.
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

3.0: Introduction

This chapter introduces and describes the methods, procedures, and instruments used to collect data for analysis in response to the questions of this research study. The focus of this study was on the role of collaborative writing (CW) in class, as opposed to individual writing, as a means to improve the essay writing skills of undergraduate male Saudi EFL learners. As such it highlights the importance and need to encourage a deeper understanding between CW and individuals in improving writing in the classroom. This chapter therefore discusses the methodological basis of the study, and illustrates the planning of the research methodology.

The chapter is divided into six parts which frame the research methodology. Section 3.1 situates the methodology within traditions of research inquiry. Section 3.2 presents the methodology design. This offers an informative analysis using qualitative and quantitative methods. Here the researcher justifies the use of a mixed methods approach, as necessary for deeper insights in order to answer the research questions. This section also presents the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used in this study. Section 3.3 outlines the research design framework. The researcher provides a detailed description of the research design used to elicit the data examined and analyzed in the ensuing chapters. Section 3.3.1 analyzes the research questions which query the extent to which Saudi learners can improve themselves in essay writing in CW compared to individual writing in class. Section 3.4 outlines the empirical study. This section also elucidates the procedures and methods undertaken in gathering the data collection, ethical considerations, the pilot study and data collection instruments.

In sections 3.4 and 3.4.5 the researcher describes the methodological approaches selected to address these research questions, including the measures used and the instruments of data collection. Section 3.4.1 delineates the experimental study used to conduct a case study. Finally, section 3.5 presents the data analysis and offers the analytical frameworks of the empirical study to provide a detailed description of the procedures used to analyze the data obtained via the empirical study.

3.1: Research Inquiry

This section explains the different traditions of enquiry which shaped the research study, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods paradigms. Each of these paradigms
implies what Schwandt (2007) describes as “understand[ing] the meaning of human action” (248). As five philosophical assumptions, namely, ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological, guide the paradigms to distinguish them as appropriate types, the researcher’s decision to use a mixed method approach will become clear. However, while a mixed method approach was indeed used, qualitative methods dominated in order to elicit the subjective views of participant experiences using group work writing and to enhance the research findings with enriched data.

3.1.1: The Five Philosophical Assumptions
Creswell (2012) states philosophical assumptions are a useful means of indicating the type of philosophy and its importance in a research study since they assist both the formulation of a problem and the research questions and ways to seek significant information to answer them.

Ontological
Crotty (1998) defined ontology as “the study of being”. As such it concerns the structure of reality and its nature of existence (Creswell, 2012). Ontological assumptions reinforce an interpretive paradigm that suggests the existence of different realities in the social world. These realities may be examined through their distinctive and holistic features (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In the current study the researcher used a number of data collection instruments including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, think aloud protocols (TAPs) and pre- and post-tests to explore the challenges and differences encountered between group and individual work to improve the learning of essay writing in English. To uncover such realities, the researcher is urged to use combined quantitative and qualitative data techniques. In addition, quantitative and qualitative data techniques allow the researcher to come up with multiple verifications of the socially constructed world of people (learners) and to identify the learners’ and the teachers’ feelings, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions of the reality of both teaching and learning essay writing.

Epistemological
Epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty 2003, p. 3). While Guba & Lincoln (1994, p. 108) contend that epistemology asks “What is the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known?”, the term is also connected with “the nature of knowledge and forms” (Cohen et al., 2007 p. 7). Every research paradigm inheres specific epistemological assumption which inevitably influence the
choice of methodology. The researcher must therefore be aware of both how this assumption relates to the chosen methodology, and how such an assumption connects to the participants and the study findings. Crotty (1998, p. 5) asserts that “things exist as meaningful entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects”.

The epistemological researcher adopts the role of observer and treats the social world as natural through prediction, carefully controlled methodological measures to ensure that their own “values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes” (Guba, 1990; Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers in a quantitative approach strive to remain detached from the data, while researchers using a qualitative approach deliberately seek closeness with the participants. The qualitative researcher may use the research instruments of questionnaires, interviews, and think-aloud protocols. The researcher then should endeavour to be objective following controlled procedures such as reliability and validity. According to Guba (1990) post-positivist methodology is ‘modified, experimental / manipulative’ and can be applied in natural settings such as quasi-experiments to permit the use of qualitative methods.

Axiological

Axiology refers to “the theory of values, extrinsic and intrinsic” (Walter, 2006, p. 13) and thus concerns how individuals see the world and the value judgments inherent in their research. As such, axiology addresses questions related to what is valued and considered to be “good” or desirable for humans (Given, 2008). Denzin & Lincoln (2005) argue that acting (axiology) is one of the assumptions related to the research philosophy. According to Lee (1991), there is a relationship between ontology (being), epistemology (knowing) and axiology (acting). This relationship clarifies the connections between how one sees the world (ontology), thinks about it (epistemology), and acts within it (axiology).

In the context of research methodology constructivism is also understood as a learning philosophy (Vygotsky, 1978) since the “constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning or “how people make sense of their experience” (Caffarella & Merriam, 1999, p. 260). Therefore, constructivism refers to issues of thinking and learning. It describes the way learners can make sense of materials and how such materials can be shown and taught effectively. Constructivism maintains that researcher values are intrinsically linked
to the research process. There are many ways to understand and approach values. Rescher (1969) divides values into eight basic types: economic; physical and material; social; moral; political; religious; intellectual; and aesthetic value. The researcher should therefore acknowledge and describe personal values, but not exclude them. Creswell (1998) contends that all investigators should be cognizant of the value-laden nature of their studies and actively report their values and biases, along with information gathered from the field.

**Rhetorical**

Rhetoric is the ability to use concise and clear language in order to communicate fluently and to be comprehensible to an audience. Rhetorical criticism is “the business of identifying the complications of rhetoric and then unpacking or explaining them in a comprehensive and efficient manner” (Hart & Daughton, 2005, p. 22). Rhetorical research is understood as “forms of (discursive) manipulation of ‘reality’ by social actors in order to achieve a certain goal” (Hart & Daughton, 2005, p. 3). Livesey (2002) states that rhetorical criticism shows insight into the use of data collection for persuasion, noting how a researcher uses language to influence audience’s attitudes and actions. Rhetoric was employed in this study using well-organized flow of thoughts delivered in straightforward and persuasive language related to the information and findings of the study. The rhetorical assumption means that the qualitative investigation, for instance, uses specific terms and personal narrative in the research study. Words such as *discover* and *understanding* emerging as qualitative terms are established rhetorical markers (Creswell, 1998).

It was necessary to read and re-read the information provided to clarify the goal of the study and avoid ambiguity. The format and structure of this thesis were organized and developed into related sections to clearly indicate and explain the main issues connecting them with the literature that supported the findings, and which formed the theoretical basis of the thesis study.

**Methodology**

Qualitative and quantitative methods will be discussed in further detail in section 3.2.1. In terms of the quantitative paradigm, the methods of data collection were chosen to maintain objectivity. However, in the qualitative paradigm, the methods of data collection aim to capture various realities. While quantitative methods are deductive and produce results that can be changed into numerical collection of data and can statistically be analyzed, qualitative methods are inductive, and thus produce theories that can be expressed as models or narratives (Leedy,
As Becker (1996) explains, quantitative researchers focus on some chosen procedures to be traced and tested using a theory or hypothesis. Qualitative researchers have more flexibility in their procedures and approach: they concentrate on the questions that require answers. Some of the analysis results of quantitative data can be statistically generalizable, while the analysis results of qualitative data may produce a generalization of theories.

3.2: The Research Methodology

“Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data” (Wellington, 2015, p. 12). Thus, research methodology aims to justify, evaluate, and describe the use of a particular method (ibid.).

Methodology refers to how each of logic, reality, values and what counts as knowledge information research. On the other hand, methods are the techniques and procedures followed to conduct research, and are determined by the methodology (i.e. sampling, data collection, data analysis, and results reporting, as well as theories, conceptual frameworks, taxonomies and models).

(McGregor & Murnane, 2010, p. 420)

The methodology of this study is of an exploratory process which provides a specific way of teaching and learning, using different methods of data and an overall interpretive methodology that aims to elicit an in-depth understanding of improving essay writing through group work as opposed to individual writing by students.

3.2.1: Research Methods

Many researchers have conducted studies on “writing fluency”. These focus on using quantitative approaches (Cheshier, 1982; Ishikawa, 1995), qualitative approaches (Lannin, 2007) or mixed methods approaches (Barkaoui, 2010; Lee & Greene, 2007). By privileging the exploratory nature, a research design employing mixed methods was chosen for the current study. The data collection methods used have both strengths and weaknesses. Mixed methods research refers to any research study that adopts both qualitative and quantitative techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Borkan, 2004). The study adopts both quantitative and qualitative research designs in order to answer the research questions and achieve its objectives. The choice of a research design focuses on the extent and the nature of the information sought. The researcher deemed that the most appropriate design for this study was the mixed research
methods which entailed the use of a survey to obtain information for academic purposes from a group of volunteers to gather qualitative data.

3.2.1.1: Quantitative versus Qualitative

The nature of the data the researcher collected requires the researcher to comprehend the difference between qualitative and quantitative methodology. Quantitative and qualitative methods are useful and compatible with the research paradigm, and the methods should be decided according to the purpose of the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Mertens, 2014).

To distinguish between the qualitative research and the quantitative research, the former is used in words, rather than numbers, as in the quantitative approach, or using open-ended questions, as in qualitative interview questions, rather than using closed-ended questions as in quantitative hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In other words, we have two aspects here; first of all, quantitative data is numeric data which generates statistics, while qualitative data is narrative (oral or written reporting). Secondly, certain types of questions, such as rating, elicit quantitative data, and others, such as open-ended questions, elicit qualitative data.

The simplest way to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative may be to say that qualitative methods involve a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in term of measurements or amounts. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, focus attention on measurements and amounts. (Thomas, 2003, p. 1)

3.2.1.2: Quantitative Research

“Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured typically by instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures” (Creswell, 2013, p. 4). Thus, it entails collecting, interpreting, analysing, and producing the results of the study (ibid.). Researchers often refer to quantitative data as numeric data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Schwandt, 2007). According to Silverman (2000), quantitative methodology provides answers to questions of how many? and how much?

3.2.1.3: The Qualitative Research

Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as a “real world setting (Patton, 2002, p. 39). The process
includes a number of required questions and procedures, as the data should typically be collected in the participants choice of setting. The data then is built inductively from a particular to a general theme, which permits the researcher to make valuable interpretations of the meaning of the data to answer the relevant study questions. As such “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2013, p. 4).

3.2.1.4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Some Advantages and Limitations of Qualitative Method

The use of qualitative research approaches in data collection has several benefits. Firstly, as stated by Denzin (1989), a qualitative research approach produces rich descriptive details of participant opinions, feelings, and experiences and allows for interpretation of the meanings of participants’ actions. Chalhoub-Deville & Deville (2008) argue that qualitative approaches achieve deeper insights into issues related to language assessment design and interpretation. Secondly, Denzin & Lincoln (2011) maintain that qualitative research encompasses a wider range of research methods, epistemological viewpoints, and interpretive techniques to explore human experiences. Thirdly, qualitative research permits researchers to identify the participants’ experience, and discover how meanings are shaped in culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For instance, the written assignments of “good” or “satisfactory” may provoke an investigation to understand the meaning of these terms in order to elicit the features of text displayed in the participants’ scripts (Leung, 2012). Fourthly, qualitative research instruments such as observation, semi-structured interviews, and description records are commonly used for collecting data (Cohen et al., 2013).

The consequent data collection is detailed but subjective, and therefore liable to some criticism. The analysis of specific cases takes a considerable amount of time, and results cannot always be generalized to larger population (Flick, 2015). According to Hsieh & Shannon (2005), another issue is the difficulty in developing a complete understanding of a context which may result in failure to identify certain key categories. Furthermore, there may be problems in reporting results as a consequence of unsuccessful analysis, or difficulties in describing a situation (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).
Some Advantages and Limitations of the Quantitative Method

Driscoll (2011) posits that the quantitative approach aims to collect hard statistical or numerical data. Renner & Taylor-Powell (2003) argue that in comparison with the complexities of the qualitative approach, this is a more straightforward method of data analysis. Adopting such an approach presents a useful opportunity to use raw and fresh data, which may be analyzed to understand different variables in relation to the study. The quantitative approach also affords the opportunity to generalize obtained sample results to the wider population (ibid.). Choy (2014, p. 101) further summarizes the strengths of this approach as having three advantages:

1. reliability by critical analysis
2. short timeframe for administered survey
3. facilitated numerical data for groups and extents of agree or disagree from respondents

However, while the quantitative research approach has proven advantages it also has a number of limitations. Sudeshna & Datt (2016) argue that the quantitative method has several major drawbacks:

1. Improper representation of the target population:
   Applying a sampling plan of the subjects depends on the probability distribution of data. This may lead to miscalculation of distribution and falsity in proposition.

2. Inability to control the environment:
   Researchers sometimes face a problem to control an environment where participants provide answers to the questions in a survey (Baxter, 2008). Furthermore, responses depend on a particular time, which is dependent on certain conditions that occur during the particular time frame.

3. Limited outcomes in a quantitative research:
   The use of a structured questionnaire using close ended questions leads to limited outcomes since respondents have fewer response options, based on choices made by the researcher. Therefore, results are not always truly representative or generalizable.

4. Difficulty in data analysis:
   Quantitative approaches require extensive analysis, and is often difficult to perform for researcher from non-statistical backgrounds. Statistical analysis is a scientific discipline and can be a daunting task for non-mathematicians.

5. Requirement of extra resources to analyse the results:
Successful statistical confirmation of results is robustly tested in quantitative research. A hypothesis is proven through several experiments in order to any avoid ambiguity in the findings. For this reason, the results need to be refined and retested many times (Ong et al., 2003) which requires more research time and resources.

6. There is no guarantee of how truthful a respondent is and how he/she understands questions:

   The fact that participants answers are based on individualized interpretations (Ackroyd & Hughes 1981). Choy (2014, p. 101) presents significant stumbling blocks to the quantitative approach as follows:
   a. lack of resources for large scale research
   b. no depth of experience or description

The researcher therefore used the mixed method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods and triangulating the data for more comprehensive depth, validity and readability throughout the collected data. VanderStoep & Johnson (2008) illustrate a useful briefing as in the following table:

\textbf{Table 3.1: Comparison of Characteristics of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods (adapted from VanderStoep & Johnson, 2008)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of data</td>
<td>Phenomena are described numerically</td>
<td>Phenomena are described in a narrative fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Descriptive and inferential statistics</td>
<td>Identification of major themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of inquiry</td>
<td>Specific questions or hypothesis</td>
<td>Broad thematic concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Advantage</td>
<td>Large sample, statistical validity, accurately reflects the population</td>
<td>Rich, in depth narrative description of sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Disadvantage</td>
<td>Superficial understanding of participants’ thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>Small sample, not generalized to the population at large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.1.5: Mixed Methods

A mixed-method design is a procedure for gathering both quantitative and qualitative data and for analyzing and reporting the data, based on the sequence of information (Creswell, 2002). The researcher also used pre- and post-tests to gather rich information, building on the mixed-method procedure. As discussed above therefore, for more information and more accuracy of the data collection, the researcher did not resort to a single method, but used mixed methods to counter any limitations of either quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data and using distinct design that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks.

(Creswell, 2013, p. 4)

Advantages of Mixed Methods

As recommended by numerous researchers and scholars (Johnson et al., 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Klassen et al., 2012; Brown, 2014; Gray, 2014), this study uses mixed methods to gain in depth data collection. In addition, the mixed method provides a logical line of inquiry which includes the use of deduction, induction, and testing hypotheses and theories (Greene, 2008). According to Johnson et al. (2007), the rationale for using the mixed methods research stems from the following advantages:

a. it enables a researcher to be more confident of the results obtained
b. it stimulates and supports the development of new methods of collecting data
c. it elicits richer and thicker data
d. it can lead to the synthesis of theories

Other scholars refer to five useful purposes for using mixed methods: triangulation, development, expansion, complementarity and initiation (Greene et al., 1989). Triangulation (section 3.3.2) refers to combining quantitative and qualitative methods to complement and strengthen each other. Development shows gathering results through one method can be useful for developing the other method. Expansion is used to mix methods to enlarge the whole range of the study. Complementarity infers that both methods are joined to measure any overlapping that may contrast with the triangulation. Initiation is used to utilize the mixed methods in order to detect any contradictions and provide support in framing new thoughts and ideas (Gray, 2014). All five purposes (Table 3.2) involve the sequential use of quantitative and qualitative
methods, where, for instance, the first method is used to support inform the development of the second.

**Table 3.2: Purposes for mixed-method evaluation designs**
*(Adapted from Greene et al., 1989)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRIANGULATION</td>
<td>Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from the different methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPLEMENTARITY</td>
<td>Seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INITIATION</td>
<td>Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPANSION</td>
<td>Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Disadvantages of Mixed Methods**

Several scholars have critiqued the use of mixed methods in investigating a study (Bryman, 2007; Giddings, 2006). Bryman (2007) states that researchers may misinterpret differences and commonalities when collecting data using methods, thereby rendering them unreliable. In addition, using mixed methods is time-consuming for both researchers and participants. However, the advantages of mixed methods outweigh the disadvantages, particularly for this study where the various data sets enriched and complemented each other.

**3.2.1.6: Sampling**

When not predominantly planning to represent the wider population of students, but rather a certain number of language learners in writing, the study adopts a strategy known as “non-probability sampling” (Leedy, 1997, p. 204; Cohen et al., 2011, p. 153). Therefore, the researcher used a qualitative, non-probability sampling method that consisted of a small number of respondents (Borg & Gall, 1979), and used qualitative and statistical analysis on the data collected (Cohen et al., 2011). In choosing a sampling method, eight important points must be considered to plan and make sure the sampling procedure is satisfying:
Decide the need for a sample
• Identify the population
• Identify the strategy (such as, variant of required probability and non-probability of samples)
• Ensure access to sampling
• Identify the requirements of confidence level and interval
• Calculate the number required in the sample
• Obtain and manage access to all participants
• Be willing to adjust data, once collected (ibid.)

As used in the present research, the methods must fit the planned objectives prior to the beginning of the study. The choice of a sampling strategy must be suitable for the goal of the research and accommodate the timescales, research design, methodology of the research, and the methods of data collection (Cohen et al., 2011).

Regarding the sampling strategy suitable for the data study, some factors were considered: the research paradigm (mixed methods qualitative and quantitate), the research methods (the case study), and the sampling (relevance or irrelevance of the representativeness of the participants) (Cohen et al., 2011).

There are two types of sampling method: probability sampling and purposive (or non-probability) sampling. Probability sampling is where every individual element in a population is chosen at random and has a known, non-zero chance of selection. In purposive sampling, the chance of selection for each element in a population is unknown and for some elements is zero. (Arber, 2001, p. 61)

The researcher used purposive and cluster sampling. From the outset of the study, it was decided that participants would be selected based on what should be useful in sampling: purposive sampling (the researcher was studying a particular group) and cluster sampling (there were two separated groups: the experimental and the control group).

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3 ‘An ideal cluster can be defined as a set of points that is compact and isolated’ (Jain 2010, p. 652). ‘The class of cluster sampling designs includes simple random or systematic selection of clusters, and also two-stage cluster sampling in which the units within each sampled cluster are themselves sampled’ (Stehman & Czaplewski 1998, p. 335).
Sample Size
Some participants may fail to complete the questionnaires or to participate in the pre and post tests and/or the interview (Cohen et al., 2011). For the above reasons, it was decided and planned to sample all classes of participants, which represented 58 individuals. In addition, the study was done in normal classes, where the number in each class ranged from 26 to 32 students. Therefore, the number of total participants did not exceed 60 students, considering that the number might be reduced and might be less than 30 students, depending on attendance, punctuality, and not withdrawing from participation.

3.3: Research Design
The research design includes the questions, approaches, methodological framework, methods, analysis, and the process the researcher used in the case study (Gary, 2011). Regarding the definition of an experimental study, Flick states the experimental study must include at least two groups to which learners or participants are allocated randomly (2015). However, the researcher in this study devised a quasi-experimental design using different instruments (e.g., pre and post-tests) to elicit the different effects of the experimental treatment, compared to the traditional treatment (i.e. teaching method).

Quasi-experimental designs identify a comparison group that is as similar as possible to the treatment group in terms of baseline (pre-intervention) characteristics. The comparison group captures what would have been the outcomes if the programme/policy had not been implemented (i.e., the counterfactual). Hence, the programme or policy can be said to have caused some difference in outcomes between the treatment and comparison groups.

(White & Sabarwal, 2014, p. 1)

This section has shown the considerations the researcher undertook to decide on the methods, procedures and instruments which frame the case study. The methods of the case study enable the investigation of group work writing in a naturalistic setting. Grounded theory, on the other hand, allows a close relation proximity to the participants in actual group work writing.

3.3.1: The Research Questions
The aim of the current study was to investigate the role of collaborative writing as compared to individual work and how collaboration may contribute to the teaching/learning experiences for male ESL University Saudi students in English language writing classes. The following research questions drove the study:
3.3.1.1: The Main Question of the Study:

1. Which is more effective in improving academic essay writing, collaborative writing or writing individually?

The main aim of this question is to find out whether collaborative writing in essay writing provides more benefits as compared to individual writing, and it includes the following three sub-questions:

2. Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?

3. Are student perceptions and attitudes positively affected by collaborative writing learning settings?

4. What are the practitioners’ perceptions of collaborative writing?

3.3.1.2: Description of Research Questions

Research Question (1)

Through the first question, the researcher aims to assess the effort and performance of the students after being involved in CW learning; a pre-test and a post-test are appropriate for this study. The learners in both control and experimental groups were asked to correct errors in short essays on a specific subject during their pre- and post-tests and also asked to write short essays on a specific subject during their pre- and post-tests (see Appendix 1 for the pre and post writing tests, Appendix 2 for the error tests, and Appendix 12 for the timeline of distributing the errors and writing tests in weeks 1 and 11). The evaluation of the learner essays rests on a framework of ten criteria of writing (Table 4.7), before and after the treatment study.

The pre- and post-test method was suitable for this element of the research, as it entailed evaluating the learners’ essays; based on the scores of their work, a comparative study of the two groups’ achievement could be made. The tests were deemed a valid method to measure whether the experimental group is more or less effective than the traditional or control group with regard to writing accuracy. The pre- and post-tests of writing a short essay (200-250 words) on a topic also evaluated the learners’ essays, and based on the scores of their work, a comparative study of the two groups’ achievements could be made. With regard to improving essay writing, the experimental and control groups will be compared before and after the treatment study.
Research Question (2)
Through this question, the researcher attempted to determine the effectiveness of collaborative writing to conclude if it helped in reducing common errors made by learners, compared to individual writing. To answer this question, the learners in both control and experimental groups were asked to correct errors in short essays on a specific subject (Appendices 2 and 12).

Research Question (3)
The data required to assess the learners’ perceptions and attitudes were gained from pre- and post-questionnaires and the learners’ interviews (Appendices 3, 4, and 6). If the experimental group participants’ perception and attitudes were positive about the CW activity, it was hypothesized that they could be more effective in their writing proficiency. Consequently, the participants are more likely to achieve progress in the learning process. With this in mind, the researcher tracked the improvement of the students’ perceptions and attitudes towards the new method of writing they were using. The participants in the experimental group were given the two parts of the questionnaire, pre- and post-, to complete at the beginning and at the end of this study. The researcher did the same with the control group. The reason behind asking the control group to comment on the same questionnaire was to see how aware the learners were of CW. The questionnaire questions (Appendices 3 and 4) were made easy and intelligible. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the researcher could collect reliable and valid answers. Eleven students from the experimental and control groups were selected according to the students’ availability and desire to answer the interview questions (Appendix 6), with particular attention on the answers to questions #1 one and #2 from students in the experimental group: namely; “What is the effect of CW on essay writing? And how do you feel when you work in groups?” and in the control group, “What is the effect of individual work on essay writing? And how do you feel when you write individually?”.

Research Question (4)
A total of 35 teachers participated in answering the questionnaire (Appendix 5). They were asked to participate in this study to answer the sub research question, “What are the Imam University, English Department practitioners’ perceptions about group work in improving essay writing?”'. This research question would help to understand the perceptions of experienced lecturers or teachers who used CW in teaching. It enabled comparison of the relationship between the researcher’s findings about the effect of CW in improving writing and
the teachers’ perceptions. Table 3.3 presents all the instruments and methods used in the current study sought to answer the core research questions.

Table 3.3: Instruments and Methods used to answer the research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Research Questions</th>
<th>The Employed Methods</th>
<th>The measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Which is more effective in improving academic writing, collaborative writing or writing individually?</td>
<td>Essays were given and collected from all the learners at the beginning and at the end of the 12-week study. The learners from both groups were asked to write short essays and to correct common errors on given short essays.</td>
<td>Judgment of experienced volunteer teachers marked the learners’ essays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?</td>
<td>Essays were given and collected from all the learners at the beginning and end of the 12-week study. The learners from both groups were asked to write short essays and to correct the common errors on given short essays.</td>
<td>Judgment of experienced volunteer teachers marked the learners’ essays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are students’ perceptions and attitudes positively affected by collaborative writing learning settings?</td>
<td>Pre and post Questionnaires were given to both groups of the students at the beginning and the end of this study. 11 students from the experimental and control groups were asked to give their perceptions in the interview about group work versus individual writing.</td>
<td>The questionnaires, with the guidance and support of the supervisor, were designed by the researcher (Appendices 3 and 4). The researcher used an audio recorder and transcribed the participants’ answers to get their perceptions (Appendix 14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the practitioners’ perceptions about collaborative writing?</td>
<td>A questionnaire was given to the teachers to get their perceptions about CW in essay writing.</td>
<td>The questionnaire, with the guidance and support of the supervisor, was designed by the researcher (Appendix 5).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2: Triangulation

The triangulation model is frequently used to integrate the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is defined by Denzin (1978, p. 291) as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon”. Triangulation is used as a strategy to increase the validity of research findings and evaluation. In the social sciences, triangulation refers to “the combination of different theories and theoretical frameworks, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct” (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012, p. 156).

Many experts, including Cohen et al., (2007) and Weir (2005), confirm that triangulation is as an important method for validating study findings. Triangulation helps minimize limitations of employing a single-method approach. For example, relying on one data collection method may distort reality because it might obscure bias. Triangulation seeks convergence, correspondence and corroboration of results by using two or more recourses of data collection. The use of a mixed-method approach (section 3.2.1.5) facilitated triangulation of the data collection. The extensive and varied amount of data sources the researcher used ensured triangulation of the collected data provided denser, richer, and more valid and accurate information.

In this study, “more than one source of data” (Wallace, 1998, p. 36) was used to “explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 195). The data collection of this study was comprised of three questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, TAPs and writing tests (writing task and correcting errors task). Triangulation is a crucial factor that indicates using mixed methods. As discussed in Chapter Three, in research methodology quantitative and qualitative methods are combined using triangulation to derive optimal results. The main focus of this study is on the role of collaborative writing to help learners improve the skill of writing as opposed to writing individually. As study findings from several instruments mutually reinforce each other with the application of triangulation, it was necessary to apply the method of triangulation for more reliable and valid data collection findings.

3.4: Design Framework

Since group work writing is a highly complex process, it is worth exploring using different designs, such as a case study, to provide better results about collaboration (Gary, 2011).
3.4.1: Case Study

Creswell (2007) defined case study as research that “involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system.” (p 73). Case study research explores a phenomenon or an entity based on time and activity, such as an institution, social group or a program (Creswell, 1994, p. 12). The case study was deemed appropriate for this study, as it focused on learning more about a group of learners, as it traced their work and improvements.

Gall et al., (2005) divided the case study into three parts, according to the goal: describing, explaining, and evaluating cases. The descriptive case is used to portray and depict a phenomenon by employing a thick description. The explanation case is used to elucidate a phenomenon by finding patterns across cases. The evaluative case seeks to make judgments about a phenomenon. Most research on group work writing has used small groups in data collection, focusing on a case study approach, as this approach provides a thick and rich description of events (Storch, 2002). Second, the classroom is the natural context of the case study, which is a contemporary phenomenon in the real-life context (Yin, 2013). The main aim of this approach was to elicit a close-up picture of the reality of collaboration and to capture a rich description of the participants’ feelings, views, and experiences, since the case study focused heavily on real-life experience.

Through this case study, a contextualized and grounded description of what the learners did or said and how they behaved can be identified and understood more clearly. The behaviours of the learners stemmed from the collaborative work, which provided the means of gathering in-depth details. The transcription of the students’ interactions in the Think Aloud Protocol for instance, detailed what they said to one another, and the manner in which it was said can tell us of the learners’ positive or negative attitudes towards group work writing.

Along with these, the case study approach was chosen because of the small number of participants. Although this small number means that it is not possible to generalize the findings, the case study format makes it possible to give special attention to individual learners, so each learner’s improvement can be closely observed. For the goal of this study, four elements of this case study were selected: the researcher’s involvement with the participants; the choice of a small group; using different means of data collection, and, finally, the adoption of the mixed method paradigm and data analysis.
Case Study Variables

This study conducted the collaborative writing process of a case study group over one semester and elicited learners’ reflections on their group work experience, applying four independent variables that can affect how participants engage with different activities and four dependent variables that can affect by the independent variables.

Independent Variables

- Time
- Location of learning
- Group work
- Individual work

Dependent Variables

- Attitudes
- Perceptions
- Holistic ratings of the quality of participants’ writing
- Analytical rating in categories of proficiency: Organization, Development, Cohesion/coherence, Structure, Vocabulary and Mechanics

Case studies recognize and accept that there are many variables operating in a single case; hence, to catch the implications of these variables requires more than one tool for data collection and many sources of evidence. (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 289)

Within the focus on qualitative and quantitative research, the researcher therefore conducted a case study to explain, describe, and evaluate specific situations (Gall et al., 2005; Gary, 2011). Despite the advantages of the case study approach, there are a number of weaknesses which render the findings ungeneralizable. Although the findings from the case study may not be generalizable to a large population, the collaborative group in the study represented a range of past learning experiences and language backgrounds. The research also used multiple tools for data collection to provide significant cross-checking of findings. These tools included pre- and post-tests, pre- and post-students’ questionnaires, interviews, diary, and observation. To improve validity and reliability, some procedures and instructional research was explicitly documented to enable replication of the work.
3.4.2: Ethical Considerations

Research ethics, as defined by Gray (2014), implies “conducting research in a way that goes beyond merely adopting the most appropriate research methodology, but conducting research in a responsible and morally defensible way” (p.68). There are essential points which researchers should carefully attend to while conducting a study and surveys: confidentiality and anonymity, identifying sponsor and purpose, voluntary participation, no harm to participants, truthfulness and honesty, and care of reporting and analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Cohen et al., 2013; Nunan, 1992; Gilbert, 2008; Gray, 2014).

The first point, concerning respondents’ identity, can be achieved through the researcher’s strategy and promise not to reveal any related information. The researcher used numbers instead of names to ensure anonymity of the participants. The second point concerned the main purpose of the study and the tools used for that goal. One of the important points was the voluntary agreement of the participants to take part in doing the tasks in terms of answering the questionnaire, being interviewed, doing the pre- and post-tests, and the right to withdraw at any time without explanation. In addition, the most significant issue of all was ensuring that no harm came to the participants in using the procedures and collecting data (Dörnyei, 2007). The last point was related to truthfulness and honesty while reporting the results.

One of the major issues before doing any research is to obtain permission from the national or local organization, depending on the location of the study. As the researcher conducted his research in Saudi Arabia, he considered the rules and regulations and had to confirm to Irish Ethics (Hennink et al., 2011). This study adhered with ethical standards through the following phases: To obtain permission to start the study on the students in Saudi Arabia, the researcher applied for approval from the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee, and it was granted (Appendix 7). The researcher also applied for approval from Imam University in Saudi Arabia to conduct the field study, and it was also granted. An official Imam University letter was sent to the University of Limerick, confirming the permission for the researcher to undertake the study (Appendix 8). This thesis’s ethical consideration was prepared by careful consultation with the researcher’s supervisor, who examined every aspect the researcher presented before doing his field study.
3.4.3: The Pilot Study

The researcher’s supervisor encouraged carrying out a pilot study. Before the researcher applied to the Ethical Committee of the University of Limerick for applying the empirical study, he requested that a colleague who teaches English in the home department workplace to teach his students through group work as opposed to individual writing. He willingly agreed to do the study for six weeks.

The aim of the pilot study was to plan a suitable research methodology for the empirical study. One of the advantages of the pilot study is to test out the research tools (Baker, 1998). Furthermore, it aimed to establish both the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed data collection methods and fulfil a range of functions and insights for other researchers prior to applying the main study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). The advantages of a pilot study are that it may throw up warnings to areas where the study project could experience problems or failures. It may also highlight where the procedures may not be taken on or instances where the tools may be too complex or be unsuitable. As Vaus (2002, p. 54) advises, “do not take the risk, Pilot Test first.”

In 2014, and with the help of a friend who did the pilot study for the researcher, all the points were discussed which were prepared to check the procedures and tools before doing the empirical study. He did the pilot study for six weeks. First, the participants were divided into two groups: Group A (the treatment or experimental group) and Group B (the control group). Group A worked in small groups whereas group B worked individually. Group A (experimental) were subdivided into smaller groups (6 and 5 students in two groups) and each group was required to write collaboratively. In contrast, each student in the group B (the control group) continued to write individually. The data collection included pre- and post-questionnaires which were distributed via the student emails. All participating students were evaluated through both their writing and their responses to the survey. The outline of pilot study is illustrated in Table 3.4 below.
Table 3.4: The Pilot Study Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>11 students</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 Students</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>• Students wrote collaboratively</td>
<td>• students wrote individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• students given a test to write on a</td>
<td>• students given a test to write on a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>given subject</td>
<td>given subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>• Did the same task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provided the pilot researcher with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their emails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Distribute the draft pre-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questionnaires through email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2-5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Working in groups</strong></td>
<td><strong>Working individually</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>• Distribute the draft post</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questionnaires through email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gave students a test to write on a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>given subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>See Group A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, that pilot study proved to be useful and informative. It allowed for some significant changes to the tools and procedures to be amended in the main study accordingly. Initially, the students in the pilot study were reluctant to interact. The students were discouraged by the size of the group (six students) and by the fact that they remained in this same group the following week. It was useful to take advantage of this in order to divide the students into yet smaller groups of four students and alternate the students every week. Secondly, the limit of words should accord with the given time for the test. For example, it was apparently difficult for the students to write 350 words in 50 minutes. Therefore, in the “main study” versus the “pilot study”, the number of words was reduced to 200 words in order to allow the students to relax and avoid tension while writing. Thirdly, the students in the pilot study were allowed to use dictionaries. However, it was observed that this interrupted their writing and wasted time, so this option was eliminated from in the main. Responding to the survey through email was not encouraging as many students did not respond. Therefore, the researcher distributed and collected the questionnaires in class throughout the main study. Lastly, the students who participated in the pilot study survey complained that the survey took a long time and the questions should be phrased more clearly. This feedback was incorporated into the empirical study survey following adjustments and guidance from my supervisor. Table 3.5 presents a summary of the adaptations between the Pilot and Main study.
**Table 3.5: The Pilot Study to Main Study Adaptations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Task</th>
<th>The Pilot Study</th>
<th>The Main Study</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>6 students worked together</td>
<td>4 students worked together</td>
<td>Four students found more suitable and effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups did not change.</td>
<td>Groups changed every week.</td>
<td>Changing groups were more interesting and effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Test</td>
<td>50 minutes to write from 300-350 words</td>
<td>50 minutes From 200-250 words</td>
<td>Students were unable to write 300-350 words in 50 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allowed to use dictionary</td>
<td>Not allowed to use dictionary</td>
<td>Using dictionaries wasted time for the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Questionnaires</td>
<td>Distributed through email</td>
<td>Distributed in classroom</td>
<td>Using email for the questionnaires did not encourage the students to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students provided comments.</td>
<td>Amending the questionnaires guided by the supervisor</td>
<td>The researcher made use of the participants’ comments on the questionnaires to amend for the empirical study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Questionnaires</td>
<td>Teachers provided comments.</td>
<td>Amending the questionnaires guided by the supervisor</td>
<td>The researcher made use of the teachers’ comments on the questionnaires to amend for the empirical study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.4.4: The Empirical Study**

**3.4.4.1: Research Setting**

The study was applied in a classroom at the College of Languages and Translation at Imam University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The participants were initially divided into two groups; the experimental comprised 32 candidates, while the control group comprised 26. All were Saudi male level three, EFL full-time students with an age range between 18 and 24 years old. All students had studied the English language for at least six years in both middle and high
schools before applying for the college, since English is compulsory. Ten students from each group were chosen to represent the two groups. The other students were excluded from the test for the following reasons:

1. The students excluded were not punctual and did not attend classes and tests
2. The students chosen from each group were punctual and missed no class from the beginning until the end of the study
3. The researcher reassured equality among both groups in their English proficiency from the beginning.

**Duration of Research and Teaching the Participants**

The study duration was 12 weeks and was conducted from 25 January to 12 April 2015. For full details of the empirical study timeline see Appendix 12. During the weekly empirical study, there was a 60-minute lecture to teach and prepare the students to write a short essay in an academic context. The next stage was for practice, where one group of students was divided into smaller writing groups while another group wrote short academic essays individually. During the lecture every week, students in both groups were taught how to write a short essay in an academic context using the book *Effective Academic Writing 2: The Short Essay*, by Alice Savage and Patricia Mayer. The students were taught how to write descriptive, narrative, opinion, comparison and contrast, and finally, cause and effect essays during this study. The students also were taught how to write the introduction, body, and conclusion of a short academic essay. The researcher guided the students by giving them the instructions needed to focus on both the macro and micro levels and prepared them to improve the ten criteria (see Table 4.7). On the other hand, both the control and experimental groups practiced essay writing during the following lectures which lasted 60 minutes every week. The students were separated into two classes. The students in the control group were asked to produce a short essay through writing individually, but the students in the experimental group were asked to write collaboratively in small groups of three or four students. However, the experimental and control groups wrote on the same topic every week. Those who wrote individually produced one short essay per student while those who wrote collaboratively produced one essay per each small group. For more details, see Appendix 12.
3.4.4.2: Research Population

Population

Population is defined as “the set of individuals about which […] the researcher want[s] to be able to generalise” (Fogelman, 2002, p. 97). Based on participant availability and the research goal, 58 Arabic-speakers as English learners were initially identified to participate in this study. The participants of this study were non-randomly chosen. Originally, there were 32 participants in the study for Group A (the experimental group), but not all the students attended. Only ten students were found to be consistently punctual and attended all sessions across the weeks of the study. They represented group A, the experimental group. The other group (the control group) was originally made up of 26 students at the beginning of the study, but many students were not committed and/or punctual. Like the participants in group A, ten students were found to be punctual and attended no sessions during the period of the study, and they represented group B (the control group). All participants were male, had been studying English for six years and had a proven writing proficiency level of Intermediate.

3.4.5: Data Collection Instruments

As discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3 many sources of data were used with the aim to explain different standpoints with rich information (Cohen et al., 2011). Using five data collection instruments (see Table 4.1) ensured that including both quantitative and qualitative data would be more accurate and richer when measuring the analysis findings of the writing tests, questionnaires, interview and think aloud protocols to get different resources through data collection methods (Deardorff, 2009). In addition to using several sources, the researcher included quantitative and qualitative data methods to measure and investigate the complexity of the writing process improvement of the participants (Ibid.). The data collection instruments comprised three questionnaires, four pre- and post-writing tests, one semi-structured interview, the researcher’s own diary and observations and think aloud protocols (TAPs).

An important issue worth mentioning here is that while carrying out this study, the researcher was keenly focused on two effects that are widely considered in qualitative research. These effects were the “Hawthorne effect” and “yea-saying”. The Hawthorne effect describes a situation where the subjects of a study alter a particular aspect of their behaviour while being observed (Gass & Mackey, 2007). The way in which participants can benefit from a treatment simply as a result of being part of a study, is another aspect of the Hawthorne effect. On the other hand, “yea-saying” is a response bias where the students will tend to agree with their
teacher even when in doubt (Arndt & Crane 1975). Another issue is the student ‘self-selection’. Traditionally, selection bias has been described as bias arising from inappropriate selection (or self-selection) of study subjects from the source population (Rothman et al. 2008). The researcher was the teacher in the empirical study. He selected two groups, and the distribution was random. While withdrawing from the study could negatively affect the results, the students in both groups were free to withdraw from the study without any justification. This could potentially lead to self-selection bias, but it did not in this study. For example, the students in the control group did not achieve any significant progress in the ten criteria (see Table 4.14). Such results suggest that the students who withdrew from participation might be excellent students who insignificantly affected the results (see details in section 5.4.1). While conducting the study, the researcher focused on establishing the students’ feelings with reference to collaborative writing (see section 4.3.7). These issues will be discussed in detail in the discussion chapter.

3.4.5.1: Questionnaires

Pre and Post Students’ Questionnaires

Three questionnaire were used; two were used for the students; one was used at the beginning of the study (Appendix 3), the second at the end (Appendix 4), and the third was used for the teachers (Appendix 5). The pre- and post-questionnaires used for the learners had the same questions with small adjustments, e.g., where participants were asked in the pre-questionnaire if they think CW “will help” them to write better, this was changed to “helped” in the post-questionnaire. Another difference was that in the pre-questionnaire the first section aimed to get general information about the participants, but that section was not required in the post-questionnaire.

The pre- and post-questionnaires allowed the researcher to identify the changes in the participants’ learning strategies, perceptions, and attitudes. The questionnaires were designed to elicit information that represented the participants’ perceptions and viewpoints about the group work writing as opposed to individual work. This data collection method enabled the researcher to answer some of the secondary research questions, for example, question three (Table 3.3).

As recommended by scholars such as Nunan (1992) and Wallace (1998), the questionnaire questions used plain and clear language to avoid potential misunderstandings. The
questionnaires included closed and open questions. The closed questions as yes/no queries were equated with a “comment” such as, “If so, how? If not, why not?” “Leaving a place to answer such questions provides an opportunity to the participants to more openly state their opinions” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 392).

**Students’ Questionnaires**

The students’ questionnaires comprised four sections. The first concerned general information and it was included in the pre-questionnaire. The aim here was to elicit information about the participants’ academic background and determine their English proficiency. For example, one of the questions was, “Have you taken either the IELTS or TOEFEL exam? Y/N If the answer is yes, what grade did you get in writing?” The next section, part one, was comprised of three items. The aim was to ascertain students’ interest in the English writing skill. An example of this section is, “I like English writing activities” and the students could choose “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”.

Part two comprised 32 items, and designed with the aim of drawing out participant learner insights into group work, individual work, teachers’ feedback, peer feedback, monolingual dictionary feedback with group discussion, and monolingual feedback. For example, to the statement, “Group work in class encourages me to work hard” and the participants were asked to tick one of the five choices, such as “agree” or “disagree” to indicate the extent of their agreement/disagreement.

The third section comprised five items to indicate the attitude of the students regarding group work and writing essays in class, and a yes/no question for the same purpose, where the participants were given a space to comment. For example, to the statement, “I feel relaxed writing in English in a group” the students were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement/disagreement by choosing one of five choices, such as “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree”. Table 3.6 below presents a breakdown of the questionnaires.
Table 3.6: The Types of questions in the questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ personal information</th>
<th>Name (optional), English proficiency IELTS/TOEFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likert scale</td>
<td>The participant selects one choice from multiple choice, such as “agree” and “disagree” that are represented with numbers to facilitate analysis of the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>The participant answers “Yes” or “No” in response to the yes/no question. With the open-ended question, the participant may comment on that question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended</td>
<td>E.g., Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills in groups will help you to write better? If so, how? If not, why not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practitioners’ Questionnaires

The practitioners’ questionnaire had two main parts. The questionnaire asked participants to provide very brief information about their background in teaching English, particularly in terms of writing skills. One of the questions, for example asked:

“In teaching essay writing skills, have you used group work in class? Yes ( ) No ( )”

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine how teachers viewed collaborative writing as a method in teaching academic writing as opposed to writing individually. Moreover, the practitioner responses were deemed to add help and support to explore the research issues, more specifically, through the final question:

“What are the practitioners’ perceptions about collaborative writing?”

The first part asked the teachers the most common errors Saudi learners make in writing such as “tense and prepositions” The participants were requested to choose from one of four choices: usually; rarely; sometimes; or, frequently. It was anticipated that the practitioner responses would help to identify the most common errors, which would afford opportunities to assess whether the students who wrote collaboratively would improve themselves by reducing such errors.
The second part asked the teachers whether collaborative writing or individual work was best at certain stages in writing, and to indicate the extent of agreement/disagreement, as in, for example:

“Collaborative writing is more useful than writing individually in organizing ideas”

The participants were also asked to indicate the extent of their agreement/disagreement by selecting from a scale of five choices, from “agree” to “disagree”.

3.4.5.2: Semi-structured Interview

Kvale defines an interview as “a specific form of conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee” (2008, p. xvii). The aim of using the interview was to add to the questionnaires to gather further information and feedback from the learners of the study. The interview is “a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard” (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 349).

Researchers argue that interviews are one of the most powerful tools in which a researcher attempts to ascertain and understand how people understand and experience their world (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Kvale, 2008). The semi-structured interview was deliberately introduced after the treatment study to gather a deeper insight of the learners’ experience and would help in answering the research study questions 2, 3 and 4 (Table 3.3 and Appendix 6).

The entire interviews were audio recorded as all participants were uncomfortable with the video camera. Interviews were then transcribed to facilitate the participants’ texts data analysis. Written texts from the audio recording can provide rich and thick information about the views, ideas, intentions, and activities of learners (Punch, 2009; Silverman, 2000). There are three types of interviews, “the fully structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview” (Robson, 2006, p. 270). The semi-structured interview is regarded as one of the most useful and beneficial research methods.

As a researcher, it was necessary to investigate the issue in deep and rich depth to gather more information from the participants. For example, using interviews responses to simple yes/no question, afforded the opportunity to ask for further clarifications or rationales (Al-Sudais, 2004, p. 105) and confirms that using the interview can garner information which may be
difficult to obtain through questionnaires and reveals why the researcher used the semi-structured interview to collect valuable qualitative data. This type of interview fits the aim of the study best, as explained above. For this study, several semi-structured interviews were conducted, and each learner was individually interviewed for five minutes. These interviews conducted through English, as this was preferred by the students who felt less inhibited when expressing their opinions in English. The interview started by confirming the location and time. Prior to conducting the interview, the researcher ensured the readiness of recording equipment, such as using the recorder. The researcher informed the interviewees about the main purpose of the study, that each interview would last five minutes, and once again assured them of the confidentiality of the recording. Finally, the interviews were finished by thanking participants for their time. When selecting the participants for the interview, trustworthiness, friendliness, and doing the best to concentrate were carefully considered, as the participants’ answers were essential for the study.

**The Role of the Interviewer**

It was the main aim of the interviewer to find suitable and comfortable surroundings for the participants. The researcher was also very keen not to direct the volunteers’ answers (Cohen et al., 2013). In the case of listening, the interviewer was attentive and did not interrupt the interviewees in order to allow the maximum opportunity for them to express themselves (Byrne, 2004).

> There are some essential qualities which the successful interviewer must possess: an interest and respect for people as individuals, and flexibility in response to them; an ability to show understanding and sympathy for their point of view; and, above all, a willingness to sit quietly and listen.

*(Thompson 1988, p. 196)*

### 3.4.5.3: Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs)

**Description of TAPs**

Another useful instrument utilized by the researcher used was Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs). These are described by Van Someren et al., (1994, p. 26) as, “[t]hinking aloud during problem-solving [which] means that the subject keeps on talking, speaks out loud whatever thoughts come to mind, while performing the task at hand”. In other words, the writers “spoke their
thoughts as they composed or planned their writing” (Reid, 1993, p. 37). This method plays an important role in educational research for learners thought processes (Wittrock, 1986). It is a cognitive activity used to gain data about the ways in which participants cognitively process information (Ericsson & Simon, 1980).

Such a study would shed light on learners’ actual participation during small groups writing sessions and offer insight into how specific writing skills are improved. Using this method a number of types of action can be observed, such as correcting, macro-planning, problem solving etc. What is interesting about TAPs is that learners give utterance to whatever springs to mind. This was shown to be very useful in the present research as it enabled the researcher to identify the parts of writing learners improve and the parts they find difficult as well as how they solve problems through collaborative writing.

**What Is Involved in TAPs?**

Think aloud protocols (TAPs) involve learners thinking aloud when performing a set of tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). In this method, “subjects are asked to perform a task and to verbalize whatever crosses their mind during the task performance. The written transcriptions of the verbalization are called think-aloud protocols (TAPs).” (Jääskeläinen, 2010, p. 371). According to (Van Someren et al., 1994, p. 29), the concept of TAPs was based on “the idea that one can observe events that take place in consciousness, more or less as one can observe events in the outside world.”

**TAPs Data and Why It Is Useful**

Olson et al., (1984) agree that the think-aloud technique is among the most effective ways to assess a higher level of thinking processes. With protocol analysis, it is possible to describe the participants’ work during their performance (Ericsson & Simon, 1993). The benefit of protocol analysis resides in its capacity to tell, in detail, which information participants are concentrating on while performing tasks (in this case, collaborative writing). Researchers use different methods to analyze the think-aloud protocols (TAPs) data, such as inductive analysis (Aitken, 2000).

A total of four students in the experimental group agreed to participate in the task of talking aloud whilst writing collaboratively. The students did the task in two sessions in order to complete writing a short essay on a given subject in weeks seven and eight (Appendix 12,
Timeline of the Study). The learners’ thoughts are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in three steps to identify the strategies used and the positive aspects of the participants’ behaviour when doing a writing task on a specific subject as a small group activity. The researcher used qualitative data analysis by compiling themes, coding, and constructing the categories, which emerged from the data (section 3.5.2).

**Why Is TAPs Method Included in the Study?**

The use of this instrument aimed to observe students’ reactions when writing collaboratively. As such it provided an opportunity for the researcher to trace and identify the areas of improved writing and to ascertain how the improvements came to happen from the students’ discussion of solutions to problems they faced writing within the hearing of the researcher. This helped the researcher understand the progress of the complex strategies of the writing process when writing collaboratively as compared to when writing as an individual. For example, the students were observed to actively help each other in every area and stage of writing (see section 4.3.7). For example, in the present study, when one of the students (Speaker 2) said, “Now, the supporting text for each idea, the introduction”, all of the students interacted with him in determining how to support their statements and find stronger more suitable controlling ideas during the task of writing. Using an instrument such as TAPs for data collection enabled students to verbalize their task which was useful to discover how the students improved their essay writing while writing collaboratively.

**Advantages and Limitations of Think Aloud Protocols**

The TAPs approach is a valuable way to investigate writing problems since it allows researchers to identify the kinds of knowledge learners consciously draw on when they compose writing in a specific area (Charters, 2003; Mowey & Conahan, 1995). Ericsson & Simon (1980, p. 247) add that even if learners’ view of the thought processes is incomplete, reports such as think-aloud are a “thoroughly reliable” source of useful information. Another advantage of using TAPs is that it reduces problems related to memory failure which can occur when a researcher waits to collect verbal data at the end of a specific activity (Wade, 1990). Furthermore, the use of TAPs with learners working in a ‘real’ activity leads to more reliable results than when learners are asked to provide hypothetical information on a certain situation (ibid.).
Although the TAPs approach is very effective, it is not free from drawbacks. Van Someren et al. (1994) claim that TAPs do not elicit all cognitive activities, which leads to incomplete information. The reactivity of the verbal reports is also controversial as thinking aloud can arguably affect the reading process. Therefore, it is claimed that frequent interruptions as a source of the possible disruption and alternation can derive an incomplete report (Seliger, 1983; Stratman & Hamp-Lyons, 1994). “Although this method was considerably effective, the data on the protocols should be considered carefully, as the data were not always interpreted as a direct reflection of the learners’ processing” (Tanaka, 2015, p. 261).

In addition, the TAPs process, which involves transcribing, gathering, coding and analyzing data, is time-consuming and many such protocols present researchers with difficult choices in the interpretation of the data (Green, 1998; Smagorinsky, 1994). Indeed, as discussed in section 4.3, it proved difficult to obtain data from the participants which definitively found “writing is difficult” or “writing is interesting”. It was extremely time-consuming and required interpretation to identify relevant remarks, such as when a speaker joked or laughed to tell us that he could be happy or interested. A quote from Speaker 3 who observed, “We have now maybe 15 minutes” or from Speaker 5 who complained, ‘Have no time’ was the only tacit allusions to the fact that writing was a difficult task.

3.4.5.4: Error Test

The students’ error test research instrument was designed to determine how students writing collaboratively would improve their writing through reducing errors. This helped answer one of the research questions: Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing? (section 3.3.1). The participants were asked to correct common errors in a short essay (Appendix 2). As this type of test did not require the participants to write, they were asked to correct common errors Saudi learners usually make. The researcher therefore relied on the quantitative approach to analyze the findings. The researcher used a pre-test of the study and a post-test (Appendix 2) at either end of the study to determine common errors for both the experimental and control groups which sought to ascertain whether the students who wrote collaboratively would improve themselves in reducing the common errors as opposed to those who wrote individually in class.
3.4.5.5: Writing Test

This section presents the writing test as one of the instruments used in the current study. The researcher used a pre-test (Appendix 1) which required the participants to write a short essay ranging from 200 to 250 words on the topic, “How can you correct common errors in essay writing?” The researcher also used a post-test (Appendix 1) following the same procedure by asking the students to write on the topic, “When you write, do you prefer to write individually or in groups? Write a short essay in which you justify your choice”. The aim of this instrument was to see whether students would improve their writing skills while writing collaboratively by comparing their test results to those students who were writing individually.

Research Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis

1. There will not be a significant difference in the Control group between the pre-test and the post-test
2. There will not be a significant difference in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test
3. There will not be a significant difference between the experimental and Control groups in the post-test after the Treatment Study

Alternative Hypothesis

4. There will be a significant difference in the Control group between the pre-test and the post-test
5. There will be a significant difference in the experimental group between the pre-test and the post-test
6. There will be a significant difference between the experimental and Control groups in the post-test After the Treatment Study

Marking the Pre and Post Writing Tests

The researcher used different techniques, such as pre- and post-subjective tests (Appendix 1) to measure the student writing proficiency and improvement in writing. In terms of marking the participant tests, two points were studied carefully:

- Essay Scoring Rubric
- Raters
Scoring Essays

A scoring rubric of the experimental and control groups were used to assess the participants’ performance on essay writing at the beginning and at the end of the treatment study (Appendix 10). A scoring rubric is a helpful quantitative method, defined as “A type of matrix that provides scaled levels of achievement or understanding for a set of criteria or dimensions of quality for a given performance” (Allen & Tanner, 2006, p. 197).

According to Sadik (2008), a scoring rubric is a useful assessment tool to evaluate learners’ progress. Challenges include the complexities involved in writing (Tindal & Parker, 1989), the wide range of responses to essay writing tasks, and the range of the participants’ scoring rubrics (Gansle et al., 2002). Due to the multiplicity of ways available to correct the written responses of students, the objective scoring of the differences in quality was overwhelming (Gansle et al., 2006). Scoring rubrics are divided into two types:

1. Holistic rubrics
2. Analytic rubrics

1. Holistic Rubrics

The holistic rubric marks the overall product, without evaluating each item separately (Nitko, 2001), and was used in this study to give an overall assessment of the improvement about each participant in the two groups. Analytical rubric scoring is used to score the specific criteria and measure the examinees’ progress (Moskal, 2003). The researcher therefore used analytic scoring to answer the main question of this study. The researcher designed the rubric scoring based on Paulus’ (1999) essay scoring rubric as described below.

An example of a holistic scoring rubric is the one used for a TOEFL Writing Test, where the scale consists of six levels of writing proficiency. In the case of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), an holistic scale is applied in grading writing where the scale consists of six levels of writing proficiency (0-5) as in illustrated in Table 3.7 below. The two levels shown (0 and 1) are examples of evaluating writing (https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/scores/). Another such instrument is Polio’s (1997) holistic rubrics scale, which was developed as a quick and reliable method to measure accuracy and uses a scale from 0 to 9. According to Holistic Measures of Linguistic Accuracy, a perfect score of (9) corresponds to “no errors of vocabulary, spelling,
punctuation, or grammar” while a score of (5) corresponds to “errors in vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, or grammar that include frequently” (Polio, 1997, p. 134).

Table 3. 7: TOEFL Writing Rubrics
(Adapted from file:///C:/Users/PC/Desktop/toefl_writing_rubrics.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent WRITING Rubrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Holistic scoring scales inhere a considerable number of advantages. The scoring is less time consuming because it does not entail focusing on individual aspects of the writing (Bacha, 2001; Weigle, 2002). According to White, holistic scoring is a more valid methodology than analytic scoring which pays “too much attention to the parts is likely to obscure the meaning
of the whole” (1984, p. 409). However, holistic scoring also has many disadvantages, especially in the context of second-language learning. Stein (1983) claims that holistic scoring is not suitable for marking learners’ texts as the content and ideas of good writing vary. When using this type of scoring, there is no attempt to analyze what constitutes good writing in any detail. A single score does not reveal detailed diagnostic information about learners’ writing proficiency. In other words, it does not provide raters with sufficient information about the strengths or weaknesses of the writing, such as the correct use of syntax and the appropriacy of the chosen vocabulary (Weigle, 2002). Another disadvantage is that the results of holistic scoring are not always easy to interpret. Raters do not necessarily use similar criteria to ensure they assign the same marks. In other words, raters with different criteria may award similar scores (ibid.). For example, a piece of writing might be given a score of 3 on a holistic scale by one rater based on the use of rhetorical devices, whereas another might award a score of 3 because of syntactic features. Huot argues that the use of holistic scoring, as well as the use of multiple-choice and grammar tests to evaluate students’ writing is troubling:

> Although the advent of holistic scoring permitted student writing to once again be part of the tests in English and writing, we must not lose sight of the fact that holistic scoring is a product of the same thinking that produced the indirect tests of grammar usage and mechanics. That is, like multiple choice tests, holistic scoring was developed to produce reliable scores.  
> (Huot, 2002, p. 24)

1. Analytic Rubrics on Essay Scoring

Turning therefore to analytic rubrics for essay scoring, these have long been used have been used by numerous researchers to evaluate writing. Jacobs (1981), for example, scored writing according to five aspects: content, organization of the writing, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The five aspects are marked independently to emphasize each, with points for each varying, as follows: content (30 points), language use (25 points), organization (20 points), vocabulary (20 points) and mechanics (5 points). The Michigan Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (Hamp-Lyons, 1990) is another example of an analytic scale. Here, the scoring procedure consists of three rating scales: (a) arguments and ideas, (b) language control, and (c) rhetorical features. The three scores are reported separately to provide useful diagnostic information to both teachers and the test takers (Weigle, 2002).

Analytic rubrics are more useful than holistic scoring in the classroom, since the information gained can assist both teachers and learners in identifying the learners’ weaknesses, strengths
and needs (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). This arguably explains why it is preferred by researchers over holistic scoring and used by many writing researchers (Brown, 2004; Weigle, 2002). Bacha (2001) contends that when properly applied, analytic scoring can prove extremely informative and provide useful insights into the learner’s proficiency level in a specific area of writing.

Analytic scoring has a few disadvantages. The major disadvantage is that it is time consuming since teachers or raters are obliged to make different decisions for each script, which makes it more expensive than holistic scoring (Weigle, 2002). Another disadvantage is that analytic scoring combines scores on a variety of scales, which may result in the loss of useful information (ibid.). In the same vein, too much focus in every single part may lead to losing some useful information. White (1984, p. 409) states, “too much attention to the parts is likely to obscure the meaning of the whole”. In this instance therefore, the researcher used it to provide supplementary details of the writing progress of the students in his study.

Choosing a Proper Scoring Rubric
As the main question in the study concerned the extent to which collaborative writing is more effective in improving academic writing than writing individually, it was necessary to evaluate the participants of the experimental and control groups through writing a short essay. To this end, it was also necessary to measure the quality rubric changes using a test of written English (TWE) on the participants’ essays in the experimental and control groups over the 12 weeks. According to the results of the students’ writing essays, two important points need to be solved: scoring rubric and raters. To mark the essays, the researcher chose two volunteers who are experienced in teaching English writing. It was also important to decide on an ideal scoring rubric for the purpose of evaluating the students’ writing.

Paulus’ (1999) Scoring Rubric
Rubrics are a tool commonly used for evaluating learners’ work, from elementary to advanced levels (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Andrade (2000) defines rubrics as a useful instructional tool that “describes varying levels of quality, from excellent to poor document, for a specific assignment” (p.13). Using rubrics to score writing is one way teachers and researchers try to address some issues of reliability and validity in marking writing.
Rubrics can be defined as a set of guidelines for distinguishing between performances of 
products of different quality. A rubric is an assessment tool that verbally describes and 
scales levels of student achievement on performance tasks, but it can also be associated 
with more conventional alphanumeric and numeric scores or grades. 
(Solomon, 1998, p. 120)

Paulus’ study aimed to determine if training undergraduate ESL learners in the USA to provide 
feedback would be effective in improving writing skills. One of the significant findings of 
Paulus’ study was that peer feedback helped the students improve multiple drafts. Paulus’ 
Rubric was developed with reference to the composition rubrics of the Michigan English 
Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) which focused on evaluating essays holistically. 
Paulus added writing categories, “to reflect what was taught in the course and the goals of this 
particular persuasive essay” (285). Paulus’ study shows that the rubric could be used to 
evaluate students’ writing globally and locally as her rubric scoring “allowed for an analytical 
assessment of both the global and local aspects of writing, in addition to providing a holistic, 
overall final assessment score” (34). Since Paulus’ Rubric proved to be successful in providing 
global and local aspects of writing, many researchers have subsequently adopted her rubric 
(Davoudi et al., 2015; Grami, 2010; and Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Paulus’ rubric was considered the most appropriate scale for the present study as it 
demonstrates how to evaluate learners’ essays successfully and to assess aspects of 
participants’ writing, globally and locally. In addition, it has six categories which measure 
essay writing directly relevant to the aims of this study:

- Organization
- Development
- Cohesion/Coherence
- Structure
- Vocabulary
- Mechanics

The researcher needed to identify the extent of improvement of each group using a rubric 
scale which shows the holistic and analytical rubric, calculating of marks from 1 as the 
lowest mark and 10 as the highest score for each of the six categories of scoring. For this, 
the researcher followed Paulus’ (1999) rubrics as illustrated below in Table 3.8 (Appendix 
10).
Table 3.8: Scoring Rubric adapted from Paulus, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>• Includes introduction, the body and conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The topic sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unity of ideas and paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• supporting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>• Using examples and supporting ideas and evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohesion/coherence</strong></td>
<td>• Using transition words correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>• grammatical issues: such as using verbs and tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>• Words / clarity in meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>• Spelling/ punctuation / capitalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing Criteria
The writing features were categorized into two levels adapted from Paulus (1999): organization, development, and cohesion/coherence grouped as macro-level features and structure, vocabulary, and mechanics grouped as micro-level features. Researchers’ choices of criteria align with the purposes of their studies. For example, Attali and Burstein (2006) used eight criteria (content, organization, grammar, development, usage, style, mechanics, lexical complexity) as these were appropriate for their study, which applied holistic scoring for a regression model. However, Burstein et al., (2003), who evaluated students’ essays and provided feedback to the students about errors, used seven criteria: organization, development, grammar, style, usage, mechanics, and vocabulary.

The current study used ten criteria (Table 4.7) based on Paulus’ scoring system. The researcher separated “thesis statement” from “organization” as a sub-feature and used “style”, “usage”, “word choice”, and “word length” as sub-features under “vocabulary”, a main feature. That was done to reflect the learning outcomes in each criterion in order to answer the main research question: “To what extent is collaborative writing more effective in improving academic
writing than writing individually?” It was important then to measure the extent to which collaborative writing was significant in all ten criteria as opposed to the traditional method of individual writing.

**Raters**

The written essays were collected from the participants in both groups to be graded and analyzed. Although the researcher was the teacher for the experimental and control groups, the participants’ essays were judged by two independent raters in order to guarantee reliable and valid findings. The researcher chose two volunteers from his department who were experienced in teaching English language and instructed them in how to evaluate and mark the participants’ essay writing. The researcher also provided them with a reference criteria for grading the essays.

The raters were given a version of the rubric to use (Appendix 10). The rating of the essays was based on six categories adapted from Paulus’ Rubric scoring of writing: development, organization, coherence and cohesion, structure, mechanics, and vocabulary. For more details about the categories, the researcher expanded them into ten criteria (Table 4.7). As such, *organization* included thesis statement, and *vocabulary* included style, usage, word choice, and word length. As Cronbach’s alpha is considered to be an indicator of internal consistency (Cortina, 1993), this was used to calculate inter-rater reliability.

**3.4.5.6: Teacher Diary and Observation**

Bailey (1990, p.215) defines diary studies as “a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events”. The major aim of using this type of tool is to trace the participants’ interaction and improvement during the weeks of the treatment study. The researcher is encouraged to enter all types of group work activity on a regular basis. The researcher could gather information and valuable insights, then interpret and discuss to support in answering the research questions that might be difficult to gather with other tools (Hyland, 2015). The researcher who uses a diary can report subjective perceptions and facts of the language learning activities and experiences which are normally are hidden or inaccessible to external observers (Bailey, 1990; Hyland, 2015).
3.4.5.7: Validity and Reliability

In general, validity and reliability are indications of the soundness of the research study. More specifically, validity and reliability apply to the methodologies and design of the research, and are two of the main concerns of the present study. In this section, details on all possible factors that threaten both the validity and reliability of the research are considered. According to Cohen et al. (2000), validity means that the instruments used should measure what they are supposed to measure. To achieve validity in qualitative data, the researcher must be honest and search for rich and deep data besides the suitability of the subjects. On the other hand, quantitative validity can be achieved by choosing the samples carefully, using proper instruments, and applying suitable statistical analyses to the collected dataset.

The researcher assembled a pilot study in order to improve validity and reliability and to avoid any ambiguity or lack of clarity in using the data instruments. Moreover, one benefit of the pilot study to the current study was to minimize or avoid any threat that would decrease the quality of data collection. Neuman (2003, pp. 251-255) alludes to a number of common hazards to validity including bias, history, and testing effect. In attending to these issues the researcher tried to diminish major threats such as proficiency levels or degree of motivation by surveying the backgrounds of the students in both the experimental and control groups. To achieve reliability, the researcher did his utmost to ensure the study remained as stable as possible, and selected two sample groups with similar proficiency and characteristics (such as level, age and gender) to ensure the stability and consistency of the data results.

The decision to base the current study in the English Language Department at Imam University was instrumental to ensuring the validity of the study since the course in teaching academic writing to third level students had already been established in that context. The setting was therefore ideal to examine the effectiveness of collaborative writing in improving the students’ skills.

A number of proposed standards are associated with quantitative research as follows:

1. **Truth Value**: how the researcher establishes confidence in the findings of a certain inquiry for the respondents and the context

2. **Applicability**: how to determine the extent to which the findings have applicability in other contexts or with other respondents
3. **Consistency**: how to determine whether the findings would be repeated similar participants in similar context

4. **Neutrality**: how to establish the degree to which the findings are determined by the respondents and conditions, and not by the interests, motivations, biases, or perspectives of the inquirer (Seale, 2002, p. 104).

In terms of the instruments used, the pre-test and post-test errors and short essays writing were assessed using Paulus’s rubric (1999). To maintain validity, the researcher did not correct the student samples himself, but had the tests independently graded by two experienced raters. In marking the writing tests, all the scores of the students in the experimental and control groups were rated and judged by the two raters in the Department of the English Language at Imam University. As noted above, the scale went from 1 (lowest mark) to 10 (highest mark), and the raters gave the analytical scores (Appendix 10). Cronbach’s alpha was used to ensure reliability between marks of the raters. Cronbach’s alpha is considered as an indicator of consistency between those who corrected the tests (Cortina, 1993).

To achieve reliability, the majority of the ratings should vary according to the participants each rater is grading. For example, if rater A gives participant 1 a low score and participant 2 a high score, rater B should also give the participants 1 and 2 similar scores. Variations in students’ marks between raters should be very small to prove a positive correlation (Larson-Hall, 2015). In terms of the validity and reliability of the questionnaires and the interviews, the researcher discussed the procedures involved in completing the task of the two instruments with the participants and made use of the notes in the pilot study (section 3.4.3).

As outlined in section 3.2, this research is quantitative and qualitative. Criticisms of qualitative research are based on scepticism surrounding the potential subjectivity of data interpretations and the commensurate lack of result generalizability. In order to combat these potentially damaging limitations, Guba & Lincoln (1985) contend that a qualitative researcher must establish trustworthiness to convince readers that the findings of the study are significant. As Neuman (2003, p. 179) expresses it, validity requires the quality of “truthfulness”. In order to attain trustworthiness in the study, triangulation was applied as discussed in section 3.3.2. As also noted, to improve validity and reliability, the researcher used a mixed method approach which was an active approach in the study for quantitative and qualitative approaches to
complement each other, i.e. ‘to offer insights that neither one alone could provide’ (Reinhardt & Cook, 1979, p. 21).

3.5: Data Analysis

According to Burns & Grove (2003, p. 479), data analysis is “a mechanism for reducing and organizing data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher”. As detailed in section 3.4.5 above, the study data were collected via five instruments (questionnaires, interview, think aloud protocols, error test and writing test), each with a unique set of analysis demands. The data collected was mainly primary and required qualitative and quantitative analysis. Primary data are those collected from sources such as direct contact with the source of data (Newman & Benz, 1998).

3.5.1: Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Quantitative research is associated with deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning commences with a broader theory or generalization, and ultimately reaches a conclusion through testing the theories during the research. One approach used by the researcher used was quantitative (section 3.2.1.2), in which data was collected from writing test, errors test and the questionnaires:

Quantitative research generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out (e.g., a study comparing student test results before and after an instructional treatment (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 2)

This type of analysis generates and employs numerical data and is generally agreed to be “reliable and rigorous” (Gray, 2013, p. 192). Indeed, it is extremely valuable in cases which seek to measure recurrence among students or provide a numerical summary of frequent actions of the participants (Abeyasekera, 2005). The researcher used this analysis method both for the writing and errors tests and for the questionnaires.

The Essay Writing and Errors Tests Analysis

According to Hedge (2001), starting an essay writing assignment is difficult because the task requires a great deal of application, attention, and concentration. As recommended by researchers such as Williams (2004), the researcher utilized analytic evaluation based on different categories with certain criteria since the evaluation involves numerous dimensions of
writing skills that could generate more information about student performance in writing. The writing samples were therefore scored based on the Paulus’ (1999) essay scoring rubric as described above (section 3.4.5.5). The scores for the essay tests of the students from the experimental and control groups were marked as pre- and post-tests using a paired t-test. As previously noted, two raters used Paulus’s rubric to marked the students’ essays across both groups. In addition, to determine whether the students from either group had improved in writing, the researcher used the independent t-test in order to examine the difference between the mean in the control and experimental groups. The aim of doing this was to identify any significant differences between the two groups. The scores of the 20 participants of both groups were utilized in a descriptive statistics in SPSS (means and p-values) analysis. The writing samples were therefore corrected and analyzed both as overall writing, and in terms of each suggested criterion.

As with the writing test, quantitative analysis was also applied on the errors test. The students’ samples were collected and corrected and the results were entered in SPSS using a paired t-test to discern student improvement before and after the treatment. An independent t-test was used to identify any significant differences between the two groups.

**Questionnaire Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative data yielded from the Likert scales of the pre- and post-questionnaires (section 3.4.5.1) were analyzed manually.

**3.5.2: Analyses of Qualitative Data**

As has been stressed above (section 3.2.1.2), since quantitative statistics alone are not sufficient to elicit student perceptions and attitudes, a qualitative study allows the participants to tell their stories, and can reveal the depth of experience to support the findings of the quantitative data (Gray, 2013). The researcher applied qualitative analysis to the questionnaire, interview and think aloud protocols. In order to so do, the researcher used a thematic method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Guest et al., (2012, p. 15) point out, thematic analysis “a rigorous, yet inductive set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible”. The researcher analyzed the data by applying the six phases delineated by Braun & Clarke (2006):

1. familiarizing yourself with your data
2. generating initial codes
3. searching for themes
4. reviewing said themes
5. defining and naming themes
6. producing the report  

(Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 35).

According to the qualitative analysis applied in the interview phase, the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed yielding qualitative data. The participant discussions were transcribed by a qualified transcriber and revised several times by the researcher in order to ensure the content of the interviews had been faithfully recorded. The analysis was inductive (Patton, 2002) in that the researcher immersed himself in the specifics and details of the data in order to detect significant categories, themes, and codes. The researcher read and re-read the responses to the interview questions in order to properly identify the required themes and codes which emerged from the student responses. General themes from the students’ transcript (Appendix 14) were then generated and labelled with a term or phrase that stated the meaning in each case. The researcher then analyzed the data by applying six phases (Appendix 20). A matrix of themes, such as “improving writing”, “improving grammar”, and so on, was also created (Appendix 15).

According to the analysis of the data arising from the TAPs, the researcher used qualitative data analysis by compiling themes, coding, and constructing the categories which emerged from the data. As was similarly applied on the thematic analysis of the questionnaires and the interview, the data were analyzed following the same procedures.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation (section 3.3.2) is intended to enhance credibility and validity in addition to generating much richer data findings for the study. The data is organized in relation to instruments relevant to the research questions (section 3.3.1). For example, the researcher gathered the quantitative data from the questionnaire and writing test and integrated them with the qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the data gathered from TAPs was used and triangulated with the other data instruments.
The findings of the instruments (questionnaire, interview, and TAPs) were triangulated in order to detect any important issue related to the research questions. For example, at the outset of the study, students felt a little anxious about working with their colleagues in the class (see section 4.3.5). According to the results in Figure 4.14, for the first item (“Peer feedback helps me overcome my fear of writing in English”), 40% of the students agreed with that statement at the beginning of the study. Significantly, after the treatment study, the amount of agreement increased quite significantly by one third, from 40% to 60%. For the findings to be more valid and reliable, the data was integrated with findings found in the questionnaires. Open-ended questions revealed that students did not dare to correct peers’ errors due to being worried about being wrong and knowing they would also feel embarrassed if others corrected them. It was obvious that applying the method of triangulation was very useful to provide much richer findings to support a specific issue in the research study. The researcher therefore used triangulation to amplify validity of the present study by integrating the findings from the five data instruments.

3.6: Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research paradigm, outlined the development of the methodology, and justified the use of the quantitative/qualitative mixed methods in this study. As previously discussed in section 3.2.1.5, the mixed methods approach presents a comprehensive framework for the research study. By examining a number of instruments and three analytical approaches, the chapter supported the framework devised for the study which used both analytical and thematic analysis. In addition, the data analyses were illustrated by presenting the five instruments research instruments and details of all data collection procedures.

Finally, the validity and readability of the data in this study was discussed in respect of all instruments utilized in the present research. Details of all data analysis processes of using SPSS in the analytical data was provided, while thematic analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken manually and also detailed in this chapter. Chapter Four presents the findings of the data analysis of each instrument used in the research study; namely, the questionnaires, interview, think aloud protocols, errors test, and writing test.
CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS

4.0: Introduction
This study was carried out with 20 students from two different groups, experimental and control (section 3.4.4.2). Chapter Four provides the analysis of the collected data. The data collection included methods such as a questionnaire gathered from practitioners and students, students’ interview, error test, short essay writing test, and data of Think Aloud Protocols (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Research Instruments and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research instruments</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Treatment of the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Questionnaire (Practitioners)</td>
<td>Quantitative, Qualitative</td>
<td>Manually, Manually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Questionnaire (Students)</td>
<td>Qualitative (Open-ended Questions)</td>
<td>Thematic analysis: manually using themes and codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Interview (Students)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Thematic analysis: manually using themes and codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Think Aloud Protocols (Students)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Thematic analysis: manually using themes and codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Error Test</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>SPSS Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Essay Writing Test</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>SPSS Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher questionnaire was used to elicit additional information from the practitioners about the benefits of CW. The student questionnaire was used to evaluate perceptions and attitudes of CW following the treatment study. The interview was devised to draw out student perceptions and attitudes about CW following the treatment study, while the think aloud protocols analysis was used to measure how participants interacted while writing collaboratively. The passage test was used to test the students’ overall writing, and the error test was used to identify common writing errors and how the students would improve reducing such errors after the treatment study.

The qualitative data gathered from the questionnaire (students, open-ended questions), the semi-structured interview and think aloud protocols were coded and organized manually. The codes, themes, and subthemes which emerged from the participants’ raw data were
recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). Accordingly, the choice of a theme was determined according to whether it captures something in relation and importance to the research questions (Braun, & Clark 2006).

Each theme used was supplemented with relevant extracts and quotes from the questionnaires or interview transcripts in order to provide supportive arguments made and evidence to answer the research questions. It is intended that the themes will provide evidence and help in answering the research questions (section 3.3.1) of whether collaborative writing enhances writing skills and competence.

Section 4.4 presents the scores for the participants’ error tests. Higher scores in the post-tests would indicate student improvement. Since it was important to identify any progress in students’ writing, the researcher calculated the results using SPSS Program to apply two types of tests (independent t-test and paired t-test). The two tests were used to measure any progress of each group before and after the treatment study and to measure the mean difference of the experimental and control group after the treatment study. Section 4.5 presents the passage test. The scores for the participants’ writing essays in the pre- and post-tests were marked and collected by two volunteer expert teachers applying Paulus’s rubric. As it was also of great importance to identify any progress in students’ writing, the researcher calculated the results using the SPSS Program to apply two types of tests (independent t-test and paired t-test); the same process applied in the error test. The aim of these tests was to detect any significant differences between the variables. All the results generated from the teachers and students are triangulated and discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

4.1: Teachers’ Perceptions about CW
Thirty-five participants were practitioners who work at Imam University. As outlined in Chapter Three, the researcher used a survey (Appendix 5) which asked questions about their perceptions of CW (i.e. pros and cons).

4.1.1: Teachers’ Background
All but three of the 35 teacher participants hold a postgraduate qualification, approximately half to Masters and half to PhD level. All participants are experienced in teaching writing skills with experience ranging from one year to more than 10 years (Figure 4.1). The fact that almost half of the participants (47.2%) hold a PhD, and 44.4% have experience in teaching writing for
more than 10 years was considered to help significantly in obtaining more reliable responses from participants investigating CW.

**Figure 4.1: Practitioners’ Experience of Teaching Writing and Qualification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practitioners’ Qualification and Experience of Teaching Writing Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2: Perceptions of Common Errors

Because the errors usually made by Saudi learners in writing are an important issue in this study, it was helpful to elicit the perceptions of the teachers who teach at Imam University in Saudi Arabia as this could help to identify the most common errors in writing. This would also help answer the research questions, especially the second one (“Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?”). According to the teacher survey (Appendix 5), the most frequent common errors made by the Saudi students are those listed in Figure 4.2. The majority of the respondents agreed that the most frequent errors the students make are in punctuation marks, spelling, verb tenses, and articles (Figure 4.2). Identifying most common errors that Saudi learners make was used to gauge how well the students in CW could improve themselves in writing paying special attention to how they could reduce those common errors.
4.1.3: Teachers’ Perceptions about Collaborative Writing

According to the teachers’ education and experience in writing, they were asked if CW is better than individual writing in class at certain stages in writing. In addition, when the teachers were asked if they had used group work in class, 77.14% confirmed they had while the remaining 22.86% did not use CW (Appendix 5, section 3.4.5.1). With this in mind, the participant responses were interesting and supported the method of CW in class. In the planning before writing stage, the majority of 71.43% strongly agreed that CW could be better than individual writing. To add to this agreement, 14.29% (five responses) agreed. This means that a total of 85.72% agreed that collaborative writing is better than working individually in the planning stage.

Interestingly, the results showed that, in the case of discussing and coming up with mutual ideas among peers in class, the respondents felt that CW is better than individual writing. For example, the responses revealed that 82.86% (29 participants) strongly agreed and 14.29% (five participants) agreed that CW is better in this situation. Thus, the majority of the
participants (97.15%) agreed on that point. In addition, the majority supported CW over individual writing with regard to grammatical accuracy where a total of 51.43% strongly agreed; 25.71% agreed; in terms of spelling and punctuation 54.29% strongly agreed and 28.57% agreed; in terms of word choice in writing 62.86% strongly agreed and 20% agreed; and with regard to finding mistakes 74.29% strongly agreed and 22.86% agreed as illustrated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Teachers’ Agreement towards Collaborative Writing

4.2: CW Pre and Post-treatment Perceptions: Control and Experimental Groups: Analysis of Quantitative Data

4.2.1: Participant Profile/Background

Background information of participants is given in terms of gender (males) and English proficiency; all students’ levels were intermediate. This section was only used in the pre-questionnaire, which was intended to provide insight about the students before the treatment study. Section A of the survey (Appendix 3, part A) requested the students’ background, which
was then used for a number of purposes, such as identifying their English proficiency level and specifically their proficiency in EFL writing. This information helped to both identify the participants’ status in terms of their experience in the English language, and to track their improvement during the 12 week course of the study (Appendix 12). The participants were enrolled in the third level as English majors at the College of Languages and Translation, Imam University, Saudi Arabia.

4.2.2: Perceptions of Writing Skills

Before addressing students’ perceptions of writing skills, it is important to briefly discuss the questionnaire. The students completed the pre-questionnaire survey at the beginning of the academic term and the questionnaire was completed at the end of the treatment/semester as well. The intention of the pre-questionnaire survey was to provide the baseline for the third research question: “Are students’ perceptions and attitudes positively affected by collaborative writing learning settings?” The survey consists of Likert-scale questions and open-ended questions (section 3.4.5.1). For example, the first question asked the participants whether they liked writing activities. The question required the learners to indicate their degree of preference.

The Control vs. Experimental Groups (Perceptions of Writing Skills)

Figure 4.4 shows the results of the responses from the control group before and after the course study. Regarding the first question (“I like English writing activities”), the pre-questionnaire for the control group revealed that the majority of the group liked English writing activity (10% strongly agreed and 50% agreed). On the other hand, 10% disagreed with the proposition, and 30% were uncertain. With regard to the second item (“I think that learning English writing skills is essential”), 70% of the students strongly agreed that English writing skills are essential, and the remaining 30% agreed. The student responses to the third item (“Writing in English is a difficult activity”) showed that an 80% majority of the students agreed that writing in English is a difficult activity, with 30% strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing.

It was notable that all the students agreed that English writing is a very important skill in learning, which reflects the pressure to master this skill in their educational context. But overall, the students in the control group were not very interested in writing skills before or after the course of study, and the number of students who were interested reduced from 60% to 50%. The students in this group perceive writing as a skill which requires effort to develop.
This might suggest that the experimental conditions (with the experimental group) actually had an effect on interest in writing. This matter will be further elaborated in the Chapter Five comparison of the attitudes of the control and experimental groups towards interest and improving writing. On the other hand, Figure 4.5 shows the results of the responses before and after the course, where the students in the experimental group worked collaboratively. Regarding the first question ("I like English writing activities"), the pre-questionnaire of the experimental group revealed that the majority of the group (60%) agreed that they liked English writing activities. Both the control and experimental groups revealed the same amount of agreement at the beginning of the study. Significantly, the amount of agreement in the experimental group increased after the treatment study from 60% to 80%, while the amount of agreement in the control group decreased from 60% to 50% (Figure 4.6). This clearly suggests that those students who were writing collaboratively during the treatment study enjoyed the experience.

**Figure 4.4: Control Group’s Attitudes towards Writing Activity**
Based on the student responses from both groups, it is clear that English writing is perceived as essential for ESL learners. All students of both groups agreed both before and after the study that English writing is essential. Hence, learners need a practical method by which they can
improve this important skill in academic learning. This reaffirms the need to identify a new method for teaching and learning writing is that the skill is perennially perceived as difficult. Before and after the study, an 80% majority of students in the control group agreed that English writing is difficult. However, while the amount of agreement in the experimental group was also 80% at the beginning of the study, the figure reduced to 60% by the end of the treatment study. The responses given by the experimental group at the end of the study (Figure 4.7) suggests that students found something useful to help them reduce the feeling of difficulty, which could be attributed to collaborative writing, which is further explored in Chapter Five.

Figure 4.7: Attitudes towards Writing Activity

![Diagram showing students' perceptions about writing before and after treatment study](image)

4.2.3: Perceptions of Collaborative Writing

In this section, it is important to elicit how the students saw CW as a method for helping learners improve writing skills before the treatment study. This provided an opportunity to compare the responses of the participants before and after the treatment study, especially the
experimental group who worked collaboratively in writing. Four items on the pre questionnaire required the participants of the two groups to give their perceptions of CW (Figure 4.8).

Since the control group worked individually during the treatment study they did not need a post- questionnaire about collaborative writing. According to the responses from the control and experimental groups, all results in Figure 4.8 demonstrate a positive impression of collaborative writing pre-treatment. Gathering information about students’ impressions about collaborative writing before engaging the experiential group in collaborative writing provides insightful information and could provide a useful opportunity to measure the change in student perceptions, especially in the experimental group, before and after the treatment study.

The majority of the control group (50%) agreed that they like working with groups for writing. In addition, the experimental group revealed that the majority of them (60%) liked CW. It is interesting that the number of the participants in the two groups (50% and 60%) is still relatively low. However, this merely creates more opportunities to compare the students’ perceptions after the treatment study, specifically those who wrote collaboratively. Figure 4.8 provides additional details about perceptions of CW and the range of agreement among both groups.

**Figure 4.8: Students’ Perceptions of Collaborative Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like working with groups in class.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work in class is interesting.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel relaxed writing in English in a group.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing essays in class with peers is interesting.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The knowledge of whether students like collaborative writing is critical, since if students like CW, they will arguably work harder. Therefore, it is important to explore the students’ perceptions of CW before the treatment study in order to measure the difference after the treatment study. For example, according to the responses in Figure 4.9, 20% of the students in the experimental group strongly agreed that writing essays in class is interesting, while a further 30% agreed. In addition, 30% were uncertain, but 10% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed. This provides a good opportunity to measure the responses after the treatment study to determine whether there is a significant difference.

Significantly, for this study, the number of positive responses in the experimental group increased after the treatment study, as shown in Figure 4.9. For the first item, (“I like working with groups in class”) the total amount of agreement increased from 60% to 80%, which reflects that the students in the experimental group reported that they highly enjoyed writing collaboratively.

This reinforces the idea of enjoyment in CW are the responses of the second item (“Group work in class is interesting”): the degree of agreement increased from 50% to 70% at the end of the study. More interestingly, the number of students who felt more relaxed while writing collaboratively increased from 40% to 70%. This strongly suggests that the students’ attitude to writing had changed as a result of the CW approach, so much so, that they felt less troubled about writing following the study. Finally, the number of students who agreed that writing essays with peers in class is interesting increased from 50% to 80%, and uncertainty reduced from 30% to 10% as illustrated in Figure 4.9.
4.2.4: Students' Perceptions about Improving Writing

This section addresses one of the central issues of the current study. The researcher sought to establish how well the participants interacted in CW and to identify the areas in essay writing in which the students improved as they engaged in CW during the treatment study. According to the results illustrated in Figure 4.10, the responses of the control group revealed that half the students agreed that CW helps students improve writing skills. The responses of the experimental group in Figure 4.11 on the other hand, revealed that 60% of the students agreed that CW helps learners improve writing. The initial responses of both groups provided a good opportunity to compare the students in the experimental group with the responses about improving writing at the end of the study. Interestingly, the level of agreement that CW helps learners to improve their overall writing increased in the experimental group from 60% to 80%. Furthermore, the number of students who were initially uncertain fell from 30% to 10%.
Figure 4.10: Students’ Perceptions (Improving Writing)

Figure 4.11: Students’ Perceptions about Improving Writing
4.2.5: Students’ Perceptions of Peer Review

Peers in CW play a vital and useful role, as discussed in section 2.9.3.3. In this study, CW peers showed a great effort in helping each other in writing, as shown in the post-treatment data. According to the data illustrate in Figure 4.12, all seven items revealed enhanced positive attitudes towards the role of peer feedback in writing; improving the organization of writing; presenting a useful opportunity to share ideas; benefiting from each other; improving essay writing skills; improving the content of student writing; improving the grammar structure of writing; and improving the spelling and punctuation in writing. These aspects of their writing were actually shown to have improved as will be further discussed in section 4.5.

Figure 4.12 shows the number of the participants who agreed on almost all seven items after the treatment study. This gives a strong indication that peer feedback plays a useful role in CW and in helping learners improve writing skill. For example, at the beginning of the study, the amount of agreement with the idea that peer feedback helps in the learning of grammar was 50%, and this increased, post-study, to 70%. Similar results occurred regarding the content of writing and spelling. In addition, agreement increased from 70% to 80% regarding the idea that peer feedback helps learners improve in vocabulary.
a. Trusting Peer Feedback before and after the Treatment Study

According to the results shown in Figure 4.13, students were initially somewhat hesitant to trust peer feedback. This may be because they were not familiar with CW. The responses at the beginning of the study show that the amount of agreement with these statements about peer feedback was 50%. Significantly, after engaging the students in CW, the total level of ‘trust’ rose from 50 to 70%. The overall results of the student responses show enhanced results after the treatment study in trusting peer feedback, in trusting suggestions from peers, and in recommending that peers should correct students’ errors.
b. Peers and Confidence in CW

Only at the beginning of the study were students a little anxious of working with their colleagues in the class. According to the results in Figure 4.14, for the first item (“Peer feedback helps me overcome my fear of writing in English”), 10% of the participants strongly agreed, and 30% agreed. This means that 40% of the students agreed. Interestingly, after the treatment study, the amount of agreement increased quite sharply, by one third, from 40% to 60%.

In addition, for the second item (“My peers’ corrections of my errors do not embarrass me”), at the beginning of the study, 40% said that correcting errors did not embarrass them. However, after applying CW, the amount of agreement increased from 40% to 70%. This demonstrates that CW increased openness to accepting peer feedback. Figure 4.14 shows a comparison of the agreement before and after the treatment study.

What is more, according to the third item (“I believe I have the ability to give my classmates helpful suggestions about writing”), at the beginning, 70% of the students said that they felt they had the ability to give useful suggestions and the amount of agreement increased from 70% to 80% at the end of the study.
All the results showed positive attitudes towards CW and confidence. The majority of the students trusted peer feedback, overcame their fears of working with peers, and provided useful suggestions as illustrated in Figure 4.14. The increase in the amount of agreement in the aforementioned items and decrease in the number of students who were uncertain (see Figure 4.14) in all the items clearly indicate the positive advantages of CW which will be further examined later in Chapter Five.

Figure 4.14: Students’ Perceptions about Fear and Confidence in Collaborative Writing

4.2.6: Students’ Perceptions about Motivation
According to data analysis results, the students in the experimental group revealed positive findings about being motivated to work hard during the treatment study. For example, the amount of agreement that “Group work in class encourages me to work hard” increased from 60% to 80% as shown in Figure 4.15. In addition, the amount of agreement that “Group work motivates me to write and discover my errors in writing” increased from 50 to 80%, suggesting that CW increases motivation to work hard.
4.2.7: Students’ Perceptions about Distraction in CW

Figure 4.16 shows how the experimental group students’ presumption that CW would be distracting, were disproved as a result of the study. In fact, the figures on ‘agreement’ that CW would be ‘distracting’ plummeted from 60% to 10%.
4.2.8: Students Attitudes towards Applying CW in Teaching Writing

According to the results shown in Figure 4.17, at the beginning of the study, when students were asked through the questionnaire if they would recommend CW to be taught in teaching writing (“The peer feedback technique should be applied in English writing classes”), the majority of the students (60%) agreed on that suggestion at the beginning of the study.

Interestingly, the level of agreement increased from 60% to 70% that peer feedback should be taught in teaching writing. The positive results after the treatment study illustrated in Figure 4.17 and the other positive results discussed in previous sections support the idea that CW should be applied in teaching academic writing (see Chapter Six for more details).

Figure 4.17: Experimental Group’s Attitudes towards Applying CW in Teaching Writing

The quantitative data analysis findings show that applying CW with the students has positive advantages, as shown in the results presented hitherto. The students’ responses revealed that the majority of the students in the experimental group were more interested in CW following the treatment study. However, the students agreed that acquiring writing skills is challenging, yet essential. Therefore, there must be a method to help them improve writing, such as CW.
What was most notable about CW was the majority of the students reported that they improved their writing skills after engaging in such a method. In addition, the percentage of agreement of the students increased after the training study; in particular, CW specifically peer feedback helped the students understand the criteria of writing, improve grammar and vocabulary, punctuation marks, generating ideas and the content of writing, as the majority agreed on that. The next section addresses the qualitative perceptions of CW.

4.3: Experimental Group Findings

Here the experimental group quantitative data presented earlier is integrated with their qualitative data from the questionnaires, interviews and think-aloud protocol, in order to triangulate and hence enrich the results.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis involved interpreting the responses from open-ended questions in the questionnaires, the interview and think aloud protocols. The researcher analyzed the data by applying the six phases (section 3.5.2 and Appendix 20). General themes from the students’ transcript (interview and think aloud protocols) and open-ended questionnaire questions were then generated and labelled with a term or phrase that stated the meaning in each case. A table of themes, such as “improving writing”, “improving grammar”, and so on, was also created (Appendices 15, 16, and 17). Thematic analysis is discussed in more detail in section 3.5.2.

4.3.1: Attitudes to Writing

Important/difficult Skill

According to the students’ answers in the questionnaires’ open-ended questions, the majority of the students agreed that writing is an important skill. For example, the majority of the students in the control group (Appendix 15, Thematic Analysis, Questionnaire Open-ended Questions) agreed on that claim. At the beginning of the study, one student from the control group (Respondent B8) said, “All students need writing because we use English in all the courses”. After the treatment study, the same student said, “I hope that I will improve myself in writing in future because it is a very important skill”. The majority of the students in the experimental group also agreed that writing is essential. At the beginning of the study, one student (Respondent A12) said, “All students know writing is very important”. After the treatment study, the same student said, “It is a very nice and important skill” (for more quotes, see Appendix 15).
As noted earlier, before and after the treatment study, all students from both the control and experimental groups agreed that writing skills are essential (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). With regard to difficulty in writing, the majority of the students (80%) in the control group agreed on that claim before the treatment study, and the amount of agreement remained the same at the end of the study. However, the number of students in agreement in the experimental group reduced from 80% to 60% regarding whether writing skill is difficult, which suggests that the students found something useful to help them reduce the feeling of difficulty, which the researcher will seek to identify in Chapter Five (Figures 4.7).

With regard to difficulty in writing, the majority of the students agreed that writing is difficult. One of the students from the control group (Respondent B17) said, “However, this skill is very difficult, and I think I will improve it this semester”. After the treatment study, the same student said, “This skill is very difficult, and we need to improve it because it is very important, as I said”. However, the majority of students from the experimental group felt that writing skills was less difficult after the treatment study, which could be attributed to CW. For example, one of the students (Respondent A28) said, “Writing is not like reading or listening, but it is more difficult and it needs a lot of work”. Interestingly, after the treatment study, the same student said, “Although writing is very difficult, I found it interesting and less difficult when I worked with my colleagues”. For more quote examples, see Appendix 15. According to the interviewees’ perceptions about difficulty, the majority of the students said that they helped each other in the task of writing which suggests that CW helped the students reduce the feeling of difficulty (Appendix 16, Thematic Analysis and Interview).

Two students stated the following:

Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups

(Interviewee A16).

I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic]

(Interviewee A21).

4.3.2: Affective Impact
The students in the control group did not show much interest in writing skills following the treatment study. The writing course did not seem to stimulate the interest of the students in the
control group as the amount of interest fell from 60% to 50% (Figure 4.6). To support this, for example, at the beginning of the study, one student in the control group (Respondent B1) said, “I think writing in a group is better. However, I do not like writing because it is difficult”. At the end of the study, the same student said, “However, I do not like writing”. This implies that the student did not find anything that motivated him to like writing individually. For more quote examples, see Codes and Themes from open-ended questions in the questionnaire in Appendix 15.

On the other hand, experimental group interest in writing increased from 60% to 80% (Figure 4.6). This is corroborated by students’ answers in the open-ended question; the majority of the students agreed that they liked writing skills after the treatment study. One student (Respondent A28), for instance, said before the treatment study, “In addition, working with groups will be more interesting”. This seems to have been confirmed, as after the treatment study, the same student said, “…peer feedback was one of the most interesting parts” (see Appendix 15).

The students in the interview also revealed the affective impact of CW. The majority of them agreed that CW was very interesting to them. They were very happy to have a chance to cooperate with each other in writing. Here are two students’ reactions to CW:

Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups (Interviewee A16).

How do you feel when you work in groups? (Interviewer)

Actually, very comfortable because all the students are my classmates (Interviewee A18).

In addition, when the students wrote collaboratively and talked loudly, it appeared that they were happy to undertake the task of writing. The impression is that the students were comfortable and highly engaged while writing collaboratively. Two students stated the following when they were asked by the teacher about their impression in CW:

Speaker2: It is interesting to write in group.

Speaker 3: In the second time, I was more comfortable than the last one.

Also, it was observed that the students laughed and joked in certain situations, which reflects that they were comfortable and interested.
Speaker 5: There is no problem [Laughing].

Speaker 2: I know, but you seem to have a problem with first [Joking].

Speaker 4: When you write the first body paragraph and its first idea that we have mentioned.

Speaker 4: From my own experience

Speaker 3: You can start writing [Laughing] ... or from my

It was noted that the students laughed occasionally, as illustrated by speakers 2, 3 and 5, and their level of relaxation implies that they were comfortable when they wrote collaboratively. For more examples of the students’ affective impact, see Codes and themes from dialogue in Think Aloud Protocols Transcript (Appendix 17).

4.3.3: CW: Motivation

The students in the experimental group interacted with CW during the task of collaborative writing, and the amount of agreement that CW encouraged the students to work hard increased from 60% to 80% after the treatment study as illustrated in Figure 4.15. The findings (section 4.3) of the thematic analysis of the qualitative data corroborated this (sections 4.3.5, 4.3.6 and 4.3.7). They agreed that collaborative writing motivated them to work hard as noted in their answers in the questionnaires. For example, one student made the following statement before the treatment study:

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard... (Respondent A28).

What is more interesting is the same student did not change his perception that CW would encourage him work hard after the treatment study as he claimed:

Writing in a small group encouraged me to be active and work hard (Respondent A28).

After the treatment study, the majority of the students found CW a very useful method which encouraged them to interact and write actively. More examples on this theme can be seen in Appendix 15.
The data in the interview also revealed that CW motivated the participants to work enthusiastically and hard. It was a good chance for them to increase their motivation and support them to work hard. Undertaking this activity helped them improve their writing as confirmed in the writing test and identifying error test results (sections 4.4 and 4.5). One interviewee had the following to say as regards how he felt working with peers:

*Actually, very comfortable because all the students are my classmates. So we feel each feel comfortable so we work hard [sic]*  
(Interviewee A18).

Interviewee A21 also talked about the value of collaboration:

*I think it's a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling paragraph [sic]*  
(Interviewee A21).

This suggests that CW motivates them to work enthusiastically and hard. This was also noted during the think aloud protocol. For example, in one instance, the students repeated certain words to ask about the correct or most suitable word. That sort of repeating implies that the students were motivated to work hard and insist on benefiting from each other. Here is an example in repeating a certain word by several speakers:

**Speaker** 1. According to my own experience last semester I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore he found a lot of errors that I was not aware of a lot of errors or a lot of mistakes?

**Speaker** 5: Mistakes

**Speaker** 4: Errors

**Speaker** 5: Errors?

**Speaker** 2: Ok., Errors.

**Speaker** 4: Errors or mistakes?

### 4.3.4: CW as “Distraction” or “Time Waster”

As noted in the quantitative data analysis (section 4.2.7), at the beginning of the study, some students were hesitant about the benefits of CW. One of the main reasons was the fear that CW could distract the students and waste time. For example, when the students in the experimental group were asked if collaborative writing would distract learners in class when they write, 60%
agreed. However, the amount of agreement reduced from 60% to 10% as illustrated in Figure 4.16, indicating they no longer felt that CW was a distraction.

This was confirmed in the thematic analysis (section 3.5.2 for more details about thematic analysis) of the questionnaire data (Appendix 15) which revealed positive findings that collaborative writing did not distract students to write. One of the students in the experimental group (Respondent A29) said at the beginning of the study, “In addition, although writing in groups sounds interesting, it might distract us when we work together and talk”. Nevertheless, after participating in CW, he changed his opinion saying, “Group work was a very useful opportunity to improve writing and it did not distract us when we worked together”. Another student (Respondent A18) said at the beginning, “I see that writing in a group will distract me to focus and I will waste time if I work with my peers”. However, after the treatment study, he said, “I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends” (Appendix 15). This reaffirms that distraction and timewasting were actually quite rare during student engagement with CW.

To support this issue, in the interview, for example one of the students said that his peers were comfortable and that motivated them to work hard. This implies that they did not distract each other or waste time.

...so we feel each feel comfortable. So we **work hard** [sic] *(Interviewee A18).*

The above student was the same student who said at the beginning of the study in the questionnaire, “I see that writing in a group will distract me to focus and I will waste time”. After engaging him in CW, he admitted that he worked hard which suggests that there was very little room for distracting or wasting time.

**4.3.5: CW: Perceptions of Peer Interaction**

**a. Giving and Receiving Suggestions**

As noted in the quantitative data analysis (section 4.2.5) and according to the third item (“I believe I have the ability to give my classmates helpful suggestions about writing”), at the outset, 70% of the students were confident they had the ability to give useful suggestions. This level amount of agreement increased from 70% to 80% by the end of the study. The majority of the students agreed that they had the ability to provide useful suggestions (Figure 4.13). The
increase in the amount of agreement in the aforementioned item clearly shows that this aspect of CW gives CW specific positive advantages which be further developed in Chapter Five.

The students’ responses in the questionnaire (open-ended questions) corroborated the findings from the quantitative data analysis. The majority of them agreed that CW was useful for them to give and receive suggestions. For example, one of the students stated that CW would be a good chance to share ideas and useful suggestions in writing:

_We will work together, share ideas, and provide our suggestions in writing_  
_(Respondent A16)_.

Significantly, the student’s perceptions about giving and receiving suggestions were positive after the treatment study.

_When I worked with my classmates, we shared several tasks. For example revising, editing and offering feedback. We shared correcting errors and producing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes_  
_(Respondent A16)_.

The majority of the students agreed that they shared the role of providing useful suggestions to correct grammatical errors, choose proper words and provide mutual ideas. This implies that the students actively interacted with the task of receiving and offering suggestions, which was useful in improving writing as noted. When the students worked in small groups, it afforded them a useful opportunity to talk together and share different views and suggestions to reach the best piece of writing. In doing so, they had the chance to improve themselves in writing. Some students in the interview made the following comments about this point:

_Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups._  
_(Interviewee A16)_.

_I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic]_  
_(Interviewee A21)_.

The above participants agreed that CW was useful and helped them improve writing as every member participates, shares, and suggests different ideas.
The Think Aloud Protocols Data (Appendix 17), revealed the students to be very active, and they engaged in giving and receiving useful remarks as noted in certain situations. The following are examples from the students while writing collaboratively:

Speaker 3: OK, for the first ah, what do you suggest for the thesis statement?
Speaker 2: Now, the supporting text for each idea, the introduction
Speaker 3: A lot of people doing mistakes
Speaker 2: We are talking about asking experienced people.
Speaker 4: Yeah, you’re sure?

The students were active from the beginning of the writing task. Initially, they suggested and shared ideas on how to start with a thesis statement of the essay. In addition, the dynamics of a discussion was noted through agreeing or disagreeing on a certain point and justifying suggestions such as in the following:

Speaker 4: I think it’s not necessary to say first because we mentioned the ideas.
Speaker 2: What do you suggest?
Speaker 5: For example, there are ways that can help you.
Speaker 2: For example?
Speaker 5: No, no there are ways that can help you.
Speaker 2: But we are talking about one way.
Speaker 5: Yeah then, we go through it.
Speaker 2: No, I see first is better.
Speaker 3: I agree with him.

It is fascinating to observe how active the students were when participating in receiving or providing suggestions and offering solutions or alternative ideas during the task of collaborative writing. This confirms the useful role of peer interactions in giving and receiving feedback from each other.
b. Trust

Trusting peer feedback was one of the issues some of the participants were most hesitant about; that is, whether to trust and rely on peers’ suggestions. However, that was at the beginning of the study. Interestingly following the treatment study, the majority of the students who engaged in CW both liked and trusted peer feedback. As noted in the analysis of the quantitative data, for instance the second item (“My peers’ corrections of my errors do not embarrass me”), at the beginning of the study, 40% agreed with this statement. However, after applying CW, the amount of agreement increased from 40% to 70% (Figure 4.14). This implies that CW increased openness to accepting peer feedback.

In addition, the students from the experimental group, for example, were asked in the questionnaire, “I trust peer feedback”, and 50% of the students agreed with that statement. However, that was at the beginning of the treatment study. Significantly, the amount of agreement from the students increased from 50% to 70% (Figure 4.13). This suggests that the students found something useful in CW, which encouraged the majority of the students to trust peer feedback as will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

Other examples to support this issue come from the qualitative data analysis (see Appendix 15 for the full set of qualitative data from the questionnaires). One of the students said:

\[ \text{In fact sharing the experience with peers helped me a lot in improving writing as I mentioned. The feedback I got from my classmates helped me a lot. At the beginning, I was not sure about the benefit from the students but when I worked in groups I found a lot of benefits} \quad (\text{Respondent A31}). \]

Another student admitted:

\[ \text{I do not trust the information from peers} \quad (\text{Respondent A18}). \]

However, that negative perception was before the treatment study. Significantly, after the treatment study, the same student said:

\[ \text{I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends in the class such as sharing opinions and ideas} \quad (\text{Respondent A18}). \]
The student completely reversed his attitude to trusting peers. The examples above clearly demonstrate that while some students were hesitant at the beginning, after writing collaboratively they developed positive attitudes about trusting each other in CW. According to the interview, the majority of the students in the control group seemed not to trust peer feedback because they were not familiar with it. The following exchange took place in one interview:

Anyone who don’t trust about his information he must … don’t see it or he say I know I think maybe 80% its right, if you not trust 100% you have to trust [sic]  
(Interviewee B24)

Trust whom?  
(Interviewer)

Trusting your colleague, in his information. When someone ask him if he sure for his own information he can say if he not … we prefer to ask him other one. If he don’t found this we can say [sic]  
(Interviewee B24)

Student B24 above said that he was not sure whether the information from peers was correct, and consequently, he was hesitant to trust peer feedback. The same student stated in answering the questionnaire question that he did not trust peer feedback from the other students.

I prefer to take the information from teachers but not from my colleagues. I do not know if what they say is correct or not  
(Respondent B24).

The negative perceptions of trusting peer feedback mainly came from the students who did not write collaboratively. The positive impressions, however were that the majority of the students in the experimental group trusted peer feedback when they found it useful in writing as noted previously. This suggests that students felt that they needed peer feedback to help them identify their errors in writing:

Maybe some students don’t know their mistakes. Because when you write, sometimes you don't recognize your mistakes, so you need peer feedback…  
(Interviewee A16).

When I write in groups, different ideas, help me to write better (Interviewee A28).

This implies that the students trusted peer feedback during the task of CW.

c. Confidence

Only at the beginning of the study were students hesitant about working with their colleagues in the class. According to the results in Figure 4.14, for the first item (“Peer feedback helps me
overcome my fear of writing in English”), 40% of the students agreed with that statement at the beginning of the study. Significantly, after the treatment study, the level of agreement increased sharply by one third, from 40% to 60%.

Significantly, the majority of the students were happy about their experience and confidence in CW after the treatment study. One student, for example, was a little nervous of the task of collaborative writing as noted through his first impression at the beginning of the study. The student did not dare to correct his peers’ errors due to worry that a wrong correction would be embarrassing if others spotted his mistake:

One point I do not like. If I make many mistakes and my colleagues correct me I feel embarrassed. I also feel that it would be difficult for me to correct my colleagues’ mistakes and discover that my correction was wrong (Respondent A28).

However, after the treatment study the same student said that he was more confident. As he subsequently explained:

Writing in a small group helped me how to start and gather ideas, how to connect ideas, and how to use examples and how to finish my writing. It helped me how to choose a suitable word. My experience is now better in writing, and my confidence is better and I think no need for fear (Respondent A28).

The students in the interview also revealed something similar about CW and confidence. For example, one student from the experimental group stated:

Group work improve grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, gives you more confidence gives you more vocabulary [sic] (Interviewee A31).

The student agreed that CW supported him to be more confident in his ability to interact with his peers.

4.3.6: CW: Discussion and Sharing Ideas

After the course study, the majority of the students in the experimental group agreed that peer feedback (sharing ideas) was useful to improve writing and the level of agreement increased significantly from 30% to 70% (Figure 4.12).

It is interesting to find the students enthusiastic about discussing issues in writing with peers and that was noted through their responses in the questionnaire qualitative data. For example, at the beginning of the study, one student stated:
I think that learning and practicing writing with groups will help me improve my skill in writing. It will help me to write better. **First, when I work in groups, I will share ideas with my classmates. Sharing ideas will not be there if I work individually** (Respondent A12).

As noted, this student before the treatment study said that CW would be a good chance for him to share ideas with his colleagues and that he would be better at writing. That activity would not be available if he wrote individually as he realized. Significantly, the same student agreed that he noted improvement in his writing and he attributed that to sharing the role of gathering, linking and organizing ideas together.

*We enjoyed working together. They helped me how to gather and link the ideas and organize ideas, how to find the correct word* (Respondent A12).

Another student agreed:

*I think that working in a small group will help me a lot. It will help me to solve many problems in writing. Working with groups will help me improve all parts of writing. For example, when we work in a group, we will help each other through a discussion to solve mistakes, to organize the ideas, to connect the ideas, to organize the introduction, the body and the conclusion of the essay* (Respondent A24).

The student claimed that discussion with his peers could help him develop writing in certain areas. Significantly, the same student agreed after the treatment study. He then noted improvement in writing and he attributed that to the active discussion with his colleagues. This suggests that sharing ideas and discussion played a useful role in improving students’ writing.

*I feel that I improved myself in writing. It was very interesting. The idea of group work was a very excellent opportunity to practice writing with my colleagues. I am satisfied about my progress in writing. Talking together about different ideas and discussing the ideas were very useful for me and very interesting* (Respondent A24).

The students in the interview also revealed similar positive impressions about discussion and sharing ideas. Three students made the following comments about the process:

**Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups** (Interviewee A16).

*I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic]* (Interviewee A21).

*I have when I write in groups, different ideas, help me to write better [sic] (Interviewee A28).*
All the above participants (Interviewees A16, A21, and A28) agreed that sharing ideas was useful for them to improve writing. It is particularly interesting also to note such interactions and sharing ideas during the task of CW in Think Aloud Protocols Analysis. For example, in a certain situation, it was fascinating to observe how active the students were when participating in a discussion and offering solutions or alternative ideas during the task of writing. Moreover, the students laughed in certain situations and that added more enthusiasm to work actively. Here are relevant examples from the students:

Speaker 2: I wrote in my essay, dictionaries are always useful...

Speaker 3: You agree with him?

Speaker 4: I don’t know.

Speaker 3: I don’t agree with him. Let's change the subject.

Speaker 4: It's not wrong but there is better one [sic].

Speaker 3: Yes there is a better one.

Speaker 4: What is it?

Speaker 3: [Laughing]

4.3.7: CW: Improvement

1. Overall Writing

As noted in the analysis of the quantitative questionnaire data (Students’ Perceptions about Improving Writing, section 4.2.4), the level of agreement in the experimental group rose from 60% to 80% with the proposition that CW writing helped learners improve their overall writing (Figure 4.11).

To reinforce this perception, according to the analysis of the qualitative questionnaire data, the majority of the students felt that they had made progress in their overall writing. For example, at the beginning of the study, one of the students (Respondent 28) said:

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard, and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, avoiding redundancy, tenses, the topic sentence, generating ideas, and many other parts in essay writing.

Significantly, after the treatment study, the same student confirmed:
In sum, writing in a small group helped me in all parts of essay writing.

In the interview data, the students also revealed positive perceptions that they had improved their skills in essay writing. For example, one of the students (IntervieweeA21) remarked:

Yeah, I feel like I improved a lot.

The student agreed that he noted much improvement when he said, “a lot” which implies that the student improved himself in overall writing (Appendix 16). According to the error and writing tests presented in sections 4.4 and 4.5, this student did improve himself in writing (see Tables 4.3 and 4.9).

The students’ collaborative writing in small groups resulted in improvement in overall writing. For example, when the students were doing the think aloud protocol on a specific topic, it was found that they were happy about their improvement although the question was asked early during weeks 7 and 8 (Appendix 12), before the end of the study. The teacher asked the students after they finished writing the essay about their improvement from the beginning of the study:

The Teacher: And all of you now, you’re four students, do you think that the competence with your skills as a writer is improving because of working together?

Multi Speakers: Of course

The Teacher: You think so?

Multi Speakers: Yes

The students agreed that they noted improvement in their writing, and claimed it was due to CW. In addition, the students claimed that their writing improved through the time they spent while writing collaboratively. Two students stated the following:

Speaker 5: It improved ...

Speaker 4: Yeah, of course improved...

An issue worth mentioning here is that while carrying out this research, the researcher was keenly focused on two effects that are largely considered in qualitative research while undertaking a general research. These effects comprise the Hawthorne effect and yea-saying
(see section 3.4.5). The Hawthorne effect allows those students taking part in a study to change some of their behaviour patterns whilst they are being observed. In addition it allows them to gain benefits just by taking part in the study.

On the other hand, yea-saying is a response bias that allows the participants to agree with the teacher even when in doubt. While conducting the study, the researcher mainly focused on establishing the students’ feelings with reference to collaborative writing. From the researcher’s observations, the Hawthorne effect was the most prevalent qualitative research effect in this study. This is attributable to the fact that the majority of the students agreed that collaborative writing was useful to them and they were very happy to have a chance to cooperate with each other and improve writing which was confirmed according the writing test results (section 4.5). However, the researcher was also keen to note that a small percentage of the participants fell back on yea-saying. Such participants were largely poor performers and individuals who did not work well with other individuals. Putting these both effects into consideration, enabled the researcher to have a better understanding of the study and come up with reliable results that make the study viable.

2. Organization

Organization of writing was one of the criteria the researcher focused on in the current study, and it was important to see how well the students improved themselves in this area. According to the analysis of the quantitative data from the questionnaire, the amount of agreement that peer feedback helps learners improve the organization of writing increased from 50% before the treatment study to 80% after the treatment study (Figure 4.12). Similar findings come from the qualitative data results of the questionnaire (Appendix 15). The majority of the students who were writing collaboratively during the treatment study agreed that they noted improvement in organizing their writing. One of the students observed:

*We*...will help each other through a discussion to solve mistakes, to organize the ideas, to connect the ideas, to organize the introduction, the body and the conclusion of the essay. After the treatment study, he said, I found myself improved in many sections or parts in essay writing. For example, in vocabulary, in using the dictionary, grammar, ideas organization, etc.

*(Respondent A24)*
This suggests that CW helped the students improve themselves in organizing writing as noted.

3. Development

According to the analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaire, the majority of the students felt that they had made progress in how to develop writing. At the beginning of the study, for example, one of the students (Respondent A31) expected improvement in developing writing. He said:

_When the classmates work together, they will know how to start and organize the whole essay. We will help each other to support ideas and develop writing._

Significantly, the same student agreed that he noted improvement on how to develop writing, “I found that I have improved in grammar, spelling, punctuation, rich vocabulary, organizing, and developing the essay”. Another student (Respondent A12) agreed that he also noted improvement in this area:

_I know how to generate ideas and how to support using examples._

Similarly, the majority of the students in the interview agreed that they noted improvement in how to develop writing. One of the interviewees (Interviewee A18), for instance, assured the researcher that he knew how to generate ideas in writing:

_Actually, feel good for writing skills, generating ideas...._

More support comes from Think Aloud Protocols (TAPs) data analysis (Appendix 17). During the task of collaborative writing, the students actively participated, as noted in different situations. The following is an example drawn from the students while they were writing collaboratively when the students intended to provide supporting sentences and ideas, guide and help each other:

_Speaker 3: OK, for the first ah, what do you suggest for the thesis statement?_

_Speaker 2: Now, the supporting text for each idea, the introduction_

_Speaker 3: A lot of people doing mistakes_
Speaker 2: We are talking about asking experienced people.

Speaker 4: Yeah, you’re sure?

The students did the same activity in another situation:

Speaker 3: You want the supporting sentence for that?

Speaker 5: Yeah, we want a topic sentence.

Speaker 3: OK, asking an experienced person.

As noted, the students were active from the beginning of the writing task. Initially, they discussed and shared ideas on how to start with a thesis statement of the essay. That kind of activity highly suggests that CW helped improve the development of sentences and ideas.

4. Cohesion and Coherence

According to the analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaire (Appendix 15), the majority of the students agreed that they noted improvement on how to connect sentences and link ideas for smooth and flow of ideas in writing. One of the students (Respondent A12), for instance, expected that he would improve on how to connect sentences with paragraphs and that was at the beginning of the study:

We will discuss how to expand the ideas in the thesis statement and how to connect the paragraphs.

Interestingly, the same student, after the treatment study, noted improvement in cohesion and coherence:

They helped me how to gather and link the ideas.

A further student (Respondent A28) had a similar perception:

It helped me a lot how to connect the ideas and reduce writing errors....
Corroborating the perceptions expressed in the questionnaire that the students found improvement in cohesion and coherence is what happened during the task of collaborative writing in the ‘Think Aloud Protocols’:

Speaker 5: We have another idea.
Speaker 4: Reading
Speaker 2: Academic essay
Speaker 5: Ok
Speaker 2: Essays
Speaker 4: How can I start the idea?
Speaker 3: We used also right?
Multi Speakers: Haa!
Speaker 3: We used
Speaker 2: And used different words
Speaker 3: Another cohesion

It was fascinating to observe how active the students were when writing collaboratively and offering solutions or alternative ideas. In addition, helping each other on how to connect sentences and ideas always took place among the students. For example, the students suggested different ideas such as “reading” and “academic essay” in the quotes above when speaker 5 said, “We have another idea.” and speaker 3 asked, “How can I start the idea?” Speaker 3 was seeking help on how to connect the idea when he suggested the word ‘also’. Then he said that they needed to think of how to achieve cohesion. Remarkably, it was observed that during the task of collaborative writing, the students managed to reach an agreement when debating about a certain word to a new idea.

5. Grammar
The majority of the practitioners who participated in this study supported CW over individual writing with regard to improving grammar (51.43% strongly agreed; 25.71% agreed). The level of agreement was thus 77.14% (Figure 4.3). Grammar was one of the interesting elements the students enjoyed and improved during the treatment study when writing collaboratively. The students helped each other through providing feedback. In fact, the level of agreement that peer
feedback helps students improve the grammar structure of their writing rose sharply from 50% to 70% (Figure 4.12).

This is confirmed in the qualitative student data. At the beginning of the study, one of the students (Respondent A18) said:

I do not think that writing in a small group will help me to improve my writing.

However, following the treatment study, the student revealed a positive impression when he noted improvement in grammar as he admitted:

I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends in the class such as sharing opinions and ideas. I found improvement in grammar like tenses.

Another student (Respondent A28) claimed:

It helped me reduce writing errors such as correct prepositions, spelling, grammar, tenses....

The student interviews following the study revealed positive views about improving grammar in writing:

It helped me to write better. Better structure on essay writing (Interviewee A28).

I found it feel... actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes... (Interviewee A18).

This was illustrated during the task of CW in the Think Aloud Protocols where the students demonstrated good interaction in helping each other in grammar and correcting errors:

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people
Speaker 3: Will help gain experience
Speaker 2: Will or Would?
Speaker 5: Would help you?
Speaker 2: Will
The example shows quotes that illustrate how the students tried to help each other by asking whether to use will or would. The students shared the task of correcting each other. In the next example, the students tried to guide each other regarding the tense they should use, be it “simple past” or “present perfect”. They tried to explain why it should be in the simple past. The students were active and happy to correct each other in grammar.

Speaker 2: Last semester I’ve asked my English teacher [sic].
Speaker 3: I have asked my teacher to edit my essay.
Speaker 2: I’ve asked….
Speaker 5: I asked, because you mention last semester [sic].
Speaker 3: Ok, I asked.

It was clear that the students in the “Think Aloud Protocols” analysis, showed a positive impression about grammar when they interacted and helped each other in correcting grammatical errors. See Appendix 13 for the full TAPs transcript and Appendix 17 for the thematic analysis.

6. Vocabulary
The majority of the practitioners supported CW over individual writing with regard to the improvement of vocabulary in writing (62.86% strongly agreed; 20% agreed). The level of agreement was 82.86% (Figure 4.3). The majority of the students agreed that they found improvement in vocabulary in their writing after engaging in CW. For example, the amount of agreement that peer feedback helps students improve the word choice in their writing increased from 70% to 80% (Figure 4.12).

The qualitative questionnaire/interview data corroborated this as the majority of students noted improvements in vocabulary which they claimed were due to collaborative writing. At the outset of the study, one student (Respondent A16) thought that CW would help him improve writing in certain areas:

...for example, in the introduction and the conclusion, for the ideas and supporting the ideas, for grammar and organization and for the choice of suitable words.
Perhaps more interestingly, following the treatment study, the same student agreed that CW writing helped him with improving vocabulary. He said:

> We shared correcting errors and providing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes, such as grammar, tenses, **vocabulary**, spelling and punctuation marks and how to choose **correct** prepositions and **words**.

The students in the interview also agreed that they noted improvement in their vocabulary after the treatment study. They had the chance to share different words. For example, two students made the following statements:

> [It]... give me a lot of **vocabulary** bank to write in better words [sic]  
> (Interviewee A28).

> Group work improve grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, gives you more confidence  
> gives you more **vocabulary** [sic]  
> (Interviewee A31).

The TAPs also demonstrated that the students were also active in helping each other find suitable or proper words in writing. That was a useful chance for them to improve vocabulary. This transcript demonstrates this sort of collaborative vocabulary-building:

**Speaker 3**: Ok, I asked

**Speaker 5**: My teacher

**Multi Speakers**: To look at my essay

**Speaker 3**: To edit to look at

**Speaker 2**: To look at my essay and therefore he discovered a lot of errors or whatever. And?

**Speaker 4**: And therefore, he discovered a lot of errors

**Speaker 3**: He detected

**Speaker 4**: Therefore

**Speaker 2**: He found

This exchange demonstrates how the students tried to choose by offering two words (look at, edit) and three words (discover, detect, find). Then, they attempted to decide which words were the most suitable ones to use. Such an opportunity was very useful for the students to improve their vocabulary and practise their vocabulary-building skills.
7. **Mechanics of Writing**

The majority of the practitioners supported CW over individual writing with regard to the improvement of Mechanics of Writing (spelling and punctuation marks, 54.29% strongly agreed; 28.57% agreed). The level of agreement was 82.86 (Figure 4.3). Moreover, the positive responses of the teachers correspond to what the students revealed in their questionnaire responses. For example, the students’ agreement with the statement ‘Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation in my writing’ rose from 50% to 70% (Figure 4.12).

Students in the experimental group mentioned improvement in spelling and punctuation marks. At the beginning of the study, one of the students (Respondent A28) was enthusiastic to write collaboratively as he expected that CW would help him improve many areas in writing like spelling and punctuation marks. He said:

> Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks....

Significantly, the same student agreed that he noted improvement in spelling:

> It helped me a lot how to connect the ideas and reduce writing errors such as correcting prepositions, spelling....

Another student (Respondent A31) said:

> I found that I have improved in grammar, spelling, punctuation....

See Appendix 15 for full qualitative questionnaire data.

The interview data also revealed that CW helped spelling and punctuation. The majority of the students were happy about their improvement. Two quote examples chosen from Appendix 16 by two students stated the following:

> I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic] (Interviewee A21).

> Group work improves grammatical mistakes spelling mistakes... [sic] (Interviewee A31).
In the “Think Aloud Protocols” the students demonstrated good interaction in helping each other in some areas in mechanics of writing. The following are examples selected from the students’ activity where one of the students asked about using “punctuation marks”:

Speaker 3: Will help you expand your vocabulary and enhance your spelling

Speaker 2: No punctuation?

Speaker 3: Yes, we have punctuation.

This sort of mutual assistance in other certain areas in the mechanics of writing opens useful room to improve such a criterion as noted in the questionnaires and interview’s findings. The following example shows how the students helped each other with spelling.

Speaker 3: I will check up the misspelling

Speaker 2: MI or ME?

Speaker 5: Misunderstanding

Speaker 4: M-I-S-S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G

4.4: Common Errors Test Analysis

It was insightful to have an impression about the practitioners’ views about the most common errors the students make and to see how well the participants would reduce them in the experimental and control groups. It is also interesting to compare the progress of the two groups before and after the treatment study. Common errors tests in this section were included and meant to answer the second research question (“Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?”).

4.4.1: Equivalence of the Experimental and Control Groups before Receiving Treatment

It was essential to demonstrate that both the experimental and control groups were equivalent prior to any treatments. This made it possible to make comparisons between both groups and helped the researcher to judge the results for the two groups after the treatment study. The students were split into the two groups and spent 12 weeks as one group (control) working individually in writing while the other group (experimental) worked collaboratively. Table 4.3 presents the marks the students got before and after the treatment study.
As mentioned in Chapter Three, the comparison of the pre- and post- common errors scores reported in this part is based on these 10 students in the experimental CL group and 10 in the control TL group. At the beginning of the study, the students were given a short piece of writing (325 words) and were asked to identify and correct errors in writing. At the end of the study, the students were given another piece of writing (393 words) to identify and correct specific errors in writing (Appendix 2). The purpose of the test was to measure the improvement of students regarding identification and correction of errors, following their engagement in CW (section 3.4.5.4).

All 20 students across the experimental and control groups were tested at the beginning of the study (Appendix 2), and it is important to note that, according to the scores (Table 4.3) and data analysis results mentioned in Table 2 below, both groups were equivalent in their proficiency.

**Table 4.2: Pre-Test Control and Experimental Groups (Common Errors)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for equality of means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Test of Normality</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the SPSS results shown in Table 4.2, the difference in the average between the marks of the students in the control group is -3.1 with a p-value 0.325, which is larger than 0.05. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected, which means that there is not a significant difference between the results before the treatment study and that the students in the control and experimental groups are equal.
Table 4.3: Scores of the Error Test of the Two Groups Before and After the Treatment Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants of Control Group</th>
<th>Pre-test control group marks</th>
<th>Participants of Experimental Group</th>
<th>Pre-test experimental group marks</th>
<th>Participants of Control Group</th>
<th>Post-test control group marks</th>
<th>Participants of Experimental Group</th>
<th>Post-test experimental group marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (B1)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 (A9)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 (B1)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1 (A9)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (B8)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2 (A27)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 (B8)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 (A27)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (B17)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3 (A29)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3 (B17)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 (A29)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (B2)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 (A24)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4 (B2)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 (A24)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (B9)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5 (A16)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5 (B9)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5 (A16)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (B3)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6 (A18)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6 (B3)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6 (A18)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (B13)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7 (A12)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7 (B13)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7 (A12)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (B12)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8 (A31)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8 (B12)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8 (A31)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 (B11)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9 (A28)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9 (B11)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9 (A28)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (B24)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10 (A21)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10 (B24)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10 (A21)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2: Results of Control Group before and after Treatment Study

Table 4.4: Results of Common Errors (Control Group before and after the Treatment Study)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>Control Group Mean</th>
<th>Pre-test Mean</th>
<th>Post-test Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test of Normality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the SPSS results shown in Table 4.4, the difference in the average between the marks of the students in the control group before versus after the study is 0.40 with a p-value 0.867, which is larger than 0.05. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected, which means that there is not a significant difference between the results before and after the treatment study and that the students in the control group did not show good improvement.

However, the importance of individual writing should not be disregarded as students can still improve their skills in writing during the 2015 academic year 2015 (Appendix 12). During the semester, the students were very busy taking different courses and busy with different tasks besides being volunteers in the empirical study. The predominant purpose of this study was to
ascertain whether the students in the experimental group did well before and after the treatment study, as compared to individual writing, but without ignoring the advantages of individual writing. This will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

4.4.3: Results of Experimental Group before and after Treatment Study

As shown in analysis results depicted in Table 4.3, the students in the control group did not improve themselves significantly except for three students who showed slight progress. On the other hand, according to the analysis of the results, the students in the experimental group achieved good work. Five of the participants in the experimental group showed a good effort at improving, and three showed slight progress. According to the SPSS results, as shown in Table 4.5, the difference in the average between the marks of the students in the experimental group is −5.8 with a p-value 0.030, which is smaller than 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected, which means that in the experimental group, there is a significant difference between the results before and after the treatment study.

Table 4.5: Results of Common Errors (Experimental Group before and after the Treatment Study)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td></td>
<td>−5.8</td>
<td>8.423</td>
<td>-2.572</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>24.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.654</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.4: Results of the Control and Experimental Groups after the Treatment Study

According to the SPSS results shown in Table 4.6, the difference in the average between the marks of the students in the control and experimental groups is 8.50 with a p-value 0.025, which is smaller than 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is a significant difference between the results of the two groups after the treatment study and that the students in the experimental group show significant progress and did better than the students in the control group.
Table 4.6: Results of the Control and Experimental Groups after the Treatment Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.542</td>
<td>0.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t-test for equality of means</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Test of Normality</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.672</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results of the analysis, we can summarize that the students in the experimental group did a good job and proved to be better than the students in the control group in the common errors tests. Moreover, as discussed previously, the students who engaged in collaborative writing attained better scores in the post-test. These findings afford an interesting opportunity to be synthesized later in this chapter and in Chapter Five with the perceptions of the students in the interview and their responses in the questionnaire, especially those who wrote collaboratively during the treatment study. The next section will discuss the analysis of the writing tests.

4.5: Writing Test Analysis

The purpose of this aspect of the research was to find out whether applying a collaborative writing strategy in a particular classroom could develop and improve the students’ skills in writing. A writing test was conducted before and after the treatment study, and the difference between the experimental and control groups’ scores on both tests was measured. The difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of improvement after the training study was also measured. A short essay writing test was another type of tests, and this was meant to contribute to answering the main research question in the study (In improving essay writing in class, to what extent does collaborative writing have a significant effect on individual work?). Therefore, it was useful to measure improvements in writing via ten suggested writing criteria (Table 4.7). The grading of the test was based on those criteria.
The data in this section is derived from the following: pre- and post- tests (Appendix 1) given to the participants in both the control and experimental groups (Table 4.8 for more details). The scores from both the tests in the control TL and experimental CL groups were used to identify any progress in each group after the treatment study. For more details, see section 3.4.5.5.
Assessment

The short essays of the participants from the experimental and control groups that were written before and after twelve weeks’ involvement (Appendix 12) in the writing class were marked by two expert teachers\(^4\). The raters were provided with a copy of Paulus’s (1999) rubric to apply (Appendix 10). For more details about the marking procedure adopted for the essays, see section 3.4.5.5. The rating of the tests was based on ten writing criteria (Table 4.7), as mentioned previously, and participant writing was marked out of 100. After marking the students’ essays, a coefficient was reported for the scores. The researcher calculated a mean score for each participant in each criterion derived from the ratings of the two volunteers (raters).

Inter-rater Reliability

As explained in Chapter Three, in order to ensure reliability, the majority of the ratings should vary proportionately and according to the students the markers are judging. For example, Rater A may give student 1 a high score and student 2 a low score. For reliability, Rater B should treat students 1 and 2 in the same way (Larson-Hall, 2015). Cronbach’s alpha was used to measure the inter-rater reliability of the raters. Thus, the intra-class correlation as an indicator of consistency between the two judges could be calculated (Howell, 2012; Cortina, 1993). The students’ essays were marked and graded by two expert teachers as noted above. Table 4.9 below shows the students’ marks for their overall writing before and after the treatment study.

In this section, after analyzing the scores, the results indicated which group’s writing was most improved after the treatment study.

\(^{4}\) Terms in this section – expert teachers, raters and volunteers were used interchangeably.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Control group participants} & \textbf{Before treatment study} & \textbf{After treatment study} & \textbf{Experimental group participants} & \textbf{Before treatment study} & \textbf{After treatment study} \\
\hline
1 (B1) & 60.65 & 60.6 & 1 (A9) & 65.25 & 64.75 \\
2 (B8) & 63.6 & 61.1 & 2 (A27) & 64.85 & 75 \\
3 (B17) & 65.85 & 61.75 & 3 (A29) & 73.65 & 80.5 \\
4 (B2) & 68.7 & 66.25 & 4 (A24) & 76.5 & 78.8 \\
5 (B9) & 70.5 & 66.6 & 5 (A16) & 70.2 & 73.5 \\
6 (B3) & 70.75 & 69 & 6 (A18) & 71.1 & 78.2 \\
7 (B13) & 71.25 & 71.25 & 7 (A12) & 68 & 70.6 \\
8 (B12) & 76.5 & 74.25 & 8 (A31) & 76.5 & 84.25 \\
9 (B11) & 80.75 & 83 & 9 (A28) & 81.5 & 85.25 \\
10 (B24) & 82 & 87 & 10 (A21) & 80.5 & 86.65 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Final scores of the pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups}
\end{table}
4.5.1: Equivalence of the Experimental CL and Control TL Groups before Receiving Treatment

As noted at the start of the chapter, the students participating in the empirical study were all intermediate, at level 3 and majoring in English Language. It was still necessary, however, to make sure that the experimental and control groups were comparable in terms of the students’ proficiency and achievement in the pre-test (Appendix 1) prior to conducting the treatment study as establishing this would help the researcher to understand the differences between the findings of the two groups. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the comparison of the pre-test writing scores shown in this section is based on 10 students in the experimental CL group and 10 in the control TL group (section 3.4.5.5).

Table 4.10 below presents the results of the writing test analysis of the control and experimental groups before the treatment study. These reveal the mean of the scores obtained by each participant in the experimental CL and control TL groups in the pre-test. The mean was 72.80 for the experimental group, while the corresponding mean for each participant in the control TL group was 71.05. The mean difference of 1.75 was not significant (Independent t-test: $t = -0.604$ and the P-value = 0.554, which is bigger than 0.05). This means that the null hypotheses cannot be rejected. Therefore, the findings shown in the table below reveal that there was no significant difference between the two groups before the treatment study in terms of writing proficiency. The analysis results provide a useful base for comparing the two groups with regard to improving writing skills during the treatment study.
Table 4.10: The T Test between the Control and Experimental Groups before the Treatment Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test Control group</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>71.05</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>6.995</td>
<td>-0.604</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test Experimental group</td>
<td>0.593</td>
<td>72.80</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.2: Analysing the Writing Scores of the Control Group before and after the Treatment Study

The null hypothesis assumes that there is no significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of the control group (participants taught through individual writing). However, the alternative hypothesis assumes the opposite; that is, there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests of the control group (participants taught through individual writing) (section 3.4.5.5, Research Hypothesis).

As noted, the students in the control group were also given a writing test (Appendix 1). They were asked to write a short essay. The students were expected to realize some improvement in their writing, but because they were very busy during the empirical study, as they had many subjects to study during the semester and exams at the end, they did not make the expected effort according to the analysis results. As illustrated in Table 4.9, the marks the control group students got on the two writing tests did not show they had made any progress. According to the results shown in Table 4.11, no significant difference was found between the pre- and post-short essay writing test scores of the control group (t = 1.083 and the P Value = 0.307, which is bigger than 0.05), reassuring us that we cannot reject the null hypothesis.
Table 4.11 Comparing the overall pre- and post-test scores of students in the control TL group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Control Group Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>71.05</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>6.995</td>
<td>1.083</td>
<td>0.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.209</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>70.08</td>
<td>9.067</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Figure 4.18 below, it can be seen that the writing skills of the majority of the control group students did not improve after the treatment study, except for two students who made slight progress. The failure of the majority to improve could be attributed to the reasons mentioned above during the empirical study. The researcher will explore this issue further in Chapters Five and Six.

Figure 4.18: Comparing the overall pre- and post-tests of the control group
4.5.3: Analysing the Writing Scores of the Experimental Group before and after the Treatment Study

It is of great importance in the current study to ascertain whether the students who were writing collaboratively achieved any degree of improvement in terms of essay writing through measuring and analyzing the results of the pre and post-tests in the short essay writing. The null hypothesis assumes that there is no significant difference between the pre- and post-tests in short essay writing of the experimental group (participants taught through collaborative writing). However, the alternative hypothesis assumes the opposite; that is, that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests in short essay writing of the experimental group (participants taught through collaborative writing). The researcher calculated the results following the same procedure as mentioned previously regarding the control group using the SPSS Program.

The results of the study tests on the experimental group revealed positive findings. Table 4.12 below shows the students’ performances in the tests before and after the treatment study. The analysis results show that the mean was 72.8 before the treatment study, while the corresponding mean for each participant in the post-test was 77.75. The mean difference of 4.919 was significant (Paired t-test: t = -4.919 and the P-value = 0.001, which is smaller than 0.05). This means that we can reject the null hypothesis and that the experimental group students made an improvement. There is a significant difference between the results of their tests before and after the training study.

The findings of the experimental group before and after the treatment study, as provided in Figure 4.19, show that the majority of the students did well in the writing test after the treatment study. This, of course, leaves room to triangulate the results with the responses of the students in the post-test questionnaire and the opinions of the interviewees about CW, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.
Table 4.12: Comparing the Overall pre- and post- Test scores of Students in the Experimental CL Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>4.919</td>
<td>9.925</td>
<td>-4.919</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>77.75</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.19: Comparing the Overall pre- and post- Tests of the Experimental Group

4.5.4: Analysing the Writing Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups after the Treatment Study

In this section, the differences between the control and experimental groups in test achievement are measured. To analyze the results, the researcher carried out the same procedure as in the previous sections using the SPSS program. After calculating the students’ scores from the two groups in the program to analyze them, significantly the results for the experimental group were positive. The analysis of the post-test of the two groups revealed, as indicated in Table 4.13, that the mean was 70.08 for the control group participants, while the corresponding mean for each participant in the experimental group was 77.75. The mean difference between the two groups was 7.670 (Independent t-test: t = -2.125 and the P-value = 0.048, which is smaller than
The findings from the experimental group were positive. Therefore it did better than the control group in the writing test after the training study. These results clearly added more evidence and supporting results, which will be triangulated with the findings of the other data instruments in Chapter Five.

Table 4.13: The Experimental and Control Groups after the Treatment Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Test of Normality</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>70.08</td>
<td>7.670</td>
<td>9.067</td>
<td>-2.125</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td>77.75</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.5: Analysing the Writing Scores of each Category in both Groups before and after the Treatment Study

In this section, the researcher presents the results of the analysis of each category in the essay writing. The analysis provides the results of the experimental and control groups before and after the treatment study. The purpose is to ascertain to what extent the students who were writing collaboratively improved in each criterion. The findings should provide more evidence in order to answer the primary research question in more detail.
It is interesting to identify whether the students who were writing collaboratively in small groups did better than those who were writing individually through the use of the ten criteria (Table 4.7). The researcher entered the marks in the SPSS program, and Table 4.14 above shows the results of the analysis of the scores of the post-test regarding the ten criteria of the two groups after the training study. Details of analysis results and figures showing the findings can be found in Appendix 11.

It is interesting to identify whether the students who were writing collaboratively in small groups did better than those who were writing individually through the use of the ten criteria (see Table 4.7). In contrast to the control group, the students in the experimental group achieved significant progress on the macro level, specifically in the areas of thesis statement, organisation, development, cohesion, and coherence. The majority of the students did well in improving their academic essay writing (see Figures 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, and 4.23).
Figure 4.20: Scores of the pre and post-tests (thesis statement/ the experimental vs control groups)

Figure 4.21: Scores of the pre and post-tests (organisation/ the experimental vs control groups)

Figure 4.22: The experimental vs control groups (development in writing)
The students in the experimental group did well on the micro level as well, specifically in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and the mechanics of writing. The majority of students in the experimental group achieved significant progress as opposed to the control group (more figures illustrating improvement at the micro level can be viewed in Appendix 11).

We note that the majority of the students in the control group did not show appreciable improvement in the criteria shown in Table 4.14. However, we cannot say that the problem was due to using traditional methods (individual writing in class). It may be that the majority of the students were not motivated to improve or perhaps they were very busy with other subjects and exams during the empirical study. On the other hand, although the students in the experimental group were busy studying different subjects and taking exams, they participated in the current study and their progress in those subjects was not negatively affected as in the case of the control group.

The students in the experimental group were enthusiastic about working hard, and the majority liked CW, which resulted in positive findings and notable improvement, as is evident from the results presented in Table 4.14. According to the data analysis findings, the students in the experimental group benefited considerably from collaborative writing and their progress was significant. It is clear that the majority of the students in the experimental group achieved better scores in the post-test than in the pre-test in all criteria in writing. The analysis findings are
very interesting and provide supporting evidence. They can be triangulated with the other data collected and synthesized in order to answer the main research question. Further details of improving the criteria of writing will be further discussed in the next chapter.

There is one issue that needs clarification. During the empirical study, the students from both the experimental and control groups were studying several subjects during a certain semester of the 2015 academic year. Although they expected to have to take different exams from time to time, they agreed to be volunteers in the current study. Therefore, it was not surprising to see the number of the participating students decrease as the study progressed. Moreover, some students from both groups may not have provided as positive results as expected due to the reasons that have been mentioned. As shown in Table 4.14, the students in the control group did not achieve significant progress in the ten criteria. The reason for this could reflect the number of students who withdrew from the study. Excellent students from the control group might have been some of those who left the study, thus negatively affecting the writing test results.

4.6: Chapter Summary

In this chapter, data from all the research instruments (the questionnaires, the interviews, the TAPs, the error and writing tests) were presented, analyzed and triangulated/integrated and the emerging findings discussed. Findings that pointed to the answers to the research questions were noted. In the following chapter, the findings will be critically evaluated with particular reference to previous research delineated in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

5.0: Introduction

In the previous chapter, the data from both the teachers and students’ questionnaires, pre- and post-tests, interviews, and think-aloud protocols were analyzed. In Chapter Three, both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches were addressed through statistical and thematic analysis. In this chapter, these outcomes are combined, and the different theories, approaches, and methods discussed in Chapter Two are linked, in order to fully answer the research questions. The research questions as set out in section 3.3.1 are discussed and explored as follows:

1. Practitioners’ perceptions and attitudes towards advantages of collaborative writing over individual writing
2. Students’ perceptions and attitudes towards advantages of collaborative writing over individual writing
3. Does collaborative writing help learners reduce common errors in writing (In this case study, Undergraduate Saudi Common Errors)?
4. Identifying the extent to which collaborative writing (essay writing) is comparatively significant over individual work

In general, the research findings of the study are in line with those of the majority of similar studies (section 2.9.3.6 and Appendix 18) in almost every issue investigated, but this study extended the focus of its investigation in order to show the role of collaborative writing in improving essay writing. For example, the study applied five data collection instruments as discussed in section 3.4.5. In addition, it investigated ten criteria in writing (Table 4.7). The results of the quantitative and qualitative investigations revealed significant differences between the essay writing performance of the experimental and control groups at the end of the treatment study. This suggests collaborative writing had a beneficial impact in terms of reducing errors and improving writing skills, as will be discussed in detail in this chapter.
5.1: Practitioner Perceptions of Writing Improvement through Collaborative Writing

The practitioners (section 3.4.5.1) participating in this research study, who teach in the same department as the researcher, played an important role in this study, as they provided valuable information about the usefulness of collaborative writing. As discussed in Chapter Four, the practitioners were a resource both in identifying the errors most commonly made by Saudi learners, and also in evaluating the role of CW in helping students reduce such errors compared to individual writing.

5.1.1: Perceptions of the Most Common Errors Saudi Learners usually Make

As mentioned in Chapter Two, research indicates that learners make different types of errors according to their level of development or language proficiency (such as Grami, 2005; Khan, 2011b; Nayef & Hajjaj, 1997; Tahaineh, 2010). One of the research questions was, “Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing?” Therefore, in this study it was an essential starting point really to the researcher to identify the most common errors made by undergraduate Saudi learners. One of the instruments used to do so was the practitioners’ survey. For example, the practitioners’ perceptions about the common errors made by students could help in determining the weak areas in students’ writing. Hence, it was possible to determine if the students improved their writing by using a pre- and post-test to see if the frequency of errors was reduced (section 5.3). As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the practitioners agreed on the following ranking of the most common errors:

- Punctuation (omission/misuse of comma and the other punctuation marks)
- Spelling
- Verb tense
- Articles addition/omission of articles
- Prepositions/wrong choice of preposition (omission/addition/substitution)
- Redundancy (repetition, inclusion of unnecessary information)
- Semantics, direct translation from Arabic
- Subject-verb agreement
- Syntax sentence structure
- Verb auxiliary error
5.1.2: Perceptions of Collaborative versus Individual Writing

Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, and Editing

As presented in sections 4.2.4 and 4.5, it was interesting to note that the majority of the students in the experimental group improved in a variety of areas of essay writing compared to those doing individual writing. Teachers contributed their perceptions about collaborative writing and its role in improving the quality of students’ writing. The teachers’ perceptions tallied with the experimental group student achievements in the terms of improved writing. For example, in the stage of “Planning before writing”, around 86% of the teachers agreed that collaborative writing was more effective than individual writing (Figure 4.3). These positive responses from the teachers coincide with the observations noted in the “Think Aloud Protocols analysis” presented in section 4.3, which discussed the enthusiastic student responses to planning how to start, and gather and discuss ideas as illustrated below:

Speaker 3: The title says, how can I correct errors?
Speaker 2: Yeah, so I don't know, it's not relevant?
Speaker 4: No, it's very relevant. You are writing about ...
Speaker 5: Isn't it the same or similar to the idea of asking experienced people?
Multiple speakers: Yes, it might be the same thing.

As seen in the above collaborative writing task, four students started to actively write together about a specific subject. Speaker 3 reminded his peers about the title while Speaker 2 replied “asking experienced people” was not relevant. However, Speaker 4 disagreed, insisting that it was very relevant. Speaker 5 then interposed his support for that idea. Finally, the majority agreed on the suggested idea. That kind of debate took place many times, creating opportunities which encouraged the students to interact and collaborate together until they arrived at a suitable idea. This type of activity is direct evidence that the students writing collaboratively faced some difficulty in producing a piece of writing (section 4.3.1). For example, in the planning stage it was difficult to gather and organize ideas while at the same time ensuring error-free sentences. However, because the students were writing collaboratively, that difficulty was reduced as they were supported and helped when they took advantage of peer feedback. The teachers’ responses support this conclusion (that writing collaboratively reduces the difficulty), as mentioned above.
The vast majority of the practitioners agreed that collaborative writing was more effective than individual writing in terms of “using strategies, such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing to write a complete piece of writing” (section 4.1.3). The high percentage of teacher agreement is reflected in student responses to having the opportunity to write collaboratively:

**Speaker 3:** Yeah. A lot of people make mistakes so there are many ways to find; many methods to find errors. Here are some examples, and just suggest these three things

**Speaker 2:** I don't think that starting your essay by “a lot” is a good way

**Speaker 4:** We can change. What do you suggest?

**Speaker 2:** I suggest...

**Speaker 5:** What did you write?

During collaborative writing, it was noted that the task of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing took place enthusiastically between the students. For example, Speaker 3 suggested using the phrase “a lot” at the beginning of writing, while Speaker 2 disagreed and encouraged Speaker 4 to suggest an alternative. Learners can look at a writing activity as a recursive (Figure 2.1) instead of a linear process (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). This perspective in discussion and direction generated a very productive environment for each student to apply his experience of the stages of writing, which was facilitated and encouraged by the practitioners. As discussed in Chapter Two, learners need frequent stages, and they can use such activities as many times as required in order to complete their writing task (Tribble, 1996). When learners work in small groups to complete a particular writing task using the process approach, they collaborate actively, sharing ideas to discover solutions and create knowledge (Damon, 1984; Graham et al., 2005).

### 5.1.3: Perceptions about Coming up with Ideas

Arab learners struggle with surface-level errors rather than ideas (macro-level) (Grami, 2005). As regards macro-level elements such as content and organization, learners are thought to be more adept in a hierarchy of using ideas (Grami, 2005; Zahid, 2006; Mourtaga, 2004). Since the current study focused on both micro and macro levels of writing, it was interesting to ask the views of the teachers on how applying collaborative writing improves the macro levels. The purpose of doing that was to answer the research question “What are the practitioners’ perceptions about collaborative writing?” (section 3.3.1).
An emphatic majority of practitioners agreed that collaborative writing is better than individual writing at the initial stage of coming up with ideas (Figure 4.3). The level of agreement underlined the role played by collaborative writing in enabling students to pool their different suggestions and ideas to formulate the best choice of ideas. The data collected in the study through instruments such as think-aloud protocols, is in line with the practitioners’ opinions about generating ideas during the prewriting stage of collaborative writing (see section 4.3.6).

The type of discussion encouraged the students to work hard and develop more experience in formulating new writing ideas. Most interesting were the different tasks of sharing ideas for just a few minutes which took place between the students in certain points, but from which they gathered a great deal of useful information. Once again, this attests to the efficacy of collaborative writing as a method to improve ideas in writing. By engaging in sharing discussions about different ideas and taking responsibility for learning, the students are encouraged to become critical writers and thinkers (Golub, 1988; Noël & Robert, 2004).

5.1.4: Perceptions about Improving Grammar in Writing

According to Williams (2003), small groups are beneficial in most learning activities. Ashman and Gillis (2003) state that compared to some traditional approaches, the collaborative learning approach has positive effects on a considerable number of dependent variables, such as productivity and achievement. Grammar is one of the areas where students face difficulty and make errors, especially in Saudi Arabian students learning English. As discussed in Chapter Two, a study conducted by Alamin and Ahmed (2012) supports this view, showing that learners’ basic English grammar errors are due to intralingual interference. The researcher therefore gave special attention to how students improved their command of English grammar when involved in collaborative writing. As noted in Chapter Four, the practitioners’ responses on “collaborative writing could help students improve grammar” added more support in the role of CW.

In terms of improving grammar and correcting errors 77.15% of the teachers respectively agreed that students involved in collaborative writing performed better than those writing individually.
An interesting example in correcting errors was in terms of “verb tenses”. The students corrected each other’s errors in an acceptable and interesting manner, which ensured that individual members were not offended or embarrassed at their error. On the contrary, the practice of correcting errors engendered a very friendly and supportive atmosphere to help the students improve grammar in writing.

*Speaker 2*: Last semester I’ve asked my English teacher [sic].

*Speaker 3*: I have asked my teacher to edit my essay.

*Speaker 2*: I’ve asked....

*Speaker 5*: I asked, because you mention last semester [sic].

*Speaker 3*: Ok. I asked.

From the above exchange, it is clear that the students were attentive and willing to correct each other’s grammatical errors without rancour. For example, when Speaker 3 said, “I’ve asked”, Speaker 5 corrected the error in the tense saying I asked’ which he then justified by explaining “because you mention last semester” which Speaker 3 accepted. According to Storch (2005), this type of activity helps students clarify meaning, deliberate over grammatical or lexical choices, discuss structure and make choices to produce the text. This aspect of interactive tasks in writing provided practical opportunities for the students to reduce the occurrence of grammatical errors. Thus the active work between the students agreed with the practitioners’ perceptions of grammatical improvement.

### 5.1.5: Perceptions about Improving Spelling and Punctuation

Writing mechanics are one of the areas in which Arab learners experience problems (Al-Besher, 2012; Al-Nafiseh, 2013; Shehadeh, 2011). As explained in the previous section, the teachers’ responses about collaborative writing and students’ writing quality helped to support answering this study’s research questions. As noted in section 4.3, an 82.86% majority of teachers agreed collaborative writing is better than individual writing in terms of “spelling and punctuation” (Figure 4.3). In fact, writing collaboratively engendered a sort of active cooperation between the students in which they helped each other with spelling and the punctuation (see section 4.3.7, mechanics of writing).
There was a very interesting discussion between the students in which they tried to help each other with punctuation. The students asked for help and one raised the question of whether it was necessary to place a comma in a certain position in a sentence:

Speaker 4: So, you will able to use the correct word... So, you will be able to

Speaker 2: Is there a comma between so and you?

Speaker 3: Not sure.

Speaker 4: So?

Speaker 2: You will be able. Is there a comma between you and so?

Speaker 4: No, I don’t think...

Speaker 5: Is there a comma?

Multiple Speakers: So, you will help.

Speaker 2: There is no comma, right?

Speaker 2 asked whether it was necessary to place a comma between “so” and “you” in a specific sentence and he encouraged his colleague, Speaker 5 also to make sure to place the comma correctly. More interestingly, Speaker 2 insisted on ascertaining the correct answer by repeating the question more than once. This reflects the robust interactions of collaborative writing and the sharing of experiences across the different aspects of essay writing, such as the correct insertion of punctuation marks. Again, the cooperation between the students that resulted in significant findings discussed in section 4.5.5 was in accord with the positive responses from the practitioners in improving mechanics of writing. As mentioned in Chapter Two, research on collaboration in academic writing is necessary since students can come together to facilitate their learning of writing.

By so doing, the students can improve their quality of writing such as the mechanics of writing. This approach has been supported by many researchers. For example, learning and practicing through dialogue with peers assists the learners in achieving a specific activity in a certain manner (Bruffee, 1984; Hirvela, 1999) as noted in the case of “punctuation” in the current study. When the students helped each other in such an area, working in groups was a useful chance for the students to improve punctuation in writing which was supported by Kessler
(1992) who states that in dialogues amongst learners, the collaborative process plays an important role in solving problems effectively.

5.2: Students’ Perceptions and Attitudes towards Collaborative Writing

Collaborative learning is considered one of the most important, commonly used methods of active pedagogy (Tsay & Brady, 2012). It specifically has been a focus of attention in second-language teaching (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Storch, 2005; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Yeh, 2014). This study sought to identify students’ perceptions, both negative and positive, of writing, whether collaboratively and individually, before and after the training study.

Since CW was the main issue in the current study, the researcher wished to further elucidate the positive results of collaborative writing over individual writing. The results of data collection from the questionnaires, interview and in the protocol session will therefore be discussed in detail to explore the positive and negative participant perceptions of CW before and after the treatment study. In the pre- and post-questionnaires (Appendices 3 and 4), the students reported positive changes in respect of a number of writing matters, such as improving writing, being more interested, forming good working relationships with peers, and other associated issues which will be discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1: Perceptions about Improving Writing

Improving Overall Writing

As presented and discussed in sections 4.2.4, and 4.5, the students in the experimental group agreed that CW helped them improve overall writing. When asked if CW helped them improve all areas of writing, agreement increased from 60% to 80% following the training study (Figure 4.10). Additionally, the students were asked when during interview, “What is the effect of group work on essay writing?” the majority of the students confirmed that they noted improvement in writing because of CW (section 4.2.3).

Through the answers of the participants in the questionnaires as presented and discussed in sections 4.2.4 and 4.3.7, it is evident that the students observed improvement in their writing and attributed it to collaborative writing. For example, Respondent A28 remarked, “In sum, writing in a small group helped me in all parts of essay writing”. This reaffirms that the students credited improvement in all areas of writing to writing collaboratively. The results of the
students’ tests, as discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.4, are strong evidence of the students’ improvement in writing.

Such interesting findings are similar to those in the study conducted by Mahmoud (2014) on 20 EFL second-year university students. He used a pre-post writing test and questionnaire. The results obtained revealed that the students showed positive attitudes towards the cooperative learning approach to develop language in general and to develop writing skills in particular. However, what is unique about the present study is that it expands the investigation of collaborative writing by using five instruments (section 3.4.5) to triangulate and confirm any significant findings that could be found in the data collection.

5.2.2: Interest in Collaborative Writing (Affective Impact)

As presented in section 4.2.2, the students who were writing individually did not demonstrate a great deal of interest in writing skills following the treatment study. In fact, the number of students who were interested dropped from 60% to 50% (Figure 4.6). Conversely, the number of students who were writing collaboratively and interested in writing increased from 60% to 80% (section 4.2.2; Figure 4.6). As mentioned in Chapter Two, collaborative writing has been shown to increase learners’ interest in writing (Dale, 1994; Louth et al., 1993) and that was corroborated by the current study (see section 4.3.2). The positive findings came from the data collection (questionnaire and interview) and confirm that collaborative writing was an interesting activity for the students.

Collaborative Writing and Motivation

As has been discussed in the literature review (section 2.5.6) motivation is now recognized as a critical factor for learner performance within academic contexts (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000; Hulleman & Barron, 2015). However, EFL learners can sometimes lack motivation in writing (Ahmed, 2010a). Therefore, it was interesting in this study to see how motivated the students would be when they wrote collaboratively. As students interacted with CW in class, they felt motivated to work actively and hard. As discussed in sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.3, the level of agreement with the comment, “Group work motivates me to write and discover my errors in writing,” rose from 50% to 80% following the treatment study (Figure 4.15). The increase of the level of agreement was good evidence that CW increases motivation.
The findings reveal that the majority agreed that CW was a useful tool which motivated the students to work harder. These positive findings are also upheld by the results of the other data instruments. For example, the majority of the students agreed that CW was a welcome opportunity for them to improve writing because it motivated them to work actively (sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.3).

The student maintained that every member in the group was interested which encouraged the individual members to work harder. This reaffirms that CW was a useful tool in motivating the students to write actively which resulted in improving writing. In this regard, as stated by Richards and Lockhart (1994 p. 188), “Feedback may serve not only to let learners know how well they have performed but also to increase motivation and build a supportive classroom climate.” They agree that feedback and motivation play an important role in improving classroom work.

Does Collaborative Writing Distract Students or Waste Time?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, some learners maintain that writing is a solitary, individual activity (Storch, 2005). Thus, collaborative writing might distract learners. For example, the study conducted by Glendinning and Howard (2001) applied to a group of three students. The researchers used think-aloud protocols and composition in the data collection. The study revealed that the students failed to correct 50% of the errors and they attributed their failure to correct writing errors to distraction and time pressure. Such a situation may occur if the learners are not assigned specific tasks equally, instructed, controlled, and guided by their teacher. The case of collaborative writing in the current study, on the other hand, was different. The researcher himself assigned specific tasks equally and instructed, controlled, and guided the students. Doing so greatly helped to reduce distraction, as noted by the students in the current study.

A number of the students from both groups expressed the view that working in small groups may distract individual student focus on writing and lead to wasted time (sections 4.2.7 and 4.3.4). For example, when asked in the pre-questionnaires (Appendix 3) about the item “Group work distracts learners in class when they write”, a 60% majority of the students agreed that collaborative writing distracted learners trying to write in class. The students were concerned that writing collaboratively might therefore waste time rather than focusing on writing. Significantly, after the students had participated in collaborative writing and completed post-
questionnaires (Appendix 4) the level of agreement plummeted from 60% to just 10% (Figure 4.16). This demonstrates that CW did not in fact distract the students or waste time for the majority of the students after the treatment study.

A number of students from the control group were also concerned that collaborative writing might distract them from their focus on writing and waste their time. Those justifications formed a part of the reasons some students expressed a preference for individual rather than collaborative writing.

Yeah, because working in groups might distract you from focusing...
(Interviewee B11)

Yeah, the most problem is the time [sic] (Interviewee B12)

These particular students however, had no direct experience of CW and so it is arguably reasonable that they persisted in the idea that they would be distracted or waste time if they wrote collaboratively and waste time.

Significantly, very different perceptions about collaborative writing and potential distractions or time-wasting were elicited from the students in the experimental group. They found the task of collaborative writing very useful as it encouraged them to work harder, and not distracting to them as some had anticipated at the outset of the study (see section 4.3.4). It is clear that CW was very useful for the students and there was no room for distraction or wasting time. This issue draws researcher attention to the reality that students need instructions and workshops to teach and train them how to make the utmost benefit from CW. By so doing, students will be better equipped to manage time, write collaboratively, and providing useful feedback to their writing peers. This opens the door to further study on how to best prepare students to maximize their time and provide useful feedback. This could be achieved through workshops in teaching academic writing as will be discussed further in Chapter Six.
Collaborative Writing and Forming Good Working Relationships

The collaborative writing method was not only used to improve essay writing for undergraduate Saudi learners, but also to encourage students to form productive working relationships with each other. The collaborative learning strategy has been found to be beneficial in many different areas of education, having a positive impact on, for example, peer relationships (Ashman & Gillies 2003). Such strong relationships among class members help in raising motivation, confidence and progress in academic achievement (Nunan 1992; Kohonen 1992). The sense of a strong relationship between group members was noted in the current study.

This took place for the majority of the students. For example, both the before and after study treatment questionnaire for the experimental group students proposed that, “Group work is a good chance to make stronger connections with peers” (Appendices 3 and 4). Following the course the level of agreement rose from 50% to 80% which supports the theory that the students can form productive relationships while writing collaboratively. The element of cooperation between the students also gave rise to a more positive attitude towards the concept of collaborative writing in class, as is clear from the data derived from the questionnaire item “Group writing gives me a positive attitude towards writing”. Analysis of the results found that after the training study, the level of agreement rose from 50% to 80% in this respect.

5.2.3: Writing Is an Important/Difficult Skill

As discussed in the Chapter Two (Literature Review), writing is an essential skill as a process of thinking, expressing ideas, and learning content (Foster, 2008). It is regarded as an important skill for learning through communication (Tynjäälä et al., 2001; Weigle, 2002).

Participants across both groups all agreed that although writing is difficult, it is an essential skill in which they need to be experienced, whether they are majoring in the English language or other their fields of study. As discussed in section 4.2.2, both before and after the training study students from the control and experimental groups all agreed that academic writing is crucial (Figures 4.4; 4.5) Similar perceptions come from the questionnaire data collection. (See section 4.3.1.)

On the other hand, this skill is difficult to master, especially for foreign students. Richards and Renandya (2002 p. 303) argue that “there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for
second language learners to master”. Thus, it is interesting in the current study to see how students interact to reduce the perception of this skill’s difficulty when they work in small groups.

An 80% majority of the control group students agreed that writing is difficult at the outset of the treatment study, a figure which remained unchanged by the end. Interestingly, the level of agreement in the experimental group dropped from 80% to 60%. This suggests that these students found something that helped to reduce the perception of difficulty which might be collaborative writing (Figure 4.7). Peer feedback is one of the tools that could make the writing task less difficult (Tudor, 1996). In this regard, Megnafi (2016) conducted a case study on 20 Algerian first-year university EFL learners. The researcher used a questionnaire and classroom observations to collect the data. The purpose of this study was to focus on the importance of collaborative learning when teaching writing. The study revealed that Algerian EFL learners had experienced severe difficulties in writing, but collaborative writing reduced the students’ difficulties as they could benefit and learn from each other.

Section 4.3.1, also revealed that the majority of the students agreed that writing is a difficult task. Such interesting findings show that both groups agree that academic writing is an important but difficult skill. However, after the treatment study, the majority of the students who were writing collaboratively felt that writing was less difficult, while that was not the case for the majority of the students in the control group.

5.2.4: Perceptions of Peer Feedback

Many studies have investigated the useful role of peer feedback in improving writing, collecting data through questionnaires, interviews, or writing tests (Grami, 2010; Liu & Carless, 2006; Yakame, 2005). However, the current study is distinctive in that it endeavoured to provide a more expanded investigation about the benefits of peer feedback, using a combination of think-aloud protocols, interviews, pre-post writing tests, a correcting errors test and questionnaires from teachers and students.

In the current study, the students noted a perceived improvement in their writing after engaging in CW. The students who were hesitant about the advantages of peer feedback changed their perceptions after the treatment study. They shared their experiences in writing, and CW proved
to be a very useful tool to encourage the students to work harder and improve as is clear from
the perceptions of the students.

As noted in the literature review in Chapter Two, peer feedback plays a very valuable role in
helping the students who write collaboratively. For instance, it motivates learners to revise and
improve their writing (Paulus, 1999), supports learners’ critical thinking skills, and helps them
evaluate their own work (Berg, 1999; Paulus, 1999; Hyland, 2003b). In addition, it is
considered an effective tool for helping L2 learners improve their writing skills (Corbin, 2012).
Therefore, it was interesting to see how students engaged in collaborative writing would
interact and improve their writing.

Since peer feedback (section 2.9.3.2) is one of the important elements in the current study, it
was fascinating to elicit the students’ positive and negative perceptions, and their views and
impressions relating to peer feedback both before and after the treatment study. As discussed
in section 4.2.2, the analysis of the questionnaires (Appendices 3 and 4) revealed a number of
noteworthy findings in respect of the role and advantages of peer feedback. The level of
agreement increased following the treatment study in a number of improved areas of writing
because of peer feedback. For example, the level of agreement relating to understanding the
criteria for good writing increased from 60% to 80%, improving the organization of writing
rose from 50% to 80%, sharing ideas rose from 30% to 70%, and benefiting from each other
rose from 50% to 70%. Improving essay writing skills were also perceived to have improved
the content of writing, with a rise from 50% to 70% in improving grammar, 50% to 70% in
improving spelling and punctuation, and 70% to 80% rise in improving the word choice in
writing (Figure 4.12) Similar positive findings also come from the students’ responses in the
questionnaire (see section 4.3.5).

The level of agreement regarding the students’ perceptions of the usefulness of peer feedback
indicates that they came to realize how useful peer feedback could be in improving academic
writing as noted above. Such positive perceptions from the students following the treatment
study aligns with what has been stated by previous research. For example, as discussed in
Chapter Two, learners work more enthusiastically, enjoying interacting with their peers,
sharing information and ideas and reacting to a variety of questions and peer feedback when

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Following the study treatment, the students realized that peer feedback was a very important tool by which they could identify errors and correct each other in writing. The positive findings from the questionnaires and interview confirm that peer feedback was very useful to the students to improve their skills in writing. Furthermore, triangulating such findings that show improvement in writing provides clear evidence that peer feedback has broad advantages, as noted in this study. With regard to the linguistic benefits, learners gained experience through collaborative writing that lead to improvement in their skills as they read, shared ideas, and wrote. Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) support this, stating that working collaboratively allows learners to pool their linguistic resources (section 4.3.5).

**Perceptions about Trusting Peer Feedback**

Learners learn more successfully when they trust each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). While Zhang (1995) contends that learners prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback, other research (Grami, 2010; Yakame, 2005), including the present study, show that learners appreciate peer feedback as well. Therefore, it is important for learners to be persuaded of the advantages of peer feedback through practice, as was noted in the current study. Prior to the treatment study, the students from both the experimental and the control group were somewhat reluctant to trust peer feedback. They rationalized this by claiming that help or information obtained from peers could feel awkward and was not as reliable or trustworthy as that of teachers. However, there negative perceptions were before the treatment study.

As discussed in section 4.2.2, following the course study, the majority of the students in the experimental group agreed that peer feedback (sharing ideas) was a useful way to improve writing and the level of agreement rose from 30% to 70% (Figure 4.11). In fact, agreement in trusting the information from peers rose from 50% to 70% after the treatment study (Figure 4.12 which confirms that student perceptions regarding peer feedback as a useful tool in collaborative writing had undergone a significant and positive change.

As shown in sections 4.2.5 and 4.3.5, Respondent B24, one of the students in the control group was against CW because of a hesitation to trust peers, asserting, “I prefer to take the information from teachers but not from my colleagues. I do not know if what they say is correct or not”. However, Respondent A31, another student from the experimental group expressed trust in peer feedback following the treatment study, reflecting, “At the beginning, I was not sure about the benefit from the students, but when I worked in groups, I found a lot of benefits”.

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Nelson and Murphy (1993) state that L2 learners see teachers as the only trusted source of feedback because their peers are not knowledgeable enough to give correct feedback on writing. However, negative perceptions in this study came from students who did not apply collaborative writing and share peer feedback.

Similar views came from one student from the experimental group who said that he could not trust peer writing feedback prior to the treatment study. He explained:

*I do not think that writing in a small group will help me to improve my writing. First writing in groups is not interesting. I see that writing in a group will distract me to focus and I will waste time if I work with my peers. I do not trust the information from peers*

(Respondent A18).

The above student was evidently concerned that any information tendered by peers may be inaccurate or that they might distract or waste his time. Subsequent to the treatment study however, the same student changed his negative perceptions about peer feedback and admitted that he had benefited from peers. This reversal of agreement serves to reinforce the utility of peer feedback:

*Working in a small group was a new activity for me. I still believe that working individually is better than in groups. I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends in the class such as sharing opinions and ideas*

(Respondent A18).

An interesting point is raised by student A18 above in his admission that, “Working in a small group was a new activity for me”. This underlines the necessity for further research into the usefulness of equipping students with peer feedback skills, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

**5.3: Reducing Errors in Collaborative versus Individual Writing**

A number of Saudi researchers (Othman, 2017; Eltayeb & Ahamed, 2016; Khan & Khan, 2016) focused on error categories which included use of tenses, particularly the omission of ‘be’ and the misuse of verb tenses, omission of third person singular markers, and the general misuse of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. These errors were attributed to several factors, including the interference of the mother tongue (section 2.8.2).
The current study therefore sought to determine whether collaborative writing has a positive effect on improving writing through a reduction of common errors. One of the research questions in the study was, “Does collaborative writing reduce common errors in essay writing as compared to individual writing”? The purpose of this question was to ascertain whether collaborative writing is more significant than individual writing in reducing the common errors in writing the undergraduate Saudi students usually make, more specifically the students at Imam University in Riyadh.

5.3.1: Equivalence of the Experimental and Control Groups prior to Treatment
The researcher deemed it useful to measure the scores the students attained in common errors prior to the treatment study in order to identify any significant differences between the two groups. Therefore, the participants were given a pre-test at the outset of the study (Appendix 2). Interestingly, both groups were found to be equivalent before the treatment study (section 4.4.1).

5.3.2: Results of the Control and Experimental Groups after the Treatment Study
The data analysis reveals that the students who were writing collaboratively performed better in reducing common errors in writing than those who were writing individually. The students of both groups were given a post-test (Appendix 2) and the results were significant for the experimental group (Table 4.6). Furthermore, unlike the control group (the p-value was 0.867, Table 4.4), the students in the experimental group proved to be significant in the post-test as opposed to the pre-test (the p-value was 0.030 (Table 4.5).

Data findings of other instruments are in line with such a significant outcome. For example, as discussed in section 4.1.2, 77.14% of the teachers had the perception that collective writing improves grammar and structure more than individual writing (Figure 4.3). In addition, when the students in the experimental group were asked whether “Peer feedback helps them find weakness in their drafts” in the pre- and post-questionnaires (Appendices 3 and 4), the agreement increased from 50% to 80% following the treatment study, emphasizing that the students observed significant improvement in their ability to discover and correct errors in writing.
To support this progress from the experimental group, it was noted that the students agreed on their improvements in identifying and reducing errors in writing. When the students in the experimental group were asked about their ability to discover errors in a draft of writing, they reported that collaborative writing enabled them to discover weaknesses in their writing. For example, one interviewee said:

*I found it feel... actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes...* (Interviewee A18).

In terms of grammar (structure) for instance, the students who were engaged in collaborative writing reported improvements in their ability to structure their writing after the treatment study. In the questionnaires mentioned above, the students were asked whether “Peer feedback helps them improve the grammar structure of their writing”. The responses prior to the treatment study show that 20% strongly agreed and 30% agreed. Remarkably, following the treatment study, 20% strongly agreed and 50% agreed (Figure 4.11). Moreover, the students in the experimental group also noted improvement in spelling and punctuation after the treatment study, and agreement as represented by the comment, “Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation in my writing” increased from 50% to 70% (Figure 4.11).

It is noteworthy that the students in the experimental group agreed that they improved their ability to discover errors they were previously unaware of after the training study. They attributed this to collaborative writing, and more specifically, to the element of peer feedback. For example, prior to the study treatment, when asked whether “My classmates help me find mistakes that I was not aware of”, 10% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, and 50% were uncertain. 10% disagreed. After the training study, however, 30% strongly agreed and 50% agreed while only one student (10%) was uncertain. A single student (10%) also disagreed. In short, the level of agreement increased from 40% to 80%. This is yet more evidence that the CW students improved in reducing errors in writing.

As presented and discussed in section 4.3 (the open-ended questions in the questionnaires), students were asked whether collaborative writing helped to improve their writing. It is interesting that the majority of the students particularly alluded to improvement in correcting and reducing errors in writing, as below:
**It helped** me reduce writing errors such as correct **prepositions**, spelling, **grammar**, **tenses**... **(Respondent A28)**

*We shared correcting errors and providing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes such as grammar, tenses...* **(Respondent A16)**

Collaborative writing in class was a useful activity which enabled students to help each other to discover and correct grammatical and any other sort of errors. Therefore, improvement was noted in the experimental group concerning this issue. This is further supported in the interview data presented in section 4.3. After the students had engaged in collaborative writing, they agreed that CW had proved very helpful for them to identify and correct grammatical errors in writing:

*I found it feel... actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes...* **(Interviewee A18)**

*It helped me to write better, better structure on essay writing* **(Interviewee A28).**

*Group work improve[s] grammatical mistakes ... [sic]* **(Interviewee A31)**

It is evident that student A18 noted improvement in how identify grammatical errors while student A28 affirmed that CW had helped him to improve grammar in writing by saying “better, better”, while student A31 agreed that collaborative writing helped him improve grammatical errors. This typifies the majority of the students who noted improvements in reducing grammatical errors following the treatment study.

To support the findings of reducing common errors in writing as presented in section 4.3, the analysis of Think Aloud Protocols also provides interesting findings. Here is a sample dialogue showing error correction ‘in action’:

**Speaker 3**: I’ve asked

**Speaker 5**: I asked, because you mention last semester

**Speaker 3**: Ok, I asked.

It was noted that the students were active and keen to correct each other in different types of errors, such as when Speaker 3 said, “I’ve asked”, but Speaker 5 was quick to correct him,
saying, “I asked” justifying, “because you mention last semester”. This supports the findings that collaborative writing serves as a very useful tool for the students to improve writing by reducing the errors commonly made by the students as is noted in the results of the error tests and the performance of the experimental group following the treatment study.

Such interesting findings concerning error reduction by the students who were writing collaboratively support the significant improvement in writing as shown in the next section. Indeed, in collaborative writing, peer feedback was useful for the students to improve, whether in overall writing as shown in the next section or in reducing errors as discussed in this section. This reduction of errors is in line with Lightbown and Spada (1990) who applied their study in a classroom with 100 intermediate L2 students and found that the students who received frequent corrective feedback on writing errors produced more accurate texts than those who seldom received corrective feedback, as is the case of the control group who practiced individual writing in the current study.

The current study thus showed some of the useful effects of collaborative writing, such as reducing errors as noted in the students’ experimental group writing test. The significant findings reflect what has been investigated by other researchers in the case of verbalizing the errors when writing collaboratively. For instance, Holunga (1994) noted that the effects of verbalizing language errors made by the students allow them to “become more aware of their problems, predict their linguistic needs, set goals for themselves, monitor their own language use, and evaluate their overall success” (p. 109). Therefore, this study is unique in using instruments such as think-aloud protocols (section 3.4.5.3) to identify how active the students were to be aware of writing problems or errors they made during the treatment study.

5.4: Improving Essay Writing through Collaborative versus Individual Writing
This section looks into the main research question (section 3.3.1); namely, whether collaborative writing is more useful than individual writing in class through data collated from the pre- and post-writing tests undertaken by control and experimental groups. The results of the study regarding the first research question suggest that the students who wrote collaboratively improved their writing skills more than the ones who used the traditional method (individual writing). Many researchers have investigated and agreed that collaborative writing produces texts which are more accurate than those produced by writing individually (Hanjani, 2013; Niesyn, 2011; Noël & Robert, 2003). However, most of the studies are based
on questionnaires or interviews rather than comparative analysis of written texts. In the current study, students in both the experimental and control groups wrote essays on a specific topic in the first week of the empirical study as a pre-test and wrote about a similar topic as a post-test (Appendix 1). The participants’ essay scores represented their performance. The findings presented in Chapter Four are interpreted and summarized in this section. At the beginning of the study participants in both the control and experimental groups wrote a short pre-test essays on a specific subject which they then redid as a post-test exercise at the end of the study (section 4.5). The full analysis of this section as presented in Chapter Four is summarized here and discussed as follows:

5.4.1: Writing Test Results of the Control versus Experimental Groups
Analysis of the control group findings show no significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores (P value = 0.307) (section 4.5.2; Table 4.11). Thus, hypothesis 1.1 which claimed that no significant differences would be discerned between the students’ writing essays before and after involving students in the traditional learning method’ (section 3.4.5.5) was confirmed. Therefore, the participants in the control group did not improve in the overall writing test except for two students following the treatment study (section 4.5.2; Figure 4.18). This indicated that the traditional method of individual writing was useful for some students. However, no tools, such as final exams, or group work as in the case of the experimental group, could be definitively attributed with motivating the students to work. Moreover, the students had the right to participate or withdraw without explanation. Being a teacher who is familiar with teaching students using the traditional method (individual writing), it had been anticipated that the students would show more enthusiasm and improvement. The fact that this did not turn out to be the case could be attributed to the reasons previously discussed in section 4.5.2. The students were expected to make some improvement in their writing, but because they were busy during the empirical study (since they had many subjects and exams to study for during the semester), they did not make the expected effort according to the analysis results. As was also outlined in Chapters Two and Three, both the experimental and control groups faced a number of barriers, such as the time line of 12 weeks, and necessary time required to practice writing skills. The findings the current study offer an interesting opportunity to compare the outcomes of individual writing to the outcomes of the collaborative writing, as discussed in the next section.
On the other hand, analysis of the findings of the pre/post test results of the experimental group showed that there was a highly significant difference between the pre- and post-test scores (the p-value = 0.001) (section 4.5.3 ; Table 4.12). Thus, the alternative hypothesis 5 which claimed that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test of writing short essay by the experimental group (participants taught through collaborative writing) (section 3.4.5.5.) was confirmed.

While the students in both groups faced some of the barriers discussed previously, the students who were writing collaboratively were not negatively affected, as was the case with the control group. In addition to such significant findings from the experimental group, when comparing the post test of both groups, the results revealed significant findings for the experimental group as well (the p-value = 0.048) (section 4.5.4; Table 4.13). In order to confirm such interesting significant findings from the experimental group, data from the other instruments had shown a similar outcome.

For example, as presented in Chapter Four, the level of agreement that CW helps learners improve their overall writing increased in the experimental group from 60% to 80% (Figure 4.11). In addition, when the students were asked if peer feedback (which was not available for individual writing) it helped them to better understand the criteria of good writing, the amount of agreement increased from 60% to 80%. Students in the control group, on the other hand, were not satisfied with their writing progress. For example, when they were asked in the post-test questionnaire to rate their progress in learning strategies (drafting, revising and editing) for the overall composition at the end of the course, only 20% (two students) rated themselves “very good”.

According to the analysis of the qualitative questionnaire data, the majority of the students in the experimental group felt that they had made progress in their overall writing. For example, at the beginning of the study, one of the students (Respondent A28) said, “Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard, and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, avoiding redundancy, tenses, the topic sentence, generating ideas, and many other parts in essay writing”. Significantly, after the treatment study, the same student said, “In sum, writing in a small group helped me in all parts of essay writing”. In contrast to this, the majority of the students in the control group did not express a satisfactory impression about their progress in writing at the end of the study. One
student (Respondent B8) said, “I think I will improve myself in writing, but writing is very
difficult...” After the course study, the same student went on further to say, “I think I did not
improve myself because the semester was short and we had many other courses to focus on”.
This suggests that individual writing did not motivate the students to overcome the barriers that
they had faced during the empirical study.

Similar perceptions come from the majority of the interviewees. In the interview data, the
students also revealed positive perceptions from the experimental group that they had improved
their skills in essay writing. One of the students (Interviewee A21 in the experimental group)
said, “Yeah, I feel like I improved a lot”. The student agreed that he noted a great improvement
when he said “a lot.” According to the high mark that the student received in the overall writing
test (see Table 4.9), student number 10), we can assume that he meant overall writing when he
said “a lot”. On the other hand, one interviewee (B9) from the control group was not satisfied
about writing individually. When he was asked, “Do you think that working individually would
help you to improve yourself a lot”? he replied, “NO, no, no”, confirming that he did not note
an improvement in his writing.

According to the students who were writing collaboratively, the data from the think aloud
protocols bring about similar positive findings. For example, when the students were doing the
think aloud protocol on a specific topic, it was found that they were happy about their
improvement although the question was asked early, in weeks seven and eight (see Appendix
12), before the end of the study. The teacher asked the students after they finished writing the
essay about their improvement from the beginning of the study:

**The Teacher**: And all of you now, you’re four students, do you think that the competence
with your skills as a writer is **improving because of working together**?

**Multi speakers**: Of course

**The Teacher**: You think so?

**Multi speakers**: Yes

The writing test results of the control group were disappointing (see Table 4.14). However, as
explained in Chapter Three (see section 3.4.5), withdrawing from the study could negatively
affect the results. More than half of the students withdrew from the study because some of them
were not punctual in attending the lectures or in taking the tests. The students who withdrew were ‘self-selected’ and could have included both weaker and stronger students – so the self-selec-
tion effect could have been negligible. While the effects described above (Hawthorne effect, yea-saying, student self-selection) had some inevitable influence on the findings, it was felt that overall, the research findings were robust enough to provide valid responses to the research questions.

It was obvious that collaborative writing was a useful tool for the students in regards to improving their skills in writing. Moreover, such a method motivated the students to write actively, although they faced some barriers during the treatment study. As discussed in Chapter Two collaborative learning is one of the most effective tools for strengthening teaching students, as collaboration generates an atmosphere of increased motivation (David, 2008) which may, in turn, precipitate improvements in the students’ writing performance.

Such significant findings mirror other studies to some extent. Al-Nafiseh (2013) and Al-Besher (2012), for example, found that their students noted improvement, which supports the overall findings of the current study. However, the current study investigated the students’ improvement in more detail such as by measuring writing improvement by ten criteria (see Table 4.7). Moreover, the researcher used multiple data instruments in order to confirm any significant finding.

The positive findings of collaborative writing achievement are a direct result of what was been discussed in Chapter Two: that CW (1) increases academic work achievement; (2) increases the competitive level of learners; and (3) encourages learners to become involved in effective social settings (Kagan, 1994). Ashman and Gillies (2003) also state that compared to some traditional approaches, such as individual learning, the collaborative learning approach has a positive effect on a considerable number of dependent variables, including productivity and achievement.

According to the experimental group achievement, the positive findings in improving overall writing reassures us of what was discussed in Chapter Two, which is that through active social interaction, the learners share the responsibility for improving their writing and becoming better writers, readers, listeners, speakers, and thinkers in the classroom (Alvermann et al., 20013). Such outcomes were a direct result of the students as they provided scaffolded support
to each other and shared different experiences of performance that was beyond the students’ individual level of competence (Bremner, 2010; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012; Zhan, 2008; Zaraté et al., 2008).

In addition, the significant findings agree with what has been stated by many researchers discussed in Chapter Two. For example, according to Williams (2003), small groups are beneficial in most learning activities, including writing. Furthermore, collaborative writing has been shown to enhance learners’ writing quality (Abt-Perkins, 1992; Dix & Cawkwell, 2011; Nixon & Topping, 2001). The next section discusses the development of ten criteria in writing (Table 4.7).

It is necessary to discuss aspects of the project design that were intended to address challenges associated with bias, validity, and the interpretation of evidence, especially since the researcher was the teacher in the empirical study. The “Hawthorne effect” is an explanation for an intervention study in which the participants tend to perform better (see section 3.4.5). Knowing the participants had received a new intervention, the researcher was aware of the possibility of the Hawthorne effect. The researcher explored the Hawthorne effect as a phenomenon in this study in order to avoid a biased evaluation of the data gathered from the students. By virtue of the fact that the experimental group was part of the research project, the group could be seen as being susceptible to the Hawthorne effect. It appears that teachers who have the power to set and mark exams can have positive effects on their students’ achievement. The literature suggests that researchers must become successfully immersed in a social setting by obtaining trust and making participants feel unthreatened and relaxed (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Cotton et al., 2010), as occurred in the current study. Therefore, the researcher made it clear to the students from the beginning of the study that he would not mark the exams and that the students had the right to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and without any justification. Taking these precautions thus minimised the Hawthorne effect. The clear instructions helped the participant observer witness the true attitudes and behaviours of the workforce while limiting the negative consequences of the Hawthorne effect.

Another issue was the “yea-saying” bias (see section 3.4.5). When the researcher asked the students in the experimental group if their writing had improved, the students said “yes” (see the dialogue above). In addition, to minimise the problem of the participants’ response bias, the researcher used five instruments (see section 3.4.5 in Chapter Three) to triangulate the
results obtained from the two groups in order to support any significant findings. For example, the results of the experimental group’s writing test corroborated the responses of the students when they answered “yes”.

One more important issue is “selection bias” (see section 3.4.5). Traditionally, selection bias has been described as bias arising from inappropriate selection (or self-selection) of study subjects from the source population. Consequently, while initial differences between the two groups suggested the potential for biased comparisons, student self-selection should not have affected the validity of the treatment study.

5.4.2: Improvement in Writing Criteria among the Experimental versus Control Groups

An important decision in the current study is which criteria the researcher should use to evaluate writing. In the end, it was decided that texts would be rated separately using holistic and analytic scoring for multiple criteria such as organisation, cohesion and coherence, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Weigle, 2002). That classification was applied to see how students would improve themselves in each category. For more details about the Criteria, see Table 4.7: section 3.4.5.5.

Several studies have investigated the effects of collaborative writing on learners’ development in writing with a special focus on the macro levels (such as Al-Hazmi & Schofield, 2007; Min, 2006). However, few studies have focused on the improvement regarding the micro and macro levels in writing when applying collaborative writing. This study, with its deep investigation using five instrument data collection methods, sought to investigate the role of collaborative writing on students’ improvement compared to that of writing individually. This study then focused on both the macro and micro levels, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.4.2.1. The Experimental versus Control Groups in Improving Macro Levels

As elucidated in Chapter Two, and regarding the macro level of elements such as organization, development, coherence, and cohesion, learners are thought to be more adept in a hierarchy of utilizing ideas at the beginning of a text, the end of a text, or throughout the text (Connor, 1996). This section considers the role that collaborative writing has in improving the following
previously defined (Table 4.7; section 3.4.5.5) aspects of writing: the thesis statement “the sentence expressing the writer’s main idea or opinion regarding the given prompt” (Petrić, 2005, p. 221); organization, “presenting, developing, and supporting a thesis” (Perkins, 1983, p. 662); development, “the appropriate use of examples and support” (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009, p. 34); coherence “syntactic and semantic connectivity of linguistic forms at a surface-structure level” (Connor & Johns, 1990, p. 14); and coherence, “the principle of organization postulated to account for the underlying functional connectedness or identity of a piece of spoken or written language (text, discourse)” (Crystal, 1991, p. 60).

Lundstrom and Baker (2009, p. 34) state that “organization refers to the effectiveness of the thesis statement and unity of ideas…” which implies the importance of a “thesis statement” in writing. Therefore, in the current study this criterion was given special attention to see how well the students who were involved in collaborative writing would improve themselves in it, as opposed to the students in the control group who used the traditional method (individual writing). Development is another major criterion included in macro-level discourse of writing (Kern & Schultz, 1992). Finally, “Coherence and Cohesion” constitutes another interesting criterion, which the researcher emphasized in order to evaluate the significance of the experimental group’s writing progress.

As presented in Chapter Four and according to the results shown in Table 4.14, the p-value of the pre and post-tests (Appendix 11) showed that students writing collaboratively outperformed those in the control group (students writing individually) in the abovementioned criteria. To confirm such significant findings in the tests, data from the other instruments brought similar positive findings; those students who were engaged in collaborative writing did better in improving the macro level aspects of writing as opposed to the students who were writing individually.

As presented in Chapter Four, qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire offer interesting perceptions in that the majority of the students in the experimental group did improve themselves in the macro level in writing. One student from the experimental group revealed the following:
I feel that I improved myself in writing with the help of my peers in the introduction including the thesis statement to the conclusion. I noted improvement how to organize and develop my idea, and how to connect my ideas. Moreover, I found development in vocabulary and grammar. In addition to that, I noted improvement how to punctuate any piece of writing. Group work was a very useful chance for me to improve writing (Respondent A29).

As noted above, the quote reassures us that the student felt that he had improved himself in the macro level and attributed that to collaborative writing. He further stated that he noted improvements regarding how to “organizes,” “develop,” and “connect” ideas. On the other hand, the majority of the students who were writing individually did not note such an improvement. Another student from the control group stated the following:

I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes. Also spelling and punctuation are still difficult for me. I need to practice how to gather and use correct vocabulary. The most problem I think I need to improve myself in developing and organizing the essay. I need also to improve myself in connecting ideas. Finally, I lack the ability to produce a good essay in many areas in writing. However, the semester was very short and writing needs enough time (Respondent B2).

As noted in this quote, the student was not satisfied about his progress in writing, attributing it to the timeline. However, he did not find that individual writing motivated him to work harder. The outcome was that he did not improve himself in the macro level, stating that he still did not know how “organize,” “develop,” and “connect” ideas in writing.

Data from the interview also demonstrated similar perceptions that confirmed that the students who were writing collaboratively did better than those who were writing individually.

When I write in groups, different ideas, help me to write better [sic] (Interviewee A28)

I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas[sic] (Interviewee A21)

The students in the above quotes focused on how they found collaborative writing useful when finding new ideas. Interviewee A28, for instance, confirmed that group work helped him how to find and use the proper ideas in writing. This sort of positive perception tells us that the students noted improvement in the macro level in writing, which was not the case found in the
control group. The majority of the students who participated in the interview did not say that they noted improvement in writing in these areas (macro level).

*I think this is the most problem... the way I can change my idea...*  
(Interviewee B12)

In this quote, the student admits that the biggest problem he still faced was how to deal with ideas in writing, because he was writing individually and no one helped him, unlike in the case of his peers doing collaborative writing. It seems that he found a problem with the “macro level” of writing. This shows us that the students in the control group did not benefit from individual writing to improve such areas. The writing test results were direct evidence that the majority of the students did not improve macro-level writing skills.

Data from think aloud protocols bring very interesting pieces of dialogue to show how dynamic and active the cooperation was between the students who were writing collaboratively during the treatment study. Corroborating the perceptions expressed in the questionnaire that the students found improvement in macro level is what happened during the task of collaborative writing in the “Think Aloud Protocols”.

*Speaker 5:* We have another idea.

*Speaker 4:* Reading

*Speaker 2:* Academic essay

*Speaker 5:* Ok

*Speaker 2:* Essays

*Speaker 4:* How can I start the idea?

*Speaker 3:* We used also right?

*Multi speakers:* Haa

*Speaker 3:* We used

*Speaker 2:* And used different words

*Speaker 3:* Another cohesion
It was fascinating to observe how active the students were when writing collaboratively and offering solutions or alternative ideas. In addition, helping each other on how to connect sentences and ideas always took place among the students.

From the previous quantitative and qualitative data gathered, we can conclude that collaborative writing was a useful opportunity for students to improve their macro-level writing. As discussed in section 2.9.3.2, the study conducted by Shehadeh (2011) compared students writing in pairs to students writing individually, and the researcher found that students in pairs did better in improving the macro level. Similarly, in studies by both Al-Besher (2012) and Al-Nafiseh (2013), students who wrote collaboratively did better in the same areas than those who were writing individually. The three studies are in line with the current study in that those who were involved in collaborative writing, whether in pairs or small groups, did better than those who were writing individually. However, the current study has expanded the investigation in ways such as measuring the improvement in writing thesis statements separately from measuring improvement in organization. The researcher used variable instruments in the data collection to find answers for the research questions (section 1.4). Moreover, the researcher used “Think Aloud Protocols” in order to offer direct examples of how the students were to be active in improving those areas (thesis statement, organization, development, cohesion, and coherence).

5.4.2.2. The Experimental versus Control Groups in Improving Micro Levels
As reported in Chapter Two regarding a micro-level perspective, there are multiple studies that have shown EFL learners improve the accuracy and complexity of the morphology and syntax in their written work under this issue (Cumming & Mellow, 1996; Ishikawa, 1995; Weissberg, 2000). In respect of the micro-level perspective, multiple studies have shown EFL learners improve using a range of vocabulary in writing by applying specific methods (such as peer feedback, genre approach, product approach, and so on) (Engber, 1995; Grant & Ginther, 2000; Laufer & Nation, 1999). During this study, the researcher paid special attention on the micro level of writing in order to see the extent to which collaborative writing would help the students improve easy writing as compared to individual writing during the course study.

Experimental versus Control Groups in Improving Grammar
As underscored in Chapter Two, grammar, the “use of sentence structures and constructions; accuracy and correctness in the use of agreement, number, tense, word order, articles,
pronouns, prepositions, negation” (Shehadeh, 2011, p. 292), is one of the most important components of technical writing (Ho, 2000). Several studies, as discussed in sections 2.8.4. and 2.9.3.6 confirmed that ESL learners find it difficult to write text free of grammatical errors. Cai (2013) and Yeh (2010) for instance, attest that their study participants experienced problems with structure. The researcher used a data collection method of test, interview, questionnaire, and so on in order to determine how learners improved their grammar when they used collaborative writing.

Analysis of the data reveals that the students in the experimental group outperformed those of the control group in terms of grammar usage (the p-value was 0.048) (Appendix 11). In addition, the participants who were writing collaboratively achieved better scores in the post-test compared to the pre-test (the p-value was 0.001) (Appendix 11). On the other hand, the p-value of the pre- and post-tests was 0.202 for the control group (Appendix 11). This confirms that the majority of the students who were writing individually did not improve grammar (Table 4.14).

Quantitative data from questionnaire educes evidence that the students in collaborative writing did a much better job than the individual work. As presented in sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.7, in respect of student responses to the comment, “Peer feedback helps me improve the grammar structure of my writing,” agreement increased from 50% to 70% following the treatment (Figure 4.11). Furthermore, the majority of the practitioners also agreed that collaborative writing was more effective than individual writing in improving grammar (Figure 4.3).

According to the questionnaire’s open-ended question responses, the majority of the students in the experimental group were very satisfied about their writing. As the following quotes illustrate, grammar was specified as one area of particular advancement:

\[
\text{I found that I have improved in grammar…} \quad \text{(Respondent A31)}
\]

\[
\text{I improved myself in writing with the grammar…} \quad \text{(Respondent A27)}
\]

\[
\text{It helped me reduce writing errors such as correct prepositions, spelling, grammar, tenses…} \quad \text{(Respondent A28)}
\]

The majority of the students in the control group, on the other hand, did not benefit from individual writing, and this was indicated through their responses:
We need more time to know how to write a correct thesis statement and avoid grammatical errors.

(Respondent B1)

I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes.

(Respondent B2)

The two students above were not happy about their development in grammar, and also certain other areas of their writing. They attributed this dissatisfaction to some barriers such as the timeline. To confirm that the students in the experimental group did better than the control group in improving their writing, data was gathered from the interview.

I found it feel... actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes...

(Interviewee A18)

It helped me to write better better structure on essay writing

(Interviewee A28)

Group work improve[s] grammatical mistakes... [sic]

(Interviewee A31)

All the interviewees noted improvement in grammar, and they attributed that to being engaged in collaborative writing during the treatment study. Unlike the experimental group, some students in the interview from the control group said something different:

I feel comfortable but not too much because I found some difficulties in writing grammar

(Interviewee B24)

The student agreed that he did not find individual writing very interesting, and at the end of the study he still found difficulty in grammar, which lets us assume that he did not find individual writing encouraging him to improve his grammar. This was not the case in collaborative writing. In collaborative writing, the students were very enthusiastic to cooperate and correct each other’s grammatical errors. This was clearly noted during the active discussion in “think aloud protocols”.

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people
**Speaker 3:** Will help gain experience

**Speaker 2:** Will or Would?

**Speaker 5:** Would help you?

**Speaker 2:** Will

**Speaker 3:** Will will WILL help you gain experience!

The example shows quotes that illustrate how the students tried to help each other by asking whether to use will or would. In the next example, the students tried to guide each regarding the tense they should use, be it “simple past” or “present perfect”. They tried to explain why it should be in the simple past. The students were active and happy to correct each other in grammar. Such an active situation took place many times. We can confirm from the previously data gathered that the students who were writing collaboratively are seen as much more active and did better in improving grammar than the students who were writing individually.

While Shehadeh’s (2011) investigations found no significant difference between the control and experimental groups in terms of grammar, the current study revealed noteworthy improvements for the students who wrote collaboratively. The students in the control group in the current study justified their failure in improving their grammar to some barriers such as timeline, and they could be correct. However, it is unclear why barriers did not negatively affect the majority of the experimental group. Fung (2010) contends that “the pooling of diverse abilities provides interdependence for learners to co-construct knowledge and improve their writing skills to a greater extent than what they could achieve individually” (p. 23).

**Experimental versus Control Groups in Improving Vocabulary**

According to Laufer and Nation (1995 p. 307), vocabulary in L2 writing has an effective role in producing a “well-written composition”. Raimes (1983a) states that when learners complain about how difficult it is to write in a second language, they are actually referring to the difficulty of writing issues such as finding the right words. Thus, it was one of the issues that received attention when measuring how students improved through writing collaboratively. Vocabulary includes four categories, which were classified in the criteria the researcher used to evaluate student writing.
In this section, we will discuss the role that collaborative writing has in improving the following previously defined (Table 4.7: section 3.4.5.5) aspects of writing: usage, the “absence of errors such as missing/wrong articles, nonstandard verbs, etc.” (Deane & Zhang, 2015, p. 5); style, the “absence of errors such as repetition of words, inappropriate words, etc.” (Deane & Zhang, 2015, p. 5); word choice, the “extent to which words are edited to produce completely different words, possibly suggesting deliberation about word choice” (Deane & Zhang 2015, p. 5); and word length, measured as “average word length” (Deane & Zhang, 2015, p 5).

As presented in Chapter Four, when comparing the two groups through applying independent t-test (comparing the post-test between the two groups), the p-value tells us that there is a significant difference between those who were writing collaboratively and the other students who were writing individually in lexical complexity (word choice). However, according to the p-value, there is no significant difference between the two groups in lexical complexity (word length), usage, and style.

According to the results of the paired t-test (comparing the pre-test to the post-test) shown in Table 4.14 and Appendix 11, the p-value tells us that the majority of the students who were writing collaboratively improved themselves in vocabulary, as well as in all of the four categories mentioned above. According to the p-value of the pre- and post-tests of the control group, on the other hand, there was no significant difference between the pre- and post-test, which shows that the majority did not improve in vocabulary (Table 4.14 and Appendix 11).

We can conclude that students who were writing collaboratively improved themselves in vocabulary according to the paired test-test, but the case was not true with the other group. However, when applying the independent t-test to compare if there was a significant difference between the two groups, the results showed us that there is a significant difference only in word choice.

Data from the other instruments support the significant findings for the experimental and control groups. As outlined presented in Chapter Four, the post questionnaire (Appendix 4) asked the experiment students whether they had improved in essay writing. Interestingly the majority reported some improvement in vocabulary. The following two students for instance stated the following:
I improved how to use proper and correct words. (Respondent A29)

I also feel that I am improved in the style and usage of writing... (Respondent A27)

The control group had different perceptions about their progress in vocabulary after the course study. Here are two quotes:

I find vocabulary and using correct words very difficult. I could do better but I did not improve. (Respondent B1)

I hope that I can improve myself next semester. Vocabulary was one of the problems I faced. For example, we need to know how to use correct words and correct ideas. (Respondent B3)

The above two students complained that they did not improve in vocabulary, which suggests that the majority did not benefit from individual writing. The test results confirm these reports.

Similar perceptions come from the interview regarding the advantages of collaborative writing in improving vocabulary.

As discussed in sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.7, the students in the experimental group offered their opinions on collaborative writing, stating that it helped them in improving vocabulary, as the following quotes illustrate:

It helped me to write better structure on essay writing and give me a lot of vocabulary bank to write in better words [sic] (Interviewee A28)

Group work improve[s] grammatical mistakes spelling mistakes, gives you more confidence, gives you more vocabulary [sic] (Interviewee A31)

A student from the control group stated the following:

Because when you make a group somehow two people are working... We take the best ideas and the best words [sic] (Interviewee B11)

Seriously in the beginning of the semester I thought individually its better, now at the end of the semester, I prefer to write in group. So everyone will hear you, and when you writing, he ask as a friend about a word or grammar... [sic] (Interviewee B9)
Although the two students did not write collaboratively during the treatment study, they preferred collaborative writing to writing individually, which suggests that they did not benefit from individual writing in improving vocabulary, as noted when the student said at the beginning of the study that he thought that his individual writing was better.

For more evidence highlighting the advantages of collaborative writing, the data from the think aloud protocols bring forth interesting examples that show how actively the students were in trying to improve their vocabulary. Below is dialogue from three students:

**Speaker 2:** According to my own experience last semester I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore he found a lot of errors that I was not aware of, a lot of errors or a lot of mistakes?

**Speaker 5:** Mistakes.

**Speaker 4:** Errors

**Speaker 5:** Errors?

Such an interesting interaction between the students took place several times during the course of collaborative writing. That type of interaction generated a very supportive environment for the students to improve vocabulary. The students did the task by applying the process approach, which was beneficial for them as noted in the current study. The approach focused on the students’ finished written texts and the correct usage of linguistic knowledge therein, stressing the proper use of vocabulary (Yan, 2005; Pincas, 1982; Badger & White, 2000).

Data from several instruments confirm that the students in the experimental group did better than the students who were writing individually in improving vocabulary. When applying the traditional approach (individual writing), students in writing essays are commonly concerned with the surface aspects, such as choosing vocabulary, spelling, and correcting grammatical errors (Grami, 2005). Therefore, the students in the control group were supposed to benefit from that approach in improving vocabulary. However, as was presented previously in Chapter Four, the students did not benefit in this respect from the individual writing method, which resulted in no significant improvement in vocabulary, attributing to some barriers in the course study.
Although Arab students experience difficulty in vocabulary (Latif, 2009; Al-Sharah, 1997; Elkhatib, 1984), students in the experimental group, as noted in the test results and responses of the students, achieved significant progress that was indicated by their choice of words. This improvement goes in line with Storch’s claim (2005), who said that when writing in small groups, students synthesize information from each other, clarify meaning, deliberate over grammatical or lexical choices, discuss structure, and make choices when producing a text. As stated in Chapter Two, the positive findings agree with what is stated by Tudor (1996, p. 182), “Peer evaluation is, thus, a practical form of learner training which develops learners’ understanding of language usage and the type of difficulties…”.

**Experimental versus Control Groups in Mechanics of Writing**

Mechanics, which are comprised of the “conventions of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indentation, etc.” (Shehadeh, 2011, p. 292), are no less important than the other criteria of writing. Allen and Huon (2003) argue that good and effective writing requires understanding the mechanics of writing. Therefore, one of the interesting aspects in this study was to see how students who were writing collaboratively would improve this criterion as opposed to the students who used the traditional method.

According to the independent t-test results as presented in Chapter Four, the p-value tells us that there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups (Table 4.14; Appendix 11) in improvement of the mechanics of writing. As students mainly focus on peer comments regarding high-order levels (content, organization, cohesion, and unity) (Keh, 1990) while individual writing students focus on the lower levels (spelling, grammar, and mechanics) (Grami, 2005), we could anticipate finding no significant difference between the two groups. However, when applying the paired t-test, the p-value shows that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-test in the experimental group, while the case was negative for the control group (Table 4.14; Appendix 11). To confirm these findings, data from the other instruments bring forth similar significant findings for the experimental group.

As outlined in sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.7, the vast majority of the participants agreed that CW is better than individual writing in improving spelling and punctuation. In addition, the experimental group levels of agreement increased from 50% to 70% in responding to the comment “Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation in my writing” (Figure 4.11).
In answering the questionnaire’s open-ended questions (Appendix 4) the majority of students in the experimental group reported improvements in their mechanics of writing skills (section 4.1.2) as these comments confirm:

As I said, group work is interesting. I did not improve myself a lot but when I worked with my classmates we enjoyed working together and I feel that I improved myself in grammar and spelling

(Respondent A9)

I found that I have improved in grammar, spelling, punctuation.

(Respondent A31)

Yes I find myself much better in writing. The idea of group work was a very interesting chance. I improved myself in writing with the grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, improving new ideas, spelling

(Respondent A27)

On the other hand, the majority of the students in the control group were not satisfied about their improvement in this criterion:

I thought that I will improve myself in many areas such spelling, grammar, punctuation and developing the essay but I did not find development.

(Respondent B8)

I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes. Also spelling and punctuation are still difficult for me.

(Respondent B2)

In addition to that, in the interview (section 4.2), the students who were writing collaboratively reported that they observed improvements in several areas and they specified that spelling was one of the areas, as they explained below:

So, you need to work in groups to improve your grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, and a lot of other mistakes

(Interviewee A16)

I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group [is] participate[s] to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic]

(Interviewee A21)

Students from the control group, however, conversely claimed that individual writing did not help them recognize and improve the spelling errors, as stated by the following student:
When you are writing, you cannot focus on spelling because you want to finish because it's somehow if you're working individually it's boring like I said, so you just want to finish. So sometimes, you have spelling errors. [sic]

(Interviewee B11)

The student said that when he was writing individually, he could not focus on spelling and one of the reasons was because he found individual writing boring. However, in collaborative writing, students were happy to share their experiences and they improved themselves in writing mechanics as the following dialogue excerpt illustrates:

**Speaker 3:** I will chick up the misspelling  
**Speaker 2:** M I or ME?  
**Speaker 5:** Misunderstanding  
**Speaker 4:** M-I-S-S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G

The example below illustrates how the students helped each other in sentence punctuation:

**Speaker 2:** You will be able. Is there a comma between you and so?  
**Speaker 4:** No, I don’t think...

It was clear the students were very active in helping each other in writing and the mechanics of writing was one of those areas students were keen to improve. This type of dynamic activity between the students supports the contention that collaborative writing is better than individual writing in improving the mechanics of writing. The score results proved to be significant for the experimental group in this regard.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Arab learners face difficulties in punctuation (Mourtaga, 2004) and spelling (El-Hibir & Al Taha, 1992; Salebi, 2004). Arab learners make common errors in writing, with spelling and punctuation being one of the most common types (Alsaawi, 2015; Al-Jarf, 2010a; Al-Jarf, 2010b; Khan & Itoo, 2012). Therefore, collaborative writing is found to be a very useful method to help learners improve their writing mechanics, as noted in the variable instruments used in the current study.

A point worth mentioning is that while barriers such as timelines, busy courses, and exams for other courses negatively affected the improvement of the control group, but the case was the opposite with the experimental group, who were found to be very interested, motivated, and
active in writing collaboratively. The significant findings of the multiple instruments are direct evidence of such an improvement.

When writing, the students had the chance to work collaboratively, discuss, and come to decisions about many issues, such as selecting the title, agreeing on key messages, determining how to proceed, deciding on an audience and the purpose of the piece, deciding on the order of ideas, subheadings, and paraphrasing, underlining, using punctuation marks, selecting vocabulary, using proper spelling and grammar, sharing reading, and revising the text. All these types of activity, as supported by other researchers (such as Dobao, 2012; Ferris, 2003; Hanjani, 2013; Niesyn, 2011; Noël & Robert, 2003), have helped to improve writing when the students applied collaborative writing.

To the best of our knowledge, previous studies have scarcely investigated peer preferences for receiving macro and micro level peer feedback using multiple data instruments, such as the ones used in the current study. What stands out in this study is that the students in the experimental group received higher scores in the macro levels of writing than in the micro levels (Figure 5.1), and the control group received higher scores in the micro levels than the macro levels. This interesting issue will be discussed further in the next chapter. It is worth mentioning that the students in the control group in the post writing test did better in the Micro level than in the Marco level. For example, as shown in Figure 5.1, the students in usage, style, word choice and mechanics of writing got higher scores than in cohesion, development and organization. On the other hand, the students in the experimental group attained higher scores in the macro level than in the micro level; i.e., they did better in cohesion, development, and organization than in usage, style, word choice, and mechanics of writing. This issue opens room for further research as will be discussed in the following chapter.
The micro and macro levels have been neglected in previous research. However, the present study paid more attention to students’ preferences for providing and receiving macro/micro feedback, as noted in collaborative writing, in order to provide deeper insights for the use of peer feedback. The significant findings are direct evidence of them solving the problems that they faced in both levels of writing, which showed that the students received higher scores in the macro levels of writing as opposed to the micro levels.

5.5. Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the data gathered from both the practitioners and students by the questionnaires, pre- and post-tests, interviews, and think-aloud protocols provided significant findings about the advantages of collaborative writing as compared to writing individually. The purpose of this study was to show the benefits of collaborative writing through answering the research questions (section 3.3.1).
In general, most findings of the study are in line with the majority of similar studies as mentioned in section 2.9.3.6 and Appendix 18. This study committed to deeper investigation in order to show the role of collaborative writing in improving essay writing along several criteria. The results of the quantitative and qualitative investigations confirm that there are significant differences between the experimental and control groups at the end of the treatment study.

The students who wrote collaboratively did indeed achieve better work than the students who were writing individually. However, because the current study was limited to 20 Saudi students and applied over a short period of time, it admittedly has some limitations. Nonetheless, this study creates potential for further research, as will be discussed in the next and final chapter.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.0: Introduction
The previous chapter presented a comprehensive discussion of findings from the current study. At this point, all collected data have been presented, analyzed, and offered through a detailed discussion to address the four research questions in the present study (section 3.3.1). This chapter therefore summarizes the results and findings reported in all previous chapters in relation to the research questions. Finally, the chapter highlights issues related to the significance of the study. Implications for further development of collaborative writing (CW) to be applied generally in universities and specifically in Saudi colleges are also presented. Additionally, issues that represent limitations of the research study are identified. Finally, directions and recommendations for future research are outlined in section 6.3.

6.1: Summary of the Study
While the literature on the benefits of CW in Arab and non-Arab countries is growing, many studies of this important topic do not offer sufficient empirical data collection or analysis to support their claims. This study therefore set out to collect and analyze data with the aim of answering four questions (section 3.3.1) surrounding practitioners’ perceptions of the role of CW, Saudi university students’ perceptions about CW in improving their writing skills, the role of CW versus individual writing in reducing errors, and finally, the role of CW versus individual writing in improving essay writing (macro and micro issues).

A mixed-methods approach was adopted (section 3.2.1.5) due to the nature of the study and research questions which required quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study was conducted in classroom conditions with random sampling due to the inflexibility of the division of the participants. The study ultimately consisted of 20 third level participants majoring in English at Imam University in Saudi Arabia. The data were collected through individual oral interviews, a questionnaire, a pre- and post-writing test, a pre- and post-error identification test, and a think-aloud protocol (section 3.4.5). The ensuing data analysis was divided into quantitative data (section 3.5.1) and qualitative data through thematic analysis (section 3.5.2).

The study identified several advantages of CW over the traditional method of individual writing. The findings showed that CW helped students improve writing significantly better than writing individually. There was considerable evidence from borderline statistically and
thematically significant data (sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5) that CW is not only more useful than individual writing in improving essay writing but also has enormous scope for further research on issues such as applying CW outside the classroom (section 6.2.3) and training peers how to offer feedback in CW (section 6.2.4).

As discussed in section 4.1, the majority of the 35 practitioners participating in the study responded that CW is better than writing individually; for example, during the planning stage; during discussion and development of mutual ideas; and in making choices regarding word selection, grammar, and mechanics (Figure 4.2). In addition, the practitioners, who were teaching in the same home department as the researcher, provided vital details about the common errors Saudi learners frequently make. The practitioners’ responses addressed research questions on the advantages and the disadvantages of CW, confirmed the data findings, and helped the researcher develop suggestions for future research. Furthermore, CW was also observed to help students significantly improve their writing skills. The findings from the qualitative data on student perceptions of the implementation of CW revealed that the students made significant progress (sections 4.2 and 4.3). Data analysis gathered from the interview and think-aloud protocols (sections 4.2 and 4.3) further showed that the students who were writing collaboratively did better than the students who were writing individually. These findings were confirmed by the outcomes of the writing test and error test, which demonstrated that the students writing collaboratively did significantly better than did those who were writing individually (sections 4.4 and 4.5). The results of the study clearly showed that the use of CW, unlike individual writing, benefited learners in that it offered a peer-support structure which enabled and supported them in solving their ongoing problems in essay writing effectively.

6.2: Implications for Practice

This study identified a number of practical considerations for more successful implementation of CW in Saudi universities. A key finding was the diversity apparent in group work. The nature of CW among the students was greatly distinctive. As outlined in Chapter Two, collaborative writing is one solution that participated in facilitating and improving the process of writing as noted in this study. This happened when the students shared collaborative writing, where peers read what writers produced and solved problems through the cooperative discussion. The significant findings and several advantages of CW noted in this study suggest that this method could be extended to other environments. For example, this has implications
for the implementation of CW outside the classroom (section 6.3.2.3) which use Online Chat, Forums, Facebook, Google Docs, OneDrive, Wiki, and so on.

6.2.1: Applying Collaborative Writing in the Classroom

Teachers in Saudi Arabia usually focus on traditional teaching approaches (individual writing) (Al-Hazmi, 2003; Mohammad & Hazarika, 2016; Syed, 2003). However, a minority of teachers are willing to experiment with implementing new theories on how to teach L2 writing (Hyland, 2003b). The practitioners who participated in this study taught writing skills to the students in Imam University. All but three of the 35 teacher participants hold a postgraduate qualification, approximately half to Masters and half to PhD level (section 4.1.1). Interestingly, the participants are experienced in teaching writing skills, and the number of years of experience ranges from one year to more than 10 years. Therefore, it was worthwhile to gather their impressions about applying CW in class. According to the teachers’ education and experience in writing, they were asked if CW is better than individual writing in class at certain stages in writing. When the teachers were asked if they had used group work in class, 77.14% said “yes” (section 4.1.3). In addition, the majority of the practitioners agreed that CW was better than writing individually writing in class at certain stages in writing (section 4.1.3). The teachers’ perceptions of CW being more fruitful than writing individually align with the positive findings of the students’ achievement in the experimental group in writing. Such significant findings encourage applications such an alternative method throughout Saudi universities.

6.2.2: Increasing Motivation

Motivation is recognized as a critical factor for learner performance within academic contexts (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000; Hulleman and Barron, 2015). Mittan (1989) claimed that peer feedback gives learners a sense of confidence and guidance, increasing their motivation to write, while Crandall (1999) contended that cooperative learning can increase motivation. Furthermore, collaborative inquiry is one of the most effective tools for strengthening teaching learners since collaboration generates an atmosphere of increased drive and commitment (David, 2008). According to data analysis results, the experimental group students revealed positive findings about being motivated to work hard during the treatment study. As discussed in section 4.6.2, for example, the amount of agreement that “Group work in class encourages me to work hard” rose from 60% to 80%. 

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As noted in this study, in collaborative learning, the learners were actively negotiating, exchanging, and debating their ideas in groups which increases the students’ motivation and interest in learning writing. In fact, the level of agreement in response to the statement “Group work motivates the students to write and discover their errors in writing” increased from 50% to 80% (Figure 4.15). This confirms that CW incentivizes learners to work hard. The student enjoyment of CW was also noted as an aid to motivation and helped to improve writing of the majority of participants in the current study.

In addition, two of the students were interested in CW, and the task of writing collaboratively motivated them to write more actively than writing individually.

*For sure, group writing gave us a very useful chance to work very hard and improved ourselves and finish writing on time*  
(Respondent A29).

*My colleagues motivated me to discuss and discover many problems in writing*  
(Respondent A31).

This study showed that the majority of the participants writing collaboratively were impressed and motivated to actively write, which resulted in improving their overall writing as evidenced by their test results (sections 4.4 and 4.5).

### 6.2.3: Applying Collaborative Writing outside the Classroom

While the study was conducted in a relatively short period of time (Appendix 12) and involved a small number of participants (section 3.4.4.2), the results nonetheless confirm positive findings in different areas in academic writing (section 4.5). The significant findings regarding the role of collaborative writing in improving student skills in essay writing offer potential research opportunities in areas such as collaborative writing outside the classroom. Although traditional (individual) learning inside the classroom is well established, sharing learning outside the classroom has presented a challenge to students, especially with the fast development of technology. Schools and universities would do well to consider the value of collaborative learning outside the classroom. A number of researchers have discussed how useful collaborative writing is outside the classroom. Moss et al. (2014), for example, maintains,
In the classroom, teachers see writing groups as structures that empower students to become more thoughtful, engaged, and critical writers and readers. Outside of the classroom, writers believe that their groups will empower them to create a text that conveys their intended message as clearly and completely as possible (p. 3).

As stated above, it is evident that writers outside the classroom can be motivated to share their experiences in writing to get clear and error-free texts. Members of collaborative writing groups not only work to empower each other but also consistently negotiate the potential power dynamics which inevitably operate outside the classroom. Clearly, the unprecedented increase in the use of information technologies throughout institutions, schools, and universities is changing the way students learn. With the increase of modern technology in education, teachers and students alike can benefit from many tools outside the classroom when applying collaborative writing, such as wikis, forums, online chats, and massive open online courses (MOOCs). Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013, p. 4) purport that “the more we know about effective uses of technologies for teaching and learning, the faster we can adopt these new practices, facilitate their proliferation across higher education, and increase student success.”

The massive online collaboration activity offers new opportunities to combine and improve all essential areas of writing instruction such as grammatical accuracy, organization, generating ideas, cohesion, audience awareness, drafting and revising, etc. (Lund, 2008). The Web-based collaborative activity and use of Google Docs⁵ for instance offers additional insights. In addition, examining discussions, for instance in a wiki, in a collaborative environment, Hunter (2011) found concluded that online collaboration is helping to redefine activities such as contributors’ ideas of authorship. Of particular interest to researchers will be how such technologies may affect collaborative writing.

6.2.4: Peer Training
One limitation of the present research study is that the participants were not trained to provide feedback. The positive findings of this study presented in Chapter Four and discussed in Chapter Five indicate that further research is warranted on the effect of feedback training on how much students learn from receiving and providing peer feedback. In general, peer

⁵ Google Docs, a free web-based version of Microsoft Word, offers collaborative features which can be used to facilitate collaborative writing in a foreign language classroom (Suwantarathip & Wichadee 2014, p. 148)
feedback from a trained person with a high level of expertise is expected to be more thorough, effective, and beneficial than that from a non-trained student. Ilgen et al. (1979) cite expertise as one of the major and important factors for effective feedback. In addition, Patchan and Schunn (2015) state that through training and practicing how to provide feedback, students strengthen their ability to self-diagnose and solve writing problems. They claim that students benefit from playing the roles of both receivers and providers of feedback, but especially when students are well trained to provide feedback.

As discussed in section 2.9.3.4, Tsui and Ng (2000), conducted a six week study which placed particular emphasis on grammatical accuracy in writing. Using the data instruments of a survey and an interview, the researchers found that the students preferred feedback from teachers who they regarded as a “figure of authority that guaranteed quality” (p. 149). For this reason, they were reluctant to trust their own peers. In addition, in the current study, the students from the experimental group, for example, were asked in the questionnaire, “I trust peer feedback”, and 50% of the students agreed with that statement. This suggests that the students were reluctant to trust peer feedback. This implies the need of peer training in order for the students to be able to provide trusted feedback as teachers do.

6.3: Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

6.3.1: Limitations of the Study

Certain aspects of this study’s design and methodology limited the generalizability and utility of the findings. One of the limitations was the small number and type of participants. Only 20 students were found to be punctual and fully committed to completing the empirical study. Moreover, the participants were restricted to male undergraduate Saudi students majoring in English at Imam University in Riyadh whose English proficiency was intermediate. There is clearly scope for further research to be applied on Saudi female students and also students in different countries and even at different levels, such as secondary or high school students.

Another limitation arose from allotting participants only a short time within which to write collaboratively (Appendix 12). Twelve weeks of collaborative writing was too short to allow the participants to develop their writing skills and to allow the researcher to assess the growth of the participants’ essay writing capabilities. Indeed, research reveals that CW can provide more positive learning opportunities, but it requires a more extended timeframe. If students’
training had continued for longer, students would arguably have had more opportunities to practice to write, revise, edit, and learn more from peer feedback to improve their writing.

As presented in section 4.3.7, one issue is worth mentioning is that while carrying out the study, the researcher was keenly focused on two effects of the Hawthorne phenomenon and yea-saying. The Hawthorne effect describes the fact that research participants can alter their behaviour and experience benefits, merely as a result of being part of a research study.

On the other hand, yea-saying is a response bias that allows the participants to agree with the teacher even when in doubt. As a gatekeeper (someone else to teach the classes so as to ‘distance’ the researcher from the students being studied), it would be better to avoid such an issue. However, triangulating the data results greatly affected reducing any bias were there any. For example, after the researcher asked them if their writing had improved, they answered “yes”. To support such a reply, the students in the experimental group did well on the test, which corroborated the responses of the participants. While conducting the study, the researcher mainly focused on establishing the students’ feelings with reference to collaborative writing. Interestingly, from the researcher’s observations, the Hawthorne effect was the most prevalent qualitative research effect in this study. It seems to be unavoidable, especially today when participants are very much aware they are part of a study and have to sign consent forms.

6.3.2: Directions for Further Research

Despite the small sample the researcher used, insight was nevertheless gleaned into (a) students’ roles (peer feedback), (b) interactions among students, (c) sharing of experiences, and (d) strategies for improving writing. The findings that have been reported in this study indicate that further research is warranted to promote CW as a dynamic tool to support learners’ improvement of their writing skills. For example, additional empirical studies could compare the effectiveness of various types of CW and which advantages collaborative writing could yield if applied to:

- A large number of students
- ESL/EFL students for a protracted time period
- Male and female students, students of different levels and from different cultures or backgrounds
- Students trained in providing peer feedback
6.3.2.1: Micro- and Macro-Levels
As discussed in Chapter Two, the students who wrote collaboratively took advantage of the process approach to plan, draft, revise, and redraft (Badger & White, 2000; Zhang, 1995). The process approach to writing engages with planning and drafting (macro-level) rather than with vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (micro-level) (Badger & White, 2000). As discussed section 5.4.2, the skills of the students who were writing collaboratively were more improved than those of the students who were writing individually. However, the students in the experimental group achieved higher scores in the macro-level than in the micro-level. The outcome of using such an approach in CW was that the students improved significantly more than the students who wrote individually in organization, including the thesis statement, development, and coherence and cohesion. The results in the pre- and post-test analyses and discussion have significant findings but with different percentages (Figure 5.1), suggesting that CW might be more useful in applying the process approach to writing at the macro-level rather than the micro-level. These findings warrant further research into why the students in the experimental group performed better at the macro-level.

6.3.2.2: Improving All Stages of Writing
Al-Beshar’s (2012) conducted a study into learners’ perceptions of and improving overall writing skills (section 2.9.3.2). His study supports the current study in the sense that CW was found to be a useful method for improving writing. While the students involved expressed positive perceptions about the experience Al-Beshar noted that his students were active in the pre-writing and revising stages while writing collaboratively, but not in the editing stage. The current study, found that the students were very active in providing mutual feedback. The findings of the current study encourage further research to investigate the role of CW in all stages of writing when applying the process approach. While Al-Beshar adopted a mixed method approach and collected the data through samples of writing essays tests, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the current study used several instruments, one of which was the “Think Aloud protocols”, and it was possible to observe that the students remained very active during the editing stage. Therefore, further research opportunities are available for an expanded study to investigate the effects of collaborative writing on all stages of writing in the process approach.
6.3.2.3: Applying Collaborative Writing outside the Classroom

While the present study focused on CW in the classroom, future research could attend to CW in non-academic contexts. In Saudi Arabia, Alharbi (2015) stated that learning the English language is hampered because students do not practice English outside the classroom. While teaching writing has been an interest for few researchers as a preparation for out-of-class activity, much of the focus has been on classroom room activity. At the same time, the limitations of the study associated tied to in-classroom-based learning which have been frequently acknowledged, indicate further research possibilities for investigating the advantages of applying CW outside the classroom making use of the aforementioned tools of google docs, wikis, forums, MOOCs, OneDrive, Facebook, and so on. Moreover, the opportunity to engage in CW outside the classroom might encourage students to practice their English skills. Therefore, further studies could examine making use of online collaboration in network environments (section 6.2.3).

6.3.2.4: Peer Training

As noted above in section 6.2.4, the participants in the current study were not trained to provide feedback in the CW context. An important implication then is the need to train students carefully to prepare them for collaboration. Urzua (1987) and Grami (2010) maintained that peer feedback is crucially important in the writing process and offer constructive advice on how to train learners to develop and give feedback. Grami (2010) for instance used instructions and a checklist to provide consistent feedback to the students in his study. These included issues such as “Did the writer arrange his ideas in a logical way?” (p. 183). He therefore claimed that when students were properly trained to use peer feedback their attitude towards providing the feedback became more positive. This study suggests that future investigations should address the training of students engaged in CW.

6.4: Conclusion

In conclusion, it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that the CW approach used was the predominant factor for the improvement in student writing over the course of this study. Many other factors may have played an important role. For instance, students’ motivation to learn a new writing method might have stimulated active learning and contributed to a positive change in their attitudes toward group writing. Nevertheless, the findings support the conclusion that the use of CW had an impact on the teaching of the undergraduate Saudi students who participated in this study. Moreover, engaging the students in CW succeeded in improving their
writing performance, their self-reliance in providing feedback and learning, their cognitive abilities, their aptitude in arguing and discussing ideas, and their ability to solve problems. In addition, CW increased students’ awareness of the importance of applying writing strategies within the overall writing process. The positive findings of this study call for the provision of more supportive environments for CW within which learners, with sufficient time and training, can work through the task of writing.

The pedagogical perspective of the study makes it clear that collaborative writing could be established as a useful method for teaching writing which helps students learn from their peers in an effective and enjoyable way. To make this fact clear, the collaborative writing task in the classroom is useful in improving not only grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary (micro-level of writing) but also content, organization, development, cohesion and coherence (macro-level of writing).

This study endeavoured to help Saudi learners to better their writing skills through collaborative writing in small groups. The results of the current study thoroughly support the hypothesis that CW has a significant positive effect on improving the writing skills of EFL students. The results also encourage future research on the global benefits of CW in studies which vary the experimental conditions:

- Apply CW outside the classroom and use online learning platforms such as MOOCs, Wikis, forums, Facebook, Google Docs, OneDrive
- Apply CW to a large number of students, since this study used 20 students
- Apply CW to ESL/EFL students for a longer period of time, since this study was conducted for 12 weeks
- Apply CW to male and female students, students with different levels and students from different backgrounds and cultures as this study was applied on males students in Saudi Arabia
- Apply CW to trained students to provide feedback as this study was applied on untrained students

This case study used five instrument tools for rich investigation to collect the data and the findings proved to be significant. Therefore, the study was unique in investigating the advantages of collaborative writing in improving essay writing as opposed to individual
writing. However, what took place inside the classroom to investigate the usefulness of collaborative writing was somewhat limited by the prevailing conditions of the learning environment. For this purposes of the more effective teaching of writing, the researcher therefore recommends further research to investigate the potential advantages of collaborative writing as applied outside of conventional classroom setting.
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Pre and Post Writing Test

Control and Experimental Groups

The Pre-test Question for Writing a Short Essay
Your task is to write a short essay ranged from 200 to 250 words in the following subject: How can you correct common errors in essay writing? You have 50 minutes to finish the task. Pay special attention to the main categories of essay writing such as organization, development, structure, vocabulary, mechanics etc.

• The students were informed if they wanted to correct errors working individually or collaboratively.

The Post-test Question for Writing a Short Essay
You know that during the previous weeks, we discussed some common errors students usually make and we discussed some tools that could help in identifying the errors and correcting them such as using a dictionary or seeking help from the peers. Your task is to write a short essay ranged from 200 to 250 words in the following subject: When you write, do you prefer to write individually or in groups? Write a short easy in which you justify your choice.
You have 50 minutes to finish the task. Pay special attention to the main categories of essay writing such as organization, development, structure, vocabulary, mechanics etc.

• The students were informed that they should focus on correcting errors as they did in the pre-test.
Appendix 2 – The Pre and Post Error Tests

Read the following essay, and identify the errors. Then, correct the errors you have found.

Learning Styles and Strategies (The Pre-Test)

my learning style is generally good balanced between active, reflective, sensing and intuitive learning. However, I have a more moderate preference toward the visual learning over verbal and the sequential over global learning.

The results of my test did not surprise me. I realize that I comprehend better when shown how to do something over reading directions from a text. I feel the assessment of my test was very valid and the questions that are asked were relative to the process. I believe that my test results were very accurate.

As a learner the instructional strategies that work best for me are the visual along with sequential and I would use these in a classroom with games, graphs, pictures, charts, films, and other tools. To help students that do not learn on the same way, instructor must incorporate other strategies in the classroom to accommodate each of the different learning styles. This would include using the reflective learning style by giving the student chance to think about a subject and come to a conclusion to bring to class a discussion. It would also include addressing the verbal learning style by assign reading material of different types the student could address in class. An evaluation quiz could be used in the classroom utilizing each learning style to access the different learning styles of the students, giving the instructor information about their students learning skills. This information could then be used to better structure the class material. So that each student is accommodated.

There many different technologies out there that can be helpful in today’s classroom to address the different learning skills of students full stop There are Internet sites computer programs literature and games to name a few. New technology is presented to educational facilities and the public every day so that teachers can assess and utilize these within the classroom. New technology is a great advantage in accommodating the different learning skills in the classroom.
The Original Essay


My learning style is generally well balanced between active, reflective, sensing and intuitive learning. However, I have a more moderate preference toward the visual learning over verbal and the sequential over global learning.

The results of my test did not surprise me. I realize that I comprehend better when shown how to do something over reading directions from a text. I feel the assessment of my test was very valid and the questions that were asked were relative to the process. I believe that my test results were very accurate.

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To help students that do not learn in the same way, an instructor must incorporate other strategies in the classroom to accommodate each of the different learning styles. This would include using the reflective learning style by giving the student a chance to think about a subject and come to a conclusion to bring to class a discussion. It would also include addressing the verbal learning style by assigning reading material of different types the student could address in class.

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There are many different technologies out there that can be helpful in today’s classroom to address the different learning skills of students. There are Internet sites, computer programs, literature, and games to name a few. New technology is presented to educational facilities and the public every day so that teachers can assess and utilize these within the classroom. New technology is a great advantage in accommodating the different learning skills in the classroom.
Read the following essay, and identify the errors. Then, correct the errors you have found.

Teaching Philosophy (The Post-Test)

My teaching philosophy that teachers need to relate the concepts that students learn to the world around him. Students attend educational institution to prepare for future employment and to enter the real world. The basic skills that is needed to survive on society are taught in the classroom like reading and writing but students must also be taught that the concepts that they are learning in the classroom will prepare them for the rest of their lives. The concepts that an student is learning must affect his or her life directly. To be more specific, students should be able to feel as if the subject matter that he or she is learning is somehow related to them and has an affect on the world that they live in Students needs to be able to relate to their school work to supplement further engagement. The more that a student feels they can relate to a specific subject, the stronger the possibility that the student will continue to be eager to learn the subject. For example, in an english classroom, students should be able to see themselves in an aspect of the literature they are reading. A group of seventh graders may have a hard time relating to a book about someone who is 5 years younger then them, but they may be eager to find similarities between themselves and a character that just happens to be of the same age.

Showing your students that you care about their world allow your students to see that you care about them. If a teacher cares enough to relate the subject matter to a situation that may be occurring in his or her student lives, then the student will appreciate it. It motivates a student to excel and makes the teacher seem more approachable to the students. For example, the teacher should choose multi-cultural literature to be used within his or her classroom. By using multi-cultural literature, students are able to learn about different cultures. Knowledge of different cultures is an important part of society and prevents ignorance in the classroom and in the outside world. Students take pride in their culture and their world. They want to feel as if their world is important. When a teacher incorporates specific activities in their curriculum to promote this idea, they felt as if their world is indeed special.
My teaching philosophy is that teachers need to relate the concepts that students learn to the world around them. Students attend an educational institution to prepare for future employment and to enter the real world. The basic skills that are needed to survive in society are taught in the classroom like reading and writing, but students must also be taught that the concepts that they are learning in the classroom will prepare them for the rest of their lives. The concepts that a student is learning must affect his or her life directly. To be more specific, students should be able to feel as if the subject matter that he or she is learning is somehow related to them and has an affect on the world that they live in.

Students need to be able to relate to their school work to supplement further engagement. The more that a student feels they can relate to a specific subject, the stronger the possibility that the student will continue to be eager to learn the subject. For example, in an English classroom, students should be able to see themselves in an aspect of the literature they are reading. A group of seventh graders may have a hard time relating to a book about someone who is 5 years younger than them, but they may be eager to find similarities between themselves and a character that just happens to be of the same age.

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Appendix 3 – The Students’ Pre Questionnaire
Control and Experimental Groups

A: General Information

Name: (Optional) ____________________________

Academic Year: _______       Level: _______       College: ___________

Have you taken either the IELTS or TOEFEL exam? Y/N
If the answer is yes, what grade did you get in writing? ______________________

English Proficiency: Check the one that best describes your rating of your English proficiency.

Elementary (   ) Intermediate (   ) Advanced (   )

How would you rate your proficiency in English writing?

Elementary (   ) Intermediate (   ) Advanced (   )
B: Pre – Questionnaire (Students)

Instructions:
For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement/disagreement by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

Scale for Agreement/Disagreement
1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = uncertain
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

Part One:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-</td>
<td>I like English writing activities.</td>
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<td>2-</td>
<td>I think that learning English writing skills is essential.</td>
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<td>3-</td>
<td>Writing in English is a difficult activity.</td>
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Part Two:

Learners’ will give insight about group work, individual work, teachers’ feedback, peer feedback, monolingual dictionary feedback with group discussion, and monolingual feedback with only individual work in classes where the student is required to write essays (This will not be included in the questionnaire).

Please indicate your opinion on the following statements by checking the box that best describes your attitude towards the approach to writing used in your lessons.

Scale for Agreement/Disagreement
1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = uncertain
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Work in my writing skills class</th>
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<tr>
<td>I like working with groups in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work in class is better than individual work with regard to improving my essay writing skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work helps improve my essay writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work in class encourages me to work hard.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work in class is interesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work distracts learners in class when they write.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group writing takes longer time than working individually.</td>
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</table>

**Individual Work**

| I like working individually in class. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individual work in class is better than group work with regard to improving English essay writing skills |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individual work in class is interesting. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individual work does not distract learners in class as compared to group work. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Individual writing takes a shorter time than working in groups. |   |   |   |   |   |
| I work harder when I write my own. |   |   |   |   |   |

**Peer Feedback**

| I trust peer feedback. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Peer feedback helps me improve the organization of my writing. |   |   |   |   |   |
| Peer feedback helps me improve the content of my writing. |   |   |   |   |   |
Peer feedback helps me improve the grammar structure of my writing.

Peer feedback helps me improve the spelling and punctuation in my writing.

Peer feedback helps me improve the word choice in my writing.

Peer feedback helps me improve my overall writing ability.

Peer feedback helps me find weakness in my drafts.

My peers’ corrections of my errors do not embarrass me.

Peer feedback helps me understand the criteria for good writing.

My second draft is better than the first draft because of peer feedback.

My classmates help me find mistakes that I was not aware of.

Reviewing my peers’ drafts also helps my writing.

I trust the suggestions my classmates give me.

I believe I have the ability to give my classmates helpful suggestions about writing.

I believe my peers should correct my writing.

Peer feedback helps me overcome my fear of writing in English.

Peer feedback presents a useful opportunity to share ideas, benefit from each other, and improve essay writing skills.

The peer feedback technique should be applied in English writing classes.
In class writing, using an English-English dictionary is more helpful when I work in groups.

In class writing, using an English-English dictionary is more helpful when I work by myself.

Part Three:

Please indicate your opinion on the following statements by checking the box that best describes your attitude regarding group work and writing essays in class.

Scale of Agreement/Disagreement
1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = uncertain
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group work motivates me to write and discover my errors in writing.</td>
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<td>I feel relaxed writing in English in a group.</td>
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<td>Writing essays in class with peers is interesting.</td>
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<td>Group work is a good chance to make stronger connections with peers.</td>
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<td>Group writing gives me a positive attitude towards writing.</td>
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</table>
Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills in groups will help you to write better? If so, how? If not, why not?

Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills individually will help you to write better? If so, how? If not, why not?

- Students were informed to choose according to their group (Control or Experimental Group).
Appendix 4 – The Students’ Post Questionnaire

Control and Experimental Groups

(C)Post-Questionnaire (Students)

Date: _____________________

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement/disagreement by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate box.

Scale of Agreement/Disagreement
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Please indicate your opinion on the following statements by checking the box that best describes your attitude towards the approach to writing used in your lessons.

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<td>Individual work does not distract learners in class as compared to group work.</td>
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<td>Individual writing takes a shorter time than working in groups.</td>
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<td>I work harder when I write on my own.</td>
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**Peer Feedback**

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<th>I trust peer feedback.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peer feedback helps me improve the organization of my writing.</td>
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<td>Peer feedback helps me improve the content of my writing.</td>
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<td>Peer feedback helps me improve the grammar structure of my writing.</td>
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<td>My classmates help me find mistakes that I was not aware of.</td>
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<td>Reviewing my peers’ drafts also helps my writing.</td>
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<td>I trust the suggestions my classmates give me.</td>
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<td>I believe I have the ability to give my classmates helpful suggestions about writing.</td>
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<td>I believe my peers should correct my writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer feedback helps me overcome my fear of writing in English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer feedback presents a useful opportunity to share ideas, benefit from each other, and improve essay writing skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The peer feedback technique should be applied in English writing classes.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Group Work and Usefulness of English-English dictionary

In class writing, using an English-English dictionary is more helpful when I work in groups.

Individual Work and Usefulness of an English-English dictionary

In class writing, using an English-English dictionary is more helpful when I work by myself.

Part Three:

Instructions:
Please indicate your opinion on the following statements by checking the box that best describes your attitude towards regarding group work and writing essays in class.

Scale of Agreement/Disagreement
1 = strongly agree
2 = agree
3 = uncertain
4 = disagree
5 = strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group work motivates me to write and discover my errors in writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel relaxed writing in English in a group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing essays in class with peers is interesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work is a good chance to make stronger connections with peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group writing gives me a positive attitude towards writing.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills in groups **helped you** to write better? If so, how? If not, why not?

Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills individually **helped you** to write better? If so, how? If not, why not?

- Students were informed to choose according to their group (Control or Experimental Group).
Appendix 4 – The students’ post questionnaire

(D) Post Questionnaire (Students)

Part One:

Instructions:
After spending one semester in an English writing class, please rate your satisfaction about the benefit you received from the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Source</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peers’ feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an English-English dictionary in Group Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using an English-English dictionary in Individual Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two: Evaluation of Student Writing after One Semester of Learning in Groups
Please check the box that rates your improvement in the following areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity: Working with peers:</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning before writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning strategies (brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing) for overall composition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing ideas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Revising drafts effectively</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Part Three:

**Evaluation of Student Writing after One Semester of Learning Individually**

Please, check the box that rates your improvement in the following areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity: working alone:</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning before writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning strategies (drafting, revising and editing) for overall composition</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coming up with ideas about content and vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizing ideas</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Revising drafts effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding weaknesses in my drafts</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving and editing drafts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the grammar/syntax in my writing when working individually</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the spelling and punctuation in my writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving the word choice in my writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finding mistakes in my writing that I was not aware of previously</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5 – The Teachers’ Questionnaire

E: (Teachers’ Questionnaire)

I would greatly appreciate your response to the questions, which should not take much time. Your responses will remain anonymous.

Please check the relevant answer.

First Language: Arabic (  ) English (  ) Other (  )
Qualification: Bachelor’s (  ) Master’s (  ) Ph.D. (  ) Other (  )
Years of experience in teaching English writing skills: 1-5 (  ) 6-10 (  ) More than 10 (  )
In teaching essay writing skills, have you used group work in class? Yes (  ) No (  )

Part One:

Instructions:
Read the following statements and give your opinion towards common errors in writing.
Choose the items you think are the most common errors students make in writing classes at Imam University by putting a check mark ( √ ) in the appropriate box. Please also specify the frequency of the errors.

Scale of frequency:
Rarely
Sometimes = approx 50%
Frequently = > 70%
## Errors

<table>
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<th>word classes</th>
<th>Tick the errors you usually find. (✓)</th>
<th>rarely (✓)</th>
<th>sometimes (✓)</th>
<th>frequently (✓)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>participles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tense</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Auxiliary error</td>
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<td>Double negative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Use of active instead of passive and use of passive instead of active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td>Noun-endings (plural/possessive)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>addition/omission of articles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td>Misuse/omission/wrong adjective</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>Misuse/omission/wrong adverb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>wrong choice of pronoun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>wrong choice of preposition (omission/addition/substitution)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conjunctions</td>
<td>Misuse/omission of conjunctions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discourse structure</td>
<td>wrong choice of transition markers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(For example, Cause-Effect Transitions:</td>
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<td>accordingly, as a result, consequently, for this reason and hence)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Redundancy (repetition, inclusion of unnecessary information)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>Direct translation from Arabic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Idiom errors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Word order</td>
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</table>
If there are other common errors, please specify.

<table>
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<th>Errors</th>
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<th>frequently</th>
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</table>
**Part Two:**

This questionnaire is intended to investigate the perceptions of undergraduate English teachers in Imam University regarding group work in essay writing as compared to individual work.

The researcher will ensure the confidentiality of your responses.

The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes to complete. Your participation and cooperation is highly appreciated.

1. Read the following statements and express your degree of agreement by checking (✓) the appropriate column after you decide and choose which activity is better: group work or individual work in class.

2. Note that 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=uncertain, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Is group work or individual work best at the following stages of writing? Indicate the extent of your agreement/disagreement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning before writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Using strategies (brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing) to write a complete piece of writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coming up with ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organizing ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Revising drafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grammar structure</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Word choice in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Finding mistakes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Group work</th>
<th>Individual work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Planning before writing</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Using strategies (brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing) to write a complete piece of writing</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Coming up with ideas</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Organizing ideas</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Revising drafts</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Grammar structure</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Spelling and punctuation</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Word choice in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Finding mistakes</td>
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</table>
Appendix 6 – Students’ Interview Questions

Interviews for learners who worked in groups

Interview Questions

1. What is the effect of group work on essay writing?
2. How do you feel when you work in groups?
3. Outside the class, do you work in groups or individually while writing essays? Why?
4. What kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay?
5. If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties (e.g. because of past education, interference of the first language, lack of confidence, etc)?
6. Would you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?
7. What recommendations would you make to develop group work in essay writing?

Interviews for learners who worked individually

Interview Questions

1. What is the effect of individual work on essay writing?
2. How do you feel when you work individually?
3. Outside the class, do you work in groups or individually while writing essays? Why?
4. What kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay?
5. If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties (e.g. because of past education, interference of the first language, lack of confidence, etc)?
6. Would you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?
7. What recommendations would you make to develop group work in essay writing?
Appendix 7 - UL Ethical Approval

May 2nd 2016

To whom it concerns,

This letter is to confirm that Mansour Alammar received ethical approval for his PHD research project (The Effectiveness of Group Work vs. Individual Writing: A Case Study to Compare Group Work with Individual Writing in Class to Improve Essay Writing for Male Saudi ESL Learners) from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Limerick (ethical approval reference (2015-02-03-AHSS). Approval was granted on March 11th 2015.

__________________________

Dr. Jean Conacher

Chair, Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
AHSS Faculty Office
Tel: +353 61 202286
Email: FAHSSethics@ul.ie
February 25th 2015

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to provide official approval from the English Language and Literature department, Al-Imam Muhammad Islamic University, Saudi Arabia, for Mansour Nasser A Alammar to have some students in level three from the English Language and Literature to participate in his study.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mohammed Al-Ahayedib
College of Languages and Translation, Dean
Email: miahayedib@imamu.edu.sa
Telephone on (+96612585404)
Fax on (+9662586406)
## Essay Writing Class Plan

### Students’ Curriculum (Control group/Traditional Teaching)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>weeks</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Teaching Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Introduction and Name of the book (Effective Academic Writing 2: The Short Essay, Alice Savage and Patricia Mayer)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Curriculum and explanation to students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Pre-Test (Common Errors in essay writing)</td>
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<td>4. Distributing Post - Questionnaire (Students)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Teaching Unit One (Paragraph to short essay)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Working in class (group writing)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7. Audio Recording (Work Group)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>8. Working in class (individual writing)</td>
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<td>3. Audio Recording (Work Group)</td>
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<td>3. Audio Recording (Work Group)</td>
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<td>4. Working in class (individual writing)</td>
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<td>1. Teaching Unit 5 (Comparison and contrast essays)</td>
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<td>4. Working in class (individual writing)</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>12/04/2015</td>
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<td>23/06/1436</td>
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Researcher: Mansour Nasser A Alammar  
Supervisor: Dr. Freda Mishan  

Date: 17th December 2014  

Dr Freda Mishan  

Course Director PhD TESOL  
School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics University of Limerick  
Ireland  
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Email: freda.mishan@ul.ie
Appendix 10- Essay-scoring rubric (adapted from Paulus, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>evident; ideas random, related to each other but not to task; no paragraphing; no thesis; no unity</td>
<td>No development</td>
<td>Not coherent; no relationship of ideas evident</td>
<td>Attempted simple sentences; serious, recurring, unsystematic grammatical errors obliterate meaning; non-English patterns predominate</td>
<td>Meaning obliterated; extremely limited range; incorrect/unsystematic inflectional, derivational morpheme use; little to no knowledge of appropriate word use regarding meaning and syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Suggestion of organization; no clear thesis; ideas listed or numbered, often not in sentence form; no paragraphing/grouping; no unity</td>
<td>Development severely limited; examples random, if given.</td>
<td>Not coherent; ideas random/unconnected; attempt at transitions may be present, but ineffective; few or unclear referential ties; reader is lost.</td>
<td>Uses simple sentences; some attempts at various verb tenses; serious unsystematic errors, occasional clarity; possibly uses coordination; meaning often obliterated; unsuccessful attempts at embedding may be evident</td>
<td>Meaning severely inhibited; very limited range; relies on repetition of common words; inflectional/derivational morphemes incorrect, unsystematic; very limited command of common words; seldom idiomatic; reader greatly distracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Some organization; relationship between ideas not evident; attempted thesis, but unclear; no paragraphing/grouping; no hierarchy of ideas; suggestion of unity of ideas</td>
<td>Lacks content at abstract and concrete levels; few examples</td>
<td>Partially coherent; attempt at relationship, relevancy and progression of some ideas, but inconsistent or ineffective; limited use of transitions; relationship within and between ideas unclear/non-existent; may occasionally use appropriate simple referential ties such as</td>
<td>Meaning not impeded by use of simple sentences, despite errors; attempts at complicated sentences inhibit meaning; possibly uses coordination successfully; embedding may be evident; non-English patterns evident; non-parallel and inconsistent structures</td>
<td>Meaning inhibited; limited range; some patterns of errors may be evident; limited command of usage; much repetition; reader distracted at time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cohesion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Underdeveloped</td>
<td>Partially coherent, main purpose somewhat clear to reader; relationship, relevancy, and progression of ideas may be apparent; may begin to use logical connectors between/within ideas/paragraphs effectively; relationship between/within ideas not evident; personal pronoun references exist, may be clear, but lacks command of demonstrative pronouns and other referential ties; repetition of key vocabulary not used successfully</td>
<td>Relies on simple structures; limited command of morphosyntactic system; attempts at embedding may be evident in simple structures without consistent success; non-English patterns evident</td>
<td>Meaning inhibited by somewhat limited range and variety; often uses inappropriately informal lexical items; systematic errors in morpheme usage; somewhat limited command of word usage; occasionally idiomatic; frequent use of circumlocution; reader distracted</td>
<td>May have paragraph format; some systematic errors in spelling, capitalization, basic punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Possible attempted introduction, body, conclusion; obvious, general thesis with some attempt to follow it; ideas grouped appropriately; some persuasive focus, unclear at times; hierarchy of ideas may exist, without reflecting importance; some unity</td>
<td>Underdeveloped; some sections may have concreteness; some may be supported while others are not; some examples may be appropriate supporting evidence for a persuasive essay, others may be logical fallacies, unsupported generalizations</td>
<td>Partially coherent; shows attempt to relate ideas, still ineffective at times; some effective use of logical connectors between/within groups of ideas/paragraphs; command of personal pronoun reference; partial command of demonstratives, deictics, determiners</td>
<td>Systematic consistent grammatical errors; some successful attempts at complex structures, but limited variety; clause construction occasionally successful, meaning occasionally disrupted by use of complex or non-English patterns; some nonparallel, inconsistent structures</td>
<td>Meaning occasionally inhibited; some range and variety; morpheme usage generally under control; command awkward or uneven; sometimes awkward, unidiomatic, distracting; some use of circumlocution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Clear introduction, body, conclusion; beginning control over essay format, focused topic sentences; narrowed thesis approaching position statement; some supporting evidence, yet ineffective at times; hierarchy of ideas present without always reflecting idea importance; may digress from topic.</td>
<td>Partially underdeveloped, concreteness present, but inconsistent; logic flaws may be evident; some supporting proof and evidence used to develop thesis; some sections still under supported and generalized.</td>
<td>Basically coherent in purpose and focus; mostly effective use of logical connectors, used to progress ideas; pronoun references mostly clear; referential/anaphoric reference may be present; command of demonstratives; beginning appropriate use of transitions</td>
<td>Some variety of complex structures evident, limited pattern of error; meaning usually clear; clause construction and placement somewhat under control; finer distinction in morpho-syntactic system evident; non-English patterns may occasionally inhibit meaning</td>
<td>Meaning seldom inhibited; adequate range, variety; appropriately academic, formal in lexical choices; successfully avoids the first person; infrequent errors in morpheme usage; beginning to use some idiomatic expressions successfully; general command of usage; rarely distracting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Essay format under control; appropriate paragraphing and topic sentences; hierarchy of ideas present; main points include persuasive evidence; position statement/thesis narrowed and directs essay; may occasionally digress from topic; basically unified; follows standard persuasive organizational patterns | Acceptable level of development; concreteness present and somewhat consistent; logic evident, makes sense, mostly adequate supporting proof; may be repetitive | Mostly coherent in persuasive focus and purpose, progression of ideas facilitates reader understanding; successful attempts to use logical connectors, lexical repetition, synonyms, collocation; cohesive devices may still be inconsistent/ineffective at times; may show creativity; possibly still some irrelevancy | Meaning generally clear; increasing distinctions in morpho-syntactic system; sentence variety evident; frequent successful attempts at complex structures; non-English patterns do not inhibit meaning; parallel and consistent structures used | Meaning not inhibited; adequate range, variety; basically idiomatic; infrequent errors in usage; some attention to style; mistakes rarely distracting; little use of circumlocution |

<p>| 7 | Occasional mistakes in basic mechanics; increasingly successful attempts at sophistication punctuation; may have systematic spelling errors | Basic mechanics under control; sometimes successful attempts at sophistication, such as semi-colons, colons | Occasional mistakes in basic mechanics; increasingly successful attempts at sophistication punctuation; may have systematic spelling errors | Increasingly successful attempts at punctuation and style; occasionally systematic errors in spelling |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Each point clearly developed with a variety of convincing types of supporting evidence; ideas supported effectively; may show originality in presentation of support; clear logical and persuasive/convincing progression of ideas</td>
<td>Coherent; clear persuasive purpose and focus; ideas relevant to topic; consistency and sophistication in use of transitions/referential ties; effective use of lexical repetition, derivations, synonyms; transitional devices appropriate/effective; cohesive devices used to further the progression of ideas in a manner clearly relevant to the overall meaning.</td>
<td>Manipulates syntax with attention to style; generally error-free sentence variety; meaning clear; non-English patterns rarely evident</td>
<td>Meaning clear; fairly sophisticated range and variety; word usage under control; occasionally unidiomatic; attempts at original, appropriate choices; may use some language nuance</td>
<td>Uses mechanical devices to further meaning; generally error-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Well-developed with concrete, logical, appropriate supporting examples, evidence and details; highly effective/convincing; possibly creative use of support</td>
<td>Coherent and convincing to reader; uses transitional devices/referential ties/logical connectors to create and further a particular style</td>
<td>Mostly error-free; frequent success in using language to stylistic advantage; idiomatic syntax; non-English patterns not evident</td>
<td>Meaning clear; sophisticated range, variety; often idiomatic; often original, appropriate choices; may have distinctions in nuance for accuracy, clarity</td>
<td>Uses mechanical devices for stylistic purposes; may be error-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Appropriate native-like standard written English</td>
<td>Appropriate native-like standard written English</td>
<td>Appropriate native-like standard written English</td>
<td>Appropriate native-like standard written English</td>
<td>Appropriate native-like standard written English</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 11 - Details of Analysis (Figures showing the Control vs. Experimental Group findings, Writing Criteria Results)

Figures Showing the Scores of the Pre and Post-Tests (the Control vs. Experimental Groups)

**Macro Levels**

![Control Group Writing Test Thesis Statement](image)

![Experimental Group Writing Test Thesis Statement](image)

![Control Group Writing Test Organisation](image)

![Experimental Group Writing Test Organisation](image)
Figures Showing the Scores of the Pre and Post-Tests (the Control vs. Experimental Groups)

Macro Levels

![Writing Test Development Control Group](image1)

![Writing Test Development Experimental Group](image2)

![Writing Test Cohesion and Coherence Control Group](image3)

![Writing Test Cohesion and Coherence Experimental Group](image4)
Figures Showing the Scores of the Pre and Post-Tests (the Control vs. Experimental Groups)

Micro Levels

Writing Test
Grammar
Control Group

Writing Test
Grammar
Experimental Group

Writing Test
Mechanics
Control Group

Writing Test
Mechanics
Experimental Group

Writing Test
Vocabulary (Usage)
Control Group

Writing Test
Vocabulary (Usage)
Experimental Group
Figures Showing the Scores of the Pre and Post-Tests (the Control vs. Experimental Groups)

Micro Levels
Results of Writing Test Analysis Control vs. Experimental groups

### Macro and Micro Levels of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Significant improvement in experimental group?</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Significant improvement in control group?</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Significant difference between the 2 groups?</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thesis Statement</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.788</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>0.069</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Less than 0.001</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Less than 0.001</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cohesion and Coherence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Less than 0.001</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.288</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.048</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mechanics of Writing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>0.409</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>0.068</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vocabulary (Usage)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.416</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vocabulary (Style)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.040</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>0.908</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.244</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Vocabulary (Word Choice)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vocabulary (Word Length)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.738</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.273</td>
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</table>
### Appendix 12 – Description of the Empirical Study Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic(s) to discuss</th>
<th>Teacher Task</th>
<th>Students’ Task</th>
<th>Purpose of Task(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identifying: the participants</td>
<td>Introduction about what the participant should do during that semester, dividing participants into two groups A experimental and B control, distributed and collecting the prequestionnaires from all the students and pre-tests</td>
<td>Filling out the pre-questionnaires for 30 minutes to finish pre-test in correcting a short essay with 14 errors for 30 minutes A pre-test on a topic to write about “How can I correct essay errors?” for 50 minutes</td>
<td>Questionnaires to get their perceptions and attitudes before applying the treatment study pre-test in correcting errors to identify their English proficiency before the treatment study pre-test on a topic to write to get their writing proficiency before the treatment study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group A 32 students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B 26 students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The book Effective Academic Writing 2: The Short Essay, Alice Savage and Patricia Mayer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre- Questionnaire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre- Test Common Errors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre- Test Writing short essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>First lecture (60 Minutes) giving instructions</td>
<td>Explained what the students were supposed to do during the two lectures Instructions teaching unit two, descriptive essays Instructions: Stages of writing Prewriting stage Drafting stage Revising stage Editing stage Writing a diary and taking notes</td>
<td>In The Second Lecture (60 minutes) Group (A), the experimental group, worked in groups and each had four students. Practice writing: Prewriting stage for 30 minutes Drafting stage for 30 minutes Revising stage for 30 minutes Editing stage for 30 minutes</td>
<td>The aim of practicing writing: To see how the students interacted in the two stages and achieved the task (writing in groups as opposed to individual writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Lecture (60 Minutes) Practice writing in groups and individually The topic to write about “When you write, do you write individually or in groups? Write a short essay in which you justify your choice.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Details</td>
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</table>
| **3** | First lecture (60 Minutes) giving instructions  
Second Lecture (60 Minutes) Practice writing in groups and individually  
The topic to complete writing “When you write, do you write individually or in groups? Write a short essay in which you justify your choice.” |
|  | Instructions: Stages of writing  
Revising stage  
Editing stage  
Writing a diary and taking notes  
In The Second Lecture (60 minutes)  
Group (A), the experimental group, worked in groups and each had four students.  
Practice writing:  
Revising stage for 30 minutes  
Editing stage for 30 minutes  
Group (B), the control group, worked individually  
Practice writing:  
Revising stage for 30 minutes  
Editing stage for 30 minutes  
The aim of practicing writing:  
To see how the students interacted in the last two stages and achieved the task (writing in groups as opposed to individual writing) |
| **4** | First lecture (60 Minutes) giving instructions  
Second Lecture (60 Minutes) Practice writing in groups and individually  
The topic to write about “Which do you like to do more: reading or writing? Why?” |
|  | Instructions: Stages of writing  
Prewriting stage  
Drafting stage  
Writing a diary and taking notes  
The two groups followed what they did in week 2  
The aim of practicing writing:  
To see how the students interacted in the two stages and achieved the task (writing in groups as opposed to individual writing) |
| **5** | The same topics in week 4 |
|  | Instructions: Stages of writing  
Revising stage  
Editing stage  
Writing a diary and taking notes  
The two groups followed what they did in week 3  
The aim of practicing writing:  
See week 4 |
| 6 | Practice writing during the two lectures (120 Minutes)  
The topic: “The best ways to correct essay writing.” | Instructions  
Stages of writing  
Prewriting stage  
Drafting stage  
Revising stage  
Editing stage  
Writing a diary and taking notes | Group (A and B) experimental and control group, where A worked in groups while B worked individually.  
Prewriting stage for 30 minutes  
Drafting stage for 30 minutes  
Revising stage 30 minutes  
Editing stage 30 minutes | The aim of practicing writing:  
Was to see how the participants worked and interacted, paying special attention to the following:  
Time  
Motivation  
Interest in group work  
Using the dictionary  
Working on helping each other  
Peer feedback and trusting peers  
Planning  
Learning strategies  
Coming up with ideas  
Organizing ideas  
Revising drafts  
Finding weaknesses  
Improving and editing drafts  
Spelling  
Improving grammar  
Word choice  
Finding errors  
Both groups finished the four stages during the two lectures. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Practice writing during the second lecture (60 Minutes)  
“How can you correct essay errors?” | Instructions  
Stages of writing  
Prewriting stage  
Drafting stage  
Writing a diary and taking notes  
Using audio recorder (Four students from the experimental group) | The students in both groups A and B practiced writing. See week 3.  
Four students from group A were recorded while working in groups. | The aim was to see how the students in group A improved themselves as opposed to group B.  
Four students in group A were recorded for analysis. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>See week 7.</th>
<th>See week 7. However, this time was about: Instructions Using audio recorder (Four students from the experimental group) Stages of writing Revising stage Editing stage</th>
<th>The students in both groups A and B practiced writing. Stages of writing Revising stage 30 minutes Editing stage 30 minutes</th>
<th>See week 7.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>This week was a Mid-Term Break for the participants.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Post- Questionnaire Post- Test Common Errors Post Test Writing short essay</td>
<td>Introduction about: what the participant should do regarding the post-questionnaire, and post-tests disrupting and collecting the post-questionnaires and post-tests</td>
<td>Filling out the post-questionnaires for 30 minutes to finish Post-test in correcting a short essay with 14 errors for 30 minutes A Post-test on a topic to write about “When you write, do you prefer to write individually or in groups? Write a short essay in which you justify your choice” for 50 minutes</td>
<td>The aim of the post-questionnaire was to get the participants’ perceptions and attitudes after applying the treatment study. pre-test in correcting errors to identify their English proficiency after the treatment study pre-test on a topic to write about to get their writing proficiency after the treatment study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Doing the interview Instructions about the interview Doing the interview Using an audio recorder</td>
<td></td>
<td>Doing the interview Group A, each participant for 5 minutes Group B, each participant for 5 minutes</td>
<td>The aim was to get the participants’ perceptions and attitudes after doing the treatment study and to help in answering the research questions The audio recorder was used for analysis purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 13 - Think Aloud Protocols (Transcript)

(Four Speakers from the Experimental Group)

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ok, now, you can start and discuss the title that I gave you. Take your time.

Speaker 2: How can I correct? What did you wrote in your... [sic]

Speaker 1: And please, when you talk raise your voice.

Speaker 2: Some ideas.

Speaker 3: How can I correct?

Speaker 2: What did you wrote in your...?[sic]

Speaker 3: I wrote three main ideas - the first idea is scanning the whole paragraph for

    find any errors [sic].

Speaker 2: Yeah

Speaker 3: By scanning it, you can find a lot of mistakes. That’s my first idea.

Speaker 2: But scanning will give you errors and you will miss the, you know my point...

Speaker 3: Yeah

Speaker 2: You will ruin your essay.

Speaker 4: I wrote using dictionaries. Asking for help from experienced people...

Speaker 2: Yes, I agree on this one.

Speaker 3: I wrote those two ideas, too.

Speaker 2: Yes, I wrote this one. To show your essay, and the write graft...

Speaker 4: Writing draft...

Speaker 2: Yes, writing draft

Speaker 3: Scanning

Speaker 2: Scan? I don’t know scan. Writing draft is...

Speaker 4: When you finished your essay you scan it and show it to experienced person.
Speaker 1 (Teacher): Can I stop you just for a second? When you talk as I have said, raise your voice.

OK?

Speaker 2: More than that?

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yes, raise your voices, feel free, don’t worry. Because we want your voice to be as clear as possible. The second point is that, you know that you are four students and you are going to discuss how can you correct essay errors, OK? So, you have twenty-five minutes or so. Thank you.

Speaker 5: So, guys, what did you suggest?

Speaker 3: We suggest using dictionaries. Asking for help from experienced people and...

Speaker 2: Writing drafts.

Speaker 3: Writing drafts.

Speaker 2: Writing drafts is better than scanning because scanning will ruin your essay.

Speaker 4: So what do you think?

Speaker 5: Maybe I’ll add reading generalist or journal.

Speaker 4: Now you’re speaking about correcting your mistakes after...

Speaker 3: I have an essay now.

Speaker 4: OK.

Speaker 3: I want to avoid the errors I’ve got.

Speaker 4: You want to correct your mistakes that you have did, you have done.

Speaker 2: So next time when I write an essay I won’t have this.

Speaker 4: The way to avoid your mistake.

Speaker 5: I think it’s a useful way in your reading...

Speaker 3: So, using dictionaries....

Speaker 5(Student): Dictionaries like to misspelling and...

Speaker 3: It will help you...
Speaker 2: With your punctuation.

Speaker 3: Help you in meaning, to use the correct word and correct position. And asking experienced people would help you to built a perfect content.

Speaker 5: experienced people would help you to built a perfect content. Ok, what's the first idea you're going to write?

Speaker 4: I don't know, what do you think?

Speaker 5: I think showing or asking experienced people.

Speaker 3: Asking experienced people.

Speaker 4: Dictionaries will take a lot of time.

Speaker 2: Or showing your essay to English teacher.

Speaker 4: It should seem.

Speaker 2: By showing it to an experienced person, you gain experience.

Speaker 4: So, the first idea asking experienced people... Second

Speaker 2: Keep using a dictionary.

Speaker 5: Using dictionaries.

Speaker 4: And the last one?

Speaker 3: Writing drafts. We have a...

Speaker 4: How can I ...?

Speaker 3: The title say, how can I correct errors?

Speaker 2: Yeah, so I don't know, it's not relevant?

Speaker 4: No, it's very relevant. You are writing about ...

Speaker 5: Isn't it the same or similar to the idea of asking experienced people?

Multiple Speaker: Yes, it might be the same thing. It's something you just know and you ask for knowledge.
Speaker 4: But you might ask your classmate or talk about the class.

Speaker 5: Also that your classmates have an experience.

Speaker 4: Yes, as not as you.

Speaker 5: And what do you think?

Speaker 3: Finding another idea, it would be better.

Speaker 4: what's the idea?

Speaker 3: I don't know just ...just keep brainstorming until we find any.

Speaker 3: You said something when you came?

Speaker 5: Reading general, reading general

Speaker 3: You mean by reading, it helps you... [Muffled speech, multiple speaker]

Speaker 5: Your brain will adjust.

Speaker 2: Reading can make essays... this is to have an idea.

Speaker 4: It might be useful in other way.

Speaker 2: Ok, you have to remember that you are correcting mistakes, correcting errors not avoid. You made the mistake and you want to correct.

Speaker 3: He has a point.

Speaker 2: It the same.

Speaker 5: No, it's not the same.

Speaker 4: Of course, when you are reading, you’ll find mistakes that you have made.

Speaker 5: When you read your essay...

Speaker 4: No, when you are reading journal in general you might find the mistake...

Speaker 2: You will get an experience when you are reading.

Speaker 5: So, it's a useful way.

Speaker 4: We have now maybe 15 minutes so we have to write.

Speaker 2: OK so you want this one. I’m agreeing reading, reading in general.
Speaker 3: Reading, in general, is... reading academic writing

Speaker 4: Academic it says, it says our articles....

Speaker 2: Reading essays

Speaker 4: Academic essays

Speaker 5: Academic and grammatical...

Speaker 3: OK, for the first ah, what do you suggest for the thesis statement?

Speaker 2: Now, the supporting text for each idea.

Speaker 2: The introduction.

Speaker 3: A lot of people doing mistakes.

Speaker 2: We are talking about asking experienced people.

Speaker 4: Yeah you're sure?

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people.

Speaker 3: You want the supporting sentence for that?

Speaker 5: Yeah, we want a topic sentence.

Speaker 3: OK, asking an experienced person.

Speaker 2: Oh, Oh, we are writing an introduction.

Speaker 3: Yeah. A lot of people make mistakes so there are many ways to find; many methods to find errors. Here are some examples, and just suggest these three things.

Speaker 2: I don't think that starting your essay by a lot is a good way.

Speaker 4: We can change. What do you suggest?

Speaker 2: I suggest...

Speaker 5: What did you write?

Speaker 5: What I wrote is...I wrote, everyone makes mistakes. This is the first thing that you have to know...
Speaker 2: Errors! I forgot! Lagging

Speaker 5: Or errors, same, everyone makes mistakes or errors. This is the first thing you have to know when you want to writing an essay. And to avoid or correct these errors there are some methods or...

Speaker 3: Ways, examples

Speaker 5: Yeah

Speaker 2: Yeah, you can write this one, it's good.

Speaker 3: So

Speaker 3: So what do you think?

Speaker 4: I agree with you.

Speaker 3: OK.

Speaker 5: Have no time.

Speaker 4: Which one? First one or second one?

Speaker 2: The second one.

Speaker 5: Everyone make mistakes.

Speaker 3: Makes mistakes.

Speaker 5: Makes mistakes. This is the first thing that you want to know when you want to write an essay.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): As I have said, feel free to discuss the title. And think about the first draft and think about how to organize? How to ask about any, for example, , words that you don't know, any sentence, anything that regards ah errors, for example, and ideas coherence everything

Speaker 5: And to correct these mistakes there are some methods.

Speaker 3: By doing these three methods.

Speaker 4: We suggest, for example, we suggest three methods.
Speaker 3: Three examples and

Speaker 5: To correct these mistakes, there are some methods that you should follow.

Speaker 3: Yeah, we can go by that.

Speaker 2: Three methods?

Speaker 5: There are some methods.

Speaker 2: You can't stop here, there are some methods. OK

Speaker 5: There are some methods that you should follow like, ah...

Speaker 3: Like, you know the three

Speaker 4: Like, asking experienced people

Speaker 5: Asking...

Speaker 3: An experienced person...

Speaker 5: Using dictionaries. And?

Multiple Speakers: reading [muffled speech]

Speaker 5: This is the Draft or

Speaker 2: The draft, yeah.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): And also the drafts, it is better to read aloud. The sentences that you have

written here, to read aloud...

Speaker 2: We've finished.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yeah to let your colleagues and listen to what, for example, you have read and

after that before you come to the final draft. And also, you are going to re-read it

again.

Speaker 5: So, what I wrote is everyone makes mistakes- this is the first thing that you have to

know when you want to write an essay. And to correct these mistakes there are

some methods that you should follow. Like, asking experienced people, using

dictionaries and reading academic essays.
Speaker 3: Good.

Speaker 5: The first body paragraph

Speaker 3: You can say, first.

Speaker 5: First?

Speaker 3: Yeah, first asking experienced person will help you gain and... gain experience and correcting ah or finding errors.

Speaker 4: I think there is...

Speaker 2: A better way to write a topic sentence.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ok, I will let you now and to feel free and to be relaxed and after that think about the important points. Since that, you are working together and discussing the title. Try to be as fast as possible to finish because we have

Speaker 4: 15 minutes... yes sir.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): We have 15 minutes OK, and ah, after that definitely you are going to come to the final draft and re-read it, OK. So I will let you now to discuss what you have finished so far.

Speaker 4: Thank you. What's the topic sentence?

Speaker 2: Frist, by asking experienced person.

Speaker 4: Yeah

Speaker 2: Frist, by asking experienced person.

Speaker 4: We need a topic sentence. You are now going to the ...

Speaker 2: Details

Speaker 4: Details

Speaker 2: Frist, asking experienced people

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people

Speaker 2: Will help you...
Speaker 4: It should be the supporting sentence

Speaker 3: You can you can say asking experienced person and then support this sentence.

Speaker 2: We’ll show you.

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 2: Your errors or whatever

Speaker 5(Student): How about students or people are learning from each other?

Speaker 3: That to explain the main idea, right?

Speaker 5: Mmm

Speaker 3: That what you said to explain the topic sentence, right?

Speaker 4: Then we will go through the main point.

Speaker 3: Just writing the main idea, then explain it by what you said.

Speaker 4: So, what’s your topic sentence?

Speaker 3: First, asking an experienced person will help you gain experience and find errors.

Speaker 4: I think it’s not necessary to say first because we mentioned the ideas.

Speaker 2: What do you suggest?

Speaker 5: For example, there are ways that can help you.

Speaker 2: For example?

Speaker 5: No, no there are ways that can help you.

Speaker 2: But we are talking about one way.

Speaker 5: Yeah then, we go through it.

Speaker 2: No, I see first is better.

Speaker 3: I agree with him.

Speaker 2: I’ve read many academic essays. They always start with first or firstly.

Speaker 4(Student): OK, three seconds to decide our topic sentence.

Speaker 2: First, I say first.
Speaker 2: Asking an experienced person or people.

Speaker 3: Ok, continue.

(Speaker) 3: We don’t have much time so...

Speaker 2: First

Speaker 3: Let's go by that.

Speaker 2: First

Speaker 3: Asking an experienced person will help you gain experience and find errors.

Speaker 2: Why don’t we say, asking experienced people?

Speaker 3: OK

Speaker 2: Without saying first

Speaker 5: Because this is the first body paragraph and so it's the first idea.

Speaker 3: And there is no problem to start with first.

Speaker 5: And there is no problem. (Laughing)

Speaker 2: I know, but you seem to have a problem with first [Joking]

Speaker 4: When you write the first body paragraph and its first idea that we have mentioned

Speaker 2: yeah so, the reader, the reader

Speaker 3: I don’t agree with you.

Speaker 5: When you write first that means there are few things that we talked about.

Speaker 2: So?

Speaker 3: We talked about it.

Speaker 5: No, the first and my beginning with this is...

Speaker 2: Write whatever you want.

Student): Asking experienced people. That's your topic sentence.

Speaker 3: Asking an experienced person will help you find will help you gain experience and find errors.

Speaker 2: Find errors. I will show you the mistakes that you weren't aware of.
Speaker 3: Ok, or you can say asking experience, superior.

Speaker 2: Asking...

Speaker 3: An experienced

Speaker 2: An experienced

Speaker 3: An experienced

Speaker 2: Experienced people, an experienced person same

Speaker 3: Will help you find.

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people

Speaker 3: Will help gain experience.

Speaker 2: Will or Would ?

Speaker 5: Would help you?

Speaker 2: Will

Speaker 3: Will will will help you gain experience

Speaker 2: Will help you gain.

Speaker 3: Experience and find more errors.

Speaker 2: Will help you gain.

Speaker 4: Or avoid

Speaker 3: Yeah it is gained.

Speaker 4: Gain or avoid mistakes? Or gain experience?

Speaker 2: It will help you gain experience.

Speaker 3: Yeah, because you're asking experienced guys.

Speaker 2: Will help you gain experience and...

Speaker 3: Find more errors.

Speaker 5: More errors

Speaker 4: Yeah
Speaker 4: He is a far superior person.

Speaker 2: He has more experience and what?

Speaker 3: He is a far superior person, he has more experience then he’ll find more errors

Speaker 2: You said, Asking experienced people will help you to gain experience.

Speaker 3: Yes.

Speaker 2: And?

Speaker 3: And gain experience and find more errors.

Speaker 4: Yes, I agree

Speaker 2: And find errors?

Speaker 3: More errors

Speaker 4: More?

Speaker 3: He’s better than you.

Speaker 2: And find more...

Speaker 4: Errors

Speaker 2: Errors

Speaker 2: This is the topic sentence?

Speaker 3: Yes, now we explain it.

Speaker 4: Studies or for example, of whatever.

Speaker 3: Theory shows according to studies- studies show

Speaker 2: OK, according to studies

Speaker 4: According to studies

Speaker 2: Yeah

Speaker 3: Yeah

Speaker 2: Asking
Speaker 3: An experienced
Speaker 2: an experienced
Speaker 4: or person
Speaker 5: Or according to my own experience.
Speaker 3: Yes, you can say that.
Speaker 2: You can say that.
Speaker 5: Try that.
Speaker 2: Hmm
Speaker 5: try that, last semester for example.
Speaker 2: Last semester, I've asked my English teacher..
Speaker 5: Or from my own experience
Speaker 3: According to my own experience, last semester...
Speaker 2: Last semester I've asked my English teacher, to look at my essay or
whatever.
Speaker 3: To edit me essay.
Speaker 2: According to my own experience last semester,
Speaker 3: I've I have asked my teacher to edit my essay.
Speaker 2: I've asked...
Speaker 5: I asked, because you mention last semester.
Speaker 3: Ok I asked
Speaker 5: My teacher
Multiple speakers: To look at my essay
Speaker 3: To edit to look at
Speaker 2: To look at my essay and therefore he discovered a lot of errors or whatever.
Speaker 2: And?
Speaker 4: And therefore, he discovered a lot of errors.

Speaker 3: He detected.

Speaker 4: Therefore

Speaker 2: He found

Speaker 4: T-h-e-r-e-f-o-r-e, therefore. The spelling of therefore?

Speaker 2: THEREFORE- FOR-E. (He used Araic words)

Speaker 2: And therefore he...

Speaker 5: He detect

Speaker 2: Found a lot of a lot of errors

Speaker 4: That I was not aware of

Speaker 2: Yes that I wasn’t aware of

Speaker 4: A lot of mistakes or errors

Speaker 3: Errors.

Speaker 2: Errors, so in the title we mention

Speaker 4: And he found a lot of errors..

Speaker 2: That I wasn't aware of. That's enough. Ok the second idea.

Speaker 4: Using dictionary.

Speaker 2: Also! You can start also- topic sentence?

Speaker 4: OK

Speaker 2: Also using dictionaries.

Speaker 3: Using a dictionary using dictionaries?

Speaker 2: Using dictionaries

Speaker 3: Will help you expand your vocabulary and enhance your ehh spelling.

Speaker 2: No punctuation?

Speaker 3: Yes, we have punctuation.

Speaker 4: OK, also ...
Speaker 5: How are we to try to using the English, English dictionary?

Speaker 2: So, we generally use dictionaries.

Speaker 5: OK

Speaker 4: Ah, also...

Speaker 2: Using dictionaries...

Speaker 4: Ok also using dictionaries

Speaker 2: New sentence?

Speaker 3: Will help you...

Speaker 4: Or will give you?

Speaker 3: Will help you

Speaker 4: Ok

Speaker 3: Expand your vocabulary and enhance your punctuation.

Speaker 4: Will expand your vocabulary

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 4: Ok

Speaker 3: And enhance your punctuation.

Speaker 2: Also using dictionaries

Speaker 3: Will expand

Speaker 2: Will expand

Speaker 4: Your

Speaker 2: Ok

Speaker 3: Will expand your vocabulary

Speaker 2: Will expand your vocab

Speaker 4: Until you are

Speaker 3: And enhance your punctuation
Speaker 4: What did you say to use the...

Speaker 2: I say using dictionaries will expand your vocabulary so you are able

Speaker 4: And help you to use it in the best position you said.

Speaker 2: Yeah that’s why I want so say.

Speaker 4: I think you should write this punctuation will...

Speaker 2: Yes using dictionaries will expand your vocabulary

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 4: And help

Speaker 3: Yeah

Speaker 4: Yeah So?

Speaker 2: So, you are able to use the correct word in the correct position.

Speaker 4: So, you will able to use the correct word ....So, you will be able to

Speaker 2: So

Speaker 5: I think it’s good to try using help...

Speaker 2: Is there a comma between so and you?

Speaker 3: Not sure.

Speaker 4: So?

Speaker 2: You will be able. Is there a comma between you and so?

Speaker 4: No, I don’t think...

Speaker 5: (Student): Is there a comma?

Multiple Speaker: So, you will help.

Speaker 2: There is no comma, right?

Speaker 1: After that to avoid what is known as run on sentences, you know, so, you need to use

Speaker 4: Comma?

Speaker 1: Comma

Speaker 4: So, comma?
Speaker 2: You will be able.

Speaker 5: You be able.

Speaker 3: So, you will be able.

Speaker 5: You will be able you.

Speaker 4: You will be able.

Speaker 3: Use construction. You will be able.

Speaker 2: You will be able to what?

Speaker 4: You will be able to use.

Speaker 2: Use the correct word in the correct position.

Speaker: OK.

Speaker 2: In?

Speaker 3: The correct position.

Speaker 2: In the correct position or place?

Multiple Speakers: Position.

Speaker 4: We need an example now or something like that.

Speaker 2: Support.

Speaker 3: Supporting sentence?

Speaker 2: Study as shown. What we wrote in?

Speaker 4: My own experience.

Speaker 3: My own experience.

Speaker 2: Study as shown that using dictionaries while writing will give you...

Speaker 3: That people who use dictionaries and you continue.

Speaker 5: Have more advantages than...

Speaker 3: Are better, have more vocab.

Speaker 2: I wrote in me essay, dictionaries are always useful for writers because it has zero percent mistake.
Speaker 3: You agree with him?

Speaker 4: I don’t know.

Speaker 3: I don’t agree with him. Let’s change the subject.

Speaker 4: It’s not wrong but there is better one,

Speaker 3: Yes there is a better one.

Speaker 4: What is it?

Speaker 3: Laughing

Speaker 2: Study has shown, I think study has shown or for example or

Multiple Speakers: Study has shown what?

Speaker 3: Study has shown people who used dictionary have help, you know help me, in just

emotion

Speaker 1(Teacher): Ok, now, I am going to ask you to read aloud what you have written. I think this is

the draft, right? not the final?

Speaker 5: The second body also using dictionaries...

Speaker 5: Start from beginning?

Speaker 1(Teacher): From the beginning yeah raise your voice.

Speaker 5: Everyone makes mistakes, this is the first ah...

Speaker 4: Everyone makes mistakes, everyone makes mistakes. This is the first thing that

you have to know when you want to write an essay. And to correct these mistakes

there are some methods that you should follow. Like, asking experienced people,

using dictionaries and reading academic essays. Asking experienced people will

help you gain experience and find more errors. According to my own experience,

last semester, I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore, he found a lot

of errors that I was not aware of. Also using dictionaries will expand your

vocabulary so you will be able to use a correct word in the correct position.
Speaker 1 (Teacher): OK, so we are going to stop here, hopefully that you can continue next week for the discussion.

Speaker 2: In the same lecture?

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yeah, during the second lecture I would say.

Speaker 4: OK.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): So, half an hour also to finish this topic.

Speaker 2: So, we have the last body paragraph and the conclusion so will that?

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yeah, so we are going to finish and you have an idea already about that. I think you will discuss the issue.

Speaker 2: Hope we will be ready for it.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): With confidence?

Multiple Speakers: Sure.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Right?

Multiple Speakers: OK

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Before that, I would like for you to mention your numbers again.

Speaker 4: 31

Speaker 5: 18

Speaker 3: 28

Speaker 2: 3

Speaker 1 (Teacher): So, thank you very much for participating and discussing the title. And hopefully that we In Shaa Allah “Means God’s willing” meet next week.

Next is the Second Part took place in the following week.
The Second Part of the transcripts

Speaker 1 (teacher): You can start

Speaker 2: we start last time

Speaker 1(teacher): Raise up your voice.

Speaker 2: Second idea using dictionaries we said also using dictionaries would expand your vocabulary so you will be able to use the correct word in the correct position.

Speaker 4: And also to have a better word maybe like a smart one or something like that

Speaker 5: Just use the correct word.

Speaker 4: The correct position?

Speaker 3: I thank that’s enough.

Speaker 4: It is not enough two lines.

Speaker 3: Why it is not enough?

Speaker 4: I can give an example and that’s it.

Speaker 2: Paragraph

Speaker 4: Two lines?

Speaker 3: We continue

Speaker 4: We only wrote two lines! Also using dictionaries will expand your vocabulary so you will be able to use the correct word in the correct position.

Speaker 3: Ok you can use your own experience

Speaker 4: Or my own experience

Speaker 2: Yeah

Speaker 4: I or I’ve in using dictionaries in my writing classes I need ...

Speaker 2: It helped me a lot.
Speaker 3: Benefited me a lot.

Speaker 4: Enhance my

Speaker 2: My vocabulary bank or something like that

Speaker 4: Make a sentence.

Speaker 2: Make a sentence?

Speaker 4: Yeah

Speaker 2: In the right position?

Speaker 3: From my experience

Speaker 5: From my own experience

Speaker 3: From our experience we used to use

Speaker 4: We used to use?

Speaker 5: Yes

Speaker 4: We've used

Speaker 2: We used to use

Speaker 5: Used

Speaker 2: It is correct yeah we used to use

Multi speakers: Dictionaries

Speaker 5: While we are writing

Speaker 3: to help us

Speaker 2: In classroom works

Speaker 4: In classroom activities

Speaker 3: That's good so

Speaker 4: From my own experience

Speaker 5: Ok write it down. Write it.

Speaker 3: We need to organize the idea so.
Speaker 4: Yes from my own experience

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 2: From our experiences

Speaker 4: From our experience

Multi speakers: We use to

Speaker 3: We use to

Speaker 5: Use dictionary

Speaker 4: We have been using dictionaries.

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 4: Within classroom

Speaker 2: And activities

Speaker 5: And activities

Speaker 4: And it helped me.

Speaker 3: It helped us

Speaker 4: It helped us many times

Multi speakers: It helped us

Speaker 5: It developed us

Speaker 4: Or developed us

Speaker 3: It helped us use new words

Speaker 4: From my own experience

Speaker 3: you can start writing [Laughing] ... or from my

Speaker 2: From my own experience

Speaker 3: You need to flip the page.

Speaker 4: Ok the ideas did we say my or our ?

Speaker 2: It look my essay means and
Speaker 3: Ok from my

Speaker 4: According to my own experience

Speaker 3: Ok

Speaker 4: From my own experience

Speaker 3: From my own experience

Speaker 2: My own

Speaker 4: Experience

Speaker 3: I used to

Speaker 4: : I have been used I have

Multi speakers: I have been using

Speaker 2: Don’t use contractions

Speaker 3: Yeah

Speaker 4: From my own experience comma

Speaker 3: Emm

Multi speakers: I have been using

Speaker 2: Dictionary

Speaker: A dictionary or dictionary

Speaker 2: Dictionaries

Speaker 3: Dictionaries

Speaker 2: Dictionaries

Speaker 5: General

Speaker 4: Or dictionary

Speaker 3: Ok dictionary I have been using

Speaker 4: I have been using dictionary

Speaker 2: Dictionaries
Speaker 5: Ok
Speaker 4: I have been using
Speaker 3: Dictionaries
Speaker 4: Dictionary
Speaker 2: Through
Speaker 5: Classroom
Speaker 3: Activities
Speaker 2: Or with
Speaker 4: When writing when writing general we don’t use dictionary only on time of classroom
Speaker 5: While I am writing
Speaker 4: While I am writing in general you mean?
Speaker: In the house in your home in the class
Speaker 2: I am speaking about an experience
Speaker 4: I can have an experience outside the classroom also
Speaker 5: When you write your homework at your home
Speaker 4: Ahaa
Speaker 5: When you write your homework at home we usually use dictionary so at home at university
Speaker 2: I have been using dictionary
Speaker 3: While I am writing
Speaker 2: While I am writing
Speaker 4: Yes
Speaker 2: Within
Speaker 4: While writing
Speaker 3: While writing
Speaker 2: While
Speaker 3: Am writing essays

Speaker 4: Why writing in general?

Speaker 2: I have been using present perfect continuous and am writing continuous present continuous. I have been using dictionary.

Speaker 4: When I write

Speaker 2: When I write

Speaker 4: Essays

Speaker 3: Essays yes and it helped me a lot and it ...

Speaker 2: I have been using dictionary

Speaker 3: Allowed me

Speaker 5: Develop

Speaker 2: When I write essays

Speaker 4: When I write essays

Speaker 2: When I write

Speaker 3: Essays and it allowed me

Multi speakers: To write

Speaker 4: My vocabulary

Speaker 3: Yes new words

Speaker 2: And it

Speaker 4: Improved

Speaker 2: Improved

Speaker 4: My vocabulary

Speaker 2: My vocabulary

Speaker 3: That’s it right

Speaker 4: To become or to
Speaker 3: Can you read from the beginning

Speaker 2: Also using dictionaries will expand your vocabulary so you will be able to use the correct word in the correct position. From my own experience, ... and dictionary when I write essays and it improved my vocabulary

Speaker 4: To write more academic or to write

Speaker 5: I think that’s enough

Speaker 4: I think that’s enough

Speaker 3: Full stop

Speaker 4: With the vocabulary?

Speaker 2: Speak about the benefits using dictionary. First benefit improved Multi speakers: My vocabulary

Speaker 2: Second, shape my ability or shape

Speaker 4: The misspelling also dictionary helps you to avoid the

Speaker 3: To avoid misspelling

Speaker 2: My vocabulary

Speaker 4: And help to avoid

Speaker 5: To avoid

Speaker 3: To avoid misspelling

Speaker 4: Or reduce or whatever

Speaker 2: Misspelling words?

Speaker 3: Words

Speaker 5: Words misspelling

Speaker 4: Me to avoid?

Speaker 5: Misspelling

Speaker 3: Misspelling words
Speaker 4: Misspelling that’s it misspelling no words

Speaker 2: And [laughing]

Speaker 4: And it helped me

Speaker 2: It improved my vocabulary and

Speaker 4: Helped me to avoid misspelling

Speaker 2: Miss M-I-Double S?

Speaker 5: Answered using Arabic word, which means no

Speaker 3: Using Arabic words, which mean I will chick up the misspelling

Speaker 2: MI or ME?

Speaker 5: Misunderstanding

Speaker 4: M-I-S-S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G

Speaker 5: Misspelling

Speaker 4: M-I-S-S

Speaker 3: M-I-S-S

Speaker 4: P

Speaker 5: The other S for spelling

Speaker 3: M-I-S-S-P

Speaker 2: Spelling

Speaker 4: Ok

Speaker 3: E-L

Speaker 2: To avoid misspelling

Speaker 3: Spelling words (Then he used Arabic words which means I expect)

Speaker 4: Conclusion?

Speaker 5: We have another idea

Speaker 4: Reading
Speaker 2: Academic essay

Speaker 5: Ok

Speaker 2: Essays

Speaker 4: How can I start the idea?

Speaker 3: We used also right?

Multi speakers: Haa [Means OK]

Speaker 3: We used

Speaker 2: And used different words

Speaker 3: Another cohesion

Speaker 4: In addition to that

Speaker 2: What did you start?

Speaker 4: In addition to that

Speaker 2: Two ideas

Speaker 3: I think two ideas is enough.

Speaker 4: I think also two ideas is enough.

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people and using dictionary

Speaker 4: You in the last time you also, I said two ideas (He used Arabic words which mean I said two ideas to answer your question)

Speaker 5: Ok we have no time

Speaker 4: We should arise the

Speaker 3: Write or conclusion

Speaker 2: Yes

Speaker 5: What we wrote at the beginning?

Speaker 2: First idea everyone makes mistakes. This is the first paragraph everyone makes

Mistakes. This is the first thing that you have to learn when you want to write an
essay and correct each mistakes errors some methods that you should follow like using an expert like ask experienced people and using dictionary.

Speaker 2: Continued: asking experienced people will help you to gain experience and find errors and words. According to my own experience

Speaker 4: Asking what?

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people

Speaker 4: Asking people with experience

Speaker 3: Very experienced

Speaker 5: It is an adjective

Speaker 3: Asking an experienced asking an

Speaker 2: Experienced people [confirming]

Speaker 4: Experienced people plural [confirming]

Speaker 3: Ok

Speaker 2: Asking an experienced will help you to gain experience, experienced people will help you to gain experience isn’t it?

Speaker 4: Will help you to write better

Speaker 2: Will help you to gain knowledge

Speaker 3: Will help you to gain experience

Speaker 4: Will help you to be aware

Speaker 3: Yes

Speaker 4: Of your mistakes and find

Speaker 5: Could you read it again?

Speaker 2: I think it will help you to gain, will help you to be aware of your mistakes

Speaker 3: I think it is fine as it is.

Speaker 2: But asking experienced people will help you to gain experience and find words
Speaker 5: Repetition

Speaker 2: According to my experience asking experienced people will help you to gain experience and find more errors according to my own experience last semester I asked

Speaker 5: Repetition

Speaker 4: Repetition

Speaker 3: So according to my own experience we can change it

Speaker 4: No according for my experience I think

Speaker 2: So asking experienced people will help you to gain, will help you to be aware of your mistakes

Speaker 3: Ok

Speaker 2: According to my own experience

Speaker 4: Yeah

Speaker 3: Ok so change spelling

Speaker 4: Now editing

Speaker 2: No it would be

Speaker 5: We should start our conclusion notice

Speaker 2(Student): According to my own experience last semester I asked I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore he found a lot of errors that I was not aware of a lot of errors or a lot of mistakes?

Speaker 5: Mistakes

Speaker 4: Errors

Speaker 5: Errors

Speaker 2: Ok errors

Speaker 4: Errors or mistakes?
Speaker 5: Mistakes

Speaker 4: Mistakes mistakes [Confirming]

Speaker 5: Mistakes

Speaker 4: Errors you should be aware of

Speaker 2(Student): Mistake

Speaker 3: Mistakes

Speaker 2: Yes a lot of mistakes that I was not aware

Speaker 3: Of

Speaker 2: Of also using dictionaries will help you to expand

Speaker 5: The conclusion

Speaker 3: Start our conclusion

Speaker 5: By following these methods

Speaker 3: Haa [OK]

Speaker 5: By following these methods

Speaker 2: It’s not methods

Speaker 5: You wrote methods

Speaker 3: By following these methods ok continue

Speaker 5: You will be able to write

Speaker 4: No no by

Speaker 3: By doing these methods

Speaker 4: And write the methods but

Speaker 2: No

Multi speakers: By doing these methods

Speaker 3: Following these methods

Speaker 2: By following these methods and more you will find or may find
Speaker 3: By following these methods [Laughing]

Speaker 2: These methods

Speaker 5: May be you can use allow

Speaker 2: Should be

Speaker 3: it allows

Speaker 2: Are useful for you in your academic career or academic writing the writing

Speaker 3: Ok go ahead write it.

Speaker 2: By following these methods

Speaker 3: Ok

Speaker 2: By following these methods, you should be able

Speaker 5: You will be able

Speaker 2: By following these methods

Speaker 3: You should

Speaker 5: Comma I think

Speaker 4: In the conclusion, we should rewrite the thesis statement but in a different way

Speaker 2: So by using dictionaries and asking experienced people

Speaker 3: Ok

Speaker 5: Methods I think it's enough

Speaker 2: You should you should

Speaker 5: Methods includes you

Speaker 2: What about this? By asking experienced people in using dictionaries, you should be able to write

Speaker 4: A perfect essay

Speaker 2: Essays with few mistakes

Speaker 3: Ok
Speaker 2: Or few numb...

Speaker 5: Don’t repeat the two

Speaker 2: Haa [OK]

Speaker 5: The two ideas don’t repeat it

Speaker 4: I think it it’s better if you repeat it

Speaker 3: I’m not sure about it I fight for this idea

Speaker 2: By following these methods?

Speaker 4: No

Speaker 3: No by repetition

Speaker 2: Repetition that is by asking experienced people by using dictionaries

Speaker 3: Yes, I’m referring to it yeah

Speaker 5: Yeah that’s what you said

Speaker 4: Repetition for what?

Speaker 5: For the thesis statement for the introduction

Speaker 4: You should repeat

Speaker 5: No repeat it in another way

Speaker 4: Yeah in another way

Speaker 5: You repeat as it ...

Speaker 4: Methods it’s not in another way

Speaker 2: Why do we say... why do we say?

Speaker 5: It includes the two ideas.

Speaker 2: Why do we say by asking experienced people lab lab lab while we can say by following these methods?

Speaker 5: Yeah

Speaker 4: If you agree with it write it [Laughing]
Speaker 2: By following these methods

Speaker 3: Ok I’m with the majority

Speaker 2: Ok by following these methods what?

Speaker 5: You will be able to write better

Speaker 3: You should be able

Speaker 5: You should be able

Speaker 2: Yes, you should be able to write

Speaker 3: Better

Speaker 5: Correctly

Speaker 3: With a fewer mistakes

Speaker 5: To write correctly

Speaker 2: To write correctly

Speaker 4: Last semester

Speaker 3: A fewer better

Speaker 4: Why a fewer?

Speaker 5: You should write with no fair may be you will be fair to make mistakes so when you

write you have not

Speaker 2: You should be able

Speaker 3: You should be able to write better and make less mistakes

Speaker 2: Yeah, you should be what? You should be better what?

Speaker 3: Write what did I say?

Speaker 5: To write better

Speaker 3: To write better and make less mistakes

Speaker 2: Less mistakes?

Speaker 3: Yes
Speaker 2: You should be able to

Multi speakers: Write better

Speaker 4: And make

Speaker 2: Write better essays

Speaker 3: Write better essays

Speaker 4: Avoid

Speaker 3: Avoid

Speaker 5: A lot

Speaker 4: Avoid your mistakes that you

Speaker 5: That you have made

Speaker 2: That you did before

Speaker 4: Or that

Speaker 5: Have made

Speaker 2: You will be able to write

Speaker 5: Better

Speaker 2: Better essays

Speaker 3: With less mistakes

Speaker 2: And to avoid

Speaker 3: Or to avoid

Speaker 5: Or to avoid

Speaker 2: Will help you to write

Speaker 4: And to avoid writing

Speaker 2: Will help you to write better essays will help you to write better essays

Speaker 4: And

Speaker 2: And avoid
Speaker 3: With less mistakes or avoid

Speaker 2: And avoid the mistakes that you did

Speaker 5: That you have made

Speaker 3: That you have made

Speaker 2: and to avoid the mistakes

Speaker 3: That you did before following this method

Speaker 2: That you did

Speaker 5: You have made

Speaker 4: That you have made or that

Speaker 2: Before

Speaker 3: Before following

Speaker 4: Or that you mistakes that you weren’t

Speaker 5: Aware of

Speaker 4: Aware of

Speaker 2: Mistakes that you have done, did that you have done before

Speaker 4: Yes

Speaker 5: Yeah

Speaker 4: Are we about to finish?

Multi speakers: Yes

Speaker 5: The conclusion

Speaker 4: Right

Speaker 3: That’s a draft

Speaker 4: It is ok we just read it here I know you no leave we are able to read here I think

that’s enough

Speaker 3: Just right
Speaker 4: Read it again from the beginning of the essay

Speaker 5: Rewrite it again

Speaker 1: Are you going to rewrite it? Or just is it is it the first or the final draft?

Speaker 2: No it is the first the first

Speaker 4: The final draft

Speaker 2: It is a draft draft draft [Confirming]

Speaker 4: The final draft

Speaker 3: The final draft

Speaker 1 (Teacher): So, I think it is quite enough if you could you reread it?

Speaker 4: Just read here right?

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yeah read it here.

Speaker 2: Everyone makes mistakes. This is the first thing that you have to know when you want to write an essay, and to correct these mistakes, there are some methods that you should follow like asking experienced people and using dictionary. Asking experienced people to be able to be aware of your mistakes. According to my own experience last semester, I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore he found a lot of mistakes that I wasn’t aware of. Also, using dictionaries will expand your vocabulary. So, you will be able to use the correct word in the correct position. From my own experience, I have been using dictionaries when I write essays and it improved my vocabulary and helped me to avoid misspelling. By following these methods, you should be able to write better essays and to avoid the mistakes that you have done before.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ok thank you very much. Now briefly all of you now what is your impression about the cooperation and your work from the previous session and this session? In brief, let us listen from you
Speaker 3: In the second time, I was more comfortable than the last one

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ok what else?

Speaker 3: that’s it

Speaker 5: Got more ideas

Speaker 3: Yes, more ideas

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ok and what kind of difficulties you faced?

Speaker 4: The confidence I have more confidence that before

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ahha [OK]

Speaker 4: To speak my ideas

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yes

Speaker 4: Yeah

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Have you encountered any kind of difficulty when you worked in group?

Speaker 2: Yes, there is a kind of distraction

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Like what? For example

Speaker 2: For example, I provide an idea, other member say says his idea and we take long time to choose

Speaker 1 (Teacher): And if you are given and I want you to feel free to answer me if you are given for example a chance to have for example another opportunity to work in groups next semester, will you be enthusiastic to do it again?

Speaker 4: In writing?

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Yes

Speaker 4: Yes of course

Speaker 3: Yes yes [Confirming]

Speaker 4: Strongly agree

Speaker 1 (Teacher): And two or three reasons why?
Speaker 2: It is interesting to write in group

Speaker 1 (Teacher): It is only interesting?

Speaker 4: Interesting and

Speaker 5: It improved your writing skill

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ahha [OK]

Speaker 4: Yeah of course improved

Speaker 3: I look forward to see my peer feedback.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Peer feedback

Speaker 5: Communication with

Speaker 1 (Teacher): All of you now your four students do you think that the competence your skill as a writer is improving because of working together?

Multi speakers: Of course

Speaker 1 (Teacher): You think so?

Multi speakers: Yes

Speaker 1 (Teacher): I wish a good luck and thank very much for participating, hopefully that we can meet again.
# Appendix 14 – Transcript of the Students in the Interview

(Control and Experimental Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student NO</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>First, I would like to thank you for coming, and you are willing to answer these questions, your number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>B9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, so the first question, what is the effect of individual work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>When I write individually, ...I feel more comfortable than other writing, that’s the big effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yah so I ...I mean in improving your essay, what kind of improvement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>You mean in writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes, yes when you write individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>It’s normal, yeah I don’t understand....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you think that working individually would help you a lot to improve yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>No no no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Or it doesn’t affect you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>No it doesn't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Doesn’t affect you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay...the next question, how do you feel when you write or when you work Individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>Actually...I feel...kinda...more comfortable than... working in group ...seriously in the beginning of the semester I thought individually its better, now at the end of the semester, I prefer to write in group. So everyone will hear you, and when you writing, he ask as a friend about a word or grammar or...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, sharing of information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>So no one can......depends on his information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay the next question, outside the class, do you work in the groups or individually while writing essays? Outside the class do you work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>no individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Individually? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>no one can...maybe I think, no one can ...choose for best choice to write with him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The Next question, what kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay? So if you have written an essay now and you reread it and you try to find the errors, what kind of errors, usually you find?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>spelling and grammar listing most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you are having difficulties in writing essays in English what is the source of these difficulties? So if you find writing is very difficult for you, what is the source of, these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>maybe it is second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Any other?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>maybe when we will get out...we do practice more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, the next question, would you recommend the group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>group work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>I think it’s better and easier and faster when you write, I think everyone there can give us his idea, and writing and choose the best idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, the last question, what recommendations would you make to develop group work, in essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Suggestions...recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B9</td>
<td>Maybe, the most interesting increase one hour for only partying, it’s not enough for us , two hours for this lecture, increase one hour for just the partying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much in deed for coming and answering these questions!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

------------
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>First of all before asking you some questions, your number is?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>B11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, The first question is what is the effect of individual work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>Ah It's effect you in a great way, so you can because you work by yourself, you rely everything on yourself. You search for words, you look for errors that you do and you try to correct them so when you correct your own mistakes, you cannot just make the same mistake again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about working in groups, do you believe or you think in your own opinion that working in groups is better than individual since you spent I would say a whole semester working individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>No. I believe working individually is better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Is better?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>Yeah, because working in groups might distract you from focusing, like you can chit chat and stuff, can talk to your partners, so it might distract you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, how do you feel when you work individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>More relaxed than working in the groups because I will be focusing on what I write, not what his opinion or the other people opinion on my group, like I focus on my opinion only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you believe that for example, if you work in groups, you'll be bored?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Or distracted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>Yeah, maybe distracted but not bored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you feel that working individually is more interesting than working in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>No. If you talk about interesting, I would say groups because it cannot be boring but working individually might somehow be boring if you're writing something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about outside the class, do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B11</td>
<td>Like in homework or stuff like that?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviewer: Yeah, or practicing writing individually, and why? I mean, is it because you like or is it difficult to for example join people and work in groups?

Interviewee: No, because I like to write individually.

Interviewer: Do you find that effective?

Interviewee: Yeah, it helped me a lot.

Interviewer: Okay, What kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay? For example, you have written an essay, and that after reading and rereading, what kind of common errors?

Interviewee: Maybe the place of the punctuation marks or sometimes the spelling, if you are writing something long. When you are writing, you cannot focus on spelling because you want to finish because it's somehow if you're working individually it's boring like I said, so you just want to finish. So sometimes, you have spelling errors.

Interviewer: What about common errors in grammar?

Interviewee: No, from my experience no. I don't have. I'm good at grammar.

Interviewer: Okay. If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties?

Interviewee: Not writing a lot maybe, not practicing. Like when you practice a lot, you become professional. When you're not practicing, you somehow lose it.

Interviewer: What about your mother tongue, Arabic language – does it affect you?

Interviewee: No, I don’t see it affect me.

Interviewer: Would you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?

Interviewee: Individual work.

Interviewer: For the same reason because…?

Interviewee: Yeah, because…

Interviewer: You have found it very effective very.

Interviewee: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay. The last question then, what recommendations would you make I would say to develop group in essay writing, not individual work, suppose that someone's opinion is that group work is more effective than individual work to improve essay writing. Your suggestion now,
what is or what are your recommendations for that to develop group work?

Interviewee: B11 To be more serious.

Interviewer It's more serious in what sense?

Interviewee: B11 Yeah. Because when you make a group somehow one two people are working, the other are maybe talking or something and to do all the work together, not’s like one go for the scenery and one writes. No! We all do it then we take the best ideas and the best words or something like that, so it's 100 percent working together not

Interviewer Thank you very much indeed for giving your opinion about this issue.

---------------

Interviewer Ok so your number is?

Interviewee B12 B12

Interviewer Ok so I have some questions for you the first question what is the effect of individual work on essay writing?

Interviewee: B12 the effect is more than the groups can control your essay with your idea and can be more the results more great than working in the group and the essay will be more suitable and the shape of the essay can you can see your introduction and your part of paragraph is all of this connected together

Interviewer In your opinion, do you think that working individually will improve your competence in essay writing more than working in groups?

Interviewee: B12 Yah I think it's more better than individually and cause you are the only one who choose the ideas and how to start and how to

Interviewer Yah so you mean that you are going to depend on yourself?

Interviewee: B12 Yes.

Interviewer And by doing that you find yourself at the improvement of your writing is…

Interviewee: B12 You can see that the result in the final.

Interviewer Ok, the second question how do you feel when you work individually?

Interviewee: B12 I feel I can control the whole paragraph with my ideas and I pick the right opinion.

Interviewer Do you find it interesting?

Interviewee: B12 yes it’s because in the group you can distract you and the time as come take out and there is no If you have a leader in the groups I think
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer</th>
<th>it should be the same but when it’s like no one everyone give ideas that there is no enough time.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>Yeah so, you think that there would be some sort of distraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah the most problem is the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>What about outside the class do you work in groups or individually, when you write?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Outside the class I like to work in the groups but I couldn't find any groups then so I work (inaudible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>So the outcome is you work individually outside?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes outside I work (inaudible) with the help from the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>What about the next question what kind of errors do your find while proofreading your essay? So for example If you are writing an essay and you have finished and you are going to read it what kind of usually of errors you find when you write? When you read and try to identify the errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The most of those I find is spelling and the other one when you transfer from past to future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>Yeah and tenses and tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah Yeah Yeah I think this is the most problem because I talk about something in the future and I want to talk about something in the past so The way I can change my idea change the tense can be more a little bit difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Next question if you have difficulties in writing essays in English in your opinion what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>I think there is there the past because of the past education it can affect you on the first time you have the old style and you keep going and on this style and you cannot change it so you have learned something to have to write an essay and you need to change it but you can’t because this is kind of your rules so can’t break the rules the past education learn how to write the instruction and the conclusion you cannot change your style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In your opinion, what you recommend the group or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>I think in my opinion individually is more best than working with the groups because, yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>It is better than working with groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B12</td>
<td>Better than working with groups because don’t have enough time and the best and to choose a leader for the group can be the same for individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok so this would be for the last question what recommendations would you make to develop in essay writing you mentioned to choose a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>choose a leader so he can pick the ideas choose right and control the whole group who can take response from the right team and the right groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Your number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>B13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The first question what is the effect of individual work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Maybe you will get the chance to get feedback you don’t have someone to ask about mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Try to understand if you work individually do you think that you will get feedback from whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>If I work individually no I don’t get a feedback .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So if you work individually I think if there's feedback it should be from the teacher or the trainer so what I mean is the development of your writing ok because of the individual work to what extent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>What you mean to what extent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In other words, If you for example work individually and you find yourself is improving ok so according to this question, what kind of effect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>It does no effect at all. yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So there is no effect of individual work on essay writing? I mean if you, for example work individually, there is no improvement at all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>There is improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>no improvement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, what about for example the ideas in grammar vocabulary?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee B13</td>
<td>You can develop the way you think you can choose your own subject, subject you are familiar with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You mean your ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, the second question how do you feel when you work individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Relaxed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>More than working in groups if you have a chance to work in groups you are going to be more relaxed when you work individually or in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>No individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Outside the class, do you work in groups or individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>When you write to work, individually? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Is it because you like or is it is difficult to find people to work with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>It is not difficult not difficult. You save time you finish quickly you probably if you work with groups you might work with someone who… like annoying you cannot focus so yea…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok number four what kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay? `</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Only spelling? What about grammar errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>No grammar errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you have difficulties in writing essays in English what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Maybe because I don't read a lot and I don’t write a lot basically I don't practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In your opinion what you recommend would you recommend a group work or individual work to write or for writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Well, for writing individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>for the same reason because you have found yourself a good a student in writing and one of the reasons Is it’ because of the Individual work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>Individual just I stick with individual (inaudible) cause I’ve never tried to I’ve never write with someone in the groups you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So you haven't?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>I haven't tried yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The last question, what recommendations would you make to develop group work not individual work in essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B13</td>
<td>I don't know because I haven't tried it yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>First of all I would like to thank you for coming and you are ready to answer these questions, regarding individual work or group working in improving essay writing, you are in Group B. Your number is 18?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, the first question is what is it in your opinion the effect of individual work on essay writing? In Class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Or even outside? Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>The effect of individual work in essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Mm-hmm [Affirmative]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>To my opinion, I always like it because the unity of ideas, the unity of the style you want to write about. Nothing to impose or to distract your work or essay writing work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay so and the effect do you think that working individually, when you work individually your improvement is obvious for you see that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes [crosstalk: 0:01:18.7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You see that you are improving yourself and one of the reasons is because of individual writing or work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes because I get it that, it is something related to me only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>It's my opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>As me, as me –as Mohammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Uh-huh (Laughing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I always like to work alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Whether in writing or in education or anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Because of that, I set a plan very clear to myself to improve in any aspect of my life and it's the same with the individual work in essay writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha and if you go back for example to the previous semester and even when you were in the intensive course did you study the intensive course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>NO?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No, it was in another university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah in the first level, you studied writing in the first level second level and now in the third level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Definitely during that period of time. You worked individually and … Have you noticed the improvement of yourself in writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee B18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And is it because of writing individually or maybe some other reasons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Of course there are other reasons but mainly it is because I work alone. I focus on my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I fix them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I set a plan to fix them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. The second question how do you feel when you work individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I feel confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha, Is it interesting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>My ideas is more clear to me, what I'm going to write about, how will I write. The introduction, the conclusion. It becomes clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Not when…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Not like I work in groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. Have you worked in groups before or not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>How did you find that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>It is interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>It is interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>It is more interesting than the individual work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>But it's a bit distracting too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, so you are afraid of being distracted by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes. I always need unity of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. The next question, outside the class do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Outside the class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>NO. Mostly individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Because as I said. I always like to work alone and in any aspect and in essay writing, I like to take my time with my ideas. Unite them, think about them more and more, then there's my essay then write it. This cannot be done with groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Because of the …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>For example, some other participants they said they worked individually because of the difficulty of finding other participants to work with, that was the main reason. Not because they for example did not like to work in groups outside the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>So for me…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>For example for you if you have the chance to work outside the class, if you have a chance to work in groups outside the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I wouldn't like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>For the same reason that you have mentioned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, the next question, what kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay? Working individually in class or outside the class. So, when you proofread your essay, what kind of errors usually…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Mostly, I guess articles “a” and “an” singular and plural Sometimes with the simple present I forget the “s”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah What tenses and shifting from one tense to another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No mostly anything that needs focus, I give it a lot of time and I give it a lot of effort but this is not silly mistakes but simple ones. I usually go over them quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, the next question. If you have difficulties in writing essays in English. What is the source of these difficulties? For example, is it because of past education or interference of your language which is Arabic or what do you think?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Mostly because of the interference in the first language, Arabic. Because some of the, some of it because of the past education because we are I am talking about myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I was used to study English through Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha, I got the idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>So this is sort of what happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. The next question, would you recommend the group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No Individual work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Individual work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>For me, it’s individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha, Yes so although you admit that group work has its disadvantages?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes, a lot of advantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes you encourage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>But it’s not my preference. Group work has sharing the ideas is good with group work is better than individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Because you get a lot of ideas then you can pick yourself but then it's not my style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>And of the peer feedback doing the group work, it is interesting more interesting than the individual work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Mainly Because of this I would recommend the group to essay write but not to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha, [chuckles] For others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. The last question what recommendations would you make to develop a group in essay writing? Any suggestions any recommendations to develop group work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>There has to be they have to be the students in writing the essay they have to be all equals because there is someone in charge, It might or he might or she impose his or her opinions on the others or affect …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, for example your suggestion is that if suppose we have 4 students or participants and they are working groups there competence should be the same? Let me say for example an X is an excellent person, the other three participants they should have the same competence …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No, not the same competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>I meant no one becomes in charge even if he was the best among them because of this, he might or she might impose her or his ideas on the group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>He or she will impose it eventually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>By his work but if he or she became in charge, then things get more complicated with the others, it contradicts the idea of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Any other recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>They should focus when if there is a group essay writing on the peer feedback because it is very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>And it shouldn’t be some dull group essay writing, it should be interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Any other recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B18</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much indeed for you participation, we hope that we can meet you again for any other issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Your number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, so you are 24B. the first question, what is the effect of individual work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>It’s not very well … not too much. I found some improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Some kind of improvement. Improvement but not too much? Ok. How do you feel when you work individually? You know that this semester we spent the whole semester all of you and your colleagues you worked individually. Right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So how do you feel when you work individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>I feel comfortable but not too much because I found some difficulties in writing grammar and found some words and if you search for it you will wasting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So in either ways for example you will need someone to help you to find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yes, but not anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>You have to search for … to choose specific one of your friends and he should be very good in writing because sometimes you can’t depend in his information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, outside the class do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Because sometimes you don’t find anyone to work with him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, it’s difficult to find some people to work with?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yeah, like I said that you have to choose someone not anyone. So, you have to work individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, what kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Grammatical errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yes and spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And spelling errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yes, that’s all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you have the difficulties in writing essays in English what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>You can say we didn’t learn English from the beginning and we don’t read English too much, we don’t read it may be at all only in university. That what I see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah Ok, the next question would you recommend the group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Of course we prefer group work but not every time and you have to choose. Sometimes you can’t focus so for your study you can’t get you what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>But now you recommend group works?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, although if there is kind of as you have said distraction or voices or…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>You can’t write, you can’t even think about your ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok. The last question, what recommendations would you makes to develop group work in essay writing? If we focus now in group work, what recommendations you suggest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>I suggest we have to read minimum for one hour in English books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Try to understand my question. Now for example, focusing in group work, ok what are suggestions that you find useful to develop group work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Anyone who don’t trust about his information he must … don’t see it or he say I know I think maybe 80% its right, if you not trust 100% you have to trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Trust whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>Trusting your colleague, in his information. When someone ask him if he sure for his own information he can say if he not … we prefer to ask him other one. If he don’t found this we can say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Any other recommendation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B24</td>
<td>That’s all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>I would like to thank you for coming, and your number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>I have some questions for you, and feel free to answer all of them according to your opinion. So the first question is what is the effect of an individual work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>To fix in your language, how to use the words, how to handle the grammar rules, and (default) you think about the… any subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about for example writing in general and writing in general we have,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>It makes you...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In grammar for example in ideas, in vocabulary so do you think that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>It makes you...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Is there any effect of individual work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes, it makes you more relaxed when you are writing in exam. You practice individually when you have exam you will be ehh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>We are not talking about exams, we are talking about practicing writing, so when you work individually what is the effect of that? Does it improve you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Improve yes; it improves grammatical rules and using the words and everything about any subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok. How do you feel when you work individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Relaxed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In class for example even outside the class. How do you feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Is it more relaxed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yeah more relaxed when I work with a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The next question, outside the class do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Because, I want to be professional when I write alone or independently, and that may improves my language when I work ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, What I understand is that you prefer working individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes, because it improves my language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>More than if I work with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Number 4, what kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Use words, the same words too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What do you mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>the words, there is many…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You mean repeating, repeating words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes, repeating the words so much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>And some grammatical mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Some grammatical errors. Number 5, if you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Not reading, and the Arabic effects , the mother of language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, the interference of…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes yes, I read as I writing. I read I write as if I writing in Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok? What you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>For the result of the essay, I recommend the group, but the effect of the person or learners the individually individual work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Again, your answer? Your answer, so you recommend group work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>I recommend group work for the good essay. But for the person or learners individuals is better when write with a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You mean if you have an essay and it’s very difficult, so it’s better with a group, and if it is easy it’s better for to work individually. This is what do you mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ok, the last questions, what recommendations will you make to develop group work in essay writing? So your suggestions now for group work to be developed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>Many levels not the same level in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yes yes, the for example the students must be different in proficiency. Their proficiency should be different. What else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: B21</td>
<td>That is it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Experimental group**

<p>| Interviewer | Your number? |
| Interviewee: A16 | 16 |
| Interviewer | Thank you very much for coming, and I would like you to give your opinion about the following questions. So the first question is what is the effect of group work on essay writing? |
| Interviewee: A16 | Group writing is very important because you can improve your grammar mistakes especially when you are a beginner. So, you need to work in groups to improve your grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, and a lot of other mistakes. |
| Interviewer | How did you find the group work when you worked in groups? Regarding the effect of group work, how did you find that? |
| Interviewee: A16 | It's really good because it helps me a lot. |
| Interviewer | You feel that you're improving; one of the reasons is because of group work? |
| Interviewee: A16 | Yes |
| Interviewer | How do you feel when you work in groups? |
| Interviewee: A16 | Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups. |
| Interviewer | So you feel more interested when you work in groups than working individually? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: A16</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>Definitely because you worked before you work individually and you compare?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>This is the first time I worked in group work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>So you find this more interesting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Exactly. It helps me a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>What about outside the class, do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Actually outside the class I don’t work. Because there is nothing encouraging me to work, or to write something, or to do something. Just when I have exams, I study or I try to work or to write essays or something like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>What kind of errors do you find while proofreading your essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>A lot of errors. Grammar mistakes, also spelling mistakes, and question mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>As I said, grammar mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>The main source of this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Grammar mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>But still, what is the source of the difficulty of-- for example, let me say your mother tongue, is it one of the main reasons for that difficulty or is it because of the lack of vocabulary, is it because of the lack of confidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Of course, it depends on vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>So, definitely inviting each learner would have some kinds of difficulties? And he or she knows the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>I don’t know. Maybe some students don’t know their mistakes. Because when you write, sometimes you don’t recognize your mistakes, so you need peer feedback or teacher feedback to help you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>Would you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Sometimes in group work and sometimes in individually. Because if you work in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer</strong></td>
<td>So what are the situations you recommend individual work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewee: A16</strong></td>
<td>Because when you work in groups you'll depend on your…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Again, my question Abdull Aziz, would you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>As I've said, sometimes I prefer to work in groups sometimes I prefer to work individually. Because when you work in groups you'll depend on your peer's feedback or the other members of the group. So you have to work individually to depend on yourself, not on the group. If you're a beginner, you should work in group, but if you know how to write or if you have background about the…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So if you feel you are qualified enough to be a good writer, so is it better to write individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Yes. Yes, you should work individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So is it better to write individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What recommendations would you make to develop group work in essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Maybe they should have a teacher feedback because they know everything about writing. Not us the students because we're maybe on the same level so we don’t improve that as we have the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What other recommendations? Since you have now an experience one whole semester you've worked in groups, so what other recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Maybe, if the teacher gave us some work, it would help us a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Like doing more assignments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Yes, like writing an essay about something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>After writing essays, who's going to correct, peers or a teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>Teacher, of course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about the peers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A16</td>
<td>It doesn't really… because the teacher knows everything, he's better than the peer feedback or the members of the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much for your participation!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Your number?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first question what is the effect of group work on essay writing? Since, you spent a whole semester working in groups.

Actually I tried that working groups in last semester and writing as I found it feel… actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes, spellings but I think that you’re working individually you will find more mistakes that you afford it next time so…

And yeah

Individually and working groups

Do you feel that you have improved yourself because one of the reasons of group work?

Yeah.

How do you feel when you work in groups?

Actually, very comfortable because all the students are my classmates. so we feel each feel comfortable so we work hard. no worry no formal way. so we talk together comfortably.

Ok. And what about outside the class? Do you work in groups or individually and why?

No individually actually because we have no time to spend it with our class mates

Yeah and other people or other students.

Yeah, actually you should work individually because it is kind of unclear who work at the university and work in groups. Of course you should work outside individually.

Do you have any difficulties in writing essays?

Sometimes actually, generating ideas.

And what do you think the source of these difficulties?

May be lack of ideas, vocabulary.

What about your language? Mother tongue?

May be.

Maybe or are you sure or you are neutral?

Maybe may be sometimes.

Okay so, what do you recommend group work or individual work for essay writing?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee: A18</th>
<th>No, work in groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>Because, it improves your writing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, you tried that and you…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>Yeah, actually exact time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And thank you very much and what about the last questions, what recommendations would you make to develop a group work and essay writings? Your recommendations? Your suggestions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>Working in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Working in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, to develop anything for development essay writing regarding group work. What recommendations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A18</td>
<td>Actually, if you divide each student to work together you should keep all the whole semester to become more comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, so, your number is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Twenty one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. So, regarding the first question that I would like to ask you, about the effect of group work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you remember any other effects? Of group work… From the beginning of the semester up till… now we are about to finish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>It’s good, it’s given me a lot of new ideas. It benefits me a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And what about your competence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>About my competence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, your proficiency, your improvement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah, I feel like I improved a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. How do you feel when you work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>The same I guess, It’s good but I prefer to write alone. So, I prefer to write individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, you prefer to write individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>In the matter of exams, but in work in class or in group is good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah. So, when it comes to working in class you prefer to work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah. But in exam or in homework I prefer to work individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. Do you feel interested when you work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Outside the class, do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>All the time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah, basically, except when I’m in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Because when I work individually I get clear with my ideas, you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay. Go on. So, I asked you about working in groups, or individually outside the class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Outside the class I work individually. Because I get clear with my ideas and I can write more comfortably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What kind of errors do you find while proof reading your essay? From the previous… let me say, the previous semester and the intensive course?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Probably the spelling and the punctuations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties? So, to give you an example, the interference of the… is it the interference of the mother tongue?…. your own language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah, but I don’t think that’s the main reason. The main reason is because while you were in high school I didn’t learn good English. Our teacher wasn’t good enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, It is because the past education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about for example… lack of confidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>No, I don’t think that has anything to do with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Would you recommend… group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>In class, I recommend group work, but in the test or in homework I prefer individually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Again, Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>For example, in class, why do you support working in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Because you came in the class to learn, and when you learn with your friends or your group, is better to get new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, now the last question. What recommendations would you make to develop group work in essay writing? Any kind of recommendation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Maybe the best group with contain five members, that’s it nothing more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about the three and the four members?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>I think that’s...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you believe in the bigger the best?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yes, more ideas, more help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, for example, the perfect number you would say five?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And in this course, this semester…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>In this course, we work with four or five, yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>How did you find four?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A21</td>
<td>It was very good, very good yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you so much for participation!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Your number is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, the first question; what is the effect of group work on essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>The effect on me, you mean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>It helped me to write better better structure on essay writing and give me a lot of vocabulary bank to write in better words, and to not be afraid on writing an assay in the class. It helped me to be comfortable with writing. And the Idea is, to give me a lot of ideas to choose which better idea to write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Do you feel that you have improved yourself? Because, of group work or group work is one of the reasons group work in class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes of course, it’s one of the reasons, the biggest reason I think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>It gave me many ways to write an essay writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, how do you feel when you work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>More comfortable than working individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes, of course, because of when I work individually, I feel stressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>I don’t have many ideas to write. I have When I write in groups, different ideas, help me to write better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, what about outside the class? Do you work in groups or individually while writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>NO, actually, I write in groups only in classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about outside? Individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes of course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Because I don’t have a group. I don’t have a group to write with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You mean; is it difficult to find groups to work outside?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes, of course, because it’s not common that group writes outside of class room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, what kind of errors do we find while proofreading your essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>I don’t get the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>For example, when you try to proofread an essay, what kind of errors do you usually find?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>When I work individually or …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>No, when you write…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Misspelling, generally and grammatical mistakes, that’s it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>The source?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, for example, when you write, you find some kind of difficulties. What is the main reason for this problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Lack of ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, Only lack of ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yeah, it’s hard to find an idea to write about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah What about past education? Is that also one of the reasons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes, of course one of the reasons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And what about your language? Your Arabic language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>No, I don’t think it’s going to affect my writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Okay, what do you recommend? A group work or individual work for essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Group work of course, inside the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>And The reasons? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>The reason that I said, gives you a lot of ideas to write and the group working is more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>The last question; what recommendation would you make to a development group work in essay writing since you spent a whole semester working in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>To give the students a lot more of time to make them comfortable with writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, so to give them more time to work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What other recommendation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Ideas. Try to change the ideas and the title that we wrote about. Just try to change to find the errors and make other Ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A28</td>
<td>Thank you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>your number is…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Thirty one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thirty one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, I would like to ask you the effect of group work in essay writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Group work improve grammatical mistakes spelling mistakes gives you more confidence gives you more vocabulary you don't have and many advantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So you see these are the main advantages of group work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Of course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>How do you feel when you work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>More confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about comparing it to individual work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Emm…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Is it more interesting or they are the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>More interesting but each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah but in regard to your feeling, do you feel more interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>When you work in groups?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Of course yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Outside the class, do you work in groups or individually in writing essays?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Because I feel free when I write. Because the percentage of mistakes is going high…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>I feel more free when I write individually, I can organise my ideas, of course I can organise my ideas better than group work when I work in group but as I said each of them has its advantages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, what kind of errors do you find while proof reading your essay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>spelling mistakes and few grammatical mistakes and I think that’s it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Could you give me some examples of grammatical errors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>In present perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah in tenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Present continuous, these are the complex subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>If you have difficulties, in writing essays is in English, what is the source of these difficulties?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Lack of vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What about your own language? The Arabic language?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Of course, it affects. This is not good but it affects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>What would you recommend sorry … should you recommend group work or individual work essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>As I said both of them are good but in some situations individual work is better than …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>You mean is better in improving writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee A31</td>
<td>No of course …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>When you work in groups? So what I mean is what are the suggestions that you them to be in future for either working in groups or working individually?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>In class?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>In class or outside the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>I would recommend that at the beginning of the semester you make groups, and these groups, each of them work along the semester same member same group always working together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah so…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Till the end of the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So your recommendation for example if I work this week with specific members…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>With different members right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>No with the same members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>This makes kind of a good communication between among the members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Ahha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>They understand each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>So, you understand and know each other and you would help each other more you will be more active?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Yeah, each of them know the other one’s mistakes, mistakes he always makes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Yeah, and what recommendations would you recommendation would you make to develop group work in essay writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee: A31</td>
<td>Just the recommendation I just said, same members same students working together along the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer</td>
<td>Thank you very much for your participation!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 15 - Codes and Themes from Open-ended Questions in the Pre and Post-Questionnaires

Thematic Analysis

Experimental and Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme (1): Writing is important.</td>
<td>Important, Essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (2): Writing is difficult.</td>
<td>Difficult, Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (3): Affective impact</td>
<td>Interesting, comfortable, Like, dislike, boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (4): Motivation</td>
<td>work hard, motivate, encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (5): Distraction or Time waster</td>
<td>distract, waste time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (6): Discussion and Sharing Ideas</td>
<td>suggest, discuss, share, provide, receive, offer, give, get, opinion, peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (7): Trust</td>
<td>trust, not sure, doubt, afraid of, worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (8): Confidence</td>
<td>fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (a): Overall Writing</td>
<td>a lot, all parts, many parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (b): Organization</td>
<td>organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (c): Grammar</td>
<td>grammar, structure, tense, preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (d): Vocabulary</td>
<td>vocabulary, words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing</td>
<td>spelling, punctuation marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (f): Development</td>
<td>develop, support, use examples, generate ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (g): Cohesion and Coherence</td>
<td>connect, link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Open-ended Questions

Do you think that learning and practicing writing skills in groups will help/helped you to write better? If so how? If not, why not?

#### Theme (1): Writing is important.

**Code:** Important, Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data <strong>Before</strong> Treatment Study:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is a very <em>important</em> skill and we need some methods or ways to help us improve it (Respondent A28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students know writing is very <em>important</em> (Respondent A12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>First writing is an essential</em> skill that requires a hard activity to improve (Respondent A24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is very <em>important</em> (Respondent B1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>English language is important and English writing is very important</em> skill to me (Respondent B2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students need writing <em>because we use English in all the courses</em> (Respondent B8).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data <strong>After</strong> Treatment Study:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As I said before writing skills is <em>important</em> because we need it in all courses, exams and materials (Respondent A28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It is a very nice and important</em> skill (Respondent A12).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>In the future, I see that the students need workshops or some courses in group writing to know how interact and guide their classmates in the class when they write in groups. I said that because writing is very important to us</em> (Respondent A24).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Control Group

I know that writing is very important and this makes me feel sad because I did not note improvement in my writing (Respondent B1).

No one can deny the importance of the English language and the importance of writing as well (Respondent B2).

I hope that I will improve myself in writing in future because it is a very important skill (Respondent B8).

Theme (2): Writing is difficult.

Code: Difficult, Complex

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

Although writing is a very difficult task to do, I now know how to write an essay better than before. Yes, I improved myself but not much. We need more time (Respondent A12).

Although writing is very difficult, I found it interesting and less difficult when I worked with my colleagues (Respondent A28).

This activity trained me how to finish my essay in short time and sufficient ideas and words. Working with my colleagues helped me overcome the difficulty of writing (Respondent A31).

Control Group

I find vocabulary and using correct words very difficult (Respondent B1).
Writing is very difficult and the course was short and we were very busy with the other courses (Respondent B8).

This skill is very difficult, and we need to improve it because it is very important, as I said (Respondent B17).

Theme (3): Affective impact

Code: Interesting, comfortable, like, dislike

Raw Data Before Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

I think it will be very interesting to work with peers (Respondent A12).

In addition, working with groups will be more interesting (Respondent A28).

First writing in groups is not interesting (Respondent A18).

I like the method of group work in writing (Respondent A18).

Control Group

I think writing in a group is better. However, I do not like writing because it is difficult (Respondent B1).

Writing is boring and we need some methods to make it interesting (Respondent B8).

I like to write but I think writing with the other students is more interesting (Respondent B17).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:
Experimental Group

Working in groups was very interesting (Respondent A12).

...peer feedback was one of the most interesting parts (Respondent A28).

However, writing with my colleagues was interesting (Respondent A18).

Working with the peers was very useful and interesting (Respondent A31).

Control Group

However, I do not like writing (Respondent B1).

I was not interested and maybe because the skill was very difficult and it needs practicing for a long time (Respondent B8).

I did not enjoy writing this semester (Respondent B17).

Theme (4): Motivation

Code: work hard, motivate, encourage

Raw Data Before Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard... (Respondent A28).

Writing with the other students will motivate me to write better (Respondent A29).

We will encourage each other to work hard (Respondent A31).
Control Group

I did not find anything that could encourage me improve writing last semester (Respondent B1).

We need to change the idea of writing in class. I addition we need some methods that will help, encourage and motivate us to work in class (Respondent B2).

In fact, we need some tools to motivate us to write (Respondent B8).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

Writing in a small group encouraged me to be active and work hard (Respondent A28).

For sure, group writing gave us a very useful chance to work very hard and improved ourselves and finish writing on time [sic] (Respondent A29).

My colleagues motivated me to discuss and discover many problems in writing (Respondent A31).

Control Group

Writing was difficult and we did not find anything that could encourage us or motivate us to write in class (Respondent B1).

Writing individually in class did not motivate me to work hard and improve writing (Respondent B2).

Writing individually did not motivate me to work in class (Respondent B8).
### Theme (5): Distraction or Time waster

**Code:** distract, waste time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th><strong>Before</strong> Treatment Study:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td>I see that writing in a group will <em>distract me to focus</em> (Respondent A18).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My opinion is that group writing <em>distracts students and wastes time</em> (Respondent A22).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>However, I am not sure if writing with peers will be a sort of <em>distraction</em> and wasting time. I think it depends on the groups and the teacher in class how to manage the group (Respondent A24).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
<td>However, the thing that I do not like about group work is that group work may <em>distract and waste time</em> when we talk together in the class (B17).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data</th>
<th><strong>After</strong> Treatment Study:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td>(Only the experimental group had an impression about collaborative writing being distracting or wasting time.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I do not ignore</em> that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends (Respondent A18).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, although I like working individually, working in small groups does not waste time or distract as I thought [sic] (Respondent A22).

...working in groups did not distract us and did not waste our time (Respondent A24).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (6): Discussion and Sharing ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> suggest, discuss, share, provide, receive, offer, give, get, opinion, peer feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Raw Data Before Treatment Study:**

**Experimental Group**

*I think that learning and practicing writing with groups will help me improve my skill in writing. It will help me to write better. First, when I work in groups, I will share ideas with my classmates. Sharing ideas will not be there if I work individually (Respondent A12).*

*We will work together, share ideas, and provide our suggestions in writing (Respondent A16).*

*I think that working in a small group will help me a lot. It will help me to solve many problems in writing. Working with groups will help me improve all parts of writing. For example, when we work in a group, we will help each other through a discussion to solve mistakes, to organize the ideas, to connect the ideas, to organize the introduction, the body and the conclusion of the essay (Respondent A24).*

*Writing in small groups will give me the chance to share and get more ideas (Respondent A28).*

*Writing in groups is a nice opportunity to share writing experiences with the students (Respondent A29).*
When the classmates work together, they will know how to start and organize the whole essay. We will help each other to support ideas and develop writing (Respondent A31).

Control Group

I think that writing with peers is more useful than writing individually because we can discuss all the problems in writing together (Respondent B1).

Group work for example is a good method to discuss and share many ideas in writing (Respondent B8).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

We enjoyed working together. They helped me how to gather and link the ideas and organize ideas, how to find the correct word (Respondent A12).

When I worked with my classmates, we shared several tasks. For example revising, editing and offering feedback. We shared correcting errors and producing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes (Respondent A16).

I feel that I improved myself in writing. It was very interesting. The idea of group work was a very excellent opportunity to practice writing with my colleagues. I am satisfied about my progress in writing. Talking together about different ideas and discussing the ideas were very useful for me and very interesting (Respondent A24).

Writing in groups gave me the chance to discuss any problem and share opinions (Respondent A28).

I spent one semester in group writing and I feel that I improved myself a lot. The idea of sharing feedback with the peers was very useful and interesting (Respondent A29).

In fact sharing the experience with peers helped me a lot in improving writing as I mentioned (Respondent A31).
Theme (7): Trust

**Code:** trust, not sure, doubt, afraid of, worried

Raw Data **Before** Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

*I do not think that writing in a small group will help me to improve my writing. First writing in groups is not interesting. I see that writing in a group will distract me to focus and I will waste time if I work with my peers. *I do not trust the information* from peers* *(Respondent A18).*

An issue that I am *afraid* of is sharing or correcting errors, but not all information from peers is correct like the case of the teacher correction* *(Respondent A28).*

*We will not be worried about sharing the information* because we will work in class and the teacher will be with us* *(Respondent A31).*

**Control Group**

*I prefer to take the information from teachers but not from my colleagues. I do not know if what they say is correct or not* *(Respondent B24).*

Raw Data **After** Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

*Working in a small group was a new activity for me. I still believe that working individually is better than in groups. I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends in the class such as sharing opinions and ideas* *(Respondent A18).*

*In fact sharing the experience with peers helped me a lot in improving writing as I mentioned. The feedback I got from my classmates helped me a lot. At the beginning I was not sure about the benefit from the students but when I worked in groups I found a lot of benefits* *(Respondent A28).*
At the beginning, I was not sure about the benefit from the students, but when I worked in groups, I found a lot of benefits (Respondent A31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (8): Confidence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Raw Data **Before** Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

*I think it will be very interesting to work with peers. However, being like a teacher to correct my colleagues’ errors will not be easy and will be **embarrassing** sometimes (Respondent A12).*  

*One point I do not like. If I make many mistakes and my colleagues correct me I feel **embarrassed**. I also feel that it would be difficult for me to correct my colleagues’ mistakes and discover that my correction was wrong (Respondent A28).*  

*I think supporting each other in class will increase or **confidence** and ability in writing (Respondent A31).*  

Raw Data **After** Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

*I enjoyed the idea of correcting each other’s mistakes and the task was not **embarrassing** (Respondent A12).*  

*Writing in a small group helped me how to start and gather ideas, how to connect ideas, and how to use examples and how to finish my writing. It helped me how to choose a suitable word. My experience is now better in writing, and my **confidence is better** and I think no need for fear (Respondent A28).*
Group writing increased my experience and confidence in not only writing well, but also proving good editing (Respondent A31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (a): Overall Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: a lot, all parts, many parts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raw Data Before Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, avoiding redundancy, tenses, the topic sentence, generating ideas and many other parts in essay writing (Respondent A28).

I think I will improve myself in all aspects of essay writing (Respondent A29).

I think that group work will help me improve all academia writing areas (Respondent A31).

**Control Group**

This semester, I think I will improve myself in writing (Respondent B2).

I think I will improve myself in writing but writing is very difficult and all students need writing because we use English in all the courses (Respondent B8).

We need to learn writing because all doctors in all courses ask us to produce good writing. However, this skill is very difficult and I think I will improve it this semester (Respondent B17).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:
### Experimental Group

*In sum, writing in a small group helped me in all parts of essay writing (Respondent A28).*

As I said group work encouraged and helped me to improve myself in all areas of writing (Respondent A29).

*I am happy that I noted improvement in all parts of writing (Respondent A31).*

### Control Group

*I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes. Also spelling and punctuation are still difficult for me (Respondent B2).*

*I think I did not improve myself because the semester was short and we had many other courses to focus on (Respondent B8).*

*I think writing with the students is better and writing individually was not good for me. I am not satisfied about my development especially how to organize and develop the essay and how to identify different errors in writing. I hope that I can improve myself next semester (Respondent B17).*

---

### Theme (9): Writing Improvement

**Subtheme (b): Organization**

**Code:** organize

**Raw Data Before Treatment Study:**

*Experimental Group*

*We* …will help each other through a discussion to solve mistakes, to organize the ideas, to connect the ideas, to organize the introduction, the body and the conclusion of the essay (Respondent A24).
We will share the task in developing and organizing the essay (Respondent A27).

I think that writing in groups will be a good chance to write and develop, organize, correct, edit errors and ideas in general (Respondent A29).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

I found myself improved in many sections or parts in essay writing. For example, in vocabulary, in using the dictionary, grammar, ideas, organization, etc. (Respondent A24).

I also feel that I am improved in the style and usage of writing and organization (Respondent A27).

I noted improvement how to organize and develop my idea, and how to connect my ideas (Respondent A29).

Control Group

I think we need enough time to know how to write. My level did not improve in many parts like the organization and development (Respondent B1).

The most problem I think I need to improve myself in developing and organizing the essay (Respondent B2).

I am not satisfied about my development especially how to organize and develop the essay and how to identify different errors in writing (Respondent B17).

Theme (9): Writing Improvement

Subtheme (c): Grammar

Code: grammar, structure, tense, preposition
Raw Data Before Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

I think working with my classmates will help me to correct my own errors in grammar (Respondent A12).

I do not think that writing in a small group will help me to improve my writing (Respondent A18).

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, avoiding redundancy, tenses, the topic sentence, generating ideas and many other parts in essay writing (Respondent A28).

Control Group

We need more time to know how to write a correct thesis statement and avoid grammatical errors (Respondent B1).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Experimental Group

Correcting grammar mistakes was one of the interesting activity in the class (Respondent A12).

We shared correcting errors and providing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes such as grammar, tenses… (Respondent A16).

I do not ignore that I found some improvement in my writing and it was because of working with my friends in the class such as sharing opinions and ideas. I found improvement in grammar like tenses (Respondent A18).
I found myself *improved* in many sections or parts in essay writing. For example, in vocabulary, in using the dictionary, *grammar*... (Respondent A24).

I improved myself in writing with the grammar... (Respondent A27).

*It helped me reduce writing errors such as correct prepositions, spelling, grammar, tenses*... (Respondent A28).

I found that I have improved in grammar... (Respondent A31).

**Control Group**

*I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes* (Respondent B2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme (d): Vocabulary</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code:** vocabulary, words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Data <strong>Before</strong> Treatment Study:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...for example, in the introduction and the conclusion, for the ideas and supporting the ideas, for grammar and organization and for the **choice of suitable words** (Respondent A16).

*I can improve myself in choosing suitable words* (Respondent A27).

*I think group work will help me improve vocabulary* (Respondent A27).

| Raw Data **After** Treatment Study: |
Experimental Group

We shared correcting errors and providing different suggestions about ideas and correcting mistakes, such as grammar, tenses, **vocabulary**, spelling and punctuation marks and how to choose correct prepositions and words (Respondent A16).

I find myself much better in writing. The idea of group work was a very interesting chance. I improved myself in writing with the grammar, **vocabulary**, punctuation, improving new ideas, spelling (Respondent A27).

*I also feel that I am improved in the *style* and *usage* of writing...* (Respondent A27).

*I improved how to use proper and correct *words* (Respondent A29).

Control Group

I find **vocabulary** and using correct words very difficult. I could do better but I did not improve (Respondent B1).

*I hope that I can improve myself next semester. **Vocabulary** was one of the problems I faced. For example, we need to know how to use correct words and correct ideas* (Respondent B3).

---

**Theme (9): Writing Improvement**

**Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing**

**Code:** spelling, punctuation marks

**Raw Data Before Treatment Study:**

**Experimental Group**

*In addition, when I work with the other students, it will be a good opportunity to develop *spelling, *punctuation* and other areas of writing as I said* (Respondent A16).*

*I think that I can improve myself when I work in groups. I can improve myself in grammar, *spelling*, ideas and *punctuation* marks* (Respondent A27).*
Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, **spelling, punctuation** marks… (Respondent A28).

For example working with my colleagues will help in revising, editing and correcting the mistakes such as **spelling** and grammar (Respondent A31).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

I feel that I improved myself in grammar and **spelling** (Respondent A9).

My mistakes now are reduced like using wrong forms of words or **misspelling** (Respondent A12).

I improved myself in writing with the grammar, vocabulary, **punctuation**, improving new ideas, **spelling** (Respondent A27).

It helped me reduce writing errors such as correct prepositions, **spelling**, grammar, tenses… (Respondent A28).

I found that I have improved in grammar, **spelling, punctuation**… (Respondent A31).

**Control Group**

I am sure I can do a better job in writing. However, I did not find improvement in my writing. Still I find a problem how to avoid grammatical mistakes. Also **spelling** and **punctuation** are still difficult for me (Respondent B2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme (f): Development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> develop, support, use examples, generate ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

418
Raw Data Before Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

We will discuss how to expand the ideas in the thesis statement and how to connect the paragraphs. We will help each other in introduction, the body of the essay and the conclusion (Respondent A12).

Yes, when I work in a small group, I guess that I will work very hard and I will improve my skills in writing such as in grammar, spelling, punctuation marks, avoiding redundancy, tenses, the topic sentence, generating ideas and many other parts in essay writing (Respondent A28).

When the classmates work together, they will know how to start and organize the whole essay. We will help each other to support ideas and develop writing (Respondent A31).

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

**Experimental Group**

I know how to generate ideas and how to support using examples (Respondent A12).

I found that writing in a small group helped me in improving ideas and how to generate ideas (Respondent A28).

I found that I have improved in grammar, spelling, punctuation, rich vocabulary, organizing, and developing the essay (Respondent A31).

**Control Group**

My level did not improve in many parts like the organization and development (Respondent B1).

The most problem I think I need to improve myself in developing and organizing the essay (Respondent B2).

I thought that I will improve myself in many areas such spelling, grammar, punctuation and developing the essay but I did not find development (Respondent B8).
I am not satisfied about my development especially how to organise and develop the essay… (Respondent B17).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (g): Cohesion and Coherence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code:** connect, link

**Raw Data Before Treatment Study:**

**Experimental Group**

My colleagues will help me in generating and linking ideas. We will discuss how to use examples to support the ideas (Respondent A9).

We will discuss how to expand the ideas in the thesis statement and how to connect the paragraphs (Respondent A12).

Moreover, group work will be useful to share experience how to connect ideas using connecting devices (Respondent A28).

**Experimental Group**

**Raw Data After Treatment Study:**

I improved myself in how to connect sentences and ideas (Respondent A9).

They helped me how to gather and link the ideas (Respondent A12).

It helped me a lot how to connect the ideas and reduce writing errors (Respondent A28).

**Control Group**

The most problem I think I need to improve myself in developing and organizing the essay. I need also to improve myself in connecting ideas (Respondent B2).
**Appendix 16 - Codes and Themes from Semi-structured Interview Transcript**

**Thematic Analysis**

Experimental and Control Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme (1): Writing is important.</td>
<td>Important, Essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (2): Writing is difficult.</td>
<td>Difficult, Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (3): Affective impact</td>
<td>Interesting, comfortable, Like, dislike, boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (4): Motivation</td>
<td>work hard, motivate, encourage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (5): Distraction or Time waster</td>
<td>distract, waste time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (6): Discussion and Sharing Ideas</td>
<td>suggest, discuss, share, provide, receive, offer, give, get, opinion, peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (7): Trust</td>
<td>trust, not sure, doubt, afraid of, worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (8): Confidence</td>
<td>fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (a): Overall Writing</td>
<td>a lot, all parts, many parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (b): Organization</td>
<td>organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (c): Grammar</td>
<td>grammar, structure, tense, preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (d): Vocabulary</td>
<td>vocabulary, words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing</td>
<td>spelling, punctuation marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (f): Development</td>
<td>develop, support, use examples, generate ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (g): Cohesion and Coherence</td>
<td>connect, link</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme (2): Writing is difficult.

**Code:** Difficult, Complex

**Raw Data After Treatment Study:**

**Data from the Experimental Group**

*If you have difficulties in writing essays in English, what is the source of these difficulties? (Interviewer)*

As I said, **grammar mistakes** (Interviewee A16)

Sometimes actually, **generating ideas** (Interviewee A18)

**Lack of ideas** (Interviewee A18)

**Present continuous. These are the complex subjects** (Interviewee A31).

**Lack of vocabulary** (Interviewee A31).

**Data from the Control Group**

*If you are having difficulties in writing essays in English what is the source of these difficulties? So if you find writing is very difficult for you, what is the source of these difficulties? (Interviewer)*

Maybe it is **second language** (Interviewee B9).

Not writing a lot maybe, **not practicing** (Interviewee B11)

…because of the **past education** (Interviewee B12)

*I found some difficulties in writing* (Interviewee B24).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme (3): Affective impact</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> Interesting, comfortable, Like, dislike, boring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Raw Data** *After Treatment Study:*

**Data from the Experimental Group**

*Very comfortable* because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups (*Interviewee A16)*.

*How do you feel* when you work in groups? (*Interviewer)*

*Actually, very comfortable* because all the students are my classmates (*Interviewee A18)*.

*Okay. Do you feel* interested *when you work in groups?* (*Interviewer)*

*Yes* (*Interviewee A21)*.

*It helped me to be* comfortable *with writing* (*Interviewee A28)*.

*More comfortable* than working individually? (*Interviewer)*

*Yes of course* ... (*Interviewee A28)*.

*What about comparing it to individual work? Is it more interesting or they are the same?* (*Interviewer)*

*More interesting* ... (*Interviewee A31)*.

**Data from the Control Group**

*Do you feel* that working individually is more interesting than working in groups? (*Interviewer)*

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No. If you talk about interesting, I would say groups because it cannot be boring but working individually might somehow be boring … (Interviewee B11).

It is more interesting than the individual work (Interviewee B11).

Do you believe that for example, if you work in groups, you’ll be bored or distracted? (Interviewer)

Yeah, maybe distracted but not bored (Interviewee B11).

Theme (4): Motivation

Code: work hard, motivate, encourage

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Data from the Experimental Group

Actually, very comfortable because all the students are my classmates. So we feel each feel comfortable so we work hard [sic] (Interviewee A18).

Theme (5): Distraction or Time waster

Code: distract, waste time

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Data from the Control Group

Yeah, because working in groups might distract you from focusing, like you can chit chat and stuff, can talk to your partners, so it might distract you (Interviewee B11).

Yeah, the most problem is the time [sic] (Interviewee B12).

The effect of individual work in essay writing? (Interviewer)

Nothing to impose or to distract your work or essay writing work (Interviewee B18).

Yeah although if there is kind of as you have said distraction or voices. (Interviewer)

You can’t write, you can’t even think about your ideas (Interviewee B24).
### Theme (6): Discussion and Sharing Ideas

**Code:** suggest, discuss, share, provide, receive, offer, give, get, opinion, peer feedback

**Raw Data After Treatment Study:**

**Data from the Experimental Group**

Very comfortable because the work is not all on me. I share the work with my various other groups (Interviewee A16).

...you’ll depend on your peer’s feedback (Interviewee A16).

I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic] (Interviewee A21).

It’s good, it’s given me a lot of new ideas [sic] (Interviewee A21).

...When you learn with your friends or your group, is better to get new ideas (Interviewee A21).

And the idea is to give me a lot of ideas to choose which better idea to write (Interviewee A28).

...gives you more vocabulary you don’t have (Interviewee A31).

### Theme (7): Trust

**Code:** trust, not sure, doubt, afraid of, worried

**Raw Data After Treatment Study:**

**Data from the Experimental Group**

[Teachers] know everything about writing, not us ... [sic] (Interviewee A16).
Data from the Control Group

Anyone who don’t trust about his information he must ... don’t see it or he say I know I think maybe 80% its right, if you not trust 100% you have to trust [sic] (Interviewee B24)

Trust whom? (Interviewer)

Trusting your colleague, in his information. When someone ask him if he sure for his own information he can say if he not ... we prefer to ask him other one. If he don’t found this we can say [sic] (Interviewee B24)

Theme (8): Confidence

Code: fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Data from the Experimental Group

[Group work] helped me ...not be afraid on writing an assay in the class [sic] (Interviewee A28).

Group work improve grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, gives you more confidence gives you more vocabulary [sic] (Interviewee A31).

How do you feel when you work in groups? (Interviewer)

More confident (Interviewee A31)

Theme (9): Writing Improvement

Subtheme (a): Overall Writing

Code: a lot, all parts, many parts

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Data from the Experimental Group

Group writing is very important because you can improve ... (Interviewee A16).
You feel that you're improving; one of the reasons is because of group work? (Interviewer)

Yes (Interviewee A16).

Do you feel that you have improved yourself because one of the reasons of group work? (Interviewer)

Yeah (Interviewee A18).

Yeah, I feel like I improved a lot (Interviewee A21).

Do you feel that you have improved yourself? Because, of group work or group work is one of the reasons group work in class? (Interviewer)

Yes of course, it's one of the reasons. The biggest reason I think (Interviewee A28).

Group work improve grammatical mistakes spelling mistakes gives you more confidence gives you more vocabulary you don't have and many advantages [sic] (Interviewee A31).

Data from the Control Group

Do you think that working individually would help you a lot to improve yourself? (Interviewer)

No no no (Interviewee B9).

No improvement? (Interviewer)

Yes (Interviewee B13).

It does no effect at all [sic] (Interviewee B13).

It’s not very well ... not too much. I found some improvement. Some ... (Interviewee B24).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme (c): Grammar</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> grammar, structure, tense, preposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raw Data After Treatment Study:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data from the Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group writing is very important because you can improve your grammar mistakes (Interviewee A16).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found it feel… actually feel good for writing skills, generating ideas finding grammatical mistakes… (Interviewee A18).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helped me to write better. Better structure on essay writing (Interviewee A28).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work improve[s] grammatical mistakes… [sic] (Interviewee A31).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data from the Control Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable but not too much because I found some difficulties in writing grammar (Interviewee B24).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme (d): Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> vocabulary, words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raw Data After Treatment Study:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data from the Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helped me to write better structure on essay writing and give me a lot of vocabulary bank to write in better words [sic] (Interviewee A28).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Group work improve grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, gives you more confidence gives you more vocabulary [sic] (Interviewee A31).

Data from the Control Group

Because when you make a group somehow two people are working... We take the best ideas and the best words [sic] (Interviewee B11).

Seriously in the beginning of the semester I thought individually its better, now at the end of the semester, I prefer to write in group. So everyone will hear you, and when you writing, he ask as a friend about a word or grammar... [sic] (Interviewee B9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code: spelling, punctuation marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

Data from the Experimental Group

So, you need to work in groups to improve your grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, and a lot of other mistakes (Interviewee A16).

I think it’s a really good effect, so, in a way, every member of the group is participate to give new ideas and help with the spelling and help us finish the paragraph [sic] (Interviewee A21).

Group work improve grammatical mistakes spelling mistakes ... [sic] (Interviewee A31).

Data from the Control Group

When you are writing, you cannot focus on spelling because you want to finish because it's somehow if you’re working individually it’s boring like I said, so you just want to finish. So sometimes, you have spelling errors. [sic] (Interviewee B11).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme (f): Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> develop, support, use examples, generate ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Raw Data After Treatment Study:

**Data from the Experimental Group**

*Actually, feel good for writing skills, generating ideas...* (Interviewee A18).

When you learn with your friends or your group, is better to **get new ideas** (Interviewee A21).

*... to give me a lot of ideas to choose which better idea to write* (Interviewee A28).

**Data from the Control Group**

*I think this is the most problem... the way I can change my idea...* (Interviewee B12).
Appendix 17 - Codes and Themes from the Dialogue

Thematic Analysis
(from Think Aloud Protocols Transcript)

Experimental Group

| Theme (1): Writing is important. | Important, Essential |
| Theme (2): Writing is difficult. | Difficult, Complex |
| Theme (3): Affective impact | Interesting, comfortable, Like, dislike, joke, laugh |
| Theme (4): Motivation | work hard, motivate, encourage |
| Theme (5): Distraction or Time waster | distract, waste time |
| Theme (6): Discussion and Sharing Ideas | suggest, discuss, share, provide, receive, offer, give, get, opinion, peer feedback |
| Theme (7): Trust | trust, not sure, doubt, afraid of, worried |
| Theme (8): Confidence | fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed |
| Theme (9): Writing Improvement | |
| Subtheme (a): Overall Writing | a lot, all parts, many parts |
| Subtheme (b): Organization | organize |
| Subtheme (c): Grammar | grammar, structure, tense, preposition |
| Subtheme (d): Vocabulary | vocabulary, words |
| Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing | spelling, punctuation marks |
| Subtheme (f): Development | develop, support, use examples, generate ideas |
| Subtheme (g): Cohesion and Coherence | connect, link |
Theme (3): Affective impact

**Code:** Interesting, comfortable, Like, dislike, joke, laugh

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

**Speaker 2:** It is interesting to write in group

**Speaker 1 (Teacher):** It is only interesting?

**Speaker 4:** Interesting

********************

**Speaker 3:** In the second time, I was more comfortable than the last one

**Speaker 1 (Teacher):** Ok, what else?

********************

**Speaker 3:** Yes, there is a better one.

**Speaker 4:** What is it?

**Speaker 3:** [Laughing]

********************

**Speaker 4:** Misspelling that's it misspelling no words

**Speaker 2:** And [laughing ]

**Speaker 4:** And it helped me

**Speaker 2:** It improved my vocabulary and

********************

**Speaker 4:** From my own experience
**Speaker 3:** you can start writing [Laughing] ... or from my

**Speaker 2:** From my own experience

********************
Speaker 3: By following these methods [Laughing]

Speaker 2: These methods

Speaker 5: May be you can use allow

********************

Speaker 4: If you agree with it write it [Laughing]

Speaker 2: By following these methods

Speaker 3: Ok I’m with the majority

********************

Speaker 3: And there is no problem to start with first.

Speaker 5: And there is no problem. (Laughing)

********************

Speaker 5: There is no problem [Laughing].

Speaker 2: I know, but you seem to have a problem with first [Joking].

Speaker 4: When you write the first body paragraph and its first idea that we have mentioned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (5): Distraction or Time Waster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> distract, waste time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Have you encountered any kind of difficulty when you worked in group?

Speaker 2: Yes, there is a kind of distraction

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Like what? For example

Speaker 2: For example, I provide an idea, other member say says his idea and we take long time to choose
| Speaker 3: We suggest using dictionaries. Asking for help from experienced people and... |
| Speaker 2: Writing drafts. |
| Speaker 3: OK, for the first ah, what do you suggest for the thesis statement? |
| Speaker 2: Now, the supporting text for each idea. |
| Speaker 3: Yeah. A lot of people make mistakes so there are many ways to find; many methods to find errors. Here are some examples, and just suggest these three things. |
| Speaker 2: I don't think that starting your essay by a lot is a good way. |
| Speaker 4: We can change. What do you suggest? |
| Speaker 2: I suggest... |
| Speaker 5: What did you write? |
| Speaker 3: By doing these three methods. |
| Speaker: We suggest, for example, we suggest three methods. |
| Speaker 3: Three examples and |
| Speaker 1: Ok, now, you can start and discuss the title that I gave you. Take your time. |
| Speaker 2: How can I correct? What did you wrote in your...[sic] |
Speaker 1 (Teacher): And please, when you talk raise your voice.

Speaker 2: **Some ideas.**

**************************

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Have you encountered any kind of difficulty when you worked in group?

Speaker 2: Yes, there is a kind of distraction

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Like what? For example

Speaker 2: For example, I provide an idea, other member say says his idea and we take long time to choose

**************************

Speaker 4: It is not enough two lines.

Speaker 3: Why it is not enough?

Speaker 4: I can give an example and that’s it.

**************************

Speaker 2: Now, the supporting text for each idea.

Speaker 2: The introduction.

**************************

Speaker 1 (teacher): And please, when you talk raise your voice.

Speaker 2: **Some ideas.**

**************************

Speaker 2: What did you wrote in your...?

Speaker 3: I wrote three main ideas - the first idea is scanning the whole paragraph for find any errors.

Speaker 2: Yeah
Speaker 3: By scanning it, you can find a lot of mistakes. That’s my first idea.

************************

Speaker 2: Yes, I agree on this one.

Speaker 3: I wrote those two ideas, too.

************************

Speaker 5: experienced people would help you to built a perfect content.: Ok, what’s the first idea you're going to write?

Speaker 4: I don’t know, what do you think?

************************

Speaker 4: So, the first idea asking experienced people... Second

Speaker 2: Keep using a dictionary.

************************

Speaker 5: Isn’t it the same or similar to the idea of asking experienced people?

Multiple Speaker: Yes, it might be the same thing. It’s something you just know and you ask for knowledge.

************************

Speaker 4: Yeah of course improved

Speaker 3: I look forward to see my peer feedback.

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Peer feedback

************************

Speaker 4: I wrote using dictionaries. Asking for help from experienced people...

Speaker 2: Yes, I agree on this one.

Speaker 3: I wrote those two ideas, too.
Speaker 3: So what do you think?
Speaker 4: I agree with you.

Speaker 5: Yeah then, we go through it.
Speaker 2: No, I see first is better.
Speaker 3: I agree with him.

Speaker 2: Yeah so, the reader, the reader
Speaker 3: I don’t agree with you.

Speaker 2: By following these methods
Speaker 3: Ok I’m with the majority

Speaker 5: We have another idea.

Speaker 4: Reading

Speaker 2: Academic essay
Speaker 5: Ok

Speaker 2: Essays

Speaker 4: How can I start the idea?

*********

Speaker 2: I wrote in my essay, dictionaries are always useful...

Speaker 3: You agree with him?

Speaker 4: I don’t know.

Speaker 3: I don’t agree with him. Let’s change the subject.

Speaker 4: It’s not wrong but there is better one [sic].

Speaker 3: Yes there is a better one.

*********

Speaker 3: The title says, how can I correct errors?

Speaker2: Yeah, so I don’t know, it’s not relevant?

Speaker4: No, it’s very relevant. You are writing about ...

Speaker5: Isn’t it the same or similar to the idea of asking experienced people?

Multiple speakers: Yes, it might be the same thing.

*********
Speaker 3: Yeah. A lot of people make mistakes so there are many ways to find; many methods to find errors. Here are some examples, and just suggest these three things.

Speaker 2: *I don't think that starting your essay by “a lot” is a good way.*

Speaker 4: *We can change.* What do you suggest?

Speaker 2: *I suggest...*

---

**Theme (8): Confidence**

**Code:** fear, Confidence, dare, afraid, worried, embarrassed

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

Speaker 3: *Yes, more ideas*

Speaker 1 (Teacher): *Ok and what kind of difficulties you faced?*

Speaker 4: *The confidence I have more confidence that before*

Speaker 1 (Teacher): Ahha [OK]

---

**Theme (9): Writing Improvement**

**Subtheme (a): Overall Writing**

**Code:** a lot, all parts, many parts

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

*The Teacher: And all of you now, you’re four students, do you think that the competence with your skills as a writer is improving because of working together?*

Multi Speakers: *Of course*

*The Teacher: You think so?*
Multi Speakers: Yes

******

Speaker 5: It improved ...

Speaker 4: Yeah, of course improved...

Theme (9): Writing Improvement

Subtheme (c): Grammar

Code: grammar, structure, tense

Raw Data: In the middle of the Treatment Study:

Speaker 2: Asking experienced people

Speaker 3: Will help gain experience.

Speaker 2: Will or Would?

Speaker 5: Would help you?

Speaker 2: Will

Speaker 3: Will will will help you gain experience.

*****************

Speaker 2: Last semester I've asked my English teacher [sic].

Speaker 3: I have asked my teacher to edit my essay.

Speaker 2: I've asked....

Speaker 5: I asked, because you mention last semester [sic].

Speaker 3: Ok I asked.

Theme (9): Writing Improvement

Subtheme (d): Vocabulary

Code: vocabulary, words
Raw Data: In the middle of the Treatment Study:

Speaker 3: Ok I asked

Speaker 5: My teacher

Multi Speakers: To look at my essay

Speaker 3: To edit, to look at

Speaker 2: To look at my essay and therefore he discovered a lot of errors or whatever. And?

Speaker 4: And therefore, he discovered a lot of errors

Speaker 3: He detected

Speaker 4: Therefore

Speaker 2: He found

********************

Speaker 2: According to my own experience last semester I asked my teacher to look at my essay and therefore he found a lot of errors that I was not aware of, a lot of errors or a lot of mistakes?

Speaker 5: Mistakes.

Speaker 4: Errors

Speaker 5: Errors?

***********************

Speaker 2: Use the correct word in the correct position.

Speaker 4: OK

***********************

Speaker 5: ... errors there are some methods or...

Speaker 3: Ways, examples
Speaker 3: We used also right?

Multi Speakers: Haa

Speaker 3: We used

Speaker 2: And used different words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme (9): Writing Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtheme (e): Mechanics of Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code:</strong> spelling, punctuation marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

Speaker 4: So, you will able to use the correct word...So, you will be able to

Speaker 2: Is there a comma between so and you?

Speaker 3: Not sure.

Speaker 4: So?

Speaker 2: You will be able. Is there a comma between you and so?

Speaker 4: No, I don’t think...

Speaker 5: Is there a comma?

Multiple Speakers: So, you will help.

Speaker 2: There is no comma, right?

*******************************

Speaker 3: Will help you expand your vocabulary and enhance your spelling

Speaker 2: No punctuation?

Speaker 3: Yes, we have punctuation.
**Speaker 3:** I will check up the **misspelling**

**Speaker 2:** MI or ME?

**Speaker 5:** Misunderstanding

**Speaker 4:** M-I-S-S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G

**********************

**Speaker 4:** Therefore...?

**Speaker 2:** He found.

**Speaker 4:** T-h-e-r-e-f-o-r-e, therefore. The spelling of therefore?

**Speaker 2:** THEREFORE- FOR-E

---

**Theme (9): Writing Improvement**

**Subtheme (f): Development**

**Code:** develop, support, use examples, generate ideas

**Raw Data:** In the middle of the Treatment Study:

**Speaker 3:** OK, for the first ah, what do you suggest for the thesis statement?

**Speaker 2:** Now, the **supporting** text for each idea, the introduction

**Speaker 3:** A lot of people doing mistakes

**Speaker 2:** We are talking about asking experienced people.

**Speaker 4:** Yeah, you're sure?

**********************

**Speaker 3:** You want the **supporting sentence** for that?

**Speaker 5:** Yeah, we want a topic sentence.

**Speaker 3:** OK, asking an experienced person.
Speaker 4: We suggest, for example, we suggest three methods.

Speaker 3: Three examples and

Speaker 5: to correct these mistakes, there are some methods that you should follow.

Speaker 5(Student): For example, there are ways that can help you.

Speaker 2(Student): For example?

---

**Theme (9): Writing Improvement**

**Subtheme (g): Cohesion and Coherence**

**Code:** connect, link

**Raw Data: In the middle of** the Treatment Study:

Speaker 5: We have another idea.

Speaker 4: Reading

Speaker 2: Academic essay

Speaker 5: Ok

Speaker 2: Essays

Speaker 4: How can I start the idea?

Speaker 3: We used also right?

Multi Speakers: Haa

Speaker 3: We used

Speaker 2: And used different words

Speaker 3: Another cohesion
### Appendix 18 - Previous Studies on Collaborative Learning in L2 Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>Aim of study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berg (1999)</td>
<td>The effects of trained peer response on ESL students’ revision and writing outcomes</td>
<td>46 intermediate level ESL students</td>
<td>Written Test</td>
<td>Training helped ESL learners improve their revised drafts more than untrained learners. Positive effect on learners’ quality of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shull (2002)</td>
<td>The role of collaborative learning strategy in improving writing skills</td>
<td>54 high school juniors students</td>
<td>Pre- and post-tests of participants’ essays</td>
<td>Students in the experimental group improved writing proficiency more than the control group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storch (2005)</td>
<td>How students develop final product</td>
<td>23 ESL learners at an Australian University</td>
<td>Learners were asked to compose short (one or two paragraphs) Interview Tape-recorded</td>
<td>Pairs wrote shorter paragraphs than individuals, but better writing in terms of grammatical accuracy and complexity. CW enabled the participants to discover new ideas and share different views. In addition, CW helped them provide feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki (2008)</td>
<td>To assess differences between self and peer revisions of written texts among ESL learners</td>
<td>24 Japanese level university students</td>
<td>Observation Questionnaire Interviews Thinking aloud</td>
<td>Peers paid more frequent attention to content and ideas whereas correcting grammar, choosing words, and improving language form were paid more attention in self-revisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Japanese learners’ self-revisions and peer revisions of their written compositions in English (Suzuki, 2008)
<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wigglesworth, &amp; Storch (2009)</td>
<td>Pair versus individual writing: Effects on fluency, complexity and accuracy</td>
<td>144 Postgraduate advanced level ESL students males and females</td>
<td>Writing essay and report</td>
<td>Writing in pairs encourages the students to share ideas and pool their language collaborative. Writing task allows learners to produce more accurate texts than those produced by learners working individually. There was no difference in terms of fluency and complexity between students who completed their tasks individually and others who completed in pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grami (2010)</td>
<td>Evaluating the role of integrating peer feedback into ESL writing class in terms of developing writing skills</td>
<td>73 male University-level students at intermediate to high-intermediate levels</td>
<td>Pre and post-tests Questionnaire Interview</td>
<td>Participants who involved in the peer feedback groups outperformed the other students in the control group in every aspect of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shehadeh (2011)</td>
<td>Effects and student perceptions of collaborative writing in L2</td>
<td>38 first year students in two intact classes at a large university in the United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>Pre- and post-test Writing tasks</td>
<td>Results of the study showed that CW had an overall significant effect on students’ L2 writing. The effect varied from one writing skill area to another. Specifically, the effect was significant for organization, content and vocabulary, but not for mechanics and grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pair versus individual writing: Effects on fluency, complexity and accuracy (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009)  
The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University-Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in a Saudi Context (Grami, 2010)  
Effects and student perceptions of collaborative writing in L2 (Shehadeh, 2011)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
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<th>Data Instruments</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Besher (2012)</td>
<td>Examining the practices of various stages of the process approach through collaborative learning and determining whether it would be more effective for Saudi learners than writing individually</td>
<td>48 male University level students majoring in English in the second year</td>
<td>Writing essay tests, Questionnaires Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Findings were mainly derived from quantitative data which revealed that the students involved in collaborative learning had improved in all aspects of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nafiseh (2013)</td>
<td>Investigating the issue of collaborative writing on students in terms of learners’ perceptions and improving overall writing</td>
<td>Second-year English department students at the Teachers College, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Samples of participant edited drafts questionnaires Teacher observations</td>
<td>Peer editing was perceived as enjoyable and helpful for the majority of the students in a number of areas, including spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmoud (2014)</td>
<td>The process of evaluating students’ writings focused mainly on analyzing their mistakes with regard to spelling, using of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation as well as coherence.</td>
<td>Second-year university students at the college of languages and translation, at Al-Imam University</td>
<td>Two instruments were used in this study; a pre-post writing test, and an attitude questionnaire.</td>
<td>Findings revealed that the students’ scores in writing were higher for the post-test than the pre-test Positive attitudes towards using the cooperative learning approach to develop writing skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effectiveness of using the cooperative language learning approach to enhance EFL writing skills among Saudi University students (Mahmoud, 2014)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad (2016)</td>
<td>This study is an in-depth effort to investigate issues usually faced by EFL learners in writing skills.</td>
<td>50 students of Preparatory Year Program Najran University, Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>Questionnaire and 50 writing samples from first and second midterms of PYP were also selected</td>
<td>The students used ways to pass an exam i.e. memorize the writing answer(s)/paragraph(s) rather than the proper approaches to developing writing. The study offers some remedial measures for writing problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Study: Difficulties of learning EFL in KSA: Writing skills in context (Mohammad, 2016)

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<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEGNAFI (2016)</td>
<td>It attempts to provide some effective strategies, and procedures within the process of collaboration.</td>
<td>First year EFL university learners, and teachers in the department of English, Tlemcen, Algerian university</td>
<td>Instruments, a questionnaire for teachers, a questionnaire for learners and classroom observation</td>
<td>EFL learners had difficulties in terms of writing. EFL learners were unable to have cohesion and coherence in their written productions. EFL teachers were unable to select appropriate activities in order to teach writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching Writing Through Collaborative Activities MEGNAFI (2016)
### Appendix 19 – Common Errors Made by EFL/ESL Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>The Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Zheng &amp; Park (2013)</td>
<td>An analysis of errors in English writing made by Chinese and Korean university students.</td>
<td>A total of 168 essays, 84 essays written by Chinese and 84 essays by Korean university students, 39 males and 129 females</td>
<td>Linguistic errors were identified and coded with the help of NVivo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

Both the Chinese and Korean learners are likely to make a similar number of mistakes in their use of tense, the selection of accurate verbs and nouns, the usage of preposition and article, subject verb agreement, the inflection of verbs, the sentence structures, conjunctions, the selection of adjectives and pronouns, plural agreement and plural forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>The Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Tse &amp; Yau (2014)</td>
<td>A Case Study of Grammatical Errors Made by Malaysian Students.</td>
<td>40 Malay-speaking students at the University of Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Essays are used as the primary source for data collection. The writings are in the form of paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

Six significant errors occurred in the sample were a) singular/plural noun; b) articles; c) prepositions; d) adjective/noun/adverb; e) subject-verb agreement; and f) tenses.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Phuket &amp; Othman (2015)</td>
<td>Understanding EFL Students’ Errors in Writing.</td>
<td>Third year undergraduates in the total of 40 students whose major is English Language Thai EFL students Thailand</td>
<td>written essays of 40 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

wrong verb tense; wrong verb form; pronouns (omission, addition or wrong choice); pronouns:
inappropriate use; prepositions (omission, addition or wrong choice); articles; nouns; adjective (position); adjective (comparison); conjunctions; infinitive and gerund; subject-verb agreement; sentence fragment; translated word from Thai; word choice; confusion of sense relations; collocation; question mark; comma; full stop; capitalization; and spelling
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
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<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kirmizi &amp; Karci (2017)</td>
<td>An Investigation of Turkish Higher Education EFL Learners’ Linguistic and Lexical Errors.</td>
<td>The participants of the study are 30 students enrolled at Karabuk University in Turkey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**
(1) article, (2) word choice, (3) preposition, (4) word order, (5) parts of speech, (6) s-v agreement, (7) passive voice, (8) missing verb, (9) verb tense, (10) missing object, (11) verb form, (12) missing subject, and (13) spelling.

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Omidipour (2014)</td>
<td>An analysis of errors in writing among adult Persian learners of English.</td>
<td>40 Persian learners, both male and female. All of the participants had B.A degree in different fields except English. They were allotted to pre-intermediate level after taking a proficiency TOEFL test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**
The results of the study showed that most errors included in writing by pre-intermediate learners of English as second language resulted from inadequate lexical knowledge, misuse of prepositions and pronouns, seriously misspelled lexical items, and faulty lexical choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>The Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nezami &amp; Najafi (2012)</td>
<td>Common Error Types of Iranian Learners of English. English Language Teaching</td>
<td>Iranian Learners of English 103 university students majoring in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**
punctuation, lexical/phrase choice, spelling, article, verb formation, the use of plurals (singular for plural), preposition, verb tense/aspect, clause structure (aberrant clause), and subject/verb agreement.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUBHI &amp; YASIN (2015)</td>
<td>Investigating Study of an English Spelling Errors: A Sample of Iraqi students in Malaysia.</td>
<td>30 Undergraduate Iraqi students</td>
<td>Questionnaires Writing task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

High percentage of spelling errors

<table>
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<th>The Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alsaawi (2015)</td>
<td>Spelling errors made by Arab learners of English.</td>
<td>26 high school Saudi students</td>
<td>A small experimental study is implemented in a context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

The English writing spelling is considered a problematic issue for Saudi students and all errors made by the students are associated with the impact of their L1.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>The Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khan &amp; Itoo (2012)</td>
<td>Problems of Spelling in Common English Learners of Saudi Arabia and Strategies for Improvement The study aims to know the reasons that lie behind these problems.</td>
<td>36 male undergraduate Saudi students, Najran University, Najran, KSA</td>
<td>Data collected through paragraph writing test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

The findings revealed that the participants experienced severe spelling problems including the deletion of vowels, consonants, suffixes or syllables, substitutions, reversals of two vowels or consonants, and the addition of extra vowels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>The Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tahaineh (2010)</td>
<td>Arab EFL university students’ errors in the use of prepositions’</td>
<td>162 undergraduate Jordanian students majoring in English</td>
<td>Data was derived from free compositions written by a stratified random sample of 162 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

The students frequently used improper prepositions such as *at, by, on, with, to, from, of,* and *in.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher &amp; Year</th>
<th>The Study</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yacoub (2015)</td>
<td>English Article Errors in the Writings of ESL Advanced Arab Students.</td>
<td>20 ESL undergraduate students</td>
<td>Written essay samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alhaisoni, Gaudel &amp; Al-Zuoud (2017)</td>
<td>Article errors in the English writing of Saudi EFL preparatory year students.</td>
<td>150 undergraduate Saudi students in their preparatory year programme</td>
<td>Written samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustafa (2017)</td>
<td>Syntactic Errors Arab Learners Commit in Writing</td>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>Descriptive and analytic methods, Questionnaires, Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eltayeb &amp; Ahamed (2016)</td>
<td>An Investigation of Writing Errors of Saudi EFL University Students</td>
<td>20 undergraduate from the College of Science and Arts Saudi students at King Khalid University</td>
<td>Questionnaire, Testing, Structured Interview and Researcher Observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings of Most Common Errors:**

The study confirmed that the correct use of articles presented significant difficulties for Arab students.

The omission of the indefinite and definite article was more frequent and higher than the substitution or insertion of one for the other. Moreover, the study confirmed that the incorrect use of a was more frequent than that of an.

The study verified that the students experience grammatical problems resulting in frequent errors in punctuation, grammatical tense, syntax, run-on sentences, and the misuse of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs.

The students made frequent errors in use of tenses, particularly the omission of be and the misuse of verb tenses), omission of third person singular marker s, and the general misuse of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.
## Appendix 20 - Six Phases of Thematic Analysis
(adapted from Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 35; 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Description of the process</th>
<th>The process carried out in this research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Familiarising yourself with your data</strong></td>
<td>Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
<td>The data were transcribed and read through actively several times to familiarising myself with the data and searching for meanings, patterns. During this process notes were taken and initial ideas for coding and what is interesting about the data were noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Generating initial codes</strong></td>
<td>Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. Coding can be done more ‘data-driven’ or ‘theory-driven’ which you ‘approach the data with specific questions in mind that you wish to code around’ (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.18).</td>
<td>In this study, coding are based on the content of the data set and also driven by the research aims and questions. I coded the transcripts by tagging and naming sections. I coded every transcription and ended this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extract. The definition of a code was made explicit in the description to ensure that the codes were applied in the way each time they were used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Searching for themes</strong></td>
<td>Collating codes into potential themes gathering all data reagent to each potential theme</td>
<td>This phase was characterised by interpretation of the data and included the sorting of codes into themes. Attempts were made to name themes based on the actual words of participants. This phase ended with collection of all exacts of data that have been coded to the themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Revising themes</strong></td>
<td>Checking if themes work in relation to the codes in the entire extracts.</td>
<td>This phase was characterised by refinement of the themes through re-reading the entire data set until was satisfied that the codes and themes are valid and no codes or themes need rewording.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Defining and naming themes</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</td>
<td>In this phase, themes were defined and sub-themes were created which ‘can be useful for giving structure to a particularly large and complex theme, and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data’ (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 22). When naming the themes I was following the instruction given by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 23) that ‘names need to be concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about’. The list of the definitions of themes and sub-themes can be seen in Appendices 15.16.17.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Producing the report</strong></td>
<td>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.</td>
<td>The codes and themes generated in relation to the research aims were presented in chapter 3 and mentioned in chapter 4. The analytical claims about the data set in relation to each research question were written in chapter 4 with enough data extracts provided as the evidence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>