مجلة التربوي
مجلة علمية محكمة تصدر عن كلية التربية
بجامعة المرقب

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Case Study: Investigating The Effect of Teaching Prewriting stage on Students' Writing Quality

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of utilizing prewriting stage activities on EFL student s' essay writing quality. A total of 11 EFL student between the ages of 21 and 24 in the sixth semester at the Faculty of Education, Asmariya University Zliten had participated in this study. The participants were taught writing descriptive essay through two stages: stage one where writing descriptive essay was practiced individually paced on the product approach, and stage two where writing descriptive essay was performed through a process after an exposure to the prewriting stage. In this study, Prewriting Task and Postwriting Task were conducted. The performed essays at the Pre and Post Writing Tasks were analyzed. After the analysis was accomplished, the quality of the performed essays at the Prewriting Tasks was evaluated and compared with the performed essays at the Postwriting Task using 5-Rubric Scale to find out the degree of improvement. The results revealed that the use of Prewriting activities had a positive effect on the overall students' writing skills that, further, accompanied with an improvement in their essays quality. As a result of these findings, the study also highlighted the importance of using Prewriting Stage methods and its accompanying activities in EFL writing classrooms that will have some enhancing-support implications for teachers and curriculum planners.

Keywords: prewriting stage, writing quality, brainstorming, information-managing techniques, audience, dominant impression purpose of writing.

Background of the Study

Writing is a challenging tasks at the university level particularly for those who face low writing ability (Al-Buainain 2009; Farrah, M. 2011). It is widely described as an inactive instructional task that requires many recursive efforts (Zaid 2011). The core extent of difficulty results from the interference between the nature of writing itself and the ineffective corresponding teaching approaches used in teaching writing on the part of most teachers. This degree of difficulty, unfortunately, becomes more challenging matter when students are asked to write their essays with a quality that should meet certain academic requirements in a foreign language (Rubiaee, Daruse & Abu Bakar 2019). Such interference consequently has a further deterring effect that usually associated with inability in mastering a considerable level of the linguistic skills and critical thinking skills on the part of students (Ahmed, 2014; Alfaki, 2015; Abualoush, Masadeh, Bataineh & Alrowwad, 2018). Therefore, students became less creative, intellectual and inquisitive writers while presenting and/or describing their ideas for their audiences which in turn prevent them to perform a high essay quality (Aldera 2016).

Seeking the purpose of improving learning these skills, teachers are desperately in need of utilizing appropriate teaching method that assists them to enhance their students' writing quality (Rubiaee 2021). Focusing on this concept, and because Libyan EFL learning context is still heavily dependent on the means of product approach in learning writing, therefore methods and learning environment for teaching EFL academic writing should be reconceptualized through the use of prewriting approach (Abidin, Abuhelaiga & Pour-Mohammadi, 2011; Abushafa, 2014; Altaieb & Omar, 2015; Attelisi, 2012; Strobl et al. 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Producing an academic piece of writing is a challenging task for the majority of EFL students. It becomes more challenging when EFL students are required to produce it with high writing quality at the university level. It is, then, hard task because students should grasp a comprehensive awareness about the pertinent writing activities which should be applied beforehand starting the actual drafting of their text. These activities that locates at the prewriting stage often afford them the appropriate guidance to achieve a high level of writing quality. The issue is more complicated, in fact, when students are asked to perform an academic descriptive essay as this type of essays consumes mostly extensive efforts on the part of students in searching, gathering and managing information, identifying to whom they will address their writing and, prospectively, what type of impression they should assign in order to identify their voice clearly to their audiences. Therefore, students who have less experience in how to apply these prewriting activities or, most deterring, are unaware about them in constructing an academic essay will, almost certainly, produce low academic descriptive essay quality.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1- How do Libyan EFL university students compose their descriptive essays?

2- What type of difficulties do EFL Libyan university students face in composing their descriptive essays?

مجلة التربوي
Journal of Educational
ISSN: 2011- 421X
Arcif Q3

معامل التأثير العربي 2.17 لسنة 2024
العدد 26 يناير 2025

3. How do these difficulties affect their essay quality?
4. What is the effect of applying prewriting stage on EFL Libyan university students'   writing quality?

Methods

Research Design

The current study used qualitative design for the purpose of gathering and analyzing data pertaining it. Qualitative design is one of the most reliable research designs because it is widely categorized by its effectiveness in supporting researchers to achieve rich and comprehensive data sources (Creswell 2012). It also permits researchers to generalize their results, ranging from presenting numerous, extensive and/ or comprehensive quotations throughout the results section to the reporting of a few particular quotations to illustrate certain aspects of the finding (. For this aspect point, qualitative design is considered among scholars, particularly in social science context, as an iterative process that expands researchers' understanding toward a certain issue. This is, in fact, is achievable by making new significant distinctions, resulting from getting closer to how a certain phenomenon develops and to what extent it might influence people (Aspers & Corte, 2019). For the aforementioned reasons and more, qualitative design is utilized in the current study.

Sample Size

An 11 female students had participated in this study. They were Libyan EFL university students at Alasmarya Islamic University (AIU) in Libya, Zliten. They were at the 7th semester. Their ages were from 21 to 23 years old. All the participants were Arabic native speakers. They were all studying English as a foreign. All joined participants had received classroom instruction in EFL for a period of at least 6 years by the time they enrolled at the university.

Instrumentation.

For the purpose of answering the research questions pertaining to the current study, data in the were collected using a Writing Task. It is a writing activity performed by the participants for the purpose of gathering rich and natural written data through texts to detect students' writing performance (Al Sharadgah 2014; Abu Bakar, Darus & Rubiaee 2020; Rubiaee 2021). A significant amount of research has advocated applying *Writing Task* as an effective data collection instrument for the purpose of investigating issues related to students' written production in terms of accuracy, fluency, complexity and syntactic complexity (Kessler, Bikowski & Boggs, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth 2009 & Woodrich & Fan 2017). In addition, other researches emphasize that applying writing tasks as an instrument in qualitative studies does, in fact, outfit more adequately in collecting rich data to describe and analyze collaborative discussions, peers' feedback and critical thinking strategies within a course of written discussion (Ahmed, 2014; Elola & Oskoz, 2010 & Sharadgah, 2014). Pointing out this significance, Storch, (2013) and Swain, (2000) justify that applying writing tasks as an instrument will act a perfect role in collecting data because it promotes booth individual and peers' collaborative written production. Supporting this point, Rubiaee, (2020) highlights that using this instrument will usually lead to rich, natural and realistic data.

Data Collection Procedure

Data pertaining to the current study were collected through three stages. They are:

    a) Pre-Study Individual Writing Stage.
    b) Instructional Stage.
    c) Post-Study Individual Writing Stage.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data in this study were analyzed qualitatively. They were analyzed through a systematic process of searching for meaning of all information obtained from written texts (Rubiaee, 2021). This type of analysis was used in order to increase understanding of what have been discovered from certain issues (Kolb 2012). Based on this method of analysis, data were organized in ways that enabled the researchers to identify patterns and discover relationships that would allow them to develop explanations, make interpretations and discovering what is important to be learnt and told to others. Among the variety of methods of analysis available for conducting qualitative data analysis, content analysis was used in this study. They were used to facilitate the systematic search for meaning because they suites adequately with qualitative research designs under the study.

Stages in Analyzing Data

To analyze the being gathered data, written tasks were processed through stages of analysis. This will ensure a significant rigour in data analysis and, as a result, findings (Creswell, 2013) These stages were:

    a) Transcribing and Labelling Data
    b) Procedures for Analyzing Data.

Methods for Analyzing Data

Since qualitative data needs a recursive method of analysis in order to digest its rich content, content analysis and holistic analysis were applied to achieve this purpose. In analyzing the written essays two levels of content analysis were used; Micro-level analysis and Macro-Level Analysis.

Micro-level analysis was applied to measure linguistic features (skills) in participants' written essays. The next level of analysis was the Macro-Level analysis. It was applied to measure critical thinking skills in participants' written essays. After analyzing the written tasks using the micro and macro level analysis, a 5-scale holistic rubric scale adapted from Rubiaee, (2021) and Facione and Facione (1994) was applied once more to evaluate the quality of the written essays in the current study. This scale includes 5 levels which were ordered descendingly from 5 to 1 where level 5 represented high level of critical thinking and linguistic skills applied by a particular student in her essay and, thus, is considered to be high-quality essay. on the contrary, level 1 represents a poorly critical thinking and linguistic skills applied by a particular student in her essay and, thus, is considered to have low-quality essay.

Controlling Extraneous Variables

For the purpose of achieving pure and true data, avoiding extraneous variables technique was applied to control and exclude any redundant intervals that might occur while collecting data. To do this, the following procedures were applied:

1. The same teacher had taught the groups of participants during the post and post writing stage.
2. The same content was taught to all participants.
3. Writing activities were performed only inside the classroom to prevent any outside-classroom assessment that students might receive in accomplishing their writing tasks.
4. Participants were only allowed to search and collect information about the topics outside the classroom.
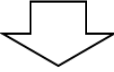
Literature Review

Success in achieving high academic essay writing quality builds primarily upon a proper harness of integrating prewriting stage in composition (Rubiaee 2021). Prewriting stage is the essential component of the entire writing process (Rubiaee, Darus & Abub Bakar 2020). It is a step prior to the actual drafting stage, involving all activities (See table 1) being mediated between the first decision to write (i.e. selecting the topic) and the beginning of a maintained first draft (i.e. actual act of composing the essay) that brings a piece of composition into exist (Baldwin 1972; Hashempour, Rostampour & Behjat 2015). It is a stage that provides students a spacious opportunity to discover about the topic of writing. Prewriting stage, therefore, is described as a discovery stage where students can practice sort of activities (Rohman 1965). These activities help students to examine what they know about the topic through experiencing wide scope of explorative investigations and quests that allow them to understand, identify and expand different sets of views or ideas about the topic. Counting to this point, more advantages can result from experiencing these activities. For instance, it can effectively assist students to apply different strategies and experience wide scope of awareness through rich dosages of deep and comprehensive reading portions to relevant sources in order to measure different issues for the purpose of performing this piece of existed written text into readable form (Mahnam & Nejadansari, 2011).

As a result of experiencing these activities, it becomes easier and, most important, effective task to foster students' language reservoir (Zaid 2011), to sharpen their linguistic skills, to increase conceptual knowledge (Rubiaee 2021), to stimulate their imagination (Badwin 1972) and, further, to cultivate their critical thinking skills (Rubiaee, Darus & Abub Bakar 2020). Giving more focus to the point, engaging students in proper prewriting activities will provide the needed space where they could establish a catalyst cruising step that permits them to gather, manage and arrange information, identify the purpose of their writing (i.e. why they want write this essay), dominant impression (i.e. identifying their position in the essay in regard to the topic) and to establish their audience (i.e. to home their writing will be addressed) for the purpose of presenting their voice clearly in a valuable academic quality (Nazario, Borchers & Lewis, 2012). Getting more benefit, this step, therefore, allows students to articulate all the inherited content of discovery, including the rhetorical knowledge, in line with the skills of how to apply them successfully (Galbraith 2009).

مجلة التربوي
Journal of Educational
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Table 1: The component of the entire writing process including activities used at the prewriting stage.

PREWRITING STAGE	WRITING STAGE	POSTWRITING STAGE

▪ Selecting the topic.
▪ Understanding the topic.
▪ Connecting reading to writing.
▪ Gathering information.
▪ Managing the gathered information using one of the following techniques:
  ➤ Branching the information.
  ➤ Brainstorming the information.
  ➤ Clustering the information.
  ➤ Cubing the information.
  ➤ Flowcharting the information.
  ➤ Freewriting the information.
  ➤ Listing the information.
  ➤ Looping the information.
  ➤ Questioning the information.
▪ Establishing or identifying your stand/opinion.
▪ Identifying your audience.
▪ Identifying your purpose of writing.
▪ Identifying your dominant impression.
▪ Outlining the essay:
  ➤ To outline the introduction
  ➤ To outline paragraph (1)
  ➤ To outline paragraph (2)
  ➤ To outline paragraph (3)
  ➤ To outline paragraph (4 & 5 if needed)
  ➤ To outline the conclusion
	▪ Drafting the information, Draft (1)
	
	  ➤ Composing the Introduction:
	    ○ Establishing the topic sentence
	    ○ Making the body of the introduction
	    ○ Formulating the thesis statement
	  ➤ Composing the body paragraphs:
	
	    ○ Body paragraph (1), (idea 1)
	    ○ Body paragraph (2), (idea 2)
	    ○ Body paragraph (3), (idea 3)
	    ○ Body paragraph (4), (idea 4) if needed
	    ○ Body paragraph (5), (idea 5) if needed
	
	  ➤ Composing the Conclusion:
	    ○ To summarize your essay
	    ○ To re-state your thesis statement
		▪ Proofreading
		➤ Checking the grammar
		➤ Checking the punctuation
		➤ Checking the spelling
		➤ Checking the sentence structure
		➤ Checking the meaning
		➤ Checking the coherence
		➤ Checking the support
		
		⬇
		
		▪ **Performing The Final Draft**
		[Final Product]

Drawing more clear attention to this concept, Leijten, Waes, Schriver and Hayes (2014) assert that discovering rhetorical dexterity of expert writers allow students to possess rich interconnected knowledge that would enhance their ability of acquiring the craft of how to set goals, search information select strategies, which used to manage information according to these goals, and, more important, how to carry procedures needed to texture these information and goals into text, reflecting on its quality. Advocating the effectiveness of the interconnection between the being inherited knowledge and the enhancing level of students' voice in their written essays on one hand and the degree of their writing quality on the other is clearly proved in many studies (Hyland, 2003; Rubiaee, Darus & Abu Bakar, 2019; Rubiaee 2021; Nicolas-Conesa, Roca de Larios and Coyle, 2014; Bulte & Housen, 2014; Mazgutova 2015). These studies strongly state that such interconnection would provide students insight into how best to contextualize their activity, enabling their readers to navigate smoothly the flow of their ideas in the text and, as a result, assess the value of their work. The findings of these studies, in other words, evidently call upon the effectiveness of exposing student during the prewriting stage to dive deep into the works of the expert writers and simply, but effectively, imitating the way of how these expert writers used their writing skills in composing the original written essays and help them to articulate, but of course not to copy and paste, these skills into their essays. Hence, a failure to establish a proper opportunity for students to experience fully the entire prewriting stage and grasp a withstood firm knowledge of how to apply all its learning constituents into written form will negatively deter students' writing ability in composing essays with high quality that should match the valuable academic standards.

Findings

Findings derived from the analysis of participants' Prestudy individual writing Task indicated that participants used only one writing stages when constructing the essay. Students' focus was directed heavily on the drafting stage rather than applying any of other writing stages. This was clearly obvious as a result of the total absence of any attempt in managing the gathered information through using any type of strategies, for example, such as brainstorming, mapping, listing flowcharting etc. that could help them to set up their aides beforehand composing the essay.

In addition, the analysis for the Prewriting Task showed that students were completely unaware about how to establish their standing point towards the topic. More intricately, students were unable to identify their audience

مجلة التربوي
Journal of Educational
ISSN: 2011- 421X
Arcif Q3

معامل التأثير العربي 2.17 لسنة 2024
العدد 26 يناير 2025

before they started composing the essay. This was clear through their fail in deciding to whom they would address their writing in order to adjust the norm of language they had to use in composing their essay that, if they could able to do, should serve the role of insuring the clarity of text-meaning for their audience who would read their essay. Analyzing The Prewriting Task also revealed another consequence that had resulted mainly from students' complete unawareness about the strengths of applying the prewriting stage in performing an essay with a quality that fulfill the academic standards; it was the absence of their ability in identifying their purpose of writing. To shed the light on this issue, the findings of the analysis for the Prewriting Task which had been performed by the participants in this study showed that all students were unable to categorize why or what was the reason behind writing their essays. In other words, students were unable to state clearly and exactly what was their motives or objectives that they were seeking behind writing their essays. Adding more consequences, inability in identifying the dominant of impression before starting to compose the essay was a result of students' inability in utilizing the prewriting stage in performing their essays that turned students to face failure in possessing and exerting a clear voice in their writing. See Table 2.

Besides, the analysis of students' Prewriting Task pointed to another hindering problem that had found to diminish the level of their essay quality. It was the shortcoming of students' complete unawareness towards how they should outline their essays either beforehand the actual drafting of the entire essay (failure in distributing ideas to their alternative paragraphs; i.e. what idea should go or link to what paragraph first) or their failure to present, discuss and illustrate accurately these ideas in their linked-to paragraphs in a well-formatted essay structure. See Screen Shot 1.

Screen Shot 1: students' inability to layout their essays (SI)
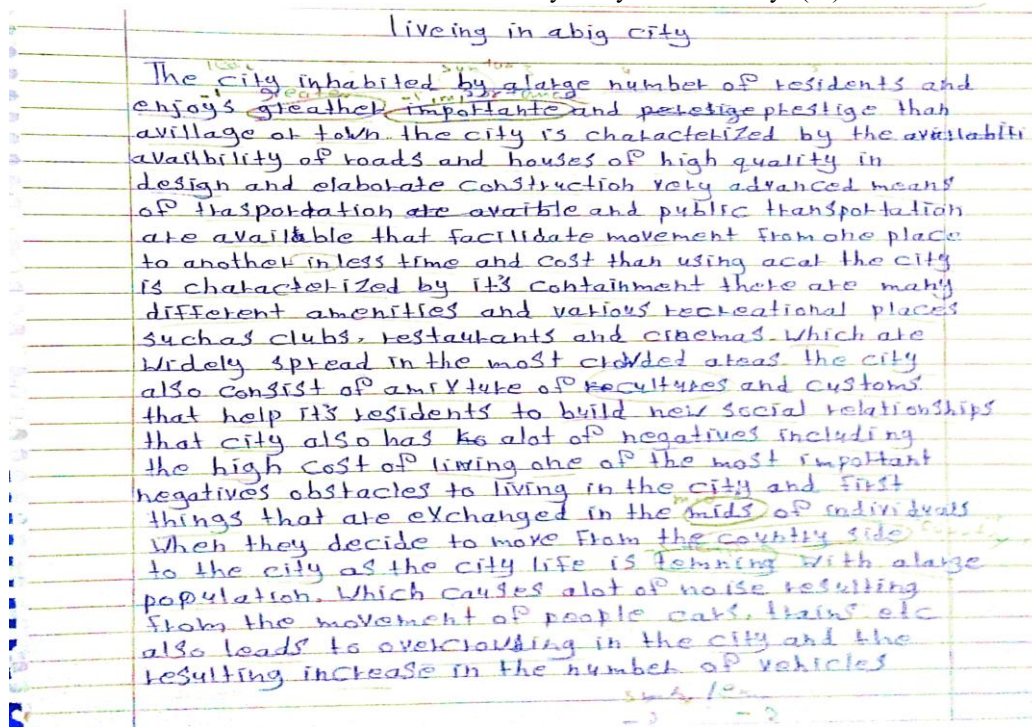
As shown in Screen Shot 1, student 1, for example, countered a complete unawareness about how the essay should be outlined. The analysis indicated that this difficulty is in fact a consequence of the absence of applying the prewriting stage. Students would do better essay outlining if they had a considerable exposure during the prewriting stage that, for sure, would afford them an opportunity to read as much related essays to their topic as possible through which they would discover how the writers of those essays outlined their essays perfectly. This would expand their writing knowledge and contribute to enhance their writing skill in formatting their essays based on the required format (Rubiaee, Darus & Abo Bakar 2021). Facing total unawareness to how the essay should be outlined turned students to lack the knowledge about how the essay should be structured too. To explain this issue, Screen

Shot 1, for instance, illustrates that because the lack of outlining skills, students became unaware to that the essay should start with an introductory paragraph and ends in a conclusion where the body paragraphs should interval for the purpose of explaining their voice towards the topic to their audiences. This, consequently, forced students to perform the whole essay in one single paragraph without any clear indication where and how the information was introduced to the audiences, how it was progressed or how and where the summary, based on the students understanding which should be presented in the body paragraphs, is located.

In fact, the findings revealed that these difficulties had a direct negative impact on students' essay quality. After all the Prewriting Tasks had been analyzed, they were evaluated using the 5-Rubric Scale. See Table 2. Results derived from this evaluation showed that the majority of students performed low essay quality that did not fulfill even the minimal requirements of the academic essay. The findings explained that students were completely unaware about neither how to outline the essay nor how to identify to whom they should write to. This difficulty forced students to be unable to select and assign what type of language or what type of rhetoric structure they should use in order to make their voice clear enough. What might add more complication to this issue was their inability to state their dominant impression before to start composing the essay. This, in addition, caused them to loss the sense of descriptive skills that they needed to convoy their message to the reader smoothly. Counting more difficulties, the findings found out that all students were unable to manage the amount of information they had about the topic of the essays which they had intended to write about. This was clearly existed based on the evaluating criteria presented in 5-Rubric Scale.

The evaluation of the performed essays, as shown in table 2, through using the evaluating criteria presented in 5-Rubric Scale revealed that such poor essay quality was, mainly, because they were unaware about the activities and strategies linked to the prewriting stage that could enhance their writing quality if they were taught to them and, most important, how better they should invest them in order to afford them a constructive guidance in improving their writing quality.

Table 2: 5-Rubric Scale used to evaluate students' Prestudy essay quality

Essay Quality	Evaluating criteria	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
High Quality	The essay is considered to have High Quality if: ▪ The gathered information was managed using one of the following techniques: ➢ Branching the information ➢ Brainstorming the information ➢ Clustering the information ➢ Cubing the information ➢ Flowcharting the information ➢ Freewriting the information ➢ Listing the information ➢ Looping the information • Questioning the information • The audiences are well identified • The purpose of the essay is well identified • The dominant impression is well identified • The essay is well outlined										
Good Quality	The essay is considered to have good quality if: • The audiences are well identified • The purpose of the essay is well identified • The dominant impression is well identified • The essay is well outlined										
Poor Quality	The essay is considered to have Poor Quality if only: • The dominant impression is well identified • The essay is well outlined										
Low Quality	The essay is considered to have Low Quality if only: • The essay is outlined		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Bad Quality	The essay is considered to have bad Quality if: • None of the above mentioned criteria was used in the essay	●								●	●

Results derived from evaluating the Prestudy individual writing task based on the 5-Rubric Scale indicated that the majority of Libyan EFL university students participated in this study had poor understanding on how an academic essay should be constructed. These findings showed that the majority of students did not follow the formal essay-structuring procedure when composing their essays. They did not construct their essays based on the three main constituting paragraphs (the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion), instead, they shrank their essay into one compact paragraph. In composing this compact paragraph,

It also revealed that students were not able to present their dominant impression that should help them assign their standing to the topic before they start their writing. In addition, findings from evaluating these essays led to discover that students who were not able to outline their essays which in turn turned them to construct their essays, in many cases, in one long but unclear and incoherent paragraphs. Essays were constructed in the form of storytelling or diary expressing. Students used these paragraphs as capacitors, filling them with an accumulated information in a disorganized structure. Such poor understanding of how to outline the essay, in fact, hindered their writing ability in performing good essay quality.

Counting to the point, evaluating the Prestudy individual writing task based on the 5-Rubric Scale indicated that students were still unable to perform high essay quality was due to their inability to clearly identify their audiences and their inability to clearly identify their purpose of writing the essay before starting to compose their essays.

Unawareness towards the importance of applying the prewriting stage in essay composition caused students serious hindering consequences that affected directly and poorly their essay quality. These consequences were, in fact, resulted from a) students' complete ignorance in devoting prewriting activities, including how they should gather information and how they should manage these information using one of the techniques prescribed in the 5-Rubric Scale which used to evaluate students' essay quality. This evaluation also indicated a strong connection between the ignorance of applying the prewriting stages and students' novice writing knowledge in constructing the essay. b) Students used few and limited activities in order to carry out the writing task to reach the final draft. Most

of these limited activities existed during the actual writing stage. Although other activities were used by some students, they were inadequate and fragmented. c) Most students used poor micro and macro writing skills in constructing their essays. The common writing skills used by the participants in constructing academic essays were stating the topic statement, the thesis statement in the introduction, and sometimes restating the thesis statement in the conclusion. The most important critical writing skills were absent to a large extent. Findings showed that students' inability in applying critical thinking skills led to very poor essay quality.

The analysis for the essays written by students during the Individual Post Writing Task (IPSWT) after involving in the instructional stage indicated more enhancement in terms of their essay writing quality. They also showed more involvement for the academic writing standards. The results justified that this level of enhancement was a direct result of students' development in the major categories of difficulties that they had been facing during the (IPWT).

As for the ability of processing information, the analysis of IPSWT indicated a considerable improvement in most students' writing quality (see table 3). This improvement was a result of their ability in managing the information, pertaining to their topics, which they had gathered during the prewriting stage before starting to compose their essays. The analysis revealed that prewriting stage allowed students to administrate, classify and divide the raw information in a well mapped plans. Although some students still less aware on how to invest the prewriting stage in managing the portions of information, the majority applied a variety of techniques in order to classify and order these portions. Students' intentions on this stage was focused on utilizing two types of strategies: listing and brainstorming (see table 3).

Table3: 5-Rubric Scale used to evaluate students' Postudy essay quality

Essay Quality	Evaluating criteria	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
High Quality	The essay is considered to have High Quality if:										
	▪ The gathered information was managed using one of the following techniques:										
	➢ Branching the information										
	➢ Brainstorming the information	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●
	➢ Clustering the information										
	➢ Cubing the information										
	➢ Flowcharting the information										
	➢ Freewriting the information										
	➢ Listing the information			●						●	
	➢ Looping the information										
	● Questioning the information										
	● The audiences are well identified					●	●	●	●		●
	● The purpose of the essay is well identified					●	●	●	●		●
	● The dominant impression is well identified					●	●	●	●		●
	● The essay is well outlined					●	●	●	●		●
Good Quality	The essay is considered to have good quality if:										
	● The audiences are well identified	●	●							X	
	● The purpose of the essay is well identified	●	●							●	
	● The dominant impression is well identified	●	●							●	
	● The essay is well outlined	X	X							●	
Poor Quality	The essay is considered to have Poor Quality if only:										
	● The dominant impression is well identified				●						
	● The essay is well outlined				X						
Low Quality	The essay is considered to have Low Quality if only:										
	● The essay is outlined										
Bad Quality	The essay is considered to have bad Quality if:										
	● None of the above mentioned criteria was used in the essay										

Also comparing the essays on the IPSWT with the essays on the IPRWT, students produced more high quality essays at the postwriting task because they were able to elicit and filter what ideas they should include in their essays in order to present their voice clearly while describing the topic and, further, how to order their ideas, in terms of what idea should be presented first or what idea should be presented at what paragraph, for the purpose of clarity of meaning and logic flow of their writing from the introduction throughout the body paragraphs to the end of the essay at the conclusion section. (see Screen Shot 2)

Screen Shot 2: The gathered information was managed using Brainstorming technique at the prewriting stage
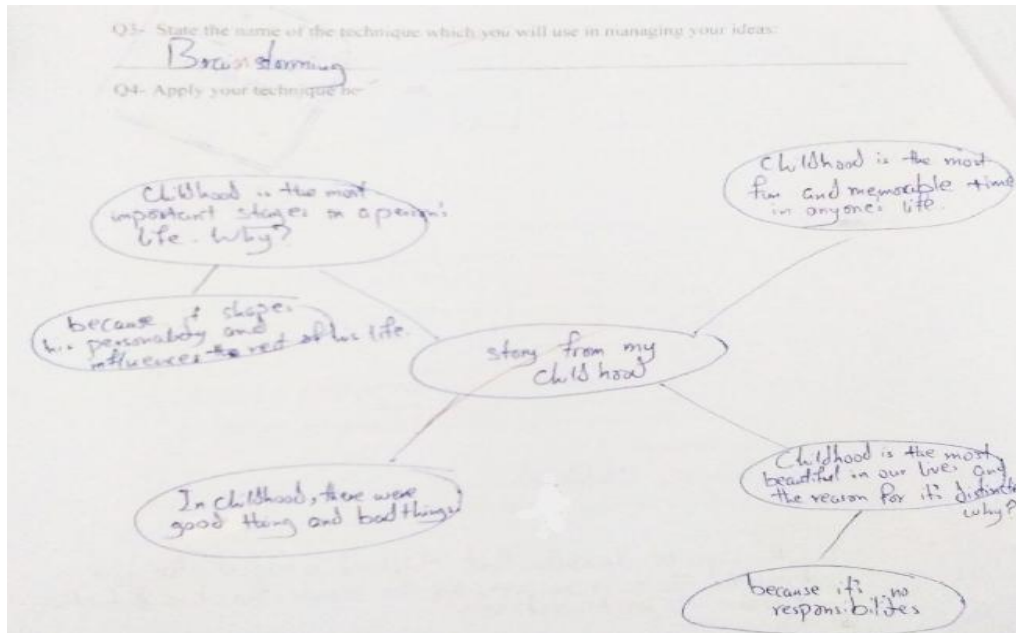
The results also showed that many students at the IPSWT performed high essay quality because they were able to apply some prewriting activities during the prewriting stage that helped them to identify and adjust their language.

One feature of development resulted from integrating prewriting stage is that students achieved a noticeable improvement in their essay quality because they became able to identify the purpose of writing before moving to the drafting stage. This helped them to learn how to inform the reader through accurate and careful description and, also, to entertain the reader with a smooth and logic engagement and lively description.

Another enhancing effect of engaging students in prewriting activities on their essay quality was its fostering impact on their ability in identifying their audience before starting to compose their essays. Comparing the analysis of students descriptive essays at the postwriting task to those at the prewriting task indicated that students at the postwriting task gained more awareness towards the importance of considering the people for whom their writing would be intended to. Shedding light on this important aspect, the analysis for the IPSWT revealed that students, in their descriptive paragraphs were able to identify and think about who would really need or want to read their writing. Applying this skill, in fact, assisted students to develop their descriptive language used in their essays so that their audience will get the main point clearly.

Adding more enhancing effects from engaging students in writing activities at the prewriting stage was reflected clearly in their ability in stating their dominant impression. The analysis of the postwriting tasks documented a considerable improvement in students' essay quality because they had a clear idea of a topic of their descriptive paragraphs. Applying this skill allowed students to establish their attitude about the subject or character of writing accurately and, as a result, to set the right tune appropriately towards that subject or character. This was clearly reflected in their ability in using either humorous and lighthearted descriptive language or, in some essays, serious and weighty description that reflected obviously what they think of that subject or character. The point is that utilizing this skill at the prewriting stage allowed them to help their readers understand their attitude by using the appropriate academic language which in turn enhanced their essay quality.

Discussion

The findings of the current study are discussed in relation to the previous studies. The findings revealed that applying prewriting stage had a great effect on developing the students' overall performance in writing skills which in turn enhanced the quality of their essays. These findings are in accordance with the results obtained by other studies in the field of EFL learning academic writing context.

Many studies confirm the importance of teaching students how to apply the prewriting stage in their essay composition in order to enhance their writing quality because it effectively improves their overall writing skill. For example, Al-Jaro, Al-Quiadhi & Ramadhan (2016); Yuk & Yunus, (2021); Alamelu (2020); Ellis (2021); Dari,

Rahmawati & Akhiriyah (2022) assert the usefulness of prewriting stage in improving the overall writing performance. These studies indicate that the students' writing final product was improved when they used the prewriting stage. They also emphasize that students who practice prewriting activities perform better in their writing than those who do not practice them. More important, these studies reported that teaching EFL students the skills of applying prewriting stage has a significant effect on developing the students' writing skills.

However, other studies were more focused on in describing the concept of its effect on the quality of writing. These studies found out that prewriting stage had more direct effect on some aspects of the students' overall writing quality. For example, Graham & Harris (2013); Durga & Rao (2018); Harris, (2023) reported that students achieved a considerable improvement in their essay quality because they became aware towards the importance of integrating the prewriting stage in their compositions that helped them to improve their skills in developing the content and organization of ideas in their essays.

The substantial effects of applying prewriting stage on students' writing quality has also received a wide advocating because its affordance of the needed space to discover and practice different prewriting techniques. These results found out that the degree of such effect was due to its direct impact in producing a text where students can prepare and arrange their thoughts and ideas in a logical order and clear linguistic coherence. Supporting these results, Pour-Mohammadi, Zainol Abidin & Fong (2012) state that these techniques are crucial to get these novice writers started appropriately with the task. Linking this state to the current study, studies like [Rubiaee 2021; Rubiaee, Darus & Abub Bakar 2020; Nazario, Borchers & Lewis 2013] explain that many students who skip or, somehow, are unaware to the importance of prewriting stage and have an immediate start with drafting stage face different recurrent, and most serious, hindering struggles in currying on a successful piece of writing even in composing their first sentence (Al-Jaro, Al-Quiadhi & Ramadhan32016). This explanation is strongly supported by scholars like Hillocks (2006) and Hayes & Flower (1980) who recommend that such recurrent struggles do mainly takes place because writing involves the most complex thinking skills in writing that need a beforehand rearrangement. And, in fact, to achieve a successful rearrangement for these complex thinking skills, students are indeed need to learn how to apply some prewriting techniques accompanying the prewriting stage that can help them to arrange and manage their ideas and voice in an appropriate form before casting it in to written text. Based on these claims, many studies, support strongly the findings of the current study in asserting the importance of utilizing the prewriting techniques such as brainstorming (Jafari & Ansari, 2012; Storch, 2013; Sulistyo, Mukminatien, Cahyono & Saukah, 2019; Hung & Van, 2018; McDonough, Vleeschauwer & Crawford, 2018), mapping (Lee, 2013; Abrams & Byrd, 2016; Al-Shaer, 2014) or listing (Flower and Hayes 1981; Raimes 1983; Rubiaee, Darus & Abu Bakar 2020; Rubiaee, 2021) at the prewriting stage in order to improve students' writing quality (Joaquin, Kim California & Shin 2016; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2009; Hyland, 2003; Weigle, 2014; Zamel, 1983).

Counting the matter of quality in EFL writing context, performing any single piece of writing that of high quality requires, in fact, students to be able to consider their audiences, the person(s) or the group(s) for whom their writing is intended (Nazario, Borchers & Lewis 2013). This concept receives more insistence in writing descriptive essay. Students, therefore, should think beforehand about who are really in need or want to read their writing (Joaquin, Kim California & Shin, 2016). based on this deliberation, students can develop their description in a manner that their readers will get the main point.

The effectiveness of identifying audiences is another contributing effect of the prewiring stage on students' writing quality. Proofing this effect, many studies demonstrate the extent to which considering audience structures the shape of the writing in EFL context. In these studies, (Hyland, 2008; Wells 2019; Hyland 1990; Van Geyte 2018;), it was evidenced that as students became able to identify the type of their proposed readers, they would be able to set up the type of a descriptive language they should use in their writing. More helpful, other studies [Marion, 1988; Hyland, 1990; Schneer, 2014; Al-Issa, 2016; Geyte, 2018; Graham et al. 2018; Strobl et al. 2019) indicated that grasping this skill has a direct enhancing effect on students' writing quality because it will allow them to select the language that corresponds to the particular linguistic domain and knowledge background pertaining to their target readers which, in the end, represents the text in a shape that facilitates the reader to understand and comprehend it.

Shedding more focus on students' writing quality, the relationship between the enhancing role of stating the dominant impression and the quality of the essay has received significant discussions in EFL learning writing. To coordinate such significance with the findings of the present study, many studies (Mary, Rutherford & William, 1981; Matsuda, 2003; Cutrone. B. 2016; Hyland ,2019) assert that students who became able to clearly state their ideas of the topic for their descriptive essay can perform high essay quality. This is because they will be able to

establish their purpose of writing (i.e to identify exactly what is the reason or what is the goal behind writing this essay). Adding more illustration, scholars like (Nazario, Borchers & Lewis 2013) emphasis that this establishment is essential for students in writing descriptive essays because it helps them to learn how to inform the readers through a careful and accurate description and, more attractively, to entertain their readers through engaging them using a lively description. Therefore, teaching students how to apply this skill as an activity at the prewriting stage will not only afford them the ability to present a text that is easy to read but also make their readers sense, feel and visualize the entire being described facts and details.

Further, the results of these studies indicated another significant relationship between the enhancing role of stating the dominant impression and the quality of the essay at the prewriting stage. These results found out that the level of improvement in students writing quality was due to the direct impact of students' ability in setting their tone before drafting their essays that was in fact resulted from their ability to state their dominant impression. In general, these studies explain that as students are able to set appropriately their tone before they start to draft their essays, they will be able to set their stand or attitude towards the topic for writing. Students at this level of writing skill, for instance, might think of their topic as serious and weighty or humorous and lighthearted (Nazario, Borchers & Lewis 2013). Therefore, Nazario, Borchers & Lewis 2013 assert that learning this skill is crucial for producing a piece of descriptive writing that matches high quality standards because setting one's tone at this point will help his/her reader to understand your attitude (i.e. whether he/she does stand with or against the idea of the topic for his/ her writing) using an appropriate tone.

Conclusion

Applying prewriting stage and its pertinent activities in performing descriptive essay has an enhancing effect on students' writing ability in producing essays with high quality.

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