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The Effect of Using Repair Strategies on Seventh-Grade Students' Writing Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the potential effect of using Repair strategies on Jordanian EFL seventh-grade students' writing performance. A quasi-experimental design and two groups were employed. For this study, two full sections of grade seven from Al-Rashedia Secondary School for Girls were selected randomly. Thirty students were assigned as the control group and thirty students as the experimental group. The pre-/post-writing test was designed in order to fulfill the study's objectives. Furthermore, the experimental group received instruction using Repair strategies, whereas the control group received instruction using conventional methods of instruction suggested in the Teacher's Book. Results demonstrated that Repair strategies improved students' writing performance. The researchers recommended utilizing Repair strategies on different writing genres instead of traditional instructional writing strategies.

Keywords: EF; Jordanian Students; Repair strategies; Writing performance.

1. Introduction

People must acquire English as a second language in order to excel in the classroom and at work, as well as to comprehend and interact with other cultures. Building communication skills is crucial for students to succeed in an EFL environment and become fluent in the target language. This requires them to be proficient in both productive and

receptive skills (Ivancic & Mandic, 2014). Accurate language practice and acquisition are greatly aided by the integration of writing skills (Ibnian, 2010; Omaggio, 2001). Writing fluently is a fundamental communication skill that is valued as a distinctive benefit to the process of learning a foreign language in the classroom (MOE, 2006).

Writing is described as the art of communicating

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ideas and feelings (Camahalan & Ruly, 2014). Connecting and exchanging thoughts, viewpoints, remarks, and blogs is crucial for international communication (Bello, 1997). Composing is necessary for everyday living as well as for the development of other language sub-skills like spelling, vocabulary acquisition, punctuation, idea communication, and the use of accurate grammar (Liu, 2013; Olango & Geta, 2016).

Both academic success and a wide range of career prospects need writing (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). Writing is an important cognitive exercise since it assesses memory, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills all at once. It improves the personality and sense of worth of learners while also serving as a means of evaluating their knowledge (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007). Writing effectively tests the ability to analyze, recall, and apply words, which makes it a significant intellectual task. It necessitates quickly retrieving topic-specific domain information from long-term mental storage. The act of writing allows one to synthesize fresh information with existing knowledge into a cognitive framework (Kellogg, 2001).

Byrne (1988) examines the several purposes of writing in education. Writing encompasses a wide range of learning strategies and criteria. It also gives instructional activities more variation. Depending on the circumstances, writing is usually needed for both official and informal assessments.

According to Starkey (2004), an effective piece of writing should contain the following components. First, organization is crucial since it guides the reader and writer from the opening to the last sentence. The second quality is clarity, which can be attained by doing away with ambiguity, employing strong, specific adjectives and adverbs, using modifiers, and being brief by doing away with unnecessary words and duplication of material. Third, the selection of words: Writers should take into account two things when choosing words: connotation (writers should pay attention to positive or negative connection that most words naturally bring with them) and denotation (writers should be mindful of the words'

exact meanings).

According to Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016), EFL students struggle with word choice and producing grammatically correct, pertinent, cohesive, and coherent sentences. EFL teachers avoid writing assignments because they don't have enough writing experience, but if they put in the necessary effort with their students, they may conquer any obstacles (Rajesh, 2017). In reality, writing is the final assignment that teachers assign; they mark errors in students' work with red marks. Writing calls on the integration and control of numerous processes, including memory, handwriting, thinking, organization, language, spatial skills, and even emotions (Singer & Bashir, 2004). According to Erkan and Saban (2011), writing proficiency is a prerequisite for academic success. However, writing in a foreign language presents a number of challenges for students as it is an active and practical skill.

One of the communication strategies used to resolve learners' writing problems is the Repair strategies. Repair is the process of addressing issues that arise during interactive language use (Seedhouse, 1999). It improves one's capacity for critical thought and problem solving. The two most popular strategies in the realm of repair for second language learners are self-initiated language and repetition. Self-initiated writing, as defined by Ramos (2000), is any writing that young people choose to produce for themselves, outside of what they are required to do for school, out of intrinsic interest and motivation. Self-initiated writing is a reflection of learners' experiences, abilities, perceptions, and motivations. Repetition can be described as the act of repeating or reproducing verbal or non-verbal actions created by oneself or another in communicative contexts. Repetition is the process of using words or sentences more than once in order to make a stronger impression on the reader. It is an important literary device that allows a writer or speaker to highlight specific aspects that they feel are important (Haniah, Sasongko, & Fauziati, 2020).

Repair strategy is a broad concept or phenomenon. For all levels of EFL learners, it is the more generic

domain of occurrence that may be applied in a variety of educational contexts with an emphasis on communication as the primary learning objective (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks 1977). It is a crucial exercise for EFL learning and communication in both formal and informal settings (Kasper, 1985). It helps students become aware of their writing mistakes and equips them with critical thinking and self-directed learning skills (Saadi, 2021).

The Repair in language learning contexts has a significant impact on resolving speaking, listening, and hearing problems (Abusahyon, Singh, & Alzubi, 2022). Furthermore, Repair is present at a variety of sequential positions, including the turn that follows the trouble source, the transition space that comes after the turn that contains the issue source, and the turn that precedes the trouble source (Lee, 2018).

A lack of interest in writing is observed in Jordanian EFL classes, although the stakeholders have offered needed support (Bani-Hani, Al-Sobh, & Abu-Melhim, 2014). Traditional techniques and summative, timed exams are still the norm, which might be to blame for the complaints of students' subpar writing abilities throughout elementary and secondary education (Obeiah & Bataineh, 2016). Teachers, who teach English as a foreign language, are provided with textbooks and flashcards to assist them with their teaching duties. However, Jordanian students continue to struggle with weak writing abilities and other issues (Al- Abed Al-Haq & Sobh, 2010; Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012; Toubat, 2003).

2. Statement of the Problem

In light of the researcher's experience in teaching foreign languages in Jordanian schools, some seventh-grade students are unable to write English in a way that is coherent and properly formed. Furthermore, students' difficulties in academic writing are not just about structure and vocabulary, but also about how to convey and organize their ideas in a second language which leads to students' low motivation toward writing tasks. Listyani and Budjalemba (2020) stated that many students in an academic writing class feel nervous and worried

about their writing because students have various difficulties in the world of writing such as proficiency level, lack of motivation, and lack of knowledge.

In EFL context, writing is consistently regarded as one of the most challenging competencies. Writing is a difficult activity for most people who learn a second language because of particular psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors (Byrne, 1988). Another problem encountered by students is the absence of the teacher's role in applying modern and innovative teaching strategies due to teachers' incompetence in teaching writing which causes students boredom in writing class and unwilling completion of their writing tasks. The teacher is very essential for students during their writing process and they are required to teach writing to the students effectively (Astrini & Ratminingsih & Utami 2020). Regarding all of the problems mentioned above, it is significant to minimize students' deficiencies in writing and look at effective and practical strategies such as Repair strategies. The main purpose of this method is to overcome learners' writing challenges and arouse their interest and motivation during their writing tasks.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the potential effect of using Repair strategies (self-initiated language & repetition) on seventh-grade students' writing performance.

Question of the Study

The current study attempted to answer the following research question:

- Are there any statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the seventh-grade students' mean scores on the writing performance post-test that can be attributed to the teaching strategy (Repair vs conventional)?

Significance of the Study

This research significantly contributes to

improving Jordanian EFL seventh-grade students' performance in writing lessons by utilizing the Repair Strategies. Furthermore, the significance of this study derives from the need to train students in efficient instructional strategies that make it possible for them to deal independently with the problems they face in learning academic skills, specifically writing. Also, the findings of the study encourage teachers to implement such of these strategies due to their positive impact on students' writing performance.

Operational Definition of Terms

Repair Strategy: It is as a correction that applies the proper linguistic form in place of incorrect sentences. Also, the person who wrote the trouble source starts the repair process when errors are found (Schegloff et al. 1977). In this study, the repair strategy is a path or technique in which seventh-grade students try to resolve writing problems during their writing tasks. Further to this, repair is one strategy that has been taught by the teacher to ignore writing errors and develop the effectiveness of their writing.

Writing Performance: "It is the ability to define an individual's thoughts effectively in writing is based on the individual's feeling of efficacy towards the skill which he/she acquires in his/her learning" (Nobahar, Tabrizi & Shaghaghi 2013, p.2117). In this study, writing performance is measured by the writing post-test, based on the outcomes of some chosen units under the study in Action Pack 7.

Limitations of the Study

The following factors limit the outcomes of the current study:

1. The study's sample is restricted to female seventh-grade students learning English at Al-Rashidiya Secondary School during the first semester of 2023–2024. The study's findings may therefore be applicable to comparable samples or circumstances.
2. The examination lasted eight weeks. There might be differences in outcomes over various time periods.
3. In Jordanian public schools, the textbook is

Action Pack 7 (modules 1, 2, and 3). Different texts and resources may provide various outcomes.

Review of the Related Literature

Following a review of educational literature, the researcher gathered the following studies that were instructive and pertinent to the investigation of Repair strategies.

Seedhouse (1999) investigated the relationship between context and the organization of repair in the L2 classroom. The participants were EFL learners. The results showed that the repair strategy would have been more appropriate to interaction in a form and accuracy context than in a task-oriented context.

De Cock (2000) investigated repetitive phrasal chunkiness in native speakers and advanced EFL learners' spontaneous speech and formal essay writing. The results showed that there are more frequently used sequences in speech than in writing but only up to a certain combination length because of the repetitive nature of unplanned speech.

Ramos (2000) examined self-initiated writing practices of young urban adolescents to describe their conceptions and judgments of their self-initiated writing and the kind of writing they are asked to do for school. The participants were volunteers from the high school. The instrument was a survey. The results showed that the majority of the participants do write at their own initiative and they keep diaries, journals, stories, poems, songs, rhymes (or raps) and letters.

Perin (2002) investigated the effects of task repetition on writing skills. The participants were upper-level developmental students. The results showed that the simple repetition of meaningful literacy tasks has the potential to facilitate learning in developmental education classrooms.

Indrarathne (2013) examined the Effects of task repetition on written language production in Task-Based Language Teaching. Narrative tasks (picture stories) were used as the instrument of this study. The findings revealed that learners are likely to transfer their knowledge of discourse features related to a task when it is performed repeatedly.

Hidalgo and Ibarrola (2020) analyzed the effects

of task repetition on collaborative writing EFL learners. The participants were learners who attended a Content and Language Integrated Learning program at a state school in the north of Spain. The instrument was a test. The results showed that less proficient native and non-native writers employ more repetition because less proficient writers lack the linguistic abilities and/or rhetorical strategies for developing supporting information.

Lu and Li (2023) examined the effect of task repetition on linguistic complexity and accuracy in young second language (L2) learners' writing. The participants were Chinese teenager L2 writers of English. The instruments were pre-posttests. The results showed that task repetition was found to have differential influences on writers with different working memory and language aptitude capacities.

Elsayed (2023) investigated the types of divergent repair strategies that a teacher uses at the tertiary level classroom to correct students' productions in academic writing online lectures. The participants were EFL learners. The instrument was classroom observation. The data revealed that the types of Repair strategies have a positive impact on students' production in academic writing. In addition, the most frequent strategy used is the other-initiation other-repair strategy.

Laila et. al (2023) compared repair strategy variations in online learning in the university classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, Algeria, and Iran. The participants were EFL learners. The results show that four different variations of repair strategies were used by lecturers and students in EFL university classrooms in Indonesia, Algeria, and Iran: self-initiated self-repair, other-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, and other-initiated other-repair, except the EFL university classroom in Indonesia, where other initiated other-repair was not used, and the most prominent variation was self-initiated self-repair.

Olatunji, Salihu and Iorhemen (2023) examined the effect of Feedback and Repair Mechanisms in Selected English Essay Writing Classroom Discourse in Ilorin, Nigeria. The participants were Six Senior Secondary Classes II in Ilorin. The instrument was

observation. The findings showed that student-self-made and fellow-learner-made repairs were outweighed by teacher-made repairs.

Concluding Remarks

Repair strategies have been shown to be important and effective as a teaching strategy by a number of studies (e.g., Seedhouse, 1999; De Cock, 2000; Ramos, 2000; Perin, 2002; Indrarathne, 2013; Hidalgo & Ibarrola, 2020; Lu & Li, 2023; Elsayed, 2023; Laila et al, 2023). It was also revealed a limited number of research studies have been conducted on how Repair strategies affected college and high school students' writing skills. However, prior research demonstrated that Repair strategies significantly improved EFL students' general writing skills. In contrast to earlier studies, this one looked at how Repair strategies affected the writing skills of female students attending a public seventh-grade school. The goal of this study is to fill a gap in the literature on this topic.

3. Method and Procedures

Design and Variables of the Study

In this study, a quasi-experimental design was employed. The variable that was independent was Repair strategies. The dependent variable was the outcome of the students' post-test on their writing skills. Furthermore, the control group was taught using the teacher's suggested conventional teaching strategies, while the experimental group was taught using Repair strategies.

Participants of the Study

The study's participants are female EFL seventh-graders from Al-Rashedia Secondary School for Girls in Jordan. They were chosen purposefully. The first semester of the school year (2023/2024) saw the completion of this study. The researcher chose two of the four seventh-grade sections at random. Thirty students each are assigned at random

to an experimental group and a control group in the two sections. While the control group received instruction using the conventional methods of instruction recommended in the Teacher's Book, the experimental group was taught utilizing Repair strategies.

Repair Strategies-Based Instructional Program

This study's instructional materials are based on the writing exercises included in Action Pack 7's Student's Book and Activity Book (modules 1, 2, and 3). In order to give the participants in the experimental group writing instruction, the researchers redesigned these exercises using Repair strategies.

Procedures for Designing and Implementing the Instructional Program

The current program is implemented using the following procedures:

1. Recognizing the writing activities found in Action Pack 7's modules 1, 2, and 3.
2. Determining whether the writing activities in Action Pack 7's Student's Book and Activity Book allow the Repair strategies to be used.
3. Making these adjustments in accordance with the Repair strategies.
4. Determining the procedures that will be used in every lesson.
5. Setting aside enough time for every task.
6. Before delivering the targeted Repair strategies, give a pre-writing test to the control and experimental groups.
7. Presenting the experimental group with the focused Repair strategies.
8. After training them in it, teach students in the targeted tasks in accordance with the Repair strategies.
9. Using a post-test to gauge the students' writing proficiency following the implementation of the lesson plan.

Validity of the Instructional Program

To ensure the program's validity, the researchers showed it to a panel of experts in English curriculum and instruction. The jury was asked to review the program and let the researchers know if they had any thoughts or suggestions for the disseminated program.

Research Instrument

The pre-/post-writing test was designed with the study's objectives in mind. The following is the instrument's description:

The Writing Pre/Post-Test

Following a review of Action Pack 7's modules (1, 2, and 3) content analysis to ascertain the best ways to teach and assess writing skills, the researchers designed a pre-/post-writing test in which students were required to write an email, a brochure, and a short paragraph. The teacher then administered the test. The purpose of the pre-test was to gauge the students' writing proficiency and determine whether the control and experimental groups were equivalent. The post-test, which measured the efficacy of Repair strategies, was given at the end of the instructional program after the pre-test results had been adjusted for. The overall test score was 60, and it was scored according to five sub-skills in writing: ideas and development, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and mechanics (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation).

Correlation analysis was utilized to assess the test's construct validity. The Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the item score and the test's overall score fall between (0.55-0.93), according to the results. In addition, the test's test-retest and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were extracted. The findings showed that the test's test-retest coefficient was 0.91 and the test's Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.87. The reliability coefficients of the test surpass the threshold value of 0.70, indicating its validity and suitability for evaluating students' writing performance.

4. Results

The means and standard deviations of the pre/post test scores in the five writing subskills were computed in order to respond to the study question, as Table 1 illustrates.

Table 1 demonstrates that in each of the five writing sub-skills (ideas and development, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and mechanics (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation)), the experimental groups' post-performance is greater than the control group's mean post-performance.

To investigate the effect of the instructional strategy (Repair vs. conventional) on the linear combination of the five writing sub-skills after controlling the effects of pre-test scores, a one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (one-way MANCOVA) using a multivariate test (Hotelling's Trace) was used, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 demonstrates that there was statistical significance in the primary effect of the teaching strategy in a linear combination of five writing sub-skills. With a partial eta square value of .890, the instructional strategy was responsible for 89.0% of

the variance in the linear combination of the five writing sub-skills. Table 3 displays the results of a follow-up univariate study (Follow-up ANCOVAs: Tests of between-subject effects) that was carried out because the instructional strategy's effect is statistically significant.

In all five writing sub-skills, Table 3 demonstrates that the experimental group's post-performance is statistically considerably greater than the control group's post-performance. The teaching strategy explained 68.2%, 65.9%, 78.2%, 74.2%, and 67.8% of the variance in ideas and development, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and mechanics, according to the partial eta squared values of .682, .659, .782, .742, and .678. Therefore, the vocabulary sub-skill saw the largest effect size from the instructional strategy, which was then followed by the sentence structure sub-skill, ideas and development sub-skill, mechanics sub-skill, and organization sub-skill.

Furthermore, Table 4 displays the means, standard deviations, and standard errors of the two groups in five writing sub-skills both before and after the pre-test scores were controlled.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-Test and Post-Test Per-test of Five Writing Sub-Skills (per sub-skill)

Writing Sub-Skill	Group	Maximum score	Pre-test		Post-test	
			Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Ideas and Development	Experimental	12	4.50	.86	9.93	1.36
	Control		4.57	.77	6.37	1.13
Organization	Experimental	12	4.50	.90	9.80	1.35
	Control		4.63	.67	6.57	1.04
Vocabulary	Experimental	12	4.57	1.01	9.97	1.00
	Control		4.47	.57	6.60	.89
Sentence Structure	Experimental	12	4.73	1.17	9.70	1.12
	Control		4.77	.94	6.47	.90
Mechanics	Experimental	12	4.60	.93	9.77	1.22
	Control		4.60	1.00	6.70	.92

Table 2: Results of Multivariate Test (Hotelling's Trace) for the Effect of Teaching Strategy on Five Writing Sub-Skills

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Teaching Strategy	8.065	79.041	5.000	49.000	.000	.890

Table 3: The Effect of the Teaching Strategy on Five Writing Sub-Skills after Controlling the Effect of Pre-Test Scores

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Covariate- S1	Ideas and Development	1.505	1	1.505	.925	.341	.017
Covariate- S2	Organization	.502	1	.502	.343	.561	.006
Covariate- S3	Vocabulary	.488	1	.488	.548	.463	.010
Covariate- S4	Sentence Structure	.826	1	.826	.806	.373	.015
Covariate-S5	Mechanics	.306	1	.306	.243	.624	.005
Instructional Strategy	Ideas and Development	184.673	1	184.673	113.425	.000	.682
	Organization	150.012	1	150.012	102.418	.000	.659
	Vocabulary	169.250	1	169.250	190.064	.000	.782
	Sentence Structure	156.062	1	156.062	152.316	.000	.742
	Mechanics	140.150	1	140.150	111.376	.000	.678
Error	Ideas and Development	86.292	53	1.628			
	Organization	77.630	53	1.465			
	Vocabulary	47.196	53	.890			
	Sentence Structure	54.303	53	1.025			
	Mechanics	66.692	53	1.258			
Corrected Total	Ideas and Development	281.650	59				
	Organization	240.983	59				
	Vocabulary	222.183	59				
	Sentence Structure	216.583	59				
	Mechanics	208.733	59				

Table 4: Adjusted and Unadjusted Means of the Five Writing Sub-Skills

A Paragraph Writing Sub-Skills	Group	Unadjusted mean		Adjusted mean	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.E
Ideas and Development	Experimental	9.93	1.36	9.91	.234
	Control	6.37	1.13	6.39	.234
Organization	Experimental	9.80	1.35	9.77	.222
	Control	6.57	1.04	6.59	.222
Vocabulary	Experimental	9.97	1.00	9.97	.173
	Control	6.60	.89	6.60	.173
Sentence Structure	Experimental	9.70	1.12	9.71	.185
	Control	6.47	.90	6.46	.185
Mechanics	Experimental	9.77	1.22	9.77	.205
	Control	6.70	.92	6.70	.205

After controlling for differences in pre-test results, Table 4 demonstrates that there are still discernible disparities between the post-performance of the two groups on five writing sub-skills. Therefore, applying the Repair strategies improved the experimental group's post-performance in each of the five writing sub-skills: organization, vocabulary, ideas and development, sentence structure, and mechanics

(spelling, capitalization, and punctuation).

5. Discussion

The results showed that the mean post-test scores of the experimental and control groups were statistically significantly different at ($\alpha=0.05$), with the experimental group's students performing better

overall in writing than the control group. Repair strategies were used to improve writing performance in the five sub-skills (ideas and development, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, and mechanics) as well as the overall writing performance.

For a variety of factors, Repair strategies may have enhanced the experimental group of students' post-test writing performance both overall and in the five writing subskills. One of the deciding factors may be the design of the instructional program based on Repair strategies. The instructional program was carefully created and given the go-ahead to be used in order to accomplish this aim. The writing assignments were thoughtfully set up by the researchers; the subjects were drawn from the curriculum, there was enough time allotted, and the exercises were brief and efficiently structured to generate more interesting subjects.

Another factor that may have helped students improve their writing performance is the way Repair strategies promoted teamwork. By highlighting individual differences, Repair strategies increased students' collaboration to accomplish assignments. To help students become more interested in the content they write, writing exercises that are suitable for both independent and group work were incorporated into the instructional program. By actively engaging in Repair strategies instead than merely listening to the teacher instruction, students were able to learn more.

Students' writing performance may have also benefited from Repair strategies' ability to place the teacher in close communication with each student as they work through the writing process step by step in the classroom. In other words, the teacher-student connection is mutually beneficial. Many students are attracted in this strategy of learning English since the teacher acts as a motivator, a leader, and an instructor. This is especially true when it comes to writing sessions.

6. Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the findings of this

study, the following conclusions were made:

1. Participants' writing skills and participation in class activities were enhanced by an instructional program that focused on Repair strategies.
2. When Repair strategies were used in the classroom, particularly in writing skills classes, students' attention levels increased.
3. Students who took part in an instructional program focused on Repair strategies outperformed their peers on the post-test, indicating that Repair strategies enhance instruction and learning while expanding on the material covered in the MOE textbook.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, some recommendations are presented as follow:

1. To assist students become better writers and to encourage engagement, communication, and peer and teacher feedback, EFL teachers are advised to utilize the current program.
2. It is advised that the MoE conduct seminars and workshops to provide teachers with the tools and knowledge they need to use Repair strategies in the classroom.
3. EFL textbook designs should incorporate exercises utilizing Repair strategies, especially for English language curricula for grade seven. Lessons on EFL writing skills are more engaging and fun with this feature.
4. Researchers are encouraged to carry out a variety of studies to look into how Repair strategies affect different grade levels.

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