Enhancing Writing Skills within EFL University Contexts: Case Study in the United Arab Emirates

Suhair E. Al Alami

Al Ghurair University, Dubai, UAE

Abstract

Upon graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates are required to acquire a repertoire of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Emphasizing the role literature can play in terms of enhancing students' writing skills, the present research introduces a literature-based course: LEARN AND GAIN. Adopting an experimental design, the research project involved two groups: experimental and control. The students of the experimental group were exposed to the literature course whilst the students of the control group were exposed to a General English language course. Examining the effectiveness of the proposed treatment, the author set and administered a pre-posttest. The pre-posttest aimed to measure subjects' communicative critical writing competence in the English language. Based on the statistical findings, the performance of the experimental group students on the pre-posttest was significantly better than that of their counterparts of the control group students. In the light of findings and conclusions, recommendations have been discussed.

Keywords: Communicative critical writing competence, EFL contexts

1. Introduction

Upon graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates specializing in majors other than English are required to have gained a repertoire of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Despite the efforts EFL practitioners make whilst teaching, the outcome in relation to mastering writing skills is not yet satisfactory enough (Al Alami: 2013). The main concern of the current paper, as such, is to propose an *appropriate course of action*.

Seeking an effective *course of action*, the author believes that using literature within EFL contexts could be helpful in relation to some crucial points. This argument is in support of a number of professionals' suggestions for using literature to enhance language proficiency within EFL contexts. In his book, for instance, McRae (2008) argues that utilizing stories for pedagogical purposes yields in some positive effects such as encouraging students to read for pleasure. Interested in knowing what may happen next, maintains students' interest and enriches their experience. Emotionally evocative and true to life settings as well as characters, Shaw (2007) believes that a novel has the power to engage learners in the content whilst enhancing imagination and visualizing characters and settings. According to De Naples (2002), while students try to grasp fiction in the form of drama and poetry, depicting characters' life as well as asking questions about what sort of life the author creates, they very often ask questions about their own lives and issues they encounter. Sentence structure, forms of organization and vocabulary provide learners with genuine language input to learn from.

It could be logical as such to state that, literature can contribute to enhancing students' writing skills in English. The present research therefore seeks to examine the reliability of this viewpoint by introducing a *novels and short stories course*, set and taught by the author. The course adopts the idea that literature can be used as a means rather than an object in itself, hence highlighting the importance of literature as a major resource in EFL/ESL learning (Baba 2008).

As well as Section One, the current paper includes the following sections: literature review, research questions, research hypotheses, study variables, research setting; population and sample, research implementation, data collection, the proposed course at a glance, statistical treatment, study findings, suggestions and recommendations, concluding word, and references. It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that, even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research topic, methodology, conclusions and recommendations can still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world.

2. Literature Review: Writing Skills within EFL Contexts

The current research recognizes the profound value of writing to both English language development and to higher education in general. Section Two of the current paper is allotted to discussing writing skills in the EFL classroom. A number of pedagogical approaches as well as related studies are presented and discussed, all within EFL contexts.

2.1. Writing Skills within EFL Contexts: Strategies, Activities, and Procedures

Foreign language writing is usually a challenging process whereby a number of factors are involved, affecting the learner either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent factors is the quality of instruction offered to learners. This part of the current paper aims to present a number of strategies; activities and procedures within the field of EFL writing.

According to Burke (2010), there are three main stages to producing a stylistics paper. These are: investigation and selection, analysis, and writing. The first stage should take up a considerable time of thorough readings, considering both a stylistics perspective and an

interpretive perspective. The second stage requires deep analyses of the text being dealt with. As far as the interpretive task of the analyses is concerned, the analyses could be either the learner's or an already existing one to which learners can refer for enrichment purposes. The third stage is normally the writing-up stage whereby learners are expected to have finalized their writing.

Technology, O'Brien (2004) believes, may be utilized in the classroom using a variety of means. The methods new technologies are employed for pedagogical purposes have been affected by the particular beliefs of each individual teacher as well as by the general institutional context. As far as word processing is concerned, it is common to assert that it is one of the optimal tools for a process approach to writing, providing users with various types of corrections prior to or following saving; deleting and inserting, for example. Network-based language teaching is also another area where technology has been implemented.

Interested in developing summary writing skills, Mishriki (2002) explains that when teaching summary writing, a teacher should make sure that students are able to recognize the outline, the organization, the main ideas, the main supporting ideas as well as how they are related to each other. Moreover, students should be able to analyze the passage in an attempt to gain a better understanding of it, which will give them a clearer insight into what to include, exclude, focus on, marginalize, or even omit when writing their summaries.

Advocating the idea that co-operative learning is of genuine support, Hirvela (2000) recommends adopting writing groups-small groups of students working together on a writing task which normally occurs in the form of peer review where students working in groups, offer authentic audience feedback from which they learn to revise their papers. Whilst working in groups, learners have the opportunity to improve their writing skills by means of exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, as well as enriching knowledge.

To summarize, this part of the current paper presents a number of strategies, activities and procedures which practitioners can implement in the EFL writing class. There is no single right way, neither is there one best activity through which writing skills can always be taught. Each of the strategies, activities and procedures outlined above has its own intrinsic value as a stimulus for eliciting some good responses.

2.2. Writing Skills within EFL Contexts: Related Studies

For EFL students, learning to write effective essays is an immense challenge, because the student has to obey linguistic conventions, write for unfamiliar audience, and employ rhetorical strategies that the audience expects. This part of Section Two deals with a number of studies and researches within the contexts of EFL writing.

Abdel-Latif (2009) conducted a study with the main aim of examining the pausing of Egyptian university students while composing their texts, and the reasons for such pauses. Thirty students took part in the study, all of whom were attending a four-year pre-service English language teaching program at an Egyptian university. The study revealed that both text quality and linguistic knowledge correlated positively with inter-sentential pausing, and negatively with intra-sentential pauses. One major implication for EFL instructors is the need to consider the linguistic knowledge levels of their students, and the need to vary instructional methods depending on students' language proficiency and/or linguistic knowledge.

Chen (2006), on the other hand, conducted a project with the aim of utilizing children's literature to enhance EFL university students' narrative thinking as well as their writing ability, through a task of story reading and writing. The project was conducted in a required composition course for English majors. The task of reading and writing stories in the project was one of the course requirements. The task was arranged to develop students' narrative thinking, and inspire

their creativity as well as imagination. It lasted for four weeks: the first week focused on reading stories; the second, drafting stories; the third, peer review and revising; and the fourth, conference and revising. To help students perceive the characters' voice, the researcher asked the participants to read out the dialogue to their peers, or role-play the characters. The project has the following implications for today's practitioners. Firstly, sharing and publication with the assistance of computer technology can empower student writers. Secondly, children's literature, if carefully chosen, can be a useful resource for integrative EFL learning. Thirdly, time; support; and practice can provide scaffolds for low self-esteemed writers. Fourthly, narrative genre knowledge gained through explicit instruction can promote students' narrative thinking, as well as facilitate the task of reading and writing stories.

With co-operative learning in mind, Storch (2005) investigated the effectiveness of collaborative writing in ESL settings. The study involved twenty three participants who were offered the choice of working either in pairs or individually. The research examined texts written in pairs as well as individually, eliciting subjects' reflections on cooperative learning as opposed to individual work. The findings revealed that texts written in pairs were shorter yet better in relation to accuracy of grammar, complexity of language as well as performance of task. Cooperative learning provided study subjects with a chance to generate ideas as well as to offer each other adequate feedback. The majority of study subjects conveyed their satisfaction with collaborative writing.

Interested in dialogue journal writing, Kim (2003) examined its implementation in a South Korean literature-based EFL classroom. The study was mainly concerned with what would happen in terms of the learners' language development and literary responses, when a teacher responded to the students through dialogue journal writing in an EFL literature based classroom. Data collection included interviews, a survey, analysis of written samples from dialogue journals, teachers' journal and field notes, along with other classroom documents. Data analysis showed that subjects viewed dialogue journal writing as a good way to improve English writing skills. In addition, dialogue journal writing served as a way of maintaining ongoing communication between the teacher and each subject, and of extending subjects' experience of the world through responding to the teacher as well as the literary texts they read. With the impact of dialogue journal writing through a literature based approach-as proposed by the study-the researcher recommended further implementation of dialogue journal writing.

Using portfolios for teaching the writing skill has been examined by a number of researchers and specialists. Yang (2003), for example, examined the extent to which integrating portfolios into a strategy of learning could be helpful, as well as investigated the outcome of using portfolios in terms of supporting EFL college students to be better autonomous learners. After two semesters of learning strategy-based instruction, proficiency tests revealed that participants made progress to a success percentage of over eighty, which could be seen as a significant improvement once compared to the fifty percent prior to training. The study recommends integrating portfolios into English language courses, familiarizing the learners with the concept of autonomy, implementing frequent portfolio's checking and sharing, and developing guidelines and mini-lessons to enhance students' writing.

Lemmon (1999) carried out a study investigating the use of dialogue journals in senior high schools as a central feature of literature studies. The study was conducted to shed light on the nature of secondary students' responses to literary texts, the degree of development dialogue journals showed in secondary students' responses to literary texts, and what dimensions that development could reveal. The responses to the literary texts-both early and late- were separated

into thematic units and then analyzed in terms of the guidelines outlined in the resource book, which the researcher provided. It was found that students' responses generally followed the categories outlined in the handbook; personal reaction was the most common as well as the most diverse of all the responses. In addition, students rarely used categories of response such as asking questions of the text or using quotes. Moreover, the average length-in words-of students' responses increased over the period of the study. Students seemed to become more accustomed to using literary terminology as an integral part of their responses. They, however, did not seem to judge the merits of a literary text until they had had a chance to the meaning of the literary work. The conclusion drawn was that, while the dialogue journal might be of use in senior high school English studies, there ought to be established criteria to determine the value of journals.

In conclusion, learning writing skills might be a demanding requirement, especially within EFL contexts where exposure to English could be limited. Students learning writing within EFL contexts have to handle issues like those of choosing appropriate words and phrases, applying correct grammatical rules, discussing relevant ideas, as well as generating sufficient ideas about the writing topic. Most importantly, students have to have adequate knowledge of how to use functional language in a variety of contexts. Hence, it is essential to be fully aware of the directions undertaken by EFL practitioners, in an aim to seek a less compartmentalized world.

With previous studies and recommendations in mind, the current research sought to equip EFL university students in the United Arab Emirates with a repertoire of writing skills, which would ensure the mastering of writing skills for life-long learning.

3. Research Questions

The present research sought appropriate answers to the following questions.

1. What could constitute a *novels and short stories* course, proposed for promoting writing skills on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

2. Could the suggested literature course be of significant influence in terms of enhancing writing skills on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

To adequately investigate the main issue, four sub-questions were formulated. These are:

I. Are there any significant differences between the two groups' performance, on the pre-posttest conducted for the purpose of the current study?

II. Are there any significant differences between the performance of female and that of male students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study?

I11. Are there any significant differences between the performance of science and non-science colleges' students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study?

4. Research Hypotheses

In accordance with the three questions mentioned above, three hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. There are no significant differences between the two groups' performances on pre-posttest, conducted for the purpose of the current study.

2. There are no significant differences between the performance of female and that of male students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.

3. There are no significant differences between the performance of science and non-science colleges' students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.

5. Study Variables

The study involved two groups: control and experimental. The two groups had males and females; majoring in science and non-science subjects. The research variables are stated below.
- Independent variable: The suggested literature course set by the researcher: **Learn and Gain.**
- Dependent variable: Experimental and control groups' performance on the pre-posttest conducted for the current study purposes.
- Moderator variables: Major; namely, science versus non-science colleges' students, and gender; female versus male.
-

6. Research Setting, Population and Sample

The research covers undergraduate learners studying in the United Arab Emirates and specializing in subjects other than English. Students whose major is English are not included as this category of learners is normally expected to acquire adequate communicative competence in English throughout their four-year study program. As far as the study sample is concerned, it includes thirty four learners studying at a private university in the United Arab Emirates. The piloting of the study was conducted in the academic year 2008-2009 for one month, re-piloting the study was conducted in the academic year 2009-2010 for four months, and implementing the study was conducted throughout the academic year 2011-2012 for four months. Piloting, re-piloting and implementing the study were all conducted at the same university in Dubai.

7. Research Implementation

The first on-site implementation stage was piloting the proposed course, which took place in class with two different groups during the academic year 2008-2009. Two short stories were selected for implementation purposes. The implementation was carried out during the first semester with a group of students who were having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively, and during the second semester with another group of students who were also having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively. Implementing the pilot study twice was intended to ensure valid, reliable as well as credible results. With reference to the students' comments then, both groups expressed satisfaction with the literary texts as well as language tasks and activities provided. However, the majority expressed concern about the high number of new words used in the two texts.

Involving two different experimental and two different control groups, the second on-site implementation stage of the course was a re-piloting study which took place during the academic year 2009-2010. Prior to and following implementation, the students involved were exposed to a pre-posttest set and conducted by the researcher. The two experimental groups were taught the proposed course along with the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course during the first and second academic semesters, while the two control groups were only taught the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course during the same period. The duration of implementation was three hours a week, lasting for fifteen weeks each.

In the light of three English language specialists' recommendations in the UK, the researcher decided to re-conduct the research project introducing a number of modifications; the

pre-post test conducted earlier was felt to be in favor of the experimental group as it has a touch of literature. Accordingly, the researcher set and administered another pre-posttest which can be seen as a neutral general English language proficiency test in favor of no specific group. Speaking in general terms, EFL tests can gain status in a number of ways, including being based on established tests such as TOEFL, by being trialed extensively, and by analysis of the items and weeding out poor ones. The researcher, therefore, based her pre-posttest on TOEFL for its being internationally recognized. Soon after trialing the pre-posttest extensively throughout the fall academic semester 2011-2012, the researcher made slight modifications and then administered the test twice-prior to and following implementation-throughout the winter academic semester 2012. The researcher implemented the proposed course involving the students who registered for the course Communication Skills throughout the winter academic semester 2012. In other words, the students who registered for the Communication Skills course were two sections, one of which was experimental and as such was taught the proposed course, while the other was control, hence was taught the general English course used for teaching Communication Skills at the university where the researcher works. The implementation process lasted for one academic semester, that is to say, forty five hours distributed over fifteen weeks.

8. Data Collection: The Pre-Posttest

Going through many books and magazines within the related areas, the researcher came to realize that, for her to employ the data collection method of using language tests would be appropriate. To ensure optimal test conduct, the researcher herself set as well as administered the pre-posttest. The pre-posttest was administered to the experimental and control groups with the aim of measuring the two groups' writing skills, prior to and following research conduct. Table One below highlights the pre-posttest specifications, and Table Two presents the evaluation criteria.

Table 1. *Test Specifications*

No	Question Type	Abilities Measured	Answer	Mark Allotment	Allocation of Time
1	Essay writing: argumentative (300 words)	Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.	See *Evaluation Criteria.*	10	
2	Essay writing: descriptive (300 words)	Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.	See *Evaluation Criteria.*	10	
3	Essay writing: process (300 words)	Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.	See *Evaluation Criteria.*	10	
Total				**30**	**One hour**

Table 2. *Evaluation Criteria*

Score 30	Topic development	Language use
27-30	Effectively addresses the topic. Displays unity and coherence. Well developed.	Well organized. Effective and adequate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Wide range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Minor errors.
23-26	Generally addresses the topic. Generally displays unity and coherence. Generally well-developed.	Generally well-organized. Adequate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Adequate range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. A few errors.
19-22	Fairly addresses the topic, as appropriate. Fairly displays unity and coherence, as required. Fairly well-developed.	Fairly well-organized. Relatively limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Relatively limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Some inaccurate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary.
13-18	Does not address the topic adequately. Limited connection of ideas. Limited development in response to the topic.	Lacks organization in places. Limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Frequent inaccuracy of structures, grammar and vocabulary.
8-12	Mostly irrelevant. Lacks unity and coherence. Serious underdevelopment.	Serious disorganization. Severely limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Severely limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Mostly inaccurate structures, grammar and vocabulary.

1-7	Irrelevant.	Severely serious disorganization.
	Incoherent.	No control of structures, grammar and vocabulary.
	Severely serious underdevelopment.	Too limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary.
		Inaccurate structures, grammar and vocabulary.
0	No attempt to write.	No attempt to write.

9. The Proposed Course at a Glance

The literature course **Learn and Gain** is comprised of two novels and fifteen short stories, selected carefully to provoke discussion on a variety of themes. The current section depicts the course briefly, presenting attainment targets and main aims, and content organization.

9.1. Main Targets and General Aims

Upon the completion of the proposed course, learners are expected to:
-Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
-Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience.

Learners are required to develop their abilities in reading critically. Hence, they should:
- Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
- Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
- Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- Make judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.
- Recognize the effectiveness of employing literary devices for appreciation.

Moreover, learners are required to improve their abilities in writing critically. They should
- Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- Utilize cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.
- Employ literary techniques in writing effectively. (Al Alami 2013, 106-107)

9.2. Organization

Learn and Gain includes seven major sections. These are:
Section one: *Warm up* including two activities-brainstorming and advanced organizers.
Section two*: Reading in action* including five sub stages.
Section three: *Language practice* including vocabulary, grammar, and literary qualities.
Section four: *Oral production* including a variety of oral language activities.
Section five: *Writer's workshop* including four sub-stages.
Section six: *Self-evaluation* including self-assessment checklists.
Section seven: *Building up your portfolio.* (Al Alami 2013, 107)

10. Statistical Treatment

To test the first research hypothesis, both *paired samples t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted. Tables Three, Four, and Five below reveal the statistical results.

Table 3. *T-Test Experimental Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test*

Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	13.0588	17	5.16715	1.25322
Post-test	16.7794	17	5.58659	1.35495

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pretest & Post test	17	.864	.000

Paired Samples Test

Test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test Post-test	-3.72059	2.83516	.68763	-5.17829	-2.26288	-5.411	16	**.000**

Table 4. *T-Test Control Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test*

Paired Samples Statistics

Test	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	5.2647	17	5.90846	1.43301
Post-test	7.5000	17	1.69097	.41012

Paired Samples Correlations

Test	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pretest & Post test	17	.376	.137

Paired Samples Test

Test	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-writing Post-writing	-2.23529	5.50033	1.33403	-5.06331	.59272	-1.676	16	**.113**

Table 5. *Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Test & Communicative Critical Writing Competence Post-Test Comparison*

Pre-Test

Post-Test

Based on the statistical findings, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group *(Sig. =.000)* is less than *0.05*, while the p-value for the control group *(Sig. =0.113)* is more than 0.05, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the pre-posttest, in favor of the experimental group students.

To test the second research hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was conducted. Table Six below reveals the results.

Table 6. *Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Two (Hypotheses Test Summary)*

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000[1,2]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test	.961[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The medians of post-writing are the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000[1,2]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The distribution of post-writing is the same across categories of gender.	Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test	.301[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic Significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

[1]Exact significance is displayed for this test.

[2]Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of male subjects is significantly different from female subjects', on the post-test.

To test the third hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was conducted. Table Seven below reveals the results.

Table7. *Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Three (Hypothesis Test Summary)*

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	1.000[1,2]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test	.442[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The medians of post-writing are the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.294[1,2]	Retain the null hypothesis.
The distribution of post-writing is the same across categories of college.	Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U	.104[1]	Retain the null hypothesis.

		Test		

Asymptotic Significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

1Exact significance is displayed for this test.

2Fisher Exact Sig.

As Table Seven reveals, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of science colleges' students is significantly different from that of non-science colleges' students, on the post-test.

11. Study Findings

Based on the statistical treatment conducted for the purpose of the current study, the researcher could conclude the following.

- Both the experimental and control groups' students could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress in the writing skill.
- There are no significant differences between the performances of female and male subjects, on the post-test conduced for the purpose of the current study.
- There are no significant differences between the subjects belonging to science colleges and subjects belonging to non-science colleges, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.

As proved by the findings of the current study, therefore, utilizing literature to enhance writing skills on the part of EFL university students studying in the United Arab Emirates has been significantly effective. What is more, no significant differences have been located between the writing performance of male and female students or between the colleges of science and colleges of non-science students, as a result of utilizing the proposed literature course to promote writing skills within EFL university contexts.

12. Writing in the EFL Classroom: Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current research, using literature within EFL contexts could be of genuine support in relation to some essential points like those of enhancing writing, developing communication skills, enhancing critical thinking and so on. As far as enhancing writing skills is concerned, the first suggestion emphasizes the contribution literature can make within EFL contexts. To enable EFL learners to develop their writing skills, the second suggestion highlights instructors' roles in the EFL classroom. Instructors are coordinators, facilitators and catalysts rather than dominators and directors. Speaking of the selection of appropriate instructional approaches, the third suggestion is in support of adopting an eclectic approach. Pedagogical approaches should testify to eclecticism when it comes to choosing an appropriate methodological approach to take with a group of students. As Carter (2010:117) argues: 'the appropriate method is very much a hands-on approach taking each text on its own merits, using what the reader knows, what the reader is aiming for in his or her learning context,..' An optimal method for the teaching of writing is therefore process-based, encouraging students to be positive explorers of cultural as well as linguistic processes.

13. Concluding Word

In conclusion, it could be reliable to consider literature an appropriate means which EFL practitioners may utilize, for the enhancement of writing skills on the part of EFL learners. A

literary text, therefore, should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL student's personal growth on his/her own. To maximize effectiveness, the employment of effective approaches and procedures will, for certain, contribute to an exciting and productive learning experience for EFL learners to gain, wherever they study and whatever they specialize in.

About the Author:
Suhair Al Alami holds a PhD in Linguistics from Ain Shams University, Egypt, and another PhD in Applied Linguistics from Aston University, UK. Currently, Dr. Al Alami works at Al Ghurair University, Dubai. Dr. Al Alami has contributed a wide range of papers to various journals, and serves as a coeditor of *Perspectives* as well as a member of the board of reviewers at two journals: *Arab World English Journal*, and *US-China Foreign Language Journal.*

14. References

Abdel-Latif, M. (2009). EFL Writers' Pausing and Composing Problems: An Introspective-Retrospective Data-Based Study. *Perspectives*, *16,* (1), 6-11.

Al Alami, S. (2013). *Learn and Gain*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Al Alami, S. (2013). *Utilising Fiction to Promote English Language Acquisition.* UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Baba, W.K. (2008). An Investigation into Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Literature and Its Use in ESL Classrooms: a Case Study at a Matriculation Centre in Malaysia (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). UK: University of Leicester.

Burke, M. (2010). Rhetorical Pedagogy. *Language and Literature*, 19, 1, 77-98.

Carter, R. (2010). Methodologies for Stylistic Analysis: Practices and Pedagogies. In Mclntyre, D and Busse, B. (eds.) *Language and Style* (pp. 55-68). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chen, Y.M. (2006). *Using Children's Literature for Reading and Writing Stories*. Retrieved July 10, 2007, from www.asian-efl-journal.com.

De Naples, F. (2002). You can Always Teach. *PMLA,* 117, 3, 496-498.

Hirvela, A. (2000). Collaborative Writing Instruction and Communities of Readers and Writers. *TESOL Quarterly, 8*, (2), 7-13.

Kim, H.R. (2003). Dialogue Journal through a Literature-Based Approach in an EFL Setting. *Language Teaching Journal*, 37, 128-129.

Lemmon, K. (1999). The Use of Dialogue Journal in Senior High English Class. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *60*(6), 1947.

McRae, J. (2008). *Creative Reading and Literature with a Small 'l'*. Manila: ANVIL.

Mishriki, A. (2002). Peer Assessment of Summary. Paper presented at the: *Third Annual International Egypt TESOL Conference,* December 2002, Cairo, Egypt.

O'Brien, T. (2004). Writing in a Foreign Language: Teaching and Learning. *Language Teaching Journal*, 37, 1-28.

Shaw, P. (2007). Teaching the Novel: The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency in Advanced Reading Skills Class. Paper presented at the: *Thirteenth Annual International TESOL Arabia Conference*, March 2007, Dubai, UAE.

Storch, N. (2005). Collaborative Writing: Product, Process, and Students' Reflections. *Language Teaching Journal*, 39, 38.

Yang, N.D. (2003). Integrating Portfolios into Learning Strategy-Based Instruction for EFL College Students. *Language Teaching Journal,* 37, 264-284.