

**THE EFFECT OF THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF THEMATIC
STRUCTURE AND GENERIC STRUCTURE ON EFL STUDENTS'
WRITING QUALITY AND MOTIVATION**

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Mervat Isa Mohammed Albufalasa

School of Education
University of Leicester

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Mervat Isa Mohammed Albufalasa

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the effect of teaching explicitly thematic structure and generic structure on EFL students' writing quality and motivation towards learning and writing in English. For this, I conducted a 14-week quasi-experiment in a university in Bahrain during the first semester of 2011-2012. I drew on a mixed methods research approach. The quantitative data involved writing tests and questionnaires and the qualitative data semi-structured interviews. I used four groups: three experimental groups and one control group. The former were given three different treatments: thematic structure (TS), generic structure (GS), and a combination of thematic and generic groups (TGS). I administered pre-, mid-, and post-tests to all groups, marked the writing scripts holistically and analytically, and calculated the marks statistically using SPSS.

The findings revealed significant differences between the three experimental and control groups but no differences among the three experimental groups. The students in the latter groups wrote more coherent and cohesive texts as a result of the interventions. This led to an in-depth analysis of 45 scripts of the post-test for the three groups to assess hidden differences. The findings revealed differences between the TGS and TS groups and the GS group in two thematic progression patterns. The overall findings suggest that teaching TS and GS helped to improve students' writing quality in terms of coherence but in terms of cohesion the teaching of TS helped the students more.

I used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews before and after the intervention. The questionnaires involved all groups and the interviews only the three experimental groups. The findings showed that the motivation and attitudes of the three experimental groups were enhanced towards learning and writing in English. This improvement was measured in terms of a number of motivational constructs related to the field of motivation in L2. These included forming positive attitudes, enhanced self-efficacy, increased self-esteem and confidence, decreased learning anxiety, higher learning autonomy, improved ideal L2 self, willingness to communicate, and greater awareness of learning goals and factors that might influence their writing.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of five sections. In the first one, the context of this study is addressed. Then, it is followed by a discussion of the purpose and significance of the study. Next, aims of the study are addressed. Finally, the overall organization of the thesis is provided.

1.2 Context of the study

The present study was conducted in the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) at the University in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This university was founded in 1986. It consists of nine colleges: Arts, Business Administration, Education, Information Technology, Law, Science, Bahrain Teachers College, Applied Studies, and Engineering. It is the main national higher education institution in the Kingdom and offers well-established academic college degrees such as diploma, BA, and MA. UoB seeks to achieve excellence in teaching and learning, develop students' personality, skills, and knowledge, and cooperate with the public and private sectors. The medium of instruction at this university is English, except for the Arabic courses and Islamic Studies.

The English language is a crucial language in Bahrain today as it is considered to be one of the top labour market requirements in most of the fields, i.e., information technology, business, engineering, and medical. The university has established a number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programmes to fulfil the needs of the students in the various colleges to help them meet the graduation and market labour requirements. DELL offers EFL courses to students majoring in English in the College of Arts and ESP courses to other students majoring in different fields in the other colleges. The ESP courses aim to develop the students' four language skills with greater emphasis on reading and writing skills. These skills are important not only to pass the English courses successfully but also to pass other courses in their field of specialization as they are all taught in English.

Among a number of ESP courses offered in the various colleges, the ESP programme designed for the Information Technology College (IT) comprises three English courses. The first course aims to develop reading skills, the second focuses on developing writing skills, and the third course aims to develop report writing skills. These courses are taught by professional, qualified Bahraini staff, native-speaker lecturers, and Arab/Asian bilingual instructors. The writing course aims to improve students' writing skills by writing different types of essays, such as advantages and disadvantages, classification, and comparison and contrast, as well as improving grammar and vocabulary.

The IT students enrolled in these courses are both male and female aged between 19 and 22. These students come from a variety of backgrounds but mainly from medium-income families.

They all speak Arabic as their mother-tongue and English as a foreign language. Prior to their enrolment at UoB, the majority of these students have generally had nine years of exposure to the English language in an academic setting. All students are required to take an English placement test which is designed by the English Language Centre (ELC) to determine their linguistic competence. Students who score less than 70% join the English orientation programme, and those who score more than 70% advance to the first year English course. Students who enrol in the English orientation programme are allowed to take the ESP courses and other IT courses even if they fail to pass the orientation programme.

IT students need to acquire a good standard in written English for graduation purposes, future jobs, and for pursuing higher degrees. They are aware of the fact that failing to pass the English courses successfully means failing to graduate from the college programme. Writing effectively is also required to pass the other courses in their field of specialization.

1.3 Rationale of the study

My interest in carrying out this research stemmed from my desire to help EFL students to improve their writing at university level, meet the college requirements, and graduate from the university. Teaching writing to EFL students at a university level requires more than just the appropriate use of sentence construction and grammar (Hyland, 2002). Writing in English demands that EFL students write in an appropriate way to communicate their ideas effectively and deliver their message successfully. EFL students should know how to organize and connect their ideas at the discourse level and maintain the flow of information. Based on the concept that

writing is an interaction between a writer and a reader, the teaching and learning of writing should assist EFL students to see writing as a means of communication through which a writer wishes to send a message through their writing. Coulthard (1994) puts it thus: “knowledge is not linear, but text is. Every writer is faced with the problem of how to organize and present his non-linear message in a comprehensible linear form” (p. 7). In order to communicate successfully, students should be able to write well-organized essays and link ideas to solve problems related to the textual organization of a text.

As a researcher and lecturer at DELL, I have taught many EFL and ESP courses, such as English for Majors (Language and Literature courses), English for Business, English for Information Technology, English for Law, and English for Science. Based on my teaching expertise, I have noticed that many EFL students have serious problems in writing essays effectively. Despite the fact that Bahraini students join university after completing nine years of studying English, a close look at their essays shows that they still have many problems in their writing. They do not seem to be able to produce essays that are coherent and cohesive. One problem may be related to students lacking sufficient knowledge in organizing their ideas at the discourse level. It appears that most students have difficulties writing a multi-paragraph essay to elaborate their ideas. They write essays that contain only one or two paragraphs that include all the information without any progression or expansion of ideas. Another problem is the lack of good organization of ideas; their ideas seem to be scattered and often irrelevant which result in incoherent essays.

These problems may be related to the teaching methodology of writing to EFL students at DELL. For example, the writing course syllabus for IT students pays little attention to teaching writing at the discourse level, i.e., the organization of essays, organizing and linking ideas, and enhancing awareness of what to write, how to write and for what purpose. A close look at the course objectives shows that most of the teaching is based on teaching grammar and vocabulary and that little emphasis is put on developing writing skills at the paragraph or text level and how to teach students to communicate their ideas in a logical way. Hyland (2002) points out, “there is little evidence that shows that syntactic complexity or grammatical accuracy are either the principle features of writing development or the best measures of good writing” (p. 9). There are many cases where students are capable of producing grammatically correct sentences and yet lack the ability to produce meaningful texts.

The course syllabus also shows that the main focus is on teaching a number of text types such as advantages and disadvantages, and comparison and contrast. EFL teachers and students should be aware that “genres are not just text types”, but “they imply/invoke/create/ (re)construct situations (and contexts), communities, writers and reader” (Coe, 2002: 199). There is a need to shift teaching writing to implement the teaching of genres in the writing courses and not just a number of different text types. Although the writing course developers at the university are aware of the importance of developing the students’ academic writing skills, they, as Hinkel (2004, p. 17) puts it “do not always have a clear picture of the types of writing and written discourse expected of students once they achieve their short-term goals of entering degree programs”. It is vital that students at university level display good academic knowledge “within the formats expected in academic discourse and text” (p. 17).

Teachers' feedback on their students' written work is another problem. Most of the feedback focuses on correcting grammar, spelling, punctuation and diction, as if telling students that those are the most important components of an essay. Accordingly, students might come to perceive that they should focus on grammar and vocabulary more than anything else.

Ignorance of how to write effectively in English results in creating difficulties to instructors and learners. The instructors might find it hard to assess their students' essays because there is little or no organization of ideas and thus tend to correct errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and choice of words. The learners find it difficult to write effectively, organize their essays, and link their ideas because they simply lack the means to do so, and instead they spend more time in working out syntactic and lexical problems.

Failing to successfully write in English demotivates the learner to exert more time and effort to learn to write effectively which may lead to negative motivation towards learning and writing in English. Based on my classroom observations, students who attend writing courses come to class with negative attitudes and perceptions about their writing abilities. Some of them explicitly express their fears and discomfort about writing in English, and some even miss their classes. They also seem inattentive and careless when it comes to completing writing tasks and activities. They appear to give up easily whenever they come across difficult tasks, and they do not put in any effort to solve their problems.

Struggling to take good grades in English sometimes leads some students to have low self-esteem and avoid writing activities as they believe that these are beyond their writing abilities. Some of the students have reached a stage where they feel they are content with passing the course with a minimum passing grade. This widens the gap between what they are supposed to achieve as university students and their future prospects in the workplace. Lack of achievement also increases their language anxiety and chances to circumvent situations where they need to produce a piece of writing. It is imperative that we take into consideration the impact of students' motivation on their learning and writing in English and start to think about how to change their attitudes so that they come to believe that with some more effort they can be successful in their academic writing courses.

I was keen to find out if SFL could offer a way to help learners in this context to write effectively and to motivate them to exert more effort and time in learning to write in English as well as to form positive attitudes towards writing. Careful attention should be paid to aspects that are related to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985; 1992; 1994). It is important to assist learners to view language as both systemic and functional to form meanings that are related to a specific context. Knowledge of the textual metafunction that is offered by SFL may help EFL learners to understand that language can be used to create discourse, and that meanings are organized into either spoken or written text cohesively and coherently. Achieving a coherent and cohesive text is possible when learners view a text as a unit of language in use, as a semantic unit (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Sentences are interlaced, and each sentence is built on the preceding ones while at the same time advancing the discourse. Considering the textual component in teaching writing is beneficial to EFL learners because it helps them to see writing

as constructing meanings by identifying what they can use as the starting point and what information to provide to make the text more coherent and cohesive. This helps create texture through the use of the theme and information systems (Ibid.). What SFL offers is its potentiality to bring together form and meaning and place a balanced emphasis on both structural forms and communicative functions in the social and cultural context in which language is exchanged. It is worth investigating if SFL could offer ways to change the way EFL learners are taught writing at DELL to help them write effectively in English to meet the expectations posited by their college and workplace.

The notion of theme-rheme construct and thematic progression patterns may assist EFL learners to increase their knowledge of how sentences are structured (Danes, 1974). The latter proposition might play a significant role in adding cohesion and coherence to a text through the use of thematic structure and the way the succession of themes contributes to develop ideas throughout the whole text. Generic structure can also prove beneficial in that it could help learners to view genres as a system for accomplishing culturally- and socially-oriented tasks or activities (Martin, 1984). Knowledge of different generic stages in different genres might provide EFL learners with a means to understand the way a text is structured and organized in terms of different social purposes (Martin, 1992).

Knowledge of the potentiality of these two structures has prompted me as a researcher to carry out an investigation, firstly, to verify how far these structures can help EFL learners to produce more coherent and cohesive essays and, secondly, to move to aspects at the sentence level and

try to work out grammatical and/or vocabulary mistakes. Also, it is worth investigating whether equipping students with such tools would result in enhancing their motivation and attitudes towards writing in English. It might be important to highlight how far the intervention might have effects other than immediate improvement in writing skills, as these structures might be important for the students' willingness and ability to continue developing their writing even after the course.

1.4 Significance of the study

The current research employs a mixed method methodology in an attempt to contribute to the existing body of literature in the fields of SFL and genre-based instruction in developing writing in English by investigating the potential of teaching thematic structure and generic structure to EFL students. This study will add to the existing knowledge by providing insights where the two structures are combined to improve the writing quality and to test whether teaching each structure individually or a combination of both improves the writing quality. The findings will help both EFL instructors and learners to become aware of some textual problems that hinder the teaching and learning of writing in English and seek ways to improve the current situation at DELL. It is hoped that the insights gained from the study will contribute to improvements in EFL writing pedagogy in this context. It is hoped that the outcomes will encourage EFL instructors and educators to consider the positive outcomes of teaching the target structures to improve the teaching and learning of writing by implementing thematic and generic structures in the writing course syllabuses. Finally, this study will add some important insights into students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English so that EFL instructors and

educators may consider the impact of the intervention on students' motivation when teaching writing.

1.5 Aims

The aim of the study is to:

- implement the explicit teaching of thematic structure and generic structure in the writing courses at university level,
- examine the effect of teaching thematic structure, generic structure and a combination of both structures on EFL students' writing quality and
- investigate the impact of the above interventions on the EFL students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English.

1.6 Organization of the thesis

Chapter 1 presents the context, rationale, significance, and purpose underpinning the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of this thesis. It draws on the principles that underpin the theory of SFL, the genre-based instruction and motivational theories in L2 context. It also discusses the thematic and generic structures framework and empirical studies to highlight the significance of the present study.

Chapter 3 describes and discusses the methodological framework of this study. This chapter justifies the rationale behind using a mixed method approach. It describes the quasi-experimental

design and its variables. It also discusses the data collection procedures and methods of data analysis. It draws on the writing course, its objectives, teaching approaches, teaching materials, writing activities, and tasks. This chapter ends with a discussion of the validity, reliability, and ethical issues of the study.

Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the findings of the current study from the writing tests. It discusses the findings holistically and analytically to test the effect of the intervention on the students' writing quality. Then, it discusses the rationale for carrying out a more in-depth analysis of the experimental groups' post-test to test the impact of the intervention on the students' writing quality.

Chapter 5 presents the evaluation of the findings from the questionnaires in light of a number of different motivational theories, namely, achievement goals, attitudes, language anxiety, autonomous learning, self-efficacy, ideal L2 self, and effort and willingness to communicate.

Chapter 6 presents the findings from the semi-structured interviews that investigated the effect of the intervention on the EFL students' motivation towards learning and writing in English. The chapter discusses the findings in light of the seven different motivational constructs discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusion, contributions, limitations, implications, and importance of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study attempts to investigate the effects of teaching thematic and generic structures on the EFL university students writing and on their attitudes towards learning writing in English. This chapter addresses the theoretical frameworks for the study by drawing on the theories of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), genre-based instruction, and L2 motivation. The first two sections present the thematic and generic structures that are used in this study to develop students' writing quality. Previous studies of both structures are discussed in order to highlight the significance and contribution of this study. The last section addresses some of the mainstream motivational theories in L2 contexts on which two of the data collection methods for this study are based, namely, the questionnaires and interviews. It was important to draw upon these motivational theories to examine the impact of thematic and generic structures on students' attitudes towards learning writing essays in English.

2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

2.2.1 Theoretical background

SFL was developed by the linguist Michael Halliday in the early 1960s. Halliday (1994) points out that his theory is “largely based on Firth’s system-structure theory, but derives more abstract principles from Hjelmslev and owes many ideas to the Prague school” (p. xxvi). Halliday

developed Firth's concept of system, which in Firth's sense was a functional paradigm, into the formal construct of a system network. The concept of context of situation invented by Malinowski (1923, cited in Halliday, 1994), and later adopted by Firth (1957, cited in Halliday, 1994), played a great role in Halliday's work. The Prague School of Linguistics influenced Halliday's thinking. The Prague linguists had a great interest in not only describing grammatical structures but also finding functional explanations for them. An example is the notions of Theme and Rheme, which will be discussed in detail below. Bloor and Bloor (1995) also point out that the Prague linguists were considerably influenced by the German psychologist Buhler. His three function model of language (expressive, conative, and referential) could be viewed as "a forerunner of Halliday's three metafunctions: Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual, which differ significantly from Buhler, but are probably in part inspired by them" (p. 248). Hymes's (1972) Communicative Competence, Widdowson's (1989) Communicative Approach, and Wilkins's (1973) Notional/Functional Syllabuses greatly influenced Halliday's functional grammar.

SFL views language as both systemic and functional (Gardner, 2010; Halliday, 2009, 1994, 1992, 1985; Webster, 2009; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Hasan, 1996; Halliday and Fawcett, 1987). It is systemic in the sense that it offers a system of choices for language users where each choice is important for the realisation of meaning. Halliday (1994) uses the system network to highlight that language should be considered as "a resource for making meanings" and that "each system in the network represents a choice: not a conscious decision made in real time but a set of possible alternatives, like 'statement/question' or 'singular/plural' or 'falling tone/rising tone'" (p. xxvi). The systems could be semantic, lexicogrammatical or phonological. For Halliday, the system consists of what he calls the (1)

‘entry condition’ (where one makes a choice), (2) the ‘set of possible options or alternatives’, and (3) the ‘realizations’ (what is to be done in terms of what structural consequences of each choice are). Figure 2.1 shows the mood system of English and the different choices one can use in a language.

Figure 2.1: A system network of mood choices (Thompson, 2004, p. 66)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

For example, if a person wants a window closed, they may choose one of the following expressions:

- I'd like to close the window.
- Can I close the window?
- Close the window.

The first choice uses the declarative form, the second one uses the interrogative form, and the last one uses the imperative. Choosing between declarative, interrogative and imperative depends on the situation we are in and who we are talking to.

Language is functional in terms of how language is used. Meanings are realized by forms and, in Halliday's (1985, 1994) functional grammar, the focus is on how meanings are expressed through different forms rather than on what these forms mean in themselves. Based on Halliday's perception of grammar as being functional, people use language to fulfil a purpose in a particular situation (Coffin et al., 2009; Hasan, 2009, 1996; Hewings and Hewings, 2005; Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Lock, 1996; Bloor and Bloor, 1995). They argue that people use language as a means to express meanings in certain situations, and the forms they choose from language are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they exchange meanings. Therefore, systemic functional approach is useful in analysing texts and finding out the relation between the social and cultural aspects and the production of text whether it is spoken or written.

SFL is important as it attempts to consider the formal accounts of grammar but at the same time relate these grammatical forms to what people do and mean through language as they try to find ways to communicate with other people around them (Coffin et al., 2009). Therefore, a text is seen as a means of communication between writer and reader, and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is needed to "systematise the relationship between the clause forms and the communicative functions" (p. 36). SFL provides a framework through which language can be interpreted as "a three-level semiotic system, where the discourse-semantic unit, the text,

semantically unified through cohesive patterns, is the locus of choices in experiential, textual, and interpersonal meaning” (Eggins, 2004, p. 307).

2.2.2 Metafunctions

Based on the notion that language is both systemic and functional, all languages are organized around three main kinds of meanings: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1994, 2009). When we use language to talk about experiences purely as information, we refer to the ideational metafunction which deals with how language construes human experience. At the interpersonal level, language is used to enact human relationships. Halliday claims that in the act of speaking, particular speech roles are adopted by the speaker and in doing so they assign to the listener a complementary role which they wish them to adopt in their turn. Language, then, is interpreted as an interaction between speakers and listeners or writers and readers. As for the textual meaning, which is the focus of this study, language is used to create discourse, and meanings are organized into either spoken or written text cohesively and coherently. Understanding how a text is organized at the textual level might help learners to write more coherently and meaningfully as they would be more able to communicate interactively and negotiate meanings in context (Bloor and Bloor, 1995). Two notions in SFL can be pedagogically useful in helping EFL students write more coherently and cohesively are thematic structure and generic structure. These two structures are discussed below.

It is worth highlighting here the importance of seeing a text as a unit of language in use to achieve coherence and cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). They define a text as a semantic unit and “related to a clause or sentence not by size but by realisation; the coding of one symbolic system in another” (p. 2). Accordingly, language learners should realize that sentences interlace and that each sentence is built on the preceding ones while at the same time advancing the discourse. By doing so, their texts will be more coherent and cohesive as these texts have a unity of meaning in context and a texture which conveys that it relates as a whole to the environment in which it is situated. They explain that “the organization of each segment of a discourse in terms of its information structure, thematic patterns, and the like is part of its texture along with continuity,” (p. 229). Texture is important to achieve a cohesive and coherent text. Language learners can use cohesive devices (reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion) and textual components (theme/rheme and given/new information) to achieve unity and texture in texts and to identify what the writer can best use as the starting point and what information to deliver to make the text coherent and cohesive. Texture can be found at two different levels, within the sentence in English which is created through the use of the theme and information systems, and the other one is at the discourse level, that is, the different genres and their distinct discourse structure such as narrative, prayer, sonnet, or TV drama (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

The importance of Halliday’s functional grammar is that it brings together form and meaning and places a balanced emphasis on both structural forms and communicative functions in the social and cultural context in which language is exchanged. This is what distinguishes SFL from other formal or mainstream approaches to researching and teaching grammar. Formal grammar refers

to theories of grammar such as Government and Binding, and other Chomskian grammars (inspired by Noam Chomsky, 1957, 1965, 1988). Mainstream refers to grammars such as those represented by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, and Svartvik (1985). Systemic functional grammar resembles other formal and mainstream approaches in that grammar consists of a hierarchy of grammatical units: words make up groups (or ‘phrases’) which in turn make up clauses, and clauses make up clause complexes (two or more clauses joined together by coordination or subordination). Only SFL – as a central component of the theory – goes beyond the clause to include the grammatical resources to link parts in a text cohesively and coherently at the discourse level. SFL is built on ideas that are drawn from both the formal and communicative approaches to grammar, yet it has shifted the focus to language forms that are used in which contexts, for which purposes, and to what effect (Coffin et al., 2009; Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Bloor and Bloor, 1995; Halliday, 1985, 1994). Accordingly, two contexts are emphasized here: the context of situation (register) and the context of culture (genre).

2.2.3 Context of situation (register) and context of culture (genre)

Context of situation consists of three contextual variables that make up the register of a text: field, tenor and mode. These three variables are important in any situation, and they influence our way of using language (Coffin et al., 2009). Field includes aspects such as the social activity that is taking place, the topic that is being discussed, the degree of specialisation, and the angle of representation. Tenor relates to the social roles and relative social status. Here language use differs according to the roles played by the participants (for example, friend to friend, or employer to employee, or parent to child, and so on). The choice being made is influenced by the

speakers' and addressees' roles in terms of power, expertise, or authority. It also includes the social distance as how far or close the participants are and how this would influence the degree of formality or informality. It also relates to the speaker/writer persona (i.e., participants will try to develop a stance in terms of using modality and lexis to express their attitudes and judgements). Mode reflects the aspects of interactivity, spontaneity, and communicative distance/role of language. While interactivity and spontaneity signal to what extent a situation is interactive and/or spontaneous (for example, a casual conversation as opposed to a political speech), the communicative distance in time and space from the events in question, and the role of language in terms of its relation with other meaning-making resources (i.e., visual aids, gestures, music, etc.) are important in interpreting a text.

Context of culture (genre) describes the relationship between the grammar and the context from a social purpose perspective. Several research studies, to be discussed later, show that in identifying different generic structures that correspond to different texts is useful for language learners. It is useful to explain to learners that there are different types of texts depending on different social purposes (i.e., narrating a story, arguing, explaining reasons for a problem, etc.), and the way a text is organized depends on the choice of different lexicogrammatical patterns as found by many SFL researchers. Genre from an SFL perspective, therefore, refers to a staged, purposeful activity which is organized or structured in a certain way to serve particular important social objectives as they unfold (Martin, 1992).

Following Martin's definition of genres, then, registers in SFL "are configurations of field, tenor and mode" (Gardner, 2012, p. 59). The metafunctions, defined by Halliday (1994), correspond to the variables of register and genre as shown in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Language and context (Martin and Matthiessen, 1991, cited in Feez, 1998, p. 8)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

Within genre, the three aspects of register correspond to the three metafunctions: field corresponds to the ideational meaning, tenor to the interpersonal meaning, and mode to the textual meaning. Language, from an SFL point of view, allows learners to make choices with respect to both register and genre. For example, if a language learner wishes to write a story, then they should choose the narrative genre. The generic structure of this genre includes five stages: orientation, complication, resolution, evaluation, and sometimes a coda. Within this genre, they have to make other choices related to register. For instance, they may choose to write a classic

narrative or science-fiction (field), may prefer to tell the story in the first or third person (tenor), and may choose spoken, written, or written with illustrations or animated mode.

What SFL offers is an opportunity to consider learning a language at the discourse level, taking into account two important contexts in which language is exchanged: register and genre. Within EFL, a text is a semantic unit and should have texture to make a text meaningful. To achieve texture, two components should be considered: coherence and cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Eggins, 2004). Even though cohesion and coherence are “often used together, they do not refer to the same properties of text and discourse” (Hinkel, 2004: 279). Coherence is defined as “the text’s relationship to its extra-textual context (the social and cultural context of its occurrence),” and cohesion refers to “the way the elements within a text bind it together as ‘unified whole’” (Eggins, 2004, p. 24). Accordingly, cohesion (the linguistic resources) is needed to combine a text as a whole, and coherence relates to the meaningful way of how a text unfolds, taking into account the social and cultural contexts.

Attention to cohesion and coherence in academic writing is vital to achieve a unified text and information flow (Hinkel, 2004). This is likely to affect positively the writing quality of university students as writing quality here can be defined as “the fit of a particular text to its context” (Witte and Faigley, 1981, p. 199) which emphasizes the definitions of text and context in SFL (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), and considers writing as a recursive activity through which students attempt to create meaning to fulfil the purpose of writing and to meet the expectations of readers (Martin and Rose, 2007). To achieve coherence and cohesion in writing essays, two

structures are offered by SFL: generic structure and thematic structure. These will be discussed in the next two sections.

2.3 Genre and generic structure

2.3.1 Definitions of genre

There are several definitions of genre. From an ESP point of view, Swales (1990) defines genre as a class of communicative events shared with a set of communicative purposes recognized by members of the parent discourse community. He points out that the discourse community “shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style” (p. 58). For him genre is largely dependent upon the community in which “a group of people who share certain language-using practices is important” (p. 29). In line with the ESP perspective, New Rhetoric researchers, share similar intuitions. Miller (1984), for example, proposes a definition of genre that is based on social actions that are performed in particular situations. However, unlike the ESP view, he argues for defining genre in terms of rhetorical situations rather than structures.

From an SFL perspective, genre is defined from a linguistic point of view which “refers to the overall structural organization and grammatical features shared by texts that have a common social purpose, such as telling a story (narrative genre) or debating an issue (discussion genre)” (Coffin et al., 2009, p. 249). This definition considers both the rhetorical situations, emphasized by the ESP and New Rhetoric, the grammatical features, and structural organization. The

formation of clauses and how they are structured to represent the writer's assumptions about what is known (given) and what is new to the reader plays a crucial role in defining genre (Hyland, 2002). Martin and Rose (2007) offer this definition: "genre is a staged, goal-oriented, social process" (p. 6) and highlight three aspects in genre: (1) it is social because it involves people and how they interact with each other, (2) it is goal-oriented because people use genres to get things done, and (3) it is staged because it takes a few steps for people to achieve their goals.

2.3.2 Generic structures

Based on the definition by SFL, genres consist of a system for accomplishing culturally- and socially-oriented tasks or activities, and language users draw on them to get things done through particular stages (Martin, 1984). Generic structure "represents the positive contribution genre makes to a text," as it is "a way of getting from A to B in the way a given culture accomplishes whatever the genre in question is functioning to do in that culture" (Martin, 1985, p. 251). There are a number of genres, such as recounts, descriptions, explanations, narratives, discussion, reports, procedures, and news broadcasting. Different genres have different generic structures depending on the social purposes and practices of a particular culture. Some genres relate to other genres, as with description and report belong to the same genre that aims to inform about things, but they differ in the way they present facts (Martin and Rose, 2008).

Genres, in general, are made up of beginnings, middles, and ends which meet the definition of constituency (Eggs, 2004). However, applying functional labelling to genres these stages are determined by "the function of the different constituents" (Ibid., p. 60). In other words, each

stage has a particular function that may help learners achieve the overall purpose of the text; consequently, they may help them see how each stage contributes to the whole meaning of a text (Coffin et al., 2009; Eggins, 2004).

When defining generic structure, it is worth drawing upon the notion of text type. These two notions are related to text structure where both generic structure and text type “represent different, yet complementary, perspectives on texts” (Paltridge, 1996, p. 237). Text type is defined as “a class of texts having similarities in linguistic forms regardless of the genre” (Biber, 1988, cited in Paltridge, 1996, p. 237). Examples of text types may include problem-solution, general-particular, matching contrast, and hypothetical-real texts (Hoey, 1983, cited in Paltridge, 1996). In some cases, one text type can be common in a number of genres. For example, problem-solution texts can be found in the context of scientific discourse, advertisements, short stories, and novels. In other cases, one genre may involve more than one text type. For example, expositions may involve four types of text structure: comparisons, time order, cause and effect, and collections of descriptions (Meyer, 1975, cited in Paltridge, 1996).

The distinction identified by Paltridge (1996) between genre and text types and the relationship between them can be useful in the language learning classroom to draw the learners' attention to understand how texts are structured to fulfil communicative purposes. A number of teaching techniques are proposed for learners to understand the rhetorical structures of genres and text types and to compare and contrast them in terms of how they affect the text. One way of doing so is by giving learners a number of examples of a particular genre and ask them to identify the

generic structure and associate text type/s on the basis of their examination of the texts. In this way, learners may develop awareness of both the rhetorical features of particular genres and the different kinds of variation that occur within them. This, in my opinion, supports what many proponents of genre pedagogies claim, that teaching generic structures could be used as a pedagogical tool in order to help students write academic essays more successfully. To help learners develop their knowledge of the schematic structure, representative texts of particular genres should be selected and presented to them.

According to Australian researchers (Macken-Horarik, 2002), there are at least eight genres that learners are required to master, such as report, recount, exposition, discussion, procedure, narrative, and news story. A useful description of these genres is presented in the table below.

Table 2.1: Genres and generic stages (Coffin et al., 2009, pp. 260-61)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

The above table shows that genres differ in terms of the social purpose, generic structure and lexicogrammatical features. This table could be related to Martin and Rose's (2007) definition of genre as each genre involves a social purpose that explains why people interact in a particular social context and how they get things done appropriately by following the appropriate generic structure to achieve their goals. This table is useful because it identifies the appropriate lexicogrammatical features for each genre, whether to use present or past tense, first or third person pronouns, declarative or interrogative mood, and so on.

Even though the above table provides a simplified picture of the language, one should not see the structures in it as being static or rigid text templates. On the contrary, to avoid the danger of prescribing inflexible generic structures that might inhibit learner's abilities to transfer such structures to tasks that require a more complex combination of generic moves and to avoid what Freedman (1994) calls "a recipe theory of genre" (p. 46), teachers should be aware of the fact that variation occurs across different genres. Thesis statements, for example, are not always found in introductions (Coe, 2002). The work done by Hyland (2004) is another example. He analyzed the move structure of dissertation acknowledgments in a corpus of 240 PhD and MA dissertations written by Hong Kong speakers of English. He found that the acknowledgement structure consists of a main Thanking move 'sandwiched' between two optional Reflecting and Announcing moves. Writers may start with a brief introspection on their research experience and then move to a compulsory stage where they acknowledge individuals and institutions for help with the dissertations. The third move was uncommon but could be found if writers wished to reclaim responsibility for the thesis submitted as being their own work and not simply the work

of those who supported them. He also found that there were particular thanking expressions, and that all thanks included the reason for acknowledging the individuals and/or the institutions.

Pointing out such variations to EFL students is important to enhance their awareness of the different moves or structures, whether they are obligatory or optional. It could widen their perspective to know that genre frameworks are “highly complex entities that interact with one another in dynamic ways” (Gordon and Gordon, 2009, p. 3). Raising teachers and learners’ awareness of the notion of genre mixing or genre embedding, in other words how genres can be bent or mixed (Bhatia, 2004) has the potential to help them see how meanings are made in particular contexts to fulfil particular communicative purposes (Millar, 2011; Johns, 2002).

One of the social purposes or practices that university students need to master is argumentation. Students should be able to discuss issues and convince readers of their point of view. Martin (1985) proposes two terms to distinguish between what an exposition aims to do: analytical and hortatory. The former aims to convince the reader that a paper or essay is well formulated and the latter to convince the reader to do what the paper/essay recommends. These two terms are further categorized into one-sided and two-sided genres as shown in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Four main argument genres (Coffin, 2004, p. 232)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

According to the above table, in SFL, if the argument is one-sided, then it is called an exposition genre; if it is two-sided, then it is called a discussion genre. Each category is further divided into analytical and hortatory. The social purposes of arguments, whether they are one-sided or two-sided, are shown in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: Four common argument genres in student academic writing (Coffin, 2004, p. 236)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

The above table shows that the social purpose of writing an exposition is to convince readers of one particular view; the social purpose of a discussion is to present two or more views about a particular issue and then argue in favour of one of the two views. Accordingly, exposition genres encompass different stages from discussion genres.

The present study taught the discussion genre between other genres, and the participants were tested on this genre by writing a discussion essay on a particular issue. Four main stages of the discussion genre were identified to discuss the issue from more than one point of view, issue^ arguments for^ arguments against ^ (judgement/position). The discussion of the different views could take the form of discussing the similarities and differences or advantages and disadvantages of the issue (Macken-Horarik, 2002). It is important to highlight that the last stage is written in brackets to signal that the idea may be optional in cases where the situation is less formal and the discussion tends to end in open-ended. This is an essential stage in “formal written discussions” as in “a traditional academic essay” (Coffin et al., 2009, p. 254).

2.4 The textual metafunction: thematic structure

2.4.1 Theme and rheme

The textual metafunction plays an important role in organizing what is said or written in a cohesive and coherent way. It is concerned with structuring the clause as message in text, and as Halliday (1994) points out, in this sense, “the clause has some form of organization giving it the status of a communicative event” (p. 37). Two components aim to achieve cohesion and coherence: cohesive ties and structural component (Halliday, 1994).

1. A cohesive component which is realized through the use of cohesive ties: reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunctions and lexical cohesion.
2. A structural component which consists of information structure and thematic structure. The first deals with organizing information as given and new, and the latter deals with organizing information as Theme and Rheme.

The structural component realizes the meaning of a clause as message through two main constituents: theme and rheme. Halliday (1994) defines theme as “the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned,” and rheme as “the remainder of the message in which the theme is developed” (p. 37). There are a number of different types of Theme: Topical, Interpersonal, and Textual. Each type is shown separately in Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 below.

Topical theme refers to a Participant, Circumstance or Process, and it is realized by Subject, Predicator, Complement or Circumstantial Adjunct as in the following examples:

Table 2.4: Topical theme

Theme	Rheme
Once upon a time	there was a beautiful princess.
They	visited interesting places in India.

Interpersonal theme realizes meaning at the Interpersonal level. The choice of Theme depends on the choice of mood: declarative, interrogative (polar and WH), imperative, and exclamations as in the table below:

Table 2.5: Interpersonal theme

Theme	Rheme
My sister	can play the guitar
Do you	like Paris?
Keep	quiet
What a nice room	you have got

Textual theme refers to a Theme that is not experiential or interpersonal as in the examples above. There are two main types of textual theme: Continuity Adjuncts and Conjunctive Adjuncts. Continuity Adjuncts refer to words like oh and well. Conjunctive Adjuncts refer to conjunctions that either link clauses to other clauses (and, but, so) or link sentences to other sentences (however, therefore).

Table 2.6: Textual theme

Theme	Rheme
Oh, you	must be joking
and she	tried to solve the problem
So they	moved to a new house

Based on the above classifications of themes, a theme can be simple or multiple (Halliday, 1985). Simple themes have a topical element, as shown in the table below,

Table 2.7: Simple theme

Theme	Rheme
The waiter	was rewarded as the employee of the month.

Multiple themes may include interpersonal or textual or both of them. The following table shows the different components that can make up a multiple theme:

Table 2.8: Multiple theme

Textual Theme	Interpersonal Theme	Topical Theme	Rheme
Well,	kids	the movie	is about to start
Good morning,	students	today	we're going to talk about space

Halliday draws attention to Predicated theme as a structural pattern that contributes to the thematic organization of the clause. He uses the structure of clefting to illustrate a Predicated Theme as shown in the table below:

It + be +

Table 2.9: Predicated theme

Theme	Rheme
It was the dog	which was found responsible.
It's love	that kept him alive all that time.

Halliday (1985) also made other classifications of theme, known as marked and unmarked themes. A theme is unmarked when it plays the role of Subject in a declarative clause, Finite in a polar interrogative clause, a WH element in a WH-interrogative clause, and a Predicator in an imperative clause, as in the following examples:

Table 2.10: Unmarked themes

Example	Conflating roles	Mood structure
He's done his homework	Theme/ Subject	declarative
Do you want some tea?	Theme/ Finite	polar interrogative
When does the play start?	Theme/ WH element	WH-interrogative
Write down the address	Theme/ Predicator	imperative

When other elements are found in thematic position, the theme is marked. For example, a marked theme can occur when it conflates with a Circumstantial Adjunct as in the example below:

Table 2.11: Marked themes

Marked Theme	Rheme
In India,	they use a lot of ingredients in food
For 10 years,	she has waited for this chance

In both clauses, the Subject is not part of the Theme. The Themes are the Circumstantial Adjuncts which could be moved to the end of the clauses and be part of the Rheme. But to serve the writer's purpose, they have been moved to the beginning of the clauses and given thematic position.

To serve the pedagogic purpose of this study, a simplified analysis of such structures was offered where everything up to the first finite verb is the theme and the rest is the rheme to avoid the problem of the large number of technical terms that are used to describe language in SFL. So, this shortcoming could be solved by trying to narrow the selection of terms to the learners (Butt et al., 2000), as in the following table:

Table 2.12: Simplified analysis of theme and rheme structure

Theme	Rheme
The doctor	has prescribed some medicines.
The pyramids	were built ages ago.

2.4.2 Information structure: given and new

Information structure comprises two components: given and new. It can vary from text to text and within a text when a constituent may be new and then develop into given information. Some texts organize information where given and new are developed and mapped on to one another. Other texts may present only new information, such as what a person writes on their shopping list. For Halliday (1994), given information is recoverable while new information is not. The speaker makes choices as to what to present as recoverable or not recoverable to the listener, depending largely on the situation in which the information is exchanged. He explains that if a piece of information is recoverable, then there must be some reference to its earlier occurrence, or it is understood from the situation or context, like using pronouns, I or you. The non-recoverable or (New) information may be related to something that has not been mentioned before, or in spoken context, could be something that has taken place unexpectedly. Given and new information can be found in both types of clauses: dependent and independent and considering the clause as message, the writer/speaker wishes to pass on some information to the reader/listener. Some of the shared information is familiar to the reader/listener, and based on this a new piece of information is presented.

2.4.3 Interaction of information and thematic structures

Both information and thematic structures are essential to analyze clauses, as they represent the system of choice through which a writer thematizes elements, using different lexico-grammatical constituents and deciding where to put given and new information, in thematic or rhematic positions.

There are two different views as where to present given and new information: whether in thematic or rhematic positions. Halliday (1994) argues that both kinds of structures are distinct yet can be ‘complementary’, and while the speaker-oriented prominence is associated with theme, the listener-oriented prominence is associated with rheme. Halliday attempts not to conflate both structures and argues that given information is not always thematized and that new information could be found in thematic position. For example, in marked declaratives, new information could be thematized as in “*In Paris*, you can join the tour to Spain”. Fries (1994, 1995a, 1995b), the Prague School linguists, and Danes (1970) argue that there is a correlation between thematic position and given information on the one hand and Rhematic position and new information on the other. They tend to conflate these two concepts, where “Given and New are oriented toward the listener,” and Given information “constitutes instructions about how to interpret what is said and how it is to be related to what the listener already knows” (Fries, 1994, p. 232). He even signals rheme with capital N as in N-Rheme to claim that new information is presented as ‘newsworthy’ in Rhematic position.

The idea of conflating information structure with thematic structure suggested by the Prague School would be more beneficial to EFL learners to help them better organize their information across their texts. Accordingly, and to serve the purpose of this study, the idea which is presented at the beginning of the clause in thematic position is given and what comes in rhematic position is new. Even though SFL attempts to offer ways to understand and analyze language, its extensive descriptive grammar may intimidate EFL teachers and learners from making use of such knowledge. To suit the needs of EFL teachers and learners, some simpler explanations of the rules makes up for its shortcomings, as these rules would be more easily applicable.

2.4.4 Thematic progression

The notion of theme-rheme structure can be helpful not only to construct meaningful sentences but also to achieve coherent and cohesive texts. The succession of theme-rheme structure in larger stretches of discourse is known as thematic progression. Danes (1974) defines thematic progression as “the choice and ordering of utterances, themes, their mutual concatenation and hierarchy, as well as their relation to their hyper-themes of the superior text units, to the whole text, and to the situation. Thematic progression might be viewed as the skeleton of the plot” (p. 114). Her definition shows that thematic progression can be used to link the parts to the whole text. Thus this could help to maintain text flow and enhance text coherence and cohesion. Examining the logical tie between themes and rhemes may assist the writer to deliver their messages in a more effective way.

There are a number of types of thematic progression patterns that can be found in different genres: Constant Theme Pattern, Linear Theme Pattern, Split Rheme Pattern, and Derived Themes. The succession of these patterns within a text can contribute to the coherence and cohesion of texts (Eggins, 2004). Explanations of these patterns are offered below.

2.4.4.1 Constant theme pattern

Constant Theme Pattern refers to a theme that is used constantly in each clause and embodies the given information. This kind of pattern is found in short passages, such as short biographies,

factual descriptions as in encyclopaedias, and narratives where the focus is on one participant, as shown below:

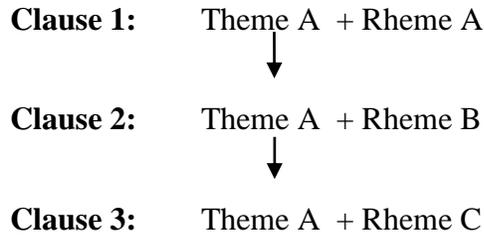


Table 2.13: Constant theme pattern

Theme	Rheme
Joan Watson	was born in France in 1985.
She	was interested in teaching kids
and (she) always	tried to find jobs to teach kids.

This pattern is referred to as theme reiteration, where the theme is reiterated or repeated in each clause “to keep a text focused” (Eggins, 2004, p. 324). This kind of thematic patterning can help to achieve cohesion in a text. The repetition of the theme throughout a text gives the text some cohesiveness as with lexical cohesion. However, if one theme is used as the point of departure in all clauses throughout the text without variation of other patterns, it might cause the text to “be boring to read or listen to,” and it would “indicate a text which is going nowhere” (Ibid.). Therefore, if a theme is constantly repeated throughout the text, the rheme, which holds the new information, is not followed up. There are other types of thematic patterns which can create a more cohesive and coherent text, such as linear theme pattern and split rheme pattern.

2.4.4.2 Linear theme pattern

In this pattern, the Rheme in one clause is used as the Theme in the subsequent clause, as shown below:

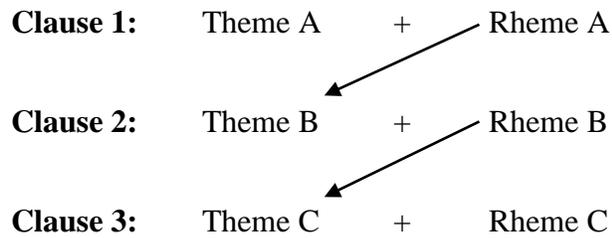


Table 2.14: Linear theme pattern

Theme	Rheme
Once upon a time, there (T1)	was a wild cat (R1).
The wild cat (T2/R1)	jumped over the fence into my garden (R2).
In my garden, there (T3/R2)	were so many beautiful flowers (R3).
The flowers (T4/R3)	were all ruined because of the wild cat (R4).

This kind of thematic pattern gives a sense of development in the text, where the rheme (new) is picked up as the theme (given) in the subsequent clauses, where a new rheme is introduced. Therefore, it helps to expand on the information and better links the ideas from a clause to the

next. By doing so, cohesion is maintained, as this pattern “gives the text a sense of cumulative development which may be absent in the repeated theme pattern” (Eggin, 2004, p. 325).

2.4.4.3 Split rheme pattern

The third pattern is known as the split rheme, where the rheme in a clause is split up into two or more components, each of which is taken in turn as the theme in a subsequent clause. The theme in a clause presents a number of rhemes which carry a number of new information components. Then, the rhemes (new) will be treated as themes (given), and they will present new rhemes which hold new information. This type of patterning information is common in longer expository texts, and it is useful in developing or elaborating ideas in a coherent way. Let us consider the following example, where R means rheme, and T stands for theme:

Table 2.15: split rheme pattern

Theme	Rheme
A plant (T1)	consists of roots (R1a), stem (R1b), leaves (R1c) and flowers (R1d)
Roots (T2/R1a)	take in water and food from soil. (R2)
Then, the stem (T3/R1b)	transports water through the plant (R3)
and (it) (T3/R1b)	raises the height of flowers and leaves. (R4)
The leaves (T4/R1c)	have different shapes. (R5)
They (T4/R1c)	make food for the plant. (R6)
Finally, the flowers (T5/R1d)	produce seeds which form new plants. (R7)

2.4.4.4 Derived themes

Derived themes are defined as “expressions in theme position which are cohesively linked in meaning, but not necessarily in form, to a topic which has been stated earlier in the text” (Bloor and Bloor, 1995, p. 93). In this type of pattern, two main categories of themes are introduced, macro-theme and hyper-theme. Macro-theme is defined as the departure point for a text and hyper-theme as the departure point for a paragraph (Coffin et al., 2009). Both of these themes provide “an orientation as to what is to come: they establish expectations about how the text or paragraph will unfold” (p. 401). These themes are found in longer texts where a writer, for instance, introduces a topic in a chapter and then refers back to it in another chapter.

To create a coherent and cohesive text, Martin and Rose (2007) point out that a theme is important to show the point of departure for a clause but that it is more important to have a hyper-theme which would assist a reader match the topic sentence with what will follow in the proceeding paragraphs. A hyper-theme is similar to a topic sentence, yet a hyper-theme is not necessarily found at the beginning or end of a sentence; it can be found at any level of the text to tie the parts to the whole. A writer can maintain a text’s texture by creating a coherent, whole organization through the use of hyper-themes where periodical waves of information flow are maintained (Martin and Rose, 2007). This hierarchy of periodicity “is concerned with information flow: with the way in which meanings are packaged to make it easier for us to take them in” (p. 175). As a result, readers are prepared to unfold the text as what is expected to come is clear, and the writer can communicate their ideas more effectively as relations within the text are cohesively tied.

2.4.5 Choices of thematic progression patterns

From a teaching perspective, this means teaching EFL learners how to develop their ideas and use different thematic patterns to better link their sentences and create cohesion and coherence to their texts. In English, the first sentence of a paragraph is the theme (topic sentence), and the remaining sentences are the rhemes (supporting sentences), and together they develop the idea presented in the topic sentence by giving examples, for instance. The previous thematic progression patterns sound important for EFL learners because the information in the sentences is picked up and reinforced throughout the text. Understanding of the macro-theme and the hyper-theme may help learners to create continuity and flow of their ideas in their writing at the discourse level. For them, this could be the framework through which they could decide their main ideas and supporting details. Then, within the paragraphs, they could work on the coherence and cohesion of their ideas to maintain continuity and information flow.

The students' choices of different thematic patterns depend on the genre they are writing in (Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2012a; Rafiei and Modirkhamene, 2012; Shieh and Lin, 2011; Tan and Sun, 2010; Jalilifar, 2010; Zhang and Li, 2009; Li and Fan, 2008; Wang, 2007; Wu, 2003; Downing, 2001; Er, 2001; Zhang and Wang, 2001; Thomas, 1999; Yau-chu-Chong, 1997; Nwogu, 1990). These studies have shown that thematic progression patterns are not arbitrary and that they depend largely on genres.

A study conducted by Zhang and Wang (2001) showed that texts of a particular genre have similar thematic progression patterns. They investigated three types of genres: narrative, science

technology, and travel manual. They found that linear thematic pattern was more evident in the science technological texts, while constant thematic pattern was more evident in the travel manual genre. As for the narrative genre, they stated that according to their analysis only constant pattern was apparent. This could be so because narrative texts tend to be more of a story telling that consists of a series of events that have thematic relationships (Wu, 2003). In his study, Wu (2003) showed that there was a relationship between the type of thematic patterns and text types. He investigated the nature of expository and narrative texts. He found that expository texts tend to convey information in a more compact and detailed manner.

According to some other studies, writers tend to use more than one type of thematic progression patterns across their texts, depending on their purpose for delivering their messages. For example, Li and Fan's study (2008) showed that literary texts contained more complex thematic progression patterns in comparison to other genres. In such texts, a writer rarely employs one single pattern of thematic progression. Similarly, Tan and Sun (2010) found that there were a number of thematic structures that can be found in expository genres: about 26.7% of linear and derived patterns appeared and 20% constant and concentrative patterns in the analysis of their corpus.

Other studies showed that a mixture of thematic patterns could be applied where some patterns are more prominent than others. An earlier study by Nwogu (1990), whose study focused on an analysis of specialized medical texts, showed that constant theme pattern appeared frequently in the methods and results section of the medical research article, while linear pattern was dominant

in the discussion section. He claimed that there was a preference for linear progressions in popularized accounts of medical texts. In Thomas's (2008) analysis of some popular scientific texts, her results echo those found by Nwogu (1990) and Swales (1990) in that linear theme pattern is more evident in specialised scientific texts and popularized accounts, depending on the writer's purpose and intended readership. She found that a linear pattern was needed, especially in the argumentation and explanation sections. Even though this study did not involve an intervention, the analysis of some students' reports showed some ruptures in the information flow where her students attempted to use constant theme pattern, linear theme pattern, and derived theme pattern across their report, where they applied more frequently the constant theme pattern even though the linear theme pattern should have been used more to increase the clarity and purpose of writing the scientific report.

To sum up, the selection of thematic patterns depends on two factors: (1) the genre or text type, and (2) the rhetorical purpose of the writer to unfold the "internal organization of the text" (Downing, 2001, p. 11). It would be of pedagogical benefit to familiarize students with the different thematic progression patterns and show them how these patterns are sensitive to genre and whatever they attempt to use should be in relation to the type of genre they are writing in (Fries, 1994, 1995c).

2.5 Approaches to teaching writing to EFL learners

Writing in an EFL context is seen as one of the challenges in learning a foreign language as it is one of the most difficult areas where students have difficulties in composing meaningful and

good quality academic writing (Chaisiri, 2010; Syananondh and Padgate, 2005; Yan, 2005; Chinnawongs, 2001). Writing should be seen as a recursive activity in which teachers and learners should consider the purpose of writing, the audience, and the social context to communicate their ideas effectively from writer to reader (Ravelli, 2005; Martin and Rose, 2007; Chinnawongs, 2001).

Teaching writing has gone through a number of stages, each of which represents a number of linguistic, cognitive, and social perspectives and which put particular stress on aspects such as the text, writer, and context (the reader or discourse community). Such theoretical diversity has led to different pedagogic applications to teaching writing to EFL students. Among a number of approaches to teaching writing to EFL learners, three prominent ones are identified: the product, process, and genre approaches (Badger and White, 2000). They are distinct in terms of their definition of writing and how they view the development of writing. The product and process approaches have been used by EFL teachers for the last twenty years or so. In the last decade, more attention was given to the genre approach which has begun to dominate the EFL and academic writing classes (Hyland, 2008, 2007; Paltridge, 2001; Gee, 1997; Tribble, 1996; Swales, 1990).

These three main approaches to teaching writing in an EFL academic setting will be discussed below, shedding light on the theories that underpin each approach. The discussion will start with the product approaches, moving to the process approaches and then discussing in more detail the genre approaches to teaching writing. The reason for mentioning the first two approaches is to

highlight the similarities and differences between them and the genre-based instruction to teaching writing. A more-detailed discussion of the genre approaches will be provided to highlight the significance of implementing a genre-based instruction in the EFL classrooms to teaching writing.

2.5.1 The product approaches

Before the emergence of the process-based pedagogies, teachers of second language writing focused mainly on the end product, and they viewed writing as the final or the finished piece of writing (Matsuda, 2003; Raimes, 1991). They are primarily “concerned with the knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mainly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher” (Badger and White, 2000, p. 154). Much of the attention was on teaching linguistic knowledge (phonology, lexis, syntax, and discourse), focusing mainly on teaching appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices (Pincas, 1982).

The product approaches recommend four stages for teaching writing: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing, to bridge the teaching and learning of writing gradually from controlled to free writing. The first stage focuses on familiarizing students with features of a particular text. Both the controlled and guided stages aim to help students practise the skills they need to do the exercises and which will prepare them for the last stage, free writing. During the different stages, a number of exercises are typically used, such as punctuation exercises,

jumbled sentences, gap-filling, and parallel paragraph writing in which students read a model paragraph, analyze it, and then write a similar one.

Texts in these approaches are considered autonomous as the ideas are drawn from structuralism and Noam Chomsky's Transformational Grammar. It views texts "as autonomous objects which can be analysed and described independently of particular contexts, writers, or readers" (Hyland, 2002, p. 6). The focus is on the structure of texts, mainly the arrangement of words, clauses, and sentences and "by following the principles which guide the correct arrangement of elements, writers can encode a full semantic representation of their intended meanings" (Ibid.). Such a view of texts makes it difficult to include in the writing process contextual social and cultural features related to texts as writing is viewed as an 'autonomous mechanism' independent of the writer or reader but which depends on producing texts containing correct forms (Hyland, 2002).

The product approaches were criticized for excluding the contextual factors of texts as proponents of the above approaches find them irrelevant as the meanings of texts could be decoded without them. Their view resulted in seeing learners' compositions as *langue*, which is "a demonstration of the writer's knowledge of forms and his or her awareness of the system of rules used to create texts" (Hyland, 2002, p. 7). As a result, for years, writing was seen as an extension of teaching grammar, and guided writing was used as the main teaching method which in turn did not need any other context but the classroom and a few skills that were obtained mainly by learning grammar. Therefore, EFL instructors and learners neglected such contextual factors that might affect their writing, and even teachers concentrated more on correcting writing

in terms of the learners' command of the linguistic knowledge over other aspects. Such a view was criticized by many writing researchers who claim that there are many cases where students are capable of producing grammatically correct sentences and yet lack the ability to produce meaningful written texts. Hyland (2002) believes that "there is little evidence that shows that syntactic complexity or grammatical accuracy are either the principle features of writing development or the best measures of good writing" (p. 9). It is apparent that EFL learners need to understand why they are writing, whom they are writing to, and in what way in order to be engaged fully in the writing process.

2.5.2 The process approaches

The process approaches came into existence as a reaction to the product approaches which focused mainly on the imitation of texts and ignored totally the fact that learners go through different stages in order to produce a good text. Writing is viewed as a "non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). Writing activities, thus, focused on moving learners from brainstorming and gathering ideas to publication of a complete text (Tribble, 1996). Writing, in this sense, involves four main stages: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising, and editing (Ibid.). According to these stages, composing is seen as non-linear, exploratory, or recursive. The different stages can interact with each other and can occur at different times during the writing process. For example, after the first draft, students may need to do some prewriting activities to work out some problems in their writing. During these stages, the role of the teacher shifted to that of a facilitator, and writing development is seen as an

“unconscious process which happens when teachers facilitate the exercise of writing skills” (Badger and White, 2000, p. 155). One of the advantages of these approaches is providing learners with the important skills that are involved in the writing process. The language-focused activities typical of product approaches have shifted to learner-centred activities in which learners gain some control over what they are supposed to write, how they write, and how to evaluate their writing (Richards, 1990).

The process approaches have been criticized for viewing writing as the same for all students or writers regardless of what is being written and who is handling the writing, giving no importance to the purpose of writing and the social context in which it is being produced (Badger and White, 2000). Another disadvantage of these approaches is that they do not give sufficient input, particularly in terms of linguistic knowledge, to carry out writing tasks successfully. This has led to researching the usefulness of the genre approaches to teaching writing.

2.5.3 The genre approaches

The genre approaches have been used since the 1980s and have had an important influence on the teaching of writing, especially in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). These approaches are similar to the product approaches in that they emphasize the notion that writing is a linguistic skill, but they differ from the former in that they focus on the social context and that writing varies according to various contexts in which it is produced (Badger and White, 2000).

To further clarify the genre-based pedagogy, there are three main approaches to teaching genre in the language teaching and learning field (Coffin et al., 2001; Paltridge, 2001). These three approaches are based on SFL (Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 1996; Martin, 1984), ESP (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993, 1999; Flowerdew, 2000; Dudley-Evans, 1995, 2002), and New Rhetoric (Adam and Artemeva, 2002; Coe, 2002; Miller, 1984).

The ESP approach to genre focuses mainly on the communicative purpose and formal language features of genres in various academic and professional contexts (Hammond and Derewianka, 2001). A theoretical framework in the teaching of advanced writing in English for Academic Purposes (ESP) has been provided (Swales, 1990) which shows how genre analysis can be useful for studying spoken and written discourse and how it can be applied in language teaching and learning situations. This theoretical framework identifies structural elements rather than functional in texts and bases the analysis of textual structures or moves largely on grammatical terms such as types of verbs, nouns, and other parts of speech. This might be seen as a shortcoming in that although an ESP approach emphasizes the communicative purpose and the formal properties of texts (Bloor, 1998), it “lacks a systematic model of language and does not make extensive use of a stratified, metafunctional grammar” (Hyland, 2002, p. 115) that is emphasized by SFL.

While the ESP approach to genre focuses extensively on providing linguistic analysis for descriptions of genres, the New Rhetoric (NR) focuses mainly on social actions in different social situations (Coffin, 2001; Hammond and Derewianka, 2001). The NR theorists prefer to

start and sometimes end with “a discussion of the rhetorical situation rather than with a more specific analysis of lexicogrammatical elements within the text” (Johns, 2002, p. 9). They attempt to provide ethnographic descriptions of the academic and professional contexts in which genres occur. It is argued that genre analysis should be based on relating text to context and finding relations between them (Miller, 1984). Even though some studies attempted to show that the learners benefitted from focusing on the contextual factors to enhance their understanding of the discourse community and influenced the students to participate in the classroom discussions to incorporate the results of their discussions in their academic writing, they did not show how far the knowledge and understanding of such contextual factors could have a positive impact on the learners’ actual writing (Adam and Artemeva, 2002; Coe, 2002). Focusing extensively on examining the social, cultural, and institutional contexts of particular genres at the expense of the structure of the language might not lead to effective results on students’ writing, if we consider the audience of the NR approach. This approach targets highly educated, native speaker university students. Therefore, applying this approach to an educational context, like this study, might not be effective.

The work of SFL places great emphasis on examining language from a broad perspective as it views language as “a means of responding to everyday real-life language-related issues in diverse social, professional and academic contexts” (Coffin and Donohue, 2012, p. 78). In SFL, text is the primary unit of analysis, and it can be “as small as a clause or large as an entire academic monograph” (Ibid.). SFL emphasizes the relationship between language, text, and context. Therefore, an SF-based genre approach considers the surface structure of a text (generic structure) and the inner structure through the analysis of register variables (field, tenor and

mode) (Burns, 2001). The SF-based perspective on genre involves several factors that influence texts: the writers' goals and intentions, their relationship to the readers, which information they wish to convey, and what forms are needed to attain this (Hyland, 2002). These factors can be illustrated in the following diagrammatic explanation of genre:

Figure 2.3: Martin's models of genre (Martin, 1993, p. 120)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

Martin (1993) suggests that there is a relationship between register and genre in which the relationship of aspects, such as mood, field, and tenor are highlighted within a particular context. It is considered likely that EFL learners would benefit from becoming aware of the wide choice available to them of verbs and vocabulary (field), expressions of modality and clause types (tenor), and cohesive ties, generic structures and thematic structures (mode). Another advantage to opting for an SF approach is that "the overall generic structure of the text is, in most systemic genre analysts' view, a product of the genre and, in turn, the context of culture – that is, part of a culturally evolved way of doing things – whereas language features are a result of the particular context of situation, or register" (Paltridge, 2001, p. 46). Here the notions of register and genre are combined in learning a language.

The SF genre-approach focuses more on stages within a text, but they are different to the ESP approaches in that they use functional terms rather than grammatical terms such as verbs of action, feeling or being, and so on. Similar to the NR, they look into the text's relation with its social and cultural contexts. In an SF perspective, generic and thematic structures of texts and the context of situation and context of culture are drawn together to show how linguistic choices are made within a particular text. The present study employed a genre-based instruction to teaching writing to EFL learners, drawing on SFL because it was thought that it could enable learners or language users to view language as a system of choice in terms of register and genre. In other words, EFL learners might benefit from focusing on a genre and its linguistic features that provide a clear idea of how the content should be organized and how the language should be expressed.

Many activities have been developed to help students understand the socio-cultural context and setting of a genre and the relationship between writers and readers (Millar, 2011; Paltridge, 2001; Brown et al., 1996; Johns, 1995; Derewianka, 1990). A great number of useful activities are provided to help teachers to develop language learners' awareness of discourse-level aspects of written genres, such as using colour-coded texts, reassembly exercises, comparing student texts, data commentaries, on-line genre analysis, translation based on a sample of instances of a given genre, identifying generic structure and text structure components, matching generic and text structure components to sections of a text, etc. The present study made use of some of these activities to teach students writing. To assist learners to understand the writing process through the use of the genre-based pedagogies, a teaching and learning cycle has been proposed that consists of three phases: modelling the target genre, construction of a text, and independent

construction of the text (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). A more detailed explanation of this cycle is provided below.

To sum up this section, it is worth highlighting the idea that the product, process, and genre approaches are seen as complementary rather than opposing (Badger and White, 2000). By examining their strengths and weaknesses, more productive EFL writing classrooms can be guaranteed. A pure product approach or a pure process approach may not be suitable enough for teaching writing for EFL learners in my context. Genre approaches appear to compensate for the shortages found in the product and process approaches. They incorporate the importance of the linguistic knowledge in the writing classrooms (product approaches) and the importance of identifying contextual factors, such as how learners write, for what purposes, and for whom are taken into consideration. Some may criticize genre approaches in that they “undervalue the skills needed to produce a text and see learners as largely passive” (Badger and White, 2000, p. 155). However, incorporating the teaching and learning cycle in the genre teaching pedagogies may compensate for this shortcoming (Hyland, 2008, 2007; Martin, 1993; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Hammond, 1987).

2.5.4 The systemic teaching and learning cycle

Hammond et al. (1992) propose a wheel model of a teaching-learning cycle that incorporates a number of different stages that aim to take the learners gradually from building knowledge of the content of the text, through the presentation and discussion of the text in question, to a joint

construction of the text, and finally to independent construction of the text, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.4: The teaching and learning cycle (Hammond et al., 1992, p. 17)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

At each of the stages below, the learners' attention is drawn to the cultural and social context, the generic/schematic structures, the content, and the linguistic features of the target text. It is shown in the figure that each stage seeks to fulfil a particular purpose. The role of the teacher here is to some extent that of a facilitator. Yet, the teacher can intervene at any stage depending on the learners' development and needs. The cycle is meant to be flexible to enable the teacher to enter it whenever learners need further clarification, assistance, and support. This cycle may assist teachers to prepare classroom activities and tasks to guide students through gradual stages (Hyland, 2008).

It is pointed out that the teaching and learning cycle is based on the notion of some modern theories, such as collaboration, scaffolding, peer interaction, and learner progress (Hyland, 2008). They are based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, cited in Hyland, 2008) and Bruner (1990, cited in Hyland, 2008) who, through the notion of scaffolding, emphasize the role of peer interaction and more experienced people to move the learners from their existing level of

performance to a higher level, potential performance. This cycle supports the learners through Vygotsky's notion, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.5: Scaffolding and collaboration in the learning cycle (Hyland, 2008, p. 559)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

ZPD refers to the gap between the current and potential performance of the learners. A teacher can move around the cycle and the instruction from the teacher to the students is reduced as students become more autonomous, gaining more confidence in their abilities to learn and write the genre on their own (Hyland, 2008).

The present study utilized this cycle as it may help to minimize the risk of over-emphasizing the product in a prescriptive way that might be found in the genre-based pedagogy and which may “undervalue skills needed to produce a text, and see the learners as largely passive” (Badger and White, 2000, p. 157). It might also be pedagogically useful to use this cycle to have more effective genre-based instruction lessons, as it provides the means of incorporating both the product and the process approaches involved in the learning situation. It might also be helpful for the students to learn writing effectively following a number of stages through which the target

genre is introduced and analyzed and a number of activities and varied exercises are provided to help the students build up their knowledge of the language and context. Then, with required assistance they may produce partial texts, and finally this may help them produce their own texts reflecting both the social context and the appropriate language use.

2.6 Previous empirical studies on thematic structure and generic structure

2.6.1 Empirical studies on thematic structure

Some studies used theme-rheme structure and thematic progression patterns as an analytical tool to examine the students' texts to diagnose problems that EFL students might face when writing in English (Rustipa, 2010; Qing-Feng, 2009; Ebrahimi, 2008; Alonso and McCabe, 2003; Belmonte and Hidalgo, 1998; Lovejoy, 1998). These studies did not involve any intervention. They only showed the areas where students suffer from a lack of writing coherently and cohesively at the sentence, paragraph, and essay levels. Based on their analysis, pedagogical recommendations were suggested to implement the teaching of theme-rheme structure and the different thematic progression patterns to improve the writing quality of EFL learners.

One of these studies is Lovejoy's (1998) study where he introduced a procedure for analyzing themes at the sentential level and showed how it might be helpful for students when they write their sentences in the process of revising their written work. He analyzed an academic article in psychology to show the different kinds of sentential themes. Then, he based his discussion on revising a student's essay and suggesting ways to write better sentential themes. The student,

after revising her essay, re-wrote it trying to eliminate some of the problems that occurred in her original writing by using the discussed sentential themes. This study focused on findings from only one student, which might not provide enough solid results.

A study which took into account writing at the discourse level was conducted by Belmonte and Hidalgo (1998). This study showed that the notion of theme/rheme can be helpful as a medium of instruction for teachers to evaluate the writing of L2 learners. Their research was based on a corpus of 25 student compositions written by Spanish native speakers who were set for a mock TWE (test of writing English) exam in terms of their thematic progression patterns. The exam was a 30 minute written essay where the students had to respond to a prompt to give their opinion on an issue. They first analyzed 40 professional texts of a similar nature to their corpus to help them to see how professional writers attempted to organize their texts in terms of thematic progression and selection of theme/rheme construct. The results showed that professional writers tended to thematize either discourse themes (e.g., for one thing, for another) or topical themes (e.g., pronouns), and using different thematic patterns to develop their argument. Then, they compared their students' compositions with the professional texts and discovered some problems, such as overuse of constant progression, confusion selection of discoursal and topical themes, the empty rheme (rhemes which are not picked up and used in the subsequent clauses to advance the discourse), overuse of 'there', brand new themes (themes containing new information), and themes with unclear reference (overuse of pronouns).

Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012b) studied the thematic progression patterns in EFL students' composition. Their corpus consisted of 180 essays based on three pictorial stories written by 60 sophomore, junior, and senior English major students at an Iranian university. No teaching of theme-rheme was given. The sophomore group received 128 hours of instruction on English language grammar. The junior group received 32 hours of instruction on paragraph writing and grammar. The senior group received 32 hours instruction on essay and paragraph writing and grammar. All groups sat for a homogeneity test based on their academic experience (those who scored 70 and above were chosen). The data show that there were significant differences between the groups in terms of students' use of linear and constant progression. The results of the study suggest the effectiveness of using thematic patterns as an analytical tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the students' compositions. Thus, pedagogical implications were made for both EFL teachers and students to make improvement in academic writing.

Apart from writing, some studies researched the applicability of using thematic structure to analyze texts to improve reading comprehension skills. These studies did not involve any teaching of theme-rheme structure. This structure was only used to analyze texts. Shieh and Lin (2011) attempted to explore theme/rheme relationship and thematic progression in texts to improve students' reading ability in Taiwan. They used discourse analysis method to analyze a corpus of texts produced between the years 2002 and 2008. Based on the descriptive statistics, the results show that unmarked themes and constant theme pattern distribute most between the texts, suggesting that the TP method of development could be utilized to help learners on how information is distributed through the analysis of marked and unmarked themes in texts. Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi (2012a) analyzed 16 texts from 4 academic reading textbooks written by

native and non-native English speakers to find out the textual theme and its types in such texts. The frequency of theme types and thematic progression patterns were calculated following the Hallidayian model. The results showed that the textual theme and its types are effective to examine the connectivity of the ideas in texts semantically and structurally. They also suggested that textual themes are important to create cohesive texts and that students should be aware of such themes to help them comprehend texts more effectively.

The above studies show that thematic structure was a useful analytical tool to investigate the relationship between thematic choices and to diagnose potential problems in EFL learners' writing and reading. These studies though did not involve any teaching of thematic structure to verify how far this could be beneficial in actual pedagogical situations, where real teaching of theme-rheme structure can take place. According to a number of studies (Krisnawati, 2013; Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2012b; Ho, 2009; Ren et al., 2009; Yang, 2008; Wang, L. 2007; Wang, X. 2007; Leonard and Hukari, 2005; Xudong, 2003), this structure could be applied in the classroom, and it is likely to be useful to improve the students' writing quality.

Teaching thematic structure to improve coherence and cohesion at the paragraph level proved to be useful in a study conducted by Leonard and Hukari (2005). The researchers implemented theme/rheme lesson to show how to maintain coherence in textual organization. The students wrote a paragraph in response to a prompt. Then, they explained to them the theme/rheme construct and carried out some activities on authentic texts. Afterwards, the students rewrote their paragraphs. Examining one student's paragraph, they showed that the student attempted to

relate the themes and rhemes better, and they maintained better succession of sentences and text flow. Based on their results, they recommended going a step further to show how to better write multi-paragraph essays by looking for themes and rhemes and ways of connecting them. Their study appeared to be promising, yet it was concerned with teaching thematic patterns at the paragraph level, and it involved only one class. It also lacked a control group, and it did not provide statistical results to see how far the gain was.

Wang, X. (2007) researched whether teaching the four SFL concepts (theme-rheme, lexical density, grammatical metaphor, and nominalization) would enhance students' writing development. The researcher taught 3 groups of students in the English department of a Chinese college for 16 weeks. Each group consisted of 30 students, and they were classified into 3 levels: elementary, intermediate, and advanced. They were asked to write narrative and exposition essays. A post-test was given on narrative and exposition genres after the intervention. The researcher analyzed the students' texts in terms of patterns of thematic progression and found that they had made progress in their writing as far as theme-rheme structure is concerned. However, this study does not provide empirical results that show how large this gain was, and it did not provide enough information about the progress made by the students. It appears that the researcher focused mainly on developing the learners' awareness of themes at the sentence and paragraph levels but not at the discourse level.

Other studies that took into account teaching thematic structure to improve writing at the discourse level resulted in some positive outcomes. Xudong (2003), for example, used thematic

analysis as a self-revision technique to help ESL/EFL student writers improve their essays. His technique focused on examining macro-theme and hyper-themes. He demonstrated a simple four-step procedure to analyse two student essays (A and B); one maintained good coherence, and the other one lacked coherence. His steps could be summarized as follows: (1) looking for a macro-theme, (2) looking for hyper-themes, (3) deciding if the hyper-themes are predictable from the macro-theme, and (4) examining the content of the themes at the paragraph level and determining the line of development of the paragraph. He found that student A's essay was much better than student B's in terms of clearer macro-theme and hyper-themes and better and clearer thematic choice which resulted in a more coherent essay. One of his students appreciated this self-revision technique to amend their essays. Based on that, he recommended utilizing thematic analysis in teaching writing to help ESL/EFL students improve coherence. His study sounded positive, but it was carried out on two students only which means that it needs to undergo extensive testing to test the validity of his procedure.

A study by Yang (2008) researched the usefulness of teaching thematic structure in a different genre other than exposition and narrative. Yang designed a lesson plan to teach explanation writing and showed how thematic progression analysis could be employed in teaching that genre. His lesson plan was part of a writing course for EFL learners at the intermediate level majoring in geography at a university in China. His lesson lasted for 45 minutes in which he taught the theme/rheme construct focusing on the explanation genre using task-based strategy and activities that were based on collaborative learning, peer conferencing, and group work discussion. He anticipated two problems with his students: (1) it was the first time that the students were being introduced to the T-P analysis, and (2) the class size was around 50 students. His lesson plan is

interesting and useful, but the results were based just on the researcher's speculation that the students should be able to use the T-P analysis to write explanation essays effectively. No concrete results were provided. In addition, thematic structure may require more time and practice to master than just one lesson. To have positive results, this structure should be reinforced throughout a number of lessons to make sure the students had fully understood it and applied it in their compositions.

Wong (2007) examined and identified the weaknesses of theme/rheme structure as message in a case study. His subject was a non-native speaker of English who had spent many years studying English as a foreign language. His subject had completed 48 essays in 6 months on different issues: social, business, and scientific matters. Examining the first 20 essays, Wong discovered a number of weaknesses such as: absence of theme, disguised/vague/non-explicit theme, and incoherent tie between theme and rheme. She then carried out an action research to solve such problems in the student's written work. In her writing programme, she taught the subject the three parts of the clause: the notion of theme and rheme in a clause, examining academic texts with focus on theme and rheme (reading), writing short essays, and finally correcting essays with special focus on theme and rheme structure. Wong then examined the student's work and concluded that some improvements were made with clearer themes. She presented some sentences to show how the student applied clearer themes. Thus, she recommended the teaching of theme/rheme structure to overcome weaknesses that are apparent in students' writing. This study was small as it involved only one student, and it lacked a detailed analysis of the student's essays.

Contrary to the above studies, Ho's study (2009) showed that her student did not improve much in her writing. Ho used STA (Systemic Textual Analysis) to teach a university student in Brunei. Her teaching was based on joint instructor-student analysis of the patterns of thematic progression, the generic structure of review writing, and the types of clauses. After instruction had been given, the teacher examined both texts (pre- and post-) and evaluated the impact of the instruction on the student's writing quality. The researcher concluded that based on the analysis, the instruction helped her student improve the generic structure and clause type of her review text, but it did not help much in improving the thematic structure. However, the variation between the two presented texts showed that the student attempted to improve the texture of her second text. This case study is interesting, but it is based on a single student and does not reveal how large the gain was or why there was not much improvement on the thematic structure component.

Ren et al. (2009) carried out a study that showed that students' lack of good organization and development of ideas throughout their texts could be due to the extensiveness that teachers put on grammar over other aspects in writing. They used Thematic Operational Approach (TOA) to help students produce argumentative essays. This approach aims to show how to connect sentences using theme-rheme structure to create coherence in a text. In researching the possibility of applying TOA in the teaching of college English writing, they found from the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews, that one of the main problems students faced when writing was their lack of "logical organization of the text content and the coherent layout of the textual structure" (p. 143). The data collected from the teachers' assessment of the students' composition revealed that they focused mainly on correcting students' grammar

mistakes at the expense of flow of information in their texts. Thus, the students misleadingly “think that correct grammar is the primary factor in writing” (p. 143) and this, in turn, would make them pay more attention to grammar than to the coherence of their compositions. The authors proposed TOA to redress this and overcome any anticipated problems in writing in a three-step experiment: (1) enhance students’ awareness of thematic structure and its different patterns, (2) provide a sample analysis to show how these patterns are applied, and (3) provide relevant reinforcement exercises. They then calculated the proportions of TP patterns in the pre- and post-tests. The students made good progress as they used more TP patterns which resulted in more coherent essays. However, this study lacks any detailed information about the students, how many were involved, how long the course was, how many hours were dedicated to the teaching, and description of methods of processing and analyzing the data.

2.6.2 Empirical studies on generic structure

The use of a genre-based approach to teaching writing sounds promising in developing students’ awareness of the organizational and linguistic features of genres in order to develop their academic writing. Awareness of generic structure may help learners improve their writing skills in their academic contexts. There are a number of studies that focused on the use of genre-based instruction to develop writing skills (Chaisiri, 2010; Henry and Roseberry, 1999, 1998; Myskow and Gordon, 2009; Madjdi, 2009; Srinon, 2009; Wu and Dong, 2009; Cheng, 2008; Firkins et al., 2007; Breeze, 2006; Lin 2006; Hyon, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Swales and Lindemann, 2002; Pang, 2002; Mustafa, 1995; Marshall, 1991).

Henry and Roseberry's (1998) study reported positive yet mixed findings. They studied the effect of explicit genre teaching on first-year management students' acquisition of the tourist information genre, which can be found in airline magazines, newspapers, tourist information leaflets, and guidebooks. 34 participants were assigned (quasi-randomly) to two groups: genre and non-genre. They were given a pre-test followed by 6 hours of instruction for 3 weeks and were then given a post-test. The genre group was taught using 6 authentic texts (not modified or simplified) and genre-based instruction, and the other one used the same authentic texts yet was taught with a more traditional approach. The two groups were taught by two different instructors, one was one of the two researchers and the other by an instructor in the department. The researchers obtained three types of data from the tests: motivation scores (two raters), scores obtained from a move index, and ratings from Roseberry's index of texture (conjunction, conjunctive reach, specificity, connectivity, topic, and topic shift involving the first six clauses of each text). The results showed significant improvement in motivation and texture of the experimental group. However, the two groups did not differ significantly in terms of the move scores although the genre group had made certain progress in their post-tests. The non-genre group did not show any significant improvement in the post-tests. The reason why explicit genre instruction failed to improve students' use of moves still needs to be investigated. One reason could be that the teaching of genre was over a short period of time, or the students needed extra activities that show variations of both obligatory and optional moves. The two groups were taught by two different instructors which could have affected the results of the study.

Another study by Henry and Roseberry (1999) tested raising learners' awareness of the generic structure and linguistic features of essay introductions. They developed a number of teaching

materials that aimed to teach the students explicitly the generic structure and linguistic features of writing good expository essay introductions. Their experiment consisted of 13 first-year students who were studying education at a university in Brunei. The students were asked to write an essay on technological topics at the beginning of the course. After 8 hours of explicit instruction over a period of 2 weeks, they were asked to write another essay on one of the topics suggested to them. The assessment of the post-test was based on their knowledge of the genre as they did not practice writing the genre and did not receive any feedback in writing the genre. As with their previous study, Henry and Roseberry (1998) used a move index and a texture index to calculate the differences in the pre- and post-tests. There was a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests which showed that the students benefitted from learning the generic structure and linguistic features to produce good essay introductions. This study sounds promising, but it lacked a control group to safely say that any improvement could be related directly to the explicit teaching of generic structure of the genre. It was carried out over a short period of time and with a small group.

A study by Cheng (2008) aimed to investigate the effects of SFL genre-based instruction on 26 English major freshmen L2 students' writing development in a composition writing course at a university in Taiwan. They were taught the narrative genre for 4 sessions, each lasting 2 hours. Pre- and post-tests were given on a narrative genre. The data was analyzed in terms of three aspects: content, organization, and language features. The overall conclusion was that explicit genre instruction reported positive results to some extent. The students improved significantly in both the content and language features, but when it came to the organization aspect, like in Henry and Roseberry's (1998) study, they showed no significant improvement in the move

scores from pre- to post-test. This could be due to a number of reasons. First, the study was conducted for a short period of time. Second, the model texts selected for in-class readings followed a fixed genre pattern and did not give the students the opportunity to diversify the organization. Third, the students were asked to write on a topic that drew on their personal experience and asked them to narrate their story in a chronological way. One main disadvantage of this research is that it lacked a control group to detect whether improvements were the result of the intervention.

Chaisiri (2010) investigated university teachers' perceptions of their approaches to teaching writing and the effects of implementing a genre-based approach in one English-major classroom. The study consisted of two phases. The first phase involved collecting data from teachers teaching at the university using questionnaires and interviews. The results of both quantitative and qualitative data suggested that most teachers used a combination of approaches when teaching writing as well as using examples of texts or model texts to help learners analyze them, understand the linguistic features, and improve their grammar. This was in accordance with the genre pedagogy implemented in the next phase in one classroom. The second phase involved implementing a genre-based instruction in one English classroom. This phase comprised classroom observation notes by one teacher, interviews, journals, and a collection of pre-intervention, post-intervention, and in-class written work. The students were taught 4 genres over 8 weeks. The results from the second data suggest that a genre-based instruction had promising results on both the teacher and the students. Both were satisfied, and the students made positive improvements in their writing. This study sounds promising, but it needed to further explore how

far the students benefitted from the course statistically. Also, a control group was needed to compare the results of both classes.

Breeze (2006) carried out a study that aimed to compare two pedagogical approaches to teaching genre in a Spanish context. Two business English groups were selected: the first one acted as the 'linguistic analysis' group and the second as the 'contextual analysis' group, following a 6-hour report-writing course. The first group were taught the linguistic features (the textual organization and lexical choice) of the report genre while the second group focused on contextual factors (the roles of the manager, researcher and writer, and its context) of the report genre. Both groups set for a pre-test and a final report, and the data collected was assessed analytically and holistically. The results confirmed significant differences in the pre-test and final report within and between the groups. Both groups did well on the final report when the results are compared with the pre-test. The study attempted to show that both approaches were beneficial as both groups' performance improved. The contextual group attempted to perform better than the linguistic group as their mean scores were higher which could be due to the top-down approach used which activated their pre-existing knowledge and strategies. This study was in favour of the NR approach which emphasizes the notion of teaching the contextual factors to help improve students' level.

A study conducted by Pang (2002) showed that his textual group did better on the mechanistic elements of the genre in question, such as the use of obligatory moves and features, and use of the mood and person rather than the contextual group. Pang applied two approaches to genre

instruction: textual analysis (focusing on schematic structure, and lexicogrammatical analysis), and contextual-awareness (focusing on types of genres, communicative purpose, roles of the writer and the reader) approach. The study was conducted on two groups of first-year students at university (one with 19 students, the other with 20 students). They were taught the film review, and the students were asked to analyze the models given in terms of their contextual meanings (contextual group), and schematic features (textual group). The data obtained from the students' film reviews was analyzed in terms of a writing-strategy questionnaire, and the film reviews were marked holistically and according to a criterion based on the functional systemic model. Both approaches reported considerably similar progress in both groups' writing quality as measured by the pre-/post scores. However, based on analysis of individual cases, Pang pointed out that the textual-analysis approach worked well with the majority of the students with low initial scores, and the contextual-analysis approach helped only a few students with low initial scores. Despite these slight differences between the two groups, Pang recommends bridging the gap between the contextual and textual approaches instead of dichotomising the two, as suggested by SFL.

Similarly, Macken-Horarik (2002) calls for connecting both the context and text, following the SFL approach towards learning a language. By combining both the context and text dimensions, teachers could maximize the potentiality of improving their learners' writing. She studied the contextual framework for teaching explanation genre in an Australian context. Her study focused on teaching the contextual factors explicitly taking into account the genre in question. The study obtained data from a case study carried out by a teacher who applied the contextual framework in a 10-week unit on human reproduction and its technologies with special focus on explanation

genre. The study resulted in better performance in the students' writing in terms of better use of field knowledge, tenor, and mood aspects. She suggests that SFL should be considered as "it is a contextually sensitive and functional grammar, it enables us to move in a mutually predictive way between context and text" (p. 42).

2.7 Motivation in second language learning

The current study investigates the effect of learning thematic and generic structures on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing essays in English. This section discusses the definition of motivation and the most recent motivational theories in L2 contexts. Based on some of these motivational theories, the questionnaires and interview questions were designed to examine the effect of the above structures.

2.7.1 Definition of motivation

There is not a simple, straightforward definition of motivation (Dornyei, 1998). According to Dornyei, researchers tend to agree that "motivation is responsible for determining human behaviour by energising it and giving it direction," and motivation theories generally try to explain why people behave the way they do (p. 117). Motivation in L2 is a multi-faceted construct as learning an L2 not only involves learning a language as a coding system but also incorporates social and cultural dimensions (Dornyei, 1998, 2003).

Defining L2 motivation is somehow problematic as it involves a number of different definitions that stem from different psychological, cognitive, and social paradigms. In order to reach a workable definition, a number of motivational aspects should be considered. As far as this study is concerned, the design of the questionnaires and the interview questions attempted to cover a number of motivational traits that I found important in L2 motivation, mainly in the areas where instrumental-integrative and internal-external motivations are concerned. Table 2.16 summaries the main motivational aspects that were taken into account in this study. These motivational aspects will be discussed within a number of motivational theories in L2 context where each signals a distinct period of time, the social psychological period, and the cognitive period. Some recent developments in L2 motivation will be discussed to relate them to the current study.

Table 2.16: Motivational aspects covered in this study

Motivational Aspects
• achievement goals
• attitudes
• language anxiety
• autonomous learning
• self-efficacy
• ideal L2 self
• effort and willingness to communicate

2.7.2 Theories of motivation

The study of motivation in L2 context has gone through three main stages, and each stage has embraced a number of motivational aspects that have reflected that period of time: (1) the social psychological period, (2) the cognitive-situated period, and (3) the process-oriented period (Dornyei, 2011). The first two stages are of importance to this study as they incorporate the motivational aspects listed above.

2.7.2.1 The social psychological period

This stage is characterized by the work of Gardner and Lambert (1972) on conceptualizing motivation in learning a foreign or second language within a social framework. Their theory of motivation included a number of social and psychological aspects that viewed forming positive attitudes towards the foreign language speakers and culture as a key factor in learning that language. For Gardner (1985), motivation is “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p. 10). Three motivational elements can be identified here: “(a) the effort expended to achieve a goal; (b) a desire to learn a language; and (c) satisfaction with the task of learning the language” (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995, p. 506). These factors imply that the more motivated a learner is the more they want to learn the language, enjoy the learning, and strive to learn the language. Gardner’s (1985, 2001) classification of two orientations, integrative and instrumental, have greatly influenced the way we understand the language learning motivation. These integrative and instrumental components resemble what researchers call intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Vallerand, 1997; Brown, 2000) as they are two of the

main components of the cognitive theories in L2 motivation. These will be reviewed below in the self-determination theory.

Integrative orientation refers to the learner's goal of learning the language to understand the cultural community of that language better and to assimilate to some extent into that community. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) consider the integrative motive as a construct that is composed of three key components: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, and motivation. The first component refers to the individual's interest in learning a foreign language and their attitudes towards the community of that language which reflect the individual's willingness to interact culturally and socially with members of that culture. The second one embraces the individual's evaluation of the L2 teacher and the L2 course. The last component comprises effort, desire, and attitude towards learning. These elements made up Gardner's Attitude Motivation Index (AMI). His AMI scale showed that there was a strong correlation between attitudes, motivation, and success in learning the language. Many variables are at play in the context of a language classroom, such as the teacher, the textbooks, the activities, the peers, and so on. Forming positive attitudes towards learning an L2 may result in increasing the enjoyment of the course, enhancing the desire to learn the language, and dedicating more effort in learning the language (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991).

Instrumental motivation is concerned more with the learner's purpose to learn the L2, whether it is for a promotion, or pass an exam, or seen as an educated person. This type of motivation could be seen as a tool that learners of language can adopt to achieve their goal/s behind learning a

language. L2 learners may anticipate a reward from a teacher, or a parent, for instance, and, thus, they would opt for rewards, such as money, presents, or grades.

Both orientations are important and affect learners' goals towards learning the language. Their effectiveness though depends on the L2 context and the learners' view and purpose of its importance in learning a foreign language (Brown, 2000).

2.7.2.2 The cognitive-situated period

Gardner's theory on motivation, which was laid down in the 1960s and was mainly grounded in social psychology, has been challenged by the cognitive motivation theories which were introduced in mainstream psychology in an attempt to reach a better understanding of L2 motivation (Dornyei, 2003). This attempt embraces motivational psychologists' tendency to incorporate cognitive concepts in their theories (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996). Before the incorporation of the cognitive concepts in L2 motivation, the early stage of motivational theories revolved around the concept of need reduction and that learning a language will satisfy a need like other human needs, such as primary needs (hunger, love, etc.) and secondary needs (curiosity, affiliation, power, etc.). However, according to Pintrich and Schunk (1996), "Explanations of behaviour have moved away from stimuli and reinforcement contingencies and instead emphasize learners' constructive interpretations of events and the role that their beliefs, cognition, affects, and values play in achievement situations" (p. v). Motivation is perceived as a concept which includes higher-level needs which in turn includes various mental processes, such as satisfying one's need to successfully learn a language.

Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) identify three main approaches in motivational psychology: expectancy-value theories, goal theories, and self-determination theory. These theories are of value to the current study as they highlight motivational factors that are thought to greatly influence EFL learners towards learning and writing in English.

(1) Expectancy-value theories

It is argued that motivation to carry out various tasks is the result of two key factors: the learner's "expectancy of success in a given task and the reward that successful task performance will bring," and "the value the individual attaches to success in that task" (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 13). These two dimensions underpin a number of other motivational theories that play a vital role in learning a language.

Expectancy theories involve three cognitive processes: processing past experiences (the attribution theory), judging one's abilities and competence (the self-efficacy theory), and maintaining one's self-esteem (the self-worth theory) (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011). The guiding principle in the attribution theory is that learners can link their past successes and failures with their future achievement efforts. Learners ascribe past failures on a particular task to low ability on their part the chances that they will try to do the task again and succeed in it are less. If they consider that it is due to insufficient effort or inadequate learning strategies, then they are more likely to give it another try (Weiner, 1992). Even if some learners have gone through past failures, it might be worth trying if teachers can help change this into positive ones by assisting

the learners to do well on their tasks gradually through more interesting teaching strategies so learners will exert more effort.

In the self-worth theory there is a need for an individual for self-acceptance (Covington, 1992). As in the context of language classroom, learners try to “aggrandise and protect self-perceptions of ability” (Covington and Roberts, 1994, p. 161). Promoting learners’ self-esteem, their self-efficacy would be enhanced accordingly. Dornyei (1998) explains self-efficacy theory as dealing with “people’s judgment of their capabilities to carry out certain specific tasks, and accordingly, their sense of efficacy will determine their choice of the activities attempted, as well as the level of aspirations, the amount of effort, and the persistence displayed” (p. 119). It is argued that learners with low self-efficacy may lose faith in their capabilities and give up easily (Bandura, 1993, cited in Dornyei, 1998). Therefore, if teachers could help learners to enhance their self-efficacy, they may try to approach more challenging situations with confidence, to sustain a task- rather than self-diagnostic focus during task-involvement, and to carry on and heighten effort in the face of failures.

Task values include four components: attainment value, intrinsic value, extrinsic utility value, and cost (Eccles and Wigfield, 1995, 2000). Attainment value refers to the importance of doing well on a task in accordance with one’s personal values and needs. Intrinsic value refers to the enjoyment or pleasure factor that a task brings about. Extrinsic value is related to the usefulness of the task to accomplish future goals. The last component, cost, refers to the negative valence of a task, involving factors like expended effort and time, and emotional costs. Anxiety or fear of

failure is taken into account. These components are important as the overall contribution of value may result in determining the strength of the behaviour towards completing a task. This might influence EFL learners to achieve not only short-term goals but also long-term future goals, such as graduating from university, or getting a good job or attaining a job promotion. Dornyei (2001) emphasizes the importance of relating achievement in tasks to “the attainment of personally valued long-term goals” which may have a great influence on goal theories (p. 9).

(2) Goal theories

The construct of ‘goal’ has replaced the concept of ‘need’ or ‘drive’, and it is viewed as “the ‘engine’ to fire the action and provide the direction in which to act” (Dornyei, 1998, p. 120). He states that there are three goal theories which are influential: goal-setting theory, goal orientation theory, and goal content and multiplicity.

Goal-setting theory confirms that “human action is caused by purpose, and for action to take place, goals have to be set and pursued by choice” (Locke and Latham, 1994, cited in Dornyei, 1998, p. 120). This theory is compatible with expectancy-value theories as ‘commitment’ is perceived to increase when people see that accomplishing a goal is possible and important (Dornyei, 1998). As a result, learners’ self-efficacy could be enhanced, and they would commit themselves to achieve their goals when they feel that they are attainable and important to them.

Goal orientation theory aims to explain learners' learning and performance in the context of school. Ames (1992) points out that there are two contrasting achievement goal orientations: a mastery orientation pursued by mastery goals (also called task-involvement or learning goals), and a performance orientation, involving performance goals. The mastery goals focus on the content, and the performance goals focus on showing ability, attaining good grades, and outperforming classmates. These variables should be taken into consideration when designing course syllabuses and activities and tasks for EFL learners.

Unlike the previous two goal theories, goal content and multiplicity theory does not focus on “academic performance, achievement or competence” (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 22). It integrates social and academic goals in educational contexts, focusing in particular on considering how social competence may interact positively with academic competence (Wentzel, 2000, cited in Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011). Goal theories are crucial in defining motivation, as it is a psychological attribute which leads people to achieve a goal and is viewed as ‘a goal-directed’ aspect in learning a second or foreign language (Gardner, 1985). It is related to factors that explain what people are motivated to carry out goals, what motivates them internally and externally, and how motivation is measured and analyzed.

(3) Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory introduces two concepts: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). They are an elaboration of the integrative and instrumental components in Gardner's work. Traditionally, intrinsic motivation can be found within the task itself: a sense of achievement, self-esteem, enjoyment of the class. Extrinsic motivation is seen as external to the task: getting a promotion, passing an exam, avoiding punishment, etc. Within this theory, three subtypes of intrinsic motivation are important: (a) to learn, (b) towards achievement, and (c) to experience stimulation (Vallerand, 1997). These three subtypes are interrelated because when learners find pleasure and satisfaction in understanding something new to them, they will try to achieve or accomplish their tasks, and this will result in experiencing pleasant sensations.

As for extrinsic motivation, Vallerand (1997) distinguishes three subtypes: (a) external regulation, (b) introjected regulation, and (c) identified regulation. External regulation refers to activities that are external to the learners. For example, if the reason for carrying out the task is taken away, then there is no incentive to continue engagement in the activity. Introjected regulation refers to reasons that learners find as a type of pressure to perform an activity. For example, when they feel they have to carry out a task because otherwise they would feel ashamed. The last type, identified regulation, is found when learners perform an activity for relevant personal reasons. For example, if they have a valued goal to practise their writing skills, then they would invest time and effort to improve their writing skills.

Another point that is worth mentioning here is the connection between self-determination theory and learner autonomy in the L2 classroom. Dornyei (1998) and Ushioda (1996) argue that enhancing learner autonomy in the classroom increases the learners' motivation towards learning the language. They claim that L2 motivation and learner autonomy go hand in hand, and as Dickinson (1995, cited in Dornyei, 1998), suggests: "enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning... and perceiving that their learning successes and failures are to be attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control" (p. 124). Enhancing learners' autonomous learning might help them take some responsibilities of their own learning as they should be able to identify their learning goals, how to evaluate their learning, and what to do to improve themselves. This would result in what Ushioda (1996) points out: "autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners" (p. 2). It is worth investigating whether the intervention would result in enhancing learners' autonomy and motivation towards learning, gaining confidence in their abilities, and exerting effort and time to improve themselves.

2.7.2.3 The process-oriented period

Although this approach is not taken into account for the current study, it might be helpful to shed light on it as it involves "some aspects of motivational evolution" to examine the "ups and downs" of motivation (Dornyei, 2005, p. 84). Since motivation fluctuates over time within a lesson or over a whole academic year, the process model of L2 motivation, introduced by Dornyei, incorporates a number of different motivational functions and influences. He emphasizes the importance of including temporal awareness when incorporating motivational

strategies into teaching situations. That is why in his model, Dornyei (2005, p. 85) “breaks down the overall motivational process into several discrete temporal segments” that are then organized according to three main stages: pre-actional, actional, and post-actional. Throughout these stages, learners’ “initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and then into operationalized intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading (hopefully) to the accomplishments of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process” (pp. 85-86). This model could be effective for EFL teachers to increase their learners’ motivation in learning a language, and it could be used as a starting point for language teachers to maximize motivation in learners. One main drawback of this model is related to “its inaccessibility to average language teachers” (Piggin, 2012, p. 61). Dornyei (2005) proposed a framework that could be applied by classroom teachers “to promote their motivational teaching practice and to create a motivating classroom environment” (p. 111).

2.7.3 Dornyei’s taxonomy of L2 motivation

Dornyei’s taxonomy of L2 motivation is of interest to the current study as it encapsulates a number of influential motivational factors that may have impact on EFL learners’ motivation towards learning and writing in English. Dornyei (2003) points out that Gardner’s (1985) approach offered a ‘macro perspective’ of L2 motivation in that it “allowed researchers to characterize and compare the motivational pattern of whole learning communities and then to draw inferences about intercultural communication and affiliation” (p. 11). However, it was felt that this ‘macro perspective’ was “less adequate” for providing a clearer picture of L2 motivation in the classrooms (p. 11). This led a number of researchers (Brown, 1990, 1994; Crookes and

Schmidt, 1991; Clement et al., 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1996) to begin examining the effects of various factors on learners' motivation, for example, course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components, and group-specific motivational components. Dornyei (1994) developed a framework of motivation in the language classroom in an attempt to synthesise various lines of research. His taxonomy of motivation consists of three levels: the language level, the learner level, and the learning situation level, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.6: Dornyei's framework of L2 motivation (Dornyei, 1994, p. 280)

(removed due to copyright restrictions)

This taxonomy could be effective for language teachers to motivate their learners taking into account the different levels that learning goes through. At the language level, Dornyei draws on

Gardner's two orientations: integrative and instrumental. The orientations at this level determine the purposes behind studying the language. As reviewed earlier, defining learners' goals of learning a language could be set as a trigger to motivate them to exert more effort to achieve them. At the learner level, a number of traits of the language learner are identified. At this level, the learner's motivation is likely to be influenced by their need for achievement and self-confidence. This level signals the expectancy and value of the learner. It includes self-efficacy, causal attributions, language anxiety, and perceived L2 competence. At the learning situation level, which is the most elaborated part in this framework, a number of intrinsic and extrinsic motives are associated with course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components, and group-specific motivational components. The course-specific motivational components relate to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method, and the learning tasks which are based on four motivational conditions described by Keller (1983) and later by Crookes and Schmidt (1991): interest, relevance, expectancy of success, and satisfaction. The teacher-specific motivational components are related to the teacher's behaviour, personality and teaching style, and include the affiliative motive to please the teacher, authority type, and direct socialisation of motivation (modelling, task presentation, and feedback). The group-specific motivational components relate to the group dynamics of the learner group, which includes goal-orientedness, the norm and reward system, and classroom goal structure. These integrative-instrumental and internal-external motivations are important in an L2 context as they are the main components of the whole motivation construct.

2.7.4 Other motivational aspects

This study takes into its account other aspects in L2 motivation that are covered in recent motivational research: willingness to communicate, ideal L2 self that are tackled in Dornyei's situated conception of L2 motivation, and L2 motivational self-system respectively.

2.7.4.1 Dornyei's situated conception of L2 motivation

Dornyei (2003) introduces a situated approach that conceptualizes a number of motivational aspects where willingness to communicate (WTC) is highlighted in L2. WTC refers to “the psychological preparedness to use the L2 when the opportunity arises” (MacIntyre, 2007, cited in Baghaei and Dourakhshan, 2012, p. 12160). In other words, it assesses the extent to which a language learner is ready to take part in a discussion and communicate using the language in an L2 context.

WTC consists of a number of linguistic and psychological variables distributed at a six layer pyramid, including “linguistic self-confidence; the desire to affiliate with a person; interpersonal motivation; intergroup attitudes, motivation, and climate: parameters of the social situation; communicative competence and experience; and various personality traits” (Dornyei, 2003, p. 13). This model tends to pull together a number of learner variables that are considered to be well-established influences on L2 acquisition and use, resulting in “a construct in which psychological and linguistic factors are integrated in an organic manner” (Dornyei, 2003, p. 14).

This study considers some of the motivational traits tackled in the WTC's layers that could examine the impact of the intervention on students' learning anxiety, attitudes, motivation, and self-confidence. This pyramid suggests that when self-confidence, positive attitudes, and motivation are increased and learning anxiety is decreased, then this may result in enhancing the learners' willingness to communicate by awaiting opportunities to take advantage of what they learnt (intervention) to participate in the classroom. In the current study's context, speculations revolve around whether the learners see themselves willing to ask/answer questions related to their lessons, to take part in the writing tasks, to discuss the written assignments/writing tasks with their partners or groups or with their teacher. Therefore, from the perspective of willingness to communicate, teachers could see how far the learners perceive themselves as successful language learners.

2.7.4.2 Dornyei's L2 motivational self-system

A recent development in the field of L2 motivation takes into account two aspects: possible selves and future self-guides (Dornyei, 2005). These are related to motivated behaviour concerning personality traits in mainstream psychology. 'Possible selves' is defined as "the summary of the individual's self-knowledge related to how the person views him/herself at present" (Dornyei, 2009, p. 11). This concept highlights the way individuals view themselves of "what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming" which provide future rather than current views of one's self (Markus and Nurius, 1986, cited in Dornyei, 2009, p. 11). Dornyei (2009) indicates that possible selves could be

referred to as future self-guides but “not every type of possible self has this guiding function” (p. 13).

The future self-guides encompass two components: the ideal self and the ought self (Higgins, 1987; Higgins et al., 1985). The ideal L2 self refers to one’s ideal perception of themselves (e.g., if learners wish to become better writers of English, then ‘the ideal L2 Self’ is seen as a powerful motivating variable because the learners tend to imagine themselves as being better writers). The ought-to L2 self is concerned with traits that learners “ought to possess in order to meet their expectations and avoid possible negative outcomes” (Dornyei, 2009, p. 29). L2 learning experience is added (Dornyei, 2009) which refers to the motives related to the immediate learning situation and experience (e.g., the positive effect of success, the enjoyable quality of learning a structure or joining a course). What Dornyei proposes here is an understanding of the role of self-system in L2 motivation that combines a number of influential motivational factors reviewed earlier (Gardner, 1985; Pintrich and Schunk, 1996; Noels, 2003; Ushioda, 1996). How the learners imagine themselves to be or achieve in the future, the social expectations and the learning experience should be targeted by teachers who wish to encourage their learners to exert more time and effort to accomplish their goals.

2.8 Theoretical framework of the present study

Section 2.6 of this chapter discussed the empirical studies in the field of teaching both thematic and schematic structures respectively. As far as thematic structure is concerned, these studies attempted to show the importance of the SFL textual metafunction as an analytical tool to

understand the relationship between thematic structure patterns in different genres or to highlight areas where learners face difficulty in organizing their ideas and maintain text flow at the discourse level, and as a teaching tool which teachers and learners could use to help improve the teaching of writing to EFL learners. The studies confirmed their usefulness and based on such results some pedagogical implications were suggested. As for generic structure, the previous studies showed that teaching this structure is pedagogically applicable, and it might result in improving students' writing. However, the outcomes of these empirical studies showed mixed, inconclusive results. They seemed promising but did not prove that teaching the above structures would result in better writing. Besides the mixed results, they are small studies carried out over short periods of time. I think applying these structures require more time and practise to master. Also, in most of these studies a control group was missing, a factor that may have shown that any improvements may have been due to the intervention. In some cases important information about the research appears to be missing from the papers.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate if explicit teaching of thematic structure and generic structure helps EFL learners improve their writing quality. It aims to find if developing learners' awareness of both structures results in developing their skills to maintain the flow of information throughout their essays cohesively and coherently. This study seeks to investigate the efficacy of integrating both structures to improve the writing quality as there is little research evidence that show the effectiveness of combining both structures.

The rationale for integrating both the thematic and generic structures in teaching EFL is the impact of genre on the selection of thematic patterns. Genre-based instruction can work as a framework within which thematic patterns can be used to link the various ideas and sections of the students' writing to produce coherent texts. Fries (1994, 1995c) claims that the selection of thematic patterns is sensitive to particular genres. Thus, “different types of theme-rheme structure and different thematic progression patterns are... not created randomly but are generated in response to particular genre needs” (Carter-Thomas, 2008, pp. 6-7). Berry (1995) claims that two types of themes, informational and interactional, are found in different types of texts. Informational themes are found more in formal academic texts, and interactional themes are found more in personal texts.

To date, there is no or little research on combining the teaching of thematic progression within a genre based approach. Thematic progression might be best taught in this integrated way as ‘traditional’ teaching of writing tends to focus on the sentence level, while both a genre approach and thematic progression focus on the text level. Teaching thematic structure and how to develop ideas moving from one stage to another within a genre may result in enhancing and improving EFL writing. This is what needs to be investigated. Hence, this study seeks to examine whether the teaching of each structure individually or a combination of both would result in improving students’ writing, and if so, to what extent.

The current study also aims to investigate how far the intervention could have a positive impact on the students’ motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. As discussed

earlier, enhancing EFL learners' motivation towards learning a language might be fruitful and can play a significant role in encouraging the students to exert more time and effort to improve their writing skills to meet graduation and labour market requirements.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical frameworks on which the current study is based. First, it presented the systemic functional theory which offers the concepts of thematic structure and generic structure that may be used to help EFL/ESL learners improve their writing. Second, it discussed the approaches to writing, focusing on the genre approaches and the use of genre-based instruction to teaching writing. Third, it addressed some of the recent motivational theories in L2 which provided the basis for the current study's questionnaires and interviews.

To serve the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework of the current study is to be implemented in an EFL classroom to examine its effect on university students' writing quality and their motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The following chapter describes the research design, procedures for the data collection, and analysis to answer the research questions of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and procedures conducted to collect the data required to test the hypothesis and to answer the research questions that are stated below. Then, the research design is explained, drawing on a quasi-experimental design and its variables. Next, the data analysis, research context, the intervention, and the piloting of the study are discussed. The chapter presents the data collection procedures, the writing course objectives for the assigned groups, the teaching materials and activities, and the writing approaches. This part includes a description and discussion of validity, reliability, and ethical issues.

3.2 Research questions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the current study aims to investigate the effect of teaching thematic structure, generic structure, and a combination of the two structures on students' writing and motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. To test this effect, the following research questions were formulated.

Section 1

- (a) Is the explicit teaching of thematic structure effective in developing EFL students' writing quality?
- (b) What is the effect of teaching thematic structure on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English?

Section 2

- (a) Is the explicit teaching of generic structure effective in developing EFL students' writing quality?
- (b) What is the effect of teaching generic structure on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English?

Section 3

- (a) Is the explicit teaching of both thematic structure and generic structure effective in developing EFL students' writing quality?
- (b) What is the effect of teaching both thematic and generic structures on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English?

Section 4

Which approach is more effective in improving students' writing? Is it teaching thematic structure, or generic structure, or a combination of thematic and generic structures?

The first question (1.a) investigates whether the explicit teaching of thematic structure without any teaching of generic structure is sufficient to help students write more cohesively and coherently. Does the teaching of thematic structure help the students to learn only the generic

features of texts implicitly? The second question (2.a) aims to investigate whether the explicit teaching of generic structure without teaching the students thematic structure is sufficient to improve their writing, and whether the students' awareness of thematic choices will improve implicitly. The third question (3.a) aims to pull together the explicit teaching of thematic structure and generic structure to help students' write better essays. It hypothesizes that by teaching both structures, students should be capable of writing more coherently and cohesively. It relies on the idea that a genre approach can act as scaffolding or a framework for students to apply thematic structure more appropriately. The data obtained from the study will show which approach is more effective in improving students' writing (question 4). The other set of questions (1.b, 2.b, 3.b) aims to investigate the effect of teaching these structures on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. Examining the students' motivation and attitudes adds depth to the outcomes of this study from another dimension.

3.3 Null hypothesis

Based on the research questions, the study posits two null hypotheses:

- (1) There is no significant difference in the effects on students' writing quality of teaching thematic structure, generic structure, or a combination of the two.
- (2) There is no significant difference in the effects on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English of teaching thematic structure, generic structure, or a combination of the two.

3.4 Research design

Research is defined as any systematic process of inquiry embracing three elements: (1) a question, problem or hypothesis; (2) data or evidence related to this hypothesis; and (3) analysis and interpretation of data (Nunan, 1992). Educational research refers to scientific research on the problems faced in education (Freimuth, 2009) and is concerned with obtaining knowledge (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989) which is related to the notions of truth and reality in the world. Obtaining knowledge stems from two philosophical concepts: ontology and epistemology (Freimuth, 2009). Ontology is concerned with the nature of being, reality, and existence, and epistemology is concerned with the study of the nature and extent of knowledge and truth (Ibid.). While ontology refers to the study of what we know, epistemology refers to the study of how we achieve knowledge (Ibid.). To gain knowledge of the world (epistemological concerns), there are a number of different ways or techniques of collecting and analyzing data (methods of research). Among a number of different ways to classify methodology, quantitative, qualitative and mixed research methods are the most popular (Cohen et al., 2011).

Research approaches can be quantitative or qualitative or a mixed methods approach, i.e., a mixture of both approaches. Quantitative research “involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 24). For example, a researcher can use SPSS to analyze data collected from pre- and post-tests. Qualitative research “involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed by non-statistical methods” (Ibid.). For example, a researcher can use qualitative content analysis to analyze interview research.

Finally, a mixed methods approach refers to a research study that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in one study.

Research methodologies are often divided into a number of paradigms (Punch, 2005): positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical/constructivist, post-modernism and realism. The current study focuses on positivism and interpretivism, as they are the most relevant paradigms to this study.

Positivist research is concerned with gaining knowledge using scientific methods of enquiry such as experiments, surveys, observations, and statistical analysis. It relies on conceptualizing reality from an objective perspective (Punch, 2005). The quantitative approach is associated with the positivist paradigm. Interpretivism is more concerned with gaining knowledge by understanding and exploring human and social reality. In contrast to the positivist paradigm, interpretive methods of research start from “the position that our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors” (Walsham, 2006, p. 320). This means that there is “no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science” (Ibid.). In interpretivist paradigm, the researcher enquires about phenomena using qualitative methods such as semi- and unstructured interviewing, focus groups, qualitative examination of texts, and content analysis techniques to analyze data (Bryman, 2008). The qualitative approach is associated with the interpretivism paradigm.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are related to two concepts: objectivity and subjectivity. While objectivity is closely related to quantitative research, subjectivity is closely related to qualitative research (Freimuth, 2009). Objectivity can be defined as being objective and bias-free. Collecting and analyzing data in quantitative research are carried out in an objective manner, and the researcher's personal judgements are excluded. The results or outcomes of experiments, for example, are considered quantifiable and wherever and whenever a hypothesis is tested, the results would be the same (Ibid.). Subjectivity in qualitative research involves "the interpretation of a person's internal reality rather than pure external and independent facts" (Freimuth, 2009, p. 7). This is based on an epistemological assumption that truth does not exist in a separate vacuum in isolation from the research contexts and participants (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Subjective research aims to "understand and explain social phenomena that people in society have constructed for themselves" (Merriam, 2001, cited in Freimuth, 2009, p. 8).

In order to answer the research questions, this study draws on a mixed methods research approach. I opted for a mixed methods approach because it has several advantages. As described by Dornyei (2007), it "expands the understanding of a complex issue, corroborates findings through 'triangulation', and reaches multiple audiences" (pp. 164-166). This study attempts to compensate for the weaknesses that may be found in the quantitative and qualitative approaches if used separately. By applying mixed methods research, the data collected from the experiment (the writing tests) are complemented by another means of a quantitative data collection (the questionnaires) as well as by qualitative data (the semi-structured interviews). It also adds depth to the quantitative results and allows for an investigation of certain issues from different angles.

One set of data (the questionnaires) validated another one (the semi-structured interviews). The conclusions were verified by presenting converging findings through different methods. As a result, the validity of the study was strengthened. It helped me as a researcher to present my findings in a way that is acceptable to those who would not be sympathetic to one of the approaches alone.

The present study involved a concurrent collection of data (occurring at the same time) as opposed to sequential collection of data (in sequence) (Dornyei 2007; Creswell 2011). The study utilized the quantitative and qualitative methods independently within the same timeframe. By drawing on the concurrent collection of data, both the quantitative and qualitative were given equal weight. In addition to that, the results of one data collection can converge and/or validate the results of another one as well as analyzing data for different purposes (Creswell, 2011). The table below (Table 3.1) presents the steps taken to conduct this research study.

Table 3.1: The research steps

Research Steps	Mixed methods approach (quasi-experimental design)
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the pre-test • the pre-questionnaires • the pre-interviews
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of the intervention • the mid-test
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implementation of the intervention
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the post-test • the post-questionnaires • the post-interviews

This table shows the steps in a chronological order. As it is shown, the first step comprised collecting data from three different methods: the pre-test, the pre-questionnaire and the pre-interviews. The collection of these data was conducted through the first two weeks before the intervention. After teaching five weeks and the implementation of the intervention, the mid-test was conducted. After another five weeks of teaching the intervention, the post-test, the post-questionnaire and the post-interviews were conducted. Below is a discussion of these various parts of the research.

3.5 Quasi-experimental design

There are three main types of experiments: pre-experiment, quasi-experiment, and true experiment (Nunan, 1992). In a pre-experiment, participants may take pre- and post-tests, but it lacks a control group. The true experiment and quasi-experiment are similar in terms of having pre- and post-tests, an experimental group, and a control group. The true experiment has random assignment of participants but not the quasi-experiment. In this study, it was not possible to assign the participants randomly to the groups. They were intact class groups. Another difference between experiments and quasi-experiments is that variables are tightly controlled in the former, while they are less controllable in classroom research where the researcher usually has to work with an existing class, environment, and circumstances dictated by others, for instance, the school or university (Cohen et al., 2011).

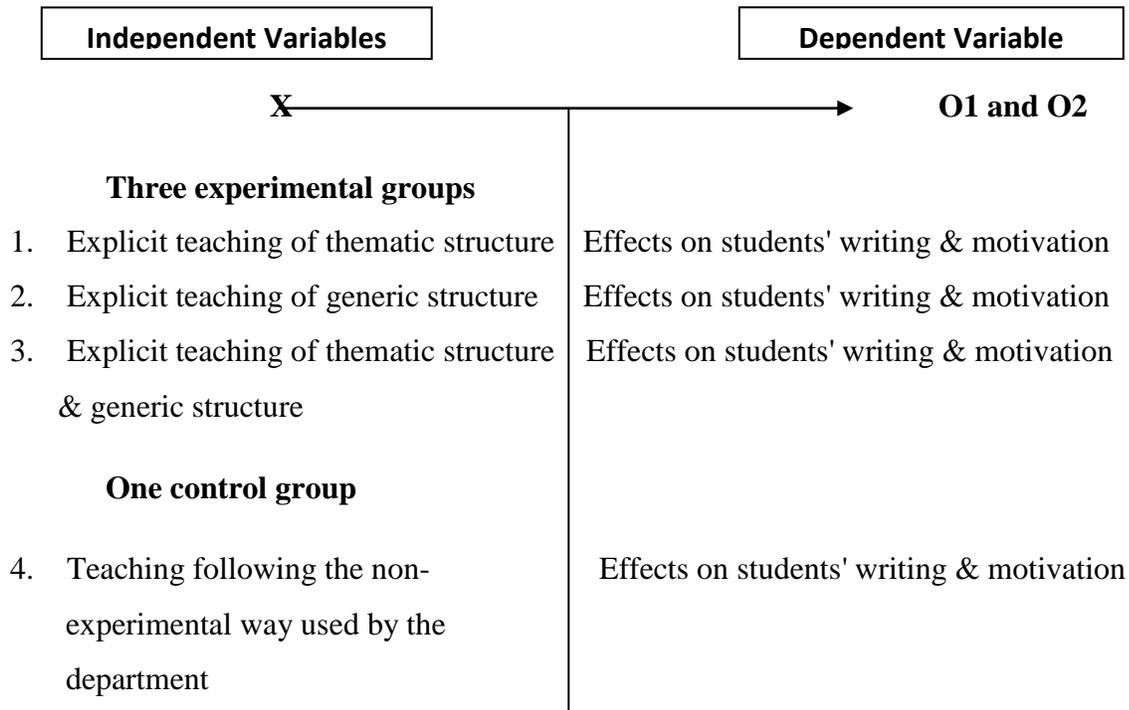
In the current study, there were four intact groups, three of which were experimental groups and one which acted as the control group following a quasi-experimental-qualitative-statistical

research design (Nunan, 1992). The three experimental groups were given three different treatments, explained below. A mid-test was administered to measure the impact of the intervention on the students' writing quality at that point. The writing tests aimed to answer questions 1-a, 2-a, 3-a, and 4 about improvements in writing quality. The data collected from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews aimed to answer the second set of questions 1-b, 2-b, and 3-b about the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English.

3.6 Quasi-experiment variables

In this study, the independent variable (X) represents the type of treatment (intervention) that was administered to students, the dependent variable (O1) represents the outcome or the effect of the treatment on students' writing quality, and (O2) represents the outcome or the effect of the treatment on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The study used three types of intervention: each one (independent variable) was tested for its impact on students' writing (dependent variable 1) and motivation (dependent variable 2) as shown in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: The relationship between the independent and dependent variables



As the figure shows, there were three independent variables in the experiment and one independent variable for the control group. The first of the three independent variables was the explicit teaching of thematic structure, the second was the explicit teaching of generic structure, and the third was a combination of both the explicit teaching of thematic and generic structures. In the control group, the independent variable was teaching writing following the course outline used by the Department of English Language and Literature at a university in Bahrain. The dependent variables for the four groups were the impact of the type of instruction on students' writing quality and their motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English.

3.7 Data Analysis

There were three modes of analyses as far as the writing tests are concerned. The collected written essays were marked both holistically and analytically. Holistic rating scales provide a single mark based on an overall impression of the students' performance in their writing. There were two raters who marked all the writing scripts holistically, and an average of the scores was calculated. Analytical rating scales provide more detailed information as they tend to focus more on certain aspects that need to be measured.

Two analytical rating scales were used that aimed to measure two different structures. One scale was used across all groups to examine how far the students were successful in terms of generic structure, and the other one was used across all groups to examine how far the students were successful in terms of thematic structure. The analytical marking was carried out by the researcher. Reliability of the holistic and analytical marking is discussed below. At a later stage, I conducted an in-depth analysis of a number of the post-writing scripts of the three experimental groups. These will be explained in detail in Chapter 4.

The generic structure criterion examined the main stages involved in writing a discussion essay: issue ^arguments for ^arguments against ^position/judgment as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The generic structure criterion

Stages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Issue (to introduce the issue to be discussed by giving background information about it and how it is to be framed)▪ General Statement (2)▪ Preview/scope (2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arguments for (to inform the reader the evidence for the positive side of the issue and support arguments with examples) (6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Arguments against (to inform the reader the evidence for the negative side of the issue and support arguments with examples) (6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conclusion (to summarize the main ideas while restating the main issue as well as recommending a final position on the issue) (4)
Total 20/2 = 10

Each stage was given a grade, and the scripts were marked on how successful the students were in including the previous stages of a discussion essay to develop their ideas throughout the essay. In the first stage, the students had to introduce the issue by writing a general statement and defining the scope of their discussion. In the second and third stages, the students had to discuss different points of views, informing the reader of arguments for and against and support their arguments by providing evidence. In the last stage, the students had to restate the main issue, summarize the main ideas, stating their position and recommending an action.

The second analytical criterion examined how successful the students were in using thematic structures. These were classified in four categories, and each was given a grade, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: The thematic structure criterion

Items
Macro-theme is clearly and effectively presented that has a distinct focus on what the essay should be about. It catches the reader's attention and boosts the impact of the essay. It is directly relevant to the issue, and establishes the ground upon which the student's argument is based. (5)
Clear and logical use of hyper-themes. Opposing viewpoints are addressed in a logical, effective manner in separate paragraphs. Both viewpoints are related to the macro-theme. (5)
Themes/rhemes: sentences are well-developed in the paragraphs and are connected to the hyper-themes. They support the viewpoints with concrete evidence and examples. Flow of information is maintained. (5)
Conclusion is well-grounded and is connected logically and directly to the macro-theme and hyper-themes that are addressed throughout the essay by restating them. It encloses the writer's opinion on the issue and may as well propose some suggestions or solutions for further action on the matter. (5)
Total 20/2 = 10

The students should include macro-themes and hyper-themes to effectively communicate their ideas at the paragraph and the essay levels. Their presentation of ideas should be carried out logically by using hyper-themes that are supported by examples to argue for and against the issue

stated in the first paragraph. They should write a conclusion in which they summarize the main points, connecting them to the macro-theme and hyper-themes stated earlier.

As the two analytical scales worked in similar ways and failed to bring out any differences between the experimental groups, as will be explained in detail in Chapter 4, a more in-depth analysis of a number of the post-test scripts was carried out.

To analyze the data collected from the questionnaires, the Excel programme was used to calculate the percentages for each of the four groups. These percentages are presented in separate tables to analyze the students' responses to the questions according to a number of motivational constructs (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). To analyze the data collected from the interviews, thematic analysis was conducted for the pre- and post-interviews (Appendix F). This was based on some suggested guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Dornyei (2007). Accordingly, I transcribed the spoken data, generated initial codes, searched and reviewed for themes, defined and labelled themes, interpreted the data, and drew conclusions.

3.8 Research Context

The research was conducted in the Department of English Language & Literature (DELL) at a university in Bahrain. The participants who were involved in this study were 108 undergraduates majoring in Information Technology (IT). The study was conducted in four groups taking the English writing course offered by the department. There were 27 students in each group. Their

age ranged between 20 and 22. The groups were a mixture of male and female students. All the participants speak Arabic as their first language and English as a foreign language. English is used as the medium of instruction in the university. They had studied English for 9 years before joining the university. None of the students had previously received any instruction of either thematic or generic structures.

3.9 Treatment (intervention)

I taught the four groups for one academic semester (September 2011 to January 2012) which consisted of 14 weeks. All groups were taught three hours per week. Three of the groups were chosen as the experimental groups and one as the control group. The students in all groups were taught writing in accordance with the course outline designed by the English Department. The course outline was modified to a certain extent to incorporate the intervention in the experimental groups. The four groups were categorized, as shown in Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4: The four groups involved in this study

Group	Treatment
C	Control Group
TGS	Experimental Group: Thematic and Generic Structures
TS	Experimental Group: Thematic Structure
GS	Experimental Group: Generic Structure

Group C was the control group where students were taught following the outline designed by the department. Group TGS was taught both generic and thematic structures integrated in the regular course content. Group TS was taught thematic structure incorporated in the regular course content. Group GS was taught generic structure integrated with the regular programme

content. They all used the same textbook, but some teaching materials and activities were replaced by others to suit the type of intervention in each group. The content of the programme is discussed in section 3.12.

3.10 Piloting of the study

Piloting is an important step in carrying out any research as it can enhance the reliability and validity of the outcomes of the research (Dornyei, 2007). The piloting of this study was carried out twice: one was planned, and the other one was unplanned. At the planned stage, prior to the first attempt of the study, the writing tests, questionnaires and interviews were piloted on a number of students majoring in English. These were not part of the main study so as to ensure their suitability in terms of timing, layout, and instructions (Cohen et al., 2011). Modifications were carried out accordingly.

The first attempt, which lasted for 3 weeks, was unsuccessful due to the unrest in Bahrain in February 2011, which disrupted the normal functioning of the university. Because of this disruption, the study was called off and carried out again during the first academic semester of the following year. The 3-week period in the first attempt worked as the unplanned stage of piloting of the research design. This period had some advantages. Firstly, I felt I had more control over the course as I was teaching it for the first time. In addition, it helped to develop more confidence in myself and the teaching content. I knew more specifically what to focus on and how to cover the material and interact more naturally with the students. Furthermore, some of the tasks and activities were modified to teach the content more appropriately. Also, it

provided me with some ideas about how to devise more appropriately the teaching materials across the timeline of the semester. This minimized the unexpected problems that might have occurred. It is worth mentioning that the students who were involved in the study were different from the students who were involved in the first attempt.

3.11 Data collection procedures

I employed two tools of data collection, writing tests and questionnaires, to obtain the quantitative data for all groups. The qualitative data was collected from semi-structured interviews with 8 students from each of the experimental groups. These methods are explained in detail below.

3.11.1 Design and rationale of the writing tests

There were three writing tests which were administered as follows: a pre-test at the beginning of the semester, a mid-test in the middle of the semester, and a post-test at the end of the semester. The aim of the three writing tests was to measure students' writing quality and to find out if it improved during the semester. The aim of the pre-test was to establish their writing quality before the interventions to check the comparability of the groups. The mid-test was to check if there was any progress in their writing quality at that stage. The post-test measured improvements in writing quality after the completion of the course. All the students in the four groups took part in the three tests. The writing tests required the participants to write a discussion essay of not less than 350 words (Appendix A). They were carried out during class time for 60

minutes. The features of the three tests were similar, but the topic was different in each test. They were all IT oriented, and the participants were to a certain degree familiar with them, as they were related to their field of specialization.

3.11.2 Design and rationale of the questionnaires

The second tool was questionnaires administered to all groups; one at the beginning of the semester before the intervention and the second at the end of the semester after the intervention. The data collected from questionnaires is typically of a quantitative nature. Like experiments, questionnaires are widely used because, as Dornyei (2007) points out, “the essence of scientific research is trying to find answers to questions in a systematic and disciplined manner” (p. 101).

Questionnaires intend to find three main types of answers: factual, behavioural, and attitudinal (Dornyei, 2007). There are two main types of questions in questionnaires: closed-ended and open-ended. Closed-ended questions may vary in format. They can take the form of scales, true-false items, multiple-choice items, and/or rank order items. In this study, closed-ended questionnaires were chosen because specific answers were sought. The questionnaire was in the form of statements. The responses were given on Likert Scales, where the students had to indicate their answers on a scale of 5: strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree. In order to ensure that the students responded easily to the questionnaires, the questionnaires were translated into Arabic, the participants’ first language. Two tutors at the English department checked the translation, and I made the necessary amendments to ensure that

the questionnaire items fulfilled their purposes. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher to all groups during class time.

The two questionnaires were administered to the experimental groups to measure the impact of the intervention on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English and to the control group to measure the students' attitudes towards writing in English after they had been taught in the regular, non-experimental way. The inclusion of the control group was to highlight any differences with the experimental groups before and after the intervention. Comparisons between the three experimental groups were also made to highlight any differences between them.

Both the pre- and post-questionnaires (Appendices B and C) included items related to seven components: students' achievement goals, attitudes, learning anxiety, autonomous learning, self-efficacy, ideal L2 self, and the students' effort and willingness to communicate in the L2 classroom. Each component comprised a number of questions; resulting in total of 30 in the pre-questionnaire and 32 in the post-questionnaire. The last question in both questionnaires was a ranking one where the students had to rank a number of items from 1 to 5 on the level of importance to them in writing. Overall, the questions were similar in the pre- and post-questionnaires except that in the post-questionnaire for the experimental groups most of the questions directly referred to the intervention in question by adding "learning the structure".

3.11.3 Design and rationale of the interviews

Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 24 students in the experimental groups, 8 from each group. To gather data pertinent to research questions 1-b, 2-b,

and 3-b, interviews were carried out with the students before and after the intervention. The aim of the interviews was to examine the impact of the intervention on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. Another purpose was to triangulate the data collected with that of the questionnaires to fill in any gaps the researcher might be left with after processing the questionnaires and for the students to further elaborate any detail that may help the researcher to understand the impact of the intervention.

There are many types of interviews, ranging from structured to unstructured. This study employed semi-structured interviews because they “offer a compromise between the two extremes” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 136). They have the potential to encourage students to express their opinions and “elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner”, as they consist of a set of pre-prepared guiding questions that are usually open-ended (Ibid.). This type of interviewing is useful when “the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance”, but this requires piloting of the questions to check their clarity and wording (Ibid.). Following Dornyei's (2007) interview guidance, the interviews were designed carefully to ensure that they were related to the current research area by writing appropriate questions that would help in answering the research questions. The questions were piloted to ensure their clarity and wording. The order of the questions also helped to elicit responses in a gradual, relaxed manner. The questions were of a content nature (Patton, 2002, cited in Dornyei, 2007, pp. 137-8) and enquired about the interviewees' experiences, behaviours, opinions, values, feelings and knowledge.

The interviews were conducted in my office at the university, which was private and quiet. Even though this setting emphasized the student-teacher relationship, I tried to minimize this effect by creating as friendly an atmosphere as possible so the interviewees did not feel intimidated. The interview started with a welcoming comment and a short, friendly chat as an “initial ice-breaking period” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 137). To increase the interviewees’ motivation “to respond openly and in detail” (Ibid., p. 140), a brief explanation of the aim of the interviews and the purposes of the questions were offered without mentioning the intervention. They signed a consent form that allowed me to carry out the interviews and in which they agreed to have the interviews recorded for educational purposes.

The pre-interview lasted about 10 to 15 minutes. The post-interviews took longer, about 20 to 30 minutes, as the interviewees were more talkative and needed more time to talk about the impact of the intervention on their writing. The interviews were carried out in Arabic, the students’ first language, to ensure that they felt comfortable and to elicit better responses as they would be able to express themselves more freely. The translation of the interview questions was checked by two bi-lingual tutors to ensure its accuracy.

Like the questionnaire items, the interview questions were based on recent motivational theories. The pre-interview (Appendix D) and post-interview (Appendix E) consisted of 10 questions each. Four of the questions were common in both the pre- and post-interviews to make comparison possible. These questions reflected the students’ own perception of their level of

writing in English, their satisfaction with their level of writing, their grades, and their expectancy of writing successfully in English.

Other questions that were only in the pre-interview focused mainly on finding out about the students' goals and to what extent they could achieve their goals based on their perceptions of their writing level in English. Some other questions investigated their awareness of some of their strengths and/or weaknesses in writing and possible solutions. The post-interview questions examined the students' awareness of their writing level and whether they perceived any changes or improvements in their writing and what might have helped them to improve. The questions asked about how confident they thought they were in their editing skills. Some questions looked into whether the students thought they had benefitted from the interventions and whether they would recommend them to other students to improve their writing quality.

3.12 The writing course

The English course that was normally conducted by the department was modified for each group for the purposes of the experiment. Modifications were made in terms of the course objectives, teaching materials, activities, and approaches used to teaching writing. Below is a detailed explanation of the modifications I made.

3.12.1 Aims and objectives of the writing course

The main aim of the writing course was to develop the students' academic writing to fulfil the needs of the students in the IT College. Production of writing was expected at the essay level, and the students had to demonstrate abilities to write three main genres successfully: Explanation, Taxonomic Report, and Discussion. Permission was granted from the English department to make some changes to the course syllabus to suit the purpose of the study without altering the main objective of the course. There were shared objectives between the four groups as shown in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5: Shared objectives between the four groups

Students should be able to:

- Understand and apply the learning cycle
- Write an essay on three main genres: Explanation, Taxonomic Report, and Discussion.
- Present information and ideas clearly in an essay.
- Expand a text by adding relevant ideas and examples.
- Skim and scan reading essays for information.
- Paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize

A set of other objectives were identified for each group to suit the purpose of each treatment as shown in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Objectives for each group individually

C Group	TGS Group	TS Group	GS Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate tenses and voice. • Use task specific vocabulary appropriately. • Use grammatical structures in their writing. • Use appropriate connectors. • Write successfully following the main parts of an essay: introduction, body and conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriately theme-rheme structure at the sentence level. • Use appropriately different patterns of theme-rheme structure at the paragraph level. • Use appropriately macro-themes and hyper-themes at the essay level. • Use appropriately the different generic structure of different genres. • Identify the different moves within a genre highlighting the purpose of each stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriately theme-rheme structure at the sentence level. • Use appropriately different patterns of theme-rheme structure at the paragraph level. • Use appropriately macro-themes and hyper-themes at the essay level. • Write successfully following the main parts of an essay: introduction, body and conclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriately the different generic structure of different genres. • Identify the different moves within a genre highlighting the purpose of each stage.

The objectives the students in the control group had to fulfil were those already specified by the department of English with some modifications regarding the three genres. Each of the three experimental groups had its own distinct objectives. While the focus in the TS group was on developing the students' use of thematic structure, the focus in the GS group was on developing the students' use of generic structure. The objectives set for the TGS group were a combination of those set for the TS and GS groups to develop both the students' use of thematic and generic structures.

3.12.2 Teaching materials and activities

The teaching materials and activities were devised according to the set of objectives for each group. Each group had its own outline, but they all shared the same number of units, the same essay examples, and the same number of teaching hours, three hours per week.

The writing course was based on five units from the regular text book; each was taught for two weeks. The first unit introduced the students to some of the basic elements of writing, starting with writing at the paragraph level. All groups were taught the basic division of an essay: introduction, body, and conclusion without getting into details about the different generic structure of the three genres and the purposes behind these stages or moves. Then, three units were taught that covered three main genres: Explanation, Taxonomic Report, and Discussion. The fifth unit focused on teaching the students paraphrasing, summarizing, and synthesizing.

All groups had the same reading texts. For all groups, some reading texts, such as the ones used for teaching the discussion genre, were replaced by others which served the purposes of the study better. For the experimental groups, I prepared special materials and incorporated them in the course outline to teach thematic structure and generic structure. Looking at the outline of the control and thematic groups (Appendix H (Control group) and Appendix I (TS group)), some of the tasks were similar in all groups, but others were different. While the control group was working on tasks that focused on grammar or vocabulary, the experimental groups were working on tasks that focused on generic and/or thematic structures.

The activities and written tasks for the experiment groups were used to ensure that the students understood the structures and to help them use them effectively in their writing. They were divided into three main sections, each representing a particular genre. As for the thematic structure, the tasks gradually introduced the students to theme-rheme structure, first at the sentence level, then at the paragraph level, ending with macro-themes and hyper-themes at the essay level. Theme-rheme was reinforced throughout the three genres as students were asked to carry out tasks to check their understanding and use of thematic patterns. In the generic group the target generic structures were introduced to the students and were followed by varied tasks to check their understanding and implementation of what they had learnt in their writing. The TGS group were introduced to thematic and generic structures using a number of the activities/written tasks used with the other two experimental groups. The number of activities in the third group matched the number of those used in the other groups. All groups had the same number of activities which included a variety of task types ranging from filling in gaps, matching, completing tables, and ordering.

Teacher-student and student-student feedback were provided. Some of the tasks were devised to help the students in all groups check and correct their own written work. The type of feedback given to the experimental groups was based on the structures they had learnt. The feedback given to the students in the control group focused on grammar, spelling, and general layout of the essay.

3.12.3 Writing approaches

The writing approach adopted for all the groups was based on the teaching-learning cycle proposed by Hammond et. al (1992). This cycle encompassed a number of stages that aimed to take the learners gradually from building knowledge of the content of the text through the presentation and discussion of the text in question to a joint construction of the text and finally to the independent construction of the text. My role was that of a facilitator, and I intervened at different stages whenever the students needed further clarification, assistance, and support.

The cycle helped me with my teaching, taking into account the gradual process that students needed to understand and use the target genres effectively. The students in all groups were taught following five stages:

- (1) setting the purpose for learning by giving a clear explanation of what to learn and do,
- (2) modelling or demonstration by the teacher of the skill that needed to be learnt,
- (3) guiding the students through structured and substantial activities to practice the taught skills,
- (4) providing feedback, and
- (5) allowing time for the students to produce their own essays.

By doing so, the instruction from a teacher-centred classroom to a student-centred classroom was emphasized where the students were offered time and practice to carry out the tasks. This cycle

helped to incorporate both the product approach and the process approach to ensure that students in all the groups benefited from both approaches and to minimize the risk of over-emphasizing the product in a prescriptive way. Individual, pair, and group work were implemented to maximize the learning potential in all groups. The writing activities and tasks were devised according to the three types of classroom work. I monitored the students while they were engaged in their individual, pair, and group work and offered help when necessary.

3.13 Reliability

Reliability means “consistencies of data, scores or observations obtained using elicitation instruments, which can include a range of tools from standardized tests administered in educational settings to tasks completed by participants in a research study” (Chalhoub-Deville, 2006, cited in Dornyei, 2007, p. 50). To enhance the present study’s reliability, two aspects were considered: rater reliability and instrument reliability (Mackey and Gass, 2005).

Rater reliability was considered when marking the writing scripts of all the groups in the pre-, mid- and post-tests holistically and analytically to ensure that the marks were consistent. Two types of rater reliability were considered: interrater and intrarater reliability. Interrater reliability was checked for the holistic marking as it involved two raters (one was the researcher and the other an academic member at the English Department) to ensure the consistency of “scores by two or more raters or between one rater at Time X and that same rater at Time Y” (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 128). To measure the internal consistency of the two raters, the Cronbach’s Alpha

coefficient was used using SPSS, and a value of 0.85 was obtained, suggesting that there was a relatively high internal consistency between the two raters.

Intrarater reliability was checked for the analytical marking, as one rater (the researcher) was involved to judge the same set of data at different times to ensure that the marking was carried out in a consistent manner. Half of the scripts in all the tests were remarked to check the consistency of the marks. A few scripts were found inconsistent; either half a mark extra was given or taken out. The rater remarked those scripts to make sure the marks were consistent.

Instrument reliability was checked to enhance the reliability of the instruments used in the research design. This study opted for equivalence of forms to test the instruments used in this study, namely, the pre- and post- tests and the pre- and post-questionnaires (Mackey and Gass, 2005). It determines the reliability of scores in pre- and post-tests, for instance, where two versions of a test are administered to the same group and a correlation coefficient is calculated.

Other reliability tests are test-retest and internal consistency. Test-retest means that the same test is given to the same group at two points in time. When this is not possible, internal consistency is assessed. There are many statistical techniques that can be used to measure instrument reliability, such as split-half, Kuder-Richardson 20 and 21, and Cronbach alpha (Cohen et al., 2011). Cronbach alpha was used to check the reliability of the pre- and post-tests. Split-half was calculated to measure the reliability of the questionnaires. The reliability of the pre- and post-

tests was calculated using a correlation coefficient (Cronbach's alpha), and a value of 0.88 was obtained, indicating high reliability of the tests scores. The internal reliability of the questionnaires was calculated using a split-half reliability measurement. A value of 0.75 was obtained in the pre-questionnaire and 0.80 in the post-questionnaire, suggesting reliable and highly reliable internal consistency respectively.

A number of elements were considered to enhance the reliability in interviews. First of all, the interview questions were piloted taking into account the order of questions, wording and the required time. The questions of the interview were carefully worded to avoid leading questions. Piloting the interview provided me with the opportunity to enhance my interviewing skills. I opted for the semi-structured interview with a number of closed questions to maximize reliability in interviews, yet the interviewees had the chance to elaborate on their answers when asked about the improvements that occurred in their writing, for instance. By doing so, they were offered the chance to “demonstrate their unique way of looking at the world – their definition of the situation” (Silverman, 1993, cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 205).

Some elements may cause bias in interviewing, and this may affect the outcomes. Among these elements are biased sampling, poor rapport between interview and interviewees, changing of question order and wording, inconsistent coding of responses and selective or interpreted recording of data/transcripts (Oppenheim, 1992, cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 205). Regarding the selection of the interviewees, I selected them with little knowledge about their academic level in writing, which helped minimize bias. After I explained the purpose behind the interview, a

number of the students were picked up randomly and were asked to take part in the interview. Some of them agreed and others declined to take part in the interviews. I respected their decisions to minimize the problems that might occur to the dual lecturer/researcher role (Nolan and Putten, 2007).

Another problem that might have occurred is related to one of the possible effects of the power relationship between the teacher/researcher and the students. Students may feel that to maintain a good relationship with the lecturer they have to agree to have the interview. I made it very clear to them that whatever their decision, this should not affect them academically. This relationship got stronger by the end of the academic semester, and the students felt more relaxed. All interviews were carried out in comparable conditions, taking into account elements like the office, lightening, recording tools, conditioning, and creating a friendly atmosphere. The interviews were conducted in a similar and consistent way in terms of the question order and wording. Sometimes, I had to rephrase the questions to make sure that the students understood them, as rewording the questions does not undermine the reliability of the interviewing (Oppenheim, 1992, cited in Cohen et al., 2007).

3.14 Validity

Validity in both quantitative and qualitative research is a requirement and without it, it could be considered worthless (Cohen et al., 2011). Validity means the extent to which an instrument, a method, or a test actually measures “what it purports to measure” (Ibid., p. 179). There are a

number of types of validity in quantitative and qualitative paradigms: internal, external, ecological, and content validity as well as issues of triangulation.

External validity means to what extent the findings from the present study can be generalized or transferred to similar settings (Cohen et al., 2011). The current study attempted to enhance its external validity by providing an explicit description of the dependent and independent variables. It is hoped that this might facilitate future replications of the research. Generalizability in qualitative research qualifies transferability or applicability (Dornyei, 2007; Cohen et al., 2011). To ensure that the outcomes are transferable and/or applicable to other settings, the setting of this study involved intact groups which ensured ecological validity. Studies using intact classes are in fact “more likely to have external validity because they are conducted under conditions closer to those normally found in educational contexts” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989, p. 149).

External validity might be threatened as the current study employed a quasi-experiment approach. In any experiment, a researcher attempts to control a number of extraneous variables. By doing so, the internal validity of the research becomes greater than the external validity (Gay et al., 2006). Pilliner (1973) (cited in Cohen et al., 2011) argues, however, that enhancing the internal validity of a research results in enhancing its external validity. Controlling as many of these variables as possible is important in any experimental research so that they do not affect the outcomes of the research (Cohen et al., 2011). For this study, I made careful planning concerning the teaching syllabuses, materials, and tasks. The instruments used in this research were piloted and amended accordingly. To avoid some possible implementation threats, the four groups were

enrolled in the same writing course, taught by the same instructor and conducted in the same physical environment (similar classes in the same building with similar facilities).

Being the sole instructor in all the groups might cause bias as the “experimenter expectancy is a type of reactivity and threat to internal validity due to the experimenter indirectly making subjects aware of the hypothesis or desired results” (Neuman, 2006). This refers to what is known as the Hawthorne effect. To avoid this potential problem, I provided clear instructions, teaching and assistance to all students equally. I delivered these in a neutral way. As the researcher/lecturer, I tried to sound neutral when teaching and working with all the students and when collecting data. When collecting data, the tests, questionnaires, and interviews were carried out in the same rigorous manner to all students. To do that, all students took the same tests and completed the questionnaires within the same time allocated to them, and the interviews were conducted within the same week under the same conditions as described earlier. The administration of these research tools were carried out by giving the participants a general idea about the experiment but without tackling what was to be taught or focused on. All these measures enhanced the internal validity of the study, as the latter considered “the degree to which observed differences on the dependent variable are a direct result of manipulation of the independent variable, not some other variable” (Gay et al., 2006, p. 237).

Another problem that might arise from carrying out a research with intact groups is the issue of how far these groups were comparable before the intervention, which may affect the outcomes of a research. The pre-test results of this study show that these groups were comparable. Any

changes that occurred in the students' performance in the post-test may be attributed to the effect of the intervention, if we bear in mind that implementation threats and experimenter expectancy, mentioned above, were avoided.

Triangulation promoted the validity of the present study through “the convergence and corroboration of the findings” as well as increasing “the generalizability – that is, external validity – of the results” (Dornyei, 2007, pp. 45-46). The verification of the results of the questionnaires against the results of the interviews and the verification of the findings of the writing tests against the questionnaires/interviews enhanced the validity of the study and minimized the likelihood of biases. By drawing upon the positivist and interpretive paradigms that underline the quantitative and qualitative methods respectively, triangulation of the outcomes from the different sources also helped to increase the validity of this study.

3.15 Ethical issues

Johnson and Christensen (2004) stress that educational research, unlike research in other contexts, “imposes either minimal or no risk to the participants and has enjoyed a special status with respect to formal ethical oversight” (p. iii). Dornyei (2007) believes that there should be a firm ethical framework that researchers in the field of applied linguistics should bear in mind.

This study took into account a number of ethical issues: official consent, participants' consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. An official consent was sought from both the University of Leicester to carry out this study and the university in Bahrain to have access to students and be

granted four courses. Official letters were sent to the relevant authorities to ask for their approval to conduct the experiment, questionnaire, and interviews.

To respect the right of the participants, I provided them with a brief explanation about the experiment. I obtained written consent from the students who participated in the questionnaires and the interviews. They were made aware of their rights before and during the study, and that the results of the study will be used for educational research purposes. They were ensured that their names would not be disclosed, and that they would remain confidential.

When conducting the questionnaire, the participants' approval was sought, and a cover page was attached to the questionnaire defining its purpose. As for the semi-structured interviews, ethical issues tend to rise more than in quantitative research, as they deal with sensitive issues in people's lives (Dornyei, 2007). It is essential to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Thus, the interviewees' approval to be interviewed and their interviews to be recorded were sought, and the purpose of the interview was explained. To avoid disadvantaging the students in the control group, materials that were used to carry out the intervention were available at the department to be used after the intervention by the students. Other instructors can also use them with their students in future courses.

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the methodological issues involved in this study. The study used a mixed method design to examine the effect of teaching thematic structure, generic structure and a combination of both structures on EFL students' writing, and motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. In the quantitative part of the study, a quasi-experimental design and questionnaires were used, and semi-structured interviews were used in the qualitative part. The chapter also described the research design, setting, participants, measurement tools, and data analysis procedures. It also explained the way the quality of the study was enhanced and how ethical considerations were taken into account. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings from the writing tests.

CHAPTER 4

THE WRITING TESTS: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes and discusses the findings of the writing tests. It aims to answer the first set of research questions in Chapter 3. The research questions investigate whether the explicit teaching of thematic structure, generic structure or a combination of both structures assist students in improving their writing quality at the essay level. This Chapter first discusses the collection of the writing data and means of analysis. Then, it presents and analyzes the findings from the writing tests and the experimental groups' post-tests. The findings are discussed in light of the relevant empirical and theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

4.2 Data of the writing tests

Four groups took part in this study. Three groups functioned as experimental and one as control as shown in Table 4.1 below. All groups sat for three writing tests: pre-test, mid-test, and post-test (Appendix A).

Table 4.1: The four groups involved in this study

Group	Treatment
C	Control Group
TGS	Experimental Group: (Thematic and Generic Structures)
TS	Experimental Group: Thematic Structure
GS	Experimental Group: Generic Structure

As explained earlier in Chapter 3, the writing tests were first marked on two different scales: holistic and analytic. The holistic marking aimed to give a score on an overall impression of the writing scripts. The analytic marking employed two scales as described in section 3.7 (Tables 3.2 and 3.3) in Chapter 3. Then, an in-depth analysis of the post-tests was carried out. In order to describe and analyze the holistic and analytical scores of the three tests, a number of SPSS tests were conducted: (1) descriptive tables were used to show the mean scores and the standard deviation of all groups; (2) one-way ANOVA was conducted to measure any significant differences in the mean scores on the dependent variables (quality of writing) across the three experimental groups and control group; and (3) a Post Hoc Test was applied, namely the Scheffe Test, to find out which differences, if any, were significant and in which groups. The in-depth analysis of the post-test was conducted using an analysis of thematic structure. The purpose of the in-depth analysis, methods of analysis, and description of the findings are discussed in detail in Section 4.6.

To show how the scripts were marked using the thematic structure and generic structure criteria, two samples of the students' writing in the TGS and TS are analysed below. The full essays of these sample texts are provided in Appendix J alongside with other essays for the Control and GS groups.

When applying the generic structure criterion (see criterion on p. 103), the TGS essay shows that the student managed successfully in including the four stages of a discussion genre. In the first

paragraph (as shown below), the student introduced the issue successfully by giving a brief background information about technology and stating their opinion in the matter.

Day after day and the [technology developed more and more, faster and faster]. Sometimes you feel like it's a race! Everyone - countries, companies, governments ... etc. - are racing each others just to have the much effective and efficient technology! In track of racing to get the best, I think that we need this kind of technology, especially in this century. However, we are in the twenty first century. There are some people who do not know what is the exact meaning of technology.

Then, the student was able to define clearly the scope of writing and what they intend to discuss.

In this essay, I'll explores some issues surrounding technology and the impact of it in our life, considering the argument from both positive and negative sides.

Then, the student was able to explain some of the issues surrounding the impact of technology and consider different points of view, informing the reader of both arguments for and against.

Clear topic sentences were introduced at the beginning of each paragraph as highlighted below:

The aim of using technology is to make our life easier.

In addition, the technology has many applications to increase our knowledge.

Then, the student provided some evidence and examples to further elaborate on the discussion. For example, when discussing the positive impact of technology on people's entertainment. The student managed to give some examples where technology is used for entertainment purposes, as shown below:

Entertainment classified into playing games, watching movies, having massage and other things that bring fun and relaxing. Playing games (electronic games) through playstation (1,2,3,4), xbox, wii, gameboy and all the types of electronic games are the funniest technological games ever. Watching movies become much easier, instead of going to the cinema you can easily by its DVD CD or download it via the internet and watch it at home! There are new machines that make our bodies relaxed like the electronic massage machines and there are also different types according to the parts to be massaged.

After discussing the arguments for using technology, the student skilfully introduced the reader to the counter part of the argument and prepared the reader for what is to come, as shown below:

Despite these highly positive results of technology, there are also some negative factors.

As with discussing arguments for, the student was able to write successfully the topic sentences and provided some evidence and example to support their argument.

Another problem of technology is the physical and social diseases.

If the technology provides everything, people will become lazy and they will depend on these machines. Also setting in front of the computer for a long time can decrease your social life and hit your brain. There is a study said that setting in front the computer for many hours playing games and watching fiction cartoons can amplify a half of the brain that responsible to think about fiction and unreality and the other half which is responsible to think logically and realistic will be at the same size, so the brain will be damaged within the two unequal halves.

Finally, the student included the fourth stage of a discussion genre and that is the conclusion in which they summarised the main points discussed previously throughout the text and relating them to the scope of their writing. In addition to that, the student included a final position on the issue and suggesting to be aware of the negative effects of technology, as shown below:

To sum up, technology makes our life much easier if we use it in the correct way. Technology makes the communications stronger between people around the world. It increases our knowledge by using it in the education and reading. Technology also supports business and give us some fun. I think that the technology saves our time and effort so we should use it carefully to benefit from it as much as possible and be aware from the entire negative points.

This next essay shows how it was marked using a thematic structure criterion (see criterion on p. 104). Evaluating the student's text (from the TS group) using this criterion shows that they managed to present the macro-theme effectively by introducing the issue directly and clearly, as shown below.

Technology has become important in the fast life of today. The technology involved with transmission & storage of information, especially the development of installation, & management of computer systems within companies, universities & other organisations.

The student was able to develop the issue to establish the ground upon which the argument is based on.

I will
explain the positive & negative impact of technology.

The student showed good use of hyper-themes. The opposing viewpoints were addressed in a logical and effective manner, by addressing first the arguments for and then arguments against. Some examples of hyper-themes (which would be considered as topic sentences) are shown below:

One of the positive impact of technology is that the world is becoming a smaller village.

Another positive impact of technology is that it is an important factor in education,

Despite the positive impacts, there are negative impacts of technology on individuals as well.

One of the most important negative impacts is that people are becoming more dependent on technology.

When examining the themes/rhemes within the paragraphs, the student generally was able to maintain well-developed and related sentences, as well as relating the hyper-themes to the scope of the essay. For example, as shown below, the student highlighted the risks of technology on

health. Examining the supporting details show that the student maintained flow of information as all sentences related to the hyper-theme to support it.

In addition to it, there are various health risks involved with the use of technology. Using computers all the time causes Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. It is caused by using keyboard & typing all the time. Computer Vision Syndrome is another example of health risk. Technostress, dose of radiation, screen emission, low level electromagnetic field are all the causes involved with the unlimited use of technology. Because of technostress people become lazy, rude & impatient. Screen emission is caused by the monitor because there is no special glass & sitting in front of it causes screen emission.

The last part of this criterion also examined how the student successfully managed to conclude the essay by relating the hyper-themes to the macro-theme and the scope of the essay. As with the generic criterion, the student also enclosed their opinion on the issue.

To sum up, Technology has both advantages & disadvantages. It plays a very important role in our life making our life easy, quick & peaceful. But people are forgetting the disadvantages over advantages because it provides them with easy life to do their work.

4.3 Findings of the holistic scale

4.3.1 Descriptive tables of the three tests

The descriptive tables below show the mean scores and the standard deviation of the four groups in the three tests. The mean scores and standard deviation of the tests, pre-, mid-, and post-tests, are shown separately in the following Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4. Table 4.2 shows the groups' performance in the writing test before the intervention.

Table 4.2: Holistic Scale (mean scores and SD of all groups in the pre-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	3.0926	.93064	.17910
2. TGS	27	3.3333	.94054	.18101
3. TS	27	3.2037	.76283	.14681
4. GS	27	2.9444	.89156	.17158

Table 4.2 shows that the mean scores of the four groups in the pre-test were almost the same before the intervention was implemented. The highest mean was scored by the TGS group and the lowest mean by the GS group. The standard deviation of the four groups was almost the same at approximately SD (.94), where the TS group had the lowest standard deviation than the other groups at SD (.76). The standard deviation of all groups was lower than 1 which is a good indicator that the students in the four groups behaved homogeneously. As a result, the mean scores can be considered a reliable indicator of the performance of each subject.

After five weeks of teaching the four groups, a mid-test was administered to all groups as shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Holistic Scale (mean scores and SD of all groups in the mid-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	4.0185	.91443	.17598
2. TGS	27	4.5556	1.14634	.22061
3. TS	27	4.7037	1.15408	.22210
4. GS	27	4.4259	1.20658	.23221

Table 4.3 shows the mean scores and standard deviation for all groups in the mid-test. Similar to Table 4.2, the mean scores were comparable in all groups, with the TS group scoring the highest mean score at M (4.70) and the C group scoring the lowest mean score at M (4.01). A comparison of the mean scores of Tables 4.2 and 4.3 shows that there was a slight increase for all groups from the pre-test to the mid-test.

At the end of the academic semester, after teaching another five weeks, a post-test was administered to all groups to examine the students' performance in the writing test, as shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Holistic Scale: (mean scores and SD of all groups in the post-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	4.9074	1.01940	.19618
2. TGS	27	7.5741	.93751	.18042
3. TS	27	7.6296	.98637	.18983
4. GS	27	7.5000	.72058	.13868

Table 4.4 shows the mean scores and standard deviation for all groups in the post-test. The mean scores for the four groups differ in the post-test as the C group had the lowest mean score at M (4.90) and the TS group the highest at M (7.62). In the post-test, the TGS, TS, and GS groups scored higher than the C group. The three groups' mean scores were comparatively similar. The standard deviation of all groups again indicates that the students performed homogeneously in the post-test, with the GS group getting the lowest mean score at SD (.72).

4.3.2 One-way ANOVA

One-way ANOVA was carried out to see whether there were significant differences in the mean scores on the dependent variable (writing quality) across the four groups in the three tests respectively, as shown in the table below.

Table 4.5: Holistic Scale (significance level of the four groups in the three tests)

Tests and groups	F	Sig.
Pre-test (between groups)	1.129	.327
Mid-test (between groups)	1.816	.168
Post-test(between groups)	35.613	.000*

Table 4.5 shows that there was no significant difference between the four groups in the pre-test and mid-test with $F(1.129)$, $P = .327$ and $F(1.816)$, $P = .168$ respectively. A highly significant statistical difference was found between the four groups in the post-test with $F(35.16)$, $P = 0.001$.

4.3.3 Post hoc tests: Scheffe Test

One-way ANOVA showed that there was a highly significant statistical difference between the four groups in the post-test. To indicate where this significant difference lay and in which group, a post hoc test was carried out, namely the Scheffe Test. The table below shows the mean difference and significance level comparing all groups together in the post-test where a significant difference was found.

Table 4.6: Holistic Scale (Scheffe Test: significance level of all groups in the post-test)

Groups		Significance Level.
C	TGS	.000*
	TS	.000*
	GS	.000*
TGS	C	.000*
	TS	.997
	GS	.993
TS	C	.000*
	TGS	.997
	GS	.993
GS	C	.000*
	TGS	.993
	GS	.966

Table 4.6 shows that there was a highly significant difference between the C group and the three other groups at level $P = .001$. There was no significant difference between the TGS, TS, and GS groups ($P = .997$, $P = .966$ and $P = .993$). In the post-test, the students in each of the experimental groups performed noticeably better than those in the control group.

Comparison of the performance of the four groups in the pre-, mid-, and post-tests indicates that there was a trend in the mean scores over time. It shows that the means of all groups were increasing throughout the three tests. There was no significant statistical difference between the four groups in the mid-test even though the mean scores were slightly higher than in the pre-test. The mean scores were considerably higher in the post-test as far as the three experimental groups are concerned. The control group did not change much in the post-test when it was compared to the students' performance in the mid-test and even the pre-test.

4.4 Findings of the analytical scale (generic and thematic structures criteria)

The following section presents the findings of the analytical scale, using both thematic and generic criteria. Two tables are presented for each test: one regarding thematic structure and the other one regarding generic structure. Each table is described in detail.

4.4.1 Descriptive tables of the three tests

The descriptive tables show the mean scores and the standard deviation of the four groups in the three tests which were marked using thematic and generic criteria. The mean scores and standard

deviation of the tests are shown separately in tables 4.7, 4.9, and 4.11 for generic structure criterion. Tables 4.8, 4.10 and 4.12 show the thematic structure criterion. The first two tables (4.7 and 4.8) show the groups' performance in the writing test before the intervention. Table 4.7 shows results based on generic structure criterion, and Table 4.8 shows results based on thematic structure criterion.

Table 4.7: Generic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the pre-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	2.4444	.62532	.12034
2. TGS	27	2.5741	.68925	.13265
3. TS	27	2.6296	.79169	.15236
4. GS	27	2.5370	.79573	.15314

Table 4.8: Thematic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the pre-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	2.5556	.71163	.13695
2. TGS	27	2.3889	.62532	.12034
3. TS	27	2.6296	.76702	.14761
4. GS	27	2.5000	.77211	.14859

The mean scores in Tables 4.7 and 4.8 are relatively similar. In both tables, the highest mean was scored by the TS group at M (2.62). The standard deviation of the four groups was moderately

the same at approximately $SD = .77$ and $SD = .79$ respectively. The standard deviation of all groups was lower than 1 which is a good indicator that the students in the four groups behaved homogenously. As a result, the mean scores can be considered a reliable indicator of the performance of each subject.

After five weeks of teaching the four groups, a mid-test was administered to all groups as shown in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 below. Table 4.9 shows results based on generic structure criterion, and Table 4.10 shows results based on thematic structure criterion.

Table 4.9: Generic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the mid-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	3.2037	.96336	.18540
2. TGS	27	4.2222	.88070	.16949
3. TS	27	4.0370	.85402	.16436
4. GS	27	4.1481	.71810	.13820

Table 4.10: Thematic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the mid-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	3.3148	.78628	.15132
2. TGS	27	4.1111	.90228	.17364
3. TS	27	3.9815	1.15593	.22246
4. GS	27	4.1667	.89872	.17296

Tables 4.9 and 4.10 indicate the mean scores and standard deviation for all groups in the mid-test using the thematic and generic marking criteria respectively. The mean scores of the three experimental groups are a little higher than the control group. The standard deviation of all groups in both tables indicates that the students performed homogeneously at SD (1.1). As a result, the mean scores can be considered a reliable indicator of the performance of each subject. Comparing the mean scores of Tables 4.9 and 4.10 with 4.7 and 4.8 respectively, we find a slight but insignificant increase from the pre-test to the mid-test.

At the end of the academic semester, after teaching another five weeks, a post-test was administered to all groups to examine the students' performance in the writing test, as shown in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 below. Table 4.11 shows results based on generic structure criterion, and Table 4.12 shows results based on thematic structure criterion.

Table 4.11: Generic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the post-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	4.3889	.88070	.16949
2. TGS	27	7.3519	1.01730	.19578
3. TS	27	7.3333	1.24035	.23870
4. GS	27	7.1667	.67937	.13074

Table 4.12: Thematic structure criterion (mean scores and SD of all groups in the post-test)

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
1. C	27	4.0926	.79707	.15340
2. TGS	27	7.4259	.99715	.19190
3. TS	27	7.4815	1.08735	.20926
4. GS	27	7.1111	.65535	.12612

The mean scores in Tables 4.11 and 4.12 for the four groups differ in the post-test as the C group had the lowest mean score at M (4.38 and 4.09) respectively. The TGS, TS, and GS groups had comparatively similar mean scores which were much higher than the C group. The standard error of all groups indicates that the sample was representative of the overall population.

4.4.2 One-way ANOVA

According to the tables in the previous section, it is worth looking into whether there are significant differences between the four groups in the three tests using both thematic and generic criteria. As with the Holistic scale, one-way ANOVA was carried out to examine whether there were significant differences in the mean scores on the dependent variable (writing quality) across the four groups in the three tests respectively as shown in the following two tables:

Table 4.13: Significance Level in the three tests (generic structure criterion)

Tests and groups	F	Sig.
Pre-test (between groups)	.321	.726
Mid-test (between groups)	5.830	.004*
Post-test (between groups)	40.388	.000*

Table 4.14: Significance Level in the three tests (thematic structure criterion)

Tests and groups	F	Sig.
Pre-test (Between Groups)	.793	.455
Mid-test (Between Groups)	2.572	.081
Post-test (Between Groups)	63.905	.000*

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 show that there was no significant difference between the four groups in the pre-test, but a highly significant statistical difference was found between the four groups in the post-test at P (0.001). As for the mid-test, Table 4.13 shows that there was significant difference between the four groups in the mid-test at P (.004), while Table 4.14 shows that there was no significant difference between the groups P (.081).

4.4.3 Post hoc tests: Scheffe Test

Based on the one-way ANOVA, a highly significant statistical difference was found between the four groups in the mid- and post-tests. A Scheffe Test was used to investigate where this significant difference lay and in which group. The table below shows the mean difference and significance level comparing all groups together in the post-test. This table is based on the generic structure criterion.

Table 4.15: Scheffe Test (significance level in the mid- and post-tests – generic structure criterion)

Groups	Sig. (Mid-test)	Sig. (Post-test)
C TGS	.001*	.000*
TS	.007*	.000*

	GS	.002*	.000*
TGS	C	.001*	.000*
	TS	.890	1.000
	GS	.992	.922
TS	C	.007*	.000*
	TGS	.890	1.000
	GS	.973	.941
GS	C	.002*	.000*
	TGS	.992	.922
	TS	.973	.941

Table 4.15 shows that there was a highly significant difference when comparing the C group to the TGS, TS and GS groups in the mid- and post-tests at level P (.001). There was no significant difference between the TGS, TS, and GS groups in the mid- and post-tests. For example, when comparing the TGS group to the TS and GS groups, there was no significant difference in the mid- and post-tests at level P (.890; .992) and P (1; .922) respectively. There was no significant difference between the TS and GS groups in the mid- and post-tests at level P (.992; .973) and P (.922; .941) respectively.

Table 4.16 below shows the mean difference and significance level comparing all groups together in the post-test. This table is based on the thematic structure criterion.

Table 4.16: Scheffe Test (significance level in the post-test – thematic structure criterion)

Groups		Sig.
C	TGS	.000*
	TS	.000*
	GS	.000*
TGS	C	.000*
	TS	.997

	GS	.649
TS	C	.000*
	TGS	.997
	GS	.518
GS	C	.000*
	TGS	.649
	TS	.518

Table 4.16 shows that there was a highly significant difference when comparing the C group to the TGS, TS, and GS groups in the post-test at level P (.001). No significant difference was found between the TGS, TS, and GS groups in the post-test. When comparing the TGS group to the TS and GS groups there was no significant difference in the post-test at level P (.997; .649) respectively. When comparing the TS group to the GS group, no significant difference was found in the post-test at level P (.518).

4.5 An in-depth analysis of the post-test scripts of TGS, TS, and GS groups

This section discusses the in-depth analysis taking into account: (1) the purpose behind carrying out the in-depth analysis of the post-tests; (2) the method used to analyze the scripts; and (3) the main findings.

4.5.1 Purpose of carrying out the in-depth analysis

According to the statistical findings, the outcomes of the post-test for the three experimental groups were relatively similar when evaluated using the thematic structure and generic structure criteria. The unexpected outcome may be related to the analytical criteria used to evaluate the

scripts, specifically the thematic structure criterion. Therefore, to take this study a step further, a more in-depth analysis of 45 post-test scripts of the three experimental groups (15 scripts from each group) was carried out to see if there were any hidden differences that the totals subjected to statistical analysis did not reveal.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the generic structure criterion (Table 3.2) was used to measure if the students were able to apply the generic structure of a discussion essay, taking into account the four stages of a discussion genre (issue ^ arguments for ^arguments against ^ conclusion). The students' scripts were evaluated according to the inclusion or omission of any of these four stages. In the first stage (the issue), the students' scripts were evaluated as to whether they were able to introduce the issue and determine the scope of their essay. In the second and third stages (arguments for and against), they were examined as to whether they had included both sides of the issue, for and against arguments, and supported their arguments with evidence and examples. In the conclusion, they were evaluated on whether they had included a conclusion that summarized the main ideas and presented a final position on the issue. The thematic structure criterion (Table 3.3) was used to measure how successful the students were at using theme-rheme structure throughout their essay. It measured if the students were able to successfully use the macro-theme and hyper-themes to discuss their ideas at the paragraph and essay levels. It also considered the students' discussion of ideas in the paragraphs and if they were supported by evidence and finally how well the conclusion was connected to the overall essay.

The criteria of the two rating scales appeared to overlap as the macro- and hyper-themes helped to mark the stages of the genre, suggesting that generic structure and thematic structure can be closely related and interdependent. As a result, it was worth looking deeper into the use of thematic progression patterns for 45 post-test scripts of the experimental groups to add valuable

insights to the current study, to verify whether or not there were any hidden differences between the three experimental groups, and to assess whether or not it was in favour of a particular group.

4.5.2 Method of the in-depth analysis

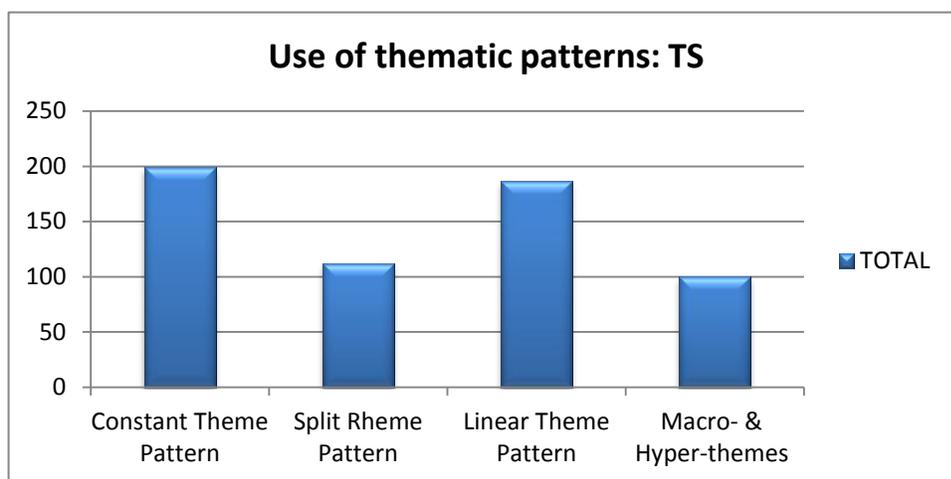
The 45 post-test scripts were chosen randomly from the three experimental groups. The scripts were analyzed in terms of some of the different types of thematic progression patterns that had been taught in the TS and TGS groups: constant progression, linear progression, spilt rheme progression, macro-theme, and hyper-theme. These patterns were examined to trace the development of the students' use of different thematic patterns at the essay level. The analysis was carried out in a way similar to Ho's study (2009) which followed Berry's (1995) study, where independent clauses and co-ordinating clauses were taken into account because as argued by Berry (1995) the main themes are evident in independent clauses rather than dependent clauses. In this type of analysis, each clause is divided into two main parts: theme and rheme. Theme is the message found at the beginning of the clause, including everything that precedes the verb in the clause. Rheme is the new message that follows the theme, and it includes everything from the verb till the end of the clause. Arrows were used to show the thematic choices and their directions to trace the thematic development throughout the whole essays. The scripts of the thematic group were marked as TS, the scripts of the generic group were marked as GS and the ones from the mixed group were marked as TGS (Appendix J).

4.5.3 Findings of the in-depth analysis

The thematic analysis examined the students' use of different types of thematic patterns, how often they used them, to what extent they performed similarly, and at what points they were different. The first three graphs below show how often the students in each group in turn used

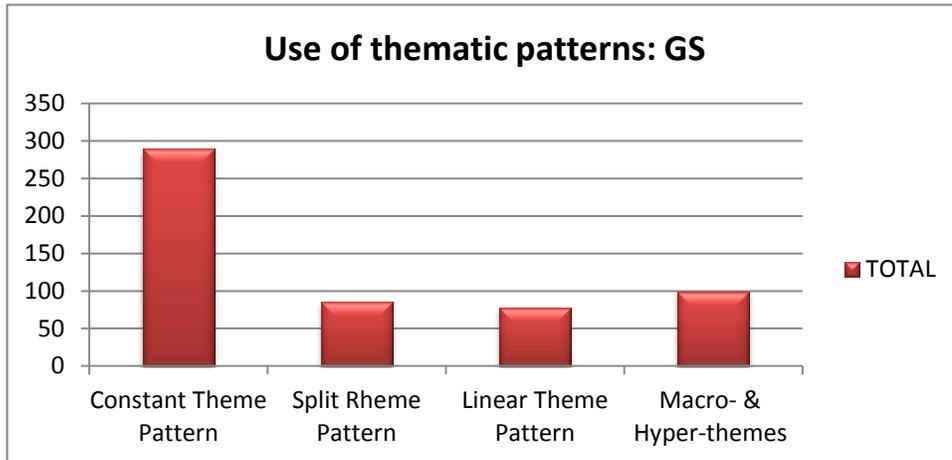
the four types of patterns identified earlier. The fourth graph compares the students' performance in the three groups.

Graph 4.1: Thematic progression patterns used in the post-test: TS Group



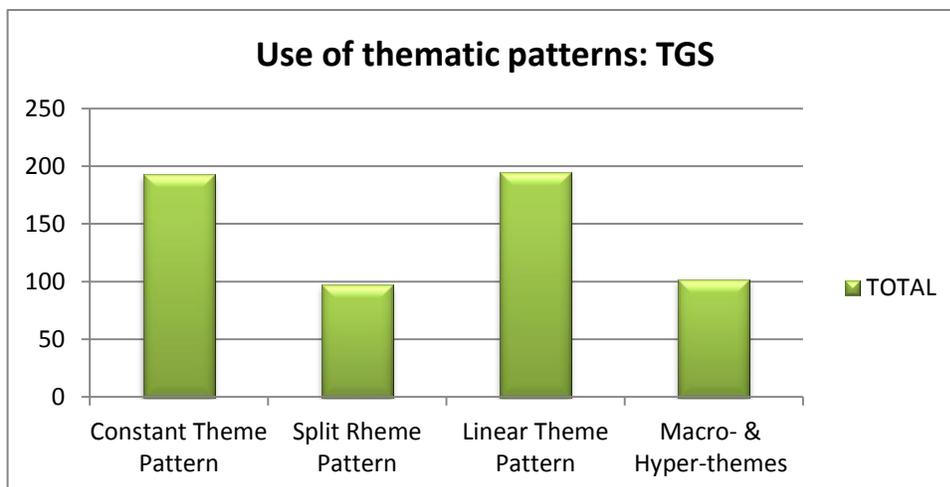
Graph 4.1 shows the thematic progression patterns for the TS group and how frequently the students used these patterns throughout their essays. According to the graph, the students used all the types of thematic progression patterns identified earlier. They used 199 of the constant theme pattern, 112 of the split theme pattern, 186 of the linear theme pattern and 100 of the derived theme pattern (macro-theme and hyper-themes) in total.

Graph 4.2: Thematic progression patterns used in the post-test: GS Group



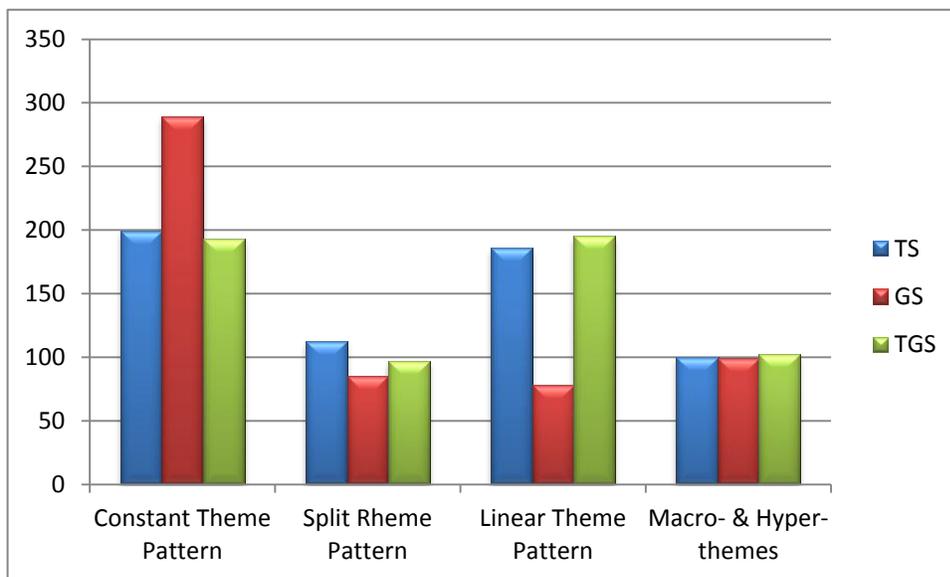
Graph 4.2 shows the thematic progression patterns for the GS group. The students used all the types of thematic progression patterns identified earlier. The most frequent pattern was the constant theme pattern. They used it 290 across their essays, they used 85 of the split theme pattern, 78 of the linear theme pattern, and 99 of the derived theme pattern (macro-theme and hyper-themes) in total.

Graph 4.3: Thematic progression patterns used in the post-test: TGS Group



Graph 4.3 shows the thematic progression patterns for the TGS group. The students used all the types of thematic progression patterns identified earlier. They used 196 of the constant pattern across their essays, 97 of the split theme pattern, 195 of the linear theme pattern, and 102 of the derived theme pattern (macro-theme and hyper-themes) in total.

Graph 4.4: Thematic progression patterns used in the post-test: TGS, TS and GS groups



Graph 4.4 compares the four types of thematic progression patterns and how often they were used in the three experimental groups. The groups used the macro- and hyper-themes to a similar extent. There were slight differences between the three groups in the use of the split rheme pattern. There are noticeable differences between the groups when the constant theme pattern and the linear theme pattern are taken into consideration. According to the graph, the GS group used the constant theme pattern more often and the linear theme pattern less. The

TGS and TS groups used the linear theme pattern more often and relied less on the constant theme pattern.

4.6 Discussion of the statistical and in-depth analysis findings

This section discusses the statistical and in-depth findings. They will help in answering the research questions posited by this study. The statistical findings are drawn on to answer the questions that are related to the three types of interventions (the explicit teaching of (1) thematic structure, (2) generic structure and (3) a combination of both structures). These questions examine the extent to which the intervention had an effect on the students' writing quality. The findings of the in-depth analysis are drawn on to answer the four research question about which intervention was more effective in improving the students' writing quality.

4.6.1 Summary of the main statistical and in-depth analysis findings

The statistical findings show that all groups were comparable at the beginning of the course as they performed similarly in the writing pre-test. The improvement that took place in the post-test could then be discussed with reference to the factors/reasons that might have influenced the students' performance. In the mid-test, all students' performance slightly improved, yet the analytical scores were in favour of the experimental groups over the control group. The post-test totals showed interesting multiple findings. The first one occurred between the three experimental groups and the control group. There were highly significant differences between

the experimental groups and the control group, suggesting that the intervention affected the experimental groups and improved their writing quality greatly. The second one occurred between the three experimental groups, showing no significant differences.

The findings of the in-depth analysis of the post-tests for the three experimental groups revealed that there were some differences between them as far as some of the common thematic progression patterns are concerned. The TS and TGS groups used the linear theme pattern more often than the GS group, while the latter relied much more on the constant theme pattern and much less on the linear theme pattern.

4.6.2 Discussion of the findings

The statistical findings (holistic and analytical) indicate that the three experimental groups outperformed the control group in improving their writing quality in terms of writing more coherent and cohesive essays. This improvement may be related to the explicit teaching of the three types of intervention as stated before. The improvement on generic structure and thematic structure are discussed below separately.

4.6.2.1 Improvement on generic structure

The statistical findings reveal that all three experimental groups did well on using the generic structure of a discussion genre. It is expected that the explicit teaching of generic structure would benefit the students and improve their writing quality in the TGS and GS groups.

This study has produced results that support the findings of a number of earlier studies in the field of a genre-based instruction and the explicit teaching of generic structures to improving writing that were reviewed in Chapter 2 (Chaisiri, 2010; Henry and Roseberry, 1998, 1999; Myskow and Gordon, 2009; Madjdi, 2009; Srinon, 2009; Cheng, 2008; Firkins et al., 2007; Breeze, 2006; Lin, 2006; Hyon, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Swales and Lindemann, 2002; Pang, 2002; Mustafa, 1995; Marshall, 1991).

In the current study, the explicit teaching of generic structure has resulted in positive outcomes, when the results of the TGS and GS groups are compared with the control group. These statistical results provided an answer to the research question that aimed to examine the effect of the intervention on the students' writing quality. For example, it is in line with Henry and Roseberry's study (1999) that aimed to raise learners' awareness of generic structure and linguistic features of essay introductions at the paragraph level. There was a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests which means that the students benefitted from learning the generic structure and linguistic features to produce good essay introductions. Learning and raising students' awareness of generic structure of genres resulted in improving their writing quality.

In terms of the textual organization of a text, this study agrees with Pang's (2002) findings who investigated two approaches to genre instruction: contextual and textual organization. Similar to Pang's participants in the textual group, the current study's participants did well on

the use of generic structure stages in the pre- and post-tests and when they were compared with the control group.

The results of the current study contradicted some other studies which provided negative results as with Cheng (2008) and Henry and Roseberry (1998). Their studies showed that their students' did not improve significantly in writing in terms of the organization aspect and the move scores respectively from the pre- to post-tests. This may be attributed to a number of reasons. Unlike this study, Cheng's (2008) study focused on teaching generic structure of a narrative genre which failed to capture significant differences before and after the intervention as the students were asked to write on a topic that drew on their personal experience and helped them to narrate their story in a chronological way. Also, it lacked a control group to demonstrate the extent to which the improvement was due to the intervention. The current study was different than Henry and Roseberry's (1998) as the two groups were taught by two different instructors which may have affected the results of their study.

What emerges from this study is that the TS group, who did not receive any instruction on generic structure, used it successfully. Their analytical marking scores indicate that they were able to apply the generic structure of a discussion genre effectively. The TGS and GS groups were explicitly taught the generic stages that they should include in their discussion essay, so they did not find it difficult to organize their thoughts and arguments in separate paragraphs. This may be attributed to the fact that all of the experimental groups were taught how to develop their ideas at the discourse level. The TS group were not explicitly taught the generic

structure of a discussion genre, but they were explicitly taught the macro-themes and hyper-themes and how to use them to organize their discussion at the essay level. They were able to use the macro-theme as the main topic sentence for the whole essay and the hyper-themes as the topic sentences representing their main ideas at the paragraph level. The hyper-themes here were like topic sentences that contained the main ideas that they attempted to discuss in their essays. It can be assumed that the main generic stages of a genre and the macro-themes and hyper-themes worked in similar ways so that both resulted in improving the students' writing quality at the discourse level. This explains why the TS group did well on the use of generic structure as good writers can use these themes skilfully at the textual level to orient the readers to what to expect, how the text will unfold and in what direction (Martin and Rose, 2003).

Another possibility is that the improvement on generic structure may be related to the contextual factors, such as the awareness of the purpose for writing a discussion essay, the role of the writer, and the reader. Even though the TS students were not taught generic structure and the purposes of the different stages, their awareness of such factors might have been fostered when they were taught the different thematic patterns, when to use and why, such as macro- and hyper-themes. Knowledge of the contextual factors of texts might have helped them to improve on generic structure intuitively, as shown in some studies (Breeze, 2006; Pang, 2002; Macken-Horarik, 2002) which suggested that teaching students the contextual factors of texts might help in improving their writing.

4.6.2.2 Improvement on thematic structure

The current study provides positive statistical results when the TGS and TS groups are compared on the pre- and post-tests and when their performance is compared with the control group. These statistical outcomes provide an answer to the research question that aimed to examine the effect of teaching thematic structure on the students' writing quality. The students were successful in writing more cohesive and coherent essays.

The current study provided some answers to a number of earlier studies which were carried out to examine how the teaching of thematic progression patterns could be of benefit in pedagogical contexts as an analytical tool and/or a revision tool to help EFL teachers to improve learners' writing quality (Rustipa, 2010; Qing-feng 2009; Ebrahimi, 2008; Alonso and McCabe, 2003; Belmonte and Hidalgo, 1998; and Lovejoy, 1998). As discussed earlier, these studies did not include any teaching of thematic structure, but recommended implementing it in pedagogical classrooms. This study proved to be a useful teaching and learning tool to improve students' writing quality.

This study is in line with a number of studies which used thematic structure in pedagogical situations (Krisnawati, 2013; Ebrahimi, SF and Ebrahimi, SJ, 2012b; Ho, 2009; Ren, Gao and Li, 2009; Yang, 2008; Wang, L, 2007; Wang, X, 2007; Leonard and Hukari, 2005; Xudong, 2003). As discussed earlier, these studies were promising but did not provide any empirical/statistical results, as with the current study, based on the explicit teaching of thematic structure to EFL students to find its effect on their writing. They were only small

studies which were carried out on a small number of students for a short period of time and without a control group.

Some of the findings were unexpected when considering the third research question. This question aimed to investigate the effect of combining the teaching of TS and GS to improve the students' writing quality. This study anticipated that to maximize the potential that both structures offer to teaching writing to EFL learners, they should be integrated, but this was proven wrong. The current study indicates that teaching a combination of TS and GS helped to improve the quality of the students' writing but no more than teaching each on their own.

4.6.2.3 The in-depth findings

Despite the absence of statistically significant differences between the three experimental groups, the in-depth analysis revealed some interesting results that might help us to understand the effect of the intervention and to answer the fourth question: which type of intervention had the most effect on the students' writing. The results of the in-depth analysis of the post-test scripts showed that the three groups performed equally as far as the macro- and hyper-themes are concerned. There were differences between the three experimental groups in the three types of thematic patterns at the paragraph level: the constant theme pattern, the linear theme pattern, and the split rheme pattern.

There were slight differences between the three groups as far as the split rheme pattern is concerned. All the students showed good use of this pattern to further develop their argument on discussing the positive and negative impact of technology at the essay level, for instance. They were able to split up the rheme at the end of the introductory paragraph into two main sub-rhemes which were then used as their hyper-themes in the following two stages of the essay (for and against arguments). Even though the difference was small, the TS and TGS students used this pattern more than the GS according to Graph 4.4. The implementation of this pattern will help students further expand their paragraphs by picking up the information in the sub-rhemes and introducing them in thematic position in the following clauses.

As far as the constant theme pattern and the linear theme pattern are concerned, the analysis showed that there were noticeable differences between the three groups. Both patterns were used by the students. The GS group overused the constant theme pattern, while the TGS and TS students used the linear theme pattern more frequently and the constant theme pattern less. The use of these patterns will help students in organizing their essays coherently and cohesively as this could be achieved by picking up or reiterating an idea from a preceding theme or rheme.

The constant theme pattern helps students to “keep a text focused” (Eggins, 2004, p. 324) which would contribute to its cohesiveness by repeating an element throughout an essay. Like lexical cohesion (a cohesive tie), “repetition is an effective means of creating cohesion” (Ibid.). The students need this pattern to keep their readers focused and informed of what they

are writing about. All the groups succeeded in using this pattern; however, the GS group overused it in their essays. The overuse of the constant theme pattern (theme reiteration) might cause some problems in making the text appear less cohesive and coherent. Eggins (2004) argues that it is obvious that the theme reiteration helps to achieve cohesiveness in a text, yet using the same theme repeatedly would make the text sound boring and indicate that the text “is going nowhere” which might cause empty rhemes (p. 324). What is meant by empty rhemes is that the information introduced in rhematic position is not followed up. The GS students attempted to use the same theme repeatedly, and they also introduced new themes which were not introduced before.

Thematic shifting is important to solve problems that might occur due to the overuse of the constant theme pattern, such as the linear theme pattern and the spilt up rheme pattern to achieve cohesiveness in texts (Eggins, 2004). As is shown from the in-depth analysis, the TGS and TS students attempted to use the linear theme pattern more frequently than the GS. They were able to pick up the information introduced in rhematic position and used it in thematic position in the following clauses to intervene their discussion. This helped the students to minimize having empty rhemes or introducing new themes which would result in giving “a text a sense of cumulative development which may be absent in the repeated theme pattern” (Eggins, 2004, p. 325). The TGS and TS students were able to expand their paragraphs by explaining the rhemes in thematic position and elaborating on their ideas. For example, they attempted to use discursal themes more frequently to signal their paragraphs and new clauses in order to show their flow of information and development of ideas by using transition words, such as first, second, for example, another example, etc. Also, they attempted to use more

textual themes, such as, but, therefore, this, however, so, as a result, and so on, to show the link between the themes and rhemes. This contributed to the overall coherence and cohesion of their essays.

4.6.2.4 Overall conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that the three types of intervention helped the students improve their writing quality in terms of producing more coherent and cohesive essays. The statistical findings attempted to measure the students' writing quality in terms of coherence. These findings show that the TGS, TS, and GS students were successful in maintaining the overall text flow and could organize their essays more effectively, communicate their ideas efficiently, and deliver their message to their readers successfully. This would meet the SF definition of generic structure and thematic structure in that they aim to accomplish a communicative purpose. Coherence plays an important role as the students need to keep their readers well-informed about where they are and where they going to (Butt et al., 2000). The in-depth analysis of thematic progression patterns contributed towards measuring the writing quality in terms of cohesion as it looked at how well the sentences were connected throughout the essay and the paragraphs. The results show that the TGS and TS groups were more successful in using the different thematic patterns across their essays to interweave their ideas to maintain more cohesive and coherent essays.

The overall findings suggest that teaching of GS and TS would benefit EFL students to write more coherently. When it comes to cohesion, the teaching of TS appears to be more effective

as the use of thematic patterns are beneficial to link or tie ideas more effectively and how each sentence is built on the proceeding one through the construction of theme and rheme. This cohesive tie is important in realizing “relationship between an item and the item it presupposed in a text” (Martin, 2001, p. 37). Realizing meanings and their relationships as semantic units add texture and unity to a text, and maintaining texture results in more coherent and cohesive texts (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Having no difference in the overall impression does not mean that the mastery of the different thematic patterns is less important. The in-depth analysis of the scripts shows that those whose intervention included TS now have that ‘tool’ in their grammars for future use. This helps to fulfil a long-term learning effect and aid the learners to develop their writing further in the future.

4.7 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed the statistical findings of the quantitative data of all groups and the in-depth analysis of the post-test scripts of the three experimental groups. First, I presented the statistical data from all writing tests (pre-, mid- and post-) to show the statistical differences between the four groups. Then, an in-depth analysis of the findings was presented for the three experimental groups to show any hidden differences between the groups.

The data shows that there was a significant statistical difference between the experimental groups and the control group in the pre- and post-tests. These statistical findings suggest that the explicit teaching of either thematic structure, generic structure or a combination of the two structures were effective in developing the students' writing quality in terms of coherence. It also provided some insightful answers to the research question that investigated which structure resulted in better writing. The in-depth analysis revealed that there were some differences between the three groups in using a number of thematic progression patterns. Also, the teaching of TS helped the students to write better in terms of cohesion as the TGS and TS groups attempted to use the linear theme pattern more effectively than the GS.

The overall findings suggest that all experimental groups did well on generic structure even though the TS group was not taught the generic structure of a discussion genre. The TGS and TS groups did better on thematic structure than the GS group. Teaching TS could help students learn generic structure intuitively, but teaching GS does not necessarily result in improving the use of thematic patterns intuitively. Combining the two structures appeared to help the students improve their writing coherently and cohesively but no more than teaching thematic structure.

CHAPTER 5

THE QUESTIONNAIRES: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the data collected from the questionnaires before and after the intervention. It starts first with a brief background of the design and administration of the questionnaires. Then, it presents the findings of the questionnaires in two main sections. The first one deals with the results of the pre- and post-questionnaires except for the ranking question. The second section presents and discusses the findings of a ranking question in which the students had to rank a number of items prevalent in their writing in order of importance to them. Finally, the main points are summarized.

5.2 Brief background of the design and administration of the questionnaires

The aim of the questionnaires was to measure the effect of the intervention on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The two questionnaires were administered to the experimental groups and control group. The aim behind including the control group was to differentiate between changes in motivation and attitudes due to the intervention and changes due to other factors.

The students' responses in both questionnaires were given on a 5-point Likert scale: ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. They were numerically coded and the frequencies as percentages were calculated using the Excel programme. The 5-point scale was collapsed into a 3-point scale: the "strongly agree" and "agree" was collapsed into "agree" and the "strongly disagree" and "disagree" was collapsed into "disagree". This was done to facilitate comparison between the groups.

Both questionnaires (Appendices B and C) included items related to seven components: achievement goals, attitudes, language anxiety, autonomous learning, self-efficacy, ideal L2 self, and effort and willingness to communicate. The pre-questionnaire contained 30 questions and the post-questionnaire 32. Two questions were added to the attitudes component to further clarify the effect of the interventions. The questions were similar in the pre- and post-questionnaires except that in the post-questionnaire for the experimental groups most of the questions referred directly to the intervention by adding "learning *the structure*". The control group were asked about their motivation and attitudes towards the writing course itself, as they were taught writing in the regular, non-experimental way.

5.3 Findings and analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaires

The analysis of the pre-questionnaire examined the profile and comparability of the four groups. The post-questionnaire examined the effect the intervention had on the seven motivational components. The pre-questionnaire results of each component and the corresponding post-questionnaire results are presented and discussed below.

5.3.1 Achievement goals

Five questions aimed to elicit the students' responses on their aims or goals of studying the English language. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.1: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: achievement goals component

Achievement Goals	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I study English to get a degree.	82%	70%	52%	74%	11%	4%	0%	7%	7%	26%	48%	19%
2. I study English to gain good grades in exams.	85%	70%	74%	89%	4%	7%	4%	0%	11%	22%	22%	11%
3. I study English to pass other courses successfully in my field of specialization.	59%	59%	66%	78%	7%	4%	15%	7%	33%	37%	19%	15%
4. I study English to get a good job or be promoted in the future.	92%	63%	85%	85%	0%	7%	11%	15%	7%	30%	4%	0%
5. I study English for future studies in my major.	89%	66%	66%	78%	4%	7%	7%	7%	7%	26%	26%	15%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.1 above represents the results related to the students' achievement goals before the intervention. This table indicates mixed results between the groups, signalling differences in their learning goals. For example, while a majority of the students (70% and above) in the C, TGS, and GS groups studied English to get a degree, only 52% of the TS group answered that they studied English to get a degree. More TS and GS students than C and TGS students agreed that they studied English to do well in other courses in their field of specialization. More students in

the C group (89%) agreed that they studied English for future studies in their major, while 77% of the other groups agreed on the same question. More than 70% of the students in all groups agreed that they studied English to gain good grades in their exams. 88% of the students answered that they studied English to get a good job or to be promoted in the future.

Table 5.2: Findings of the post-questionnaire: achievement goals component

Achievement Goals	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English to get a degree.	48%	82%	92%	96%	26%	11%	0%	4%	26%	7%	7%	0%
2. Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English to gain good grades in exams.	15%	74%	89%	74%	33%	11%	4%	22%	52%	15%	7%	4%
3. Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English to pass other courses successfully in my field of specialization.	11%	33%	41%	70%	41%	30%	30%	11%	48%	37%	30%	19%
4. Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English to get a good job or be promoted in future.	19%	33%	37%	82%	44%	41%	56%	15%	37%	26%	7%	4%
5. Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English for future studies in my major.	19%	37%	37%	74%	33%	37%	52%	19%	48%	26%	11%	7%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.2 indicates the extent to which the students felt that the intervention helped them achieve their goals. Examining Table 5.1 and Table 5.2, some comparisons can be drawn from the

students' responses before and after the intervention. In the pre-questionnaire, there seemed to be a consensus on most of the questions between the four groups. It can be concluded that the students were comparable to a great extent before the intervention; however, the post-questionnaire highlighted some interesting differences as most of the students in the experimental groups felt that the intervention helped them to achieve their goals but not as many in the control group felt the same.

One major difference emerged between the experimental groups and the control group on the one hand and between the experimental groups on the other hand as shown in Table 5.2. For example, a large number of the students (averaging at 90%) in the TGS, TS, and GS groups felt that the intervention helped them to get a degree, while only 48% of the students in the C group agreed on the same question. Similarly, Question 2 shows that 79% of the TGS, TS, and GS groups agreed that the learning of (the structure) helped them to gain good grades in their exams, while only 15% of the students in the C group agreed on the same point as far as learning writing in the regular, non-experimental way were concerned.

As far as questions 3, 4, and 5 are concerned, some differences are obvious not only between the experimental and control groups but also between the three experimental groups. On the one hand, very few students in the control group (averaging at 15%) felt that learning writing in the regular, non-experimental way helped them achieve these goals, while more students in the experimental groups felt that the intervention helped them to achieve the same goals. On the other hand, the GS group agreed that learning (the structure) will help them to achieve goals 3, 4,

and 5 more than the TGS and TS groups. A high number of students in the TGS and TS groups felt unsure about whether or not the intervention helped them achieve these goals.

Another striking difference the post-questionnaire showed was within the control group, when their responses were compared in the pre- and post-questionnaires. In comparison to the pre-responses, very few students felt that learning writing in the regular, non-experimental way helped them to achieve their goals. Some differences were spotted between the three experimental groups in favour of the GS group, as they appeared to agree more on that the intervention could help them in passing other courses successfully, getting a good job, gaining promotions, and completing their higher studies in the future.

5.3.2 Attitudes

The attitudes component comprised of three questions in the pre-questionnaire and five items in the post-questionnaire. Tables 5.3 and 5.4 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.3: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: attitudes component

Attitudes	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I enjoy studying English.	56%	48%	52%	44%	11%	15%	7%	11%	33%	37%	41%	44%
2. I find writing essays in English interesting.	30%	26%	33%	37%	37%	26%	26%	15%	33%	48%	41%	48%
3. I look forward to English classes.	41%	30%	48%	33%	22%	22%	30%	30%	37%	48%	22%	37%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.3 shows the students' responses on the attitudes component in the pre-questionnaire. This table aimed to examine whether the students were comparable in terms of enjoying studying English, finding writing essays interesting, and looking forward to the English classes. The students' responses were relatively similar across the three statements. 50% of the students said they enjoyed learning English. 40.5% of them did not find writing essays in English interesting at all. The last statement shows similar results, as an average of 37% of the students in all groups either agreed or disagreed on whether they looked forward to the English classes. More students in the TS group seemed to disagree than the other groups on question 3.

Table 5.4: Findings of the post-questionnaire: attitudes component

Attitudes	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. Learning (the structure) made me enjoy studying English.	15%	70%	66%	82%	41%	22%	15%	11%	44%	7%	19%	7%
2. I felt most satisfied when I attained a good score in my writing test.	15%	59%	59%	74%	15%	4%	15%	7%	70%	37%	26%	19%
3. I felt most satisfied when I was able to write effectively in English.	11%	82%	85%	85%	33%	19%	7%	0%	56%	0%	7%	19%
4. I find writing essays in English interesting after learning (the structure).	26%	66%	78%	66%	26%	22%	11%	22%	48%	11%	11%	11%
5. I look forward to English classes.	33%	74%	74%	82%	19%	11%	7%	15%	48%	15%	19%	4%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.5 shows the responses of all students on the attitude component in the post-questionnaire. The items in this table measured the extent to which the intervention helped to

increase the students' positive attitudes in terms of enjoying learning English, satisfaction with their grades in writing and increased ability to write better essay, finding writing more interesting, and looking forward to English classes.

When comparing Table 5.3 and Table 5.4, there are some interesting and noticeable differences between the groups before and after the intervention. On one hand, the intervention seemed to have a positive effect on the experimental groups as they have formed more positive attitudes towards learning and writing in English, ranging between an average of 66% as the lowest point and 85% as the highest point. On the other hand, the C group seemed to have formed more negative attitudes towards learning and writing in English when their attitudes are compared with: (1) the experimental groups in the post-questionnaire, and (2) their attitudes at the beginning of the course and after studying writing in the non-experimental way.

5.3.3 Language anxiety

The language anxiety component consisted of three items and aimed to measure the students' level of anxiety towards writing in English: whether they felt worried, nervous or happy. The words 'worried' and 'nervous' could be interchangeable but according to Arab learners they could mean relatively different. For them, 'worried' is associated with fear and being scared, and 'nervous' is associated with tension and developing nervous habits. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.5: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: language anxiety component

Language Anxiety	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I feel worried when I write an essay in English.	74%	74%	70%	66%	11%	7%	11%	19%	15%	19%	19%	15%
2. I feel nervous when I have to carry out a writing task.	70%	74%	63%	63%	15%	7%	15%	19%	15%	19%	22%	19%
3. I feel happy about my level of writing in English.	7%	7%	11%	19%	19%	22%	19%	11%	74%	74%	70%	70%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.5 shows the students' level of language anxiety in all groups at the beginning of the course. This table indicates that all groups were comparable as there was consensus among them across the three questions. A large number of the students in all groups felt worried and nervous when they wrote in English and were not happy about their writing level.

Table 5.6: Findings of the post-questionnaire: language anxiety component

Language Anxiety	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I feel worried when I write an essay in English even after learning (the structure).	63%	22%	19%	48%	19%	26%	30%	4%	19%	52%	52%	48%
2. I feel nervous when I have to carry out a writing task even after learning (the structure).	74%	26%	22%	41%	11%	19%	22%	19%	15%	56%	56%	41%
3. I feel happy about my level of writing in English after learning (the structure).	26%	74%	70%	66%	22%	11%	19%	19%	52%	15%	11%	15%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.6 shows the extent to which the intervention affected the students' level of anxiety towards writing in English. When comparing Table 5.5 and Table 5.6, there are some noteworthy changes in the students' level of anxiety towards writing in English with reference to the three experimental groups in the pre- and post-questionnaires. More than half of the students did not feel worried or nervous towards writing in English and happier about their level in writing due to the intervention. The intervention seemed to have a positive effect on minimizing the students' learning anxiety towards writing in English. As for the control group, their language anxiety did not change as the majority of the students still felt highly worried and nervous when writing English essays, and roughly half of them did not feel happy about their writing level. It is worth mentioning here that when comparing the three experimental groups in the post-questionnaire the GS students were more worried and nervous than the TGS and TS groups but less worried and nervous compared with the C group. Yet, they were relatively happier about their writing level as the other two experimental groups.

5.3.4 Autonomous learning

The autonomous learning component included three items that measured the learners' learning autonomy and working independently. Tables 5.7 and 5.8 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.7: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: autonomous learning component

Autonomous Learning	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I need the help of the teacher from beginning to end when I start writing an essay in English.	37%	52%	52%	56%	37%	22%	11%	19%	26%	26%	37%	26%
2. I do not need the teacher's feedback continuously to correct my written work.	4%	15%	4%	4%	33%	30%	26%	22%	63%	56%	70%	74%
3. I can carry out a writing task on my own.	19%	30%	30%	30%	48%	30%	41%	52%	33%	41%	30%	19%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.7 shows the students' level of dependency on the teacher and on themselves when they write an essay in English. To a certain extent, the groups' responses were comparable as far as item 2 is concerned. The majority of the students expressed their need for the teacher's feedback continuously to correct their written work. Looking at the students' responses to item 1, the three experimental groups seemed to be more in agreement than the control group. More than half of the students needed the teacher's help from the beginning to end when they write an essay in English, whereas only 37% of the students in the C group needed the help of the teacher to carry out a writing task. 37% of the control group were not sure whether they needed the teacher's help or not. The last question indicates a mixture of answers for all the groups. It is worth noting here that roughly half of the students in the C, TS, and GS groups were unsure about their writing abilities. 41% of the students in the TGS group claimed that they could not carry out a writing task on their own.

Table 5.8: Findings of the post-questionnaire: autonomous learning component

Autonomous Learning	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I need the help of the teacher from beginning to end when I start writing an essay in English even after learning (the structure).	48%	30%	19%	48%	22%	11%	30%	4%	30%	59%	52%	48%
2. I do not seek the teacher’s feedback continuously to correct my written work after learning (the structure).	19%	44%	22%	41%	15%	19%	22%	19%	66%	37%	56%	41%
3. I can carry out a writing task on my own after learning (the structure).	26%	82%	70%	66%	30%	11%	19%	19%	44%	7%	11%	15%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.8 shows the effect of the intervention on the students’ autonomous learning component after the intervention. It indicates that some changes occurred in the students’ autonomous learning due to the intervention when the experimental groups are compared with the control group. One remarkable difference between the experimental groups and the control group can be detected in relation to item 3. An overwhelming majority of the students from the experimental groups agreed that the intervention helped them to carry out a writing task on their own, whereas only 26% of the students in the control group did so. Around half of the students in the experimental groups said that they did not need the help of the teacher continuously from beginning to end, which goes in line with their responses to item 3.

It is important to note that the effect of the intervention was not effective in all the experimental groups. An equal number of students in the TS and GS groups, for example, who had felt more independent in the post-questionnaire, still felt that they needed the teacher’s help and continuous feedback on their written work. This suggests that students may need more time and practice to feel that they could work independently.

5.3.5 Effort and willingness to communicate

The effort and willingness to communicate component comprised three items that measured the students’ effort and willingness to participate in the English course for either the writing tasks were useful, interesting or challenging. Tables 5.9 and 5.10 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.9: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: effort and willingness to communicate component

Effort and willingness to communicate	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is useful.	37%	22%	26%	33%	11%	33%	41%	30%	52%	44%	33%	22%
2. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is interesting.	30%	30%	26%	41%	19%	26%	26%	22%	52%	44%	48%	37%
3. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is challenging.	26%	33%	37%	48%	26%	26%	33%	22%	48%	41%	30%	30%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.9 shows the students' effort and willingness to communicate in English when carrying out a writing task before the intervention. This table indicates that all groups were relatively comparable as they all expressed mixed responses across the three categories. It seems that more students in the C and TGS groups disagreed with the three questions as they did not find the writing tasks useful, interesting or challenging. As for the TS group, most students either disagreed or were unsure about how useful, interesting or challenging the tasks were. As for the GS group, more students seemed to agree with the three items than those who either disagreed or were unsure.

Table 5.10: Findings of the post-questionnaire: effort and willingness to communicate component

Effort and willingness to communicate	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is useful.	30%	66%	70%	70%	26%	19%	15%	15%	44%	15%	4%	4%
2. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is interesting.	19%	59%	63%	74%	26%	22%	22%	11%	56%	19%	15%	15%
3. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is challenging.	41%	70%	70%	63%	33%	15%	19%	33%	26%	15%	11%	4%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.10 indicates the extent to which the students' effort and willingness to communicate were affected after the intervention. This table signals major changes that occurred in the experimental groups. Contrary to Table 5.9, a large number of the experimental students agreed that the intervention helped them to participate in the English class because they found the writing tasks useful, interesting, and challenging, unlike the students in the control group. What is also interesting about this table is that 41% of the control group agreed that the writing task was challenging. This could be because the students may have interpreted the word challenging in a positive way.

5.3.6 Self-efficacy

The self-efficacy component consisted of eight items that measured the extent to which the students perceived their abilities to write well, in terms of better linking their ideas and structuring their text at the paragraph and essay levels as well as maintaining self-confidence in learning how to write well in English, changed. Tables 5.11 and 5.12 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.11: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: self-efficacy component

Self-efficacy	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I feel confident about writing essays in English.	19%	19%	19%	26%	30%	15%	33%	19%	52%	66%	48%	56%

2. I am sure I can do well on writing courses even if they are difficult.	59%	37%	33%	30%	33%	33%	44%	37%	7%	30%	22%	33%
3. No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn how to write effectively in English.	33%	44%	22%	22%	11%	7%	44%	7%	56%	48%	33%	70%
4. When I come across difficult writing tasks, I give up easily.	33%	37%	19%	30%	11%	19%	26%	7%	56%	44%	56%	63%
5. I know how to write well in English.	22%	11%	15%	22%	44%	63%	56%	52%	33%	26%	30%	26%
6. I know how to structure my essays.	4%	7%	7%	15%	33%	30%	59%	52%	63%	63%	33%	33%
7. I know how to link my ideas within a paragraph.	15%	19%	22%	26%	52%	52%	33%	41%	33%	30%	44%	33%
8. I know how to link my ideas from paragraph to paragraph.	15%	19%	26%	22%	37%	48%	26%	44%	48%	33%	48%	33%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.11 shows all groups' responses to the self-efficacy component. This table indicates that all groups were relatively comparable before the intervention. Looking at the responses to the first item, the majority of the students in all groups said that they lacked confidence in their abilities to write essays in English. Their responses to items 2, 3, and 4 were relatively comparable. Most of them sounded positive about their determination to learn writing effectively in English and not giving up easily even if the tasks were difficult. Yet a significant number of students said that they were either unsure or disagreed with these items.

The remaining four questions dealt directly with the students' self-perception of their abilities to write essays in English. According to this table, the majority of the students seemed to be in agreement. A large number of them were either unsure or disagreed with items 5 to 8 about how far they could write well in English in general, structure their essays, and link their ideas at the

paragraph and essay levels. Being so unsure about these items in writing highlights their unawareness of such items and their importance in their writing.

Table 5.12: Findings of the post-questionnaire: self-efficacy component

Self-efficacy	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I feel confident about writing essays in English after learning (the structure).	15%	74%	78%	78%	30%	15%	15%	15%	56%	11%	7%	7%
2. I am sure I can do well on writing courses even if they are difficult after learning (the structure).	15%	70%	59%	63%	37%	19%	22%	33%	48%	11%	19%	4%
3. No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn how to write effectively in English even after learning (the structure).	30%	4%	4%	11%	22%	7%	4%	0%	48%	89%	92%	89%
4. When I come across difficult writing tasks, I give up easily even after learning (the structure).	41%	11%	19%	11%	22%	11%	4%	19%	37%	78%	78%	66%
5. After learning (the structure), I know how to write well in English.	22%	74%	78%	66%	41%	22%	15%	22%	37%	4%	15%	11%
6. After learning (the structure), I know how to structure my essays.	30%	74%	66%	78%	33%	11%	19%	11%	37%	15%	15%	11%
7. After learning (the structure), I know how to link my ideas within a paragraph.	33%	66%	74%	63%	15%	15%	7%	15%	52%	19%	19%	22%
8. After learning (the structure), I know how to link my ideas from paragraph to paragraph.	26%	70%	74%	70%	19%	15%	15%	11%	56%	15%	11%	19%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.12 shows the responses on the self-efficacy component after the intervention. This table shows interesting results as far as the three experimental groups are concerned. Contrary to only

15% of students in C group, the TGS, TS, and GS groups indicated highly positive results: over three quarters of the students felt confident about writing essays in English and doing well on writing courses after learning the intervention. Another remarkable change occurred in the experimental groups as far as items 2, 3, and 4 are concerned. An overwhelming number of the experimental students sounded more positive than they did in the pre-questionnaire as they felt that after the intervention they could do well on their writing tasks even if they were difficult, and their sense of being defeated was minimized to a great extent, unlike the control group.

The next four items indicate a remarkable change in the experimental groups due to the intervention. Unlike the control group, over three quarters of the students in the experimental groups indicated that they felt they could do well in writing courses, better structure their essays and link their ideas within a paragraph and at the essay level. This may be due to their increased awareness of their abilities and of such items as structuring their essays and organizing and linking their ideas.

5.3.7 Ideal L2-self

The ideal L2-self component comprised of four items that measured the extent to which the students imagined themselves as good writers and communicators in English, doing well in the future, and whether their future jobs required them to write well in English. Tables 5.13 and 5.14 present the findings on this component in the pre- and post-questionnaires respectively.

Table 5.13: Findings of the pre-questionnaire: ideal L2-self component

Ideal L2 Self	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to write well in English.	30%	41%	30%	41%	70%	15%	37%	26%	0%	44%	33%	33%
2. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to communicate well in English.	30%	52%	41%	37%	40%	7%	33%	33%	30%	41%	26%	30%
3. The things that I imagine doing in future require me to write in English effectively.	89%	96%	89%	96%	11%	4%	11%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
4. The job I imagine having in the future requires me to write well in English.	92%	89%	92%	85%	4%	7%	7%	7%	4%	4%	0%	7%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.13 illustrates the students' responses on the ideal l2-self component before the intervention. There seems to be a consensus between the groups across the four items, yet there are some variations in the first and second items. Looking at the first question, a relatively comparable number of students either agree or disagree on the idea that they could imagine themselves as someone who could write well in English. 70% of the control group students expressed great doubt about this item. The second item also indicates variation across the four groups, yet they seemed to be in harmony between the four groups. The last two items (3 and 4) show comparatively great agreement as 93% and 89% of the groups agreed that the things they imagined doing in the future and their future jobs required them to write well in English.

Table 5.14: Findings of the post-questionnaire: ideal L2-selfcomponent

Ideal L2 Self	Agree				Neither A or D				Disagree			
	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS	C	TGS	TS	GS
1. After learning (the structure), I can imagine myself as someone who is able to write well in English.	19%	89%	89%	70%	44%	15%	19%	26%	37%	4%	0%	4%
2. After learning (the structure), I can imagine myself as someone who is able to communicate well in English.	15%	63%	78%	74%	56%	22%	15%	15%	30%	15%	7%	11%
3. After learning (the structure), the things that I imagine doing in future require me to write in English effectively.	78%	92%	89%	82%	22%	7%	7%	15%	0%	0%	4%	4%
4. After learning (the structure), the job I imagine having in the future requires me to write well in English.	82%	89%	82%	85%	19%	11%	19%	7%	0%	0%	0%	7%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.14 shows the post-responses of the students on the ideal l2-self component which signals the changes that occurred due to the intervention. Unlike Table 5.13, the first two items show remarkable differences between the experimental groups and the control group: a great number of the experimental students imagined themselves agreed with them. As with the pre-questionnaire, items 3 and 4 illustrate that a vast majority of the students in all groups agreed with the idea that job prospects required from them to write well in English. This may be due to the nature of these two items as they are fact-finding ones.

5.4 Discussion of the questionnaires

Based on the findings presented in the previous section, the students' responses will be discussed in this section in relation to some of the recent L2 motivational theories reviewed previously in Chapter 2 to examine the extent to which the interventions affected the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English and to highlight any differences within and between the experimental groups and the control group.

Regarding the achievement goals, it was argued that if students were broadly aware of them they would be able to see the importance of improving their writing skills and level in order to achieve them (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993; Dornyei 2003, 2011). In other words, if their goals coincided with those that were included in the questionnaire, they would be able to see if they could achieve them. There were some interesting differences within and between the groups. The C group seemed to disagree with most of the goals, even to a greater extent in the post-questionnaire. It may be that they might not have felt that the writing course (in the non-experimental way) was effective or beneficial in terms of achieving their goals. They did not see how the writing course would help them in doing so. Unlike the C group, the three experimental groups agreed to a great extent that the intervention helped them feel they could achieve their learning goals, especially the ones that dealt with getting a degree and gaining good grades in exams. Even though the GS group seemed to have agreed more on the other goals than the TGS and TS groups, they all felt more enthusiastic about achieving goals to improve their English in other courses, getting a good job and completing their higher studies in the future. It appears that the intervention helped the students to have more positive motivational attitudes which then

would enhance their learning English. If the students could see that their broad goals are attainable, then this would motivate them to exert more effort to achieve them. Having improved in writing in English, according to their writing tests, the TGS, TS, and GS students felt like attaining their goals more than the C group.

The post-questionnaire signals a great change in the students' attitudes in the three experimental groups towards learning English and writing in English. The intervention seemed to have formed positive attitudes more in the experimental groups as they enjoyed learning English, found writing in English more interesting, and they looked forward to attending English classes. They also felt most satisfied when they attained good marks in their writing and were able to write more effectively than before. This might be related to experiencing more interesting structures that they felt they would benefit from in improving their writing and more interesting tasks and materials in the interventions. According to a number of motivational theorists (Ajzer and Fishbein 1977; Gardner 1985; Dornyei 1998), attitudes towards learning an L2 play a crucial role in enhancing students' motivation. Therefore, if the intervention helped the students to form positive attitudes towards learning and writing in English, then the students would be more likely to try to exert more effort and time towards learning and writing in English. Contrary to them, the C group appeared to have lost interest by the end of the course in learning to write in English. Comparing their attitudes with those of the experimental groups, it can be concluded that the writing course in the non-experimental way did not enhance their attitudes to enjoy learning and writing in English.

The interventions seemed to have helped the students in the experimental groups to minimize their language anxiety. To a great extent, the experimental groups were less worried and nervous and felt happier when carrying out writing tasks in English after the intervention than the control group in the post-questionnaire. The GS group appeared to feel more worried and nervous compared to the other two experimental groups. The findings on this component suggest that learning both thematic and generic structures decreased the level of anxiety in the experimental groups, and the thematic structure decreased the students' language anxiety in writing essays in English. It is argued that high levels of anxiety may inhibit students from enjoying learning and improving their L2 as there is a strong correlation between language anxiety and one's achievement in learning a language (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993). Therefore, minimizing the level of language anxiety towards learning and writing in English can result in better performance and increase students' motivation towards learning (Zare and Riasati, 2012).

Clearly, the interventions had a positive impact on the students' learning autonomy. Based on the findings on the autonomous learning component, there was a remarkable change in the experimental groups when the students' responses from pre- to post-questionnaires were compared. This suggests that the students felt more confident and started to trust themselves and their abilities more than the C group to carry out their writing tasks more independently and with lesser demand of the teacher's constant help and feedback. Because the control group did not receive any teaching of the interventions, they persisted on seeking the teacher's help and feedback and doubted that they could depend on their own abilities when writing essays in English. Having such a positive effect on the students' autonomous learning, their motivation towards learning a language would likely increase (Dornyei 1998; Ushioda 1996; Dickinson

1995). Autonomous learners can be described as intrinsically motivated learners who would take responsibilities of their learning and exhibit more life-long learning (Voller, 1997). This motivational component could be related to learners' achievement motivation expectancies in relation to academic confidence, learning strategies, and achievement goals (Eccles and Roeser, 2003). As a result of the interventions, it is likely that the students, who gained better academic confidence, would become autonomous learners.

Learning the structures resulted in enhancing the students' participation in the experimental groups in the English classes more than those in the control group. The exercises that were based on the structures might have been more useful, interesting, and challenging, so the students were more encouraged to take part more effectively in class participation. This component is important because it shows how much effort the students were willing to put in the English course. Dornyei's (1994) taxonomy of L2 motivation includes a course-specific component which is related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method, and the learning tasks. It encompasses four motivational conditions described by Keller (1983) and later by Crookes and Schmidt (1991): interest, relevance, expectancy of success, and satisfaction. They suggest that these motivational conditions are important in L2 contexts to improve learners' motivation towards learning a language. Accordingly, if the intervention succeeds in arousing interest in the task, relating the task to their lives, increasing their feelings of success, and enhancing their satisfaction in the outcome, then this is predicated to affect their motivation towards learning and improving their writing in English positively. Based on the students' responses, the interventions enhanced their effort and willingness to communicate to write in English effectively. This component is also seen in relation to learning anxiety as it could be

related to a number of factors of foreign language anxiety, such as communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986, cited in Zare and Riasati, 2012). The interventions seemed to minimize the students' communication apprehension as they were more willing to take part in the writing tasks based on the knowledge they acquired from the writing classes. Their fear decreased as their learning process moved forward, and they made good progress.

The findings of the self-efficacy component in the post-questionnaire suggest that the impact of the intervention on the students was great. After the intervention, a large majority of the students in the three experimental groups felt more confident about their abilities, more determined on doing well in the writing course and not giving up easily even if the writing course or tasks were difficult. Maintaining this self-confidence would result in enhancing self-efficacy which in turn would result in better learning and improving writing skills. Also, the students in the experimental groups, unlike the control group, claimed that their ability to write well in English increased in terms of better structuring essays, linking ideas within a paragraph or between paragraphs. Their answers showed that they felt more capable of judging their abilities based on their awareness of the interventions. The control group's responses were either unsure about their abilities in writing or they disagreed with being able to better structure or link their paragraphs effectively. Their uncertainty and disagreement about their knowledge or ability to write well, structure their essays, or link their ideas within a paragraph or from a paragraph to the next, suggest that they might be less important to them.

Self-efficacy theory stems out from expectancy-value theories, where two key factors to one's expectancy of success in a task and the value they attach to success on that particular task, are important in developing one's positive motivation towards learning the L2, (Dornyei, 2001). According to some motivational theories (Dornyei, 1998; Bandura, 1993), learners with low self-efficacy may lose faith in themselves and their capabilities to do well in learning an L2 with a tendency to give up easily. Learners with high self-efficacy tend to approach threatening situations with confidence to sustain a task- rather than self-diagnostic focus during task-involvement and to carry on and heighten effort in the face of failures. As for the results obtained from the pre- and post-questionnaires, the students' self-efficacy in the experimental groups had increased. They felt that they were able to carry out a writing task with more confidence. Their determination to succeed was enhanced, too.

The last component, which measured the impact of the interventions on the students' self-image, appeared to affect positively the experimental learners to a greater extent than the control group. Comparing the pre- and post-questionnaire on this component, the experimental groups' attitudes towards themselves changed remarkably as they could positively imagine themselves as people who could write and communicate well in English, unlike the control group who lacked positive perception of their ability to do well either in writing or communicating in English. Not much changed in their perception of the things they imagined doing or their future jobs which require them to write well in English. This suggests that the students dealt with these two points as facts that whatever they want to do in the future will certainly require writing well in English regardless of how they imagined themselves as people who can write or communicate well in English. Dornyei and Ushioda (2003) suggest that future self-guides are "a primary motivational

force” and according to the present findings the intervention could “bridge the gap between the actual self and their projected goal states” (pp. 350-351). The latter authors also indicate that there are a number of empirical studies that have proven that “future self-guides are potent motivators” (Ibid.). Therefore, the intervention could positively affect students’ self-image as EFL learners, and their motivation would be more enhanced towards learning the English language.

5.5 The pre- and post-ranking question

In the following section, the results of the pre- and post-ranking questions are presented and discussed for each group individually. Comparisons are drawn (1) within the groups to highlight any differences and (2) between the groups in the pre- and post-questionnaires to examine the effect of the intervention on the students in the experimental groups and to compare it with the control group. In this question, the students had to rank five items that are prevalent in their writing according to their importance to them. These items were grammar, spelling, organization, vocabulary, and linking ideas. All the students were asked to rank them from 1 to 5, where 1 represented the least important and 5 the most important.

5.5.1 Findings of the ranking question for all groups

The findings are presented in separate tables for each group. Each table comprised the results of the pre- and post-ranking questions.

Table 5.15: Findings of the pre- and post-ranking question: CG

C	Grammar		Spelling		Organization		Vocabulary		Linking Ideas	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1/Least important	11%	7%	19%	19%	26%	41%	11%	7%	33%	26%
2	4%	7%	11%	19%	37%	30%	19%	11%	30%	33%
3	19%	22%	19%	26%	22%	15%	22%	15%	19%	22%
4	22%	22%	26%	19%	15%	4%	22%	41%	15%	15%
5/most important	44%	41%	26%	19%	0%	11%	26%	26%	4%	4%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.15 shows the results found in the ranking question for the control group. Comparing the students' responses in the pre- and post-questions, we notice that very few changes took place regarding most of the items. The table shows that the most important item in writing was grammar in the pre- and post-questions (44% and 41% respectively), followed by vocabulary and spelling. Linking ideas and organization were the least important items in both the pre- and post-questions. Very few students opted for these two items as the most important ones in their writing, where a big number of students ranked them as either the first or second least important items.

Table 5.16: Findings of the pre- and post-ranking question: TGS group

TGS	Grammar		Spelling		Organization		Vocabulary		Linking Ideas	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1/Least important	7%	11%	26%	63%	33%	4%	7%	22%	26%	0%
2	7%	19%	11%	19%	44%	11%	4%	41%	33%	11%
3	22%	52%	15%	7%	11%	7%	26%	22%	26%	11%
4	26%	11%	26%	4%	7%	33%	33%	11%	7%	41%
5/most important	37%	7%	22%	7%	4%	44%	30%	4%	7%	37%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.16 represents the results found in the ranking question for the TGS group. On one hand, this table indicates that the most important item in writing before the intervention was grammar (37%) followed by vocabulary (30%). It also illustrates that in the pre-question, a big number of students ranked organization and linking ideas as the first or second least two important items in their writing. On the other hand, there are some interesting changes that took place after the intervention. The table shows that the first most important item in writing was organization (44%) followed by linking ideas in the second most important stage (37%). The post-results show that almost over three quarter of the students chose organization and linking ideas as the first and second most important stages. Also, this table shows two more shifts in students' responses in items referring to spelling and vocabulary as only two students chose spelling as the most important item and one student chose vocabulary as the most important item. A final interesting shift was in the students' responses towards grammar as only two students opted for it as the most important item, unlike in the pre-question.

Table 5.17: Findings of the pre- and post-ranking question: TS group

TS	Grammar		Spelling		Organization		Vocabulary		Linking Ideas	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1/Least important	7%	15%	30%	48%	37%	0%	19%	33%	7%	7%
2	0%	37%	22%	41%	22%	11%	4%	11%	52%	0%
3	15%	26%	11%	7%	26%	22%	30%	37%	19%	4%
4	19%	15%	22%	0%	15%	30%	30%	7%	15%	48%
5/most important	59%	7%	15%	4%	0%	37%	19%	11%	7%	41%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.17 demonstrates the results found in the ranking question for the TS group. Before the intervention, roughly more than half of the students chose grammar as the most important item in writing and organization as the least important item. 30% of the students chose vocabulary as the second most important stage and spelling as the least important item. 52% of the students ranked linking ideas as the second least important item. Some interesting shifts occurred in the table after the intervention. About 41% of the students ranked linking ideas as the first most important item in their writing, while only two students chose grammar as the most important item, signalling a great shift from the pre- to post-intervention. Around three quarter of the students chose organization as the second most important item at the first and second stages, indicating a great shift from the pre-question.

Table 5.18: Findings of the pre- and post-ranking question: GS group

GS	Grammar		Spelling		Organization		Vocabulary		Linking Ideas	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1/Least important	11%	11%	30%	67%	22%	0%	7%	19%	30%	4%
2	7%	22%	11%	26%	41%	0%	19%	52%	22%	0%
3	11%	41%	26%	7%	19%	15%	11%	22%	33%	15%
4	19%	15%	26%	0%	19%	33%	33%	4%	4%	48%
5/most important	52%	11%	7%	0%	0%	52%	30%	30%	11%	33%

Note: A rounded 4% corresponds to one student

Table 5.18 shows the results found in the ranking question for the GS group. On the one hand, it indicates that more than half of the students chose grammar as the most important item in writing and vocabulary, then, was followed as the second most important item (30%). It shows that the least important items were linking ideas and spelling (30%). A big number of students ranked organization as the second least important item. On the other hand, after learning generic structure in their writing course, 52% of the students opted for organization as the first most important item in their writing, indicating a great shift from the pre-intervention result. Linking ideas took place as the second most important item. This table shows that in the post-question, an overwhelming majority of the students chose organization and linking ideas as the first and second most important items. The post-results show that a significant number of students ranked spelling as the least important item. There was a shift in the students' responses regarding grammar: only three students ranked it as the most important item whereas, after the intervention the majority ranked it as the third most important item in their writing.

5.5.2 Discussion of the findings of the ranking question

As far as the pre-ranking question is concerned, a number of similarities are found between the four groups when their responses are compared. Around 48% of the students in all groups ranked grammar as the first most important item in their writing, 59% of the TS group, and 37% of the TGS group. This may reflect the effect of teaching English in general and writing in particular to these students throughout the years from school to university levels, where the primary focus is on teaching grammar even when they teach writing. Based on my experience in teaching English for years at government schools and at university, I can say that teachers tend to focus excessively on grammar in their teaching materials and activities even when they attempt to teach writing. A lot of time and effort is dedicated to teaching grammar and most of the writing activities are based on grammar. Even feedback on students' written work is done through correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes, and less effort is given to correcting organization and incoherent essays in terms of linking ideas within a paragraph and from a paragraph to another. This may have affected the students' perception of learning a language in that it should mostly rely on learning grammar and neglecting other important items such as organization and linking their ideas to achieve cohesive and coherent texts. This is very much obvious when we look at their least important choices regarding the above items. According to the previous four tables, the majority of students chose either organization or linking ideas as their first or second least important items when they had to write in English, suggesting students' unawareness of the importance of these items in writing.

Comparing the groups in the pre- and post-ranking questions, there are some significant changes that have taken place in the three experimental groups but not in the control group. The main choices that the control group made in the pre- and post-questionnaires remained relatively similar, where grammar ranked top on their priority list, and organization and linking ideas were at the bottom of the list. The three experimental groups ranked organization and linking ideas as very important, then grammar and vocabulary, and ending with spelling at the bottom of their list. These changes can be attributed to the interventions when the experimental groups and the control group are compared. The interventions may have enhanced the experimental students' perception and awareness of the existence of other important items in writing rather than only focusing on grammar and vocabulary in order to improve their writing quality. It is safe to assume that the teaching materials, writing tasks, and feedback on their written work may have led the students to shift their focus from looking solely at their grammar or vocabulary mistakes to other, not less important, items in writing: organization of their essays and linking their ideas within paragraphs and at the essay level. The interventions provided the students with a new experience that helped them to develop their writing quality by looking at the whole picture, how the essay should look like, and how the ideas could be linked and developed more effectively. According to SFL, teaching writing is a top-down procedure that helps learners to write at a text level and then move to its constituents (Hyland, 2008). By shifting the students' awareness "to a conscious manipulation of language and choice" (Ibid., p. 547), the students could improve their writing. From there, the students then could work out other grammar, punctuation, and spelling problems. Even then, attending to grammar would be from the angle that grammar "is a resource for producing texts: a repertoire of available choices for achieving particular purposes in particular contexts" (Ibid., p. 557), which is emphasized in SFL.

5.6 Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed the second set of the quantitative data collection: the questionnaires. It first discussed the pre- and post-questionnaires in relation to the seven components. These seven components are based on some of the most influential motivational theories in L2 context. Secondly, the pre- and post-ranking questions were discussed, in which the students ranked a number of items prevalent in their writing.

The results obtained from the pre- and post-questionnaires provided answers to the second set of the research questions posited by this study. Based on the responses of the students in the experimental groups, it can be concluded that their attitudes were enhanced after learning either thematic structure, generic structure or a combination of both structures, unlike the control group whose attitudes towards learning were not enhanced.

The pre- and post-ranking questions also measured the students' awareness of some of the prevalent items that they need to be aware of when writing in English: organization, linking ideas, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. The students' responses in the pre- and post-questionnaires show that the experimental groups' awareness was enhanced in that they had become more aware of the importance of the organization of their essays and linking their ideas.

As discussed earlier, a number of motivational theories in L2 argue that increasing students' motivation and attitudes enhances their learning. The interventions in this study proved to have a

positive impact on L2 learners. A more in-depth analysis of the students' attitudes in the three experimental groups will be discussed in the following chapter to add deeper insights into how far these structures impacted the students' attitudes and choices in writing and to find out which intervention had more positive impact on them.

CHAPTER 6

THE INTERVIEWS: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the qualitative data, namely, the interviews before and after the intervention for the three experimental groups. It first gives a brief background of the aims of the interviews, the types of questions, and the thematic analysis used. Then, it presents and discusses the themes that are found in the pre-interviews. After that, it presents and discusses the themes that were prevalent between the three groups after the intervention. Next, the findings of the interviews are discussed in light of some of the recent motivational theories in L2 context, comparing the groups in the pre- and post-interviews. Finally, it summarizes the outcomes discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Brief background of the interviews: aims, questions, and analysis method

The semi-structured interviews, which were administered to the three experimental groups before and after the intervention, encompassed a number of aims. First, the overall aim of the interviews was to conceptualize deeper insights into how the teaching of thematic structure, generic structure, and a combination of both structures impacted the students' motivation, attitudes, and choices in writing, and which intervention had a more positive impact. Second, the aim of the pre-interview was to survey the students' motivation and attitudes in the three experimental groups towards learning in English in general and writing in particular. Third, the post-

interviews aimed to elicit the students' responses to the intervention and how they viewed their writing to examine the extent to which it had affected their motivation and attitudes. Finally, the interview data was triangulated with the questionnaire data to fill in any gaps and to elaborate any detail that may help us to understand the relevant issues. This last aim will be discussed in the last chapter.

The pre- and post-interviews consisted of ten questions. Some of the questions were similar in the pre- and post-interviews; therefore, some comparisons were able to be made of the students' attitudes before and after the intervention. These questions were based on motivational theories such as judging one's capabilities, expectancy of success, language anxiety, and satisfaction. Other questions in the pre-interviews aimed to elicit responses on students' integrative and instrumental goals to improve their writing skills, identifying areas of weaknesses in writing, and suggesting ways to overcome their problems in writing. Other questions in the post-interviews investigated the students' awareness of the intervention and its effect on their writing, autonomous learning, and their perceptions of their writing capabilities and level.

Three students from each experimental group were interviewed, resulting in a total of 18 pre- and post-interviews. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. After reading thoroughly through the interviews, a number of common themes were identified (Table 6.1). These will be presented and analyzed as follows: (1) themes that are salient in the pre-interviews, and (2) themes that are prevalent in the post-interviews.

Table 6.1: Themes in the pre- and post-interviews

Pre-interview themes	Post-interview themes
<p>6.3.1 Negative attitudes towards writing in English</p> <p><i>“There are a lot of things to do, but because we feel they are difficult so we don’t try them.”</i></p>	<p>6.4.1 Positive attitudes towards the intervention/Ability to reflect</p> <p><i>“I encourage teaching these two structures to other students because they will improve themselves a lot as it happened with me.”</i></p> <p><i>“The layout of the essay is better. There are clear introduction and many paragraphs.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.2 Poor perception of writing abilities and dissatisfaction with grades</p> <p><i>“I don’t think I’m more than average”</i></p>	<p>6.4.2 A sense of improvement</p> <p><i>“There are certain things that improved in the way I write.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.3 Low expectancy of success</p> <p><i>“I think I will make a lot of mistakes”</i></p>	<p>6.4.3 Better expectancy of success</p> <p><i>“I can do it. I can trust myself more now and I can write better.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.4 Anticipation of problems in writing</p> <p><i>“I have problems in grammar.”</i></p>	<p>6.4.4 Increased confidence/Reduced learning anxiety</p> <p><i>“I feel now I can write about any topic”</i> <i>“I don’t fear from writing English like before.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.5 Teacher dependency</p> <p><i>“I believe I need a lot of assistance from my teacher or friends.”</i></p>	<p>6.4.5 Increased learner autonomy</p> <p><i>“I can now edit my own work. Learning generic structure helped me how to employ the structure to improve my writing skills.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.6 A desire to improve</p> <p><i>“I feel I can do better but I don’t know how.”</i></p>	<p>6.4.6 A desire for further improvement</p> <p><i>“Yeah a lot [satisfied] but I’m looking forward to gaining a better level in writing.”</i></p>
<p>6.3.7 Awareness of learning goals</p> <p><i>“I want to pass successfully my courses especially that all my courses are in English.”</i></p>	<p>6.4.7 Improvements in writing</p> <p><i>“Every paragraph should contain one main idea and examples to support that idea.”</i> <i>“I also avoided repeating myself in the paragraph.”</i></p>

6.3 Analysis of the pre-interviews

The analysis of the pre-interviews revealed a number of key themes that were consistent across the students interviewed in the three groups. Each theme is analysed in detail below. One limitation of the pre-interviews that is worth pointing out here was that the interviews were brief and uninformative as the students seemed to lack the ability to reflect thoroughly on their learning as they did in the post-interviews. Other reasons might be related to students' shyness and inexperience.

6.3.1 Negative attitudes towards writing in English

Some of the students made comments which suggested that they had negative attitudes towards their English learning. These comments show a lack of passion or interest in learning English and reveal low motivation in the students. For example, when talking about her level of writing in English, Hawra (GS) revealed: "I don't like writing a lot." Also, when she was asked about her goals and whether she could achieve them or not, her answer was quite interesting as it implied her wish that she did not even bother to improve herself: "For sure, if I try."

Two other students' responses show that they were demotivated to the extent that they had not practiced English for some time as indicated below:

Naseem (GS): I haven't practised English for some time.

Maryam (TS): I haven't practised it [English] for a long time.

When asked how they thought they could improve their writing in English, one student's response suggested her low motivation towards improving her level, as Aysha (TGS) said: "There are a lot of things to do, but because we feel they are difficult so we don't try them." Her answer suggests that maybe the tasks are not appropriate for their level or that there might not be enough scaffolding to allow her to solve these tasks. This, of course, would result in demotivating them.

One final example was when asked 'Do you think you can meet your goals [in English writing]?' Marwah (TS) said that she had a low opinion of what she was able to achieve in the future because she thought she could only be able to achieve them slightly, which could result in self-demotivation towards improving: "Yes, if I want to. But I will achieve them slightly."

6.3.2 Poor self-perception of writing abilities and dissatisfaction with grades

A common theme among the interviewees' answers in the pre-interviews was a poor self-perception of their writing skills and abilities. Their responses highlighted their negative attitudes towards their capabilities in performing well in writing in English. When they were asked 'How do you evaluate your level at writing in English?' all of them agreed that they did not expect to write well in English and graded themselves at average or lower levels. Hawra's (GS) response, "I don't think I'm more than average," was typical of most of the interviewees. Aysha and Talal felt even weaker in writing: "My level is bad. I don't think I can write well," Aysha (TGS), "I think I'm good but maybe not that good for a university level," (Talal, TGS).

All groups were dissatisfied with their writing abilities in English. When they were asked ‘Are you satisfied with your level?’ all the interviewees except for one indicated that they were not satisfied at all. They all wanted to improve their level in writing in English, suggesting that they were not happy with their writing level. For example, Hawra (GS) and Marwah (TS) said that they were not satisfied with their level at all. Talal (TGS), however, commented on this question and said he was satisfied but that he definitely needed to improve his level.

When asked ‘Are you happy with your grades in writing?’ six of them reported that they were not happy at all with their grades in writing. For example, Bushra (TS) said: “I don’t like the grades.” Other students sounded hesitant and agreed that their grades reflected their writing level. For example, Talal’s (TGS) comment on his grade was: “Well, I think so. It reflects my level.” Naseem (GS) was hesitant about her grade: “Well, maybe to a certain extent.” Tariq (TGS) said, “My grades are good, but I think I deserve less than this.” His response suggests that he was negative about himself and his abilities regardless his satisfaction with his grades.

6.3.3 Low expectancy of success

The third theme suggests that the students’ expectancy of success was low. When asked ‘Do you think you are capable of writing essays in English effectively?’ the students’ responses were highly critical, and they appeared not to trust their abilities to write effectively in English. Most of them gave very short and negative answers: Alaa (TGS) and Bushra (TS) said: “No.” Some students anticipated that they would make mistakes in their writing: Maryam (TS) said, “I think I will make a lot of mistakes as I haven’t practised it [writing] for a long time.”

6.3.4 Anticipation of problems in writing

One interesting issue that was common to the students in the three groups was their anticipation of problems in their writing. The majority of the students felt negatively towards writing, highlighting problems in different areas in writing, such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, linking and organization of ideas, repetition of ideas, and writing strategies.

To start with, four of the students expressed that they had problems in grammar. For example, Talal (TGS) said: “I have problems in grammar” and Hawra (GS) replied: “I have problems in spelling.” Five of the interviewees reported that they lacked sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas and needed to learn more words: Tariq (GS) said: “The words I know are not many. I want to use new words that suit the topic,” and Hawra (GS) related her inability to write a paragraph to her lack of a good command of vocabulary. Five students expressed that they had difficulty with organizing and linking their thoughts and ideas, as with Bushra (TS) who reported: “When it comes to writing, I face difficulty in organizing my ideas and how to start writing them logically.” She also said that her problem was related to the way she should organize her ideas: “You think you have ideas, but you don’t know how to use them coherently in a long essay... Linking ideas is what I have difficulty with.”

What is interesting was that two students related their problems in writing to their lack of coherence and tendency to repeat themselves, as Maryam (TS), for instance, who said: “Sometime I finish a point and I find myself repeating it again.” Alaa (TGS) referred to her lack of good writing strategies: “My writing strategies need to be improved.”

Some of the interviewees' responses implied that their main problems were in writing more than in other areas in learning English, as some of them highlighted their strengths in areas such as reading, speaking, grammar, and listening. For example, Bushra (TS) said: "Actually, I can understand when I read something or if someone speaks to me. In writing it is average, but I'm good at listening, reading and grammar"; Alaa (TGS) remarked: "I feel I'm very weak in writing. But my speaking is much better."

6.3.5 Teacher dependency

The students' responses implied that they did not have confidence in themselves and some of them explicitly indicated that they would not do well on their own without the help of the teacher, suggesting low perception of self-autonomous learning. They all reported that they had problems in writing, yet they lacked confidence in dealing with them on their own as indicated, for example, by:

Naseem (GS): I think I can do well if I get proper help from the teacher.

Alaa (TGS): Not alone. I believe I need a lot of assistance from my teacher or friends.

Aysha (TGS): On my own! I don't think so. I only feel confident in writing in English when the teacher is around.

A number of students seemed to have no practical ideas or tools that could help them work out the problems they were aware of as indicated below:

Tariq (GS): I feel I can write better, but I don't know how.

Bushra (TS): I feel I can do better, but I don't know how.

Alaa (TGS): I wish to improve my level in English, especially my writing, but I'm clueless as to how to do so.

One student pointed out that she tried a couple of things recommended by others but that they did not benefit her in improving her writing. This seems to indicate that she was an autonomous learner as she tried different things even though she was partially successful: "I love reading, but what I read doesn't benefit me a lot. Another thing I tried was watching series or movies. They helped me to improve my speaking but not my writing," Maryam (TS).

6.3.6 A desire to improve

Another theme which was common between the students in the pre-interviews was a strong desire to improve their English language writing skills. I believe that what drives this 'desire to improve' is the students' awareness of their learning goals as they all indicated that they had specific goals they wished to achieve by improving their writing level. Based on their responses, a strong correlation is detected between their goals and their desire to improve. This 'desire to improve' may be seen as a trigger one should aim at to motivate the students to improve. Almost all students explicitly said that they 'want' to improve their level in writing:

Hawra (GS): I want to improve my language.

Marwah (TS): I want to improve it [English] for my study and life. I want to know more words, their meanings and spellings.

Aysha (TGS): I want to improve myself. My speaking needs improving. I need to have more confidence in myself and improve my vocabulary.

Despite the students' negative attitudes towards learning English due to their realization of their current level in English, their low abilities to write effectively and their lack of effective means or tools to help them improve their writing level, they were hoping to improve themselves in learning the English language. When the interviewees were asked 'How do you think you can improve your writing in English?', some of them suggested, in general terms, different ways that they thought they would improve their writing skills. Five of the interviewees recommended reading different texts to improve their writing and to learn new words that would help them in writing: "Reading stories helps to enrich my vocabulary so I can write better," Tariq (GS).

Almost all of the students thought that by learning new words they could improve their writing. For example, Hawra (GS) said, "I should practise new words," and Marwah (TS) said, "[I want to] learn new words. If I know enough words, I can write better." Two students' suggestions focused on practising writing as a key to write better. For example, Talal (TGS) said, "I think I need to practise writing more. Then, I will learn how to write well.

Two other students suggested watching programmes in English. Naseem (GS), for example, reported that through watching programmes in English, her vocabulary will improve and consequently her writing will improve. She also said that if her speaking is improved, then her writing will improve: “When I speak well I will write well. When I watch programmes in English, I will learn to use expressions correctly and learn new words,” Naseem (GS).

Bushra (TS) and Maryam (TS) said that they tried different ways to improve their writing, but they failed and they expressed their ignorance of how to do so:

Bushra (TS): This is what I want to know: how to improve myself. I don’t know how to improve my writing.

Maryam (TS): I always ask this question to people. Some suggested reading and others suggested watching programmes in English. They helped me to improve my speaking but not my writing.

Tariq also commented that he would keep looking for ways to improve his writing, suggesting his ignorance of how to do so: “I will keep looking for other ways to improve myself in writing,” Tariq (GS).

The students’ suggestions on how to improve their writing imply that they were unaware of practical ways to do so and that they were just wishing that what they tried would benefit them. They mostly focused on areas that were not related directly to improving their writing, such as grammar, reading, speaking, and so on. Even though they had previously highlighted areas

where they had problems in writing, they did not know what to do to overcome them. For example, some of them talked about their problems in connecting their ideas coherently, yet they failed to pick up on this when asked about solutions to their problems and focused on other areas like reading or grammar.

6.3.7 Awareness of learning goals

The students replied to a number of questions that were related to identification of learning goals related to writing skills. The students were aware of their learning goals and the importance of improving their level in writing to achieve these goals, which were varied and covered a number of integrative and instrumental goals.

Three of the interviewees indicated that they wanted to improve their writing because they wanted to improve their use of the English language as it is a popular, global language. For example, Tariq (GS) said: “It is the language of the world.” Four mentioned that they wanted to improve their writing for their IT studies, like Marwah (TS): “I want to improve it (writing) for my study,” and to pass other courses successfully as indicated by Aysha (TGS): “I want to pass successfully my courses especially that all my courses are in English.” Maryam (TS) expressed her wish to pursue her post graduate studies and stressed the need of writing well in English: “I have a dream to finish my post graduate studies. I want to be good at researching and writing well. My ambition is to be a researcher. I think it is very important to improve my writing.” Alaa (TGS) reported that the need to improve her writing was related to her future work: “Tomorrow, I will need it for my work.” This was repeated by several others. Bushra (TS) mentioned that she

wanted to attain a graduation certificate. Other students wanted to improve their writing to help them in their life, for travelling and for entertainment.

All of the students shared relatively common learning goals and they all 'want' to improve themselves to meet their goals, yet their responses to whether they felt they could fulfil their goals were not promising as their answers suggested they lacked confidence in their current writing level. Many of them doubted achieving their goals, and they said that they needed a lot of effort to do so. Tariq (GS), for example, said: "I need to work on them." Other students reported that they could achieve their goals but either 'not fully' or 'slowly', as with Marwah (TS) who said: "Yeah, but I will achieve them slowly," and Talal (TGS) said, "I can but not fully."

Two more students' replies were interesting as they said that they could achieve their goals only if they tried, suggesting a sense of negative attitude about their abilities to the extent that they hypothetically imagined they could do so by using 'if': Hawra (GS) said, "If I try," and Bushra (TS) said, "Yeah, if you have the desire to succeed, then you will." Aysha (TGS) reported that she could not achieve her goals because of the problems she had in writing and that this demotivated her to improve herself: "I do want that [achieving her goals] but I need help. I have problems. I don't know how to improve."

6.4 Analysis of the post-interviews

The analysis of the post-interviews revealed a number of themes, most of them were found consistent across the three groups and some others were different. All the groups shared common themes such as positive attitudes towards the intervention and ability to reflect, a sense of improvement, better expectancy of success, increased confidence and reduced learning anxiety, increased learner autonomy, and room for further improvement. The last theme which is related to their evaluation of their writing quality and areas where they had improved was different between the TGS and TS groups and the GS group in some respects. The themes are discussed in the following sub-sections.

6.4.1 Positive attitudes towards the intervention and ability to reflect

The students formed positive attitudes towards the intervention as they considered it beneficial. When the students were asked whether they would recommend the learnt structures to other students, their responses demonstrated a positive perception of the intervention and its value as they all enthusiastically recommended it to other students:

Alaa (TGS): I encourage teaching these structures to other students because they will improve themselves a lot as it happened with me.

Maryam (TS): A lot. I don't know what they used to teach in this course, but I feel this is the essential thing that has benefited me a lot.

Hawra (GS): Yes, it is very beneficial.

The students' recommendation was based on the benefits they experienced after the intervention. Some encouraged teaching the intervention to other students with respect to factors such as increased confidence, minimized fear, and positive attitudes as these examples show:

Hawra (GS): Students will like it because it will help them. They will feel confident when writing.

Bushra (TS): It should be taught to other students. They will not fear writing in English.

Marwah (TS): I don't like English. The thing that kept me wanting to learn more was this structure. At least I entered the classroom with something I know and I can use to develop myself.

Other students recommended the intervention because it helped them improve their writing abilities and autonomous learning:

Naseem (GS): 100% yes. The structure is very important and everyone should study it, especially to those who wish to improve in writing reports, letters, discussion, or any other genre.

Aysha (TGS): If the basics are explained using these structures, then I believe students won't suffer a lot.

Talal (TGS): They [other students] will be able to depend on themselves. They will have better grades and their level will improve generally.

Bushra (TS): I benefited a lot. I feel theme-rheme is fixed in our minds. I can use it to check my work in a better way.

The students' positive attitudes can be seen noticeably through their increased ability to reflect on their writing level and learning. Their responses revealed their ability to identify their learning outcomes, what they had done, what they thought of their level after the intervention, what had changed in their writing, and views towards writing. This is also apparent in their replies to the question 'How do you evaluate your level at writing in English?' Below are some examples from the three groups.

Tariq (GS): After the course, it improved. There are certain things that improved in the way I write. Generally, my vocabulary and organization of ideas developed. The layout of the essay is better. There are clear introduction and many paragraphs. I feel I am more focused when I write. Not like before. I'm more confident in writing. I just think of the framework I need to use to write. Then, I can just write down my ideas in an easier way.

Bushra (TS): For a long time, I had problems when writing essays, especially the introduction. I didn't know how to start to write my essay. But now it takes me lesser time to know what I am supposed to write. I think the writing course helped me to know how to begin and how to link my ideas. I didn't know how to start, and I felt I was repeating myself all the time. But now I write better. You see, writing in English is difficult, but I feel now I can write and I don't fear writing in English like before.

Aysha (TGS): Generally, for me it has improved a lot; a noticeable improvement at the writing level as well as the grade level. At the beginning I was afraid, and all I wanted was just to pass the course with the minimum grade. But after the mid-term exam I began to notice that my writing changed and even my goal has changed from just passing the course with the minimum passing grade to passing with an excellent grade. For me, what I learned from this course was worth all my years of learning English. This course helped me a lot, and I benefited a lot from the things I studied.

The students' answers above imply that they had become more thoughtful and could provide deeper insights into their learning which they could only do after the intervention. They were able to point out areas where they gained strengths in comparison to their level before the intervention. All of them discussed the effect the intervention had on their organization of ideas, structuring the essay, linking ideas, and grades. They also reflected upon their attitudes towards learning and writing in English as they gained confidence in their abilities and overcame their fear. Now, they were more attentive what to focus on in their writing and how to go about doing so to overcome any potential problems.

6.4.2 A sense of improvement

The students' perception of their writing abilities was enhanced. All the interviewees reflected on the changes that took place in their writing, highlighting their improved writing abilities and how they viewed their writing before and after the intervention. Responding to a number of questions,

they all explicitly referred to their improvement by saying ‘improved’, ‘has improved’, ‘better than before’, etc. By using these expressions, the students implied that after the intervention they appreciated their abilities more than before. Tariq (GS) said, “There are certain things that improved in the way I write”; Marwah (TS) said, “I can say [my writing] has improved”; and Aysha (TGS) commented, “It has improved a lot; a noticeable improvement at the writing level”.

All the students referred directly to the effect of the intervention on their writing and could relate it to their improved writing abilities. Some of them reported that they could write better in terms of better organization, knowing how to start writing, and what to include with the help of the intervention. For example,

Tariq (GS): Before, I didn’t know how to write and what to write at the beginning or what to include in the conclusion. I know now how to organize the paragraphs according to the stages that I learnt.

Naseem (GS): Before the course, I always had in mind that one paragraph should contain all the ideas or information. But after the course, I learnt that every paragraph had its own purpose and how to write it in a better way. After the course, a lot changed in my opinion; generally the layout of the essay.

Aysha (TGS): Now I know what exactly is required from me. The generic structure taught us what we had to write and in what way.
Now I know how to write a coherent paragraph that talks about

one main idea and how then we should elaborate on this idea. At the beginning, we used to write anything that came to our minds.

Some students reported that they could write better because of the theme-rheme structure in that they could link ideas and identify the relationship between the sentences,

Alaa (TGS): Now I have a clear idea of how to start and end my essay. Also, what details I should include in the body. Even the way I should write my sentences and the relationship between the sentences are much better now.

Bushra (TS): I know now the basics of writing. Theme-rheme structure helped me a lot to organize and link my ideas.

Marwah (TS): I learnt how to begin my sentences and how to move to the next one. We learnt many patterns in the course that we can use to link our ideas.

Other students reported that their writing had become better than before in terms of taking lesser time to write and how to start writing using thematic structure to develop ideas in a systematic way.

Bushra (TS): Now it [writing] takes me lesser time to know how to write.

Maryam (TS): Now I can develop my ideas in a systematic way. I even helped my sister in writing her report.

Hawra (GS): I feel now I can start writing. All I have to do is to think of the layout of the essay and then think of the ideas. It is much easier.

6.4.3 Better expectancy of success

As a result of the improvements that took place in the way they write after the intervention, the students' expectancy of success was enhanced as well. Their responses about their capability to write effectively in English suggest that they had gained confidence in their writing abilities and now they expected to do better on writing tasks.

Hawra (GS): Yes, I can sit down and think of how to write and the number of paragraphs. I think I can do it.

Marwah (TS): I can do so by knowing how to start and what to include.

Alaa (TGS): I can do it. I trust myself more now, and I can write better.

Some students explained that they might still commit some mistakes regarding grammar or spelling, but they sounded more positive as they no longer had problems with their methods of organizing their essays and linking their ideas, implying that since they have dealt with issues like organization and linking their ideas, then other problems could be dealt with as well.

Tariq (GS): I can write, but I might have some mistakes that have to do with spelling or vocabulary.

Talal (TGS): I can write well but maybe with some mistakes, like in grammar or spelling.

But now the layout of the essay and how to link my paragraphs are much clearer.

6.4.4 Increased confidence and reduced learning anxiety

A theme that was prominent in the students' responses was related to their increased confidence in their abilities to write well. The students either explicitly or implicitly reported that their confidence in their abilities to carry out writing tasks was enhanced.

Hawra (GS): I gained confidence in writing.

Tariq (GS): I'm more confident in writing.

Aysha (TGS): I feel more confident now that I can write better.

Other students said that they felt better about their writing after the intervention as they started to organize their ideas, structure their essays and even express more effectively.

Talal (TGS): I feel now I can write about any topic because I know how to do

that following the stages you [the teacher] taught us in the

classroom.

Maryam (TS): I can organize my ideas

Naseem (GS): I feel I'm much better than before. I think I can use the stuff I learnt to write.

This increased confidence may be based on their enhanced perception of their writing abilities which they thought they gained because of the intervention. Using expressions like 'I feel I can do it', 'I can write', 'I can use', 'I know how' imply that the students could now trust their writing abilities more to do better.

Marwah (TS): I can write better than before.

Hawra (GS): I feel now I can start writing. I think I can do it.

Maryam (TS): I know how to write now

Aysha (TGS): After the mid-term exam, I began to notice that my writing had changed, and even my goal had changed from just passing the course with a minimum passing grade to passing it with an excellent grade.

Alaa (TGS): I can trust myself more now, and I can write longer essays.

This increased confidence reduced learning anxiety among the students after the intervention, for some of them explicitly reported that their fear of writing in English minimized to a great extent.

Aysha (TGS): Now I don't fear writing essays in English. Before, it was impossible for me to write with this confidence. Now it is not a nightmare any more as we have the necessary skills to enable us to write well in English.

Bushra (TS): I don't fear writing English like before.

Maryam (TS): I was afraid of this writing course, and I postponed it for some time because I was afraid I would get a bad grade. But now I tell my friends they should join the course quickly.

Some students expressed their satisfaction with the improvements they made and the better grades they attained in comparison to their level before the intervention, suggesting that they had become less anxious towards learning writing. When asked 'Are you satisfied with your current level in writing in English?' and 'Are you happy with your grades in writing?' they reported thus,

Naseem (GS): Sure, of course. Well, yes. I have gained better grades than before.

Maryam (TS): Yes. Yes, a lot.

Aysha (TGS): Yes, a lot. I gained good grades on my tests and assignments.

Easiness in carrying out the writing tasks seemed to have reduced the students' learning anxiety. Some students reported that because of the intervention they could now write more easily than before,

Hawra (GS): It [writing] is much easier.

Tariq (GS): I can write down my ideas more easily. The reader will find it

[my writing] easy to read.

Naseem (GS): The reader can follow what I write easily.

Maryam (TS): I can do that [writing] easily.

Aysha (TGS): Everything is simpler now.

Marwah (TS): To a certain extent, yes. My grades reflect the level I attained.

6.4.5 Increased learner autonomy

Another theme that was found in the post-interviews was related to the students' learning autonomy and whether they were capable of editing their writing tasks on their own. When asked 'Are you able to self-edit yourself?' the students' responses varied. Most of the students reported that they could now edit their work by utilizing the structures they learnt, suggesting independency from the teachers and increased confidence in themselves. For example,

Naseem (GS): I can now edit my own work. Learning generic structure helped
me to employ the structure to improve my writing skills.

Bushra (TS): Yes, I can. After writing the first draft, I can read it again and
check my ideas and how they are linked. I can use different
patterns to check my work.

Aysha (TGS): I know now how to go about editing my work.

Tariq's (GS) response reveals that his perception of editing written work enhanced as he suggested that editing should be beyond correcting grammatical or spelling mistakes to include organization of ideas and the essay layout,

Tariq (GS): Yes, I can. I tried to use it. Before, I used to correct my work focusing only on either spelling or vocabulary, but now I correct my ideas and the way my essay should be organized. I can say, for example, if this idea should come first or next and so on.

Two students said that they could edit their written work to a certain degree. Alaa (TGS) said he needed to practise it more, and Hawra (GS) needed sometimes the teacher's help,

Alaa (TGS): I have problems linking my ideas but with these structures I believe I can edit my own work to a certain extent. I need to practise a lot to master it.

Hawra (GS): Sometimes, I need the help of the teacher.

Talal's response suggests that what he learnt helped him to edit his work independently but that he might still need some help from the teacher not to correct his organization of the essay but his grammar mistakes,

Talal (TGS): Yes, sure I can but there will still be some simple mistakes. I think I can check the layout of the essay on my own following the stages, and I think I

can tell whether my paragraphs have good main ideas and if they are linked to the overall essay. But for grammar or other mistakes I think I still need the teacher to help me with them.

Marwah (TS) reported that she still could not edit her work independently, suggesting hesitance in carrying out amendments without the teacher's help. This could imply that weaker students need more time to be able to show more confidence in their ability to amend their own work: "No, I still cannot do that on my own," Marwah (TS).

6.4.6 A desire for further improvement

One common theme among all students in the three groups was their agreement for further improvement in their English writing. They all expressed their desire to improve 'more' their writing abilities and grades. This suggests that the intervention has enhanced their self-esteem, helped them to form positive attitudes towards their writing level, and increased their motivation.

Naseem (GS): Sure, of course [I'm satisfied] but I think I still need to improve myself in writing. I guess I want to gain better grades.

Maryam (TS): I still want to reach a better level. I want to improve it more.

Aysha (TGS): Yes, a lot [satisfied] but I'm looking forward to gaining a better level in writing

6.4.7 Improvements in writing

All students reported improvements in their writing. However, they tackled these improvements from different perspectives according to the type of intervention, indicating better awareness of the changes that occurred in their essay writing and their enhanced abilities to reflect on their learning. There are three common improvements across the three groups: (1) better paragraph use and essay structure, (2) awareness of contextual factors in texts, and (3) writing longer essays and including more ideas. The TGS and TS students identified two more areas where they improved: (1) better linking ideas and (2) excluding irrelevant information. These improvements are discussed in the separate sub-sections below.

6.4.7.1 Common themes across all groups

(1) Better paragraph use and essay structure

All students reported improvements in writing in terms of better paragraph use and essay structure. Due to the intervention, the students were much better in organizing their ideas, identifying the number of paragraphs, and identifying main ideas and supporting details. The GS and TGS students attributed their ability to better organization and layout to the learning of generic structure.

Tariq (GS): After the course, the layout of the essay is better. There are clear introduction and many paragraphs. I just think of the framework I need to use to write. I then can just write down my ideas more easily.

Aysha (TGS): The generic structure taught us what we had to write and in what way.

Now I know how to write a coherent paragraph that has a main idea and how then we should elaborate on this idea. I know what stages to include and how to link my ideas.

As is evident from the post-interviews, all students appeared to have a common problem regarding the number of paragraphs as they all attempted to write a one paragraph essay that contained all the ideas, not knowing exactly how to organize their ideas in separate paragraphs at the essay level, as indicated, for example, by:

Naseem (GS): Every paragraph should contain one main idea and examples to support that idea. The course helped me to learn to write in separate paragraphs and what I should include in each paragraph. Also, the course taught us different genres and different layouts according to the topics.

Marwah (TS): Before, all I used to do was to write all my ideas in one paragraph. But now I know that I should start with my topic, decide what to include in the body of the essay, and how to end.

Alaa (TGS): In the past, I used to think of only an introduction and sometimes one paragraph in the body, but I didn't have any idea what we should include in these paragraphs, how to start and how to end. But now I have a clearer

idea about how to start, how to end and what details I should include in the body.

The TS students attributed their improvements in organizing their essay to thematic structure, implying that the intervention intuitively led them to identify a number of paragraphs, linking them, and what to include in each one. The responses below show that now they write better essays now in terms of better organization of ideas using macro-themes and hyper-themes:

Bushra (TS): Theme-rheme structure helped me a lot to organize and link my ideas. The macro-theme helped me to know how to start my essay and how to link my hyper-themes to support my argument,

Talal (TGS): Now I write longer essays, starting from the introduction, moving to body and then the conclusion, using macro-themes and hyper-themes.

Maryam (TS): I can organize my ideas. I didn't know how to start my new topic and how to develop it. It [paragraph] is also linked to other paragraphs and each one deals with one main idea.

(2) Awareness of contextual factors in texts

The students in all groups highlighted an interesting area which is awareness of some of the contextual factors prevalent in texts. For example, all students were aware that their writing entails a purpose that carries a message,

Naseem (GS): I learnt that every paragraph had its own purpose and a way to

write. So, I used all the steps in the generic structure to deliver
my message.

Maryam (TS): I think about the scope of the essay, what I want to write about
and why.

Alaa (TGS): [I should] say what I'm writing and why I'm interested in the topic.

Another contextual factor in texts is related to the reader. All the interviewees were aware of the importance of considering the reader when writing so that they try to make their messages clear and suit the addressee:

Tariq (GS): Each essay has its own distinct stages so the reader will find it easy
to read.

Bushra (TS): That will help the reader to know what I am writing about.

Talal (TGS): To make it better for you [the teacher] to know what I'm writing
about.

(3) Writing longer essays and including more ideas

The students reported that they were better writers in terms of increased ability to write longer essays and including more ideas due to the intervention. At the beginning, they complained that they did not have much to write, as with Hawra (GS) who said: “In the past...I didn’t have much to write.” But after learning the structures, they could think of more main ideas, how to order them and how to elaborate on them:

Naseem (GS): Each paragraph talks about one main idea. Then, I can write more details and give examples.

Bushra (TS): After identifying my main ideas, I discussed them in more details. Now, what I focus more on is how to elaborate my ideas.

Aysha (TGS): Now, I know how to write a coherent paragraph that talks about one main idea and how then we should elaborate on this idea.

Tariq (GS): I learnt to write longer, detailed essays.

Marwah (TS): I can write longer essays now.

Talal (TGS): In the past, I couldn’t write an essay that reached 350 words. Now I write longer essays. This [thematic structure] helped me a lot to write longer essays.

6.4.7.2 Common themes in TS and TGS groups only

(1) Better linking of ideas

What is interesting is that only the TS and TGS students reported that they thought they were better at linking ideas at the paragraph and essay levels,

Bushra (TS): Theme-rheme structure helped me a lot to better link my ideas.

After writing the first draft, I read it again and check my ideas and how they are linked. I can use different patterns to check my work. I found my ideas are better-linked and somehow related to each other.

Alaa (TGS): Even the way I should write my sentences and the relationship between the sentences are much better now.

Maryam (TS): With theme-rheme structure I can do that [linking ideas] easily. I start with themes and finish with rhemes; I can then pick them [rhemes] up and start the following sentences.

Talal (TGS): Of course, all ideas are linked together throughout the essay. Then, my ideas are linked with the conclusion too. I think I can tell whether my paragraphs have good main ideas and if they are linked to the overall essay.

(2) Excluding irrelevant ideas and avoiding repeating one's self

The TS and TGS students reported that thematic structure helped them to avoid repeating themselves in their writing and that they felt they were better at excluding irrelevant ideas, as indicated by:

Bushra (TS): [in the past] I felt I was repeating myself all the time. It [theme/
rheme] helped me exclude irrelevant ideas and to stop
repeating myself.

Maryam (TS): My sentences are better linked and not repeated.

Marwah (TS): I avoided repeating myself in the paragraph.

Aysha (TGS): I can keep out any redundant information.

Alaa (TGS): Theme/rheme helped me to find the irrelevant information and
discard them.

Talal (TGS): There is no repetition anymore.

6.5 Discussion of the interviews

All the students in the three groups showed positive attitudes towards the intervention as they felt it helped them to improve their writing abilities in English. This may influence the learners' success in L2 learning (Csizer and Dornyei, 2005; Dornyei, 2003; Gardner and Lambert, 1972).

The students' reflection on their learning situation enabled them to examine the changes that took place in their writing, the writing tasks, their capabilities of handling the tasks successfully, and how far their learning goals are attainable. Since learners' attitude can impact learners' motivation towards learning a language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), it can be argued that the intervention impacted the students' motivation towards learning to write in English as their perception of the learning situation was enhanced, resulting in more enjoyment of the writing course and a desire to develop more abilities (Dornyei, 2003; Oxford and Shearin, 1996; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). It is safe to say that the writing materials, activities and tasks, which were designed for each intervention, motivated the students to improve their writing abilities.

The intervention affected the students positively and helped them to enhance not only their writing skills but also their metalinguistic awareness. Metalinguistic awareness can help learners to see that a language is a system of communication and that there are many different ways to use a language to produce a variety of meanings (Baten et al., 2011). Because of the intervention, the students were able to identify the areas where they gained strengths, the changes they made to their writing, what they thought of the structures they learnt, and how they recognized their writing abilities. They also showed better understanding of their improvements and what caused those improvements to take place. They all attributed their improvements to the learning of the structures. This will help them in developing their writing even after the course finished. The intervention also enhanced the students' beliefs about their ability to infer causes for improvements and success (Weiner, 1992). This ability to infer will impact the students' future choices and determine their future behaviour as they would behave in a certain way based on their inferences and past experiences (Ibid.).

The students showed high expectancy of success when compared with their attitudes before the intervention. They based their expectancy of success on the improvements that took place in their writing abilities. Because they viewed themselves as far better writers in English after the intervention, they expected themselves to succeed in carrying out their writing tasks and sounded more positive about their abilities as they no longer faced difficulty with problems, like organizing their essays and linking their ideas. Their efforts resulted in their attainment of the desired performance which is based on their self-efficacy, the difficulty of goals, and control (Vroom, 1964). To explain this, the students' self-efficacy was improved because their ability to perform a particular behaviour successfully, namely, the writing tasks, was enhanced. All the students were positively sure of the belief 'I can do it' which increased both their effort and task achievement (Bandura, 1997). This may affect the students' learning goals as they would feel that these goals are attainable. Therefore, the intervention impacted the way the students felt about having some degree of control over the expected outcome from their writing course.

The intervention increased the students' confidence and reduced their learning anxiety towards writing. The students expressed that their uneasiness, nervousness, and worrying about writing in English were minimized when carrying out their writing tasks due to the intervention. They showed great satisfaction about their level in English, and they were far happier with their grades. In the pre-interviews, the students lacked satisfaction with their writing abilities and grades, suggesting negative perception of their performance in writing in English. This could result in increasing their level of fear of doing badly or even failing, as their grades were not promising. This resulted in affecting the students' confidence and self-esteem negatively, as there is a strong correlation between anxiety and self-esteem in learning a language (Zare and

Riasati, 2012; Peleg, 2009; Patten, 1983). If learners experience high level of anxiety, then their self-esteem will be low. But, if they minimize their anxiety, then their self-esteem will be high. Both situations will affect the learners' learning process. This study showed that the intervention helped the students to maximize their self-esteem and confidence and minimize their learning anxiety (Cubukcu, 2007; Cheng, 2004; Horwitz et al., 1986). The students perceived themselves to be capable of writing successfully, and thus their anxiety level was reduced. Experiencing high level of self-esteem and confidence, the students might be able to overcome learning obstacles that they may encounter and, hence, help them to approach the writing tasks more appropriately.

The intervention affected the students' autonomous learning positively which improved their motivation towards learning and writing in English (Dornyei, 1998a; Ushioda, 1996). A key factor that might have helped the students to enhance their learning autonomy could be related to their enhanced awareness. Raising learners' awareness of their learning goals, needs and evaluation of their learning would likely result in better autonomous learning (Sinclair et al., 1999). Due to their increased confidence and developing a positive perception of their writing abilities, the students felt that they could carry out their writing tasks independently and edit their written work applying the structures they learnt as they reported in the post-interviews. In the pre-interviews the students were more dependent on the teacher for instructions and feedback. The results of this study suggest that the interventions in the three groups provided the students with appropriate tools that they could apply to show great independency from the teacher, taking some responsibility for their own learning, and perceiving that their success could be attributed to their efforts and strategies rather than factors outside their control (Dickinson, 1995). Some

students reported that they were still in need of the teacher's continuous help, which may suggest that students with medium and low writing abilities may need more time to develop learning autonomy.

The intervention affected positively the students' attitudes towards their learning goals. In the pre-interviews, even though the students were aware of some of their learning goals, they were hesitant about whether they could attain them or not due to their low perception of their writing abilities and low expectancy of success. In the post-interviews, the students' responses suggest that they increased their self-perception of their abilities and showed great interest in succeeding in the writing course which, as a result, may affect their perception about achieving their learning goals in the future. The change in their attitude could be related to the intervention which motivated the students to exert more effort to achieve their goals, as it aroused their desire to learn more and increased satisfaction towards learning the language (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995). The intervention helped the students to see that their goals were possible and important; consequently, commitment towards achieving these goals was likely to increase (Locke, 1996, cited in Dornyei, 2011).

The students' increased awareness of what type of improvements occurred in writing suggests which intervention had the most effect on students' motivation and attitudes towards writing. According to the results discussed in section 6.4.7, the students experienced similar and different improvements. All of them reported that all types of the interventions helped them in better structuring their essays, enhanced awareness of contextual factors when writing essays, and increased ability to write longer essays and include more ideas. They were different in terms of

better linked ideas and excluding irrelevant ideas, an effect which was only evident in the TGS and TS groups. We can say that the teaching of thematic structure resulted in better outcomes than generic structure. TS enhanced the students' awareness of the contextual factors and structuring essays; whereas, GS did not result in enhancing the students' awareness of linking ideas and excluding irrelevant information.

6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter presented, analyzed, and discussed the findings of the pre- and post-interviews for the three experimental groups. First, it presented and analyzed the pre-interview findings and then the post-interview findings. A discussion of the pre- and post-interviews was carried out to examine the extent to which the intervention affected the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English.

In the pre-interviews, a number of common themes were identified across the three groups. They all had low perception of their writing abilities, low expectancy of success, dissatisfaction and anticipation of problems in writing, and negative attitudes towards writing. Yet they were all aware of their learning goals and expressed a strong desire to improve themselves to write better in English. In the post interviews, and regardless of the types of the intervention, all three groups' motivation was enhanced. They all shared common themes, such as positive attitudes and ability to reflect on their learning and improvements in their writing, experiencing a sense of improvement, increased confidence and reduced learning anxiety, increased expectancy of

success, increased learner autonomy, improvements in writing, and a desire for further improvement in the future.

These qualitative findings show that learning thematic structure, generic structure, and a combination of both structures have positive results on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. They have affected the way the students perceived themselves as writers and their writing abilities, as some positive changes took place after the intervention. The interviews helped to get deeper insights into how the teaching of thematic structure, generic structure, and a combination of both structures impacted the students' attitudes and choices in writing. It seems that learning thematic structure has resulted in making the students more aware of not only the importance of linking their ideas but also organizing their essay, that is, how to begin, how many paragraphs to write, what to include in each one, how to end the essays, and how to use contextual factors such as the reader and the purpose. The GS students focused mainly on changes that accounted for layout and organization of essays. Their awareness of the contextual factors, namely delivering their message and guiding the reader through their essays, was improved. Yet, it seems that learning GS did not result in enhancing the students' awareness of the importance of their ideas and how they were linked to each other. Unlike the TGS and TS groups, the GS group did not pay attention to repetition of ideas and how to avoid them. Clearly, all the three experimental students' attitudes improved because of the intervention. This positive impact may motivate students to exert more effort and time to develop their writing level.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, CONTRIBUTION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the major issues that resulted from the analysis of the data in the light of the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2. The focus will be on revisiting the main objectives of the study and summarizing the original knowledge that emerges from the study. This chapter will also offer a critical evaluation of the research and its limitations and point out new directions for further research in the future.

7.2 Summary of the findings

This study investigated the effect of teaching thematic and generic structures to EFL students at university level on their writing quality, motivation, and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The quasi-experimental study implemented three methods of data collection: writing tests, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The findings are summarized and implications are discussed below.

7.2.1 The writing tests

As far as the writing tests are concerned, this study found multiple findings between the four groups. On the one hand, there were significant statistical differences between the three

experimental groups and the control group on the pre- and post-tests. The improvement in the students' writing quality that occurred in the experimental groups can be attributed to the intervention. On the other hand, the statistical findings revealed that there were no significant differences between the three experimental groups. Holistically, all experimental groups did well on the post-test, regardless of the type of intervention. Similarly, the analytical findings showed that there were no significant differences between them. However, after carrying out the in-depth analysis, some interesting findings emerged that added more insights to the statistical ones.

The grading of the scripts applying the generic structure criterion showed that not only the TGS and GS groups did well on applying the stages of the discussion genre, but that the TS group also, surprisingly, managed to use the genre effectively. One reason can be that the explicit teaching of macro- and hyper-themes at the discourse level to signal what is to come helped the TS students to establish expectations about how the text or paragraph will unfold (Coffin et al., 2009). The findings confirm that these thematic patterns mark the stages of a genre, and that generic and thematic structures are closely related and interdependent. Another reason can be that the scoring of the scripts applying the thematic structure criterion failed to capture any differences between the three groups. It did not help much in signposting how far the three groups were different or similar.

The in-depth analysis of 45 scripts of the post-tests, though, revealed interesting findings, differentiating the TS and TGS groups from the GS group. The findings confirm that the TS and TGS groups are better at using the linear theme pattern and split rheme pattern effectively than

the GS group who overused the constant theme pattern and used the other two types of patterns less often.

The results of the statistical and in-depth analyses reveal that the students in the experimental groups benefitted from the intervention and improved their writing quality in terms of coherence and cohesion. The statistical findings attempted to measure the students' writing quality in terms of coherence. The results indicate that the TGS, TS, and GS students were successful in writing more coherent essays than the control group. They were able to maintain the overall text flow and organize their essays in a better way, employing a top to bottom method to communicate their ideas effectively and to deliver their message to the readers successfully. The in-depth analysis of thematic progression patterns contributed to measuring the writing quality in terms of cohesion, as it looked into how far the sentences were well-connected throughout the essay and the paragraphs. The results show that the TGS and TS groups were more successful in using the different thematic patterns across their essays to interweave their ideas and to produce more cohesive and coherent essays. The sentences were well connected using the linear theme pattern effectively alongside the constant theme pattern and split up rheme pattern.

Studies (Tan and Sun 2010; Thomas 2008; Wu 2003; Nwogu 1990) have shown that in a discussion genre the linear theme pattern is dominant. Since the choices of thematic patterns are not arbitrary and depend largely on the type of genre, and if we are seeking better writers and long-term effects, EFL students should be acquainted with these different thematic patterns in

different texts and be given opportunities to apply them effectively in their own writing. One of the problems unskilled writers have is that they overuse the constant pattern (Ebrahimi and Ebrahimi, 2010; Xudong, 2003; Belmonte and McCabe, 1998), and this was confirmed by the findings from the GS group. This indicates that EFL students need more than learning about generic structure; they need explicit knowledge about thematic progression patterns to help them overcome problems such as the overuse of the constant theme pattern that can lead to a less cohesive text (Eggins, 2004).

In summary, the in-depth findings suggest that teaching thematic structure can intuitively help EFL learners to learn generic structure of a genre, but learning generic structure does not necessarily lead to a better use of thematic structure patterns. Combining thematic structure and generic structure is likely to result in better outcomes rather than teaching generic structure on its own.

7.2.2 The questionnaires

The findings from the questionnaires show interesting differences between the three experimental groups and the control group on the pre- and post-results. The findings confirm that the intervention, regardless of its type, had a positive impact on the experimental groups' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The students' motivation towards learning and writing in English had been enhanced, taking into account a number of motivational factors. To start with, the intervention seemed to (a) motivate the students to expend more effort to achieve their goals; (b) increase their desire to learn the English language as they

now enjoyed the learning tasks; and (c) enhance their satisfaction with the task (Tremblay and Gardner, 1995; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991).

The intervention also helped to improve the students' instrumental/extrinsic motivation (Gardner 1985; Brown 2000) as students' awareness of the purpose for learning English, whether for job promotion, to attain good grades, pass an exam, or visualizing themselves as good writers of English, was enhanced. Enhancing one's self-image that they are capable of doing better may result in better motivated learners. The intervention helped students to link past successes on writing tasks with their future achievement efforts (Dornyei, 1998a; 2001, 2011; Weiner, 1992).

The students' expectations to succeed in the writing tasks and activities increased. The reward that the students got by successfully accomplishing the writing tasks and the value they attached to such a success in the assigned tasks had a great impact on their attitudes towards learning writing in English. Dornyei (2011) puts it clearly: "the greater the perceived likelihood of goal attainment and the greater the incentive value of the goal, the higher the degree of the individual's positive motivation" (p. 13). After the intervention, the learners' self-efficacy improved, as they felt that they could judge their capabilities of learning the tasks better and not give up easily even if the tasks are difficult. This resulted in increasing their self-esteem and confidence and in minimizing their learning anxiety.

Finally, the replies to the pre- and post-ranking questions suggest that the students' awareness of some influential factors in writing, such as organization of the essay, and linking and organizing ideas at the paragraph and discourse levels, were enhanced by the intervention.

7.2.3 The interviews

The thematic analysis of the pre-interviews revealed seven main themes about the student's perception and attitudes of their English writing, which were consistent between the three experimental groups before the intervention. First, the students had a low self-perception of their abilities in English writing, pointing out their weaknesses and lack of good writing abilities. They indicated dissatisfaction with their level and grades due to their low level in writing. The students had low expectancy of success because they did not expect to perform well in writing. They had negative feelings towards writing in English, as they anticipated a lot of problems when they carried out writing tasks. This led to the next two themes which were about teacher dependency which results in low perception of autonomous learning and negative attitudes towards writing. Some students had a negative outlook on learning English writing, particularly lack of enthusiasm, interest, and motivation. However, all students were able to identify some of their learning goals, and this resulted in building up a desire to improve although they sounded hopeless about finding useful and practical ways to improve their writing.

The thematic analysis of the post-interviews also revealed seven main themes that measured the positive effect of the intervention on the students' motivation and attitudes towards learning and

writing in English. These themes were consistent among the three experimental groups except for one theme which revealed some differences regarding improvement in writing.

To begin with, all students showed interest in reflecting on their learning, highlighting changes that took place in their writing after the intervention. The students, due to the intervention, formed positive attitudes towards their learning as they highly recommended it to other students learning English. Their confidence in their writing abilities increased, resulting in increased autonomous learning as students could trust themselves to carry out writing tasks and amend their work. Their perception of their writing abilities was enhanced as they felt a sense of improvement in carrying out writing tasks successfully. The students' expectancy of success increased as a result of better writing abilities. Because of increased self-confidence and expectancy of success, the students' learning anxiety was reduced. Finally, all students expressed their wish to take their improvements even further as a result of increased motivation towards writing better in English.

The last theme which was about the improvements the students made in their writing revealed some similarities and differences. The TGS, TS, and GS groups were similar in that the students' awareness of a number of issues prevalent in writing was enhanced: good essay structure, contextual factors in texts, and ability to write longer essays and include more ideas. They were different in terms of linking ideas better and excluding irrelevant ideas which were expressed by the TGS and TS groups but not by the GS group. These views suggest that learning thematic

structure helped in increasing the students' awareness of more factors in writing than the GS group.

7.2.4 Triangulation of the findings of the questionnaires, interviews, and tests

The findings of this study contributed to the area where the results of the tests, the questionnaires, and the interviews can be triangulated to highlight any similarities or differences between the experimental groups. This triangulation enhanced the validity of this research study.

The findings of the questionnaires validated the findings of the interviews. The students were aware of their learning goals, and they felt that the intervention had a positive impact in that they felt that what they learnt will help them in achieving their goals. Both the findings from the questionnaires and the interviews confirmed that the intervention resulted in positive attitudes towards learning and writing in English. The improvement in writing encouraged them to look forward to a further improvement as they enjoyed the writing class and found that what they learnt benefitted them a lot. The findings corroborated those of the interviews in that the intervention helped in minimizing learning anxiety. Yet, this component was more evident in the TGS and TS groups than in the GS group, as they explicitly reported in their interviews that they no longer feared writing, and that now they approached their writing tasks more confidently. This means that learning thematic structure helped the students by reducing language anxiety more than learning generic structure.

The findings from both methods confirm that the intervention impacted positively the students' learning autonomy. The students in the experimental groups showed great confidence in learning independently to write and to edit their written work using the taught structures. What is more, students' self-efficacy was enhanced as they reported positive outcomes from the questionnaires and the interviews. The findings proved that both structures helped to enhance the students' expectancy of success based on better perceptions of their writing abilities and improvement in writing in English. The last point is related to the students' awareness of some of the prevalent factors in writing that they did not pay much attention to before the intervention.

The findings from the post-questionnaire on the ranking question signal a major shift in the experimental groups' awareness of organization of essay, layout, and linking their ideas at the paragraph and essay levels. These findings can be validated with the students' responses in the interviews when discussing the changes that took place in their writing, highlighting their knowledge of these factors in improving their writing. However, the post-interviews revealed more insights concerning this issue. The TS students were aware of essay structure and some contextual factors even though they were not explicitly taught those skills. The GS students, unlike the TGS and TS students, did not pay much attention to linking ideas and excluding irrelevant ones.

The findings from the tests helped to validate the findings from the questionnaires and the interviews. A good example is the students' responses in Table 5.4 regarding the attitudes component which reflected their performance in the post-test. Managing to write effectively in

English and attaining good grades reflect the positive change in the experimental groups' attitudes towards learning and writing in English, whereas the control group felt the least satisfied towards their level and grades, reflecting their poor performance in writing. Another example is related to Table 5.6 which measured the students' language anxiety. Comparing the experimental groups with the control group, we find that the experimental groups were less worried and nervous when writing in English, unlike the control group. This can be explained in relation with the students' performance in writing. The control group felt most worried and nervous because they could not do well in their writing course. Table 5.12 exhibits some interesting responses that can be related to the students' performance in writing. Because the experimental groups managed to do better in the writing course, their confidence and self-efficacy increased, unlike the control group.

One more example can be related to the experimental groups' responses to questions 1 and 2 in Table 5.14. After the intervention, the students improved their writing level and did well in their writing tasks and tests. This resulted in enhancing the students' self-image as the majority could imagine themselves as people who can write and communicate well in English, unlike the control group who expressed great hesitance towards these two questions.

A final example can be in relation with the ranking question which reflected the students' awareness of organization and linking ideas in their writing. As it is evident from the post-test, the experimental groups outperformed the control group. Their essays were far better as they

organized and structured their essays in a much better way. This shows their enhanced awareness of the importance of these factors in improving their writing quality.

7.3 Limitations

It is vital that a researcher makes their study's limitations explicit to other researchers to allow them replicate the study and to "judge to what extent the findings can or cannot be generalized to other people and situations" (Creswell, 2005, p. 198). The design and conduct of the current research study had a number of limitations. First, being the researcher as well as the lecturer may have influenced the objectivity of the findings of the study as the students may have been intimidated and tried to meet the perceived expectations by the lecturer/researcher. To avoid introducing a bias, the researcher tried her best to be neutral and behave the same way in the four groups. The participants were informed when carrying out the questionnaires and the interviews that their answers, whether positive or negative, are of great value as they enlighten researchers of possible solutions to problems that they may encounter during their studies and that this should not affect them academically.

Another limitation may concern the analytical marking and the in-depth analysis as it was not possible to find a suitable rater to corroborate these analyses. To compensate for any shortcomings in the analytical marking, half of the scripts were re-marked by the same rater to ensure that the given marks were consistent.

Ideally, it would have been better to have analysed all the scripts of the three experimental groups' post-test, but due to the excessive demands of such an analysis, 45 scripts were randomly selected to enhance the validity of this study. It was thought that this number was sufficient and representative being based on random selection of the whole sample.

The pre- and post-questionnaires were not identical, as 'after the intervention' was added in the post-questionnaire to draw closely on the effect of intervention on the students' attitudes. Likewise, the pre- and post-interviews were different in some respects. Even though each interview consisted of 10 questions, some questions were different.

This study involved a quasi-experiment approach, and it is likely that in any experiment there are a number of extraneous variables. These variables may threaten the validity of the outcomes of the research, so the researcher tried to control them to enhance the study's validity. Using intact classes as with this research study is more likely to exhibit external validity as they are conducted in comparable situations as those found in any educational contexts (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989).

It is also worth mentioning here that using a quasi-experiment approach might cause some problems as it was difficult to separate Theme and Genre features in the practice of teaching. There were instances where some overlaps took place when teaching thematic structure and generic structure.

In order to replicate this study in future research, it is important to draw the attention of future researchers for the drawbacks of the thematic structure criterion that caused the overlap in the assessment of the writing scripts. As discussed previously, this criterion failed to capture any differences between the groups as it worked in a similar way as the generic structure criterion. To reduce this overlap, it is suggested that the fourth part in the criterion should be excluded.

7.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, a number of pedagogical recommendations are suggested below for EFL teachers and learners when teaching/learning writing at a university level. In addition, some recommendations are suggested for future research.

7.4.1 Pedagogical recommendations

This research study raises a number of issues related to the teaching of writing to EFL learners at a university level as well as highlighting important areas which EFL teachers should take into consideration in their teaching of academic writing.

To begin with, it is advantageous to approach teaching and learning of writing in English from an SFL perspective with more attention paid to constructing meanings at discourse level through the implementation of thematic structure and generic structure in writing. Writing should be seen as a communication means that aims to deliver a message from a writer to a reader. Enhancing EFL learners' perception of such a definition can help them to clarify a number of contextual

factors, such as the purpose behind writing, the role of the writer, and how to meet the reader's expectations. These factors can help them to improve their understanding of the context of register and context of culture. Learning about generic structure and thematic structure may help the learners to organize their texts better in terms of knowing what to write about, how to start, what to include and how to end, and to relate all parts to the same skeleton to successfully meet the reader's expectations.

In order to implement these structures effectively in the EFL classroom, teachers need to familiarize themselves with thematic and generic structures. Training sessions/workshops should be offered to help teachers maximize the potential of these structures in improving the writing quality of their learners. These sessions/workshops should draw the teachers' attention to see writing as a top-bottom procedure. This will help them visualize writing as a whole picture and how the parts are connected to fit in effectively. If the teachers' awareness in this area is enhanced, it is likely to result in helping EFL learners write more coherent and cohesive texts.

EFL teachers can make use of thematic structure and generic structure to diagnose the problems students encounter in writing. These can help in identifying problems that are related to linking and organizing ideas to maintain cohesiveness and coherence in texts. It can also help to find out what thematic progression patterns the learners attempt to apply in their writing and how their choices of these patterns can help to improve their writing more coherently and cohesively. Learning about different genres and different generic structure can also help EFL teachers diagnose potential problems, which learners may encounter in terms of structuring the essay, the

number of paragraphs, how to start and how to end, and the stages involved in genres and what purposes they serve. Therefore, at a teaching level, these structures can be useful diagnostic tools to pinpoint the learners' weaknesses in writing.

There is a need to shift EFL learners' attention from an exclusive focus on grammar and vocabulary at sentence level to issues more important in writing, such as essay organization, layout and organization, and linking of ideas at paragraph and essay levels. Raising their awareness in these areas has the potential to significantly improve their academic writing. The explicit teaching of thematic and generic structures can help to draw attention to learning writing at the discourse level. As the findings of this research study showed, the experimental groups did far better than the control group. They were able to organize and structure their essays and link their ideas to maintain text flow. By doing so, the learners can look at writing from a wider perspective where they look at the whole picture and then within that frame they can work out other issues related to writing, i.e., grammar and mechanics.

Another relevant area that can help in drawing learners' awareness is related to teachers' feedback on written work. It should be explicit and supportive in that it should raise learners' awareness of what to focus on to improve textual flow. The feedback criteria should include items that cover thematic and generic structures in a way that is applicable and useful.

At the course planning stage, genre-based instruction should be considered when devising the course syllabus. Students should be familiar with a number of academic genres they are expected to perform well at university level. Raising awareness of such genres can give them a better understanding of what they are expected to achieve. To maximize learning, the teaching syllabus should integrate both structures. The choices of thematic patterns should be taught within a particular genre where the students are knowledgeable and trained to use the patterns effectively. Also, careful planning of the teaching material, writing tasks, and activities is needed. These material and tasks should encourage students to exert effort and time to learn writing in English.

Attention must be paid to the role of motivation in L2 context. To help EFL learners exert more effort and time to learn and write in English, a number of motivational constructs should be considered. EFL teachers should consider enhancing their learners' attitudes, expectancy of success, confidence, learning anxiety, learner autonomy, self-efficacy, and future self-image in order to encourage learners to improve themselves. Enhancing the learners' confidence and self-esteem, for instance, are likely to result in enhancing their autonomous learning and encouraging them to take responsibility of their learning. This may help in shifting the classroom from a teacher-centred approach to a student-centred approach. As it is shown by this research study, experiencing the benefits of learning about thematic structure and generic structure is likely to motivate the students to exert more time and effort to improve their writing quality.

It is important to raise EFL learners' awareness of their learning skills and strategies to determine their learning needs, goals and learning outcomes. Drawing the learners' attention to

what to focus on when writing in L2 and providing them with beneficial tools such as thematic and generic structures will likely results in “exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about a language, a conscious understanding of how languages work, of how people learn them and use them” (ALA definition of language awareness, cited in Ellis, 2012, p.2). Consequently, EFL learners’ autonomous learning will be enhanced (Sinclair, et al., 1999).

7.4.2 Recommendations for future research

First, the analysis of the writing data focused mainly on investigating the effect of the intervention on students’ writing quality on the coherence of their texts. The current study contributed with results that measured the cohesion of these texts, but it covered a number of the post-test scripts. Therefore, it is worth investigating the effect of the target structures on cohesion including the whole data in the post-test as well as the pre-test to draw on more comparisons.

Second, a delayed post-test to measure the long-term impact of the intervention on students' writing quality should be included. The advantage of the delayed post-test is that “one gets a wider snapshot of treatment effects” (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 149). Such long-term studies are needed to test the findings of the current study. To verify the trends that were found in this study, replication of the study using a different genre rather than discussion is worth investigating.

It is also worth investigating if interventions similar to those of this study improve students' reading comprehension as well. Finally, to add deeper insights to the field of implementing SFL, it will be interesting to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards implementing generic structure and thematic structure in their writing classes.

7.5 Conclusion

I would like to conclude this chapter with a number of contributions that this study has come up with in the light of the theoretical framework proposed by this study. The findings of the current study contributed to the research field in SFL and genre-based instruction, with emphasis on the explicit teaching of thematic structure and generic structure to improve EFL learners' writing in English in terms of writing more cohesively and coherently. The findings showed that both structures resulted in positive outcomes as the students in this context were able to write better essays in English. This study has provided some positive outcomes that filled in gaps that were found in some previous studies in the field as discussed in Chapter 2. The current study's findings confirmed the effectiveness of implementing thematic and generic structures in the EFL writing classrooms. This study more interestingly provided some answers to whether the teaching of thematic structure or generic structure would result in better writing. It showed that teaching both structures helped the students to improve their writing in terms of coherence, but in terms of cohesion the TS and TGS groups were better than the GS. This study also provided some answers to the area where both structures are combined as there is little research that investigated combining both structures. Combining the two structures was likely to result in better performance rather than learning generic structure on its own.

The study has provided some pedagogical benefits in terms of its contribution to the field of teaching and learning of L2 writing at the university level. Its findings will enrich the EFL instructors' awareness of the potential benefits of implementing the teaching of thematic and generic structures to help improve their students' writing quality in terms of coherence and cohesion. These structures can help facilitate the teaching materials and writing tasks. The results of this study also confirmed that the students could benefit to a great extent to improve their writing quality and enhance their knowledge of how to go about doing so. The current study has also provided some practical guidelines on how to improve the teaching and learning of L2 writing.

This study has, moreover, provided some deep insights into the issue of EFL learners' motivation and attitudes towards learning and writing in English. As discussed previously, motivation plays a crucial role in encouraging the students to improve their language skills to fulfill their learning goals. The current study contributed with positive results that showed that the teaching of both structures had a positive impact on the students' motivation towards learning and writing in English.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The writing tests

Writing Question

(Pre-test)

Name: _____ ID# _____

Read the following topic, and then write an essay of at least 350 words to support your argument.

Some people argue that social networking (*Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn*, etc) can be a serious threat to youngsters. Other people argue that the benefits outweigh the risk.

Discuss your opinion, and support your stance (position) by using enough reasons and examples.

Writing Question

(Mid-test)

Name: _____ ID# _____

Read the following topic, and then write an essay of at least 350 words to support your argument.

Some people believe that Internet chatting is beneficial while others oppose this idea.

Which view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your point of view.

Writing Question

(Post-test)

Name: _____ **ID#** _____

Read the following topic, and then write an essay of at least 350 words to support your argument.

Does modern technology make life more convenient, or was life better when technology was simpler?

Discuss your opinion, and support your stance (position) by using enough reasons and examples.

Appendix B: The pre-questionnaire

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
<p>❖ Achievement goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I study English to get a degree. 2. I study English to gain good grades in exams. 3. I study English to pass other courses successfully in my field of specialization. 4. I study English to get a good job or be promoted in the future. 5. I study English for future studies on my major. 					
<p>❖ Attitudes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. I enjoy studying English. 7. I find writing essays in English interesting. 8. I look forward to English classes. 					
<p>❖ Language Anxiety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. I feel worried when I write an essay in English. 10. I feel nervous when I have to carry out a writing task. 11. I feel happy about my level of writing in English. 					
<p>❖ Autonomous learning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. I need the help of the teacher from beginning to end when I start writing an essay in English. 13. I do not need the teacher's feedback continuously to correct my written work. 14. I can carry out a writing task on my own. 					
<p>❖ Self-efficacy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. I feel confident about writing essays in English. 16. I am sure I can do well on writing courses even if they are difficult. 					

<p>17. No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn how to write effectively in English.</p> <p>18. When I come across difficult writing tasks, I give up easily.</p> <p>19. I know how to write well in English.</p> <p>20. I know how to structure my essays.</p> <p>21. I know how to link my ideas within a paragraph.</p> <p>22. I know how to link my ideas from paragraph to paragraph.</p>					
<p>❖ Ideal L2 self:</p> <p>23. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to write well in English.</p> <p>24. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to communicate well in English.</p> <p>25. The things that I want to do in future require me to write in English effectively.</p> <p>26. The job I imagine having in the future requires me to write well in English.</p>					
<p>❖ Effort & willingness to communicate:</p> <p>27. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is useful.</p> <p>28. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is interesting.</p> <p>29. I can participate in the English course because the writing task is challenging.</p>					

30. On a scale of five, grade the importance of the following items in your writing from 1 to 5, as 1 represents the least important and 5 represents the most important.

Grammar, spelling, organization of text, vocabulary, linking ideas

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix C: The post-questionnaire

Statements	5	4	3	2	1
<p>❖ Achievement goals:</p> <p><i>Learning (the structure) has helped me improve my English to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. get a degree. 2. gain good grades in exams. 3. pass other courses successfully in my field of specialization. 4. get a good job or be promoted in future. 5. me for future studies on my major. 					
<p>❖ Attitudes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Learning (the structure) made me enjoy studying English. 7. I felt most satisfied when I attained a good score in my writing test. 8. I felt most satisfied when I was able to write effectively in English. 9. I find writing essays in English interesting after learning (the structure). 10. I look forward to English classes. 					
<p>❖ Language Anxiety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. I feel worried when I write an essay in English even after learning (the structure). 12. I feel nervous when I have to carry out a writing task even after learning (the structure). 13. I feel happy about my level of writing in English after learning (the structure). 					

<p>❖ Autonomous learning:</p> <p>14. I need the help of the teacher from beginning to end when I start writing an essay in English even after learning (the structure).</p> <p>15. I do not seek the teacher's feedback continuously to correct my written work after learning (the structure).</p> <p>16. I can carry out a writing task on my own after learning (the structure).</p>					
<p>❖ Self-efficacy:</p> <p>17. I feel confident about writing essays in English after learning (the structure).</p> <p>18. I am sure I can do well on writing courses even if they are difficult after learning (the structure).</p> <p>19. No matter how much effort I put in, I cannot learn how to write effectively in English even after learning (the structure).</p> <p>20. When I come across difficult writing tasks, I give up easily even after learning (the structure).</p> <p>21. After learning (the structure), I know how to write well in English.</p> <p>22. After learning (the structure), I know how to structure my essays.</p> <p>23. After learning (the structure), I know how to link my ideas within a paragraph.</p> <p>24. After learning (the structure), I know how to link my ideas from paragraph to paragraph.</p>					
<p>❖ Ideal L2 self:</p> <p>25. After learning (the structure), I can imagine myself as someone who is able to write well in English.</p> <p>26. After learning (the structure), I can imagine myself as someone who is able to communicate well in English.</p> <p>27. After learning (the structure), the things that I want to do in future require me to write in English effectively.</p> <p>28. After learning (the structure), the job I imagine having in the future requires me to write well in English.</p>					

❖ Effort & willingness to communicate:					
29. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is useful.					
30. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is interesting.					
31. After learning (the structure), I can participate in the English course because the writing task is challenging.					

32. On a scale of five, grade the importance of the following items in your writing from 1 to 5, as 1 represents the least important and 5 represents the most important.

Grammar, spelling, organization of text, vocabulary, linking ideas

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix D: The pre-interview questions

1. How do you evaluate your level at writing in English?
2. Are you satisfied with your level?
3. Do you have goals to improve your writing skills?
4. What are your goals?
5. Do you think you can meet your goals now?
6. Do you think that you are capable of writing essays in English effectively?
7. Are you happy with your grades in writing?
8. Are there any specific areas that you need to improve in your writing?
9. What are they?
10. How do you think you can improve your writing in English?

Appendix E: The post-interview questions

1. How do you evaluate your level at writing in English now?
2. Are you satisfied with your current level in writing in English?
3. Do you think that you are capable of writing essays in English effectively at the present?
4. Are you happy with your grades in writing?
5. Do you think that your writing level has changed at all throughout this course?
6. If yes, what are the areas you think have changed in your writing?
7. If your answer is yes to Q5, what, in your opinion, has improved your writing level in English?
8. Are you able to self-edit yourself?
9. Would you recommend we teach (the intervention) to other students learning to write in English?
10. Looking at one of your written assignments, can you tell me what changes have you made, and how have you done so?

Appendix F: A sample of one of the pre-interview scripts

Q: How do you evaluate your level at writing in English?

A: I can communicate with others but when it comes to writing I feel myself weak. I don't know how to write well. Maybe because we stopped writing since we were at secondary school. I haven't practised writing essays for a long time. I feel myself good but I believe I need some skills to improve my level.

Q: Are you satisfied with your level?

A: No. I always say that I have a dream to improve my level.

Q: Do you have goals to improve your writing skills?

A: Yes, of course.

Q: So, what are your goals?

A: I have a dream to pursue my post graduate studies. Generally speaking, I want to be good at research and how to write well. My ambition is to be a researcher at a university. I think it is very important to develop it.

Q: Do you think you can meet your goals now?

A: I have to work on them to achieve my dream.

Q: Do you think that you are capable of writing essays in English effectively?

A: Yeah but I think I will make a lot of mistakes as I haven't practised it for a long time.

Q: Are you happy with your grades in writing?

A: No, but sometime yes.

Q: Are there any specific areas that you need to improve in your writing?

A: Yea, there are.

Q: What are they?

A: I feel sometime my ideas are not linked well. Sometime I finish a point and I find myself repeating it again in the next paragraph but in a different way. I don't like that. It is just repeating what I have already said. Sometime spelling or grammar may make me hesitant.

Q: How do you think you can improve your writing in English?

A: I always ask this question to people and they all recommend reading. I love reading but what I read didn't benefit me a lot. Another thing I tried was watching series or movies. It helped me to improve my speaking but not my writing.

Appendix G: A sample of one of the post-interview scripts

Q: How do you evaluate your level at writing in English now?

A: Generally, for me it has improved a lot; a noticeable improvement at the writing level as well as the grade level. At the beginning I was afraid and all I wanted was just to pass the course with the minimum grade. But after the mid-term exam I began to notice that my writing changed and even my goal changed from just passing the course with the minimum passing grade to an excellent grade. For me, what I learned from this course is worth all my years learning English.

Q: Are you satisfied with your current level in writing in English?

A: Yeah a lot but I'm looking forward to gaining a better level. I feel more confident now as I can write better. My level has improved so I feel satisfied.

Q: Do you think that you are capable of writing essays in English effectively at the present?

A: Yes. Now I don't fear writing essays in English. Before, it was impossible for me to write with this confidence. Now it is not a nightmare any more as we have the necessary skills to enable us to write well in English.

Q: Are you happy with your grades in writing?

A: A lot. I gained good grades in my tests and assignments.

Q: Do you think that your writing level has changed at all throughout this course?

A: Yes. It has definitely improved.

Q: If yes, what are the areas you think have changed in your writing?

A: First of all, the whole vision of writing an essay was to meet the word limit, so we used to write anything to meet the word limit. But now I know what is required exactly from me. This course helped me to write better essays and long ones too. Also, using theme-rheme structure helped me to select my ideas and write longer essays to meet the word limit. The generic structure taught us what we had to write and in what way. Before I excelled in organizing my essay in Arabic but not in English. Now I don't have this problem. At the beginning I thought that my problems were all about grammar and vocabulary but now I discovered that I didn't know how to organize my essay in the way it should be.

Q: Anything else?

A: Yeah now my ideas in writing. Now I know how to write a coherent paragraph that talks about the same point and can elaborate on this idea. At the beginning, we used to write anything that came across our minds. During my mid-term exam, it was the first time for me to apply this structure into my writing. I used to waste a lot of time not knowing exactly what to write. Now I have changed my writing strategies.

Q: If your answer is yes to Q5, what, in your opinion, has improved your writing level in English?

A: Everything was so clear for us. We knew what we were expected to do from the beginning. So our fear demolished as we knew what to do. We knew the basics and we just followed them.

Q: Are you able to self-edit yourself?

A: I won't say that I'm perfect 100% now but I know now how to go about editing my work.

Q: Would you recommend we teach (Thematic & Generic Structures) to other students learning to write in English?

A: Yea a lot. I encourage even teaching them to students from the beginning. If the basics are explained using these structures, then I believe students won't suffer a lot. I'm sure that if we continue studying and applying these structures, our writing level will improve a lot. We spent a lot of years not knowing how to write properly.

Q: Looking at one of your written assignments, can you tell me what changes or improvements have you made, and how have you improved your writing?

A: At the beginning, I decided on my introduction. Now I know what to include in the introduction and write why I am writing the essay, so when you read it, you will know. I even began to qualify my ideas and whether they were good enough or not. I can keep out any redundant information. Before, I used to write a lot but they were meaningless. I have now a plan.

Everything is simpler now. I knew what stages to include and linked my ideas. I feel satisfied of it because I considered it as something acceptable not like before.

Appendix H: Outline of the control group

Week	Topic	Materials covered
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The three parts: topic sentence, body & conclusion. - Unity & coherence: logical order, repeating key words, synonyms and using pronouns <p>Collection of pre-data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of course description and outline • Task 1 • Tasks 2, 3 & 4 • Conducting pre-questionnaire
2	<p>From paragraph to essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement - Introduction - Body - Conclusion <p>Collection of pre-data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 5 & 6 • Tasks 7, 8 & 9 • Tasks 10 & 11 • Conducting pre-writing test • Conducting pre-interviews
3	<p>Explanation Genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is explanation genre? - Unity & coherence - Grammar Focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 1, 2, 3 & 4 • Tasks 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9
4	<p>Explanation Genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing an explanation essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an IT-related topic to write an explanation essay • Brainstorm & search for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write first draft • Check essay with partners/ teacher • Write a final draft

5	Taxonomic Report - What is Taxonomic Report? - Grammar Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 • Tasks 6, 7 & 8
6	Taxonomic Report - Grammar Focus - Writing a taxonomic report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 9, 10 & 11 • Choose an IT-related topic to write a taxonomic report • Brainstorm & search for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write first draft • Check essay with partners/ teacher • Write a final draft
7	Mid-term Break	Mid-term Break
8	Collection of mid-data Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting mid-writing test - Explanation of paraphrasing • Task 1 • Task 2
9	Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of summarizing • Task 3 • Task 4
10	Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of synthesizing • Task 5
11	Discussion Genre - Discussion essays: Reading Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 1 • Task 2

	- Grammar Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 1 • Task 2 • Task 3
12	Discussion Genre - Grammar Focus - Writing a discussion essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 4 • Task 5 • Choose an IT-related topic to write a discussion essay • Brainstorm & search for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write first draft • Check essay with partners/ teacher • Write a final draft
13	Collection of post-data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting post-writing test • Conducting post-interviews • Conducting post-questionnaire

Appendix I: Outline of the TS group

Week	Topic	Materials covered
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The three parts: topic sentence, body & conclusion. - Unity & coherence: logical order, repeating key words, synonyms and using pronouns <p>Collection of pre-data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of course description and outline • Task 1 • Tasks 2, 3 & 4 • Conducting pre-questionnaire
2	<p>From paragraph to essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thesis statement - Introduction - Body - Conclusion <p>Collection of pre-data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 5 & 6 • Tasks 7, 8 & 9 • Tasks 10 & 11 • Conducting pre-writing test • Conducting pre-interviews
3	<p>Explanation Genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Explanation genre? • Unity & coherence <p>Thematic structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theme/rheme structure <p>Types of Thematic Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant theme pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 1, 2 & 3 <p>Thematic Structure (A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of structure • Task 1 • Task 2 • Task 3 <p>Thematic Structure (B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of structure • Task 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 2
4	<p>Explanation Genre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Macro-theme & Hyper-theme - Writing an explanation essay 	<p>Thematic Structure (C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of structure • Task 1 • Task 2 • Choose an IT-related topic to write an Explanation essay • Google your topic for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write your essay • Use the Theme/Rheme structure to check your paragraphs and the whole essay • Check essay with teacher • Write a final draft
5	<p>Taxonomic Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is Taxonomic Report? <p>Types of Thematic Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linear theme pattern <p>Types of Thematic Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Split-up rheme pattern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks 1, 2 & 3 <p>Thematic Structure (D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of structure • Task 1 • Task 2 <p>Thematic Structure (E)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of structure • Task 1 • Task 2 • Task 3
6	Taxonomic Report	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic Structure - Writing a taxonomic report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 1 • Choose an IT-related topic to write a taxonomic report • Google your topic for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write your essay • Use the Theme/Rheme structure to check your paragraphs and the whole essay • Check essay with teacher • Write a final draft
7	Mid-term Break	Mid-term Break
8	<p>Collection of mid-data</p> <p>Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting mid-writing test - Explanation of paraphrasing • Tasks 1 • Task 2
9	<p>Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of summarizing • Task 3 • Task 4
10	<p>Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Synthesizing in Academic Writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of synthesizing • Task 5
11	<p>Discussion Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explanation of discussion genre 	<p>Thematic Structure (F)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task 1 • Task 2

<p>12</p>	<p>Discussion Genre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing an essay on discussion genre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an IT-related topic to write a discussion essay • Brainstorm for ideas • Decide what to include in your essay • Write your essay • Use the Theme/Rheme structure to check your paragraphs and the whole essay • Check essay with teacher • Write a final draft
<p>13</p>	<p>Collection of post-data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting post-writing test • Conducting post-interviews • Conducting post-questionnaire

Appendix J: Samples of the four groups' writing texts.

Control Group

Nowadays, technology play a big part in our life, a part which no one can live without. Some think that technology make our life easy and make people happy, but I think that the technology was no more than a bad and wrong jump in our simple life, a jump make the world worse and not better.

Our simple life was just perfect, ~~Sunrise~~ Sunrise with fresh air and blue water, you can have a small home, where you can see the green and feel the nature, but every that just gone when technology entered our life, now we can see trees cut, air pollution and seas burial, this technology ~~bring~~ bring only disaster with it.

A life with no taste, that the mean of technology. Technology make person ~~just~~ as a machine, life easy, every thing, just done with no fire, where is the mean of this life? I cannot just stay and make the technology done every thing, it will be a disrespectful to our life, ~~Ancient~~ ~~the~~ people. Otherwise ancient people used to live perfectly, they feel every day in thier life and get in adventures, and that what I can name it with a taste to life.

After all, I don't think that I will stand a day without my laptop, my T.V, my video games, my lovely thing that call's technology, because now this is our life, and changes must happen, even if it was bad, because we cannot stop this.

To sum up, I know that people ^{now} may ~~hard~~ find if they lose technology because they reliable to much on it, but living just one day without it is not just a dream of the most?

Generic Structure Group

Everyone of us deals with technology. people are using technology in every aspect of their life. It has become apart of their life. Technology has great effects on our life, in medical field, educational field and even in our daily life. It's the industry of knowledge that has made huge influence and change in our life. In this essay, I will discuss both the negative and positive effects of the impact of technology on our life.

One impact of technology is that education has become better. Teachers and Coordinators are using technological ways like, Smart board and powerpoint to explain the lessons more effectively and to pass the informations smoothly to Students mind. The resources that we use have become various. We can use the Internet to search for information that we need for our projects and homework. In addition, you can buy books online from websites. you can send your assignments online.

The Second impact is that it has made Communicating with people from the otherside of the world easier and faster. For example, if you have friends from Eroup you can call them by cellphone or visit them by plane. you don't have to write letters that wastes your time and effort also sending these letters takes for about a week to reach the wanted person.

Another impact is that media has developed and become flexible. Nowadays, news papers numbers have increased magazines, fax has appeared, everything new spread in the air. you can watch the latest news about the world around you and live on T.v, using T.v Satelitates

on the other hand, technology has led to number of Serious problems. For example, if students kept using the

For meaningless things like playing online games or chatting for 4-5 hours a day, this action will affect his educational and social life, his marks will drop down, he may fail in his subjects, he will become addicted to the technology that he uses.

Furthermore, technology may affect our life in a dangerous way. People will depend more on using technology, things will get worse, they will become lazy, their health will damage, their weight will increase. For example if you want to buy something from the cold store that is not far from your house you will use the car instead of walking.

In summary, using technology could lead to many benefits, that will make our life better and easy, like making education better or making communication easy and faster also the development of media. ^{However,} people can use technology but not in a way that makes them waste their time. People should use technology wisely and in a good way.

Day after day and the [technology developed more and more, faster and faster]. Sometimes you feel like it's a race! Everyone - countries, companies, governments ... etc. - are racing each others just to have the much effective and efficient technology! In track of racing to get the best, I think that we need this kind of technology, especially in this century. However, we are in the twenty first century. There are some people who do not know what is the exact meaning of technology.

In this essay, I'll explores some issues surrounding technology and the impact of it in our life, considering the argument from both positive and negative sides.

The aim of using technology is to make our life easier. As a result of that, communications become much easier. One of the greatest technologies that used to improve the communications is the Internet. Through the Internet, people can communicates from and to anywhere in the world, because this technology makes the world like a small village. In this case people like scientists, doctors, or engineers can exchange their experience and they can benefit from each others by sharing whatever they want like images, videos, articles or sound clips via the Internet. There are many telecommunications belongs to technology like telephones, mobiles, faxes and T.Vs. These are the most effective machines in spreading news and let people know what is the newest news around the world.



In addition, the technology has many applications to increase our knowledge. These applications support many fields like education and reading. The education improved a lot since the technology enters its world. Teachers in schools and instructors in universities nowadays used are using very technological methods in teaching such as smart boards, data show and websites to give online quizzes, submit assignments or even to post announcements, questions or grades. Reading is based on books. Books also developed while technology within two parts, books in libraries, and e-books. Libraries in this century used sorting system on computers to lead the readers to the place of each book instead of searching for the book or ask the librarian about it. E-book is a soft copy of any book which is posted in some websites. This type of books can help the reader to save time and space.

Moreover, the business also evolved by technology. There are several ways to buy and sell via the internet. by using websites with home delivery. The payment methods optional too, the buyer can pay via the internet through visa, paypal, mastercard ... etc, or paying cash when ~~you~~ the buyer received the commodity. Also technology helps the business interests in advertizing. Ads can be publicized fast electronically (through websites or emails), in T.Vs and radios, or by printing these ads with high quality.

The entertainment is one of what the technology provided to us. Entertainment classified into playing games, watching movies, having massage and other things that bring fun and relaxing. Playing games (electronics games) through playstation (1,2,3,4), xbox, wii, gameboy and all the types of electronic games are the funniest technological games ever. Watching movies become much easier, instead of going to the cinema you can easily by its DVD CD or download it via the Internet and watch it at home! There are new machines that make our bodies relaxed like the electronic massage machines and there are also different types according to the parts to be massaged.

Despite these highly positive results of technology, there are also some negative factors. One of these negative factors is the employment. The employment is a result of using the computers and machines instead of using employees or workers. The employment is a big disease on the society. If the employment percent increased, the government must spend on them and they will be dependent ~~of~~ of the society.

Another problem of technology is the physical and social diseases. If the technology provides everything, people will become lazy and they will depend on these machines. Also setting in front of the computer for along time can decreases your social life and hit your brain. There is a study said that setting in front the computer for many hours playing games and watching fiction cartoons can amplifies a half of the brain that responsible to think about fiction and unreality and the other half which is responsible to think logically and realistic will be at the same size, so the brain will be damaged within the two unequalled halves.

To sum up, technology makes our life much easier if we use it in the correct way. Technology makes the communications stronger between people around the world. It increases our knowledge by using it in the education and reading. Technology also supports business and give us some fun. I think that the technology saves our time and effort so we should use it carefully to benefit from it as much as possible and be aware from the entire negative points.

Technology has become important in the fast life of today. The technology involved with transmission & storage of information, especially the development, installation, & management of computer systems within companies, universities & other organisations. I will explain the positive & negative impact of technology.

One of the positive impact of technology is that the world is becoming a smaller village, due to the use of technology by bringing distant location closer through the use of cell phones, Internet & many more technological items. With the help of cell phones people can communicate from one place to another. With the help of social networking sites they can communicate from one country to another, they can even share pictures, messages, & can talk live with each other.

Another positive impact of technology is that it is an important factor in education, healthcare & business field. It has changed jobs in a way, so that it makes it easier for human beings to do their work. Engineers are also hired to develop ways in order to enhance the already existing technology. Technology plays a very important role in medical centres. It helps doctors to prepare X-rays, surgery, etc. Through the use of technology in schools, teaching is becoming more easy for teachers.

The most positive impact of technology is that it's transferring the manual process into digital process, making the digital process more efficient, saving time, papers & energy. If it was suppose to be done manually then it would have taken more energy. For e.g.:- The Accountant will first need to prepare the journal ledger to balance accounts of all members, if something is missing or there is difference in balance like somewhere more or less then he need to go through all the records again & prepare the new one. After this he'll need to prepare the journal entry & do all posting. Then prepare who paid the account & who is remaining by balancing all those ledgers & finally he can prepare the journal ^{General} entry. Through digital process he won't need to go through all those process he can simply use excel to prepare accounts. If something went wrong then he can use copy & paste & can balance them, this will save both time & efforts.

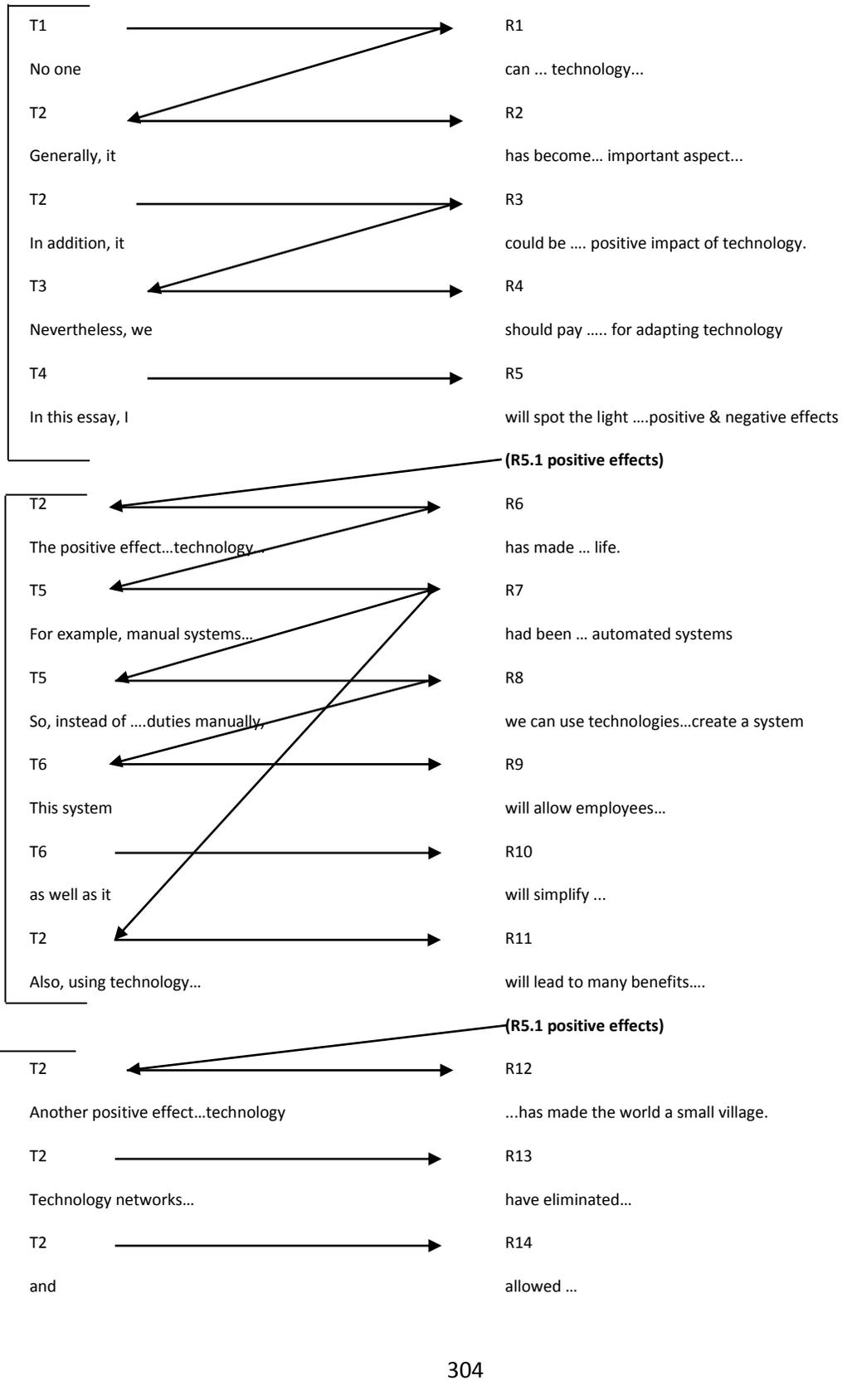
Despite the positive impacts, there are negative impacts of technology on individuals as well. One of the most important negative impacts is that people are becoming more dependent on technology. Even for small things like writing a short paragraph people are using typewriters or computers to do their work. Using search engines to search for particular topic rather than using their own words. The main problem from it, is people are becoming lazy. They think that why to walk when you can hop in the car? why play football, or rugby or other games

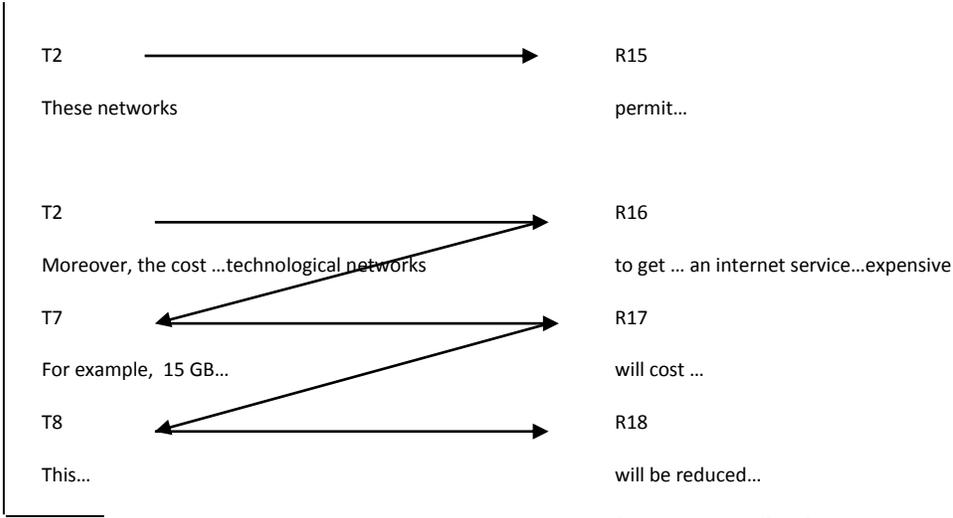
Outside when you can play Red Dead Redemption, or watch the undead nightmare or story on Youtube? Even for washing clothes or dishes people are using machines to do their works.

In addition to it, there are various health risks involved with the use of technology. Using computers all the time causes Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. It is caused by using keyboard & typing all the time. Computer Vision Syndrome is another example of health risk. Technostress, role of radiation, screen emission, low level electromagnetic field are all ^{the} causes involve with the unlimited use of technology. Because of technostress people become lazy, rude & impatient. Screen emission is caused by the monitor because there is no special glass & sitting in front of it causes screen emission.

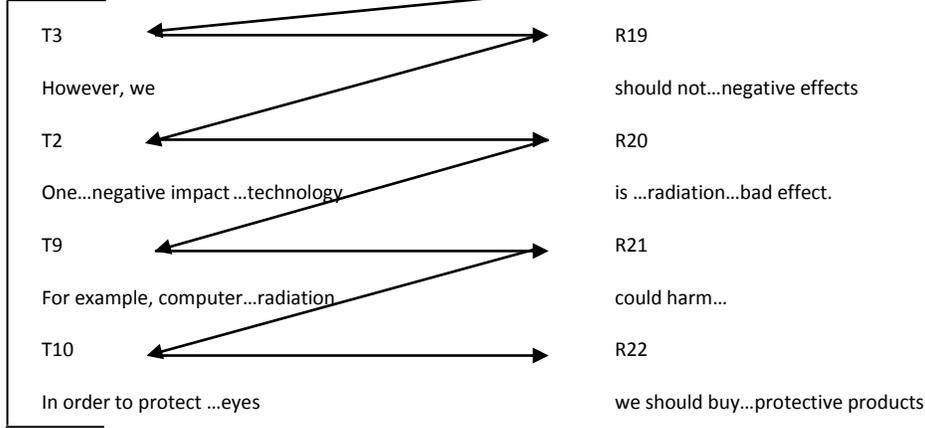
To sum up, Technology has both advantages & disadvantages. It plays a very important role in our life making our life easy, quick & peaceful. But people are forgetting the disadvantages over advantages because it provides them with easy life to do their work.

Appendix K: A sample of the thematic structure analysis of the TS group

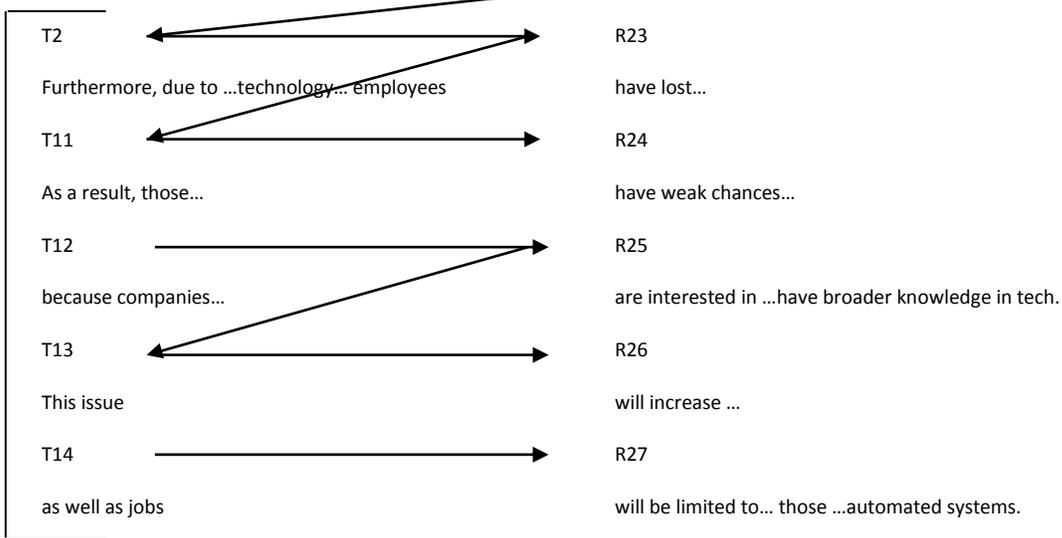




(R5.2 negative effects)



(R5.2 negative effects)



(R5- positive and negative effects)

