
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Role of Instructor Qualifications, Assessment and Pedagogical Practices in EFL Students' Grammar and Writing Proficiency

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| ABSTRACT

Three groups of EFL freshman students were concurrently enrolled in a grammar and a writing course. One group was taught the grammar and writing courses by the same instructor; the other two groups were taught grammar and writing by two different instructors using the same textbook but different instructional and assessment techniques. The study aims to find out which group made higher gains in grammatical knowledge and writing skill development. It also aimed to find out the effects of instructor qualifications, assessment, and pedagogical variables on students' grammatical competence and writing skill development. Comparisons of the grammar and writing post-tests showed significant differences between the three groups in the writing and grammar post-test mean scores. There were strong correlations between the grammar and writing post-test scores. Performance of the Group that received a combination of writing and grammar instruction by the same instructor (Instructor A) was the highest. The relationship between grammar and writing instruction seems to be reciprocal: writing instruction affects grammatical competence and grammatical knowledge affects writing skill development. Better achievements were made when both courses were taught by the same instructor as she can make the right connections between what is taught in both courses, which specific structures and skills should be emphasized. The instructors' qualifications, pedagogical system, educational and professional experience, the integration of online instruction, the type of error correction and instant feedback given to the students and the formative assessment technique used were significantly more effective than writing/grammar instruction that depended on the textbook alone. These variables proved to be important for enhancing the grammatical knowledge and writing quality of unskilled, low ability EFL students and resulted in a significant improvement in their grammar and writing post-test scores.

| KEYWORDS

Grammar instruction, grammatical knowledge, EFL students, instructor qualifications, feedback, assessment types, struggling writers, writing proficiency, writing quality, writing skill development.

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1. Introduction

Writing is a complex activity that integrates multiple cognitive, linguistic, and motor abilities. It involves skills that focus on content such as generating and organising ideas in paragraphs, word choice, cohesion, coherence, and revision and skills that focus on form such as grammar, spelling, handwriting, capitalisation, and punctuation. Many students struggle in the writing process and end up producing a piece of writing that is incomprehensible with numerous errors and weaknesses. In addition, teaching and learning of grammar and writing in a foreign/second language (L2) has been challenging to both teachers and students for a very long time. Grammatical and writing errors/weaknesses are major concerns for many (L2) teachers and students.

There has been much controversy over the role of grammar instruction in the teaching of writing, whether grammar and writing should be taught separately, or they should be integrated into the English language writing class. Several robust meta-analyses found no evidence of any beneficial effect. Moreover, existing research is limited in that it only considers isolated grammar instruction and offers no theorisation of an instructional relationship between grammar and writing (Jones, Myhill & Bailey, 2013).

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To tackle writing errors, in general, and grammatical errors, in particular, some researchers investigated the kinds of grammatical errors that students make and how frequently they occur so that remedies can be sought. Kampookaew (2020) analyzed grammatical errors made by Thai EFL university students in essay writing. The errors were classified into ten types with nouns, verb, word class, article, and preposition errors constituting 84.07% of all errors, in addition to the wrong use of singular and plural nouns, subject-verb disagreement and article 'the' deletion.

In Indonesia, Helmiati, Sudarsono and Susilowati (2019) compared grammar and writing tests scores of EFL students and found a weak correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability. This means that students who have a low score in grammar, does not necessarily mean they would score low in writing and vice versa.

To help develop L2 students' writing skills, prior studies in the literature showed numerous effective teaching strategies and activities. The first effective strategy was direct grammar instruction. Robinson and Feng (2016) found that after four months of direct grammar instruction half of the students in fifth grade exhibited a significant increase in their overall writing scores. In Korea, Wang and Wang (2014) used explicit grammar instruction with students enrolled in an intermediate-level freshman English reading and writing course. The students completed a set of workbooks which they read and studied for homework over a week. The intervention had a positive impact on students' perceptions of their writing and editing skills. In another study in Korea, students received form-focused instruction. Explicit grammar emphasis proved to be more effective for morphology that had a small, binary scope. Explicit emphasis on grammatical features dissimilar to L1 significantly increased students' accuracy in speech and writing (Schenck, 2019). In Iran, Rajabi and Dezhkam (2014) used four task-focused exercises to elicit grammatical difficulties of EFL computer software majors. The results revealed superiority of the experimental group and considered explicit grammar instruction as a scaffolding strategy that is effective in improving students' writing accuracy. The students benefited from the traditional form-centered, rule-based pedagogy as it helped them learn procedural knowledge in grammar and basic writing skills in standard English (Davis, 1996).

The second strategy focused on teaching contextualised grammar to promote students' grammatical competence and writing ability. Teaching contextualized grammar through a writing medium was an effective and meaningful way to develop students' grammatical competence (Artunduaga & Marco, 2013). It also had a positive effect on writing performance, but a differential effect on different sub-groups, benefiting skilled student writers more than weaker ones (Jones, Myhill & Bailey, 2013). In England, contextualised grammar teaching, linked to the teaching of writing, improved students' writing output and their metalinguistic understanding. But this benefit was experienced more by skilled student writers than poor ones (Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson, 2011)

The third strategy was sentence combining. Datchuk and Kubina (2013) reviewed 19 published articles that focused on the effect of teaching sentence-level writing skills to students with writing difficulties and learning disabilities on the sentence-level skills of handwriting, sentence construction, and grammar/usage. Findings revealed that struggling writers benefited from the intervention, particularly in handwriting and sentence construction, and they could transfer the skills they acquired to more complex tasks such as sentence writing and extended composition. In Iran, Ahangari and Barghi (2012) concluded that intermediate EFL students' demonstrable knowledge of certain language forms in a grammar test cannot be necessarily generalized to their accuracy in writing. This means that a certain test score obtained on a grammar test is not necessarily a valid indicator of a student's accuracy level in writing. Fourth grade students who received instruction in peer-assisted sentence-combining and sentence-construction skills produced improved story writing and used these skills when revising (Saddler & Graham, 2005).

The fourth strategy was integrated grammar to develop EFL students' writing skills. Hoadjli and Lahlouhi's (2018) confirmed that teaching grammar in the context of writing and engaging Algerian EFL sophomore students in the process of rule formation helped them use grammar correctly and appropriately in writing producing more legible and correct products. Another study in Algeria reported that the number of mistakes in writing can be reduced and a balance between form and content can be made through integrative grammar teaching, i.e., the integration of form and meaning with students' interaction while learning (Zerfaoui, 2015).

A fifth strategy was supplementing content courses with a daily grammar review and error correction feedback. Pre- and post-test results revealed significant improvement in the students' overall grammatical accuracy. The grammar group significantly outperformed the nongrammar group on the grammar-focused instrument but not on the integrative one (Frantzen, 1995).

The sixth strategy was integrating different forms of technology in instruction. When Japanese students wrote with the assistance of Grammarly, they produced fewer grammatical errors and used a variety of lexical items (Dizon & Gayed, 2021). In Egypt, integrating an automated writing evaluation tool together with feedback helped reduce student writers' anxiety and enhanced their grammar test score (Waer, 2021). In the USA, hybrid (face-to-face and online) and online grammar instruction improved journalism students' writing skills. Students' grammar scores improved regardless of the type of instruction they had received.

However, students in the hybrid course were significantly more satisfied with their overall writing skills (Moore & Jones, 2015). By contrast, combining classroom instruction with grammatical CALL (computer-assisted language learning) was not detrimental to Taiwanese EFL students' learning (Liou, Wang & Hung-Yeh, 1992).

An important factor that plays a role in the development of students' grammatical and writing competence is teachers' pedagogical systems and grammar teaching. Teacher's linguistic subject knowledge was found to be a significant mediating factor in the success of contextualised grammar teaching. Research into teachers' pedagogical systems can contribute to a fuller and more realistic understanding of L2 grammar instruction (Myhill, Jones, Lines & Watson, 2011). Experienced teachers' decisions in teaching grammar were shaped by the interaction of their pedagogical system, their educational and professional experiences, and the instructional context (Borg (1998). Teachers need to receive more training to increase their knowledge of effective research-based writing strategies in order to improve the overall writing quality of their students (Robinson & Feng (2016).

In summary, the above literature review showed lack of studies in Saudi Arabia that investigate the effects of instructor qualifications, instructional and assessment variables on EFL students' grammatical knowledge and writing skill development. Therefore, this study aims to find out the effects of four types of variables (instructor qualifications, assessment types, teaching grammar, and writing in separate courses, and using different instructional strategies) on students' grammatical competence and writing skill development. It aims to find out which group made higher gains in grammar and writing proficiency: (i) Group 1 that was taught both grammar and writing by the same instructor (Instructor A); (ii) Group 2 that was taught grammar and writing by two different instructors (Grammar by Instructor A and writing by Instructor B); (iii) or Group 3 that was taught grammar and writing courses by two different instructors (grammar by Instructor B and writing by Instructor A) using the same textbooks but different instructional and assessment techniques. In addition, the study aims to answer the following questions: (i) Are there significant differences between Group 1, 2, and 3 in grammar and writing achievement? (ii) Is there a relationship between EFL freshman students' achievement in grammar and writing? (iii) Does grammar instruction affect writing skill development? (iv) Does writing instruction affect students' acquisition of English grammar? Do the instructional and assessment techniques used make a difference in students' grammatical knowledge and their writing skill development?

2. Methodology

2.1 Instructors' Sample

2.1 Instructors' Sample

Two female instructors at the College of Languages and Translation (COLT), King Saudi University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia participated in the study. Instructor A has a Ph.D. degree in applied linguistics and foreign language curriculum and pedagogy. In her pre-service preparation, she studied educational psychology, theories of learning and motivation, foreign language teaching methods, measurement, and statistics, second language acquisition, phonology, syntax and others. She is a full professor with 20 years of experience in college teaching. She taught different EFL and ESP courses such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary building and dictionary skills, English for science, medicine, geography, and art education purposes, in addition to contrastive analysis, semantics, stylistics, interpreting and translation courses. She is widely published, and she presents at international conferences where she talks about her teaching experience.

Instructor B has a Ph.D. degree in theoretical linguistics. In her pre-service preparation, she studies courses in phonology, phonetics, syntax, semantics, general, historical and sociolinguistics. She is an assistant professor with 20 years of experience in college teaching. She taught different EFL courses such as speaking, reading, writing, grammar, in addition to contrastive analysis, stylistics, and text linguistics. She has no conference presentations and no publications.

When the study was conducted, both instructors were assigned by the Department to teach grammar and writing courses to selected sections (groups) of EFL freshman students at COLT. Both instructors did not choose the courses, nor which sections to teach. They could not re-assign/re-group the students as that is not allowed by the Department regulations.

2.2 Students' Sample

Subjects of the present study consisted of 189 EFL female freshman students majoring in translation at (COLT). The students were enrolled in 3 groups (1, 2, and 3). Students in each course were assigned by the Registration Department. The three groups were concurrently taking Grammar I (3 hours per week) and Writing I courses (4 hours per week), in addition to Listening 1 (3 hours), Speaking 1 (3 hours), Reading I (4 hours), and Vocabulary Building (3 hours) courses in EFL. The students were all Saudi and were all native speakers of Arabic. Their median age was 18 years, with a range of 17-19 years.

Table 1: Number of Students Enrolled in Each course

Groups	I. N	II. SEMESTER	III. WRITING INSTRUCTOR	IV. GRAMMAR INSTRUCTOR
Group 1	59	Fall	Instructor A	Instructor A
Group 2	63	Spring	Instructor A	Instructor B
Group 3	67	Spring	Instructor B	Instructor A

As Table 1 shows, students in Group 1 (59 students) studied the Grammar I and Writing I courses in the Fall semester, whereas students in Group 2 (59 students) and Group 3 (63 students) studied the Grammar I and Writing I courses in the Spring semester. Group 1 was taught Grammar I and Writing I by Instructor A, i.e., the same instructor. Group 2 was taught Grammar I by Instructor A and Writing I by instructor B, i.e., two different instructors. Group 3 was taught Grammar I by Instructor B and Writing I instructor A, i.e., two different instructors as well. Thus, Group 1 served as the experimental group and Groups 2 and 3 served as the control groups.

At the beginning of the semester, the three groups were given grammar and writing pre-tests. The pre-test scores showed no significant differences between the 3 groups in grammatical knowledge and writing skill level. A qualitative analysis of the pre-tests revealed many writing problems: The students made several spelling mistakes per line, did not use punctuation marks at all, could not capitalize words and had difficulty expressing, generating and organizing ideas. They could not put words together to make a sentence.

Table 2: Distribution of the Grammar Pre-test Scores of Groups 1, 2, and 3 in Percentages

Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE	Range
Group 1	59	43	44	15.76	1.84	10-94
Group 2	63	41	42	14.30	1.12	15-82
Group 3	67	39	40	14-72	1.31	18-83

Table 3: Distribution of the Writing Pre-test Scores of Groups 1, 2, and 3 in Percentages

Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE	Range
Group 1	59	44	43	17.33	2.20	14-90
Group 2	63	43	40	15.98	2.24	12-81
Group 3	67	42	40	13.85	2.31	11-83

2.3 Course Material

The three groups used the same grammar textbook by Azar (2007). They studied the same chapters, grammatical structures and completed the same exercises. The three groups studied the following grammatical structures: *Parts of speech, count and non-count nouns, use of definite and indefinite articles, regular and irregular plurals, transitive and intransitive verbs, linking verbs, regular and irregular verbs, adverb placement, subject-verb agreement, all tenses, modals, infinitives and gerunds, spelling of -ing, -ed, -es, pronunciation of -ed, -s and -es at the end of verbs and nouns, prepositions, prepositional phrases, information, tag, negative and yes-no questions, negatives, and relative clauses.* The grammar course was taught for 14 weeks.

Likewise, the three groups studied the same writing textbook by Segal and Pavl (2015-2016). The Interaction I textbook is for high beginning to low intermediate-level students. It follows a writing-process approach. It introduces students to the paragraph and sentence development. The book includes 10 chapters, each with a main topic and several parts: Exploring ideas, building vocabulary, organizing ideas, developing cohesion and style, some grammatical points, writing the first draft, editing practice, writing the second draft and journal writing. Each chapter was taught over one week (4 class sessions) and the book was covered over 14 weeks. Students in all groups completed all the skills, writing tasks and exercises in each chapter and wrote the same one-paragraph essays.

2.4 Treatment

2.4.1 Instructor A's Instructional and Assessment Techniques

Instructor A used different kinds of strategies in teaching her grammar courses such as direct instruction form-focused, rule-based, contextualized grammar, integrative grammar teaching, i.e., the integration of form and meaning with students' interaction while learning, sentence combining, production, application, comparing, and contrasting different structures such as tenses. She would use illustrations to clarify a grammatical structure or concept and show relationships. Since the students were translation major, they were occasionally asked to translate some structures such as "modals" to Arabic because they are dissimilar in both languages.

After presenting a new grammatical structure, the students were not left alone to do the exercises in the textbook on their own at home. Students in Instructor A's grammar courses did most items in the grammar exercises in class under her supervision right. While doing the exercises, Instructor A would go around, check students' answers, and provide instant feedback. Only grammatical errors related to rules under study were highlighted. She only pointed out the presence and location of errors but did not give the correct forms. The students had to re-check the rules and examples in the textbook to understand where and why they made mistakes. She gave extra credit to students who could do all the items in an exercise correctly and within the designated time.

In the same way, students enrolled in Instructor A's writing courses completed all the skills, exercises and writing tasks in the chapter and wrote two short essays per week. After presenting a particular skill or task, the students did the exercise related to it in the textbook right away. They would do all of the exercises and at least write part of their paragraph in class and rewrite their paragraphs when necessary. While doing the exercises and writing the paragraphs, Instructor A monitored students' work and gave instant feedback. The students received communicative feedback focusing on meaning and only errors related to rules or skills under study were highlighted. Feedback was provided on the presence and location of errors, but she did not provide any correct forms directly. She encouraged self-editing and peer-editing. She gave extra credit for good paragraphs every time the students wrote a paragraph in class.

In addition to in-class instruction, Instructor A used Blackboard (a Learning Management System) in her courses. Blackboard was used from home. Every week, websites containing grammar explanations, examples, exercises, quizzes, and a daily grammar lesson were posted. Questions that required the students to produce a particular tense or grammatical structure in a short paragraph were posted in the online discussion forum. They checked the specific grammar websites, answered the quizzes, and were encouraged to check the daily grammar lesson.

In Instructor A's online writing classes, the students were encouraged to post paragraphs about themes posted by the instructor and any other theme of their choice. They responded to each other's posts. They posted stories and poems that they had read and liked to share with their classmates. Some wrote their own poems and stories. They felt free to post messages of condolences, seasons greetings and wishes on any occasion like a student's birthday, religious and national holidays or whenever they needed help. Students checked the specific writing websites. Instructor A encouraged her students to word-process their paragraphs and check their spelling at home.

In her online courses, Instructor A served as a facilitator. She provided technical support on using the different Blackboard tools, and responded to individual students' needs, comments, and requests for certain websites. She encouraged her students to write for communication and not to worry about making mistakes. She sent private and public messages to encourage the students to interact and communicate online. She gave extra credit for using the online course and for writing good paragraphs. She posted questions and discussion topics and wrote model responses. Instructor A did not correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. She only pointed out the type of errors they made and asked the students to double-check their posts.

Regarding grammar and writing assessment, Instructor A used formative assessment in her grammar courses, i.e., students were given a quiz every other week. They were given a total of 7 grammar quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes covered the material taught over two weeks only. They were given between 20-30 minutes to finish the quiz. Each quiz covered details in the material covered and tested the students' ability to apply and transfer knowledge. To develop speed, each quiz included between 80-100 words, phrases and sentences compressed in one page.

In Instructor A's writing courses, the students took a quiz every other week. The students took a total of 6 quizzes. On quizzes 1, 3, and 5, the students wrote a paragraph and on quizzes 2, 4, and 6, they completed different writing tasks similar to those covered in class and in the textbook. Students were not allowed to use the dictionary during the test sessions.

The grammar and writing quizzes were always graded, and returned to the students with comments on strengths and weaknesses. Words of encouragement were always given. The slightest improvement was noted and commended. Answers were always discussed in class and the mark distribution and scoring procedures were explained.

2.4.2 Instructor B's Instructional and Assessment Techniques

Instructor B followed a traditional approach in teaching grammar to her students which was form-focused and rule-based and depended on explaining grammatical rules and giving the examples in the textbook. The students did the exercises at home. The following class, they answered the exercises in class. Instructor B gave direct corrections of errors. She did not integrate Blackboard or any technology in teaching Grammar.

In the same way, she went through the sections and exercises given in the *Interaction I Writing* textbook. The students wrote their paragraphs at home. She did not use Blackboard or any other technology, nor any websites as a supplement to in-class instruction.

As for grammar and writing assessment, Instructor B gave 2 Interm grammar tests and 2 Interm Writing tests. Each Interm covered half of the material taught in the textbook. Each test session lasted for 2 hours. The grammar and writing Interms were always graded and returned to the students to see their marks and mistakes.

2.4 Procedures

At the beginning of each semester, students in the three groups took the same grammar and writing pre-tests. Results of the two-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the three groups in their grammar and writing scores before the grammar and writing instruction began (grammar $F = 1.37$; $Df = 186$; $P < .67$; Writing $F = 2.12$; $Df = 186$; $P < .89$), i.e., no significant differences were found in the students' grammatical knowledge and writing skill level before the grammar and writing instruction began.

At the end of the semester, the three groups took the same grammar post-test (the final exam) that covered all of the grammatical topics studied throughout the semester: These included the following: (i) Write if each noun is Count (C) or Non-count (NC) as it is used in the text; (ii) Write the plural of each word as it is used in the text; (iii) Write the singular form of the noun where necessary; (iv) Read the following paragraph, then make questions as indicated; (v) Write the past participle of each verb; (vi) Complete the following sentences; (vii) Underline the correct word; (viii) Fill in the blanks with a pronoun; (ix) Write the part of speech of each word as it is used in the text. Use N, Adj, V, Adv; (x) Fill in the blanks in the text with an article where necessary; (xi) Write the plural form of the noun where necessary; (xii) Use the correct tense of the verbs in parentheses or add a modal where necessary; (xiii) How is -ed or -es pronounced in the following words; (xiv) Change nouns and pronouns to plural where necessary and make any necessary changes; (xv) Fill in the blanks with an expression of quantity or an indefinite pronoun. Most of the questions required production.

Similarly, at the end of the semester, the three groups took the same writing post-test that was part of a three-hour final exam. The final exam contained the following: (i) four texts with objective questions covering all the grammar and writing tasks practiced over the semester; (ii) a letter-writing task; (iii) An essay-writing task about a topic that the students had never seen nor practiced in class or in the online course. The topic of the essay was tangible and familiar to the students. The test instructions specified the essay length and components taught and practiced during the course such as a topic sentence, types and number of supporting ideas, use of correct spelling, grammar, conjunctions and cohesive ties, capitalization, punctuation, etc. The essay instructions were as follows: In your opinion, which is your favourite social media platform? Write a paragraph between 10-15 lines in which you give 3-5 reasons to support your opinion. Give your paragraph a title. The paragraph should have a topic sentence and a conclusion. Use simple, compound, and complex sentences. Pay attention to verb tenses. Add transitional words and conjunctions where necessary. Indent, capitalize words, and insert punctuation mark where necessary. Reread your full paragraph and edit it. Double-check your grammar (conjunctions, tenses, articles, prepositions ... etc.), spelling, use of capitalization, punctuation marks, indentation. The students were not allowed to use their dictionaries during the post-test session.

The pre-test and post-tests were blindly graded by both instructors. The students wrote their ID numbers instead of their names. Both instructors used the same grading procedures. An answer key was used for the grammar post-test and a scoring rubric was used for the writing post-test which showed the writing skills (content and organization, grammar and vocabulary, and mechanics) and performance levels (high, above average, average, below average and low). Answers to the questions were graded one at a time for all the students. Points were deducted for spelling mistakes.

2.5 Students' Surveys

At the end of the semester, all the students answered an open-ended survey about their experience learning grammar and writing from Instructor A and B. The surveys consisted of the following questions: (1) What did you like about the Grammar/Writing course, teaching and assessment strategies? What did you not like? Why (3) Did your English improve as a result of studying with Instructor A/Instructor B? In what ways? (4) Did it make any difference in learning English Grammar/Writing? Why (5) What problems or difficulties did you face in the Grammar/Writing courses and how were those problems solved?

2.6 Test Validity and Reliability

The grammar and writing post-tests are believed to have content validity as they aimed at assessing freshman students' grammatical knowledge and writing skills in English. The grammar and writing tasks performed on the post-tests were comparable to those covered in the grammar and writing textbooks that the students studied in class. In addition, the grammar and writing test instructions were formulated clearly, and the students' task was defined. Concurrent validity of each post-test was calculated by correlating the students' scores on the grammar/writing post-test with their grammar/writing total course mark. The validity coefficient for the grammar and writing post-tests were .59 and .56 respectively. Concurrent validity was also calculated by

correlating the students' scores on the grammar and writing post-tests with their scores on the second in-term test for Instructor B, and last grammar and writing quiz for Instructor A. The validity coefficient for the grammar and writing posttest was .71 and 74 respectively.

Although Instructors A and B scored the pre and post-tests using an answer key and a scoring rubric, estimates of inter-rater reliability were necessary. A 30% random sample of the grammar and writing pre and post-test papers was selected from each groups' answer sheets and were double scored by Instructor A and B using the same answer key and the scoring rubric. The scores given by Instructors A and B were correlated. The inter-rater correlation coefficient for the grammar and writing post-tests was .96 and .95 respectively. Moreover, examinee reliability was computed using the Kuder- Richardson formula 21'. The examinee reliability coefficient for the grammar and writing post-tests was .69 and .67 respectively.

2.7 Statistical Analysis

First, all pre-test and post-test raw scores for the three groups were converted into percentages. Then, for each group, the mean median, standard deviation, standard error and range were computed for the grammar and writing pre and post-test scores.

To find out whether students in the Groups 1, 2, and 3 have made higher gains in their grammatical knowledge and writing skills as a result of the different instructional and assessment techniques they were exposed to, the mean scores of the grammar and writing pre and post-tests for each group were compared separately using a T-test, i.e., a total of 6 T-Tests.

To find out which group made higher gains in grammatical knowledge and writing skills as a result of the different instructional and assessment techniques used by their instructors (whether the same or different instructors), and in which course they made higher gains, a two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was calculated using the following variables: 2 courses (grammar and Writing) X 3 groups (1, 2, 3). So, a two-way ANOVA was run to compare the grammar and writing pre and post-test mean scores within each group and across all groups.

Moreover, the grammar and writing post-test scores for each group were correlated to find out whether a high grammar test score is associated with a high writing score and whether a low grammar score denotes a low writing score.

Finally, responses to the survey from students in the three groups were categorized according to the questions and are reported qualitatively.

3. Results

Tables 4 and 5 show that the typical student in Groups 1, 2, and 3 scored 79%, 69%, and 70% on the grammar post-test, and 78%, 71%, and 65% on the writing test respectively. However, the median values do not show whether each group has made improvement in grammar and writing as a result of the instruction and assessment types they have received. Comparisons of the pre and post-test means scores for each group using a T-Test showed significant differences between each groups' pre-test and posttest means scores, which means that each group made significantly higher scores on the post-test than the pre-test as a result of the instruction they received regardless of who taught the course and type of instruction they have received (See Tables 6, 7).

Table 4: The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Standard Error and Range of Grammar Post-test Scores of Groups 1, 2 & 3 in Percentages

Group	N	Instructors	Mean	Median	SD	SE	Range
Group 1	59	A	79%	79%	10.26	1.90	50-96
Group 2	63	B	67%	69%	12.62	1.26	40-94
Group 3	67	A	71%	70%	10.57	1.34	45-94

Table 5: The Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Standard Error and Range of the Writing Pottest Scores of Groups 1, 2 & 3 in Percentages

Group	N	Instructors	Mean	Median	SD	SE	Range
Group 1	59	A	78%	78%	9.70	1.87	50-93
Group 2	63	A	72%	71%	10.11	2.41	40-90
Group 3	67	B	64%	65%	12.23	2.31	35-87

Table 6: T-Test Results for the Grammar Pre and Post-test Mean Scores

Groups	Instructors	N	Df	Mean	T value	P Value
Group 1	A	59	58	79%	6.13	.01
Group 2	B	63	62	67%	5.34	.01
Group 3	A	67	66	71%	5.78	.01

Table 7: T-Test Results for the Writing Pre and Post-test Mean Scores

Groups	Instructors	N	Df	Mean	T value	P Value
Group 1	A	59	58	78%	7.22	.01
Group 2	A	63	62	72%	5.78	.01
Group 3	B	67	66	64%	6.45	.01

Here again, results of the T-Tests do not show which group made higher gains on the grammar and writing post-tests at the end of the semester and which course was higher. Comparisons of Group 1, 2, 3 mean scores on the grammar and writing post-tests using a two-way ANOVA revealed significant differences among the three groups in the grammar and writing post-test mean scores ($Df = 186$; $F = 7.42$; $P > .01$).

Since there is a significant difference between the three groups in the grammar and writing post-test scores, results of a Scheffé test showed significant differences at the .05 among Groups 1, 2, and 3 in the Grammar and Writing means scores. This means that Group 1, that received both grammar and writing instruction from the same instructor (Instructor A), made higher gains than Groups 2 and 3 that received Grammar and writing instruction from two different instructors (A and B). Interestingly, the groups that received writing or grammar instruction from Instructor A made higher gains in grammar/writing than the group that received grammar or writing instruction from Instructor B.

Furthermore, there were strong correlations between the grammar and writing post-test scores of the three groups (Group 1 $r = .72$; Group 2 $r = .65$; Group 3 $r = .60$), which means that high grammar scores were associated with high writing scores and low grammar scores were associated with low writing scores, with higher correlations among the grammar and writing scores when the two courses were taught by the same instructor rather than 2 different instructors.

4. Discussion

The present study found that students who received concurrent grammar and writing instruction from the same instructor (Instructor A) scored significantly higher than Groups 2 and 3 who received grammar and writing instruction from two different instructors. The instructors' qualifications, pedagogical system, educational and professional experience, the integration of online instruction, the type of error correction and instant feedback given to the students and the formative assessment techniques used were significantly more effective than writing/grammar instruction that depended on the textbook alone. These variables proved to be important for enhancing the grammatical knowledge and writing quality of unskilled, low ability EFL students and resulted in a significant improvement in their grammar and writing post-test scores.

Qualitative analysis of the post-test essays of Group 1 students, in comparison with Groups 2 and 3, exhibited a great improvement in their grammatical knowledge and writing ability. They became more competent in their language use and could write and communicate easily. They could write long essays, could generate, and organize ideas, could construct long sentences with compound and complex structures instead of short, simple, and incomprehensible sentences at the beginning of the semester. Their spelling ability and use of punctuation marks and capitalization rules were much better than the other two groups. Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors decreased significantly in number and type. They were able to answer most of the production questions on the grammar post-test. Only 10% of the students in Group 1 failed the courses as opposed to 30% of Groups 2 and 3.

Furthermore, Group 1 students' responses to the post-treatment survey indicated that the integration of the online course had a positive effect on their attitude towards learning and practicing grammar and writing. It enhanced their self-confidence, motivation, and sense of achievement. Use of Blackboard made the grammar and writing tasks enjoyable rather than a chore. It encouraged the students to write a lot and exchange ideas and comments outside the classroom. The online learning environment was secure for making mistakes and for student-instructor and student-student interactions. Achievement was enhanced by the multiple skills practiced by Group 1 students: reading, writing, grammatical structures, spell checking and word-processing. Blackboard provided the students with extension activities that they enjoyed. They used writing as a means of communication about favourable authentic everyday-life situations. The grammar and writing websites posted provided more information and extra practice on the

specific writing skills and grammar points introduced and practiced in class. Thus, writing skills and grammatical structures studies in class were simultaneously practiced, consolidated, and transferred to new situations outside the classroom.

The students added that formative assessment, i.e., taking a quiz every 2 weeks is better than taking 2 interms over the whole semester as in the former case, they focused on a small portion of the material, could study it several times, and master it. Each quiz helped them explore on their strengths and work on their weaknesses before moving on to new material.

Students in Group 1 who were concurrently taught grammar and writing asserted that receiving grammar and writing from the same instructor helped them connect and apply the same structures and rules. This consolidated what they were learning. In each grammar or writing class and in the online course, Instructor A was reminding them of certain rules and issues that they had studied. Instructor A's wide knowledge of English grammar and writing skills, the variety of teaching techniques she used, the instant feedback she provided right after a rule, or a specific skill was presented were very effective and beneficial as the students could unlearn their misunderstandings and correct their errors right away.

The positive effect of the concurrent teaching of grammar and writing instruction on the writing achievement of unskilled, low-ability EFL female freshman writers obtained in the present study is consistent with findings of other studies in the literature such as Robinson and Feng (2016), Wang and Wang (2014); Schenck (2019); Rajabi and Dezhkam (2014); Davis (1996); Artunduaga and Marco (2013); Jones, Myhill and Bailey (2013); Myhill, Jones, Lines and Watson (2011); Datchuk and Kubina (2013) and Saddler and Graham (2005) with EFL students in England, Iran, Korea, USA, Egypt and Algeria. These studies, as well as the current study, found that direct and explicit grammar instruction, traditional form-focused and rule-based pedagogy, contextualised grammar teaching linked to the teaching of writing, peer-assisted sentence-combining and sentence-construction skills, the integration of form and meaning with students' interaction while learning, daily grammar review and error correction feedback were effective and meaningful in developing students' grammatical competence. They helped the students learn procedural knowledge in grammar and basic writing skills. They were effective in improving students' writing accuracy. They also had a positive impact on students' perceptions of their writing and editing skills.

Unlike the present study which found a strong correlation between the students' grammar and writing post-test scores, Helmiati, Sudarsono and Susilowati (2019) found a low correlation between grammar mastery and writing ability of Indonesian students i.e., students who had a low score on the grammar test did not necessarily mean that they would score low in writing and vice versa. Similarly, Ahangari and Barghi's (2013) findings demonstrated that intermediate EFL students' knowledge of certain grammatical forms on a test may not necessarily reflect their writing ability and accuracy, i.e., a certain score obtained on a grammar test may not necessarily indicate the student's writing ability and accuracy.

As in the presents study, Myhill, Jones, Lines and Watson (2011), Borg (1998) and Robinson and Feng (2016) found that the teacher's linguistic subject knowledge, her pedagogical systems and grammar teaching are factors that play an important role in developing students' grammatical and writing competence. They can contribute to a fuller and more realistic understanding of L2 grammar. In addition, experienced teachers' decisions in teaching grammar were shaped by the interaction of their pedagogical system, their educational and professional experiences, and the instructional context.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

Findings of this study showed a strong correlation between EFL freshman students' scores in both writing and grammar, which means that grammar instruction is crucial for writing improvement and writing practice is crucial for the acquisition of grammatical structures. The relationship between grammar and writing instruction seems to be reciprocal, i.e., writing instruction affects grammatical competence and grammatical knowledge affects writing skill development. Based on findings of the present study, grammar and writing courses should be concurrently taught to EFL freshman students by the same instructor. Writing and grammar instructors should make the connection between grammatical structures taught in the grammar course while teaching writing, and the skills taught in the writing course while teaching grammar. This connection should be made all the time.

For the effective use of grammar in writing tasks, one small task must be taught at a time, where it is explained, illustrated, practiced in class under the instructor's supervision and extension activities given for extra practice.

In the grammar and writing courses, students must do the exercises or at least few sentences, and write part of their paragraph in class under the instructor's supervision (not at home). Instant feedback should be given to, at least, few students each class session, due limited class time. Error location should be pointed out, students can be reminded of the rule and illustrative examples studied, and they must try to self-correct their errors. In the writing course, students should be encouraged to write for communication and not to worry about errors. Focus should be on correcting some errors (not all errors) in an essay (Jalalifarahani & Azizi, 2012; Al-Jarf, 2011c; Al-Jarf, 2021a). Grammar and writing tests should consist of application questions that focus on measuring students'

ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations and require the production of the answer. All tasks and structures studied should be covered on a test. Stretches of discourse longer than a single sentence must be used. Sentences used on grammar tests and topics used on writing tests should not have been encountered in class. However, the type and difficulty level of the tasks should be comparable to those practiced in class.

For better grammar and writing instruction and better student achievement, the current study recommends the following:

- Training EFL instructors in EFL pedagogy, theories of learning and motivation, and principles of language assessment to increase their knowledge of effective writing and grammar pedagogical strategies that impact students' overall grammatical knowledge and writing quality. EFL instructors may attend professional development sessions to enhance their grammar content knowledge, to have a better understanding of students' gaps in writing, and good teaching practices in the writing class (Xavier, Hong & Renandya, 2020). They may also join ESL teachers' online discussion forums and ESL professional development Facebook pages to exchange knowledge and expertise and pose questions about issues of interest to them (Al-Jarf, 2021c; Al-Jarf, 2014a; A-Jarf, 2007a; Al-Jarf, 2006a; Al-Jarf, 2006b).
- Use of task-based and project-based grammar and writing instruction, creating opportunities for the students to practice grammar and writing, and motivating them to get involved in the activities (Pham & Do (2021; Ray, 2018; Al-Jarf, 2005b).
- Using the flipped classroom strategy by actively engaging the students in the learning activity, using various techniques such as collaborative writing, in-class teacher-learner interaction and negotiation, video screen casting, and maximizing in-class time (Valizadeh & Soltanpour, 2020).
- Use of Grammarly, a free online writing assistant, or any other editing app to improve students' writing quality (Dizon & Gayed, 2021).
- Use of overt teaching to reduce subject-verb agreement errors of EAP learners and improve the quality of their writing (Wee, Sim & Jusoff, 2009).
- Supplementing the course content with a daily grammar review and error correction feedback to promote grammatical accuracy in writing in the target language (Frantzen, 1995).
- Using blogs to practice writing about current global events and about the Covid-19 pandemic in the EFL writing classroom (Al-Jarf, 2022a; Al-Jarf, 2022b).
- Connecting writing topics such as humanizing cities, creating job opportunities for the young people and women empowerment with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 (Al-Jarf, 2021b).
- Training students in specific writing skills such as how to write a statement of purpose (Al-Jarf-2008).
- Integrating participation goals in writing activities (Al-Jarf, 2021d).
- Using English linguistic landscapes in the students' environment to teach certain grammatical structures (Al-Jarf, 2021e).
- Integrating online courses in writing and grammar instruction and combining online reading and writing activities (A-Jarf, 2007b; 2007c; A-Jarf, 2005a; A-Jarf, 2004; A-Jarf, 2002).
- Integrating online grammar and writing tasks (Al-Jarf, 2017; Al-Jarf, 2014c).
- Integrating Elluminate webconferences in EFL grammar instruction (Al-Jarf, 2013a).
- Enhancing students' writing, grammar, Greek and Latin roots, vocabulary, and spelling skills with mind-mapping software (Al-Jarf, 2015b; Al-Jarf, 2013b; Al-Jarf, 2011d; Al-Jarf, 2011e; Al-Jarf, 2010; Al-Jarf, 2009).
- Using social media such as Facebook for free writing (Al-Jarf, 2018; Al-Jarf, 2015a; Al-Jarf, 2014b).
- Assessing students' grammar and writing test performance and teachers' performance with iRubrics (Al-Jarf, 2020; Al-Jarf, 2015c; Al-Jarf, 2011a; Al-Jarf, 2011b).

Finally, the current study recommends that future studies investigate the effects of concurrent teaching of language skills and elements such as listening, speaking, reading and vocabulary on the development of different kinds of writing skills such as a five-paragraph essay, writing for academic and business purposes, writing an argumentative essay, creative writing and others.

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