



**Postgraduate Studies and Training**  
**Department of English**

**An Investigation into English Language Writing Strategies Employed by  
Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students at Sabratha University**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master in Applied Linguistics**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates English language writing strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students at Sabratha University. It also examines the benefits students gain from experiencing these strategies in writing tasks. To answer the research questions, this study adopted a mixed-method research design. The quantitative data of this study were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire. Forty MA students answered this questionnaire from the Department of English. The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Eight MA students were interviewed. All the participants of this study were recruited using convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data of the questionnaire, whereas the thematic analysis method was used to analyse the qualitative data of the interview. The results of the study revealed that most of the participants perceived writing strategies as effective and flexible tools to enhance their writing abilities. The findings revealed that Libyan EFL postgraduate students used five categories of writing strategies: rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, communicative, and social/affective strategies. This indicates that MA students were aware of the importance of using appropriate strategies, and they made use of various writing strategies. They only differ in terms of frequency and kind. For instance, metacognitive and cognitive strategies were the most frequently used when writing, followed by communicative, affective, social, and rhetorical strategies. Moreover, participants reported that using these strategies produced several benefits, including improved organization, planning, and overall coherence. They also facilitated idea generation and academic performance. Students revealed that writing strategies increased their confidence and motivation, and more timely submission of tasks. Finally, using writing strategies reduced their anxiety and increased responsiveness to peer and teacher feedback. These findings revealed that there are strong relationships between all of the writing strategies, and all of them can be used moderately in enhancing writing skills and contributing in improving writing quality. Based on these results, several suggestions and recommendations are presented.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this study, titled “An Investigation into English Language Writing Strategies Employed by Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students at Sabratha University,” is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been copied from another source. I confirm that any work or material contributed by others in this thesis has been properly cited, acknowledged, and listed in the reference section.

Signature.....

Date .....

## **Dedication**

To my beloved parents

To my husband

To my son

I dedicate this research for.

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, I would like to express my special thanks to Allah the Almighty for giving me the strength, willingness, and guidance to complete this dissertation. This achievement would not be done without his blessing.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
MA	Master of Arts
LLS	Language Learning Strategies
UK	United Kingdom

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.0. Introduction**

This chapter aims to provide an overview of writing strategies and sheds light on their implementation in EFL contexts. It starts with a background of the study. Then it introduces the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, and the research questions. After that it explains the significance of the study and gives a brief description of the methodology. It ends with clarifying the structure of the thesis.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Writing in English is one of the most significant skills that students need to master to pursue their academic success, share knowledge, and communicate effectively. Writing is a prime fundamental aspect, especially for those who are studying English as a foreign language. Writing is defined by Nunan (2003, p. 88) as a “productive skill and way of communicating thoughts and ideas coherently and logically.” That is, writing involves learners' culture and knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and structure to enable writers to send a message communicatively and make sense to the readers of what has been written. Many scholars have highlighted writing as a dynamic and recursive process (Blanchard & Root, 2004; Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981; Harmer, 2007). They stated that there are three writing stages or processes to have a good piece of writing: planning, translating, and reviewing. Planning involves generating ideas, writing goals, and outlines. Translating ideas occurs by using memory and knowledge about the topic to support ideas. Reviewing is where the writer checks the whole work and makes some edits (Flower and Hayes, 1981). Similarly, Balanced and Root (2002) proposed that writing consists of three stages: pre-writing, writing, and revising or editing.

However, writing in a second language is described as more challenging and complex than writing in one's native language. Bailey (2003) noted that L2 writing requires proficiency in many linguistic areas, for example, spelling, vocabulary, usage, and grammar which raises the difficulty for learners. Reflecting this, Defazio et al. (2010) reported that the majority of students do not possess the skills necessary to effectively communicate in a written work. Other researchers have pointed out that L2 writers often struggle due to limited background knowledge of the topic or incomplete mastery of

grammatical conventions (Hyland, 2001). In practice, learners frequently exhibit common writing difficulties such as grammatical and lexical errors, imprecise word choice, and problems with coherence and cohesion (Padgate, 2008).

To help learners overcome these challenges within the writing stages, writing strategies are effective tools and techniques that writers consciously adopt to manage the complexity of writing (Creswell, 2000; Graham, 2006). For example, writers might carefully plan their ideas before drafting, regularly monitor and revise their text during writing, and revise the draft thoroughly after completion. By practicing strategy use at each stage of the writing, students can better address common problems and improve the overall quality of their writing.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate students' writing strategies in EFL contexts. For instance, Baker and Boonkit (2004) compared the strategies used by Thailand high-achieving learners and the strategies used by less successful learners through a survey, diaries, and interviews. The findings of the study were that highachiever students used cognitive strategies, whereas low-achiever students used social and affective strategies. Taking another route, Torrance, Thomas, & Robinson (1994) investigated writing strategies used by UK graduate students. The findings showed that planners had higher productivity than the two strategy writers, and planning can be effective for some students, but planning itself will not guarantee the success of writing. One more study conducted by Arifin (2017) investigated the writing strategies used by four Indonesian graduate students when writing in L2. The findings of the study indicated that skilled writers used each strategy in high frequency, on the other hand, less skilled writers only used each strategy in low frequency.

As mentioned above, writing strategies play an important role in the ESL/EFL writing process. Many studies have been carried out on EFL undergraduate students' writing strategies and challenges (e.g., Wang & Wen, 2002; Mustafa & Shahab, 2024; Zhang et al., 2021); yet, there have not been adequate studies addressing master's graduate students scholarly writing strategies (e.g., Hemmings et al., 2007; Gomez, 2014). Thus, this study aims to investigate the writing strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students as they write. It also intends to investigate students' benefits from using various writing strategies in their tasks.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Writing strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the process of writing (Creswell, 2000; Graham, 2006). From my experience as an EFL student, I noticed that most of the students have difficulties and face challenges in writing academically even though they have extensive knowledge of language and structure. This is perhaps due to the lack of awareness of the writing strategies, or they may not have been properly introduced by their teachers. Although there are many research studies about learning strategies that have been carried out for undergraduate students, few of them deal with writing strategies used by EFL postgraduate students when writing in Libyan contexts. Thus, this study aims to investigate the writing strategies utilised by EFL Libyan postgraduate students at Sabratha University when they write. It also intends to investigate students' benefits from using these strategies.

## **1.3. Aims of the Study**

This study aims to:

1. Identify writing strategies utilised by EFL Libyan postgraduate students.
2. Investigate postgraduate students' benefits gained from using writing strategies.

## **1.4. Research Questions**

To achieve the aims of this study, the following questions are constructed.

1. What writing strategies do EFL Libyan postgraduate students employ when they write?
2. What benefits do EFL postgraduate students experience from using various writing strategies in their writing tasks?

## **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study might assist students in improving their writing strategies by increasing their awareness of the most effective strategies and approaches that support their academic tasks. They might also help teachers adopt appropriate approaches and techniques that encourage the use of these strategies in the classroom. Furthermore, the findings could guide syllabus designers in integrating strategy-based instruction into the curriculum. Based on the results, several suggestions and recommendations may be proposed to enhance the teaching and learning of writing. Moreover, since there is limited

research on writing strategies in the Libyan context, this study will contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

### **1.6. Methodology**

This study adopted a mixed-method research design. Mixed-method design allows the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to analyse the outcomes in one single study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The study took place at Sabratha University, in the Department of English. The data were collected by using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. Forty Libyan EFL postgraduate students completed a questionnaire. Eight students were interviewed. All the participants of this study were recruited using convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data of the questionnaire, whereas the thematic analysis method was used to analyse the qualitative data of the interview. The findings of the numeric data collected from the questionnaire were presented in tables, while the interview data were presented under specific themes generated from the data analysis procedures. However, ethical issues such as anonymity and informed consent were taken into account.

### **1.7. Structure of the Study**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study, including the background of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, and methodology.

Chapter two begins with a comprehensive review of the literature on writing in general, and on writing strategies in particular. Firstly, it explains concepts related to writing (definition of writing, the importance of writing, components of writing, the process of writing, factors affecting students' writing, problems encountered in writing, approaches to writing, and writing techniques). Then a discussion of writing strategies is introduced. Start with the definition of writing strategies, their importance, their benefits, and their classification were provided. Finally, an overview of previous studies on writing strategies is illustrated.

Chapter three outlines the methodology applied in this study. It introduces the research design, context of study, sample, data collection tools (questionnaire and semistructured interview), pilot study, and ethical issues.

Chapter four presents the analysis and key findings of the questionnaire and semistructured interviews. It also explains the procedures of analyzing data to reach final results.

Chapter five discusses the main findings of the study with some interpretation and implementation of writing strategies to answer the research questions. It also provides a conclusion of the main findings of the whole study, some recommendations for both teachers and students, limitations, and suggestions for future studies.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.0. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the literature on English language writing strategies used by students. Various aspects related to writing are introduced to provide a deeper understanding of the topic. These aspects include the definition and components of writing, the writing process, and the difficulties faced by EFL Libyan students in writing. After that, a brief discussion of writing approaches and some writing techniques is introduced. Following that, the strategies employed by students while writing, their classification and benefits are presented. Additionally, previous studies about writing strategies are also discussed. Finally, summary of the chapter is provided.

#### **2.1. Definition of Writing Skill**

Writing is a valuable tool and crucial ability that enables people to communicate in target languages. It is the capacity to efficiently and deliberately construct a language in written form. Writing is a crucial skill for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, especially those at the tertiary level (Jabali, 2018; Toba et al., 2019). Jebreil et al. (2015) stated that writing involves various cognitive processes such as expressing intentions, composing ideas, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It encompasses not only the act of putting words on paper but also the processes of thinking, composing, and encoding language within a sociocultural context (Fareed et al., 2016). It serves as a means of interpersonal communication through different linguistic styles and discourses, allowing people to connect with others across distances and time. In academic settings, writing plays a significant role in conference presentations, journals, and book publishing, facilitating the dissemination of new ideas and concepts (Cumming, 1998).

Nation (2009) suggested that writing can be approached as a skill that is enhanced through the development of listening, speaking, and reading abilities. By engaging in activities that strengthen these skills, individuals can effectively utilise words in their writing. This implies that writing proficiency can be improved by acquiring a deeper understanding of various language components. Nunan (2003, p. 88) defined writing as "Writing entails both the mental work of developing and organizing ideas into cohesive statements and paragraphs that readers can understand, as well as the physical act of putting words down on paper or a screen." Whereas Petty and Jensen (1980) asserted that writing is an

essential mode of language expression, encompassing not only the process of creating letters and words but also the development of sentences and paragraphs, precise spelling, and conformity to written rules. Additionally, writing is defined as an effective written version of spoken language that necessitates planning, drafting, and editing prior to final output in order to produce thoughts and knowledge in a meaningful and logical manner (Nunan, 2001).

From these definitions, it can be concluded that writing is the act of placing thoughts, expressing feelings, organizing ideas and actions into words on paper to convey a message in a cohesive, logical, and understandable way. It plays a crucial role in academic contexts, as writing assignments, research papers, articles and facilitating critical thinking and effective communication.

## **2.2. The Importance of Writing**

In terms of language proficiency, writing is a fundamental language skill that is as crucial as speaking, listening, and reading. It is essential for students to be proficient in writing letters, composing written reports, responding to advertisements, and utilizing electronic media for communication (Harmer, 2006). In the academic environment, the ability to write effectively is essential for university students to achieve academic success. It is important to recognize that students' ability to communicate knowledge and ideas plays a key role in assessing their analytical skills in educational settings (Bean, 2011). This emphasis on writing encourages students to engage in critical thinking, develop analytical reasoning, and enhance their learning capabilities and efficiency (Shalaby, 2023). Moreover, proficiency in writing enables students to share their research findings with a global audience in academic contexts, facilitating the exchange of ideas on an international scale (Bean, 2011).

In essence, in order to practice writing and produce a quality written form, students need to be adequately knowledgeable about the subject, proficient in the usage of syntax and vocabulary, and efficient at organizing their thoughts. Teachers and students alike must successfully teach these foundational elements. The following section discusses the basic elements of writing that students use to develop an effective written product.

## **2.3. Components of Writing**

Writing components refer to the process by which writers create written works.

According to Jacobson et al. (1981), there are five writing components that should be mastered by writers in order to transfer ideas and thoughts into written form. These components are as follows.

**a. Content:** This component refers to the essence of the main idea being conveyed. It is a cohesive group of statements that a writer presents to develop a subject. The content of a paragraph should focus on conveying ideas rather than simply serving as transitions, restatements, or emphasis.

**b. Organization:** It is the logical arrangement of content in writing. This component is more than just a random collection of facts and ideas but rather a deliberate attempt to structure information in a coherent manner. Even in early drafts, writers may still be working to establish order and identify patterns in their material to align with the purpose of their writing.

**c. Vocabulary:** This component is crucial in writing, as it involves choosing words that best express the intended meaning clearly and directly. Writers should aim to use words that precisely convey their ideas, avoiding ambiguity or distortion.

**d. Language Use:** Pertains to the correct grammatical form and syntax used to separate, combine, and group ideas in writing. This helps to establish logical relationships between words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in paragraph writing.

**e. Mechanics:** It involves the graphic conventions of language, such as arranging letters, words, and paragraphs in a structured manner. This includes knowledge of language structure and other related elements to ensure clarity and coherence in writing.

To write academically readable parallel texts, one should possess a particular level of linguistic competence and knowledge of writing elements and how to use them. Therefore, there are steps writers take to develop a decent written form before delivering it to the readers. If students follow these steps, they will be able to produce writing that is accurate, meaningful, and coherent.

#### **2.4. The Process of Writing**

The writing process refers to the stages or steps a writer follows to produce a coherent, effective piece of writing (Harris & Graham, 2019). These processes are recursive, in which writers go through different stages to produce their work. There are four writing stages introduced by Harmer (2004). These writing stages are: planning, drafting, editing, and the final version.

- a. Planning:** Before putting pen to paper, writers must have a clear vision of what they want to convey. It is essential to have a solid plan in place, outlining the ideas and purpose behind their writing and thinking about language style. By carefully categorizing their thoughts and determining the message they want to convey, writers can ensure their words have impact and clarity.
- b. Drafting:** The process of drafting is the first version of written work. Paying attention to grammar rules, punctuation, and spelling is not the core part of this process. However, during drafting, students focus more on conveying ideas and constructing the structure and organization of what is in mind in order to have a rough draft.
- c. Editing:** It is the process of reflecting and revising. In this stage, the first draft is reviewed to check the grammar rules, spelling mistakes, and punctuation, and then rewritten correctly.
- d. Final Version:** It is the last stage in the process of writing. Once students have finished their editing and revision of the written form, it is ready to be published to the readers as a final project.

However, it is important to note that not all writers follow the same process or activities. What works for one writer may not work for another, and different stages and strategies may be more effective for different individuals or assignments. Williams (2003) introduced the phase model as an extended writing process model, consisting of eight key processes. These processes are:

- . The Prewriting Stage:** Before diving into your first draft or paper, it is crucial to engage in prewriting activities. It is the ability to form ideas and thoughts before putting them on paper. This involves brainstorming ideas, discussion, free writing, and outlining activities.
- . The Planning Stage:** It is a thinking activity and organization technique that helps students integrate their ideas with the purpose of their paper. It involves considering your purpose and how all these elements connect to the information you have gathered about the topic.
- . The Drafting Stage:** This stage is bringing your ideas to life on paper. It involves organizing ideas in a specific order. Students should focus on the content and organization more than spelling and grammatical errors.

. **The Pausing and Reading Stage:** These stages occur simultaneously. Rereading what has been written, thinking about more ideas, and pausing when running out of ideas.

. **The Revising Stage:** It is often seen as the key to successful writing. It is about more than just fixing grammar or word choice, it is about refining your overall message and structure. This step comes after completing your initial draft. In this process, writers refine the organization and expression of their composition. focuses on sentence-level concerns like correcting mistakes and focusing on punctuation, spelling, grammar, and word choice.

. **The Editing Stage:** It focuses on writing mechanics such as references and formatting, as well as linguistic accuracy. It involves fine-tuning your work for errors and clarity.

. **The Publishing Stage:** This stage involves sharing an effective final product with the public.

Williams (2003) suggested that all writers engage in these processes to some extent, and it is essential for student writers to explore various writing strategies to determine what works best for them. The process model emphasizes that a finished composition is the result of a complex interaction of activities across different stages of development. While not every writing task progresses through every stage. Williams (2003) also highlighted that processes like planning, drafting, and revising have influential states, and these processes are often modified as writers revise while drafting, plan while editing, and so on.

To sum up, writing processes provide a general framework for successful writing development. During the process of writing, as students work towards mastering the art of writing, they often encounter common errors, including spelling mistakes, grammar issues, punctuation errors, and vocabulary challenges. The following section discusses the common problems and difficulties faced by EFL students when they write.

## **2.5. Problems Encountered by EFL Students in Writing**

In EFL contexts, it is imperative for students to engage in writing in order to effectively convey their thoughts and ideas on a day-to-day basis, whether through letters, creating narratives, or composing concise messages. Despite students' existing familiarity with writing, several crucial elements contribute to its complexity beyond what may initially be perceived. For instance, when composing a brief narrative, students are required to consider various aspects, including content, structure, language usage, punctuation, and

grammar. Consequently, this necessitates a thorough exploration and understanding of these skills prior to the formulation of their written work (Sakkir et al., 2022).

The task of producing academic texts such as essays and research papers in English can be quite challenging for EFL students. Previous studies have been conducted on the writing difficulties of students. For example, Abdalwahid (2021) conducted a study analyzing 150 essays by Libyan EFL university students. This study revealed that grammar mistakes, punctuation errors, poor organization, spelling mistakes, inappropriate sentences, and a lack of coherence are the most common problems in writing. Similarly, Hasan and Marzuki (2017) examined the English writing skills of university students in Riau by giving them timed writing assignments. They found various grammatical errors in the students' work, including problems with plural forms, articles, verb forms, clauses, passive voice, and prepositions in their writing.

In addition, Toba, Nor, and Sanu (2019) revealed that Indonesian EFL university students are still facing challenges in various aspects of writing, including content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. These difficulties are attributed to a lack of understanding of writing fundamentals and personal factors such as limited writing practice, negative perceptions of writing, a lack of motivation, time constraints during writing classes, and inadequate instruction on the writing process from teachers. Moreover, a recent study on Pakistani EFL learners on the obstacles to writing skills suggested that factors such as L1 interference, teaching methods, memorization, and rote learning can impede the progress of students in improving their writing skills (Farooq et al., 2020).

In summary, the literature showed that the most significant challenges faced by EFL students in writing include grammatical errors, punctuation issues, spelling mistakes, capitalization errors, and poor organization or illogical sequencing. Various factors have been identified as significantly impacting writing skills, such as students, instructors, environment, family, education system and teachers' undergraduate education (Kokkokoğlu and Doğan, 2021). Rushing to cover the curriculum and students' lack of interest and motivation to write also have a detrimental effect on their writing abilities. Furthermore, language proficiency, linguistic differences, and motivation play a crucial role in the writing process. The following section briefly discusses the main factors affecting students' writing skills based on previous research.

## **2.6. Factors that Affect Students' Writing**

Writing is perceived as the most challenging aspect of language learning (Hidayati, 2018). Various factors can contribute to students losing interest in writing, such as struggling to find appropriate words in the target language, grappling with syntax and semantics, and lacking motivation. This paper delves into three key factors-language proficiency, linguistic differences, and motivation and their potential impact on students' writing processes.

### **2.6.1. Language Proficiency**

Proficiency in language is closely tied to the ability to use words and expressions effectively for a given task. Language proficiency is demonstrated through the language skills of L2 learners (Cumming, 2001; Da Costa et al., 2016). Hussain (2017) suggested that writing proficiency is connected to overall language skills, which greatly impacts writing proficiency for second language students. Developing writing skills requires mastery of cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic competencies (Ellis, 2015; De Oliveira & Silva, 2016; Gennaro, 2016). L2 learners must acquire competency to achieve proficiency in L2 learning, enabling them to produce lengthy texts with appropriate meta-discourse features, vocabulary, and syntactic structures (Barkaoui, 2007).

While some studies suggested that higher language proficiency leads to better writing products, others have found no direct correlation between L2 linguistic proficiency and writing quality. The debate continues, with some researchers emphasizing the importance of composing competence over linguistic ability in determining writing quality. Further investigation is needed to fully understand the impact of language proficiency on L2 writing outcomes. In a study conducted by Beare and Bourdages (2007), eight skilled bilingual writers (English and Spanish) were examined based on recommendations from professional contacts as individuals with high proficiency levels. The study aimed to determine if writers employed more language-switching strategies when generating content in L2 compared to L1. Results showed that language switching was not common among highly proficient bilingual writers, with only three out of the eight participants switching to L1 during content generation in L2. Among the three participants, Cathy frequently used her L1 in L2 content generation, possibly due to lower L2 proficiency compared to the others. The remaining participants, whose L2 proficiency was "very close to native speakers," did not need to revert to L1 in their composing process.

### **2.6.2. Linguistic Differences**

The linguistic differences between Arabic and English present challenges for Libyan EFL students, who often struggle with vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and discourse structures when writing in English. As Arabic is the primary language for these students, they may attempt to apply Arabic writing and rhetorical patterns to English, resulting in difficulties in adapting to English writing conventions. Common errors observed in the writing of Libyan EFL students include fragments, subject-verb agreement errors, misuse of articles, punctuation errors, coherence and cohesion issues, run-on sentences, poor paragraph development, selection of inappropriate lexical items, and omissions. Educators working with Libyan EFL students should take into account these differences in language when designing writing instructions and tasks (Abdel Aziz & Adel, 2020; Almushwat & Sabkha, 2023).

### **2.6.3. Motivation**

In light of the aforementioned challenges, motivation is one of the most important factors influencing students' writing skills. Fostering motivation is crucial in aiding students to overcome difficulties in complex writing tasks. Wigfield and Cambria (2010) asserted a strong link between motivation, achievement, and students' performance in writing tasks. Al-Hoorie and Macintyre (2020) further emphasised the correlation between achievement in second language learning and motivational factors, noting that students with high motivation in writing tend to excel in writing assignments. This notion was supported by Cahyono and Rahayu (2020) in a case study involving 55 English Foreign Language (EFL) students, revealing a positive correlation between students' motivation and their writing achievement.

Moreover, Lipstein and Renninger (2007) suggested that motivated students are more likely to set practical goals, use effective techniques, and seek feedback to improve their writing. Akyol & Aktas (2018) also found that motivation plays a significant role in the development of writing skills. Additionally, Ackerman (2006) highlighted the impact of teachers demonstrating strong writing skills on students' motivation to write. Moreover, Nasihah and Cahyono (2017) found a significant positive correlation between 12 students' motivation and writing achievement, indicating that higher motivation levels corresponded to better writing performance. It is evident that motivation plays a crucial role in determining students' writing achievement. Thus, it is essential for EFL students

to employ effective methods and approaches to enhance motivation and improve their writing skills.

To sum up, the literature indicated that various factors contribute to challenges in English writing for EFL students. Some of these factors are language proficiency, linguistic differences, and motivation. Teachers have a significant impact on improving students' literacy habits and motivating their students, which in turn can lead to improved writing abilities. Hence, implementing effective teaching approaches in EFL classrooms can greatly enhance students' writing skills.

## **2.7. Approaches to Teaching Writing**

The process of teaching involves showing or assisting individuals in acquiring knowledge and understanding, as outlined by (Brown, 2007). Harmer (2007) emphasised that teaching writing goes beyond addressing technical aspects, focussing on helping students effectively communicate their thoughts. Teachers play a vital role in creating conducive environments for idea generation and motivating students to write. Implementing a process approach to writing instruction involves guiding students through the writing process, emphasising revision, feedback, and individual conferences to enhance writing skills effectively.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, writing has often taken a backseat to speaking and fluency in traditional teaching methods such as communicative language teaching (CLT), audio-lingual teaching, and the direct method (Richards and Rogers, 2003). However, researchers have introduced three main approaches to teaching writing: the product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach.

### **2.7.1 Product Approach**

The product approach, considered more traditional, involves presenting a model for learners to imitate and then manipulating language elements to create a similar text (Kadmiry, 2021). Teachers utilizing the product approach prioritize the grammatical aspects and organisation of written texts over the content and ideas present within the text (Ngubane, 2018). The main objective of the product approach is to ensure accuracy in writing. Teachers evaluate students' writing based on their proficiency in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In some instances, students are required to analyze the key components of a teacher's sample text and replicate its organizational structure in their own writing (Akinyenye & Pluddemann, 2016).

In professional discourse, writing is often perceived as a product that reflects the writer's proficiency in grammar and vocabulary, with writing skills believed to be honed through imitation and manipulation of models presented by educators. Some individuals view writing as an extension of grammar, serving as a tool for reinforcing language patterns through practice and assessing learners' capacity to generate coherent sentences. Conversely, others see writing as a complex skill that necessitates the cultivation of proficiency in manipulating vocabulary and grammar structures (Hyland, 2003).

The product approach to teaching writing involves four stages: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing (Hyland, 2003). During the familiarization stage, students are introduced to grammatical structures and vocabulary through a model text. In the controlled stage, students write sentences using specified grammatical structures and vocabulary from a substitution table, usually in isolation. The guided stage involves students imitating a model text, while the free writing stage allows students to create their own texts using the language skills they have acquired. Overall, the product approach views writing as primarily focused on understanding linguistic competence as a result of imitating teacher texts rather than the content.

According to Sun and Feng (2009), this approach is thoroughly teacher-centred. It has faced criticism for not emphasizing the autonomy of writing and overlooking the importance of learners preparing, organizing, and drafting their own thoughts to produce unique content. Additionally, the focus on sentence accuracy in the product-oriented approach may neglect the overall content of the writing. In response to the limitations of the product-oriented method, the process approach focuses on the steps writers take to produce authentic texts. This approach highlights the various stages of writing, including planning (prewriting), drafting, revising, editing, and submitting the final version for feedback (Manzanares and Gonzales, 2013).

### **2.7.2 Process Approach**

The process approach to teaching writing is a popular method among teachers, focussing on how a text is written rather than just the final product (Sun & Feng, 2009). This approach, as highlighted by Hyland (2003), has revolutionized the understanding of writing and its teaching methods. It has shown that writing is a complex and recursive process, not a linear one. This approach emphasizes the importance of prewriting, drafting, evaluating, and revising in a continuous cycle.

In the pre-writing stage, students are encouraged to explore different techniques to develop and engage with a topic. Instead of submitting a final piece right away, students are expected to produce multiple drafts. Feedback from peers and teachers is used to revise these drafts. Rewriting and revision are essential components of the writing process, with editing being an ongoing process. The multiple-draft process involves generating ideas, writing a first draft focusing on content, and revising ideas and communication in subsequent drafts. In classrooms that adopt this approach, the writer, content, purpose, and multiple drafts are central elements.

Similarly, Sun and Feng (2009) stated that the process approach to teaching writing should involve multiple stages, including prewriting activities such as brainstorming and group discussion, drafting, receiving feedback from peers or the instructor, revising at the whole-text level (evaluating focus, organization, evidence, etc.), revising at the paragraph or sentence level, proofreading, and finalizing the text. Essentially, the process approach to teaching writing emphasizes the writing process over the final product.

To sum up, this process approach allows students to generate ideas, revise them, and receive feedback before producing a final written piece that effectively communicates their thoughts to the audience. The process approach's primary goal is to teach students how to come up with writing ideas, organize these ideas, consider the audience, draft, and revise their work until they have a completed paper that effectively communicates their own thoughts.

### **2.7.3. Genre Approach**

Since the 1980s, the 'genre approach' to teaching writing has taken various shapes in different regions of the world. The genre-based approach to writing pedagogy emphasizes the importance of understanding specific patterns and conventions of written discourse in different contexts (Hyland, 2003). This approach helps students develop awareness of language features and contexts, as well as how texts are organized. By focusing on audience choice and expectations, students learn how to write effectively in different genres and gain insight into how each genre serves a rhetorical purpose. This approach also helps students understand the various components of a text, such as the writer, intended reader, and text conventions, based on communicative purposes (Cheng, 2008).

Hyland (2007) believed that teachers play a crucial role in helping learners understand the organization of "target texts" and the reasons behind their structure. Familiarity with

different writing genres and their language conventions can greatly enhance EFL learners' writing skills and proficiency. Moreover, Luu (2012) emphasized the importance of genre-based writing classes in motivating EFL learners to engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and readers. This collaborative approach not only reduces learners' sense of isolation but also reinforces their understanding of linguistic usage, content, and ideas when composing texts. Therefore, it is essential for writing teachers to provide EFL students with sample texts of various genres to support their exploration of generic structures and language features.

In summary, teaching writing is a difficult responsibility for teachers. Students should not only be able to memorize and imitate example texts but also be able to develop their real-world writing skills. Furthermore, the teachers are not only required to paint students' papers in red ink. Their critical comments, methods, and techniques inside classrooms play an important role in enhancing students' writing skills. The following section briefly discusses these writing techniques that can be employed by instructors to facilitate the writing process inside classrooms.

## **2.8. Techniques Involved in Developing Writing**

Writing is a complicated cognitive activity that involves careful thought, discipline, and focus, making it challenging to learn and teach (Grami, 2010). Teachers need to be aware of the reasons behind the numerous challenges that EFL and ESL students encounter when completing writing-related assignments. The intricate vocabulary, grammar, and coherence of the English language may be some of the causes. In addition, students become bored with the traditional techniques of instruction used in their classes (Ismail, 2007). Therefore, in order to help EFL/ESL students write better in English, teachers should try to embrace a variety of different techniques in their instructional programs and understand the requirements and interests of the students.

Brainstorming, group work, giving feedback, and genre are important techniques that innovative teachers have to implement in their classes to develop their EFL/ESL students' writing abilities.

### **2.8.1. Pair Work or Group Work**

Barkley (2012) asserted that collaborative writing involves students working in pairs or small groups to collectively produce a formal piece of writing. This method encourages active participation from all group members throughout the writing process, from

generating ideas to revising and editing the final product. By working collaboratively, students can effectively navigate the various stages of writing and remain focused on achieving a high-quality outcome.

Collaborative work in educational settings has been shown to enhance communication skills and vocabulary acquisition, and encourage participation among students who may be more reserved. This approach allows learners to exchange ideas and enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills through interaction with their peers. Additionally, collaborative work fosters a supportive environment where students can share knowledge, provide feedback, and offer guidance to one another in both successful and challenging situations (Kondo & Tuto, 2001). Ultimately, students collectively review and discuss their work to deepen their understanding and document their observations in descriptive texts (Murugesan, 2019).

In contrast to traditional teaching methods that prioritize theoretical knowledge and teacher-led instruction, collaborative writing emphasizes student engagement and active involvement in the writing process. This approach requires students to take on a more proactive role in their learning, contributing to a more dynamic and interactive classroom environment.

### **2.8.2. Brainstorming**

The technique of brainstorming is a valuable tool for students to generate many ideas and organize their thoughts before beginning a writing project (Hamer, 2019). Blanchard and Root (2003) claimed that brainstorming is a rapid method for producing a large number of ideas for a given topic. The goal is to jot down as many ideas as you can without considering how you will use them. One of the most significant benefits of brainstorming is that it fosters student cohesion, fosters interpersonal ties, and allows students to assess one another's perspectives.

Brainstorming is applicable to all educational levels and contexts (Gorjian & Namani, 2018). According to Alkhatib (2012), brainstorming helps students engage in higherlevel thinking by utilising prior knowledge in writing activities and identifying their skills and knowledge. Namani (2012) stated that brainstorming is an effective way for learners to improve their writing skills, as there are no strict rules to follow when generating sentences. Students will be able to express themselves freely and autonomously through

writing in the classroom, and students will feel comfortable writing any sentence, regardless of its relevance to the topic.

### **2.8.3. Feedback**

Feedback is an essential form of assessment that provides information on students' writing performance. For the purpose of learning and motivating students, feedback has long been considered vital in the development of writing abilities in second languages (L2). It is regarded as a crucial developmental tool in process-based, learner-centered classrooms, for example, helping students progress through several drafts until they can effectively articulate themselves (Hyland, 2006).

Feedback can be delivered by teachers (teacher feedback) or by peers (peer feedback). Teacher-written feedback is commonly utilized in L2 writing classrooms, as it is believed to be essential for enhancing students' writing skills (Hyland, 2006). According to other experts such as Pol et al. (2008) and Rollinson (2005), peer feedback is described as an educational practice where students provide constructive comments on their peers' work for either formative or summative assessment purposes. Additionally, computer-generated feedback software can also be beneficial for students, as it increases writing output and motivation and provides a nonthreatening environment (Ware and Warschauer, 2006). Computer-based feedback is often clearer and more legible and can be saved for future reference or analysis (Ferris, 2014). It is evident from these definitions that feedback plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process, as it enables students to self-evaluate and build confidence in their learning.

### **2.8.4. Genre**

Another important technique in developing English writing is genre, which refers to a specific style or type of writing. Genre helps readers identify the type of text they are reading, whether it be scientific, advertising, biographical, romantic fiction, a formal letter, or poetry. When teachers aim to teach a specific genre to their EFL or ESL students, it is essential to first provide examples of that genre in the classroom. This allows students to understand the techniques involved in writing that particular genre and encourages them to practice on their own. By offering targeted training and activities related to the genre for accuracy practice, teachers can help students enhance their writing skills in that specific type of text. Furthermore, teachers should guide students on how to write and

what to write while also allowing them the freedom to develop their writing skills in a creative and independent manner (Hyland, 2004).

However, the significance of language learning strategies has become more pronounced in the current years due to the growing emphasis on language acquisition worldwide. Learning strategies are recognized as a crucial element in aiding the successful acquisition of a second or foreign language (L2) and have been extensively researched (Griffiths, 2013; Oxford, 2017). Specific learning strategies can assist learners in achieving their desired learning goals in a particular context, while other strategies may not be as effective for that specific goal. The subsequent section provides a comprehensive overview of language learning strategies in EFL classrooms.

## **2.9. Language Learning Strategies**

Strategy is seen as a deliberate plan or action taken to reach a specific goal. Brown (2007) described strategy as a particular approach used to address a problem or manipulate information in order to achieve objectives. In the field of education, the concept of strategy has increasingly become a significant influence.

Language learning strategies (LLS) have significantly impacted the learning process of language learners (Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 2014). According to Chamot (2005), strategies are defined as procedures that aid in learning tasks, often being conscious and goal-orientated, particularly in the initial stages of tackling a new language task. While learner strategies have evolved over time, experts generally agree that language learner strategies involve conscious or semi-conscious thoughts and behaviors used by learners to enhance their knowledge and understanding of a second language (Cohen, 2005). According to Oxford (2017), these strategies are contextually specific thoughts and actions that can be both mental and physical, can be combined in clusters or chains, and can have cognitive, emotional, and social roles as determined by the individual. Furthermore, Griffiths (2008) argued that language learning strategies are activities consciously chosen by learners to regulate their own language learning.

Chamot (2005) stated that language learning strategies are crucial for two main reasons. Firstly, studying the strategies employed by second language learners provides insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes involved in language learning. Secondly, by teaching less successful language learners new strategies, they can improve their language learning abilities. What is more, Anderson (2005) highlighted

problematically that intentionality and objectivity are the main characteristics of a strategy. Firstly, problematic refers to solving a problem, especially in communication. Intentionality refers to the implementation of strategies consciously, and objectivity assumes that strategies are used to reach a specific goal.

According to Oxford (2017), the taxonomy of language learning strategies identifies two main categories: direct and indirect strategies. Indirect strategies encompass memory, cognitive, and compensation techniques. Memory strategies involve creating mental associations, utilizing visual and auditory aids, and engaging in repetitive practice. Cognitive strategies focus on activities such as practicing language skills, analyzing and reasoning, and structuring input and output. Compensation strategies involve intelligent guessing and overcoming speaking and writing limitations.

Conversely, direct strategies include metacognitive, affective, and social approaches. Metacognitive strategies involve self-directed learning, planning and organizing study methods, and evaluating learning progress. Affective strategies encompass managing anxiety, maintaining self-motivation, and regulating emotional responses. Social strategies involve asking questions, building relationships with others, and demonstrating empathy. However, direct strategies are associated with actual language use, while indirect strategies pertain to the planning and organisation of the learning process.

In summary, a learning strategy is the deliberate choice made by students to facilitate their language acquisition and overall learning experience. Language learning strategies refer to the approaches individuals select to attain their desired goals and improve the learning process within educational environments. Hence, within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, there is a prevalent emphasis on Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) as a whole, with a notable concentration on writing strategies specifically to improve the educational experience of EFL students (Oxford, 2007).

## **2.10. Writing Strategies**

Writing strategies are considered to be crucial in the advancement of second language writing skills. Various scholars, such as Brown (2007), Yongqi Gue (2003), O'Malley (1995), and Cook (2008), advocated that writing strategy plays a significant role in education by guiding learners in approaching problems, manipulating information, and ultimately achieving their goals. However, utilizing writing strategies such as metacognitive strategies and collaborative learning can further boost students' motivation

and writing ability, as suggested by various studies (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). The next subsection discusses the writing strategies and their classification, besides their use by EFL students.

### **2.10.1. The Definition of Writing Strategies**

In every stage of writing, writers adopt certain strategies to deal with the difficulty of writing and overcome their weaknesses to solve writing problems in the learning process. For this reason, apart from learning to write, students should have their own techniques or strategies to help them with writing. Students decide how to learn based on how easy and enjoyable the activity is, which helps them stay motivated and persistent in their language learning journey (Sari, 2020).

Moreover, Ibraimi (2016) defined writing strategy as a personalized tool or roadmap that learners create to effectively reach their writing goals and objectives in a classroom setting. According to Okasha & Hamdi (2014), writing strategies refer to methods employed to manage the writing process in order to generate well-structured content of high quality. These strategies encompass cognitive and metacognitive techniques utilized to oversee the creation of written language and address challenges encountered during the writing process. Patric & Czarl (2003) identified writing strategies as particular techniques and actions that writers use to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their written work. Once students employ writing strategies, they can effectively increase their language skills. In addition, educating students in the art of writing poses a significant challenge for educators. Therefore, the implementation of effective strategies is crucial to enhancing students' writing abilities. Through the utilization of these strategies, students are able to improve their writing skills significantly (Kibry and Crovitz, 2013).

To sum up, writing strategies are tools, techniques, and actions used consciously and purposefully by students to facilitate the process of writing and improve their writing abilities. These strategies can be adopted by writers before starting to write, when they write, or in the revision and editing stage. However, not all strategies of writing are at the same level, and not all of them are effective for students. They differ according to their use and implementation when students write. This study aims to explore the writing strategies used by students during the writing process.

### **2.10.2. The Importance of Writing Strategies**

Writing strategies play a crucial role in determining learners' success in writing courses (Kim, 2020; Mastan et al., 2017). Writing strategies are tools, techniques, or operations that learners can utilise to enhance their writing effectiveness (Creswell, 2000; Graham, 2000; Graham, 2006). Studies have extensively examined the writing strategies employed by L2/EFL learners over the past two decades (Graham et al., 2013). A recent research study was launched to explore the importance of writing strategies. Maarof and Murat (2013) found that ESL students were classified as utilising writing strategies at a moderate level, with varying usage among high and low proficiency students. De Silva (2015) examined the effects of writing strategy instruction on the writing performance of undergraduate students, highlighting the positive impact of training in writing strategies on enhancing students' writing abilities. Similarly, Cabrejas (2008) has shown that proficient writers employ revision strategies more frequently and thoroughly. While writers typically focus on linguistic accuracy, some may revise to alter the focus or meaning of their work. Skilled writers make deliberate changes such as adding, deleting, substituting, or reorganizing paragraphs, considering the impact on the overall text structure and coherence.

However, it is essential to teach students writing strategies to help them overcome obstacles and improve their writing skills (Cole & Feng, 2015). By practicing writing and applying techniques, students can enhance their writing performance, with proficient writers demonstrating a greater tendency to employ effective writing strategies compared to less proficient writers (Lei, 2016).

In summary, the active and complex process of utilizing writing strategies significantly impacts students' success in writing. It is imperative to encourage students to use various methods to enhance their writing skills, particularly for ESL students who require strategy training to write effectively in the target language (Bloom, 2008). The following section views the benefits of using writing strategies in developing academic tasks.

### **2.10.3. Students' Benefits of Using Writing Strategies in Academic Tasks**

EFL students can gain a range of benefits from using different writing strategies in their academic tasks. Firstly, by applying writing strategies such as outlining, brainstorming, and organizing ideas, students can manage to have a written work with good quality and cohesion. In academic settings, it is essential for students to communicate their thoughts

effectively, structuring ideas clearly and logically. In fact, a study conducted by Hashempour et al. (2015) revealed that pre-writing strategies help students write more clearly and coherently as well as monitor their writing effectively.

Moreover, critical thinking skills can be improved by adopting various writing strategies. For example, through analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, students can discuss the topic in a wider manner with a deeper understanding of the issue. By doing this, students reactivate their knowledge with strong critical thinking (Zahrani and Elyas 2017). Furthermore, using various writing strategies helps in developing students' language proficiency. Using some writing genres, such as descriptive or narrative styles, along with planning and outlining, enhances students' grammar and vocabulary. According to Okasha and Hamdi (2014), writing strategies have a significant effect on developing students' writing proficiency and confidence. Engaging with a variety of writing strategies not only improves students' written work but also gives students confidence and reduces anxiety. By using these strategies, students can write without being stressed and enhance their autonomy over writing (Tarhuns, 2013).

Writing strategies are considered as effective tools in helping students manage their time and meet deadlines. By planning, drafting, and monitoring, students can achieve their goals in appropriate time and produce a good-quality text. For example, Alvioleta et al. (2025) stated that the use of self-regulation learning strategies by graduate students helps them control their time and manage to produce their academic written tasks successfully. Another benefit of using writing strategies is helping students to be aware of their mistakes and identify their weaknesses. Wang et al. (2023) stated that self-regulation can be supported by getting feedback from teachers or peers, which helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses, plan better, and stay motivated throughout the writing process.

In summary, using different writing strategies helps EFL students to gain numerous benefits to develop their academic tasks. These strategies improved the clarity and coherence of their writing, enhanced their critical thinking skills, and improved their proficiency. Thus, the classification of writing strategies by different scholars is discussed in the following subsection.

#### 2.10.4. Writing Strategies Classifications

Effective writing strategies play a crucial role in helping students improve their writing skills and achieve better results. The classification writing strategies varies depending on the researcher's perspective. The following sections are going to present some models of strategies. These models were presented by Arndt (1987), Wenden (1991), Riazi (1997), Sasaki (2000), and Mu (2005):

##### A. Arndt, 1987 Model for Writing Strategies

Arndt (1987) conducted pioneering studies on writing strategies, focussing on six Chinese postgraduate EFL students. These students were observed as they worked on academic written texts in both their native language and English. Arndt identified eight key categories to analyze the students' writing strategies: planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, re-reading, questioning, revising, and editing. Through these categories, she decoded the writing strategies of Chinese students. One interesting finding was that Chinese students tended to revise word choice more in their English tasks compared to their native language tasks. However, they reported rehearsing word choice more in their native language. Arndt attributed this difference to the students' hesitancy to try out alternatives and their lack of confidence in their decisions when writing in English.

**Table 1: Arndt's (1987) Categories of Writing Strategies**

Category of strategies	Definition
Planning	Finding a focus and deciding what to write about
Global planning	Deciding how to organize the text as a whole
Repeating	Of key words and phrases-an activity that often seemed to provide impetus to continue composing.
Re-reading	Of what had already been written down
Questioning	As a means of classifying ideas or evaluating what had been written.
Revising	Making changes to the written text in order to clarify the meaning
Editing	Making changes to the written text in order to correct the syntax or spelling

## B. Wenden's, (1991) Model for Writing Strategies

Wenden (1991) conducted a study involving eight ESL students who were asked to write a composition on a computer while providing introspective commentary on their writing process. The focus of the study was on how students utilized metacognitive strategies in their writing and the type of task knowledge they sought before and during the writing process.

According to Wenden (1991), metacognitive strategies are mental processes or procedures that learners employ to regulate their learning. These strategies play a direct role in the execution of a writing task and encompass planning, evaluating, and monitoring. Cognitive strategies, on the other hand, are mental operations used by learners to acquire new information and apply it to specific learning tasks, helping them overcome obstacles encountered along the way. Cognitive strategies serve as auxiliary tools that support the implementation of metacognitive strategies, with a narrower focus compared to the latter. Wenden outlined the cognitive and metacognitive strategies in her article, which are summarized in Table (2).

**Table 2: Wenden's (1991) Classification of Writing Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies	Cognitive strategies	
Planning	. Clarification	. Self-questioning . Hypothesising . Defining terms . Comparing
Evaluating	. Retrieval	. Rereading aloud or silently . . Writing in a lead-in word or expression . Rereading the assigned question . Self-questioning . Summarising what had just been written . Thinking in one's native language
Monitoring	. Resourcing . Deferral . Avoidance . Verification	. Ask researchers to refer to a dictionary.

## C. Riazi, 1997, Model for Writing Strategies

Riazi (1997) examined the macro-strategies utilized by Iranian doctoral students in carrying out their academic tasks. These strategies played a crucial role in shaping their mental representations of academic writing tasks and guiding their social activities to

achieve them. The cognitive strategies employed by the participants involved working with, analyzing, and manipulating the materials necessary for task completion. Specific strategies included note-taking, inferencing, elaboration, utilizing mother tongue knowledge, transferring skills between languages, and revising and editing multiple drafts of their papers. Riazi observed that participants in the study perceived the relationship between their native language (L1) and English as a Second Language (ESL) in the context of their graduate studies. Rather than starting from scratch in ESL, they engaged in a dynamic and interactive process of utilizing and building upon their existing knowledge, skills, and strategies. Metacognitive strategies, such as selfregulatory techniques, enabled participants to exert control over their writing tasks, thereby reducing anxiety about task completion. Social strategies encompassed interactions with professors and other members of the academic community to seek clarification on tasks, discuss problems related to tasks, and address feedback received on their writing in their field of study.

**Table 3: Riazi's (1997) Classification of Writing Strategies**

<b>Composing Strategies</b>	<b>Constituents</b>	<b>Phase of the Composing Process</b>
<b>Cognitive Strategies</b> Interacting with the materials to be used in writing by manipulating them mentally or physically	. Note-taking . Elaboration . Use of mother tongue knowledge and skill transfer from L1 Inferencing .Drafting (revising and editing)	. Reading and writing . Reading and writing . Reading and writing
<b>Metacognitive strategies</b> Executive processes used to plan, monitor, and evaluate a writing task	. Assigning goals . Planning (making and changing the outline) . Rationalizing appropriate formats .Monitoring and evaluation	. Task representation and reading Writing . Reading and writing .Reading/writing/task representation
<b>Social strategies</b> Interacting with other people to assist in performing the task or to gain affective control	. Appealing for clarifications . Getting feedback from professors and peers	. Task representation: writing
<b>Searching and using supporting sources</b>	. Searching and using libraries (books, journals, Eric, microfiche) . Using guidelines . Using others' writing as a model	. Reading and writing

#### **D. Sasaki, 2000: Model for Writing Strategies**

Sasaki (2000) delved into the writing processes of EFL learners by utilising a research scheme based on Japanese L1. The study incorporated various data sources, written texts, video recordings of pausing behaviour during writing, stimulated recall protocols, and analytic scores for written texts. The findings revealed that expert writers spent more time planning a detailed organisation before writing compared to novice writers. Expert writers also showed less frequent pauses for reflection once they had established their global plan. The study highlighted differences in strategy use between expert and novice writers based on ESL proficiency, with novice writers beginning to adopt expert strategies after six months of instruction. This research scheme provides a thorough overview of ESL writing strategies, as outlined in Table (4).

The scheme selected by Sasaki offers a detailed description of strategies that ESL writers may utilize in their writing process. However, previous studies have primarily categorized these strategies based on the writers' writing process, with only Wenden (1991) and Riazi (1997) approaching the classification from a theoretical perspective.

Thus, the taxonomies proposed by Wenden and Riazi are deemed incomplete as they do not consider rhetorical and communicative strategies. Sasaki's (2000) writing skills category includes eleven strategies such as planning, idea generation, and evaluation, each with one to four sub-strategies and detailed definitions.

**Table 4: Sasaki's (2000) Classification of Writing Strategies**

Writing Strategies	Sub Strategies	Definition
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Global planning</li> <li>. Thematic planning</li> <li>. Local planning</li> <li>. Organizing</li> <li>. Conclusion: Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Detailed planning of the overall organization</li> <li>. Less detailed planning of the overall organization</li> <li>. Planning what to write next</li> <li>. Organizing the generated ideas</li> <li>. Planning for the conclusion</li> </ul>
Retrieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Planning what to write next</li> <li>. Organizing the generated ideas</li> <li>. Planning for the conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Retrieving the already constructed plan</li> <li>. Retrieving appropriate information from long-term memory</li> </ul>
Generating ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Naturally generated</li> <li>. Description generated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Generating an idea without any stimulus</li> <li>. Generating an idea related to the previous description</li> </ul>
Verbalizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Verbalizing a proposition</li> <li>. Rhetorical refining</li> <li>. Mechanical refining</li> <li>. Sense of readers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Verbalizing the content the writer intends to write</li> <li>. Refining the rhetorical aspect(s) of an expression</li> <li>. Refining the mechanical or (L1/ESL) grammatical aspect(s) of an expression</li> <li>. Adjusting expressions for the readers</li> </ul>
Translating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Translating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Translating the generated idea into ESL</li> </ul>
Rereading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Rereading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Rereading the already produced sentence</li> </ul>
Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. ESL proficiency evaluation</li> <li>. Local text evaluation</li> <li>. Generated text evaluation</li> <li>. Evaluating one's own ESL proficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Evaluating part of the generated text</li> <li>. Evaluating the generated text in general</li> </ul>
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Resting</li> <li>. Questioning</li> <li>. Impossible to categorize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Asking the researcher a question</li> <li>. Impossible to categorize</li> </ul>

**E. Mu, 2005, Model for Writing Strategies**

To continue the line of classifying writing strategies, Mu (2005) conducted a study on ESL writing strategies, categorizing them into 5 group strategies and 30 writing strategies. The group strategies, derived from theories of ESL writing, include rhetorical strategies,

which refer to strategies used by writers to try out ideas and express them. Metacognitive strategies refer to strategies used by writers to evaluate and monitor writing tasks. Cognitive strategies refer to strategies used by writers to implement the written task physically and mentally. Communicative strategies refer to strategies used to express ideas and thoughts in a more effective way. Social/affective strategies refer to the strategies used in interacting with others to assist and gain support or feedback. These classifications aim to provide a more specific understanding of ESL writing strategies.

Upon reviewing the literature on ESL writing strategies, it is apparent that the summaries and classifications provided are somewhat confusing (Mu, 2005). For instance, Arndt (1987) grouped planning and global planning as separate strategies, while Sasaki (2000) further subdivided planning into various categories. The differing classifications of strategies, such as planning and global planning, may lead to confusion among ESL learners. Furthermore, discrepancies exist among researchers regarding the distinction between revising and editing. Some researchers, like Arndt (1987), separate the two, while others, such as Riazi (1997), do not. Wenden (1991) even omits revising strategies from her taxonomy. Most of these classifications lack a solid theoretical foundation, being derived from think-aloud protocol analysis or observations. Therefore, it is imperative to approach ESL writing strategies from a theoretical standpoint to improve their applicability and reliability in ESL writing practice.

While Mu's (2005) classification is based on previous research by Arndt (1987), Riazi (1997), and Sasaki (2000), Mu acknowledges its limitations. Firstly, Mu (2005) agrees with Hsiao and Oxford (2002) that creating a consistent framework for classifying ESL writing strategies is challenging due to researchers' varying criteria. In addition, Mu (2005) highlights the unconventional merging of different categories in this classification. Furthermore, Mu (2005) points out that the classification may not be comprehensive enough to encompass all strategies due to their complexity and individual writer preferences. Despite its limitations, this classification of ESL writing strategies hold value for the teaching and learning of ESL writing due to its clarity and convenience (Abas and Aziz, 2016).

**Table 5: Mu's Category of ESL Writing Strategies**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Sub-strategies</b>	<b>Speculation</b>
Rhetorical Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Organization</li> <li>. Use of L1</li> <li>. Formatting/Modeling</li> <li>. Comparing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Beginning, development, or ending .</li> <li>Translate the generated idea into ESL genre consideration.</li> <li>. Different rhetorical conventions</li> </ul>
Metacognitive strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Finding focus</li> <li>. Checking and identifying problems</li> <li>. Reconsidering written text and goals</li> </ul>
Cognitive strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Generating ideas</li> <li>. Revising</li> <li>. Elaborating</li> <li>. Clarification</li> <li>. Retrieval</li> <li>. Rehearsing</li> <li>. Summarizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Repeating, lead-in, inferencing, etc. .</li> <li>Making changes to the plan or written text -extending the contents of the writing</li> <li>. Disposing of confusions.</li> <li>. Getting information from memory.</li> <li>. Trying out ideas or language</li> <li>. Synthesizing what was read</li> </ul>
Communicative strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Avoidance</li> <li>. Reduction</li> <li>. Sense of readers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Avoiding some problems</li> <li>. Giving up some difficulties</li> <li>. Anticipating readers' responses</li> </ul>
Social and affective strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Resourcing</li> <li>. Getting feedback</li> <li>. Assigning goals</li> <li>. Rest/deferral</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Referring to libraries and dictionaries .</li> <li>Getting support from professors and peers dissolves the load of the task. .</li> <li>Reducing anxiety</li> </ul>

In summary, various researchers, such as Arndt (1987), Riazi (1997), Sasaki (2000), and Mu (2005), have proposed different classifications of writing strategies. These classifications are valuable for identifying students' writing strategies, aiding teachers in selecting appropriate strategies to promote writing skills and enthusiasm among students. Moreover, these classifications aim to facilitate students in acquiring and enhancing their writing abilities. Mu's model of writing strategies was adopted in the current study within the writing process for two reasons. First, despite its limitations, Mu's taxonomy serves as a framework for students' writing strategies, drawing from theories of ESL writing and amalgamating previous classifications of ESL writing strategies. As noted by Abas and Abd Aziz N (2016), this classification of writing strategies holds significant importance in ESL writing instruction due to its clarity and practicality. In addition, this model is an updated one, and it was suggested by a scholar who is a pioneer in the field. Many studies adopted that, for it covers most of the strategies used by students as they write.

## **2.11. Previous Studies**

The literature reviews show that some researchers have conducted studies in terms of writing strategies. Aluemalai & Maniam (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study of 50 undergraduate ESL students in Malaysia to examine the writing strategies of successful and unsuccessful ESL students in writing classrooms. The study examined three writing strategies: prewriting, while writing, and revising writing by adopting a standard questionnaire. The findings of this study revealed that ESL students preferred to use writing strategies in planning strategies rather than throughout the writing and revising stages.

Some previous studies showed that students tended to use all strategies in their writing. Nopmanoth (2016) investigated writing strategies employed by 80 Thai EFL high school students. The data was gathered by using a questionnaire adopted from Mohite (2014) and a focus group interview. The study showed that the participants used all writing strategies cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social in their writing process which helped them to produce good written work. What is more, Hu (2022) investigated Chinese EFL learners' writing strategies and emotional aspects. The purpose of the study was to explore Chinese EFL writing strategies and their emotions. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. 54 undergraduate students were given a questionnaire for the writing strategy survey and a semi-structured interview as instruments of this study. The data revealed that EFL learners use writing strategies and anxiety in a moderate manner, and participants showed that both writing strategies and learners' emotions positively complement one another.

A study by Chen (2022) investigated the value of incorporating writing strategy instruction into writing classes to enhance students' ability to plan and improve their writing outcomes. The research involved 52 undergraduate students who shared a similar educational background. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study employed both a questionnaire and a writing performance test. Prior to completing these instruments, students received explicit instruction on writing strategies. However, the study's findings demonstrated that guiding students through effective writing processes led to improved results. It also showed that the use of metacognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective strategies contributed to more structured and coherent writing. The study highlighted the importance of integrating strategy instruction in the writing process. The study also

confirmed that writing strategy instruction significantly impacts students' ability to produce high-quality written work.

Another foundational study conducted by Mu (2005) aimed to explore writing strategies employed by ESL Chinese learners at an Australian university. The data was collected through written tasks and think-aloud protocol. Based on the analyzed data, Mu's study classified the use of writing strategies into five categories: rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, communicative, and social/affective strategies. The study findings revealed that all writing strategies were widely used by proficient learners during their writing process from planning to revision, whereas less proficient learners relied more on cognitive and communicative strategies. Overall, Mu's study highlighted the important role of using writing strategies in helping students convey meaning effectively and concisely, where clarity and organization are essential in academic contexts.

Turning to an Indonesian context, Dari et al. (2022) examined the writing strategies employed by freshmen in the English language department of an Indonesian university. A questionnaire adopted from Petrić & Czár (2003) was distributed to 125 freshmen students who participated in this study. The results showed that most students make medium use of writing strategies, with the while-writing stage followed by prewriting and revising stages.

Regarding the types of strategies that are highly used by EFL students, Ardila (2022) conducted a study on writing strategies used by Indonesian EFL undergraduate students across their proficiency and gender. The participants were 100 undergraduate students in the English department in Indonesia. A questionnaire adopted from Peñuelas (2012) was used to gather data about writing strategies. The study revealed that compensation and affective strategies are the most commonly used by students. Raoofe et al. (2017) examined the frequently used writing strategies of 312 undergraduate English students in Malaysia. A mixed-method research design was used, and the required data were gathered through a strategy questionnaire and two writing tasks. The results revealed that participants have a positive impact on using writing strategies, and effort regulation is the most commonly used one, followed by metacognitive and social strategies. In addition, high-proficiency students used more writing strategies compared to their lowlevel proficiency peers.

Furthermore, Dinsa (2023) conducted a study to investigate EFL students' writing strategies in the Ethiopian context. A total of 148 English-major students participated in

this study. A descriptive-comparison design was used in this study. The data was gathered by using a questionnaire and a t-test. The results of the study revealed that metacognitive and cognitive strategies are the most frequently used by students.

Moving into the Arab world, a study was conducted to explore the writing strategies of EFL Kuwait undergraduate students and their perspectives towards the use of a sociocognitive approach when writing (Al-Zankawi, 2018). A mixed-methods research design was used in this study. A questionnaire, think-aloud protocol, and semistructured interview were the data collection tools of the study. The participants were 128 Kuwaiti students who studied English as a foreign language. The findings of the study revealed that the planning stage is the most frequently adopted strategy by Kuwaiti students among the three data instruments. This indicated that the majority of students are aware of the importance of planning before writing.

Elshawish (2014) conducted a study on the writing strategies of Libyan university students. The purpose of the study was to investigate the writing strategies of fourth-year university students who study English as a foreign language in Libya. The study adopted a qualitative approach, using observation, a semi-structured interview, and a think-aloud protocol as data collection tools. The participants were divided into two groups: good and poor writers. In the analysis of the data, students used various strategies and sub-strategies. They only differ in the frequency and quality of the strategies used by good and poor writers. The most frequently used strategies were scanning, followed by revision, rehearsing, use of L1, planning, questioning, dictionary use, and avoidance and postponement.

The elaborate review of literature presented in this section clearly indicates that numerous studies have demonstrated the impact of writing strategies on EFL students' writing proficiency, gender, and emotions. Based on previous studies, writing strategies are important in facilitating the writing process and have a positive impact on students' writing performance. However, existing research primarily examines general writing strategies. This study aims to investigate the writing strategies used by Libyan postgraduate students. In addition to investigating students' benefits of using these strategies in their learning experiences.

## **2.12. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter provided an overview of various definitions of writing skills and their significance. It discussed the components and processes involved in writing. The chapter also briefly discussed teaching approaches and techniques for writing, followed by a discussion on writing strategies, classification, and their effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. Finally, this chapter highlighted the related literature and previous studies on writing strategies. The next chapter discusses the research methodology, the study's design, data collection methods, and ethical considerations.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

This chapter explains the methodology adopted in this study. It highlights the research design, data collection methods, participant selection process, and data analysis procedures used to achieve the study's objectives. Furthermore, it addresses the ethical considerations that guided the conduct of the research

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The research design serves as the overarching strategy chosen to effectively integrate various components of the study in a coherent and logical manner (Cohen et al., 2007). A mixed-methods research approach was employed to investigate the English language writing strategies utilised by EFL Libyan postgraduate students and their perceptions of these strategies. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods is a robust technique that enables data validation through cross-verification from multiple sources (Dornyei, 2007). As outlined by Creswell et al. (2007), a mixed methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study, with data being collected concurrently or sequentially, prioritized, and integrated at one or more stages in the research process. To achieve this, a combined of a questionnaire and an interview was utilized to collect data for the study. The quantitative questionnaire data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative interview data were analyzed by using the thematic analysis method.

#### **3.2. Context of the Study**

The study took place at the Department of English, Sabratha University during the academic year 2025. The department offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs that focus on developing students' language proficiency, academic writing, and critical thinking skills. The undergraduate program typically lasts four years, divided into eight semesters, and includes English courses such as linguistics, literature, translation, writing, reading comprehension, and speaking. Postgraduate studies in the Department of English at Sabratha University also specialized in writing courses as part of the Master of Arts (MA) program, including advanced academic writing, research writing, and critical analysis. It helps students to produce well-structured, coherent, and academic texts.

This particular university was selected due to the researcher’s easy access to the staff members and students. Additionally, the enormous number of students at Sabratha University who have good experience with the use of writing strategies in their writings encouraged the researcher to select an appropriate sample for the study.

### 3.3. Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of forty MA students whose major is English and who study at Sabratha University. A convenience sampling was employed to select participants due to its practicality and ease of access to the target population, allowing the researcher to efficiently gather data. All these students participated in the questionnaire. These participants are 37 female and 3 male. Their age ranges from 21 to 40. They have been studying English for more than 4 years. The table below presents the participants of the questionnaire.

**Table 6: Participants of the Questionnaire**

Participants	Years of studying English	Level of education
40	14 = more than 8 years 11 = 1 – 8 years 15 = 1-6 years	All of them are MA students

Among those who participated in the questionnaire, some students showed their willingness to participate in the interview. The researcher interviewed eight of them. All of these interviewees are females and their age range from 22 to 42. The table below shows the interviewees’ information.

**Table 7: Participants of the Interview**

Participants	Level of education
8	MA students

### 3.4. Data Collection Tools

Data collection involves gathering and measuring information on various variables within a structured framework, allowing researchers to address pertinent questions and assess outcomes (Cohen et al., 2007). Accordingly, this study adopted two data collection tools. A questionnaire was used to investigate the strategies students employ when writing in

English. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the benefits students gain from using these strategies.

### **3.4.1. Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was selected as the primary tool for gathering quantitative data. Dornyei (2003) defined a questionnaire as a written tool that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements, prompting them to respond by either writing out their answers or selecting from pre-existing options. It is a structured survey instrument commonly employed in research and data collection. This questionnaire comprises a predetermined set of questions or statements, each accompanied by a limited range of response options that participants are required to choose from. According to Kumar (2004), questionnaires offer a structured approach to capturing individuals' emotions, beliefs, experiences, perceptions, or attitudes. The questionnaire is a very effective quantitative technique since it enables large-scale numerical data to be obtained over a short period of time (McLeish, 2009). One more advantage of questionnaires includes saving researchers time, effort, and financial resources. Moreover, questionnaires allow researchers to gather data from a large group of participants quickly and easily, providing respondents with ample time to consider their responses (Dornyei, 2003).

The questionnaire utilized in this study comprises closed-ended questions formulated in English. It is a quantitative tool that enables the researcher to gather data from participants. The researcher utilized the questionnaire developed by Petric and Crazel (2003) with modifications approved by the researcher and the supervisor to the items that are developed on the basis of the subcategories of writing strategies highlighted by the Mu' model (2005). The questionnaire is divided into two sections (See Appendix B). The first section gives information about the purpose of the questionnaire and elicits background information on the participant's age, gender, and university. The second section of the questionnaire consists of 29 items regarding the writing strategies process. Each item type taps into the participants' use of rhetorical, cognitive, metacognitive, communicative, social, and affective strategies in writing. Each statement in the questionnaire is structured for a Likert-scale response, with five rating options ranging from "always" to "never." The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables.

#### **3.4.1.1. Piloting the Questionnaire**

Before collecting data, several steps were taken to test the questionnaire. Piloting the questionnaire helped identify any mistakes, ambiguities, unclear, or unnecessary questions. It can help researchers find any issues with how the questionnaire is given, scored, and processed, as well as how clear the instructions are (Dornyei and Taguchi, 2010). In this study, the questionnaire was first reviewed by the supervisor and four English experts to evaluate and check its length, clarity, and coverage of the topics being studied. Based on their feedback, some modifications were made to the vocabulary and sentence structure, for instance, revising double-barreled questions. These modifications were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Subsequently, the researcher randomly selected 10 students to fill out the questionnaire to ensure that the items were clear and easy to follow before it is actually used. The students confirmed that the questionnaire items were understandable and straightforward.

#### **3.4.1.2. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

To determine the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher employed the expert validity method. First, the questionnaire was presented to a group of experts who have experience in the field of the study. The researcher considered the majority of the experts' comments to finalise the formulation of the questionnaire. Second, 10 MA students were selected to complete the questionnaire to provide insights into the clarity and comprehensibility of the items.

To test the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was utilized to assess internal consistency. This statistical method evaluates whether the items consistently measure the intended constructs (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The results shown in table (8), indicate a reliability level of 71.5% in the responses of the study sample. This an acceptable value, since alpha values above 60% are considered reliable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is reliable, meaning that the respondents interpret its items in the same way as intended by the researcher. Consequently, it can be confidently used in this study, as the likelihood of obtaining consistent results upon reapplication is estimated at 71.5%.

**Table 8: Results of Cronbach's Alpha Test**

Number of statements	Cronphach's alpha
29	0.715

#### **3.4.1.3. The Procedures of the Questionnaire**

Postgraduate students in the English department at Sabratha University were invited to participate in an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed via a link to 40 students. The participants were cooperative and willing to participate, which facilitated the data collection process. The administration of the questionnaire took two days. Before distributing the link, students were provided with clear instructions and background about the research study. They were informed that their participation was highly appreciated and their responses would remain completely confidential. The researcher remained in contact with the students while completing the questionnaire in order to address any questions regarding the questionnaire items, through WhatsApp, Messenger, or phone calls. Participants were asked to do it whenever they were free.

#### **3.4.1.4. Analysis of the Questionnaire**

In this study, a descriptive statistical method was used to analyse a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to evaluate the responses of the study sample.

#### **3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interview**

An interview is defined as a dialogue or conversation, typically between two individuals, in which the interviewer asks the interviewee for answers for a specific purpose (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed to collect qualitative data and answer the second question of this study. The reasons behind selecting this type of interview are to gain in-depth data from students to investigate the benefits MA students gain from using writing strategies. The interview consists of a set of prepared questions (see appendix C) with an open-ended format to encourage participants to give more details about the topic and allow the interviewer to raise questions whenever needed (Cohen et al., 2007). The interview consisted mainly of nine open-ended questions.

##### **3.4.2.1. Piloting the Interview**

In order to achieve the research goals and thoroughly address the research questions, the researcher, with guidance from the supervisor, developed nine open-ended questions. The

interview questions were reviewed and discussed with the supervisor and two experts to confirm their alignment with the study objectives and to determine whether they cover all the issues under investigation. After that, three MA students who were willing to participate in the current study were interviewed in order to ensure the interview questions are well-structured, appropriate in length, and clear. Based on the valuable feedback provided by both the experts and the students, the interview schedule was modified. To ensure that the interviews completely addressed the study objectives, the question “In what ways do writing strategies improve the clarity, organization, and quality of your writing?” was included.

#### **3.4.2.2. Validity and Reliability of the Interview**

Regarding the interview, open-ended questions were designed to allow participants to discuss their experiences in detail, express their perspectives, and address any aspects related to the benefits of writing strategies. These questions were reviewed with the researcher’s supervisor and two academic experts to ensure their alignment with the study objectives. Finally, a pilot interview was conducted with three postgraduate students to confirm that the questions were clear, understandable, and capable of eliciting the necessary data.

#### **3.4.2.3. The Procedures of Conducting the Interview**

After obtaining the administrative approval from the Graduate Studies Administration, University of Sabratha for conducting the study, interviews were carried out with eight MA students in the Department of English. The first step in conducting the interviews was contacting all the interviewees to arrange a suitable time for them. It was challenging to find time that suited everyone, as the participants were busy with classes and preparing for final exams. Therefore, the interviews were held online via WhatsApp over two days. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced herself to the interviewee and reminded him/her of the research topic and objectives. Moreover, all the participants were informed that their information would be dealt with confidentially and anonymously, and they could withdraw at any time. Every interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. The same set of questions was presented to all participants, with some follow-up questions added to elicit further information and examples that illustrated their real-life experiences. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the students for their cooperation, participation, and valuable time.

#### **3.4.2.4. Analysis of the Interview**

The data collected through semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This method was chosen for its flexibility and effectiveness in identifying recurring patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun and Clark, 2006). The information gathered from each interview was transcribed and stored in individual files on the researcher's computer. This was the initial step in organizing, identifying themes, and coding data for thematic analysis. More details about the specific steps followed in analysing process are presented in the findings chapter.

#### **3.5. Ethical Issues**

In order to protect the privacy and safety of participants in this study, certain ethical issues are being addressed. According to Dornyei (2007, p. 67), "The primary principle of research ethics is that no mental or physical harm should come to the respondents as a result of their participation in the investigation." Therefore, the issue under investigation is not sensitive, and the questionnaire statements and interview questions did not cause any physical or psychological harm for the participants.

To begin with, a permission letter was obtained from the Graduate Studies Administration at the University of Zawia and submitted to the Graduate Studies Administration at the University of Sabratha (See Appendix D). Then the questionnaire was distributed online, providing essential information such as the study's aims, purposes, confidentiality, and the anonymity of the participants. The researcher informed the participants that their voluntary participation was highly appreciated and significant for the integrity of the study.

In relation to the interviews, the researcher provided all participants with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any stage (See Appendix A). Prior permission for audio recording was obtained from all participants, and strict confidentiality measures were maintained to ensure anonymity throughout the research process.

#### **3.6. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter outlined the methodology and procedures employed in this study. It discussed the research design, context, and sample of the study, as well as the data collection tools, namely a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. This chapter also described the pilot study, ethical considerations, and the procedures followed for

preparing data for analysis. It also addressed the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire and the interview.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

This study aims to investigate English language writing strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students and their benefits of using these strategies. The data were gathered by using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for students. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire, and the second part provides the findings derived from the interviews.

#### **4.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire (Descriptive Statistics)**

In this study, the quantitative data of the questionnaire were analysed by using descriptive statistics. The responses were analyzed and interpreted by using frequencies and percentages (%) to provide a clear understanding of the participants' responses.

#### **4.2. Findings of the Questionnaire**

The findings of the questionnaire are presented under five main points. All of them are related to the strategies used by the students as they write. They are as follows.

##### **4.2.1. Rhetorical Strategies Used by Libyan Postgraduate Students in Writing English**

Table 9 below presents the results of the frequency of rhetorical strategies used by Libyan EFL postgraduate students in their English writing. The results indicated that a strong majority of participants engage in pre-writing planning and structural organization. Specifically, 58% reported that they always think about the overall structure of their assignment before writing, while another 20% reported doing so often. Similarly, 53% stated they always organize their writing clearly and logically, with an additional 35% doing so often.

Use of narrative techniques such as storytelling and examples showed more variability. Only 23% reported always using such techniques, while 33% reported doing so sometimes and 25% often. In contrast, adapting writing style to suit the reader's preferences was less frequently practiced. While 35% reported doing so often and 38% sometimes, only 5% reported always doing so, and 8% stated they never use this strategy. These findings suggest that while organizational and structural strategies were commonly

and consistently used, stylistic flexibility and rhetorical techniques like storytelling were applied with more variation among the participants.

**Table 9: Frequency of Rhetorical Strategies Used by EFL Libyan Postgraduate Students in Writing**

No	Statement	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		No	%	No	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
1	Before I start writing, I consider the overall structure of my assignment (e.g., introduction, body, and conclusion).	-	-	-	-	9	23	8	20	23	58
2	I organize my writing in a clear and logical manner.	-	-	1	3	4	10	14	35	21	53
3	I use narrative techniques, such as storytelling and examples, to make my writing more interesting and engaging for readers.	1	3	7	18	13	33	10	25	9	23
4	I change my writing style to suit the reader's preferences.	3	8	6	15	15	38	14	35	2	5

#### **4.2.2. Metacognitive Strategies Used by Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students in English Writing**

Table 10 below shows the frequency of metacognitive strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students during their writing process. The data revealed that certain strategies were consistently practiced, while others were less frequently used. A high percentage of participants reported regularly engaging in strategic planning and monitoring. For example, 83% always begin with the introduction, and 60% always reread each sentence to ensure clarity and accuracy. Additionally, 45% always revise assignment requirements before writing, and another 28% do so often, indicating strong engagement with task expectations. However, the use of explicit time management strategies such as making a writing timetable was more limited. Only 13% reported always doing so, while the majority either sometimes (30%) or rarely (28%) planned their

writing schedule. An interesting finding is that a considerable number of students (30%) preferred to plan mentally rather than on paper, while 28% reported doing so often. This suggests a tendency toward informal, internalized planning. Encouragingly, the overwhelming majority (78%, n = 31) never submitted their work without reviewing it, highlighting a strong tendency toward reflective practice and self-monitoring.

Overall, these results indicate that Libyan EFL postgraduate students engage frequently in metacognitive strategies related to planning, monitoring, and revision, although formal time management and externalized planning (e.g., written outlines) are less commonly practiced.

**Table 10: Frequency of Metacognitive Strategies Used by Libyan EFL Students**

No	Statement	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	NO	%	No	%
5	I make a timetable for the writing process.	6	15	11	28	12	30	6	15	5	13
6	Before I start writing, I revise the requirements.	-	-	1	3	10	25	11	28	18	45
7	I start with the introduction	-	-	1	3	2	5	4	10	33	83
8	I think about what I want to write and have a plan in my mind, not on paper.	4	10	2	5	11	28	11	28	12	30
9	I reread each sentence after writing it to ensure it is clear and accurate.	1	3	1	3	4	10	10	25	24	60
10	I revise my written work after writing a few sentences that express one idea.	-	-	2	5	9	23	12	30	17	43
11	When I have a written task, I submit it without reading it.	31	78	4	10	2	5	2	5	1	3

#### 4.2.3. Cognitive Strategies Used by EFL Postgraduate Students in English Writing

Table 11 demonstrates the frequency of cognitive strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students during their writing process. The findings suggested that students

generally rely on constructive strategies such as revision, simplification, and vocabulary enhancement, while less effective practices such as translating from the native language or writing without a plan are less common.

**Table 11: Frequency of Cognitive Strategies Used by EFL Students in Writing English**

No	Statement	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
12	I start writing without having a clear plan for my ideas in mind.	18	45	9	23	9	23	3	8	1	3
13	I initially write sections of the text in my native language and later convert them into English.	24	60	6	15	4	10	4	10	2	5
14	When I find it difficult to express my thoughts in English clearly, I simplify them to make them easier to understand.	1	3	5	13	15	38	9	23	10	25
15	If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary.	2	5	6	15	14	35	5	13	13	33
16	I revise my written text before I submit it.	-	-	1	3	1	3	6	15	32	80
17	When I revise my writing, I rearrange the structure of my written text.	-	-	5	13	20	50	10	25	5	13
18	When I revise my written text, I make changes in vocabulary.	-	-	9	23	15	38	13	33	3	8

Most notably, a strong majority of students (80%) reported that they always revise their written text before submission, and an additional 15% do so often, indicating widespread commitment to improving text quality. Similarly, when revising, students frequently rearranged the structure of their writing (50%, sometimes; 25%, often; 13%, always), and

many reported making vocabulary changes (33%, often; 38%, sometimes). On the other hand, reliance on less efficient strategies appeared limited. For instance, only 3% of participants always started writing without a clear plan, and 45% never used this approach. Additionally, the majority (60%) never began writing in their native language with the intention to later translate into English, indicating a preference for direct composition in English. When faced with difficulties in expressing ideas, many students reported simplifying their language, with 25% doing so always and 38% sometimes. Furthermore, 33% always consulted a dictionary when encountering unfamiliar words, while an additional 35% did so sometimes.

Overall, these results suggest that Libyan EFL postgraduate students commonly employ productive cognitive strategies, particularly those related to revision and simplification, while showing limited reliance on native language translation or writing without planning.

#### **4.2.4. Communicative Strategies Used by Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students in English Writing**

Table 12 below depicts the frequency of communicative strategies used by Libyan EFL postgraduate students in their writing. The findings suggested a strong awareness of audience engagement and textual coherence, as indicated by the frequent use of strategies related to organization and clarity. The majority of students reported that they always (68%) or often (18%) use transition words between paragraphs to ensure smooth flow of ideas. Similarly, a high percentage of students (70%) always ensure that each paragraph contains clear main points aligned with the overall purpose of their text, and an additional 25% reported doing so often. These results suggest a strong command of organizational features that contribute to cohesion and clarity. Students also demonstrated attention to reader engagement, with 43% reporting that they always introduce ideas in a way that grabs the reader's attention and 33% doing so often. Only 3% indicated that they rarely employed this strategy, suggesting a general recognition of the importance of impactful introductions. In contrast, the strategy of reading the written text aloud after completion showed lower levels of consistent use. While 38% reported doing so sometimes, only 5% always employed this strategy, and another 5% never used it. This indicates that although reading aloud can be a valuable self-editing technique, it is not widely practiced among participants.

Overall, the results reflect strong use of communicative strategies that enhance clarity and audience engagement, particularly through structured organization and effective transitions. However, some self-monitoring strategies, such as reading text aloud, may require further reinforcement in academic writing instruction.

**Table 12: Frequency of Communicative Strategies Used by EFL Libyan Students in Writing English**

NO	Statement	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
19	After I finish writing my text, I read it aloud.	2	5	15	38	15	38	6	15	2	5
20	I use transition words between paragraphs to make my ideas flow smoothly.	-	-	2	5	4	10	7	18	27	68
21	When writing, I introduce my ideas in a way that grabs the reader's attention.	-	-	1	3	9	23	13	33	17	43
22	I ensure each paragraph has clear main points	-	-	-	-	2	5	10	25	28	70

#### **4.2.5. Social and Affective Strategies Used by Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students in English Writing**

Table 13 presents the frequency of social and affective strategies employed by Libyan EFL postgraduate students during their writing process. The results indicated varying levels of use across different strategies, with a stronger tendency for seeking feedback and emotional regulation techniques. A significant number of students (60%) reported that they always seek feedback from their teacher, and 15% do so often, suggesting a high level of teacher-student interaction and reliance on expert guidance. In contrast, fewer students sought feedback from peers, with 40% doing so sometimes, 23% rarely, and 8% always. This may reflect a preference for authoritative sources of feedback over peer-based input. When facing writing difficulties, a significant proportion of students (38%) sometimes sought help from others, and 20% often asked for assistance, indicating a moderate reliance on external support when encountering challenges. However, only a small proportion (13%) always asked for help, suggesting that many students may try to

work through difficulties independently. In terms of emotional regulation, 38% of students often tried to relax and stay calm when feeling anxious about writing, and 25% always used relaxation strategies. Additionally, 28% sometimes used techniques like deep breathing or positive self-talk, with 23% always employing such strategies, indicating a moderate use of affective techniques to manage writing-related anxiety.

On the other hand, students reported a lower frequency of self-rewarding behaviors, with 25% never rewarding themselves after completing assignments and 30% sometimes doing so. This suggests that while some students may use rewards as motivation, it is not a widespread practice. Overall, the data indicate that Libyan EFL postgraduate students engage moderately with social and affective strategies, with a greater emphasis on seeking teacher feedback and managing emotions before and during writing.

**Table 13: Frequency of Social and Affective Strategies Used by Libyan EFL Postgraduate Students in English Writing**

No	Statement	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		NO	%	NO	%	No	%	NO	%	No	%
23	I seek feedback from my peers when writing.	5	13	9	23	16	40	7	18	3	8
24	I seek feedback from my teacher.	-	-	2	5	8	20	6	15	24	60
25	When I have a problem in writing, I ask somebody to help me.	2	5	10	25	15	38	8	20	5	13
26	I prefer to get feedback from my peers rather than my teacher.	7	18	17	43	11	28	5	13	-	-
27	I give myself a reward after completing my assignment.	10	25	10	25	12	30	3	8	5	13
28	I try to relax and stay calm if I feel anxious about writing.	-	-	4	10	11	28	15	38	10	25
29	I use techniques like deep breathing or positive self-talk to manage my emotions before writing.	6	15	9	23	11	28	5	13	9	23

### **4.3. Summary of the Questionnaire Findings**

The findings of the questionnaire suggest that Libyan postgraduate students demonstrate strong writing planning skills, particularly in structuring and organizing their ideas logically and revising for clarity. While the use of teacher feedback is a central focus for most of them, they tend to underutilize peer feedback, which may restrict their exposure to diverse perspectives on their writing. To refine their writing, many rely on revision techniques such as rereading and expanding their vocabulary to improve clarity. Additionally, they frequently use dictionaries to address language barriers, highlighting their commitment to linguistic development. Students showed high engagement in ensuring their writing is coherent, they used transition words and crafted attention grabbing introductions.

### **4.4. Analysis of the Interview (Thematic Analysis)**

Qualitative data analysis is a dynamic process that aims to identify patterns of meaning within data in order to shed light on research questions. Qualitative research “is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 22). In this study, the qualitative data of the interview were analysed by using the thematic analysis method. Thematic analysis as reported by Braun and Clarke (2006), is flexible and helpful for summarising important aspects as well as emphasising the similarities and differences among the data collected. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) stated the significance of thematic analysis in identifying themes within data that are deemed important or intriguing and utilising these themes to address research objectives or shed light on pertinent issues. Given this rationale, the selection of thematic analysis in this study was crucial for ensuring a precise interpretation and reflection of the complete dataset, as well as aiding the researcher in comprehending underlying concepts. The steps that were followed to analyse the qualitative data of the interview are as follows:

**a. Familiarization with Data:** After conducting the interviews with the participants, the audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim into written texts by using the phone applications (Otter and Sonix). The participants’ names were anonymised. This is achieved by giving a number to each participant, S1, S2, S3, etc. Moreover, the audiorecorded data of each interview was listened to carefully more than one time to make the interviews’ written transcriptions present accurately the actual words. Moreover, the transcripts were checked back against the audio recording data to ensure

their accuracy for the researcher. Then, the researcher read the transcripts more than three times, taking notes and highlighting the main points to familiarize herself with the data.

**b. Generating the Initial Codes:** Coding is a fundamental component of qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this phase, researchers systematically analyse interview transcripts using both deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive coding applies predetermined themes from the literature review and research questions, while inductive coding identifies emerging patterns directly from the data itself. Following familiarizing the data, the researcher organized the data by breaking it into smaller meaningful parts. First, the researcher identified key points that stood out in the data. Then, the researcher began coding sections that related to the research questions. Next the researcher highlighted and grouped similar codes together based on their meaning. Finally, code groups were matched with specific data examples.

**c. Searching for Themes:** The theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, P. 83). In this stage, codes that fit together and had similar features were grouped and organised to generate themes to reflect coherent data patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2012). For example, a group of codes that shared structural ideas (outlining, brainstorming, and mind mapping) the researcher used this theme (idea generation) for all the related codes. At the end, the researcher generated the themes, and they were ready for the reviewing stage.

**d. Reviewing Themes:** After generating themes, the researcher went back to the coded data and checked whether the themes make sense and ensure the themes are consistent, distinct, and supported by enough data. Some themes are merged or split if needed; others are removed with weak support. For instance, the academic performance theme and the linguistic improvement theme have emerged as an academic development theme.

**e. Defining and Naming Themes:** In this stage, the researcher defined each theme clearly with a brief description that captured its essence. Thus, each theme should have a detailed analysis identifying what is interesting about the theme and whether the theme contains any sub-themes. At the end of this stage, the researcher chose names for each theme that are concise, brief, and informative to let the reader predict what the theme is about. As a result, a satisfactory list of themes was yielded for interview data.

**f. Writing the Report:** The final step of the analyzing process was writing and reporting themes. Here, the researcher created themes and presented a concise report of the findings. The themes should answer the research questions and each theme should be presented in a separate section, supported with evidence from the analyzed data.

#### **4.5. Findings of the Interview**

The interview was devoted to asking students about the benefits that they gain from using writing strategies as they write. The benefits are presented under the following themes.

##### **a. Cognitive Benefits (Improved Clarity and Organization of Ideas)**

The results of the interview revealed that writing strategies help students think, plan, and structure their ideas. Most participants reported that outlining, brainstorming, and mind mapping helped them structure their thoughts more clearly. For instance, S1 stated that *“writing strategies help organize ideas logically, ensuring clear structure. They clarify each paragraph's main idea. They make smooth connections between the ideas. Also improves flow and makes writing clearer and more engaging.”* Similarly, S2 explained that outlining and brainstorming helped her to create a final draft that is wellstructured and contains all required ideas and points. Moreover, S5 mentioned that planning makes her writing clearer and more structured and avoids repeating ideas or going off topic. Therefore, these strategies enabled them to create logical flow and coherence in their writing, making it easier to convey ideas to readers. S4 also emphasized that *“These strategies give me the chance to present my ideas logically and directly in a simple, understandable way.”* Participants also found that these strategies enabled them to effectively sequence their ideas and support their arguments clearly.

##### **b. Academic Development**

Based on the responses from the students, writing strategies support students' academic success and skill improvement. Participants noted improvements in their grades and overall academic writing quality after applying structured strategies. For instance, S2 explained that *“ all writing strategies help me to make the final draft of my writing assignment well structured...I get high marks, high grades. I'm always on time.”* Whenever she used prewriting stages, brainstorming and outlining, she managed to write academically and got high grades because her writing is well-structured and submitted on time. Furthermore, S6 added that *“Since using structured strategies and my grades have improved a lot and I don't feel stressed about deadlines anymore.”* Students also observed

growth in their language use, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. For instance, S4 stated that writing strategies allow writing to become more meaningful and structured; they helped her avoid major mistakes with grammar or vocabulary. Moreover, S3 said, *“These strategies improved my grades by making my work more polished and organised.”* Students noted fewer mistakes and more structured writing after applying strategies, leading to better academic outcomes.

### **c. Time Management**

Time management emerged as a strong benefit of writing strategies. By breaking down the writing task into stages, students were able to manage their writing process efficiently and reduce last-minute pressure. S2 explained that *“ brainstorming or the pre-planning stages helped me to save my time... and reduced distraction.”* These prewriting strategies allowed her to avoid distraction, helping her to produce wellstructured academic work and reduce stress to meet deadlines efficiently. S6 mentioned that *“using a step-by-step process with drafts helped me avoid feeling overwhelmed and finish on time.”* Another student 6 observed that planning and reviewing helped to finish writing tasks on time even when under time pressure. Similarly, S4 said, *“I’m not a lastminute person anymore, and these strategies helped me submit assignments early.”* As a result, these strategies allow students to allocate appropriate time to each phase of writing, making the process more manageable and systematic.

### **d. Emotional and Motivational Impact**

The interviewees’ responses highlighted that writing strategies significantly influenced students’ self-confidence and motivation to engage in writing tasks. For instance, S1 mentioned that writing strategies *“reduce the stress of writing”* and make the process *“feel more rewarding.”* Similarly, S6 highlighted that having a clear plan reduced the fear of the blank page and helped her stay motivated. S2 added that by using writing strategies, she was more confident because she knew she was *“on the right path.”* These insights show that writing with a clear strategy lets students feel more confident starting new writing tasks, managing time and help reduce stress. As a result, their motivation increased with less intimidation because they knew how to approach assignments.

### **e. Overcome Writing Challenges**

Most of students emphasized the importance of receiving feedback either from peers or instructors, which helped them identify weaknesses and strengthen their writing. This not

only helped them produce higher-quality content but also enhanced their problem solving ability when facing writing difficulties. For instance, S2 highlighted that *“Peer feedback shows me gaps I can’t see myself... helps me improve my drafts.”* She stated that after completing her first draft, she prefers to share it with colleagues to receive their comments and suggestions for improvement. Similarly, S8 stated that *“When faced with challenges, such as writer’s block or difficulty articulating ideas, I use brainstorming sessions and consult with peers or mentors to gain new insights.”* This indicates that using writing strategies helped students view feedback as a positive tool for improvement. Additionally, S3 highlighted that getting feedback helped her improve language accuracy and clarity: *“I revise and check my work or ask colleagues to spot grammar mistakes.”* Moreover, multiple drafts and revisions were also key in aligning their work with academic expectations. S7 mentioned that *“feedback is good and important because it helps me to discover my mistakes or errors.”* She mentioned that feedback plays a central role in her writing process, as she relies on input from peers to identify areas for improvement before revising and selecting the strongest draft. To conclude, the responses from students highlighted that writing strategies offered tools to handle various writing challenges, leading to more effective task completion.

#### **4.5.1. Summary of Interview Analysis**

The findings of the interview analysis revealed that writing strategies provide valuable insights into the organization, clarity, and logical flow of students’ writing. Receiving feedback from peers and teachers enhances their writing process. Moreover, writing strategies were considered beneficial strategies for saving time, minimizing stress, and increasing self-confidence. Furthermore, students highlighted that writing strategies enhanced their linguistic and academic performance as well as helped them in overcoming some writing challenges.

#### **4.6. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter discussed the findings of the current study in order to answer the research questions. The results presented above were obtained from analysis of the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews data. A descriptive statistic was used to analyze the questionnaire, whereas a thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview. In the first section, the students' writing strategies used were presented. In the second section, the benefits that students gained from using these strategies were discussed.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **5.0. Introduction**

This study aims to investigate writing strategies employed by EFL Libyan postgraduate students, particularly in the department of English at Sabratha University. The study employed a mixed-method approach, and data have been collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. This chapter discusses the study findings and provides possible interpretations of the obtained data. It also concludes the entire study by revisiting its key findings, discusses the limitations of the research and offers recommendations for both teachers and students. Additionally, it includes suggestions for future research.

#### **5.1. Students Writing Strategies Employed in Libyan Postgraduate Studies**

The findings indicated that EFL postgraduate students used all the writing strategies in their academic writing. This is similar to the findings of previous studies (e.g., Mu, 2005; Hu, 2022), which reported that successful EFL writers tend to employ a combination of cognitive, metacognitive, rhetorical, communicative, and affective strategies. This suggests that postgraduate students are aware of the importance of writing strategies through the writing process to enhance clarity, coherence, and overall effectiveness of their writings. It also reflects the demands of postgraduate studies for students to use all writing strategies that they know to achieve their academic goals and produce high-quality texts.

The findings demonstrated that metacognitive and cognitive strategies were mostly used by MA students. Metacognitive strategies were used to practically plan, monitor, and evaluate students' writing. Linking to the literature, Aluemalai & Maniam (2020) highlighted that planning was the most preferred strategy used by successful students. Similarly, AL-Zankawi (2018) stated that the planning step was the most adopted strategy by Kuwaiti students. This suggests that postgraduate students are aware enough of the importance of planning before writing. In addition, cognitive strategies were also used frequently by MA students as they were writing. The results of the current study revealed that most of the participants never submitted their tasks without reviewing them. This

indicates that students found the revising process helps them to produce better written work without mistakes, allowing them to make improvements to text quality, and rearrange sentence structure. This finding is likely related to Dinsa's (2023) study results, which stated that cognitive strategies were the most frequently used by students. Also, this outcome matches Elshawish's (2014) study results that found scanning, revision, rehearsing, use of L1, and planning were mostly employed strategies by writers.

Additionally, rhetorical strategies were also used by students when they write. Rhetorical techniques such as cohesive strategies, adapting different writing styles, and organizing ideas coherently and logically were applied with more variation among students. These findings indicate the effective use of rhetorical strategies enhances clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness in academic writing. It also suggests that postgraduate students recognize the importance of appealing to the reader's understanding and engagement. Related to literature, Elshawish (2014) and Fajrina (2022) similarly emphasized the role of rhetorical strategies in helping organize ideas more logically and coherently and in strengthening academic writing.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that the majority of students relied heavily on communicative strategies when they wrote their tasks. Notably, most of the participants always make sure each paragraph contains the main idea supporting the overall structure in a clear and simple way. These practices demonstrate that students are aware of the significance of communicative techniques in achieving clarity and reader accessibility in their writing. The findings of this study align with Mu's (2005) observation that EFL students use simple language with understandable meaning, especially when their language is limited, to maintain clarity and coherence and to convey the intended message effectively.

The results of the study also revealed that social and affective strategies, such as seeking feedback and managing anxiety, are widely employed by MA students. Most of the students reported that they regularly seek feedback from their teachers. The majority of students believe their teachers are the source of information, guidance and more confidence than their peers. In addition, students reported using moderate affective strategies, such as positive self-talk and deep breathing, to manage writing-related anxiety. These results are linked to Hu, N. 's (2022) study, which found that writing strategies play a significant role in reducing anxiety and negative emotions. These findings partly support Ardila (2020) & Raoofe et al. (2017), studies reported that

affective strategies are among the most commonly employed by students. Overall, these results suggest that postgraduate students recognize the value of social and affective strategies in facilitating both the emotional and cognitive aspects of academic writing, enabling them to approach tasks with greater confidence and composure.

## **5.2. Students Benefits of Using Writing Strategies**

The results of this study indicated several benefits of using writing strategies in the writing process of MA students. Firstly, all of the participants are aware of the importance of using strategies in developing their academic writing. They acknowledged writing strategies as facilitated tools during writing tasks. Students mentioned that the use of writing strategies encourages them to write their tasks easily, effectively, and coherently in a relaxing manner. This is in line with De Silva (2015), who stated that writing strategies help to develop students' writing performance and enhance their writing abilities. These responses indicate that employing different writing strategies in all writing processes help students enhance their overall writing quality and clarity. By organizing, planning, revising, translating, and outlining ideas clearly before and while students are writing, help them to communicate their thoughts logically and precisely. In this respect, Hashempour et al. (2015), in their study, stated that prewriting strategies improved students' writing effectively and helped them in monitoring their writing clearly and coherently.

The findings of this study revealed that writing strategies helped MA students to highly improve their academic performances. They write more academically, their grades have been much improved, and they achieve higher academic outcomes. This finding indicates that writing strategies play a significant role in enhancing students' academic writing abilities. To support this claim, Okasha and Hamdi (2014) stated that writing strategies have a significant impact on students' writing proficiency and improve students' grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, incorporating writing strategies led students to submit their tasks on time. By following pre-writing strategies, for instance, planning, structuring, and outlining, students have an appropriate time for each step, which helps students overcome being a last-minute person or writing under pressure. This result indicates that the students are aware of the importance of time while writing, and also aware of the role of using various writing strategies, especially before writing, to enhance their academic tasks. To support this claim, Alvioleta et al. (2025) found that the use of self-regulation,

such as drafting, organizing, brainstorming, and self-monitoring, helped students to break down their work and complete tasks faster.

Moreover, the findings of the current study revealed that employing writing strategies helped students write confidently and motivated them to complete tasks effectively. All of the students perceived that using writing strategies reduced their anxiety and motivated them to complete tasks without being stressed all the time. This indicates that motivation is a key factor in the success of students at all stages of their education, and teachers can play a pivotal role in providing and encouraging that motivation in their students. Linked to literature, Tarhuns (2013) reported that in the study, students' use of writing strategies gave them confidence and time to manage their anxiety, which helped them to overcome challenges and manage to complete their tasks perfectly. Based on students' responses, it can be seen that all students are motivated differently, and teachers should use and create more motivational strategies that lead to increased students' English writing through interactive activities in their classes and through giving positive feedback to students.

Another benefit of using writing strategies is overcoming writing problems. The results indicated that getting feedback from peers or teachers helped students to identify their weaknesses and strengthen their writing. For instance, when students are unable to complete a task, they seek help from others to give them insights related to the topic that they might not be aware of. These findings indicated the importance of receiving feedback in enhancing students' writing skills. By getting feedback, students make a good revision of their work, identify their mistakes, and build confidence to handle future tasks with more awareness. These results related to previous research studies supported the idea that feedback helps students identify their weaknesses, refine ideas, improve overall writing structure, and help them to improve and reflect on their own work (Wang et al., 2023).

To sum up, by combining quantitative and qualitative results, it is clear that the use of writing strategies is closely linked to tangible benefits. Metacognitive and cognitive strategies improve task organization, planning, and error reduction; rhetorical strategies enhance coherence and style. Communicative strategies ensure clear message delivery. Social/affective strategies boost confidence, motivation, and reduce anxiety. These findings confirm that students' strategy use is both deliberate and effective, and directly contributes to improved writing quality, academic performance, and overall confidence in completing writing tasks in postgraduate education.

### **5.3. Conclusion of the Whole Study**

This study aims to investigate writing strategies employed by EFL Libyan postgraduate students at Sabratha University and their benefits of using these strategies. This study adopted a mixed-method research design, including a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data, whereas thematic analysis was applied to analyze qualitative data.

The findings of this study revealed that EFL postgraduate students of the Faculty of Arts and Education at Sabratha University are aware of the importance of incorporating writing strategies in the educational context. Thus, they have positive attitudes toward the use of these strategies. All writing strategies were used by Libyan MA students with high frequencies, and a few of them with low frequency. This shed light on the fact that students perceived writing strategies as helpful tools in enhancing their academic writing. Additionally, the findings of the current study indicated that various benefits of writing strategies were experienced by MA students. These strategies helped students improve clarity and organization of ideas, and improved academic performance. Additionally, the participants revealed that using writing strategies helped them feel more confident, managing time, and allowed them to overcome writing barriers.

Overall, the present findings demonstrate a positive correlation between students' awareness and attitudes toward the use of writing strategies.

### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the current research study, some recommendations for teachers and students are proposed.

#### **5.4.1. Recommendations for Students**

In light of the study's findings, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for students:

1. Students should raise their knowledge about writing strategies before graduation and during study stages. This can happen by engaging in planning, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and revising, as well as joining workshops, reading academic articles or essays, and keeping writing even out of the class.
2. Students should seek feedback and discuss ideas with their peers and teachers; this helps in developing their ideas clearly and effectively.

3. EFL students should motivate themselves to use self-encouragement, positive selftalk, and relaxation techniques to reduce anxiety and stress.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendations for Teachers**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations for teachers are presented:

1. EFL teachers should consider a better way of teaching writing strategies to improve the students' ability to master writing. The teachers could apply interesting methods to develop the students' ability, like working in groups, storytelling, and engaging activities that will not make the students bored of writing and provide a comfortable atmosphere where students feel confident and relaxed.

2. It is essential for teachers to implement a pre-writing strategy such as planning or brainstorming, which is helpful to enhance students' writing abilities and structure their ideas clearly.

3. EFL teachers should encourage students to incorporate all of their writing strategies sequentially and efficiently inside classrooms to help produce good, productive written work.

4. Teachers should focus on providing feedback on students' drafts and final products, which significantly improves students' writing skills and allows them to correct their own mistakes.

5. Syllabus designers should explicitly integrate writing strategies within the curriculum such that activities and assignments can be designed to require students to use various writing strategies

6. Teachers should encourage structured peer feedback activities and promote selfediting practices such as, reading aloud and written outlines to strengthen students' writing.

#### **5.5. Limitations of the Study**

A possible limitation of the present study is that it only involved a small number of participants from a particular setting of EFL postgraduate students at Sabratha University. Thus, future studies can collect bigger data sets with participants from different universities with different learning stages to provide more insights into Libyan students'

use of strategies in academic writing. Another limitation is that the classification of writing strategies is too broad; therefore, the researcher adopted Mu's 2005 taxonomy, which narrows the strategies down. Moreover, depending on the length of the questionnaire, the items of writing strategies should have been investigated more.

### **5.6. Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the findings of the recent study, further research should be conducted to investigate each strategy alone and identify its effect precisely. Also, additional research should be conducted using different research methods and approaches, which may get different and more interesting results. However, the sample of the current study was limited to MA students at Sabratha University; thus, further research should be conducted across a larger number of Libyan universities. Moreover, a comparison study can be conducted to investigate writing strategies among EFL Libyan students with different proficiency levels compared to gender.

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## Appendices

### Appendix (A): Information sheet

#### Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Amaal Ammar Almabrouk at the University of Zawia as part of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Art in Applied Linguistics. The purpose of this study is to investigate EFL postgraduate students' use of Writing strategies in their writing tasks and to identify the benefits of using them. Before deciding to participate, it is important for you to understand the purpose of the study, what your involvement will entail, and any potential risks or benefits. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential. You have the right to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without consequence. This research will require about 10-15 minutes of your time. During this time, you will be interviewed about your experiences with writing strategies. The interviews will be conducted wherever you prefer (e.g. in the venue, via WhatsApp via Zoom), and will be tape-recorded.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact

Email Address [amaalam2024@gmail.com](mailto:amaalam2024@gmail.com)

Thank you for considering participating in this research study.

Sincerely, Amaal Ammar Almabrouk

## **Appendix (B): Writing Strategies Questionnaire Dear students**

I would like to invite you to participate in this study by answering the following questions about your use of writing strategies when completing writing tasks. The information gained from the questionnaire will be used as part of an MA dissertation in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zawia.

Your involvement in the research is voluntary, and your responses will be used solely for research purposes. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

The questionnaire might take approximately twenty minutes. The researcher would like to thank you for your time and effort. Would you please complete the questionnaire below?

### **General Information**

1. Gender     Male             Female
2. Age         21 to 25     26 to 30     31 to 35     36 to 40    Older than 40
3. How long have you been studying English?  
 1–4 Years     5–6 Years     7–8 Years     More than 8 years

### **The Writing Process**

Please read each statement and choose the most suitable answer that describes the frequency of using these writing strategies.

(Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never)

### **Rhetorical Strategies**

1. Before I start writing, I think about the overall structure of my assignment (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion).\*  
 *Always*     *Often*     *Sometimes*     *Rarely*     *Never*
2. I organize my writing in a clear and logical manner.\*  
 *Always*     *Often*     *Sometimes*     *Rarely*     *Never*
3. I use narrative techniques (such as storytelling and examples) to make my writing more interesting and engaging for readers.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

4. I change my writing style to suit the reader's preferences.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

**Metacognitive Strategies**

5. I make a timetable for the writing process.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

6. Before I start writing, I revise the requirements.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

7. I start with the introduction.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

8. I think about what I want to write and have a plan in my mind, not on paper.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

9. I reread each sentence after writing it to ensure it is clear and accurate.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

10. I revise my written work after writing a few sentences that express one idea.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

11. When I have a written task, I submit it without reading it.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

**Cognitive Strategies**

12. I start writing without having a clear plan for my ideas in my mind.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

13. I initially write sections of the text in my native language and later convert them into English.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

14. When I find it difficult to express my thoughts in English clearly, I simplify them to make them easier to understand.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

15. If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

16. I revise my written text before I submit it.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

17. When I revise my writing, I rearrange the structure of my written text.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

18. When I revise my written text, I make changes in vocabulary.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

### **Communicative Strategies**

19. After I finish writing my text, I read it aloud.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

20. I use transition words between paragraphs to make my ideas flow smoothly.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

21. When I write, I introduce my ideas in a way that grabs the reader's attention.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

22. I make sure each paragraph has clear main points that support my overall ideas.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

### **Social and Affective Strategies**

23. I seek feedback from my peers when writing.

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

24. I seek feedback from my teacher.

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

25. When I have a problem in writing, I ask somebody to help me.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

26. I prefer to get feedback from my peers rather than my teacher.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

27. I give myself a reward after completing my assignment.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

28. I try to relax and stay calm when I feel anxious about writing.\*

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

29. I use techniques (like deep breathing or positive self-talk) to manage my emotions before writing.

*Always*    *Often*    *Sometimes*    *Rarely*    *Never*

**Thanks very much for your valuable help!**

## **Appendix(C): Students' Interview Questions**

1. Can you describe your general approach to writing tasks in your post graduate studies
2. What writing strategies do you commonly use for academic assignments?
3. How did you learn or develop these writing strategies?
4. How do these strategies help you organize your thoughts, manage your time and overcome challenges while writing?
5. In what ways do these strategies improve the clarity, organization, and quality of your writing?
6. Have these strategies improved your academic performance, such as grades, or helped you meet deadlines more effectively? If yes, could you share more details?
7. Do these strategies affect your confidence or motivation when starting new writing tasks? How?
8. Are there any challenges or limitations you've encountered while applying these strategies, and how have you addressed them?
9. From your perspective, what do you consider the most significant benefit of using writing strategies in your postgraduate studies as an EFL student?

**Thank you very much for your valuable responses**

## Appendix (D): Permission Letter

State of Libya  
Ministry of Higher Education  
and Scientific Research  
SABRATHA UNIVERSITY

General Administration

الرقم الإشاري: 2516



دولة ليبيا  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة صبراتة  
الإدارة العامة

التاريخ: 1 / 1  
الموافق: 25 / 8 / 110 هـ

السيد المحترم / وكيل الجامعة للشؤون العلمية

إماتة  
مختار بن الأبرار  
الطرابلس  
هـ / 11 / 12-8-2025

بعد التحية،،،،

نحييكم على جهودكم المخلصة من أجل الارتقاء بمستوي هذه القلعة العلمية .  
**بداية** بالإشارة إلى خطاب مدير إدارة الدراسات العليا بجامعة الزاوية الموسوم بالرقم  
الإشاري (ادع 593) المؤرخ بتاريخ 2025/8/6 بشأن الطلبة / امال عمار المبروك ، التي ترغب في إجراء  
دراسة ميدانية بجامعة صبراتة للحصول على بيانات ومعلومات خاصة ببحثها . عليه نأمل منكم مساعدتها  
في ذلك بما يتماشى مع القوانين واللوائح المعمول بها بالجامعة .

ففضلوا بالاستلام

والسلام عليكم ،،،،

د. أيمن محمد الجندي

مدير إدارة الدراسات العليا والتدريب

والمعيدين



صورة إلى :  
المصادر + الدوري العام

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## السيد المحترم / مدير إدارة الدراسات العليا بجامعة صبراتة

تحية طيبة ...

في الوقت الذي نحياكم فيه على الجهود التي تبذلونها لخدمة العملية التعليمية وبناء على الطلب المقدم من الطالبة /امال عمار المبروك احدى الطلبة المسجلين بالدراسات العليا بكلية الآداب بقسم اللغة الانجليزية وهي بمرحلة إعداد الرسالة.

**عليه** ....

نأمل .... مساعدة الطالبة المعنية لإجراء دراسة ميدانية والحصول على البيانات والمعلومات الخاصة ببحثها .

د. همزة الهادي كشلاف

مدير إدارة الدراسات العليا بالجامعة



