IMPROVING SAUDI ENGLISH LEARNERS' SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING THROUGH SELF-REGULATED STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

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Submitted to the Graduate Degree Program in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date approved: 4/27/2016

Abstract

Saudi L2 learners in English departments in Saudi Arabia have difficulty mastering academic writing. Many studies attribute this deficiency to the product-oriented approach that is the dominant teaching style in Saudi Arabia. The study is a response to this observation and investigates the effect of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) instruction for TREE (Topic sentence, Reason, Explanation, Ending) strategy, which represents the process approach for Saudi L2 learners. A pre-test and post-test measured the impact of the SRSD+TREE intervention for the 25 participants in the experimental group and the 26 in the control group. Results indicated that students in the experimental group had a significant improvement and outperformed their counterparts in the control group. More specifically, participants in the experimental group had significantly higher scores in their total essay evaluations and essay length. This indicates that the process-oriented approach is more beneficial for Saudi L2 learners than the product approach and is highly recommended in teaching writing in English departments in Saudi universities.

Dedication

To my parents for their unconditional love and prayers.

To my wife for her sacrifice, and support.

To my children for making me happy and proud.

Acknowledgment

Praise and thanks go first and foremost to Almighty God for blessing me with the motivation and ability to complete this work.

I acknowledge the support I received from my major advisor, Dr. Steven White, the department chairperson. He believed in my abilities and facilitated opportunities for me to succeed. I highly appreciate his professional flexibility, collaboration, advice, and unlimited support.

I also recognize the valuable information and quality experience I acquired from my dissertation committee members, Dr. Paul Markham, Dr. Bruce Frey, Dr. Heidi Hallman, and Dr. Danita Shaw. Also, my deepest appreciation is acknowledged to my friend and brother, Dr. Abduh Alma'shy, for his assistance and care. Finally, I am grateful to all the other people who supported me directly or indirectly to achieve this research.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of Problem

In only a few years the number of Saudi universities jumped from seven to 31 universities. This growth in Saudi university numbers entails the increased number of English departments in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the King Abdullah Scholarship Program sent thousands of students to study abroad. All this change and development in Saudi Arabia requires extensive programs to teach Saudi students the four skills of English language: listening, speaking, reading, and more specifically, writing skills.

In general, writing skills are difficult to master because they combine thought, feeling, and social interactions (Perin, 2013). More specifically, the skill of writing in English presents a difficulty for Arab students in general (Hashim, 1996; Rabab`ah, 2003), and Saudi students in particular (Al-Khairy, 2013; Fadda, 2012; Javid, Farooq, & Umer, 2013). The researcher offered free courses to Saudi students at the Applied English Center at the University of Kansas to prepare them for the Test of English as a foreign language (TOFEL) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) standardized tests. Most of the students who attended these courses struggled with writing, and all the students who had taken these tests revealed that their lowest scores were in writing. In addition, the researcher conducted a mini study as a course requirement about the difficulties in learning to write in English for Saudi students in English departments at Saudi universities. The population of the study was four Saudi students who study in English departments at four different Saudi universities. All four students revealed that they still have difficulty in writing. More specifically, they stated that they did not study persuasive writing and did not remember instructors mentioning the term “thesis statements”. Therefore, the

need to investigate and test new methods and models of writing that is beneficial for second language (L2) learners is crucial.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to test a new model of writing with Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) with the TREE (Thesis statement, Reasons, Explanations, Ending) strategy of improving English persuasive writing by Saudi students who study English as a second language.

The Significance of the Study

The study is significant in several ways. First, although there are many studies that investigated the influence of the SRSD instructional model on students' argumentative writing, only one conducted the study on college students (Song & Ferretti, 2013). This shortage of testing the SRSD on adult learners is considered a limitation of the SRSD instructional model (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). In addition, the researcher could not locate any study that investigated the influence of SRSD on argumentative writing and aims of L2 learners. Therefore, this study will be the first study that investigates the SRSD instructional method on L2 Saudi learners. Moreover, the product approach is the dominant approach in teaching writing for both Arabic (Bakry & Alsamadani, 2015) and English (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010; Halimah, 1991) in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this study will present a new approach for teachers, instructors, and researchers who are interested in teaching English or Arabic in Saudi Arabia.

Research Question

1. To what extent, does the SRSD instructional model with the TREE strategy improve Saudi students' argumentative writing?

CHAPTER TWO

The Review of Literature

Introduction

The focus of the literature will be on the three aspects of writing. First, the Arabic writing style because it is the subjects' first language. More particularly the concentration will be on Arabic argumentative writing to show how it is different from English argumentative style. Exposing how persuasion in Arabic is conducted will help facilitate the reader's understanding about the differences between Arabic and English Argumentative writing. Second, the literature review will shed light on English writing and will focus on three aspects: general versus local knowledge, process versus product approaches, and argumentative writing in the process approach. Finally, teaching English writing in second and foreign language contexts will be discussed.

Arabic Writing Style and Its Influences on L2

Arabic writing derives its method of writing from the Holy Quran, according to Besston (1970, as cited in Alnofel, 2003). Also, Ostler (1987) confirmed that the written Arabic language was greatly influenced by the Quranic Arabic style. Koch (1983) clarified how argumentative writing, for instance, is represented in Arabic written language. Unlike the western style, which depends on a logical structure that goes beyond words, Arabic argumentation depends on the notion that is described with very few words. More specifically Feghali (1997) classified that four features of Arabic writing distinguish it from English writing. First, repetition in Arabic writing is a major feature in the Arabic language as a whole and particularly in writing (Drid, 2014). The repetition is not limited to writing only but includes all aspects of language:

phonological, morphological and lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels (Koch, 1983). Through repetition "an arguer presents truths by making them present in discourse: by repeating them, paraphrasing them, doubling them, calling attention to them" (Johnstone, 1991). More specifically, instead of the counter-argument found in English persuasive writing, Arab writers use repetition as a tool to confirm the argument (Kamel, 2000). Secondly, is the indirectness where a speaker or writer tends to hide his needs or goals during discourse. In order to understand the message, the receiver depends on the physical context that is internalized in the interactions (Hall, 1966). Third is the elaborateness that Arabic speakers use more words to describe ideas compared to an English speaker explaining the same idea (Samovar & Porter, 1991). In this regard, two patterns of elaboration are used in Arabic: exaggeration and assertion. These two functions confirm the credibility during interaction. Finally, effectiveness is another distinctive feature of Arabic (Feghali, 1997). According to Koch (1983), the presentation of the idea is more effective than the logic of the idea itself.

This attitude of argumentation derived its roots from the Quranic style, which shows that the arguer manifests his truth through the following discourses: repeating them, doubling them, paraphrasing them, and calling attention to them with external particles (Koch, 1983). This style of argumentation, which is completely different from the English style, might explain why the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in English departments complains about the weak performance of Arab students' argumentative essays (Al-Haq & Ahmed, 1994). For example, in Arabic persuasive text the claim is given at the end of the text and usually there is no refutation of counter arguments as in English writing (Al Jubouri, 1995 as cited in Bacha, 2010). Instead of the counter-argument, Arabic uses through-argument, which is sort of a loose logical connectivity between different opinions (Hatim, 1990). The counter-argument is not used in

Arabic writing and not preferred. Instead, the through-argument is favored where the focus on the writer's point of view and the opposition argument is ignored and there is no reference to the adversary (Kamel, 2000). Hatim (1990) refers the use of the through-argumentation to solidarity, politeness, and face-saving as factors of preference of this style. Other important differences such as the topic sentence, which is not explicitly mentioned in an Arabic paragraph as it is in an English paragraph. As a result, Arab students who studied English became confused by the typical English topic shifts (Drid, 2014). In other words, the Arabic writing style does not have an explicit topic sentence as the case in English; instead, the topic sentence is implied. These differences between Arabic and English argumentative style might cause confusion for Arab English learners.

Although Arab countries in the last century have been exposed to western civilization and the English language was taught in schools, the strategies of writing in the Arabic language were not as well used as in the English language. Alnofil (2003) investigated the differences and similarities between the strategies of writing that Saudi learners apply while writing in their native language (L1), Arabic, and L2, English. He found that participants had more training in L2 writing strategies than in L1. More specifically, the participants used pre-writing and post-writing strategies when they wrote in English more than when writing in Arabic. These findings are in line with other studies that investigated how Saudi students apply writing strategies while writing in their L1 (Al-Jamhoor, 1996; Muhammad, 2001). Moreover, Al-Ali (1998, as cited in Alnofil, 2003) stated that high school level writing instruction is limited to orthography, grammar, and organization. To conclude, Arabic writing instruction appears to scratch the surface of writing and concentrates only on the quantity of writing, not the quality. The Quranic style is still the dominant style of Arabic writing.

The influence of L1 on L2, and whether the L2 learners transfer their rhetorical strategies from their L1 are a debatable issue. Kaplan's (1966) study was, and still is, a controversial study about the influence of first language on learning a second language, like English. For example, he said that the Arabic language influences Arab students learning English as a second language. First, he distinguished between the style of English writing and other writing, including Arabic, as shown in the figure below.

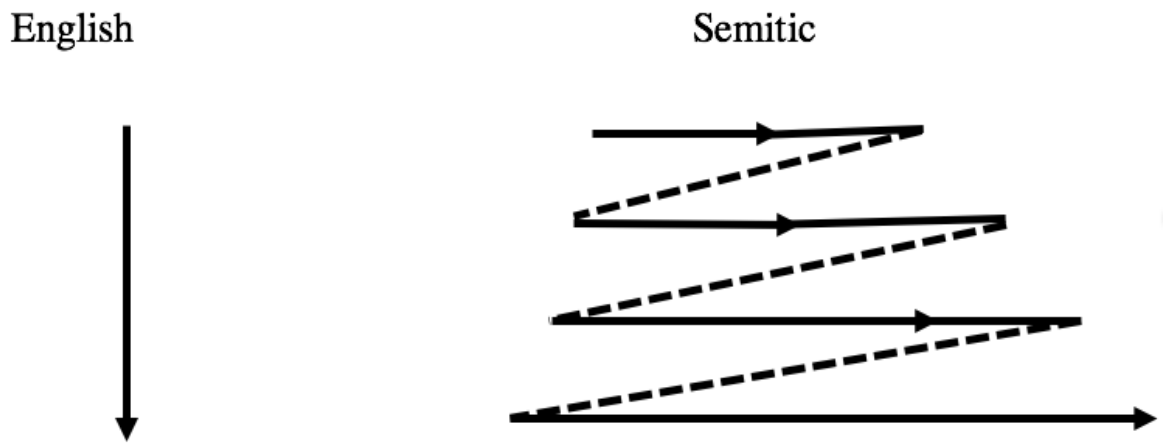

Figure 1. Kaplan's Doodle

According to his analysis, or what became known as "doodle," the English style of writing is linear; where it starts with a topic sentence and is followed by evidence that supports the claim and eventually leads to the conclusion that confirms the topic sentence. In contrast, Arabic, a Semitic language, is "based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative" (Kaplan, 1966). Moreover, based on analyzing English writing produced by Arab learners at the university level, he noticed that Arab learners made extensive use of coordination in way that English speakers consider as overuse (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004).

According to Kaplan's (1966) analysis, he claimed that English L2 learners whose L1 is Arabic tend to transfer their rhetoric strategies from their L1 language and, consequently, do not

meet their audience's expectations in the target culture while composing in English (being unaware of English strategies). He also expanded his theory and connected logic with structure and claimed that ESLs, when they acquire their first language, simultaneously acquire forms of reasoning and rhetoric expressions (Kaplan, 1966). Taking into consideration that each culture has its own format of reasoning and rhetorical patterns, this will create a vast variability of rhetoric styles and they will interfere with the target rhetorical style that is English. Furthermore, he argues for teaching ESLs not only Western rhetoric expressions but also the logical patterns. In a recent study, Barry (2014) investigated the impact of L1 Arabic on L2 English writing. She concluded that L1 Arabic influences ESL learners' English writing, with specific and predictable errors in the use of punctuation, conjunctions, capitalization, and articles as the most difficult concepts. More interestingly, she revealed that L2 Arab learners tend to write "strong descriptive narrative writing, which is often influenced by the colorful and poetic narrative tradition of the Arabian Peninsula" (Barry, 2014). However, this type of narrative writing requires a strong knowledge of syntax and lexical meaning and usually the L2 learners struggle in these areas. Moreover, Hashim (1996) reviewed literature that investigated Arabic-speaking learners' most common errors and concluded that the most common source of error is the influence of the native language. In addition, he reported that in processing English syntactic structures, Arabic speakers adopt certain strategies similar to those of first-language learners, including simplification and over-generalization.

Conversely, some researchers reject the idea of the negative transfer from L1 and decide that these errors show up in L2 learners writing due to their insufficient knowledge of their target language (Fakhri, 1994 as cited in Barry, 2014). Regarding Kaplan's (1966) argument that L2 learners transfer their rhetoric strategies from L1 to L2 writing, a study by Ismail (2010) was

conducted to test whether negative L1 transfer could be the cause of ESL writing problems by Arab learners. The study analyzed the writing samples of 30 ESL and Arabic native speakers and 30 writing samples of native English speakers on the same persuasive task. The results showed that there is no significant relationship between learners L1 and their errors in L2 writing. In addition, the findings did not show any significant difference in the rhetorical performance between native English speakers and native Arabic speakers. In other words, the study questions Kaplan's (1966) main argument of L1 negative transfer.

In summary, Arabic has a very different rhetoric style from the English style, especially in persuasive writing. Accordingly, there is a chance of negative transfer from L1 to L2 (Kaplan, 1966). This gap between English and Arabic rhetoric styles of writing will cause difficulty for Arab learners of English to master the rhetorical style of English and, as a result, any attempt to teach writing to Arab learners of English to ignore these differences will increase the chance of failure.

English Writing Style

Writing in English can be conceptualized in different ways. For example, it can be viewed as general versus local knowledge (Carter 1990). Moreover, writing can be taught through the process writing approach or product writing approach. Another view conceptualizes writing as functions (Britton's, 1975). In this section of the literature review we will explore the three attitudes of writing.

Local Knowledge vs. General Knowledge

There is debate among researchers of English composition about whether to concentrate on general knowledge or local knowledge while teaching students different writing strategies. The cognitivists, or those who follow the inner-directed approach, believe that the writing

process is universal and hence it is general knowledge rather than local knowledge. On the other hand, the social theorists, or the outer-directed theorists, reject the idea that learners obtain writing skills along with language as an inner process and claim that it is an outer process. They believe it is related to discourse of the community but that the cognitivists are unaware of it (Bizzell, 2003). More importantly, Carter (1990) highlighted a clear distinction between the two approaches by attributing the local knowledge to discourse community, where a writer becomes an expert when he has the sufficient knowledge to write as a member of a discourse community. Therefore, the socialists asserted that novel writers should be limited to discourse community first. They suggested that the first step in the writing process is that beginner-level writers should master writing in their community of discourse and study all the conventions of that field. The local knowledge approach criticizes the general or universal approach's argument that community does not influence writers' ability (Carter, 1990).

Conversely, advocators of the general knowledge approach claim that general strategies are doable for all individuals, regardless of their background in different situations. They believe that writing has universal principals that include language in general and writing language in particular (Carter, 1990). The general approach stands on three assumptions: experts have more effective general strategies in writing than novices; general knowledge is more powerful than local knowledge; and, unlike what Thorndike has stated, the general strategies are transferable from one domain to another (Carter, 1990). Though some research has revealed that thinking is a specific domain-context bound-and cannot be generalized to other domains, as local knowledge advocators would suggest, Perkins and Salomon (1989) explain that different domains are not separate from each other and have some common structures of argument. Accordingly, the cognitive skill is general but it is bound by context (Perkins & Salomon, 1987 as cited in Perkins

& Salomon, 1989). Therefore, general knowledge is very crucial for the full theory of expertise; in fact even experts sometimes turn to general strategies when they encounter novice problems in their field (Perkins & Salomon, 1987 as cited in Perkins & Salomon, 1989). This indicates that general knowledge is complementary to local knowledge; they are not conflicting approaches. In an interesting way to point out their position on this matter, Perkins and Salomon (1989) use the following story: a leader of a country has a problem with a neighbor country that has aggressive intentions towards his country. Knowing that his country's army is not strong enough to defend against the aggressor, he is sure invasion would be inevitable. Therefore, he plans to defeat his enemy through thinking and politics, not military action. The only card that he has to play is the most intelligent person in a chess game. The chess master knows how to solve problems on the chessboard and knows how to perform the moves that will make him win. The leader thinks that this highly cognitive ability needs only some lessons in politics to find a political strategy out of this problem. The crucial question is whether this highly intelligent chess player can defeat the enemy or not. In other words, can highly cognitive ability or general knowledge transfer itself to other domains or does it only exist in a specific domain, such as a professional in a chess game?

Perkins and Salmon (1989) concluded that there is not a clear answer for such questions, or about which of the two approaches, general or local knowledge, is correct. Accordingly, before deciding what will happen, we need to consider some important variables. For example, are the strategies that the chess master has acquired related specifically to chess games and consequently he will not be able to transfer them? Does the chess player gain success through applying different strategies related to solving problems or is he merely an intuitive player of chess? Answering these questions could give us a hint about his chances to succeed in his mission. Therefore, Perkins & Salomon (1989), argue that using general or specific study is

decided by the nature of the class and subject and one approach should not be generalized to classes.

A way to merge both approaches into one scale to dissimilate contradictions, Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986, as cited in Carter, 1990) established a scale with general knowledge at one end and local knowledge at the other. General knowledge is a conscious, context-free process and focuses on general strategies. The more experience a learner gains, the more the scale moves toward local knowledge, and the more the strategies become specified and limited with a context-based approach. This indicates that general knowledge in writing can be used with novice writers and local knowledge can be used with advanced writers. This point of view is compatible with Perkin & Salomon (1989) that we should not generalize one approach and neglect the other. Instead, both types of knowledge are used according to the nature of the class and the capability of the learners.

Process vs. Product Writing Approaches

The traditional, or product approach, focuses on the final writing product which views the teaching of writing as a process of assigning and evaluating writing pieces (Badger & White, 2000). It does not concentrate on the cognitive process that is behind producing the final product, as seen in the process writing approach. Instead, the teacher's main mission is correcting and grading students' papers. The teacher, however, can analyze students' papers and classify patterns of errors in what is known as the error analysis approach (Ellis, 2005). In practice, the teacher usually instructs students to read novels, plays, essays, and poetry, and analyze them in written composition. Another form of product approach strategies is that the teacher asks students to imitate a form of writing and produce a similar template, and afterwards the teacher evaluates the product before giving the student a similar task of producing a comparable piece of

written material (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). Therefore, in the product approach, the focus is on the product and very little attention is paid to strategies of writing or the cognitive process through which students develop their text. The instructions in this approach concentrate on conventions such as "introductions, thesis statement, and predictable paragraph structures" (Williams, 2003).

This approach is widely used in Saudi Arabia in English departments (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010) as well as in the English Malaysian school system because it is not as time-consuming as the process approach (Rahim, Salam, & Ismail, 2014). In this author's experience of the educational system in Saudi Arabia, the teaching of writing follows the same teaching style. A recent study by Bakry & Alsamadani, (2015), found that the product-oriented model is the dominant approach to teaching writing in the Arabic language. In the product approach, the teacher usually prefers to spend more time analyzing students' papers instead of construing cognitive activities for students. This approach aims to provide students with linguistic knowledge and therefore students are supposed to imitate models of writing with different topics (Steele, 2004). Moreover, the product approach pays attention to the appropriate use of vocabulary and syntax (Badger & White, 2000). Students, according to this approach, copy the model and try to match the model of writing provided by the instructor. The role of the instructor in this model is essential because he provides feedback and makes sure the students provide the appropriate follow-up response. Pincas (1982 as cited by Badger & White, 2000) categorized four stages for product writing: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. For example, a teacher makes one of his objectives to teach students how to describe a house. First, he provides students with a model of writing, which represents the appropriate prepositions, and the names of the rooms used in the description of a house. In the

second stage, students produce simple sentences derived from sentences that are used in the model provided to them. The teacher can physically color parts of the sentence so that students know how to substitute certain words. In the third stage, students might use a picture of a house to produce a paragraph of guided writing. Finally, students can write about any house, or write about their own houses, and this is the free writing stage. According to Pincas (1982) the first stage of learning is imitation, until the learner masters the skill, and after that he can write freely. This approach is hugely influenced by the behavioristic theory where the teacher provides the stimulus and the learner produces the response. The behaviorists see learning as an imitation process and learners are affected by outer variables rather than by inner variables (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2013). In other words, the behaviorists believe learning mainly takes place when learners receive stimulus from environmental exposure. Moreover, Watson (1977) argued that if he took a random child and raised the child by himself, that child would become any kind of specialist Watson wanted (Watson, 1977).

Gomez et al. (1996) notes two different types of the product writing approach. The first is the kind conducted in the ESL classroom where the focus is on drill-and-practice exercises. The second type emerges in the non-ESL classroom where four features are found: “(a) the topic and purpose of the writing assignment is controlled or assigned; (b) student writing is judged for syntactic and lexical accuracy as well as "ideational content"; (c) students receive prompt error feedback and corrections on a limited number of targeted skills; and (d) students may be asked to make corrections in these prioritized skills”. Gomez et al (1996) see the difference between ESL and non-ESL classrooms as temporary. The ESL students will have the same writing instructions as the native speakers when their proficiency of language develops, therefore the differences in instructions are related to priority only.

The rise of the process-oriented approach in the 1970s resulted in models that depend on the cognitive process to explain how students compose writing in school (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004; Deqi, 2005a). Mastuda (2003) holds that the process movement was not the only attempt to reform writing, however, it achieved unprecedented success in comparison to previous reform attempts. Britton's (1975) and Moffett's (1968) models are the best examples of the general approach that was famous during that period. This school of thought attributes writing to a mental process and has been the strongest proponent to the process of writing as opposed to the traditional approach that focuses on the product (Berlin, 1988). In the process writing approach the focus is on the development of writing in the writer's mind before he produces the final product. There are several stages during which writing is gradually developed. Flower & Hayes (1981) developed their model on that basis and support the process approach. They categorize three mental processes that include what is happening in a writer's mind while composing: planning, translating, and reviewing. The planning category is further divided into subcategories like planning, generating ideas, organizing, and revising. However, Flower & Hayes (1981) explain that the process approach is not a linear relation but a circular approach. Students move back and forth through these stages while writing. Steele (2004) made another categorization for the process approach and divided the process of writing into eight stages: brainstorming, planning, mind mapping, first draft, peer feedback, editing, final draft, and evaluation. It should be mentioned that the process approach is presented as an umbrella over many kinds of writing models, such as Britton (1975), Moffett (1968), Flower & Hayes (1981), and Steele (2004). The common features between these models are that they focus on the cognitive ability of learners. The relationship between their components are circular, not linear, and students should not submit their final product until they experience the different stages of writing beginning with

brainstorming to receiving feedback from a teacher and/or their peers (Kroll, 1990 as cited in Hasan & Akhand, 2010).

There are two types of the process-oriented approach: expressivist and cognitivist (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). The expressivist based its notion that writing is a creative act and teacher's instruction, therefore, should be personal and nondirective. The expressivists also pay great attention to personal voice (Zamel, 1982). Peter Elbow is considered one of the sincerest advocators of this approach and he supports giving students the freedom to write without restrictions in an effort to raise their fluency and voice (He, 2009). He argues that journal writing and personal essays are crucial to improve students writing because they are less formal writing that frees novel writers from restrictions of teachers, audience, and language (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). In addition, the expressivists believe that the teacher's mission in the classroom is to facilitate activities that support fluency and power over the writing act and to encourage self-discovery (He, 2009). Concentrating on less formal writing as a means to improve students writing is an attitude supported by Britton (1975) and Moffett (1968) as we will learn shortly.

The second type of process-oriented approach is the cognitivism approach. Though cognitivism and expressivism approaches have several features in common, the former has two distinctive features that distinguish it from expressivism. First, the cognitivism approach has influenced L1 and L2 pedagogical writing (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). For example, Flower and Hayes (1981) characterize nonlinear and recursive mental processes of writing as planning, formulation, and revision. In other words, cognitivism focuses on intellectual analytical operations in writing instead of voice and fluency as the experssivism approach does. Second, the congnitivism approach focuses on high-order operations, which include sub-processes like

the aforementioned process in Flower and Hayes's (1981) model and the eight processes in Steele's (2004). Eventually, the cognitivism view has become more influential on L2 writing (He, 2009)

In the process-oriented approach, expert writers uses the cognitive process automatically, therefore, they do not need support or instruction in this process. Whereas, a novice writer would need support and/or instruction in the cognitive processes because they have not yet become automatic in the writing process (De Stem, 2014). Moreover, in the case of the novice writer the alternation between cognitive stages puts a heavy load on the working memory of the learner. To know how the learner can have more experiences and free working memory load in regard to some aspects of language acquisition we need to shed some light on Anderson's (1983) theory of acquisition. Anderson's (1983) theory of acquisition has three stages and second language learners are supposed to follow these stages while they are exposed to new language aspects. The first stage is the cognitive stage in which learners are exposed to explicit instruction. In this stage, learning is a conscious process and the learner can verbally describe the declarative knowledge that he has acquired. Representations of this knowledge are temporarily activated in working memory. The second stage is the associative stage, and it is the unconscious stage where learners are unable to describe the knowledge that has been acquired. In this stage, the errors that have been detected in the declarative stage will be eliminated, and the declarative knowledge is transferred into procedural form. Errors in this stage still occur and the learning process is slower than the declarative stage. Moreover, the performance in this stage resembles the professional use of language more than the declarative stage. The final stage of the acquisition process is the autonomous stage where reaction time, errors, and attention decrease. This stage needs more practice and the skill can be executed effortlessly.

Therefore, to have learners become professional writers, extensive practice is required so that the representations of the mental process are no longer considered dependent on the working memory and the writer can reach the autonomous stage. Another important aspect of process writing is that writing strategies facilitate learning for novice writers. The writing strategies divide the mental process into subcategories, which allow learners to focus their effort on a single subtask at a time. (De Smet, 2014). In general, the process-oriented approach argues that writing is a skill that is learned, not taught, and the teacher's role is nondirective, where he facilitates writers to generate meanings and organize them on papers (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). This organization include writing influence (De la Luz, 1991) and generating ideas (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Finally, the process writing approach is now considered the dominant approach of writing in middle and high school in the United States (Applebee & Langer, 2009).

Models of Writing

There are different models of writing (Britton, 1975; Flower & Hayes, 198; Moffett, 1968), however, Britton's (1975) model is considered more well-known for several reasons. First, Moffett's model, as well as other models like Kinneavy's and D'Angelo's (as cited in Drust & Newell, 1989), was basically aimed to influence writing instruction, whereas Britton's model was developed as a tool to understand students' writing. In addition, Britton's model, unlike other models, gains its validity and reliably through testing it in a large study that examined several thousand pieces of students' writings, as we will explore. Finally, Britton's categories were used in different studies more than other models (Drust & Newell, 1989).

The cornerstone of Britton's model was based on Jakobson's (1960, as cited by Britton et al., 1975), conception of the hierarchy of function. The conception indicates that instead of concentrating on the sub-functions in a single text, one must focus on the holistic manner of the

text and define it accordingly. In other words, Jakobson's argument is that it is possible to determine a dominant function in a single utterance. Influenced by Jakobson's (1960) model, Britton identified three classifications of writing that are dominant in any single text: the transactional, expressive, and poetic aspect of writing. The transactional category includes functions of language, such as information or persuasion. The poetic category includes experience in a literary form, and the expressive category has a more personal focus on feelings, interests, and activities of the speaker or writer (Drust & Newell, 1989). Applebee (1981) has renamed Britton's categories transactional, expressive, and poetic as informative, personal, and imaginative respectively.

Britton's model pays attention to the expressive (or personal) category and argues that children's writing in the early stages at school is a form of low-level expressive speech. The more children develop their writing through time, the more they will develop the three different categories: transactional (informational), expressive (personal), and poetic (imaginative), (Britton et al., 1975). In other words, the expressive is like a matrix for the three categories and is the starting point of the model. The reason Britton and his team decided that expressive utterance is the dominant category in the model is that it represents face-to-face speech, which is directly related to expressive function. The expressive category is very close to the speaker and context cues are essential for the listener to understand the expressive utterance. More importantly, since expressive speech is similar to an informal type of writing, the writer can concentrate on the topic itself and connect it to prior knowledge, which leads to a shortcut to understanding. Expressive writing has the advantage of associating concepts with language, and therefore it has to be "known as writing to learn" (Keys, 1999). Britton and his colleagues argue that speech and writing have more in common and are intertwined in the process of production. Therefore,

expressive writing resembles speech in a way that speakers speak with their friends informally using expressive language, and as long as his listener understands him, the speaker will keep in the same mode. However, if they feel that their message is incomplete or the situation needs to be more formal, they will use more explicit and formal language. The same technique in writing, where a writer is in a similar situation, would shift from expressive writing (informal) to transactional or poetic writing which are more formal.

The transactional category is at one end of continuum and the poetic at the other end and the expressive is in the middle, as shown in the following figure:

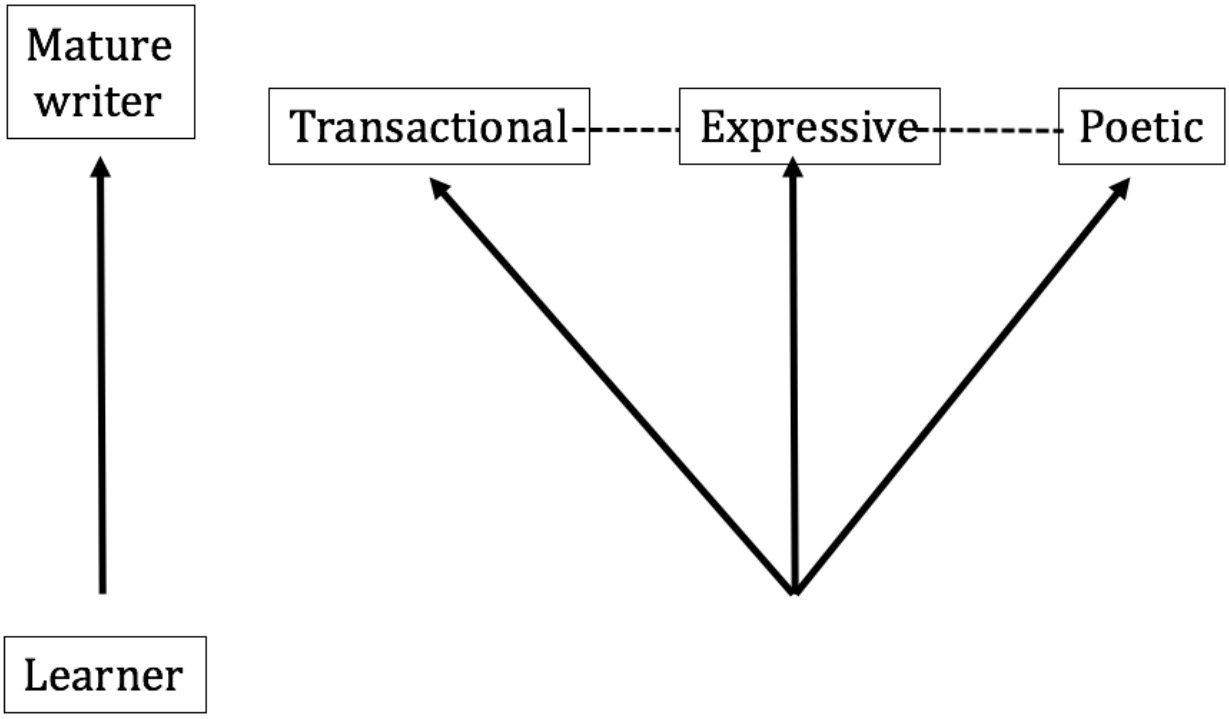

Figure 2.Britton's model (1975)

As the writer becomes more purposeful and professional, their writing will evolve into transactional and poetic writing. The transactional aspect as Britton et al. (1975) described it is "language to get things done." This includes informing, advising, persuading, or instructing people. The transactional category also has subcategories that were basically derived from

Moffett's (1986) abstractive scale. The scale starts with concrete aspects, like reporting and summarizing, and moves to abstract aspects such as analyzing, and finally, theorizing. The expressive category reflects informal speech among friends. There are three features that distinguish expressive function from transactional and poetic function. First, expressive language is close to the writer's self and through it the writer shows their closeness to the reader. Second, expressive language is not explicit since it depends on context cues and the experience between the reader and writer. Lastly, it is unstructured because it represents the flow of ideas about feelings, which indicate that it does not follow a specific structure (Britton et al., 1975).

After deciding on the dominant categories in their model, Britton and his team made another classification. They made a distinction between the participant role, which is more closely related to the transactional category, and the spectator role, which is related to the poetic category. The distinction between participant and spectator is similar to the difference between what is being done and what is being said. In other words, the role of participants is activated when an individual uses the language to get things done. Conversely, when a person uses language just for fun or enjoyment, he uses the language in the role of spectator (Britton et al., 1975).

Argumentative Writing in the Process Approach

The brief review of Britton's model shows us how writing is viewed less as structure and more as function and how attention is shifted from the product to the process of writing. One of the important aspects of Britton's model is argumentative writing, which represents the abstract aspects of writing in the transactional category. Argumentative writing is a more advanced aspect of writing that depends on the cognitive ability of learners rather than the proficiency of language (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013; Kamel, 2000) and is a highly complex type of writing (Drid,

2014). Some scholars argue that students should not be taught heuristics because they fear leaners will think that argumentative writing is set in a unified frame and organization (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013; Yeh, 1998). Therefore, they do not recommend teaching students genre-specific writing conventions such as the five paragraph essay and argue that argumentative writing should not be limited to a frame or set. However, this is similar to the debate between using local knowledge or general knowledge. Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986, as cited in Carter, 1990) recommend that novice writers should use general knowledge, in this case heuristics, until they become experts and after that they can use local knowledge where they are not limited to specific frame or organization. In other words, heuristics can be the starting point for novice writers until they become familiar with argumentative writing and become more skilled. In the same regard, Ferretti & Lewis, (2013) suggested that not only should teacher use heuristics for novice writers, but also when assigning a writing topic, they should choose commonplace topics so that students' writing will not be affected by their background experience. However, when the students become more advanced in persuasive writing, more specific topics that relate to the discipline can be introduced, as the leaners are more prepared for the local knowledge approach.

There are several implications in teaching argumentative writing to students. First, using authentic social contexts positively influences students writing. It helps students become precise in their ideas and thoughts (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). Second, explicit instructions are more effective in teaching students persuasive writing (Perin 2013). Finally, giving students authentic text to write about will lead them to free their thoughts from only responding to teachers' assignments, concentrate on the real audience, and think more broadly and critically about the topic (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). One of the important instructional models used to teach argumentative writing is the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)which was developed

by Harris and Graham (1996). It is used to teach different types of writing strategies to K-12 students (Santangelo, Harris, & Graham, 2008). The SRSD model emphasizes the importance of explicit instruction through which the teacher supports the acquisition of new strategies for their students (Song & Ferretti, 2013). Several studies confirm that explicit instructions are useful and beneficial for adult learners (Berry & Mason, 2010; De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Little et al. 2010; Mason et al. 2013). Anderson (1983) indicated in his model of second language acquisition that the first stage is explicit instruction. Ullman's model (2004) of second language acquisition distinguished declarative and procedural memory. Through his model, Ullman analyzed these cognitive stages and argued that lexicon is related to declarative memory, which depends on explicit instructions. Adult learners rely mainly on declarative memory to acquire a language, unlike children who rely on associative memory, which depends on implicit instructions (Paradi 2004; Ullman's 2005). Two important studies confirm the crucial rule of explicit instructions on adult learning. Spada and Tomita (2010) conducted a meta-analysis study that investigated the effect size of the explicit and implicit instruction on the acquisition of simple and grammatical features of English. The study revealed that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction for both simple and complex features. These results agree with Ullman's (2004) study, which stated that declarative memory, which adult learners rely on while acquiring language, is explicit in its nature.

The SRSD model consists of six stages (Santangelo, Harris, & Graham, 2008). The first stage is developing background knowledge in which teachers make sure to identify the strategy that they are about to introduce and make sure that students fully understand it. In the second stage, the teacher's primary goal is motivating students to discuss the new strategy and its importance

in developing their writing. This can be done through evaluating their performance in writing and seeing how this new strategy improves their skill. During this stage, learners should be convinced of the crucial needs to this strategy and how it is essential to developing their writing. The third stage is modeling the strategy where the teacher presents the strategy step- by-step and models it to the learners. The best method in this stage is the think aloud technique, where students clearly see how the strategy is conducted. In this stage, the discussion should continue and students should discuss how this strategy is beneficial to their writing and how it can be modified to match their actual needs. The fourth stage is memorizing where students need to memorize the strategy and use it automatically. It is not obligatory that students at the beginning fully memorize the strategy, but through extensive practice they will be able to master it. The fifth stage is the supporting stage where students try to write independently with the help of a teacher and they can use the help of their peers, if needed. This stage is the associative stage in Anderson's (1983) model where students are expected to make some errors in applying the method and it is their teacher's responsibility to evaluate and correct them. Finally, the independent stage, or what Anderson (1983) calls the automatous stage of acquisition, is what learners will experience. In this stage, students will be able to use the strategy in different settings and with a variety of tasks (Santangelo, Harris, & Graham, 2008).

Very similar to SRSD instructional model methodology, Perin (2013) has some recommendations for teaching high school students writing. First, he advises teachers to use long writing assignments instead of short ones. The writing assignment is an opportunity for students to practice, as well as for teachers to see the progress of their students' writing. Therefore, the more they write, the more they practice, and eventually their writing will improve. This follows Anderson's (1983) second language acquisition theory, which emphasizes the role of practice to

reach the level of autonomy in a skill. Second, Perin (2013) recommends that teachers use explicit instruction in writing strategies. Teachers should introduce the strategy and explain its importance. In addition, the teacher should model the strategy and show the students each step, which includes the mental process at each point. Moreover, students should have guided practice with corrective feedback and independent practice where they will exercise the strategy on their own. Though practice will improve writing, according to Perin (2013), explicit instructions are critical and there is no substitute for them. In fact, this view of using explicit instruction has a linguistic background. As mentioned earlier, Anderson's (1983) second language theory stated that the first phase of acquiring a new skill is the cognitive stage and it relies on explicit instruction.

The SRSD works as a framework for argumentative strategies that are used to improve students' writing. For example, TREE strategy is used in SRSD instructional model to prompt students to use a **T**opic sentence, provide readers with **R**easons that support the topic sentence, **E**xamine these reasons from audience perspective, and at the end provide an **E**nding for the essay (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). Several studies report the effectiveness of TREE strategy on students' argumentative writing (Berry & Mason, 2010; Graham & Harris, 1989; Mason et al. 2013; Mason & Shriner, 2008; Sexton et al 1998). Another strategy used with SRSD is PLANS (**P**ick goal, **L**ist ways to meet goals, **A**nd make **N**otes, **S**equences note) (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). The PLANS strategy also has confirmed its usefulness in improving English persuasive writing (Case, Harris & Graham,1992; Kiuhara, 2012; Patel & Laud, 2009). However, all previous studies that used the SRSD model had child participants and few used adult participants (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). The only study whose aim was college students was conducted by Song & Ferretti (2013) where they investigated the effects of self-regulated strategy development

revising instruction for argumentation writing for college students. The study assigned three conditions: the students were taught to revise their essays by asking and answering critical questions, students were taught to revise their essays through argumentation schemes to justify their standpoint but not through asking critical questions, and students received neither of the two previous conditions. The results revealed that students who were taught to ask critical questions produced higher quality essays that included more counterarguments and alternative viewpoints.

An important study,geared toward adult learners using the TREE strategy in a SRSD instructional model, was conducted by Berry & Mason (2010). The participants were four non-college participants whose ages ranged from 20-40. Besides the TREE strategy, the study implements two other strategies: POW and COPS. The former stands for: **P**ick my idea, **O**rganize my notes, **W**rite and say more, and the latter is: **C**apitalization, **O**rganization, **P**unctuation, and **S**ense (Berry & Mason 2010). The study reports significant improvement in participants' writing.

To sum up, argumentative writing is the more advanced informational aspect of writing because it is located on an abstraction scale of the informational piecemeal of Britton's (1975) and Moffett's (1968) model. It requires the more cognitive skill of planning and organizing. Few studies test the SRSD instructional model on adult learners and none have tested it on L2 to date.

English Writing in L2/FL Context

Teaching English writing as second and foreign language is very similar in its broad outlines to teaching English as L2 (Silva, 1990; Zamel, 1976). Moreover, teaching writing in a foreign and second language context is a relatively new approach (Deqi, 2005a; He, 2009). Until recently, attention was paid to teach lexicon and grammar and teaching writing was limited to

written exercises that mainly focused on vocabulary, grammar, and tested students' reading comprehension (Deqi, 2005a). Kaplan (1982) indicated that there are two types of teaching writing within the L2/FL context: teaching writing relying on composition, and teaching writing depending on written exercises. In the former, Kaplan included the three aspects of writing in Britton's (1975) and Applebee's (1981) model that are: informational, personal, and imaginative purposes. Teaching writing without composing and depending on written exercises views writing as a supportive skill and consequently it uses fill-in-the-blank exercises, writing short answers, and writing lists as a means to teach the skill of writing (Deqi, 2005a). The outcomes of this type prove its failure and demand more than building grammatical sentences (Silva, 1990). Moreover, Silva (1990) refers to this attitude of focusing on fill-in-the-blank exercises on viewing writing as a secondary skill that is taught to support other skills rather than an end in itself. As a result, many of the international students who come to the United States show obvious weakness in the ability of writing and they are not ready for academic writing, even though they know how to write a grammatical sentence (Deqi, 2005a). Some researchers refer to the attitude of neglecting teaching writing as a writing skill and consider it as secondary aspects of language to the audio-lingual approach that was adapted in the 1950s (Mastsude, 2003; Raimes, 1991).

In general, learning English as a second language and as a foreign language is considered the same and treated in the same way (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). However, there are some differences between the contexts of learning. The most common difference is that in learning English as a foreign language students are exposed to English only in the classroom, whereas in second language context the students use it in different places (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). This advantage of the L2 learner provides them with higher intrinsic motivation because they use English not only in the classroom, but in everyday life outside of the school context

(Krieger,1996). In addition, the context of English as a foreign language usually has a homogeneous linguistic and cultural background population. However, English as a second language context is usually taught to learners who have a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). The difference in teaching English in a L2 context, as opposed to teaching it in a foreign language context, is that the teaching it in a L2 context emphasis is proven to outperform teaching English in a foreign language context. For example, some studies report that ESL students outperform EFL learners in pragmatic awareness (Bardovi-Harlig & Do˝rnyei's, 1998; Schauer, 2006).

Regarding the similarities between L1 and L2 writers, Zamel (1976) and Silva (1990) argued that L1 and L2 writers are similar and both can benefit from the same writing instruction, if the L2 writers have a high level of L2 proficiency. Accordingly, as the writing process has proven to be beneficial for L1 writers, it will have the same benefit for L2 writers (Zamel, 1982). The writing process in L1 and L2 overlaps and shares many features in common (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004; Zen, 2005). He (2009) conducted a study on L2 Chinese learners of English and investigated if L2 learners have the same attitudes towards the process- oriented writing approach as L1 writers. The results conclude that participants show similar attitudes towards writing activities and the strategy of the process writing approach as L1 students. However, though L1 and L2 writing are similar in the broad sense, Silva (1993) located some differences in the practical sense. For example, L2 writers did not focus on planning while writing which make the process of writing less fluent and difficult. In addition, L2 writers do not pay attention to revision and their writing shows weakness in grammatical and lexical aspects of language. Therefore, Silva (1993) recommended ESL teachers focus on teaching writing as planning, drafting, and revising and focus on students' linguistic competence of language. Therefore, the

process-writing approach in L1 cannot be simply applied as it is in the L2 writing classrooms without modifications (He, 2009)

These days, the process writing approach is dominant in L2 writing (Deqi, 2005b). However, early in the 1970s teaching writing to L2 learners derived its methodology from the behavior approach where learning was believed to occur through correct modeling and repeated pattern drills. Moreover, classroom teaching was mainly focused on grammar (Deqi, 2005b). During that period, the product writing approach was dominant in L2 teaching in regards to writing. Therefore, mastering writing skills was believed to be achievable through providing students with controlled writing activities that usually focused on grammar and correction of the product (Susser, 1994). It must be noted that the product approach is still the dominant approach in some countries like Saudi Arabia, in teaching the Arabic language (Bakry & Alsamadani, 2015) and teaching the English language (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010) Kuwait (Halimah, 1991), and Malaysia (Rahim, Salam, & Ismail, 2014). The product approach and as indirect response to Kaplan (1966) about the rhetorical differences between cultures, focused on the form of the final product on its linear fashion (Deqi, 2005a). Accordingly, the emphasis of a writing class is to teach how to write a five-paragraph essay on topics assigned by the teachers (Matsuda, 2003; He, 2009).

In the second half of the 1970s, Zamel (1976) was the first researcher who applied the process writing approach in L2 (Susser, 1994). Zamel (1976) rejected the claim that writing entails grammatical proficiency and claimed instead that the focus in writing instruction should be upon the creative process of writing instead of grammar. She also claimed that L2 learners should have the same instruction with regard to writing as native speakers have in an English classroom (Zamel, 1976). In other words, L2 writing instruction should not differ from native

speaker writing instruction. Zamel's views were attacked by Reid (1984) who claimed that such an attitude is only suitable for advanced students. Reid (1984) argued that focusing on the product is essential for novice learners. In return, Zamil (1984) replied that such a claim shows that we still do not understand the core of the process writing approach, which does not neglect the product. In general, the process writing approach gives the teacher, especially in an ESL classroom, the chance to see at what phase of writing his students are struggling and provide them with a the needed support (Susser, 1994).

Several studies showed that the process-oriented approach benefited ESL students' writing and their perceptions and attitude toward writing were changed positively (Adipattaranun, 1992; Diaz, 1995; Villalobos,1996; Zamil, 1982). Deqi (2005a) indicated that ESL/EFL teachers benefit from the process approach and instead of focusing only on the product and teaching topic sentences, supportive sentences for instance, they begin to use techniques such as journal writing to engage students in free writing. More importantly, Jouhari (1996) conducted a study on Saudi college freshman to investigate the effect of the process writing approach on writing development. The results indicated that the process writing approach benefits student in generating ideas, drafting, processing feedback, and revising. He also reported that students' attitudes towards writing changed positively. Moreover, Alhosani (2008) investigated the role of the process approach on developing the writing ability of five fifth grade Saudi Arabian students when writing in English as a second language. The findings revealed that the process approach is a crucial and effective method to improve Saudi Arabian ESL students' writing ability.

However, there are some problems encountered when applying the process-writing approach in an ESL classroom. For example, though teachers are convinced of the process

approach theoretically, they might not apply it in the classroom (Susser, 1994) and this problem is not limited to L2 teacher's writing instruction but extends to L1 teachers' writing instruction (Silva, 1993). Though most teachers are convinced of the process approach and its benefits to ESL writing, they are not trained to teach cognitive skills in writing (He, 2009). Therefore, the ESL teacher usually tends to focus on form and correct grammatical errors more than focusing on meaningful expression and generating ideas (Susser, 1994). The rationale behind this attitude is that basically most EFL classes aim to prepare students for standardized tests such as the TOFEL and IELTS (He, 2009). In such cases, students need to memorize words, forms, and sentence structure if they want to achieve high scores.

Another obstacle in teaching the process approach in ESL/EFL classes is that L2 writers, unlike L1 writers, have an extra burden of the unfamiliarity of L2 rhetorical patterns. Ferries and Hedgcock (2004) added that teachers and instructors should be aware of the rhetorical strategies that novice L2 writers bring to the classroom from their L1. Moreover, they argue that if the classroom has different L2 learners with different backgrounds, each group should be viewed separately. This difference in backgrounds will affect their ability to "comprehend, analyze, and respond to the texts that they read" (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). This supports Kaplan's (1966) landmark article about the negative transfer from L1 to L2 context. Though some researchers criticize Kaplan's views of negative transfer, his views are very crucial for English writing instructors to understand their ESL students and remember that those students did not come to the L2 writing classroom as inexperienced writers (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). In addition, the focus of teaching English writing, where English is considered a foreign language, focuses mainly on the microstructure level of writing at the expense of the macrostructure level. Kamel (2000) investigated to what extent the degree of proficiency in English acquired by Arab fourth

year college students will enable them to understand authentic argumentative texts in English. The students were expected to graduate from the English department in Cairo University within five months of the experiment. They were exposed to argumentative passages to test their comprehension to English argumentation discourse. The results showed that most of the sample paid attention to the local and sentential details at the expense of the macrostructure level of the text. She attributed this problem to inadequate ability of students to generalize what they already know about propositional meaning to macro-propositional meaning and superstructure (Kamel, 2000). Another study confirmed the findings of Kamel (2000). Ezza (2010) analyzed the content of existing writing courses in three Arab universities, one of them a Saudi university. He concluded that English departments in these universities have adapted approaches and materials characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s. In addition, the English department included in the study seemed to focus on a bottom-up approach where they only focus on the microstructure level at the expense on macrostructure level, and as result, students struggled in writing paragraphs while they did not face difficulty in writing grammatical sentences.

In summary, teaching English in EFL and ESL contexts, on the one hand, is very similar to teaching English to native speakers in its broad outline. On the other hand, EFL and ESL contexts are similar except for a few differences and are treated in the literature as one approach. The process approach is the favorable approach to teaching writing in EFL and ESL contexts, as it is in L1 context.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology and Procedures

Introduction

This research is a response to the increasing need for developing a model that uses explicit instructions that lead to improvements in second language learners' persuasive writing. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Saudi and Arab students generally have a weakness in English writing because in school they do not learn how produce a persuasive text in English (Hatim, 1990; Ezza, 2010), or even how to understand it (Kamel, 2000). Additionally, the influence of the L1 usually affects the learning of L2 (Kaplan, 1966) and has an impact on writing. Therefore, the need for a model that concentrates on teaching the learners a rhetorical style of persuasion in English writing is crucial. The research will follow Dreyfus & Dreyfus' (1986) view of using general knowledge as an approach to improve students' writing for two reasons. Firstly, the population is novice writers of English who have little knowledge in persuasive writing, either in their L1 or L2 (Al-Jumhoor, 1996; Alnofil, 2003; Ezza, 2010; Muhammad, 2001; Hatim, 1990; Kamel, 2000). Secondly, they are studying English in general, which means they are not yet enrolled in any discipline that requires specific instruction. These circumstances make them free of audience and context and, consequently, they are not prepared to acquire local knowledge in writing but rather in general knowledge (Carter, 1990).

The Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) instructional model will be used in this study as a framework to the TREE strategy of argumentative writing. This strategy follows the general knowledge and process-oriented approaches because, as is evident in the literature review, both have a beneficial effect on students' writing. The SRSD consists of six phases: building a background, discussing it, modeling it, memorizing it, supporting it, and independent

practice (Santangelo, Harris, & Graham, 2008). The TREE strategy focuses on developing a cognitive operation that follows the blueprint: topic sentence, reasons supporting the topic sentence, examining the evidence, and ending the essay (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). Finally, though persuasive writing has slight differences from argumentative writing regarding purpose, audience, and point of view; where the former focuses more on convincing and the latter is related to claims and logical appeals (Hillocks, 2011), this study will follow Connor (1990) and Yeh (1990) and use the terms *argumentative* and *persuasive* interchangeably as one term. This is due to the fact that participants of the study are not yet familiar with the concept of argument in writing in its Western style and, as a result, they are not at the stage where they need to differentiate between argumentative and persuasive writing.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the experimental study to test and revise the material and the methods (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The participants in the pilot study were not a part of the experimental study. The researcher conducted the pilot study on four Saudi students who are studying in an English language program in the United States. Since the participants in the pilot study were in a different context from the participants of the study, the results were not included in the study. However, the pilot study revealed some flaws in the experimental study that the researcher changed before starting the experiment.

Participants

The participants of the study were 25 Saudi students in the experimental group and 26 Saudi students in the control group. The study was conducted at Northern Border University (NBU) in Saudi Arabia; the experimental group was on the Rafha campus, while the control group was on

the ArAr campus. Two campuses were chosen due to the low number of students at the Rafha campus, where the number would have been less than 14 participants in each group if we decided to use one campus. The English programs at both campuses are identical. The students in both groups are in the second year of an English program in the English department at NBU.

The program is a four-year Bachelor of Arts program and offers two courses in writing: Writing 1 and Writing 2. Writing 1 is a course that aims to educate students about different types of sentence structures such as simple, compound, and complex. Also, one of its objectives is to teach students how to write grammatical sentences and to be familiar with paragraph and essay rules. Writing 2 is more advanced, it concentrates more on teaching students different types of sentences and how they can build an essay. Therefore, all the participants in the Writing 2 course are supposed to know how to write grammaticality correct sentences. They have the same L1, Arabic, study English in a foreign context, their ages are between 20-23, and all are males. Most likely they have the same level of education because in Saudi Arabia curriculum is unified through K-12. Also, there is no chance that there will be participants who are not Saudi citizens because the universities in Saudi Arabia have a restrictive admission policy and do not admit non-Saudi students. Finally, both groups, experimental and control, have similar classes and both groups received similar instructions in writing before the experimental study. Thus, we can predict that their writing levels are equal.

Instructor

The university policy in Saudi Arabia prohibits non-faculty members from giving classes to students. Since the researcher is a PhD student, he is not qualified to give the intervention to the experimental group. Therefore, the English department at NBU assigned a faculty member, who has a master's degree in English language and has experience in teaching writing, to conduct the

experiment. The researcher provided the instructor with the material and syllabus designed for the experiment. Moreover, the researcher kept in contact with the instructor to overcome the obstacles that the instructor encountered and to make sure that the experiment remained on track.

Context

English is learned in Saudi Arabia as a foreign language. So, students in English departments have limited chances to practice English outside the college (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004). Standard Arabic is the official spoken and written language in Saudi Arabia, however, in every day usage the spoken language is the dialect of the region, which does not have a written form. The students and instructors inside the university usually do not use standard Arabic but the regional dialect. The laws in Saudi Arabia prevent males and females from studying in the same place; therefore, all of the study's participants are male. The dominant approach in teaching English in general and writing particularly is the product-based approach (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010). Therefore, the control group received instructions in writing within the product approach framework and the experimental group received instructions within the process approach framework.

Time

The experimental study took six weeks. Since the SRSD instructional model consists of six stages, the experimental was framed throughout six weeks, where each week covered one stage. However, stage two, as we will see in the procedures, needed more time for explanation and introduction of new concepts to students, and took more than one lecture. Therefore, instructor take some lecture from the modeling stage to explain the new concepts in stage two.

Pretest and Posttest

The instrument used to collect data in the study was the pretest and the posttest. In the pretest and the posttest, participants were asked to write an argumentative essay about two different topics. The first topic was: "Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience." The second topic was: "Homework assignments are a crucial technique to enhance learning and teachers should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience." The TREE strategy follows the general knowledge that focuses on teaching student writing in general discourse, not specific disciplines (Drust & Newell, 1989). Because the experimental study takes six lectures, an instructor who teaches the Writing 2 course in Rafha college will conduct the experimental study. Before the experimental study starts, all the participants will sign the approval agreement for participating in the study.

Dependent variables

Essay parts: The study will follow Berry & Mason (2010) rubric of evaluating essay parts: (a) thesis statement that includes opinion and a support (one point), (b) three reasons that support the thesis statement (three points), (c) three explanations for the reasons (three points), and (d) conclusion (one point).

Essay length: Students' words in both pretest and posttest were counted to see if there is improvement or decline in the essay length.

Data Analysis

The first test is the normality test to make sure that both groups are normally distributed. After that, the mixed analysis of variance measurement was used to see if there is a significant change between the subject within the same group and between the two groups, experimental and control (Bruce, 2015). Further analysis was conducted to see which of the four subscales were significantly improved and see if the length of the essay was increased or not.

Procedure

The participants were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control, and both groups took a pretest. In the pretest, participants were asked to write about the following topic: "Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience" The pretest is for 60 minutes. However, if a participant asks for extra time, he will receive it because the test is not seeking their implicit knowledge about writing skills, but their explicit knowledge (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). After the pretest, the experimental group received TREE strategy. The strategy was framed in the SRSD instructional model. Since the SRSD has six phases, the intervention was categorized in six stages.

Stage 1: Develop and activate background knowledge. Unlike other studies that focus in this stage on reminding participants about writing rules of persuasion writing (Berry & Mason, 2010; Song & Ferretti, 2013), the participants in this study do not have any background in argumentative writing, either in Arabic or English. As a result, in this stage the instructor provided a brief review on the differences between rhetoric styles of argumentative writing in Arabic and English. During the comparison, the instructors highlighted the differences in cultures between the two languages. This review aimed to enlighten participants about the main

differences as reported in the literature review (Hatim, 1990; Kamel, 2000; Koch, 1983). After that, the instructor introduced the SRSD and presented its six stages and how students will benefit from it. This presentation included its effectiveness on writing as proven by other studies (Berry & Mason, 2010; De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Little et al. 2010; Mason et al. 2013;). After that, the instructor presented TREE strategy by focusing on how it is different from the Arabic style of writing. This was accompanied by a presentation of essential essay components of an English essay.

Next, since all participants in the study are preparing for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam, the second section of this stage will explain how the SRSD might improve students writing scores on the exam. The writing section in the IELTS has two writing tasks: descriptive writing and persuasive writing. Persuasive writing composes two-thirds of the total score. Students examined a quality essay taken from the IELTS exam to identify topic sentences, reason, explanation and evidence, and conclusion. Transition words in the essay were highlighted to support the organization of the essay and make participants aware of their importance in presentation of the argument. The practice was in groups and after that the participants were given time to memorize the strategy steps that has been discussed through this stage.

Stage 2: Discuss instructional goals and significance. Unlike other studies (Little et al. 2010; Mason & Shriner, 2008; Song & Ferretti, 2013), in this stage the instructor presented the components of the TREE strategy in details. This divergence is due to the participants not studying argumentative writing, and they do not know how to accomplish an essay of this type. All the aforementioned studies have native English speakers as participants, and this study is the only exception where it has Saudi students for the first time. Therefore, in this stage the

instructor has introduced thoroughly the different parts of the TREE strategy with examples and exercises.

Moreover, during this stage the instructor presented a poor argumentative essay and together with the participants tried to locate the weaknesses in the essay and identify ways to strengthen it. For example, adding more reasons to the body of the essay or giving convincing explanations to reason already used. Also, the discussion included the introduction and the conclusion of the essay and how they should be used in line with the body of the essay. More importantly, the instructor discussed the linear structure of the English style and how it is different from the zigzag Arabic style in writing. Discussing this through improving poor argumentative essays was crucial to show participants the differences between the two styles discussed in stage one.

Stage 3: Model the strategy. In this stage, the instructor used "the talking aloud" strategy to model the TREE strategy. This included showing how to use transitional words, descriptive words, and more importantly, modeling the exemplary essay included different cognitive processes of writing (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Steele, 2004). This also included planning, brainstorming, drafting, and editing. Students working in pairs were asked to write on an argumentative topic provided by the instructors. A graph of how to build the essay using the TREE strategy was drawn and was visible to students until they reached stage six. Moreover, participants exchanged their essays to provide feedback and discuss their flaws, weaknesses, and improvements in writing.

Stage 4: Memorize it. In this stage, students recited the steps of the TREE strategy from memory to make sure that they were able to visualize it mentally. The instructor provided participants with exercises to examine to what extent they can recall the steps. Recalling is not

only naming the steps of TREE, but also explaining what each step means and what the best ways are to achieve them. After that, more time was specified to write an argumentative topic and students worked in pairs. Pairs were provided with a list of transitional words to help them connect the different parts of their essay.

Stage 5: Support it. The instructors monitored students' use of planning and writing strategies. This stage precedes the final stage of independent practice, therefore students worked on three persuasion topics and the instructor observed their progress in the writing task as they were working and provided them with feedback. The students also had a list of transitional words to use while building their argumentative essay. At the end of this stage, the instructor listed the common errors and discussed them with all participants.

Stage 6: Independent practice. This is the final stage where participants worked independently. The graph showing how to build a persuasion essay using the TREE strategy was erased from the boardand the transitional words list was taken from the participants. Participants individually wrote an argumentative essay where they depend on what they have learned through the five stages. The instructor minimized his notes and feedback to the most serious mistakes. Observing participants writing, the instructor at the end of time listed the common errors for each participant. At that stage the instructor that students use the TREE strategy appropriately and producing a topic that has a thesis statement, reasons, explanations, and a conclusion. The common problems were discussed together.

Because of the time limit of this experimental study, the instructions are not enough to improve students' writing and the best method to improve students' skills is to make them write frequently (Graham & Harris, 2013). Therefore, at the end of each lesson, participants had an assignment and were asked to deliver it at the beginning of the next lesson. The instructor

evaluated their writing, graded it, and wrote appropriate feedback. The feedback did not only address errors but also concentrated on positive aspects of the participants' writing (Ferries, 1999; Gee, 1973; Hyland and Hyland, 2001Rimes, 1983). The feedback was personally written and each student was addressed by his first name. This will motivate them to write more and be careful on the next assignment (Protherough, 1983)

Finishing the six stages, the experimental group was prepared for a posttest and it was conducted simultaneously for both groups after the end of the instructional session. The topic for the posttest was carefully chosen to be similar to the topic used in the pretest so that it will not need any specific experience. The second topic was: "Homework assignments are crucial technique to enhance learning and teacher should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience."

Validity

To enhance the validity of the study and assure that the results are valid, we need to make sure that the results "reflect what we believe they reflect and that they are meaningful in the sense that they have significance to broader relevant population" (Mackey& Gass, 2005). In this regard, the study depends mainly on the SRSD instructional model as a framework which was developed by Harris and Graham (1996). The SRSD was tested by many studies (Berry & Mason, 2010; De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Little et al. 2010; Mason et al. 2013) and they all confirm its significant improvements on students' writing, which increases its validity. Moreover, the study uses the TREE strategy along with SRSD instructional model which has been used in several studies (Berry & Mason, 2010; Mason et al. 2013; Little et al. 2010) and they also confirm its validity to

improve students' writing (Berry & Mason, 2010). Furthermore, choosing the topics for the pretest and the posttest was not arbitrary, but followed careful procedure. The researcher with his colleagues and friends listed five topics that required a similar level of knowledge, as they will be common topics that do not require specific experience to write about and they will be related to participants' culture. After that, consultation was sought from more advanced professional experts in writing, like professor Steven Graham, who is considered one of the pioneers of writing instruction and the developer of the SRSD instructional method. This led to the two topics that were used in the pretest and the posttest because they both have the same level of knowledge and do not need specific experience to write about because it is related to participants' culture.

In addition, to enhance the face validity in which participants will be familiar with all steps of the experiment as well as to know the ultimate goal of this study (Mackey& Gass, 2005), at the beginning of the experiment the instructor gave a presentation for all participants explaining the goals, procedure, and expected benefits of this study. Finally, the SRSD instructional method with the TREE strategy confirmed its criterion – related validity where Berry & Mason (2010) used an additional measure, the GED, to asses writing skills. After participating in the experimental study, all students passed the writing portion of GED exam.

Reliability

To enhance inter-rater reliability, two raters scored students' writing in both pretests and posttests (Mackey& Gass, 2005). The raters were two experienced instructors in the Applied English Center who have been teaching writing to international students,and in particular Saudi students, for a long time. Before the scoring procedure began, the researcher held a meeting with both instructors and explained to them the study in general and how to score the writing using

Berry & Mason's (2010) rubric. After that, each of the instructors was given the pretest and posttest papers. To make sure that the instructors followed Berry & Mason's (2010) rubric, the researcher attached a copy of the rubric to each pretest and posttest and asked the raters to complete it while rating the papers.

When the papers were finished being rated, the researcher collected the papers and classified them into two categories. The first category included the papers that had the same grading or a difference of only one grade. The researcher considered the one grade difference as natural and took the average between two raters. The second category was where the difference was more than one grade. In this case, the researcher invited the raters to another meeting and asked to them to discuss these differences in grading to narrow the subjectivity in scoring. Most of the differences in this category were solved satisfactorily and a few scores were reduced to one grade difference which allowed the researcher to take the average between the two raters.

Ethical Considerations

Before the experiment began, all students signed a consent form that explained all the steps of the study. Also, a meeting with the students was held a week before the experimental study to explain the study and what their roles would be, as well as the academic benefits from the study. They were informed that there is no fee for participating in the study and all students would participate as volunteers, and they could withdraw at any stage in the experimental study without any consequences.

Chapter Four

Results of the Study

Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the data analysis of the experimental study. The data which are presented in this chapter are students' scores in the experimental and control groups. The scores include the pretest and the posttest. The analysis of the data will explore whether there is a significant improvement in students' scores in the experimental group, on one hand, and if there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the other hand. The study was guided by the following question: To what extent does the SRSD instructional model with the TREE strategy improve Saudi students' argumentative writing?

Data Cleaning

The participants of the experimental study were 30 students. Six papers did not have matching names between the pretest and the posttest. Examining the handwriting of the pretest and the posttest unfortunately does not confirm that they belong to the same person. Therefore, a decision was made to exclude theses six papers from the experiment. Moreover, one pair of students had almost identical papers in the pretest which indicated a case of plagiarism , therefore one of them is eliminated because one student is cheating from the other and we do not know who specifically. The control group were 36 participants and six papers had no matching names in the pretest and the posttest which excluded them from the experiment. Moreover, two pairs of students plagiarized in the pretest, which caused two

papers to be excluded from the experiment. Thus, the valid participants were 26 in the experimental group and 31 in the control group.

After that, a normality test was conducted to test the normality of the data. The test showed that the pretest data were not normally distributed while the posttest was normally distributed (Table 1). To treat the abnormality in the pretest, the outliers should be removed where the difference between 75% and 25% (Table 2) of the data scores will be multiplied by 1.5 (Tucky, 1977).

Table 1. Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

	Statistic	**Sig**
Pretest total	.946	.014
Posttest total	.977	.342

Table 2. Percentiles

	25%	**75%**
Weighted average	2.5	4

The criterion scores to determine the outliers in the data were (.65625≤ data ≥6.59375). As a result, six outliers were found and deleted. Five of them were in the control group and had a score of 0 in the pretest and posttest. The remainder was in the experimental group and had a score of more than 6.59 in the pretest and posttest. After removing the outliers, both pretest and posttest had normal distribution (Table 3). The total number of participants in the experimental and control groups became 25 and 26, respectively (Table 4).

Table 3. Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

	Statistic	Sig
Pretest total	.961	.095
Posttest total	.966	.144

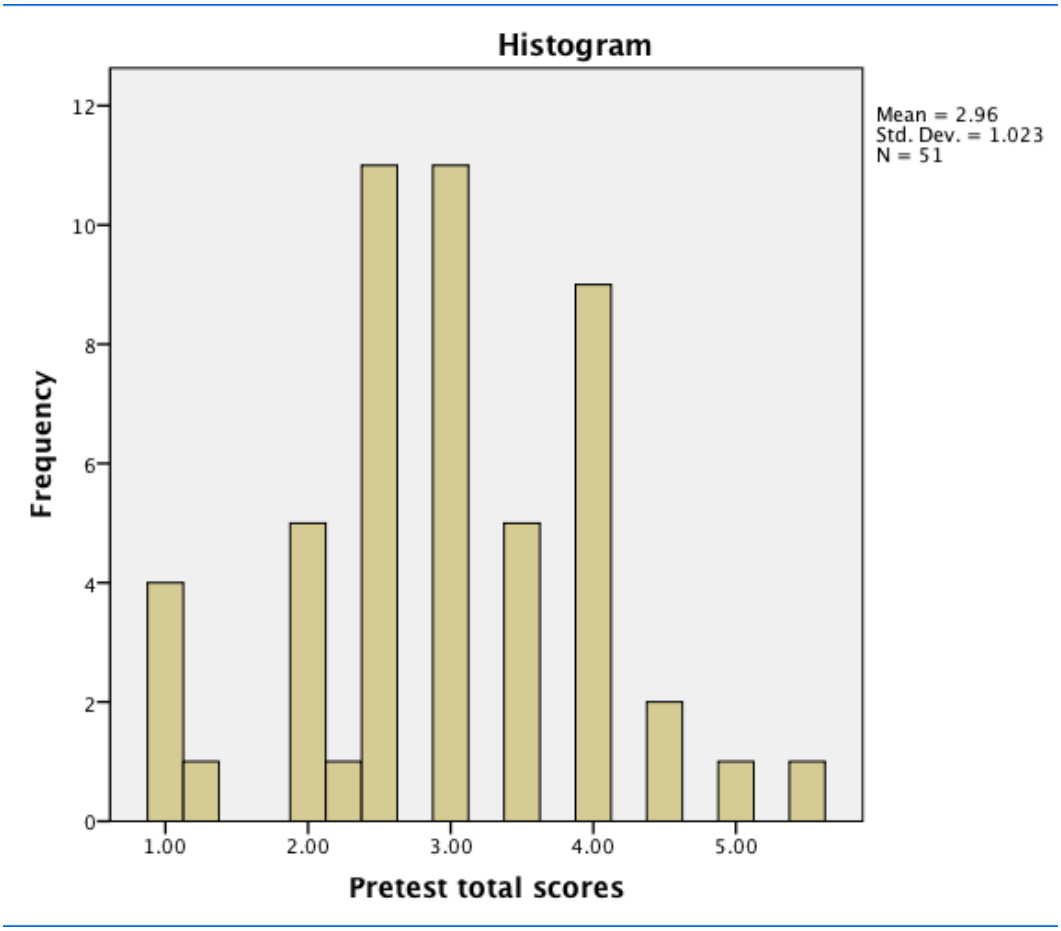

Figure 3. Pretest Total Scores

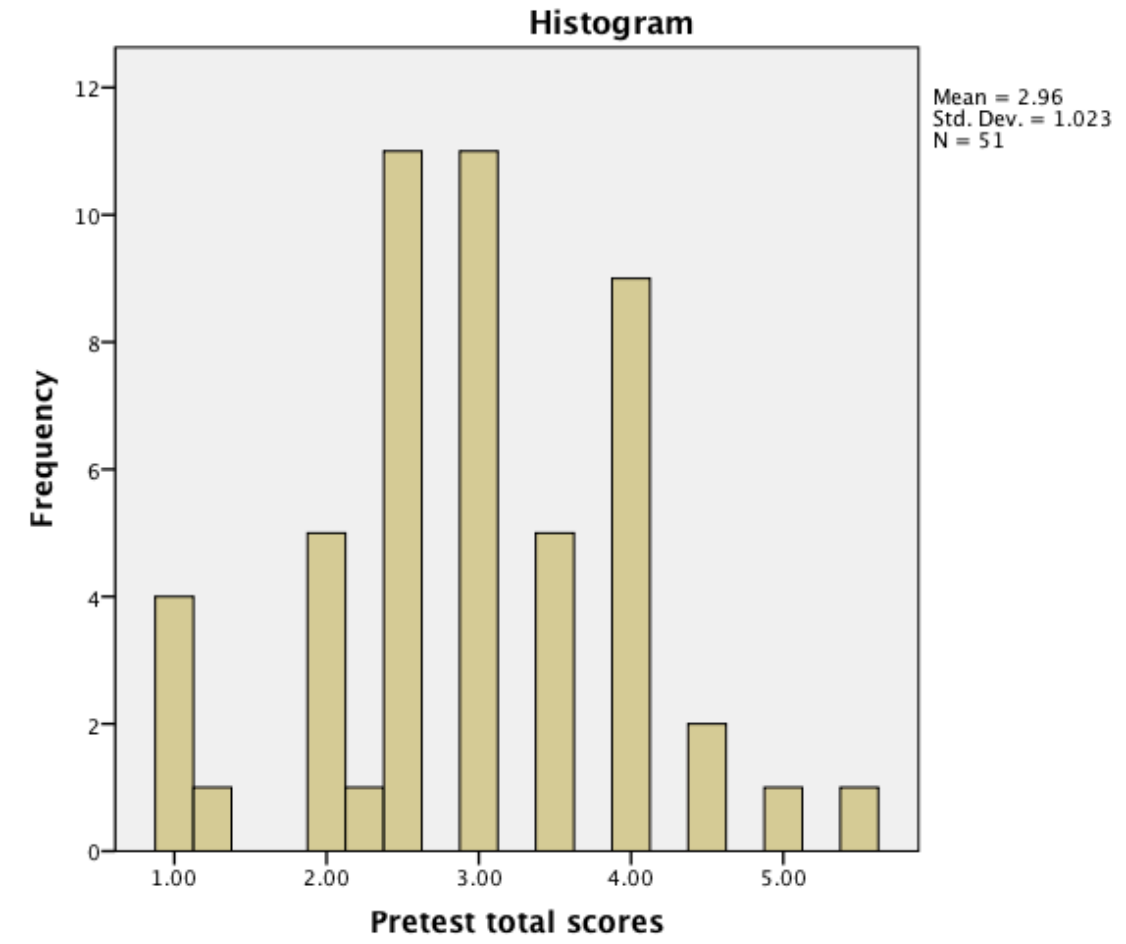

Figure 4. Pretest Total Scores

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

	Statistic
Experimental group	25
Control group	26

The Reliability

Two graders were assigned to grade the pretest and posttest. Both of them are female and have vast experience in teaching writing to international students and particularly Arab learners. After collecting the data, two copies of the pretest and posttest were made for the graders and the rubric was attached with each paper. The researcher conducted a meeting with the graders before the process of scoring the papers and explained the experimental study and the rubric. Another meeting was scheduled after scoring the papers where the researcher classified all papers and asked graders to review the papers that had differences of more than 1 in scores. The inter-item correlation of the intergrades' reliability in the pretest exam showed strong correlation r=.826 and on the posttest exam the inter-item correlation became even stronger r=.926. (Table 5).

Table 5. Inter-item Correlation of the Graders

	L_ Pretest total	**J_ Pretest total**	**L_ Posttest total**	**J_ Posttest total**
L_ Pretest total	1.00	.826	-	-
J_ Pretest total	.826	1.00	-	-
L_ Posttest total	-	-	1.00	.926
J_ Posttest total	-	-	.926	1.00

The inter-reliability of the subscales is .545 (table 6) which is less than optimal. However, theoretically, the four subscales indicate the level of writing because they construct the essay structure and were by used Berry & Mason's (2010) research.

Table 6. Inter-reliability of the Pretest Subscales

Cronbaach's Alpha	**.454**
Number of items	4

Mixed Analysis of Variance

To see whether the SRSD instructional model has a significant influence on the experimental group or not, a mixed analysis of variance measurement was conducted using SPSS version 22. This measurement will allow us to see if there is a significant change between the subject within the same group and between the two groups (experimental and control) as well as if there is interaction between the two groups. The analysis showed that we have a significant multivariate effect: Wilk's $\Lambda = .754$, $F(1, 49) = 15.975$, $p < .000$; $\eta 2 = .246$

Table 7. Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothsis df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Factor*group						

Wilks' Lambda	.754	15.957	1.000	49.000	.000	.246

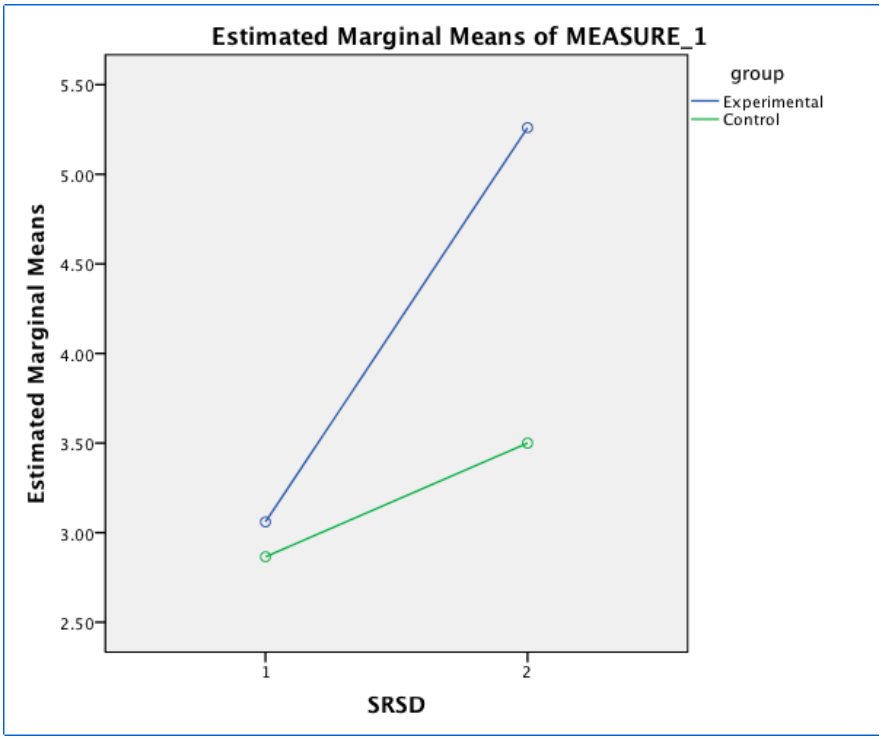

Figure 5. Total Scores Interaction

After that, a paired sample t test was conducted to see which group improved significantly. First, the paired sample test showed a significant effect of the SRSD+TREE intervention t(24) = -9.158, p < .000 on the experimental group. However, the traditional instructions of writing has a a barely significant effect on the control group, t(25) = -2.067, p < .049.

Table 8. Paired Sample Test for the Total Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Paired test	**Mean difference**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**df**	**Sig (tailed)**

Experimental group	-2.2000	1.20113	-9.158	24	.000
Control group	-.63462	1.56562	-2.067	25	.049

Also, an independent t test was conducted to see if there is a significant difference between the group levels in the pretest. The results showed that there is no significance difference t(49) = .676, p < .502 and the posttest showed a strong significant difference t(49) = 4.885, p < .000. Since the total score consists of four subscales, a paired sample test was conducted to see what subscales were significant at group level. First, in the experimental group, the thesis statement scores in the pretest and posttest did not has significant difference t(24) = -1.333, p < .195. The reasons' pretest and posttest showed a significant improvement between the pretest and the posttest, t(24) = -7.579, p < 000. The explanation scores did not show any significant difference between the pretest and the posttest t(24) = -1.935, p < 065. Finally, the conclusion scores showed a strong difference between the pretest and the posttest t(24) = -3.663, p < 001. In general, the paired sample test for the experimental group showed that only the reasons and the conclusion were significantly improved by the SRSD+TREE strategy.

Table 9. Paired Sample Test for the Experimental Group Subscales

Paired test	**Mean difference**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**Df**	**Sig (tailed)**
Thesis statement	-.1000	.37500	-1.333	24	.195

Reasons	-1.24	.81803	-7.579	24	.000
Explanation	-.36	.93005	-1.935	24	.065
Conclusion	-.46	.62783	-3.663	24	.001

Second, the control group paired sample test did not show any significance in the four subscales. The thesis statement was not significantly improved and the difference between the pretest and the posttest was insignificant, t(25) = .000, p < .1.000. The reasons scores in the pretest and the posttest were also insignificant, t(25) = -2.028, p < .053. The explanation scores showed insignificant improvement in the pertest and the protest, t(25) = 3.20, p < .752. Finally, the conclusion scores showed an insignificant difference between the pretest and the posttest, t(25) = 337, p < .739. However, the total of the four subscales was barely significant (t=-2.067, p=.049)

Table 10. Paired Sample Test for the Control Group Subscales

Paired test	**Mean difference**	**Std. Deviation**	**t**	**df**	**Sig (tailed)**
Thesis statement	.0000	.34641	.000	25	1.000
Reasons	-.55769	1.40233	-2.028	25	.053
Explanation	.05769	.92008	.320	25	.752
Conclusion	.03846	.58177	.337	25	.739

Moreover, repeated measurement was conducted on each scale separately to see if there is interaction on the group level. The Wilks' Lambda of the thesis statement was not significant (F=.980, p=.327) and the effect size was (ηp2= .020). For the reasons interaction Wilks' Lambda

was significant (F=4.458, p=040) and the effect size was was (ηp2= .083). The explanation interaction was not significant (f=950, p=113) though the effect size was weak (ηp2= .05). Finally, the conclusion interaction was significant (F=8.658, p=.005) and the effect size (ηp2= .15).

Table 11. Interaction between Groups in Subscales Separately

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Thesis statement *group	.980	.980	1.000	49.000	.327	.20
Reasons * group	.917	4.458	1.000	49.000	.040	.083
Explanation * group	.950	2.599	1.000	49.000	.113	.050
Conclusion *group	.850	8.658	1.000	49.000	.005	.150

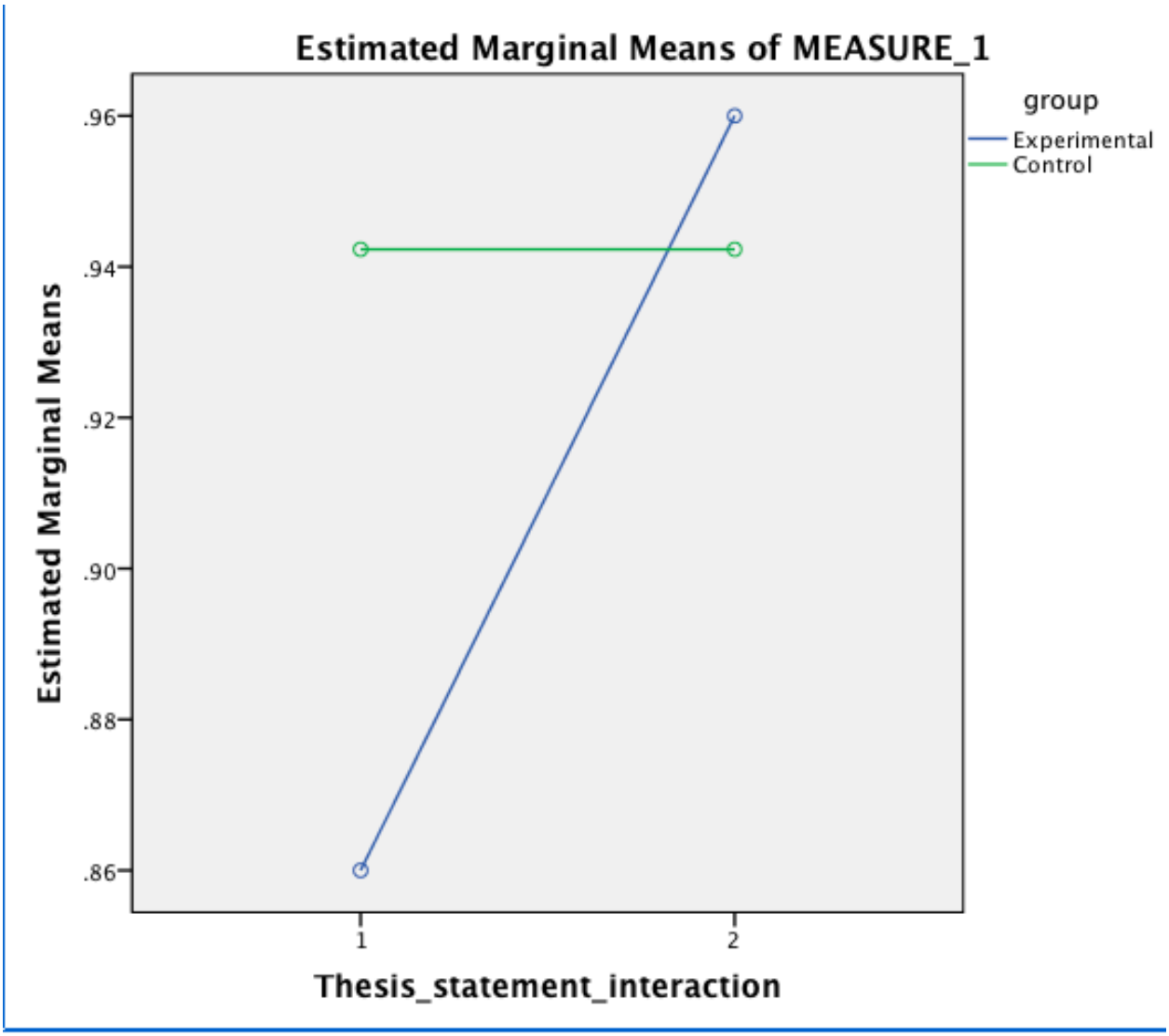

Figure 6. Thesis Statement Interaction

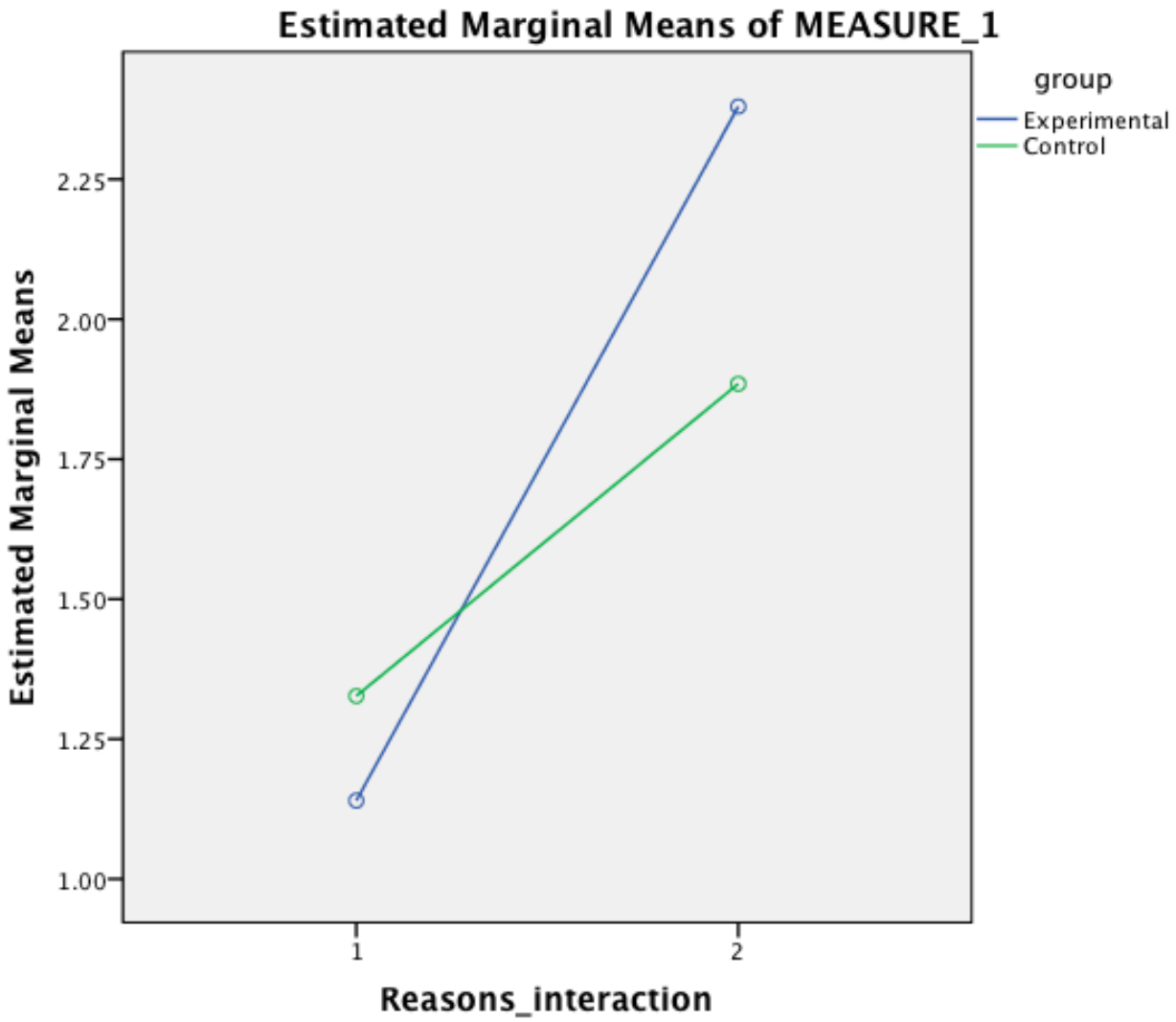

Figure 7. Reasons Interaction

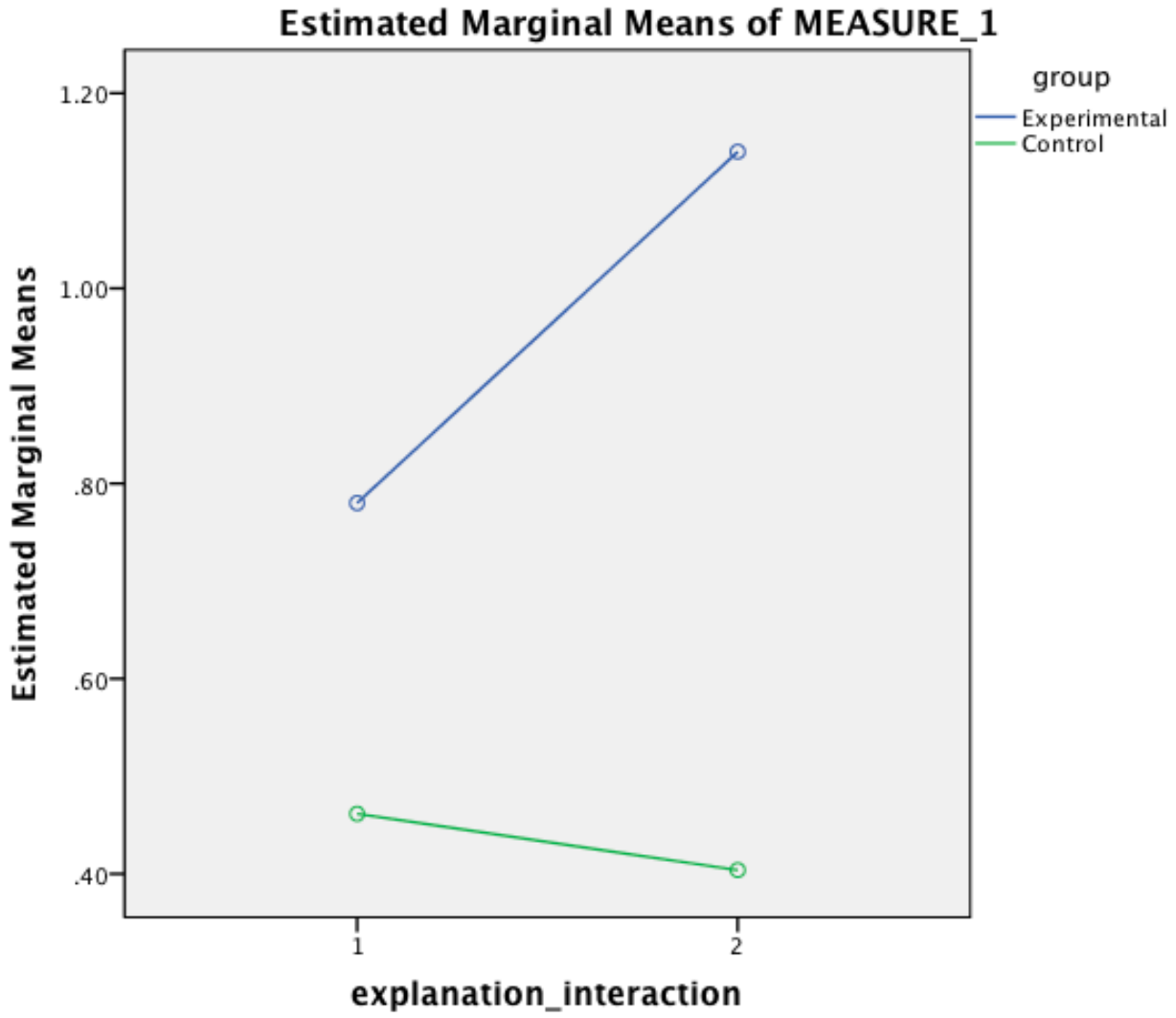

Figure 8. Explanation Interaction

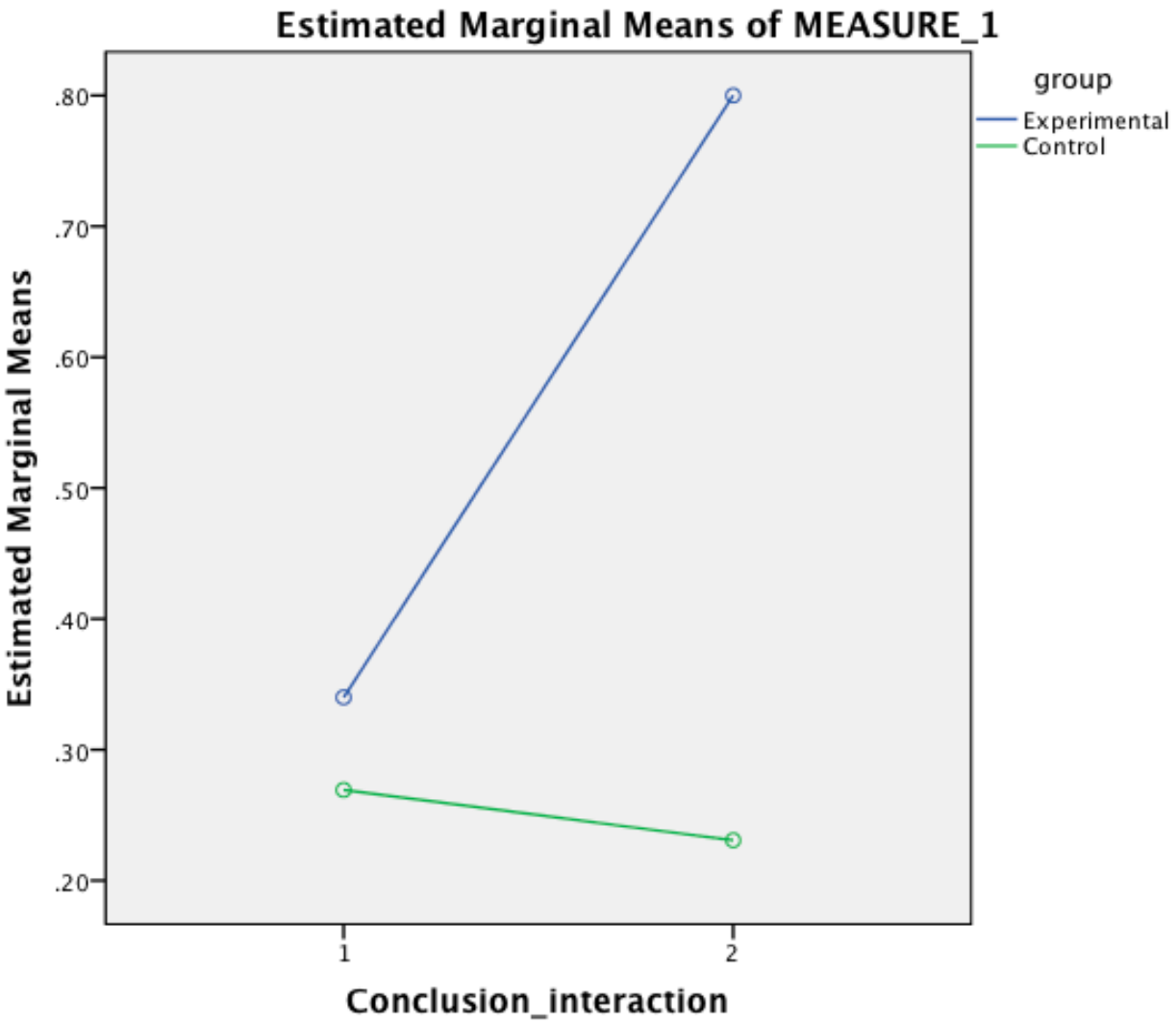

Figure 9. Conclusion Interaction

Word Count

The students' words count mean in the pretest (M=66) and in the posttest (M=92) in the experimental group. In the control group the mean for words count was (M=67) and in the posttest (M= 63) (Table 12).

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics

Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	N
Experimental group	66	92	25
Control group	66	63	26

To see if there is an interaction between the pretest and the posttest and between groups a repeated measurement test was conducted on words count and the multivariate tests showed a significant effect Wilk's $\Lambda = .840$, $F(1, 49) = 9.318$, $p < .004$; $\eta 2 = .160$.

Table 13. Multivariate Tests

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Factor*group						
Wilks' Lambda	.840	9.318	1.000	49.000	.004	.16

Moreover, a paired t test was conducted to see which group achieved significant scores. The results showed that the experimental group has a significant difference in scores between the pretest and the posttest, $t(24) = -3.384$, $p < .002$. In contrast, the control group did not have a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest $t(25) = .580$, $p < .567$

Table 14. Paired Sample Test for Word Count in the Pretest and Posttest Groups

Paired test	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig (tailed)
Experimental group	-26.040	38.47670	-3.384	24	.002
Control group	3.42308	30.09873	.580	25	.567

Chapter Five

Discussion

The findings of the study showed a significant influence of the TREE strategy within the SRSD instructional model on the persuasive writing of Saudi L2 learners. This came along with previous literature reviews that indicated the positive influence of SRSD on students' writing (Berry & Mason, 2010; Graham & Perin, 2007; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Mason et al. 2013; De La Paz, 2005). However, this study is one of the first that reports such improvement on adolescent L2 learners (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013). The experimental and control groups showed no significant difference in the pretests $t(49) = .676$, $p < .502$. This indicates that their level of persuasive writing is similar. The posttest showed a strong significance between the experimental and the control groups $t(49) = 4.885$, $p < .000$. Moreover, the mean for the experimental group in the pretest was low ($M= 3.060$) as well as the control group ($M=2.86$), which is below 50% of the total score (8). This indicates that the participants are poor writers (Al-Haq & Ahmed, 1994; Al-Khairy, 2013; Fadda, 2012; Javid, Farooq, & Umer, 2013; Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000) and thus the TREE strategy is suitable for their level although they are adolescents and in English departments. The following is a discussion of the four subscales' results separately.

Thesis Statement.

The Wilk's lambda test showed no interaction between the two groups and between the pretest and the posttest. This is due to the fact that the thesis statement results showed relatively high scores for the experimental in the pretests ($M=.86$, $SD=.33$) and the posttest ($M=.96$,

SD=.200) as well as the control group's (M=.9423, SD=.356; M=.9423, SD=16291) for pretest and posttest respectively. These high scores are due to three reasons. First, the focus in grading the essay was on the place of the thesis statement and the linguistic characteristic of the thesis statement. The place of the thesis statement is in the first paragraph and, particularly, at the end of it (Petrić, 2005). The thesis statement definition of this study followed Haluska's (2006) definition of the thesis statement: "an opinion clarified in the thesis statement, and every part of each paragraph should validate that opinion in turn." Therefore, any thesis statement in the introductory paragraph that states an opinion and is supported by a cause will have full scores regardless of the grammar and the punctuation. It must be mentioned here that the participant does not need to state the three reasons in the thesis statement to get the full score. Thus, a reason(s) or justification(s) will be considered the second part of the thesis statement and consequently give the participant the full score. This lenient grading criteria, which is one of the reasons that students got high scores in this subscale, is due to the low writing level of Arab and Saudi students (Al-Haq & Ahmed, 1994; Al-Khairy, 2013; Fadda, 2012; Javid, Farooq, & Umer, 2013; Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000).

Secondly, the participants of this study are level five students in the English department, which means they have already spent two years in the English program. Therefore, it is more likely that they have studied thesis statements since they previously took two courses in writing: Writing 1 and Writing 2. Finally, the participants seem to be good at writing thesis statements because they come at the beginning of the essay. The students may still have aspirations and are likely to respond immediately to the prompt to write what they think are good responses. However, because they are not yet being trained through the mental and cognitive processes that are needed to write a complete persuasive essay, their fluency does not continue after the

introduction, as we will see in the following sub-scales, particularly in the explanation and conclusion sections. Thus it is noted that students in the control group, who represent the product approach (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010), gained most of the scores in the thesis statement and the reasons sections, while they scored less in the explanations and conclusion. Alternatively, the experimental group participants, who represent the process approach, maintained high scores throughout the essay.

Reasons

The reasons that the experimental group showed a SRSD+TREE strategy has significant influence on writing reasons in the essay $t(24) = -7.579$, $p < 000$. The SRSD+TREE showed that it provides the student with self-regulated abilities to develop reasons that are related to the thesis statement. Moreover, we should not ignore the influence of the process-oriented approach that focus on improving the mental cognitive ability of writer. Alternatively, the control group did not show any improvement in writing reasons that support the thesis statement $t(25) = -2.028$, $p < .053$. This insignificant result was expected since providing specific reasons related to one idea requires a high cognitive ability. The product-oriented approach represented by the control participants, is unlikely able to prepare students for such skills because it mainly focuses on imitation strategy where students imitate a standard template of writing and the teacher evaluates them accordingly (Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004).

Explanations

The explanation sub-scale showed insignificant improvement $t(24) = -1.935$, $p < 065$. If we look closer to the data we find that main reason behind this insignificance is that the mean of experimental group in the pretest was relatively high (M=.780, SD=.502) compared to the control group (M=.462, SD=.488). The difference between the two means is insignificant $t(49)=$

2.297, p<.026. This indicates that the SRSD+TREE was not the cause for this insignificant improvement but rather the sampling was not randomly distributed. For the control group the paired sample t test, $t(25) = 3.20$, $p < .752$.

Conclusion

The conclusion, which is the last part of the essay, explains clearly that the experimental group is different from the control group in their way of thinking and processing the information while writing. It also shows that the experimental group writes more than the control group. The intervention of the SRSD+TREE strategy showed significant influence on the experimental group $t(24) = -3.663$, $p < 001$.

A deep examination of the results revealed that though the conclusion was merely rephrasing the thesis statement, the control group participants could not achieve at least 50% of credit in both tests. This indicates that the enthusiastic spirit of writing that the control group participants show at the beginning of the essay gradually faded while writing the different components of the essay. Alternatively, the experimental group maintained energetic writing throughout each component. This advantage in favor of the process approach confirms its benefit to novice writers.

Word Count

The word count is the second variable in the study that gives us an indicator improvement in writing skill Berry & Mason (2010). The participants in the experimental group dramatically increased the number of words they used in writing, $t(24) = -3.384$, $p < .002$, and this result came along with Berry & Mason (2010). The control group results did not show any improvement $t(25) = .580$, $p < .567$. The average of the experimental group ($M=66$, $SD=30.03$) and the control

group (M=67, SD=30.07) was almost identical which mean that they wrote the same amount in the pretest. However, posttest of the experimental group (M=92.04, SD=28.89) showed a dramatic increase in word number while the control group did not have such improvement (M=63.58, SD=37.92). This might be due to the fact that the participants of this study already have an adequate amount of vocabulary knowledge, but the product approach of writing that is dominant in Saudi Arabia is not enough to challenge their minds and motivate them to use more vocabulary. The process approach focuses more on the mental and cognitive abilities of writers' minds, generates meaning and ideas, and organizes them on papers (Dela luz, 1991; Ferries & Hedgcock, 2004; Flower & Hayes, 1981). Therefore, the participants in the experimental group in the posttest managed to write successfully through the essay parts and, consequently, wrote more words than the participants in the control group (See Appendix H).

The Conclusion

This study supports what other studies (Berry & Mason, 2010; De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Glaser & Brunstein, 2007; Graham & Perin, 2007; Mason et al. 2013), have confirmed about the positive effect of the TREE+ SRSD instructional model on students' persuasive writing. This strategy enhances a student's knowledge of the framework of an English language essay, educates the students on how to develop a self-regulated strategy in writing, and enables students to write more and elaborate their writing. Moreover, this study distinguishes itself with a new contribution in the field by using adolescent Saudi L2 learners as participants for the first time. Furthermore, unlike previous studies (Ferretti & Lewis, 2013; Yeh, 1998) that caution teaching heuristics, the results show that participants benefit from heuristics (Dreyfu & Dreyfus, 1986).

The study shows the need for adapting the process approach in teaching writing for L2 learners. Though the process approach is the dominant approach of teaching writing in middle school and high school in the United States (Applebee &langer, 2009), and in general (Deqi, 2005b), the dominant approach in Saudi Arabia is the product approach which ignores the cognitive and mental process of writing. As the results indicate, adapting the product approach to writing constrains students' fluency in writing and, consequently, shortens the length of their essays.

Implications of the Study

The study has important implications for teaching English writing in the Saudi context and the international context:

- The level of Saudi English learners in writing is still weak and these learners need more work to develop their writing, particularly in argumentative writing.
- One of the implications in teaching the process-oriented approach is that it enables the teacher to focus on each stage independently (De Smet, 2014). For example, in this study it appears that participants still need more work on building appropriate thesis statements as well as the explanations section.
- Though the SRSD instructional model is mainly designed to improve the writing of students with disabilities (Johnson et al. 2013), it benefits native English speakers who are at different educational levels such as college (Graham & Harris, 2003; Song & Ferretti 2013;), high school (Mason et al. 2013), intermediate school (De La Paz & Graham, 2002), and elementary school (Graham, Harris, & Mason, 2005), as well as nonnative English learners at the elementary school level (Glaser & Brunstein, 2007).

This study confirms the benefits of SRSD on nonnative English learners at the college level.

- The study has proven the benefit of teaching the process-oriented approach compared to the product-oriented approach, which is the dominant style of teaching writing in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hazmi, & Schofield, 2007; Ezza, 2010; Grami, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

The study is not free of limitations. First, the study has a low number of participants. Twenty-six participants are a relatively low number of participants. Also, the researcher was not the one who conducted the experiment himself because the regulations and systems of NBU prohibit instructors who are not faculty members of the department from teaching students within that department. six weeks of study is short in the calculation of second language acquisition. Students need more time to practice and reach an autonomous stage (Anderson 1983). Furthermore, the poor level of students' writing represents a barrier for conducting a more advanced strategy in writing, like the one used in Song & Ferretti (2013). Finally, the noteworthy absence of some participants slowed down the timeline of the intervention. Instructors had to schedule extra classes for the students who missed the lectures so that they could have the same instructions as their peers.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Experimental pretest exam

Name:	Date:	Experimental / Pretest

Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Appendix B: Control pretest exam

Name:	Date:	Control/ Pretest

Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Appendix C: Control Posttest exam

Name:	Date:	Control/ Posttest

Homework assignments are crucial technique to enhance learning and teacher should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Appendix D: Experimental Posttest exam

Name:	Date:	Experimental / Posttest

Homework assignments are crucial technique to enhance learning and teacher should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Appendix E

Rubric

	Category	points
1-	Thesis statement	1/
2-	3 reasons	3/
3-	3 explanations	3/
4-	Conclusion	1/
5-	Total	8/

Appendix F

Adult Informed Consent Statement (Experimental Group)

SRSD instructional model to improve Saudi students' argumentative writing in Rafha College.

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Curriculum and teaching at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To investigate the reasons behind students weakness in writing skill and test cubing technique to improve their writing skills

PROCEDURES

At Sunday 11-1-2015, you will have pretest, which is an essay about an argumentative topic and one question about your level of knowledge about the topic. The test will take 45 minutes.
From Nov. 3rd to Dec.15th, 2016 you will receive instructions on the SRSD instructional model (12 hours maximum). This will take six lectures (2 hours each lecture) on six weeks.
At Wednesday 12-16-2016 you will have a posttest, which is an essay about an argumentative and one question about your level of knowledge about the topic. The test will take 45 minutes.

As a participant of this experimental study you have the right to withdraw from it at any time you wish.

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks in the study

BENEFITS

As part of the study you will receive an important instruction in writings that will improve your writing of English and will make you familiar with English argumentative writing.

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Participants of the study will not being paid or have financial benefit of the study.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.
Also, Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future."

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Sahal Alshammari at 1122 West Campus Rd. Lawrence, Kansas 66045
If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

_____ _____

Type/Print Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

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Appendix G

Adult Informed Consent Statement (Control Group)

SRSD instructional model to improve Saudi students' argumentative writing in Rafha College.

INTRODUCTION

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PROCEDURES

At Sunday 11-1-2015, you will have pretest, which is an essay about an argumentative topic and one question about your level of knowledge about the topic. The test will take 45 minutes.
At Wednesday 12-16-2016, you will have a posttest, which is an essay about an argumentative and one question about your level of knowledge about the topic. The test will take 45 minutes.
As you are on the control group you will not receive any instructions about writing other than the ones you will take in your class that is not related to this experimental study.
As a participant of this experimental study you have the right to withdraw from it at any time you wish.

RISKS

There are no anticipated risks in the study

BENEFITS

As part of the study you will receive an important instructions in writings that will improve your writing of English and will make you familiar with English argumentative writing .

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Participants of the study will not being paid or have financial benefit of the study.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher(s) will use a study number or a pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.
Also, Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future."

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: Sahal Alshammari at 1122 West Campus Rd. Lawrence, Kansas 66045
If you cancel permission to use your information, the researchers will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

_____ _____

Type/Print Participant's Name Date

_____

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information

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Pretest/ Control

Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

I Disagree cause, I think it make the childe less intalagent and more agressive and when think about it its not a way of raising!, it's not exeptpat. its better if you use punishments like like (no going out the house) or (no money) or (no weakend out) this ways have more effect and influence on children.

Posttest/Control

Homework assignments are crucial technique to enhance learning and teacher should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

I agree ofcaus, its ton the important techingues in learning and teacher used it regulary.

There are many reasons to use it in learning, homework assignments are good for students and it helps them to have attention in the subject.

Pretest/Experimental

Should parents use corporal punishment to discipline children? To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

Corporal punishment is a bad way to discipline the children. It may cause them body harm. It effects social life. When I was young, the math teacher beat me hard because I forgot an exercise and now I hate maths since that time.

Posttest/Experimental

Homework assignments are crucial technique to enhance learning and teacher should use it regularly. To what extent do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answers and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience.

It's very imporaant to give the students alot
of homeworks ~~to improve thier learning~~.
It's to improve their learning and ~~to~~ also
to whatch How they are doing in the study.
If there ~~will be~~ no homeworks the
students won't be able to save thier time.

Secondly the students need to save thier
time out of the university.
Doing the Homework at the home
Kered [illegible] study ready
make the study time helpfull to
the study.
late study tells the students whos
doing ~~[illegible]~~ alot homework in the university
they are succed in the study
what I wrote is the reason why
the home work is imporatant to improve
the study skills and be succesfull.